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Bertram Turner and Melanie G. Wiber
Sima Aprahamian, Katja Neves and Nigel Rapport



Rural Property / Propriété rurale
Human Nature, Human Identity / La nature humaine et l'identité humaine

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Kitchen of a traditional rural house in Nepal. Courtesy of John Gray.

La cuisine d'une maison rurale traditionnelle au Népal.

Thematic Section
Rural Property / Propriété rurale

Paradoxical Conjunctions: Rural Property and Access to Rural Resources in a Transnational Environment

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Melanie G. Wiber *University of New Brunswick*

Introduction: The Context of Rural Transformations

This thematic section addresses transformative processes in property relations and access to resources in what are characterized as rural spaces. Despite the dominance of the neo-liberal reading of globalization that repeatedly endorses an open architecture to the global economy in the name of economic growth and greater equality between north and south, much of the evidence points to quite a different outcome. Contributors to this section, while coming from different but interrelated perspectives, share an interest in key mechanisms whereby transnational-local interaction transforms rural property relations and resource management. Given a common focus on the role of law, these articles demonstrate that first and foremost, transnational interdependencies involve paradoxical conjunctions. For example, international and transnational law, such as conventions of the United Nations, that determine indigenous and international human rights, as well as transnational economic regulations (*lex mercatoria*) and transnationally operating non-government organizations (NGOs), play an increasingly important role in the direction and intensity of social change. Nevertheless, as this collection shows, transnational law has both intended and unintended effects on rural property. It has a tendency towards homogeneity, while at the same time creating plurality, since the ways in which it transforms or merges with local legal forms of regulating access to scarce resources varies considerably. Each paper in this section, thus, relies on empirical anthropological research to address how transformation of rural property relations is related to transnational projects. The papers also complement one another by emphasizing different but interrelated factors steering these processes, including: transnational legal standardization, development co-operation, neo-evolutionist-neo-liberal stereotyping, governance and migration, gender

inequality and the resurgence of religion and the re-moralization of property issues. In our introduction, we employ a critical perspective to explore how all of these factors are related to questions of scale, to globalization and to local-global interactions in order to discuss the general contribution of these articles to the debate on contemporary transformative processes of rural property relations.

Paradoxical Conjunctions

Our contributors were asked to discuss how transnationalization and globalization affect property relations and property regimes under specific conditions considered characteristic for rural societies. The rural world is not beyond the reach of transnational agency. But rural spaces are said to share a combination of specific qualities, including food production, landscape amenities, low population density, ecological values and perceived ways of life that both shape rural-transnational interactions and frame our understandings of them. This also holds true for the transformative processes rural property is subjected to, the central topic of this special section. However, when we examine the social science toolkit with which one is expected to develop an understanding of these processes, the paradoxical nature of both the phenomena at hand, and our concepts for understanding them, have given us pause for thought. The boundaries that distinguish rural from urban, imperialism from development, globalization from neo-regionalization, traditional from modern, sociality from civility, modernization from hegemony, civil society from state, sophistication from parochialism and moral economy from immoral capitalism, become harder to distinguish every day. And subsequently, so do the characterizations of events, processes or outcomes. In this introduction, we first explore some of these paradoxes and then discuss the contributions to this section.

Problems of Scale: Transnational and Global

A central paradox involves understanding the processes affecting places where anthropologists do their research (see Escobar 2001). When religious communities cross state boundaries and transfer new religious interpretations or arguments throughout their membership in many nations, or when development agents from one nation implement the same type of projects in numerous different developing states, we can speak of a transnational process. Von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann (2007:58) define transnational law as: rules and institutions regulating (inter)actions, relationships or wider networks that transcend national boundaries. Globalization of law, on the other hand, refers to the spatial expansion

of transnationalized law (von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann 2007:60). Transnational processes, thus, are considered to be part of the grand scheme of globalization—at least when that term is taken to mean the increased integration of various places through strengthened and intensified global flows (see Held and McGrew 2003). But at the same moment that these processes affect nation-states, they also develop on the ground in specific localities and, as Tsing (2000:327) points out, the two processes (both the water rushing down the creek and the landscape it transforms) are mutually constitutive. What is needed then is a more sophisticated analysis of scalar dynamics.

The concept of scale allows us to analyze interactive processes interlinking various levels, including the transference of scale-bound framings and issues. Scales are not merely a natural metric but are socially constructed, extended, interlinked and rearranged. For example, a typical conflict over access to land previously framed in terms of a competition at the local scale may be no longer or exclusively addressed in a language of kin relations, social rights and obligations, local power differentials or retaliation. It may now be situated in a scalar arrangement that draws on discourses of environmental protection, sustainability, gender equality or civic responsibility, all of which, in turn, have their sources in transnational norm generation. Such an arrangement may, for instance, “escalate” violence in property relations, setting off repercussions that result in upscaling. Local phenomena can thereby be inscribed into global configurations and the same event may be differently addressed at various scales (Herod and Wright 2002). Some examples of legal scalar negotiations that affect rural areas around the globe include migration law and labour law to meet the needs of a globalized labour market or as transnational reactions to local (rural) mobility, blocking or impeding access to external markets through import quotas and faith-based normative interventions. The merging of such ingredients in different ratios reshapes property relations in a given rural area.

Networks transcend scalar divides and recast local issues as global concerns to a worldwide audience and vice versa. Local actors, for example, are confronted with issues such as global climate change or the reframing of rural property as an integral part of world cultural heritage. On the other hand, the struggles of local actors can be taken up into global discourse, as with food security becoming a form of human rights. All the papers in this section have in common the crossing of scalar boundaries and negotiation of scalar processes in discourse and practice; this provides an analytical focus to the section, as does the legal connection of scale and space.

As Tsing (2006) comments, different scalar levels are not always affected or involved to the same degree in scalar processes and so it is not surprising that scale is quite differently addressed in these papers. Wiber, for example, connects capital investment in the development of genetically modified commercial crops with global (north and south) transformations in seed distribution and farming practices, and with a globalizing discourse of intellectual property rights. Wilmsen, on the other hand, examines a transnational concept of indigeneity and its impact on property rights in one geopolitical arena in southern Africa. The same variation can be found with respect to law and the transference of transnational legal standards to diverse localities on the one hand (as in Weilenmann's case of development project law), and processes of the globalization of law on the other (as in Turner's paper on the encounter of an all-Islamic legal activism with other globalized legal templates). While the particular interplay of the transnational with the local is understood as a central point of departure for our consideration of scalar dynamics, in fact, all papers include transnational, local and national perspectives and highlight interactive dimensions of scalar dynamics.

Analyzing transnational processes in this way highlights the above-mentioned paradoxes, both at the empirical and theoretical level, making it difficult to unravel questions of rhetoric, intention, agency and identity. As others have commented with respect to modernity, development and globalization (Tsing 2000; Knauff 2002; Graebner 2002; Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal 2003), we are working with "unstable terms" (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:1). They imply an imagined future, a failed myth, a process of industrialization and commodification and a legitimizing strategy for the state. For many, these diverse outcomes can be explained if economic growth and economic stagnation are the result of the same process (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:11), that of rapid capital accumulation (see Harvey 2001). As Edelman and Haugerud (2006:18) argue, it is important not to naturalize globalization and attending processes but instead to situate them in "contingent historical forces."

For Edelman and Haugerud (2006:17), important contingent historical forces include the abandonment of the Bretton Woods Agreement (1944), which had worked to reinforce state control of national economies, particularly through restrictions on the movement of capital, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. But by the late 1970s, "market pressures," technological changes and self-interested national policy had scuttled Bretton Woods and its system of controls. McMichael argues that this led to "money becoming increasingly stateless" (Edelman and Haugerud

2006:17). The neo-liberalism of Thatcher and Reagan followed, with a free market regime where "development" was viewed as specialization for the global economy. The Washington Consensus is said to have dominated neo-liberal economic theory post-1980 (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:7-8). It coupled state minimalism with a firm commitment to the market as a solution to most social problems. Some of the architects of the Washington Consensus later tried to distance themselves from the harsher consequences of this policy by advocating poverty reduction programs, but other economists have argued that this made only superficial adjustments to the main approach.

In the social sciences, anthropology among them, a "turn away from grand narratives" may have contributed to a lack of sustained critique of the Washington Consensus, especially one based in sound political economy (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:19). Of course, globalism discourse itself might be described as "a grand narrative," and the anthropology of globalism is said to have four flaws: (1) dehistoricizing in favour of "giddy presentism"; (2) downplaying the role of the state; (3) naturalizing neo-liberalism by, for example, talking about impersonal "flows"; and (4) portraying globalization as a simplified, inexorable, coherent force and then focusing only on its cultural aspects (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:22). While we agree that there has been a deplorable lack of sustained critique of the Washington Consensus, Edelman and Haugerud show just how fragmented anthropology has become given that their citations are restricted to a subset of the discipline. While dominant journals and scholars (largely in the U.S.) took the much-debated "post-modern" turn, many scholars continued to produce excellent empirical studies of "how markets and the corporations and state and supranational institutions that influence and administer them actually work" (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:18), our contributors among them.¹

Scalar Processes in Rural Spaces

Defining "rural" and separating it from non-rural spaces has generated sharp debate over the past several decades (see Deavers 1992; Laschewski 2005). Rural places are often characterized as quantitatively and qualitatively different from non-rural places, although this has often been challenged (see Hoggart 1990; Bruun and Narangoa 2006:6). While this dualistic thinking has a distinguished ancestry in Weberian sociology,² it has also been some time since Andre Gunder Frank (1967) and Rodolfo Stavenhagen (1964) rejected the "dual society" hypothesis (that third world societies were split between a modern urban class and a traditional feudal rural class), to

argue that rural areas were not “backward” but rather the product of a process of “internal colonialization” (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:35). Three reasons have been suggested for the persistence of the rural–urban duality in theories about rural development: (1) terms of trade and relative prices of industrial versus agricultural goods have caused and continue to cause conflict in all human societies, despite their level of development; (2) widening gaps in standards of living suggest that different poverty alleviation is required in rural areas; and (3) rural poverty is a source of insurgency and unrest (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:35).³

According to Haugen and Lysgård (2006:176), it is not so much the postmodern turn that changed concepts of the rural sphere in recent years, but the “cultural turn,” especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. The result has been “the whole system of beliefs about the rural [was] questioned,” so that “rurality may be understood as a social construction where the meaning of the term is floating, changeable and contextual” (Haugen and Lysgård 2006:176). The main body of rural sociology, on the other hand, remains “functional” in tone and “policy-oriented” in focus, with the rural “treated as a fixed category” and defined by criteria such as population density and a lack of social services (Haugen and Lysgård 2006:176). Here the main contrast of traditional rural society with cosmopolitan urbanity remains entrenched (see for example Brown 2007; Collins and Quark 2006). In this survey of recent literature, we were struck by the way that the rural sociology literature employs a set of “ruralisms” that remind us of Tsing’s (2000) discussion of “globalisms” (see for example Tovey 1998; Mormont 2003; Pratt 1996; Haugen and Lysgård 2006; and contributions to the edited volume by Havnevik et al. 2006). In addition to the conflation, futurism and focus on circulation that Tsing outlines, however, we find an additional set of rhetorical devices that take the form of binary oppositions, including: tradition versus modernization; sociality (proximity and intimacy) versus individualism (in the neo-classical economic sense); *communitas* versus *civitas*; place of production versus place of hedonistic consumption; rural (read “natural”) landscape versus industrial “blight.”

This continued use of the binary opposition of urban versus rural as centre versus periphery may be blinding us to important processes. As Tsing (2000) commented with respect to the dualism of local versus global,⁴ there are only projects making places all over the place.⁵ And those projects are just as likely to draw together people from many places. Any sharp divide, then, between the rural and urban spaces must be problematized given how people move back and forth and remain connected to both

in many of the ethnographic examples in these collected papers (see Laschewski 2005; Lohnert and Steinbrink 2005).

One process that may be eclipsed as a result of the above dualism is the link between livelihoods and their source in natural resources (Tovey 1998), typically through agriculture or other forms of primary production but increasingly through commodification of nature (as in tourism or through gentrification of the countryside) (see Burchardt 2007; Hillyard 2007; Bessant 2006). In trying to sort out tangled approaches to rural livelihoods, for example, Tovey (1998:22) writes that: “we can treat where actors live as (inexact) shorthand for whether their livelihood depends more or less directly on use of natural resources” (see also the livelihood approach in Homewood 2005; Havnevik et al. 2006).

For Tovey, it follows naturally that dependency on natural resources gives rise to a specialized knowledge about them, different from the meaning of such resources to non-rural actors (1998:22). It also follows, then, that rural actors will mobilize differently, and mobilize over different issues, than will urban actors. She writes that the rural–urban distinction is primarily “a social construction used by actors in formulating projects of action, which in turn enables the social scientist or researcher to distinguish between rural and urban social action” (Tovey 1998:23). She goes on to note, however, that the distinction remains rather ambiguous, since increasingly, rural space is part of and shaped by “a hierarchy of spatial organization” that is urban-centred so that rural spaces are a “a terrain on which different social groups within society as a whole can display and realize different identities and social projects” (Tovey 1998:30).

We see here a similar use of the term “projects” (see Tsing 2000); that is to say that Tovey (1998) uses the concept of “project” to organize the purposive activities of different agents in rural places. Tovey also uses the term to show the ways in which these projects result in agents employing what we have called the “rhetoric of ruralisms” to further particular projects that have to do with emergent forms of subjectivity. Both Tovey (1998) and Mormont (2003) show how farmers, resisting the characterization of “traditional” rural agents, for example, aligned themselves with agricultural extension officers to apply technological and scientific knowledge to their food production systems—creating for themselves an identity as “industrial” farmers. Meanwhile, organic farmers call on a different set of emergent identifiers to characterize the projects they want to undertake.

It is also important, then, to emphasize the differences within and between rural areas. Different gender

relations, property arrangements, concepts of culture, and identity constructs characterize specific rural spaces. They are not homogenous in comparison with urban spaces (see Marsden 1995) or in their scalar connections to translocal and global processes, as is seen in the diversity of cases in this collection. Transitional zones may be even more interesting, lying as they do on the increasingly fuzzy boundaries between diverse versions of urbanism or between industrialization and agrarian landscapes. Weilenmann's article focuses, for example, on a peri-urban zone but shows deep social and political connections with rural areas. In fact, in all cases described here, the rural is never isolated and relies on specific external networks for production, distribution and the exchange of labour, inputs or technology, as both Wiber and Turner especially demonstrate. The diversification of rural livelihood strategies is increased through the integration of the rural with its global environment or, as mentioned above, through scalar arrangements. This is particularly interesting when the products the rural has to offer change or become differently defined by those who have the power to do so. Rural valuables (some of them monetized) include examples of the "property of humankind": new alternative rural spaces such as nature conservation areas, forest and water reserves for urban uses or for local tourism, recreation and world heritage sites.

We emphasize then the recent changes to the notion of rural in global discourse. The rural is increasingly affected by the ecological movement and other notions of "nature." It is no longer solely the space of agricultural production, if it is spatially defined at all. Here scale-making processes transform nature into a measurable commodity but also an immeasurable spiritual and moral category. The construction of environment is increasingly contested, as is the construct of the rural. Rural appears as an attitude and inventory of knowledge, as cultural repertoire, that is more than agriculture, and that is informed by perceptions of nature, density of population, forms of co-operation and networking, plus particular virtues and moralities. Interestingly, from the actors' perspective, rural always includes a size or scale factor. Therefore, the examination of the scaling downwards of global standards into rural repertoires, and the subsequent redeployment of those standards towards external audiences seems to us a promising approach to analyzing transformative processes in property arrangements.

Tovey (1998), as has been mentioned, focuses on the notion of rural actors. Where such actors are, there is also rurality. But many actors in the rural setting are viewed by most locals as decidedly external, as with the Salafiyya Islamic missionaries in the Moroccan Souss (Turner, this

volume). Meanwhile, some actors from a rural setting are viewed as insiders in non-rural settings, as in the case of some rural Albanian migrants to Greece (see Stahl and Sikor, this volume). There are extensive examples of this agency problem in the de-collectivization literature from former socialist states, a process often described as a re-ruralization of the space of agrarian production. What may be important to consider in the context of translocal-rural interplay is the particular view of state agents of the rural area as well as the attitude of rural actors toward the state. In many parts of the world, the image of traditional rural life still resonates with insurrection, independence movements, absconding from state control and evading state taxes. On the other hand, rural life may also be regarded as a stronghold of tradition and local values that resist and ameliorate the most pernicious impacts of globalization.⁶

Perhaps the focus on property transformations can reduce an over-reliance on the rural-urban dualism? Both Tovey (1998) and Marmont (2003), for example, note the ways in which previous property owners or people with interests in local resources are being displaced by new ruralism agendas. Does it help to keep our focus on how property figures in the ruralism rhetoric: how it is used, by whom and for whose benefit? And should we be asking who loses as a result of the successful deployment of certain property concepts (see von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006)? In order to explore this possibility, we turn now to the question of what property is and how it is being transformed.

Property and Its Transformations

Property transformations have long been of interest to anthropology, particularly in the postcolonial setting, and have been newly rediscovered as a central issue in recent rural studies (see Murdoch and Pratt 1993). This is especially true in post-socialist Europe. But property has also become an unstable term. While worldwide debates about property have been reduced to absurd arguments pro and con privatization, in anthropology, property has always been a more richly theorized topic.⁷ Property is viewed as giving form and substance to the relations between people with respect to valuables. These relationships are comprised of three elements: the social units (individuals, lineages, corporations, states) that can hold property rights and obligations; the valuables that are conceptualized as property objects; and, the different sets of rights and obligations held in such objects. All three are set into and vary across time and space. Empirically, property finds expression in "layers of social organization"⁸; that is, social practices create, maintain and change what property

is at the level of ideologies, of legally institutionalized property rules and of actual property relationships. What property is at one level cannot be reduced to what property is at another level, just as ideologies of marriage and legal rules about marriage are different from the actual relations between two individuals who happen to be married. The extent to which agents in rural spaces are actually constrained by property ideologies, legal institutions and actual property ties varies considerably due to a multitude of other historic, political, economic and social factors, including power differentials. Each level within a property regime (ideologies, rules, relationships) may change with different speed and for different reasons. Rather than pinning down property to one of these levels and analyzing it as if the others do not exist, we prefer to deal with empirical examples of social experience. The contributions in this section illustrate widely divergent situations of transformation and of change on the ground. Some of these involve new forms of property, including genetic patents, cultural property such as local knowledge of modes of production, and the distinct paradigms for rural development employed by the agencies of Western nations.

Globalizing discourse on property rights has led to a strong “goal-oriented” understanding of different property regimes. Private property, for example, is regarded simplistically as promoting specific aims and objectives—as if specific property concepts could assure the realization of particular results despite operating in a wide range of quite different settings. The state-centric perspective of many analysts is a particular problem; many development agents, for example, ask: who is protecting and distributing rural property rights if not the nation-state? There is a great deal of international pressure on developing countries to develop a strong, uniform and well-functioning state legal system for controlling natural resources, allowing them to participate in the world political and economic community—and enhancing access to rural property for global players. The result is a second wave of transfer—a neo-colonialism—of Western models of property regimes and institutions into the rural areas of developing countries all over the world.

Property has always been contested but under transnational conditions it is contested in qualitatively new ways. New types of property have been generated and new shareholders have appeared in the rural arena. Privatization discourses are supported and transnational agents deny access to development resources to those states that resist the discourse. One contentious arena is the claiming of rights to patent local resources or products (see Wiber, this volume). Another involves the way that

competing actors pursue the protection of local-rural knowledge as property or identify local modes of production in terms of intellectual or cultural property rights (see Turner, this volume). Yet another reaction to the homogenization of property regimes is to draw on local spirituality as a valuable resource and as an interpretative framework for rural property. In these developments, intellectual property rights play an increasingly instrumental role for both transnational and rural actors. Usufruct rights and the management of the commons, or more precisely, commonly accessed resources and goods, are threatened by the tendency to rush for patents. Transnational companies are active in this field; but institutions of the nation-state also claim control over and property rights in “rural commons” as national “biopatrimony” or “ecoheritage,” or claim control over local rural knowledge through the legal protection of national cultural heritage. On the other hand, minority groups and indigenous cultures also claim property rights in some of the same valuables (see Brown 2003; Wiber 2006). These are new phenomena but with great potential for influencing future developments.

In these conflicting claims, there are a wide range of ideas about temporality and fluctuation that affect rural property relations. In some cases the adhesion of descent groups to particular property such as land is seen as eternal and legitimizes social capacities such as the power of decision-making in local communities, while in other cases permanent partitioning of land among heirs fosters a perception of fluidity of ownership. Rules of inheritance may also be affected by recent developments, which, again, provoke far-reaching consequences for family structures and social cohesion. New dimensions of competition are created by transnational initiatives to transform gender as well as intergenerational relations. Family structures and economic gender relations are affected by a number of processes, such as providing diversification of livelihood options for women, modifying natural resource-based dependency through the establishment of women’s cooperatives or “education” and other policies. These may enhance women’s ability to cope with gender biases and thereby increase divorce rates, break household property up and accelerate out-migration.

The social units (marital units, nuclear or extended families) as traditional carriers of property rights are, therefore, under tremendous transformative pressure. Contributing to these tendencies are strategies of returning migrants who invest as returnees or seasonal temporary visitors in rural endeavours (see Nuijten and Lorenzo, this volume). They often introduce notions of private and pseudo-public ownership and other external

concepts unknown before, while at the same time, they revitalize traditional values as pristine rural property relations. In so doing, they conflate modernity and tradition and create hybrids, like returnees' traditional property in the countryside. Furthermore, migration contributes to an intergenerational redistribution of wealth and with that, to a re-organization of political influence and decision-making power (or attempts thereof, as in Nuijten and Lorenzo, this volume). The young descendants of former rural migrants have much more investment capital than local notables and therefore claim the right to decide the allocation of resources and their transformation. As they become the role models for local rural youth and challenge elders' authority, there are tremendous consequences for the negotiation of property relations. And, at any given moment, there are transnational actors making interpretations of rural property regimes that do not take into account all of the above processes. Increasing competition over, and the invalidation of, property concepts are parallel and interdependent processes.

Law, Legal Pluralism and the Transnationalization of Law

One can barely speak of property without speaking of the law. But the law also turns out to be a contested feature of rural life. For example, an interesting outcome of the study of the legal dimension of globalization has been a broader acceptance of the concept of "legal pluralism," a term that characterizes situations where more than one legal regime is operating in a social field (von Benda-Beckmann 2002; von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann 2007). From the development law perspective, the power of law to transform the local has been of more interest than the corresponding ability of local legal interactions to transform the transnational level. In contrast, anthropologists interested in legal pluralism have given the latter more attention. This emphasis on the legal dimension has further expanded anthropological understanding of rural property transformations and particularly of questions of access to resources.

In the recent past, international and transnational law as well as transnationally operating NGOs have begun to play an increasingly important role in those areas characterized as rural. Powerful transnational actors such as the IMF, the World Bank, the UN, UNESCO, the European Union and national development agencies sometimes compete with each other and follow different and sometimes incompatible agendas. They not only regulate international relations but often have a direct impact on social and economic property relations in local settings within nation-states. Transnational co-operation in environmen-

tal protection, the establishment of standards for sustainable development, the development of new technologies in agriculture, new organizational forms of resource exploitation, bio-labelling and food quality control are good examples of these tendencies. The main fields in which transnational intervention affects rural property are rural tourism, agricultural modernization, development co-operation and decentralization and democratization politics pursuing the establishment of good governance and civil society structures. Transnational initiatives in fighting rural poverty, rural exodus and migration are also worth mentioning here.

One way in which rural arenas are affected by their transnational environment is the rise of plural legal configurations, often characterized by an increasing diversity of perceptions of, and claims for, rural property. These claims derive their legitimation from different legal frameworks that interpret and apply different legal rules. If we transcend the level of normative ordering and look instead at the empirical evidence of how property relations are constructed, maintained and transformed, two aspects come to the fore as being particularly subject to profound reinterpretations: the social significance and meaning of rural property and access to resources.

Particular attention must be paid to the triangular relationship between the transnational, the rural and the state. State-transnational interaction affects the rural landscape in many different ways. State actors at different levels of the governmental hierarchy may transmit their particular and differing interpretations of transnational impacts to the local level. Transnational actors, on the other hand, may implement their standards directly in rural areas, bypassing the state, when they realize that state-transnational co-operation does not produce the desired results in the appropriate time frame (see Weilenmann, this volume). Power relations on all levels, the local, the regional, the national and the transnational, may be affected by these strategies and their outcomes. Current transnational influences that focus on decentralization and regionalization need also to be taken into consideration in this context.

Transnational Movements and Rural Mobilization

Another phenomenon attracting attention today is the increase in the number of religious and moral movements with a transnational reach that claim at least the same degree of universal validity as the propagators of sustainability or nature conservation (see Wilmsen and Turner, this volume). Sometimes characterized as the rise of civil society (Hann and Dunn 1996; Baker and Chandler

2005), this process has contributed to the development of new local standards of morality and new social or religious and cultural meanings of property, belonging and social distributive obligations, as our contributors attest. In such settings, the struggle for distributive benefits activate, instrumentalize or transform the local rural potential for violence. These developments motivate local rural actors to organize resistance, sometimes in co-operation with outside influences, sometimes very much against them. In many cases, social movements frame their request in the form of rights or property claims, as the Kalahari San have done (Wilmsen, this volume), and organize resistance against existing relationships or protest against integration into the global economy (Edelman 1999; Mésini 2004; Moyo and Yeros 2005; Woods 2008). Such resistance, however, may frame its rights-based claims in various ways ranging from a re-appropriation of rural livelihood to protests against exclusion, while new forms of ruralism are seen as a response to the neo-liberal focus on the rural and against its commodification. The concept of peasants' rights is an example. It combines various legal components and refers to ideas of global responsibility and human dignity that include a notion of reasonable and judicious attitudes towards property.

Furthermore, the devolution of state welfare responsibilities coincides with a re-moralization and re-spiritualization of rural values of sharing, charity and distributive obligations affecting property relations or even derived from them. A nation-state that does not pursue its charity work obligations is veering out of the pool of actors that may be held responsible for the arrangement of rural property regimes, leaving social security to such actors as NGOs and FBOs (faith-based organizations) (for example, Hefferan 2007; Marshall and van Saanen 2007) or to local expressions of global religions.

These processes of mobilization affect the entire sphere of regulation of access to natural resources and valuable rural goods. Concrete regulations, their corresponding legitimations and the ideologies behind them are drifting apart and may reconfigure in modified forms at the rural as well as at the transnational level. Rural property becomes loaded with different meanings as new categories of property are created and new bodies of actors pursue them. The social, political and religious embeddedness of rural property worldwide is changing as a result of emerging transnational-rural constellations. The changes in social practices, formalizations and ideologies including their interactive and interdependent connectivity affect both the perception of what "rural" means as well as its connection with "society" and with

"property." Furthermore, increasing legal and social insecurity, as a consequence of economic and social development, demands a creative reaction at the local level and changes any room for manoeuvre in negotiating local perceptions of property.

The Normative Power of Transnational and Rural Moralities: Religion, Economy and Beyond

Examining the moral aspect of property brings forcefully to mind the social proportionality of ownership. Descent and extended kin, alliances, networks, neighbourhoods, territorial bonds and forms of established co-operation are some of the more obvious relationships within which "property has its duties." Social movements, whether characterized as civil society or not, often revise existing standards of the morality of ownership, of religious, cultural and social meanings of property, of its importance for social distributive obligations and of notions of belonging (see for example, Edelman 2005). In fact, the transnational approach towards rural poverty is full of its own moral arguments, including the condemnation of corruption and other immoral practices. Political goals connected with development intervention accordingly affect moral notions of property on the ground. Democratization, good governance and decentralization are propagated as guarantors of a fair repartition of property. The transnational human rights discourse also delivers moral arguments.

This countervailing "transnational morality" transforms rural property (see Turner, this volume), and this is rarely well received at the local level. What complicates the acceptance of transnational interveners in the rural world is a certain altruistic attitude that goes together with the formulation of quasi-religious messages. While transnational actors may conceptualize the transnational message as universal, it often adds a moral (and one might even say, sanctimonious) meta-message to the transnational-rural interaction. Development concepts are shaped by a universal eco-religion, which often includes the spiritualization of nature (Tucker and Grim 2001; Taylor 2005). The ideal of nature conservation, for example, often includes a claim by external actors to the right to protect unique landscapes that are locally associated with many different connotations. Locally, the landscape represents livelihood, agriculture and food. At the same time it resonates with homeland, a rural social space and identity. Moreover, it is loaded with spiritual, legal and social meanings. The assumption that local actors will accept as equally valid those imposed transnational values quite often leads to mutual misunderstandings, as is addressed in several contributions to this section.

One example may be mentioned here. The sacred protection of places through a particular eco-value has been conflated with environmental interests. In the process, the symbolic value of property has been re-interpreted as free of social components. As a consequence, the rural reading of property relations, including usufruct and exploitation rights as logically inscribed in the religious-legal landscape, has been challenged. But from the rural perspective, property is often only legitimized precisely through such embeddedness. This kind of embeddedness has been largely neglected in research on modernizing rural property relations, as well as in the discourse on competing in the global economy. Nevertheless, this embeddedness has its own transnational connections, as well being affected by the resurgence of local moral standards.

The contributions to this thematic section provide fresh research perspectives on the transformative processes to which rural property and the management of access to natural resources in the rural zone are exposed. The examples here, from empirical research and cross-disciplinary perspectives, reveal transition processes in different parts of the world and provide the opportunity to consider the theoretical implications noted above. This research often addresses the feedback relationship between local processes of transformation in rural areas and the transnational level.

Six Examples Dealing with the Transformation of Rural Property Relations in a Globalizing World

In the different contributions to this section, our central topic is approached through five different but complementary lenses. The contexts include development co-operation, racial stereotyping, migration, the emerging transnational law within the framework of trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) and the increasing importance of transnational religious and moral framing.

For example, Wiber focuses on the transnationally generated legal standards that affect rural property. She analyses the impact of TRIPS legislation on the control of seed in agricultural production through a discussion of the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Monsanto v. Schmeiser* to restrict the status of innocent bystanders in patent infringement. She addresses the effects of that decision on farmers' autonomy in a global economy. One outcome that concerns many scholars working in agricultural development is the pervasive "chill" that such legal decisions will have on saving and sharing traditional seeds. Wiber's work shows how decisions at the national scale apply a transnational template to a local case—with

reverberations at the supra-national scale. Weilenmann, on the other hand, highlights the direct impact of development co-operation as a channel that adapts rural property regimes. He illustrates how development agencies that wish to empower the rural poor in the competition over access to resources, introduce a transnational agenda by drawing on "project law" as a normative tool. This leads to increased legal fragmentation, as state-filtered international legal conventions run up against transnational standards introduced in the shape of "project law."

Wilmsen critically analyzes how transnational actors rationalize strategies employed with respect to local conceptions of rural property. He exposes the classic stereotyping that denies San-speaking peoples of the Kalahari structured notions of land tenure, usufruct rights or property. He also addresses the reasons for the revitalization of these concepts in neo-liberal politics in the region today and highlights the negative consequences thereof. Wilmsen shows how local property constellations are made instrumental at the national scale through stereotyping, in order to construct a province that would meet international requirements for assistance. Nuijten and Lorenzo analyze the impact of temporary out-migration on the local governance of collective land exploitation. They discuss the inequalities emerging within those Andean communities that regulate internal access to land in the context of out-migration of community members as contract labour for U.S. sheep ranchers. While the resulting migrant relations produce new internal dynamics and affect the management of communal land, temporary migration has also been used to strengthen traditional power through demands for and control over the additional resources that flow into the community. Nuijten and Lorenzo also show how the transnational environment and the experience of migratory flow between host state and state of origin combine to inform the local model of governance that aspires to independence from transnational and national intervention in local affairs.

Turner examines the way in which increased reliance on moral framing and religious argumentation connects multiple scales in their impact on rural property, albeit from very different angles. He emphasizes the increasing importance of such religious and moral framing of property relations in Southwest Morocco in the local negotiations on participation and resistance to the global economy. The confrontation with exogenous moral and religious concepts led to a reconsideration of local moral standards and a reinterpretation of property relations that combined local-rural and transnational concepts to a certain degree. Turner shows how this deployment of religious and moral standardization from the supra-local scale

bypassed the state and the state's role in transnational-local interactions. Sikor and Stahl use a case study of three villages in Albania to demonstrate that different migration patterns informed differing regional attitudes towards access to resources and rural property after the collapse of the socialist system. Sikor and Stahl show how post-socialism involves a down-scaling of former competition between nations, but also how international tension within one particular region, nonetheless, continues to reverberate in local settings. These tensions in turn have affected how the respective translocal ties shape livelihood strategies and migration patterns.

Conclusion

Taken together these articles are interrelated and highlight a series of important cross-cutting themes that all contribute to general insights on contemporary processes transforming rural property relations and on their cumulative impact. The papers also address several issues raised in contemporary legal anthropology in connection to the current debate on the anthropology of globalization (Tsing 2000; Lewellen 2002; Friedman and Friedman 2008; Inda and Rosaldo 2008). The unifying point of reference of the papers is an anthropological analysis of the neo-liberal and transnational conceptualization of property issues. The anthropological arguments developed here are based on empirical data that have been collected in field studies. Factors that evoke or contribute to the acceleration of transformative processes of rural property relations are at the centre of anthropological analysis. Local legal practices and traditions, local knowledge and conflict settlement, conventional versus modern agriculture, the impact of migration on local fields, and the resurgence of religious and moral implications in property issues are anthropological issues of vital importance for further research in the anthropology of globalization and many other fields of the anthropological enterprise. Thus, this thematic section makes a significant contribution to the ongoing debate in a core field of anthropological research.

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Notes

- 1 See Wiber (1995, 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005), Wiber and Kennedy (2001) and Turner (2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). See also the publications of such journals as *Critique of Anthropology*, as well as the *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, and *Law and Anthropology* for many other examples.
- 2 Other influential figures in the early establishment of rural sociology were Tönnies and Durkheim. See chapter 1 in Hillyard 2007.
- 3 See for example Mésini 2004 and Lohnert and Steinbrink 2005. While Mésini describes the poverty-driven flow from urban to rural, Lohnert and Steinbrink do the same for the reverse direction. The fact that urban poverty is also a source of unrest and that peri-urban slums are seen as breeding grounds for terrorism (Turner 2007b) is yet another paradox.
- 4 See also the contributions to Herod and Wright 2002 on the global-local binary.
- 5 See for example Mésini 2004 and Lohnert and Steinbrink 2005 on rural and urban livelihoods and translocality.
- 6 Implementation of anti-terrorism law in Morocco, for instance, was accompanied by a state campaign targeting rural values and ideals as essential stabilizers of Moroccan society (Turner 2007b).
- 7 For a detailed review of property literature, see von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006. In what follows, we rely on their alternative framework for conceptualizing property. This approach, in turn, builds on earlier work by von Benda-Beckmann (1979, 1995) and by von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann (1999). See also Wiber and Lovell 2004.
- 8 It is in this sense that many scholars insist on the "embedded" nature of property.

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Conjonctions paradoxales : propriété rurale et accès aux ressources dans un environnement transnational

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Introduction : le contexte des transformations rurales

La présente section thématique s'intéresse aux processus de transformation dans les relations de propriété et l'accès aux ressources dans ce que l'on caractérise comme espaces ruraux. Malgré la prédominance de la lecture néo-libérale de la mondialisation qui, à répétition, cautionne une architecture ouverte de l'économie globale au nom de la croissance économique et d'une plus grande égalité entre le nord et le sud, la majorité des indices pointent vers des conséquences très différentes. Les collaborateurs de cette section, provenant d'horizons diversifiés mais interreliés, partagent un intérêt pour les mécanismes clés par lesquels l'interaction entre le transnational et le local transforme la gestion des ressources et les relations de propriété rurale.

À partir d'une perception commune du rôle du droit, ces articles démontrent qu'avant toute chose, les interdépendances transnationales supposent des conjonctions paradoxales. Par exemple, les lois internationales et transnationales, comme les conventions des Nations Unies, qui définissent les droits humains et autochtones internationaux, de même que les réglementations économiques transnationales (*lex mercatoria*) et les organisations non gouvernementales d'échelle transnationale jouent un rôle toujours plus important dans l'orientation et l'intensité du changement social. Néanmoins, comme le montre le présent recueil, les législations transnationales ont des effets souhaités et des effets non intentionnels sur la propriété rurale. La tendance générale en est une d'homogénéité, mais en même temps, on constate la production de pluralité, puisque les manières dont ces changements transforment ou s'intègrent aux formes légales locales qui régissent l'accès à des ressources limitées varient considérablement. Chacun des articles de cette section s'appuie donc sur la recherche anthropologique empirique pour comprendre comment la transformation des rela-

tions de propriété rurale est en interaction avec des projets transnationaux.

Les articles sont aussi complémentaires dans la mesure où ils éclairent des facteurs différents mais interreliés qui orientent ces processus, dont : la standardisation juridique transnationale, la coopération pour le développement, la création de stéréotypes néo-évolutionnistes néo-libéraux, la gouvernance et la migration, l'inégalité entre les sexes et la résurgence de la religion, et la remoralisation des enjeux de propriété. Dans notre introduction, nous utilisons une perspective critique pour explorer comment tous ces facteurs sont reliés à des questions d'échelle, à la mondialisation et à des interactions local-global pour discuter de la contribution générale de ces articles au débat sur les processus contemporains de transformation des relations de propriété rurale.

Conjonctions paradoxales

On a demandé à nos collaborateurs de discuter de comment la transnationalisation et la mondialisation affectent les relations de propriété et les régimes de propriété dans certaines conditions spécifiques considérées caractéristiques des sociétés rurales. Le monde rural n'est pas hors de portée des organisations transnationales. Mais on considère que les espaces ruraux partagent une combinaison de qualités spécifiques, dont la production d'aliments, le charme des paysages, de faibles densités de population, des valeurs et modes de vie écologiques en apparence, qui façonnent les interactions ruralité-transnationalité et encadrent notre perception de ces interactions. Cela est également vrai des processus de transformation auxquels est soumise la propriété rurale, qui constituent le thème central de cette section spéciale. Toutefois, quand nous avons examiné le coffre à outils des sciences sociales avec lequel nous sommes censés développer notre intelligence de ces processus, nous avons eu besoin de nous arrêter pour réfléchir à la nature paradoxale et des phénomènes sous nos yeux et des concepts à notre disposition pour les aborder. Chaque jour, il devient plus difficile de distinguer les frontières qui séparent le rural de l'urbain, l'impérialisme du développement, la mondialisation de la néo-régionalisation, le traditionnel du moderne, la socialité de la civilité, la modernisation de l'hégémonie, la société civile de l'État, le raffinement de l'esprit de clocher, et l'économie morale du capitalisme immoral. Et en conséquence, la même difficulté surgit pour caractériser les événements, les processus ou les résultats. Dans cette introduction, nous explorons d'abord certains de ces paradoxes, puis nous discutons des contributions à la présente section.

Problèmes d'échelle : le transnational et le global

Un paradoxe central tient à la compréhension des processus qui touchent les lieux où les anthropologues mènent leurs recherches (voir Escobar 2001). Quand des communautés religieuses franchissent les frontières nationales et transportent de nouveaux arguments ou de nouvelles interprétations religieuses parmi leurs membres dans plusieurs pays, ou quand des agents de développement d'une nation appliquent le même type de projets dans de nombreux pays en développement, nous pouvons alors parler de processus transnationaux. Von Benda-Beckmann et von Benda-Beckmann (2007: 58) définissent les lois transnationales comme suit : des règles et des institutions régissant des (inter)actions, des relations ou des réseaux plus vastes qui transcendent les frontières nationales. La globalisation de la législation, d'autre part, réfère à l'expansion spatiale des législations transnationalisées (von Benda-Beckmann et von Benda-Beckmann 2007:60). Les processus transnationaux sont ainsi considérés faire partie du grand système de la globalisation – du moins quand ce terme est compris comme l'intégration croissante de lieux multiples par des flux globaux intensifiés et renforcés (voir Held et McGrew 2003). Mais au même moment où ces processus touchent les États-nations, ils se développent aussi sur le terrain dans des localités spécifiques et, comme le fait remarquer Tsing (2000:327) les deux processus sont mutuellement constitutifs (à la fois l'eau qui dévale le ravin et les paysages qu'elle modifie). Ce dont on a alors besoin, c'est d'une analyse plus raffinée des dynamiques scalaires.

Le concept d'échelle nous permet d'analyser des processus interactifs interreliant divers niveaux, incluant le transfert d'enjeux et de cadrages déterminés par l'échelle. Les échelles ne sont pas d'emblée un moyen de mesure naturel, mais font l'objet d'une construction sociale, et leur extension, leurs interrelations et leurs réorganisations sont socialement déterminés. Par exemple, un conflit typique portant sur l'accès aux terres, auparavant cadré en termes d'une compétition d'échelle locale, ne peut plus être simplement ou exclusivement défini en fonction de rapports entre familles, de droits et d'obligations sociales, de différends entre pouvoirs locaux, ou de représailles. Il peut maintenant être situé dans un arrangement scalaire qui puise dans des discours de protection de l'environnement, de développement durable, d'égalité entre les sexes ou de responsabilité civique, tous discours qui à leur tour prennent leur source dans la génération de normes transnationales. Un tel arrangement peut, par exemple, provoquer un saut d'échelle, une « escalade », de violence

dans les relations de propriété, déclenchant des répercussions à plus grande échelle. Des phénomènes locaux peuvent ainsi s'inscrire dans des configurations globales et les mêmes événements peuvent être analysés différemment selon des échelles variées (Herod et Wright 2002). Parmi les exemples de négociations juridiques scalaires qui touchent les régions rurales autour du monde, on peut citer les lois touchant la migration et la main d'œuvre destinées à répondre aux besoins d'un marché du travail globalisé ou en tant que réactions transnationales à la mobilité locale (rurale), fermant ou restreignant l'accès aux marchés extérieurs par le biais de quotas d'importation ou d'interventions normatives à fondement religieux. La convergence de ces divers ingrédients dans des proportions variables redessine les relations de propriété dans une région rurale donnée.

Les réseaux transcendent les clivages scalaires et relancent les enjeux locaux en tant qu'affaires globales pour des auditoires mondiaux, et vice versa. Des acteurs locaux, par exemple, sont confrontés à des enjeux comme le changement climatique global ou le recadrage de la propriété rurale comme partie intégrante du patrimoine culturel mondial. D'autre part, les luttes des acteurs locaux peuvent être intégrées dans un discours de portée globale, par exemple quand la sécurité alimentaire devient une forme de droit humain. Tous les articles de cette section ont en commun de franchir les frontières scalaires et la négociation des processus scalaires dans le discours et la pratique; cela constitue un centre d'intérêt analytique pour la section, tout comme la connexion légale entre l'échelle et l'espace.

Comme l'observe Tsing (2006), différents niveaux d'échelle ne sont pas toujours affectés ou impliqués au même degré dans les processus scalaires, et par conséquent il n'est pas étonnant que ces articles abordent la question d'échelle de manière relativement différente. Wiber, par exemple, établit une relation entre les investissements en capital dans le développement de récoltes commerciales génétiquement modifiées et d'une part les transformations globales (nord-sud) dans les pratiques agricoles et de distribution des semences, et d'autre part le discours globalisant sur les droits de propriété intellectuelle. Wilmsen, de son côté, s'intéresse à un concept transnational d'indigénité et à son impact sur les droits de propriété dans une arène géopolitique d'Afrique du Sud. On peut trouver la même variation en ce qui touche la législation et le transfert de normes juridiques transnationales dans diverses localités d'un côté, (c'est le cas de l'étude de Weilenmann sur le « droit de projet » en matière de développement¹) et des processus de globalisation de la législation, de l'autre (comme dans l'article de Turner

qui expose la rencontre d'une mouvance activiste islamique dans le champ légal avec d'autres modèles juridiques globalisés). Comme l'interaction particulière du transnational avec le local est conçue comme un point de départ central pour notre appréhension des dynamiques scalaires, dans les faits, tous les articles comprennent des perspectives transnationales, locales et nationales, et mettent en lumière des dimensions interactives de dynamiques scalaires.

Le fait d'analyser les processus transnationaux de cette manière souligne les paradoxes mentionnés plus tôt tant au niveau empirique que théorique, ce qui complique l'entreprise de démêler les questions de rhétorique, d'intention, de rôle et d'identité. Comme d'autres l'ont soulevé à l'égard de la modernité, du développement et de la mondialisation (Tsing 2000; Knauft 2002; Graebner 2002; Sivaramakrishnan et Agrawal 2003), nous travaillons avec des « termes instables » (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:1). Ils supposent un avenir imaginé, un mythe déchu, un processus d'industrialisation et de marchandisation, et une stratégie de légitimisation pour l'État. Pour plusieurs, il est possible d'expliquer ces conséquences divergentes si la croissance et la stagnation économiques résultent du même processus (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:11), celui d'une accumulation rapide du capital (voir Harvey 2001). Selon l'argument de Edelman et Haugerud (2006:18) il est important de ne pas ramener la globalisation et les processus concomitants à un phénomène naturel, mais plutôt de les situer « parmi des forces historiques contingentes ».

Pour Edelman et Haugerud (2006:17) les importantes forces historiques contingentes comprennent l'abandon des Accords de Bretton Woods (1944), qui avaient contribué à renforcer les contrôles étatiques des économies nationales, particulièrement par des restrictions sur les mouvements du capital à la fin des années 1970 et au début des années 1980. Mais à la fin des années 1970, « les pressions du marché », les changements technologiques et les politiques nationales égoïstes avaient sabordé Bretton Woods et son système de contrôle. McMichael relève que dans ce contexte « l'argent est devenu de plus en plus apatride » (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:17). S'ensuit le néolibéralisme de Thatcher et Reagan, avec son régime de libre échange où le « développement » était perçu comme une spécialisation de l'économie globale. On dit que le Consensus de Washington a dominé la théorie économique néolibérale après 1980 (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:7-8). Cette théorie jumelait la minimisation du rôle de l'État avec une fuite en avant dans le marché comme solution à la plupart des problèmes sociaux. Certains des architectes du Consensus de Washington ont par la suite essayé de

prendre leurs distances d'avec cette politique en se faisant les champions de programmes de lutte à la pauvreté, mais d'autres économistes ont soutenu qu'il ne s'agissait que d'ajustements superficiels à l'approche fondamentale.

Parmi les sciences sociales, et l'anthropologie en fait partie, on pourrait attribuer au fait « qu'elles ont tourné le dos aux grands récits » l'absence d'une critique soutenue du Consensus de Washington, en particulier d'une critique qui s'appuierait sur une économie politique saine (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:19). Bien entendu, le discours même de la mondialisation peut être décrit comme un « grand récit », tandis que l'on observe quatre failles dans l'anthropologie de la globalisation : (1) la perte de la perspective historique en faveur d'un « présentisme déraciné »; (2) la minimisation du rôle de l'État; (3) la présentation du néo-libéralisme comme un phénomène naturel, par exemple en mettant en scène des « flux » impersonnels; et (4) l'incarnation de la mondialisation comme une force cohérente, simplifiée, inexorable, jumelée à une focalisation sur ses seules dimensions culturelles (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:22). Alors que nous convenons que l'absence d'une critique soutenue du Consensus de Washington est déplorable, Edelman et Haugerud démontrent à quel point l'anthropologie est devenue fragmentée, compte tenu du fait que leurs citations sont limitées à un sous-domaine de la discipline. Alors que les principales revues et les chercheurs en vue (principalement aux É.-U.A.) ont pris le virage « post-moderne », objet de tant de débats, de nombreux collègues ont continué de produire d'excellentes études empiriques sur « comment fonctionnent vraiment les marchés et les sociétés et l'État et les institutions supranationales qui les influencent et les administrent » (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:18), et parmi ceux-ci, nos collaborateurs².

Les processus scalaires dans les espaces ruraux

Les débats ont été enflammés, au cours des dernières décennies, autour de la définition des espaces « ruraux » et de ce qui les sépare des espaces non ruraux (voir Deavers 1992; Laschewski 2005). On caractérise souvent les lieux ruraux comme différents des non ruraux en termes de quantité et de qualité, même si cette distinction est souvent attaquée (voir Hoggart 1990; Bruun et Narangoa 2006:6). Même si cette perception dualiste a un ancêtre distingué dans la sociologie weberienne³, cela fait quand même un certain temps que André Gunder Frank (1967) et Rodolfo Stavenhagen (1964) ont rejeté l'hypothèse d'une « société duelle » (qui veut que les sociétés du tiers-monde soient séparées en une classe urbaine moderne et une classe rurale féodale traditionnelle), pour défendre

l'idée que les régions rurales ne sont pas « attardées » mais plutôt le produit d'un processus de « colonisation intérieure » (Edelman et Haugerud 2006:35). On a proposé trois raisons pour expliquer la persistance de la dualité ruralité-urbanité dans les théories sur le développement rural : (1) les termes des échanges commerciaux et les prix relatifs des produits industriels et agricoles causent depuis longtemps des conflits dans les sociétés humaines, quels que soit leurs niveaux de développement; (2) l'écart grandissant dans les niveaux de vie suggère que les mesures de lutte à la pauvreté doivent être différentes dans les régions rurales; et (3) la pauvreté rurale est source de rébellion et de désordre (Edelman and Haugerud 2006:35)⁴.

Selon Haugen et Lysgård (2006:176), ce n'est pas tant le virage postmoderne qui a transformé les concepts de la sphère rurale dans les dernières années que « le virage culturel », spécialement dans le monde anglo-saxon. Le résultat en a été que « l'on a remis en question tout le système de croyances relatif à la ruralité », de telle sorte que « la ruralité peut être comprise comme une construction sociale où la signification du terme est flottante, changeante et contextuelle » (Haugen et Lysgård 2006:176). Le corps principal de la sociologie rurale, de son côté, demeure « fonctionnel » dans le ton et « orienté vers les politiques » quant à sa portée, alors que le rural est « traité comme une catégorie fixe » et défini par des critères comme la densité de la population et une pénurie de services sociaux (Haugen et Lysgård 2006:176). Ici, le contraste fondamental entre la société rurale traditionnelle et l'urbanité cosmopolite demeure bien enraciné (voir par exemple Brown 2007; Collins et Quark 2006). Dans ce survol des publications récentes, nous avons été frappés par la manière dont la littérature de sociologie rurale emploie un jeu de « ruralismes » qui nous rappelle la discussion de Tsing (2000) au sujet des « globalismes » (voir par exemple Tovey 1998; Mormont 2003, Pratt 1996; Haugen et Lysgård 2006; les contributions au volume édité par Havnevik et col. 2006). En plus de l'assemblage, du futurisme et de l'accent sur la circulation esquissés par Tsing, nous trouvons toutefois un autre jeu d'appareils rhétoriques qui prennent la forme d'oppositions binaires, dont les suivantes : tradition par opposition à modernisation; socialité (proximité et intimité) par opposition à individualisme (dans le sens économique néo-classique); *communitas* par opposition à *civitas*; lieux de production par opposition à lieux de consommation hédoniste; paysage rural (entendez « naturel ») par opposition à « dévastation » industrielle.

Cette utilisation continuelle de l'opposition entre urbain et rural comme de centre par opposition à péri-

phérie pourrait nous empêcher de voir des processus importants. Comme l'observait Tsing à propos du dualisme du local par opposition au global⁵, il n'y a que des projets qui créent ou reconstruisent des lieux partout dans le monde⁶. Et on peut s'attendre à ce que ces projets attirent et rassemblent des gens de partout. Toute distinction marquée entre les espaces urbains et ruraux comporte donc un problème compte tenu du fait que les gens se déplacent entre ces espaces et conservent des racines de part et d'autre, dans la plupart des exemples ethnographiques réunis dans ces articles (Voir Laschewski 2005; Lohnert et Steinbrink 2005).

Un processus qui peut se trouver éclipsé comme conséquence du dualisme ci-dessus est le lien entre les moyens de subsistance et leur source parmi les ressources naturelles (Tovey 1998), typiquement dans l'agriculture et dans les autres formes de production primaire mais de plus en plus dans la marchandisation de la nature (comme manifestée dans le tourisme ou dans la gentryfication des campagnes) (voir Burchardt 2007; Hillyard 2007; Bessant 2006). En essayant de démêler les approches complexes des moyens de subsistance ruraux, Tovey (1998:22) par exemple, écrit : « on peut considérer que le lieu de résidence des acteurs est un indice (inexact) du fait que leur subsistance dépend plus ou moins directement de l'utilisation des ressources naturelles » (voir aussi l'approche des moyens d'existence dans Homewood 2005; Havnevik et col. 2006).

Pour Tovey, il s'ensuit naturellement qu'en dépendant des ressources naturelles, on acquiert des connaissances spécialisées à leur sujet différentes de la signification de telles ressources pour les acteurs non ruraux (1998:22). Il s'ensuit également que les acteurs ruraux se mobiliseront différemment et à propos d'enjeux différents que les acteurs urbains. Elle écrit que la distinction rural-urbain est avant tout « une construction sociale utilisée par les acteurs dans la formulation de projets d'actions, construction qui à son tour permet au chercheur en sciences sociales de distinguer entre l'action sociale urbaine et la rurale » (Tovey 1998:23). Elle observe toutefois que la distinction demeure plutôt ambiguë, dans la mesure où, de plus en plus, l'espace rural est formé par et fait partie « d'une hiérarchie d'organisations spatiales » qui trouve son centre en ville de sorte que les espaces ruraux constituent « un terrain sur lequel différents groupes sociaux dans la société en général peuvent afficher et réaliser différentes identités et différents projets sociaux » (Tovey 1998:30)

Nous trouvons ici une utilisation similaire du terme « projets » (voir Tsing 2000); c'est-à-dire que Tovey (1998) utilise le concept de « projet » pour organiser les

activités intentionnelles de différents agents dans les milieux ruraux. Tovey utilise aussi le terme pour montrer les manières par lesquelles ces projets résultent dans l'utilisation, par les agents, de ce que nous avons appelé la « rhétorique des ruralismes » pour faire avancer des projets particuliers qui ont à voir avec des formes émergentes de subjectivité. Tovey (1998) et Mormont (2003) montrent tous deux comment des fermiers, résistant à la caractérisation des agents ruraux « traditionnels », par exemple, s'associent avec des agents de développement agricole pour appliquer des connaissances scientifiques et techniques à leurs systèmes de production d'aliments – se dotant par là d'une identité de fermiers « industriels ». De leur côté, les agriculteurs biologiques font appel à un jeu différent de qualificatifs en émergence pour caractériser les projets qu'ils veulent entreprendre.

Il est aussi important, donc, de souligner les différences parmi et entre les régions rurales. Des relations différentes entre les sexes, des régimes de propriété, des concepts de culture et des constructions d'identités différents caractérisent des espaces ruraux spécifiques. Ils ne sont pas homogènes en comparaison avec les espaces urbains (voir Marsden 1995), ou dans leurs connexions scalaires avec les processus translocaux et globaux, comme on le constate dans la diversité des cas de la présente collection. Les zones de transition peuvent s'avérer encore plus intéressantes, puisqu'elles se trouvent dans les frontières de plus en plus floues entre les diverses versions de l'urbanisation ou entre les zones industrielles et les paysages agraires. L'article de Weilenmann s'intéresse, par exemple, à une zone périurbaine mais démontre des connexions sociales et politiques profondes avec les régions rurales. En fait, dans tous les cas décrits ici, le rural n'est jamais isolé et dépend de réseaux extérieurs spécifiques pour la production, la distribution et l'échange de main d'œuvre, d'intrants ou de technologie, comme le démontrent spécialement Wiber et Turner. La diversification des stratégies de subsistance en milieu rural se trouve accrue par l'intégration du rural avec son environnement global, ou comme mentionné plus tôt, par les arrangements scalaires. Cela est particulièrement intéressant quand les produits offerts par le milieu rural changent, ou sont devenus différemment définis par ceux qui ont le pouvoir de le faire. Parmi les ressources rurales précieuses (certaines d'entre elles monétisées), on inclut des exemples de « propriétés de l'humanité » : de nouveaux espaces ruraux alternatifs comme des secteurs de conservation de la nature, des réserves forestières et hydriques à l'usage des urbains ou du tourisme et des loisirs locaux, et des sites du patrimoine mondial.

Nous insistons donc sur les récents changements dans la notion de ruralité dans le discours global. Le rural est de plus en plus touché par le mouvement écologique et par d'autres notions de « nature ». Le milieu rural n'est plus uniquement le lieu de la production agricole, si on doit en donner une quelconque définition spatiale. Ici, les processus de constitution d'échelle transforment la nature en une marchandise mesurable, mais aussi en une catégorie morale et spirituelle incommensurable. La construction de l'environnement fait l'objet d'une compétition de plus en plus féroce, tout comme la construction des concepts du rural. La ruralité apparaît comme une attitude et un inventaire de savoir, comme un répertoire culturel, qui est plus que de l'agriculture, et qui se trouve informé par des perceptions de la nature, la densité de la population, des modes de coopération et de réseautage, plus certaines vertus et moralités particulières. De manière intéressante, du point de vue des acteurs, la ruralité implique toujours un facteur de dimension ou d'échelle. En conséquence, il nous semble qu'en examinant le saut d'échelle que connaissent les normes globales en passant dans les répertoires ruraux, et le redéploiement subséquent de ces normes en direction d'auditoires externes, nous tenons une approche prometteuse pour l'analyse des processus de transformation des modalités de propriété.

Nous l'avons mentionné, Tovey (1998) insiste sur la notion d'acteurs ruraux. Là où se trouvent ces acteurs, se trouve aussi de la ruralité. Mais de nombreux acteurs du contexte rural sont perçus par la plupart des résidents originaux comme décidément extérieurs, comme cela se produit avec les missionnaires musulmans de la Salafiyya dans le Souss marocain (Turner, dans le présent volume). D'autre part, certains acteurs d'un contexte rural sont perçus comme résidents naturels dans des contextes non ruraux, comme c'est le cas de certains Albanais d'origine rurale migrants en Grèce (voir Stahl et Sikor, dans le présent volume). On trouve des exemples extensifs de ce problème de rôle dans la documentation relative à la décollectivisation des anciens pays socialistes, un processus souvent décrit comme la re-ruralisation de l'espace de la production agraire. Dans le contexte de l'interaction entre le translocal et le rural, il peut s'avérer important de considérer le regard particulier des agents de l'État sur le territoire rural aussi bien que l'attitude des acteurs ruraux à l'égard de l'État. Dans plusieurs régions du monde, l'image de la vie rurale traditionnelle résonne encore du bruit des insurrections, des mouvements d'indépendance, de l'évasion face au contrôle de l'État et du refus des impôts étatiques. D'un autre côté, on peut aussi considérer la vie rurale comme le château fort de la tradition et

des valeurs locales, qui tempèrent et résistent aux assauts les plus pernicioeux de la mondialisation⁷.

Peut-être qu'en mettant l'accent sur les transformations de la propriété on pourra réduire l'importance exagérée attribuée au dualisme rural-urbain? Et Tovey (1998) et Marmont (2003), par exemple, observent les façons par lesquelles d'anciens propriétaires ruraux ou des personnes ayant des intérêts dans les ressources locales se trouvent déplacés par de nouveaux programmes politiques ruralistes. Est-ce qu'il nous sera utile de rester centré sur la place qu'occupe la propriété dans la rhétorique du ruralisme : comment l'utilise-t-on, par qui et au bénéfice de qui? Et devrions-nous nous demander qui est perdant en conséquence du déploiement réussi de certains concepts de propriété (voir von Benda-Beckmann et col. 2006)? Pour explorer cette possibilité, nous nous posons maintenant la question de ce qu'est la propriété, et de comment elle se trouve transformée.

La propriété et ses transformations

Les transformations de la propriété ont longtemps été un sujet d'intérêt pour l'anthropologie, particulièrement dans le contexte postcolonial, et des études récentes sur la ruralité leur ont redonné une position centrale (voir Murdoch et Pratt 1993). Ceci est particulièrement vrai dans l'Europe post-socialiste. Mais la propriété est aussi devenue un terme instable. Alors que des débats mondiaux autour de la propriété ont été réduits à des arguments absurdes pour ou contre la privatisation, en anthropologie, la propriété a toujours été l'objet d'une riche théorisation⁸. On considère que la propriété donne forme et substance aux relations entre les gens en ce qui touche les objets de valeur. Ces relations comportent trois éléments : les unités sociales (individus, lignages, sociétés, États) qui peuvent détenir des droits et obligations de propriété; les valeurs qui sont conçues comme des objets de propriété; et les différents jeux de droits et d'obligations rattachés à ces objets. Ces trois éléments sont ancrés dans le temps et l'espace et y fluctuent. Empiriquement, la propriété trouve son expression dans « des couches d'organisation sociale⁹ »; c'est-à-dire que les pratiques sociales créent, maintiennent et transforment ce qu'est la propriété au niveau des idéologies, des règles de propriété institutionnalisées en droit et des relations réelles de propriété. Ce qu'est la propriété à un niveau ne peut être réduit à ce qu'est la propriété à un autre niveau, tout comme les idéologies du mariage et la réglementation légale du mariage sont différentes des relations réelles qui s'établissent entre deux individus qui ont contracté un lien de mariage. Pour les acteurs de l'espace rural, la contrainte qu'ils subissent réellement des idéologies de la propriété, des institutions

légales et des liens réels de propriété varie considérablement, à cause d'une multitude d'autres facteurs historiques, politiques, économiques et sociaux, y compris les rapports de force.

Au sein d'un régime de propriété, chacun des niveaux (idéologie, réglementations, relations) peut changer avec des vitesses différentes et pour des raisons différentes. Plutôt que d'articuler la propriété autour d'un de ces niveaux pour l'analyser à l'exclusion des autres, nous préférons nous intéresser à des exemples empiriques tirés de l'expérience sociale. Les contributions à cette section illustrent des situations très divergentes de transformation et de changement sur le terrain. Certaines d'entre elles concernent de nouvelles formes de propriété, y compris des brevets en matière de génétique, la connaissance locale des modes de production, et les paradigmes distincts de développement rural utilisés par les organisations des pays occidentaux.

Le discours globalisant sur les droits de propriété a conduit à une puissante interprétation « de finalité » des différents régimes de propriété. Par exemple, on considère la propriété privée, de manière simpliste, comme faisant la promotion de buts et d'objectifs spécifiques – comme si des concepts spécifiques de propriété pouvaient assurer la réalisation de résultats particuliers en dépit de leur mise en œuvre dans un large éventail de contextes relativement différents. La perspective étatocentrique de nombreux analystes constitue un problème particulier; plusieurs agents de développements, par exemple, demandent : qui protège et distribue les droits de propriété ruraux sinon l'État-nation? Les pays en développement subissent beaucoup de pressions internationales en vue de l'élaboration d'un système de droit étatique fort, uniforme et fonctionnel de contrôle des ressources naturelles, qui leur permettrait de prendre part à la communauté économique et politique mondiale – et ouvrirait un meilleur accès à la propriété rurale à des acteurs mondiaux. Le résultat en est une seconde vague de transfert – un néo-colonialisme – des modèles occidentaux de régimes et institutions de propriété vers les régions rurales des pays en développement du monde entier.

La propriété a toujours fait l'objet de compétition, mais dans des conditions de transnationalité, elle est recherchée dans des façons nouvelles au plan qualitatif. On a engendré de nouveaux types de propriété et de nouveaux actionnaires sont apparus dans l'arène rurale. Certains discours font la promotion de la privatisation et des agents transnationaux privent d'accès aux ressources de développement les États qui résistent à ces discours. Un domaine controversé entoure la revendication du droit de breveter des ressources ou produits locaux (voir Wiber

dans le présent volume). Un autre implique la recherche, par des acteurs concurrents, d'occasions de protéger en tant que propriété des connaissances locales-rurales, ou encore l'identification de modes de production locaux en termes de droits de propriété intellectuelle ou culturelle (voir Turner dans le présent volume). Pourtant, une autre réaction à l'homogénéisation des régimes de propriété consiste à puiser dans la spiritualité locale en tant que ressource de valeur et comme cadre d'interprétation de la propriété rurale. Dans ces développements, les droits de propriété intellectuelle jouent un rôle instrumental croissant pour les acteurs transnationaux comme pour les ruraux. Les droits d'usufruit et la gestion des ressources et biens communs, ou plus précisément qui font l'objet d'un accès commun, sont menacés par la ruée vers les brevets. Les sociétés transnationales sont actives dans ce domaine; mais les institutions de l'État-nation réclament aussi la juridiction et les droits de propriété sur les « ressources communes rurales » en tant que « biopatrimoine » ou « écohéritage », ou revendiquent le contrôle des connaissances rurales locales au travers de la protection légale du patrimoine culturel national. De l'autre côté, des groupes minoritaires et des cultures autochtones revendiquent aussi des droits de propriété dans les mêmes valeurs (voir Brown 2003; Wiber 2006). Ce sont des phénomènes nouveaux, mais avec un fort potentiel pour influencer les développements à venir.

Parmi ces revendications contradictoires, il existe un vaste éventail d'idées relatives à la temporalité et aux fluctuations qui ont une influence sur les relations de propriété rurale. Dans certains cas, l'attachement de groupes de descendants à une propriété particulière, comme un territoire, est perçu comme éternel et devient le fondement légal de capacités sociales comme l'exercice du pouvoir décisionnel dans des communautés locales, tandis que dans d'autres cas, le partage permanent de terres entre des héritiers nourrit une perception de la fluidité de la propriété. Les règles de transmission par succession peuvent aussi être modifiées par des changements récents, ce qui, encore une fois, est source de conséquences en profondeur pour les structures familiales et la cohésion sociale. Des initiatives transnationales créent de nouveaux champs de compétition qui transforment les relations entre les sexes et entre les générations. Les structures familiales et les relations économiques entre les sexes sont touchées par bon nombre de pratiques, comme la diversification des possibilités de réaliser un revenu pour les femmes, la modification de la dépendance aux ressources naturelles par la création de coopératives de femmes, et diverses formes « d'éducation » et d'autres politiques. Ces phénomènes peuvent aider les femmes à

mieux faire face aux inégalités liées à leur sexe, et par là augmenter l'incidence des divorces, faire éclater la propriété des ménages et accélérer l'exode rural.

En tant que porteurs traditionnels des droits de propriété, les unités sociales (unités matrimoniales, familles nucléaires ou étendues) font donc face à de formidables pressions de transformation. Parmi les forces qui contribuent à ces tendances, on trouve les stratégies d'émigrants qui investissent dans des projets ruraux au moment où ils reviennent en tant que rapatriés ou visiteurs saisonniers temporaires, (voir Nuijten et Lorenzo, dans le présent volume). Ils rapportent souvent avec eux des notions de propriété privée et pseudo-publique et d'autres concepts extérieurs encore inconnus, tout en revitalisant des valeurs traditionnelles comme les relations de propriété rurale d'origine. En ce faisant, ils conjuguent tradition et modernité et créent des hybrides, comme la propriété traditionnelle des rapatriés dans les campagnes. De plus, la migration contribue à une redistribution intergénérationnelle de la richesse, et avec elle, à une réorganisation de l'influence politique et des pouvoirs décisionnels (ou à des tentatives de réorganisation, comme observées dans Nuijten et Lorenzo, présent volume). Les jeunes descendants d'anciens migrants ruraux ont beaucoup plus de capital à investir que les notables locaux et, sur cette base, exigent le droit de décider de l'allocation des ressources et de leur transformation. Comme ils deviennent des modèles pour les jeunes ruraux et défient l'autorité des anciens, cela a des conséquences majeures pour la négociation des relations de propriété. Enfin, à tout moment, on trouve des acteurs transnationaux qui produisent des interprétations des régimes de propriété rurale qui ne tiennent aucunement compte de tous les processus énumérés ci-dessus. Il se trouve donc des processus parallèles et interdépendants qui ajoutent à la compétition sur les concepts de propriété et à leur invalidation.

Le droit, le pluralisme juridique et la transnationalisation de la législation

On peut difficilement parler de propriété sans parler du cadre juridique. Mais il s'avère que le droit est aussi un objet de compétition du cadre rural. Par exemple, une conséquence intéressante de l'étude de la dimension juridique de la globalisation a pris la forme d'une adhésion plus large au concept de « pluralisme juridique », un terme qui caractérise des situations où plus d'un régime législatif est à l'œuvre dans un champ social (von Benda-Beckmann 2002; von Benda-Beckmann et von Benda-Beckmann 2007). Du point de vue du droit du développement, le pouvoir du cadre juridique de transformer le cadre local s'est avéré plus intéressant que la capacité correspondante des

interactions légales locales de transformer le niveau transnational. Par contrastes, les anthropologues intéressés au pluralisme juridique ont accordé plus d'attention à ce dernier phénomène. Cet accent mis sur la dimension juridique a permis d'élargir la compréhension des transformations de la propriété rurale et particulièrement les questions d'accès aux ressources.

Dans un passé récent, le droit international et transnational de même que les ONG travaillant en contexte transnational ont commencé à jouer un rôle de plus en plus important dans des domaines qualifiés de ruraux. De puissants acteurs transnationaux comme le FMI, la Banque Mondiale, l'ONU, l'UNESCO, l'Union européenne et des agences nationales de développement sont parfois en concurrence entre eux et mettent de l'avant leurs différents programmes politiques parfois incompatibles. Ils agissent non seulement en régisseurs des relations internationales mais ont aussi souvent un impact direct sur les relations de propriété sociale et économique dans des cadres locaux au sein des États-nations. La coopération internationale en matière d'environnement, l'établissement de normes de développement durable, la diffusion de nouvelles technologies en agriculture, de nouveaux modes organisationnels d'exploitation des ressources, la certification biologique et les contrôles de qualité des produits alimentaires sont de bons exemples de ces tendances. Les principaux domaines où les interventions transnationales affectent la propriété rurale sont le tourisme rural, la modernisation de l'agriculture, la coopération pour le développement et les politiques de décentralisation et de démocratisation visant la mise en place d'une saine gouvernance et de structures de la société civile. Il faut aussi mentionner ici des initiatives transnationales visant à combattre la pauvreté rurale, l'exode vers les villes et l'émigration.

Un des modes par lesquels les arènes rurales sont touchées par leur contexte transnational est la montée des configurations législatives pluralistes, souvent caractérisées par la diversité des perceptions de la propriété rurale et les revendications pour cette propriété. Ces revendications tirent leur légitimation de différents cadres législatifs qui interprètent et appliquent différentes régimes juridiques. Si nous transcendons le niveau de la mise en ordre normative et regardons plutôt les évidences empiriques de comment les relations de propriété sont construites, maintenues et transformées, deux aspects se détachent comme particulièrement sujets à de profondes réinterprétations : la signification sociale et le sens de la propriété rurale et l'accès aux ressources.

Il faut prêter une attention particulière à la relation triangulaire entre le transnational, le rural et l'État. Les

interactions entre l'État et le transnational affectent le paysage rural de multiples façons différentes. Des acteurs étatiques à divers échelons de la hiérarchie gouvernementale peuvent transmettre au niveau local leurs interprétations particulières et diversifiées des impacts transnationaux. Les acteurs transnationaux, de leur côté, peuvent mettre en vigueur leurs normes directement dans les régions rurales, passant par-dessus l'État, lorsqu'ils constatent que la coopération État-transnational ne produit pas les résultats escomptés dans les délais convenables (voir Weilenmann, présent volume). Les relations de pouvoir à tous les niveaux, local, régional, national et transnational peuvent se trouver affectées par ces stratégies et leurs conséquences. Dans ce contexte, on doit aussi prendre en considération les influences transnationales actuelles qui visent la décentralisation et la régionalisation.

Mouvements transnationaux et mobilisation rurale

Un autre phénomène qui attire aujourd'hui l'attention est l'accroissement du nombre des mouvements religieux et moraux de portée transnationale qui revendiquent au moins le même degré de légitimité universelle que les champions du développement durable ou de la protection de la nature (voir Wilmsen et Turner, présent volume). Parfois qualifié de montée de la société civile (Hann et Dunn 1996; Baker et Chandler 2005), ce processus a contribué au développement de nouvelles normes locales de moralité et de nouvelles significations sociales ou religieuses et culturelles de la propriété, de l'appartenance et des obligations sociales distributives, comme en témoignent nos collaborateurs. Dans de tels contextes, la lutte pour des retombées distributives suscite, instrumentalise ou transforme le potentiel rural local de violence. Ces développements motivent les acteurs ruraux locaux à organiser la résistance, parfois avec la collaboration d'influences extérieures, et parfois en confrontation brutale avec ces influences. Dans de multiples circonstances, les mouvements sociaux donnent à leurs demandes la forme de revendications pour des droits ou des propriétés, comme l'ont fait les San du Kalahari (Wilmsen, présent volume), tandis qu'ils organisent la résistance contre les relations existantes ou protestent contre leur intégration au sein de l'économie globale (Edelman 1999; Mésini 2004; Moyo et Yeros 2005; Woods 2008). Une telle résistance, toutefois, peut appuyer ses revendications pour des droits de diverses manières, qui vont de la réappropriation des modes de subsistance ruraux jusqu'à des protestations contre l'exclusion, tandis que de nouvelles formes de ruralisme sont vues comme une réponse à l'appétit néo-libé-

ral pour le rural et une réplique à sa marchandisation. Un bon exemple s'en trouve dans le concept des droits des paysans. Ce concept combine diverses composantes juridiques et réfère à des idées de responsabilité et de dignité humaine globale qui comportent une notion d'attitudes raisonnables et judicieuses face à la propriété.

Qui plus est, le transfert des responsabilités de l'État en matière de bien-être coïncide avec une revitalisation morale et spirituelle des valeurs rurales de partage, de charité et d'obligations distributives touchant les relations de propriété ou même découlant de celles-ci. Un État-nation qui ne satisfait pas à ses obligations de travail caritatif s'exclut du bassin des acteurs qui peuvent être tenus responsables des arrangements des régimes de propriété rurale, abandonnant la sécurité sociale à des acteurs comme les ONG et les organisations religieuses (par exemple, Hefferan 2007; Marshall et van Saanen 2007) ou aux expressions locales des religions mondiales.

Ces mécanismes de mobilisation ont un impact sur toute la sphère de la régulation de l'accès aux ressources naturelles et aux biens de valeur ruraux. Les réglementations concrètes, les légitimations qui y correspondent et les idéologies qui les sous-tendent sont en train de diverger et pourraient se reconfigurer dans des formes modifiées au niveau local comme au niveau transnational. La propriété en milieu rural devient chargée de significations différentes à mesure qu'on crée de nouvelles catégories de propriété et que de nouveaux groupes d'acteurs cherchent à se les approprier. L'enchaînement social (N.d.T. : *embeddedness*), politique et religieux de la propriété rurale dans le monde change en réponse à l'émergence de constellations transnationales-rurales. Les changements dans les pratiques, formalisations et idéologies sociales, y compris leur connectivité interactive et interdépendante transforment et la perception de ce que signifie « rural » et sa conjugaison avec « la société » et « la propriété ». De plus, l'insécurité sociale et légale montante, résultat du développement économique et social, exige une réaction de créativité au plan local, et modifie tout espace de manœuvre dans la négociation des perceptions locales de la propriété.

Le pouvoir normatif des moralités transnationales et rurales : religion, économie et au-delà

L'étude de la dimension morale de la propriété amène à l'esprit, avec force, la question de la proportionnalité sociale du statut de propriétaire. La descendance et la famille élargie, les alliances, les réseaux, les voisinages, les liens territoriaux et les formes de coopération établies sont quelques-unes des relations les plus évidentes parmi

lesquelles « la propriété comporte ses devoirs. » Les mouvements sociaux, qu'ils se définissent par la société civile ou pas, révisent souvent à la hausse les normes existantes de moralité de la possession, des significations religieuses, culturelles et sociales de la propriété, de son importance pour les obligations sociales de distribution et les notions d'appartenance (par exemple, Edelman 2005). En fait le regard transnational sur la pauvreté rurale est plein de ses propres arguments moraux, dont la condamnation de la corruption et des autres pratiques immorales. Les objectifs politiques associés aux interventions de développement ont une incidence congrue sur les notions de propriété sur le terrain. On assure la dissémination de la démocratie, de la bonne gouvernance et de la décentralisation en tant que garants de juste répartition de la propriété. Le discours transnational sur les droits humains livre lui aussi des arguments moraux.

Cette « moralité transnationale » compensatoire transforme la propriété rurale (voir Turner, présent volume), et cela est rarement bien reçu au niveau local. Ce qui complique l'acceptation des intervenants transnationaux dans le monde rural est une certaine attitude altruiste qui s'accompagne de la formulation de messages quasi religieux. Alors que les acteurs transnationaux peuvent conceptualiser le message transnational comme universel, il ajoute souvent un méta-message moral (certains diraient moralisant) à l'interaction transnational-rural. Les concepts du développement sont façonnés par une éco-religion universelle, qui comporte souvent une spiritualisation de la nature (Tucker et Grim 2001; Taylor, 2005). L'idéal de la conservation de la nature, par exemple, inclut souvent une revendication, de la part d'acteurs extérieurs, pour le droit de protéger des paysages uniques qui sont localement associés avec de nombreuses et diverses connotations. Au plan local, le paysage représente un moyen de subsistance, de l'agriculture et des aliments. En même temps, il résonne en tant que patrie, espace social rural et identité. Qui plus est, il est chargé de signification spirituelle, légale et sociale. Prendre pour acquis que les acteurs locaux acceptent sur un pied d'égalité ces valeurs transnationales imposées mène assez souvent à des malentendus mutuels comme le révèlent plusieurs contributions de cette section.

On peut ici mentionner un exemple. On a jumelé à des intérêts environnementaux la protection sacrée de certains lieux par une éco-valeur particulière. Dans ce processus, on a réinterprété la valeur symbolique de la propriété comme libre de composantes sociales. En conséquence, on a questionné la lecture rurale des relations de propriété, y compris l'usufruit et les droits d'exploitation, en tant qu'inscrite dans le paysage religieux-juridique. Mais du

point de vue rural, la propriété n'est souvent légitimée que précisément par un tel enchâssement organique. Ce genre d'enchâssement a été généralement négligé dans la recherche sur la modernisation des relations de propriété rurale, de même que dans le discours sur la compétition dans l'économie globale. Toutefois, cet enchâssement a ses propres connexions transnationales, étant lui-même affecté par la résurgence des normes morales locales.

Les contributions à cette section thématique fournissent des perspectives de recherche fraîches sur les processus de transformation auxquels sont exposées la propriété rurale et la gestion de l'accès aux ressources naturelles dans les zones rurales. Les exemples donnés ici, tirés de la recherche empirique et de perspectives transdisciplinaires, dévoilent des processus de transition dans diverses parties du monde et offrent une occasion de considérer les conséquences théoriques énoncées plus haut. Cette recherche s'intéresse souvent à la relation de rétroaction entre les processus locaux de transformation dans les régions rurales et le niveau transnational.

Six exemples portant sur la transformation des relations de propriété rurale dans un monde en voie de globalisation

Dans les diverses contributions à cette section, notre sujet central est abordé avec cinq lentilles différentes mais complémentaires. Ces contextes comprennent la coopération pour le développement, l'application de stéréotypes raciaux, les migrations, l'émergence d'un droit transnational dans le cadre des droits de propriété intellectuelle qui touchent au commerce (TRIPS) et l'importance croissante des cadres moraux et religieux transnationaux.

Par exemple, Wiber se concentre sur les normes légales générées en mode transnational qui touchent la propriété rurale. Elle analyse l'impact des législations des droits de propriété intellectuelle qui touchent au commerce sur le contrôle des semences dans la production agricole dans le cadre d'une discussion portant sur la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada dans *Monsanto v. Schmeiser* pour restreindre le statut de spectateurs innocents dans des cas de violation de brevets. Elle s'arrête aux effets de cette décision sur l'autonomie des agriculteurs dans une économie mondialisée. Une des conséquences qui inquiète plusieurs chercheurs dans le domaine du développement agricole est le « gel » envahissant que de telles décisions légales auront sur la conservation et le partage de semences traditionnelles. Le travail de Wiber montre comment des décisions à l'échelle nationale appliquent une grille transnationale à une situation locale – avec des réverbérations à l'échelle supranationale. Weilenmann, d'un autre côté, met en lumière l'impact

direct de la coopération pour le développement comme un canal qui adapte les régimes de propriété rurale. Il illustre comment les agences de développement qui souhaitent donner des moyens aux pauvres des régions rurales dans la concurrence pour l'accès aux ressources, introduisent un ordre du jour transnational en puisant dans le « droit de projet » (voir N.d.T. ci-dessus) comme outil normatif. Cela entraîne une fragmentation juridique accrue, alors que les conventions légales internationales filtrées par les États entrent en collision avec les normes transnationales introduites sous la forme de « droit de projet ».

Wilmsen analyse de manière critique comment les acteurs transnationaux rationalisent les stratégies employées en ce qui touche les conceptions locales de la propriété rurale. Il expose les stéréotypes classiques qui nient aux autochtones de langue san du Kalahari des notions structurées de régime foncier, de droits d'usufruit ou de propriété. Il s'intéresse aussi aux raisons qui sous-tendent la revitalisation de tels concepts dans les politiques néo-libérales mises en œuvre dans la région aujourd'hui et en souligne les conséquences négatives. Wilmsen montre comment les constellations locales de propriété sont instrumentalisées à l'échelle nationale par la diffusion de stéréotypes, de façon à construire une province qui satisferait aux exigences internationales pour l'assistance. Nuijten et Lorenzo analysent l'impact de l'émigration temporaire sur la gouvernance locale de l'exploitation collective des terres. Ils discutent des inégalités qui apparaissent dans ces communautés andines qui régissent l'accès interne aux terres, dans le contexte où des membres de la communauté émigrent pour s'embaucher comme bergers dans des ranchs nord-américains. Alors que les relations avec les émigrants produisent de nouvelles dynamiques internes et affectent la gestion des terres communales, l'émigration temporaire a aussi servi à renforcer le pouvoir traditionnel, dans la demande pour les nouvelles ressources qui irriguent la communauté et la tentative de les contrôler. Nuijten et Lorenzo montrent aussi comment l'environnement transnational et l'expérience des flux migratoires entre le pays d'origine et le pays hôte se combinent pour informer le modèle local d'exercice du pouvoir qui aspire à demeurer indépendant des interventions nationales et transnationales dans les affaires locales.

Turner observe la façon dont une dépendance accrue au cadre moral et à l'argumentation religieuse connecte de multiples échelles dans leur impact sur la propriété rurale, même si cela est vu depuis des angles très différents. Il souligne l'importance croissante de tels encadrements moraux et religieux des relations de propriété

dans le sud-ouest du Maroc dans les négociations locales de la participation ou de la résistance à l'économie globale. La confrontation avec des concepts moraux et religieux exogènes a mené à la réévaluation des normes morales locales et à une réinterprétation des relations de propriété qui combinaient jusqu'à un certain degré des concepts locaux-ruraux et transnationaux. Turner montre comment ce déploiement de standardisation religieuse et morale en provenance de l'échelon supralocal a contourné l'État et le rôle de l'État dans les interactions transnational-local. Sikor et Stahl présentent une étude de cas de trois villages albanais pour démontrer que différentes formules d'émigration ont engendré des attitudes régionales différentes à l'égard de l'accès aux ressources et à la propriété rurale après l'effondrement du système socialiste. Sikor et Stahl montrent comment le post-socialisme implique un passage à une plus petite échelle de ce qu'était la concurrence entre nations, mais aussi comment la tension internationale au sein d'une région particulière continue malgré tout à résonner dans les contextes locaux. Ces tensions à leur tour ont affecté comment les liens translocaux respectifs façonnent les stratégies locales de subsistance et les formules de migration.

Conclusion

Dans l'ensemble, ces articles sont interreliés et reflètent une série d'importants thèmes transversaux qui contribuent tous à permettre une appréhension générale des processus contemporains en train de transformer la propriété rurale, et de leur impact cumulatif. Ces articles s'intéressent aussi à plusieurs enjeux soulevés en anthropologie juridique contemporaine en rapport avec le débat actuel sur l'anthropologie de la mondialisation (Tsing 2000; Lewellen 2002; Friedman et Friedman 2008; Inda et Rosaldo 2008). Le point de référence unificateur des articles est une analyse anthropologique de la conceptualisation néo-libérale et transnationale des enjeux de la propriété. Les arguments anthropologiques développés ici sont basés sur des données empiriques qui ont été recueillies dans des études de terrain. Au cœur de l'analyse anthropologique sont des facteurs qui évoquent ou qui contribuent à l'accélération des processus de transformation des relations de propriété rurale. Les pratiques et traditions juridiques locales, les connaissances locales et le règlement des conflits, le débat entre agricultures moderne et conventionnelle, l'impact de l'émigration sur les domaines locaux, la résurgence des facteurs religieux et moraux dans les questions de propriété sont des enjeux anthropologiques d'importance vitale pour pousser plus loin la recherche en anthropologie de la globalisation et dans beaucoup d'autres domaines de la quête anthropo-

logique. Ainsi, cette section thématique apporte une contribution significative au débat permanent dans un domaine central de la recherche anthropologique.

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Notes

- 1 N.d.T: « droit de projet » est un terme nouveau qui qualifie cette composante normative d'un cadre réglementaire inhérent à et transféré par un projet d'aide au développement.
- 2 Voir Wiber (1995, 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005), Wiber et Kennedy (2001) et Turner (2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). Voir aussi des périodiques comme *Critique of Anthropology*, de même que le *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, et *Law and Anthropology* pour de nombreux autres exemples.
- 3 D'autres figures importantes dans l'établissement initial de la sociologie rurale furent Tönnies et Durkheim. Voir le premier chapitre de Hillyard 2007.
- 4 Voir par exemple Mésini 2004 et Lohnert et Steinbrink 2005. Alors que Mésini décrit le flot poussé par la pauvreté des ruraux vers les villes, Lohnert et Steinbrink observent le phénomène inverse. Le facteur de la pauvreté urbaine comme source d'agitation et la perception des bidonvilles péri-urbains comme berceaux du terrorisme (Turner 2007b) constituent aussi des paradoxes.
- 5 Voir aussi les contributions à l'ouvrage de Herod et Wright 2002 sur la dyade global-local.
- 6 Voir par exemple Mésini 2004 et Lohnert et Steinbrink 2005 sur les moyens de subsistance ruraux et urbains et sur la translocalité.
- 7 La mise en œuvre des lois anti-terroristes au Maroc, par exemple, s'accompagnait d'une campagne nationale établissant les valeurs et idéaux ruraux comme des stabilisateurs essentiels de la société marocaine (Turner 2007b)
- 8 Pour une revue détaillée de la documentation sur la propriété, voyez von Benda-Beckmann et col. 2006. Dans ce qui suit, nous nous appuyons sur leur cadre alternatif pour la conceptualisation de la propriété. Cette approche, à son tour, est construite sur des travaux antérieurs de von Benda-

- Beckmann (1979, 1995) et de von Benda-Beckmann et von Benda-Beckmann (1999). Voir aussi Wiber et Lovell 2004.
- 9 C'est dans ce sens que de nombreux chercheurs insistent sur le caractère « enchassé » (*embedded*) de la propriété.

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“What Innocent Bystanders?”: The Impact of Law and Economics Reasoning on Rural Property Rights

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Abstract: In May 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada denied the Saskatchewan farmer Percy Schmeiser innocent bystander status and ruled in favour of protecting the intellectual property rights of Monsanto, which holds a patent on genetically modified canola seed. Farmers around the world have protested this decision as an attack on their privileged position under national patent legislation, fueling a larger debate about biotechnology, farmer seed systems and intellectual property rights. This article looks at the patent infringement arguments in Canada in the context of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and of potential amendments to the Canada Patent Act. Law and economics scholars have critiqued both “innocent bystander” and “farmer autonomy” as legitimate defenses in such cases of patent infringement. In the process, they have ignored, and perhaps facilitated, wider issues of property transformations in the rural setting.

Keywords: intellectual property rights, biotechnology, farmers' rights

Résumé : En mai 2004, la Cour suprême du Canada a rejeté la demande de statut de spectateur innocent au fermier Percy Schmeiser et a reconnu les droits de propriété intellectuelle de Monsanto, qui détient un brevet d'invention pour les semences de canola génétiquement modifiées. Des fermiers provenant des quatre coins du monde ont protesté contre cette décision, la qualifiant d'attaque contre leur position privilégiée au regard de la législation nationale sur les brevets, alimentant ainsi un débat plus vaste sur les biotechnologies, les systèmes de semences des fermiers et les droits de propriété intellectuelle. Cet article étudie les cas de contrefaçon de brevets au Canada au regard de l'Accord concernant les Aspects des droits de propriété intellectuelle qui touchent au commerce (ADPIC) et des amendements possibles à la Loi canadienne sur les brevets. Les spécialistes en droit et en économie ont critiqué la légitimité des exceptions invoquant le « spectateur innocent » ou « l'autonomie du fermier » dans de tels cas de contrefaçon de brevets. Ce faisant, ils ont ignoré et peut-être même facilité les transformations, dans un cadre plus large, relatives aux questions de propriétés en contexte rural.

Mots-clés : Droits sur la propriété intellectuelle, biotechnologie, droits des fermiers

Introduction

In a recent edited volume on the anthropological contribution to property studies, my co-authors and I argued that new forms of property are transforming traditional property forms in various ways, including the types of social groups that can hold property, the types of valuables considered property, and the ideological constructs that surround property (von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006). Intellectual property is one of these new forms with wide-ranging impacts on traditional property. One example is the rapid transformation of patent law in many countries under the influence of the international Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Given the influence of neo-liberal economic reasoning on Western legal traditions, traditional rural property rights are being reconstituted as “privilege” rather than as “rights.” Under the impact of TRIPS, this legal change is rapidly spreading to many other countries, leading to a significant erosion of farmer autonomy to employ farmland and seed stocks in the farmer’s own best interests (Wiber 2005). This is the setting in which the Percy Schmeiser case came to the Canadian Supreme Court and one of the reasons that this case has attracted so much interest internationally. In this paper I critically examine some of the law and economics arguments that are contributing to new interpretations of patent law, which in turn are recasting rural property rights.¹

Percy Schmeiser has farmed 1,400 acres in Saskatchewan for 50 years. For the past seven years, he has been locked in a legal battle with the biotech corporation Monsanto (*Monsanto Canada Inc. v. Schmeiser* 2004 SCC 34). Monsanto claims that in 1998, Schmeiser planted illegally-obtained genetically modified canola seed² for which they hold the patent, and that he materially benefitted from that theft. Schmeiser claims that he did not willingly plant Monsanto seed on his land, that he attempted to eradicate invasive plants when he found them, and that he was an innocent bystander.

On the advice of expert testimony provided by Monsanto employees, the Supreme Court of Canada rejected Schmeiser's claim that the origin of the GM canola seed on his farm was accidental, perhaps "blown onto" his land from five neighbouring farms where the seed was being legitimately planted. Based on a licensing fee of \$15 per acre, and on the acreage Schmeiser was accused of planting, he would owe Monsanto approximately CAN\$15,450 to legally plant the genetically modified canola. Monsanto additionally claimed all profits from the 1998 crop plus any seed stock remaining in Schmeiser's possession (CBC News Online 2004). The majority ruling did not require Schmeiser to turn his 1998 profits over, nor did it require that he pay Monsanto's court costs. Schmeiser was ordered to turn all remaining canola crop and seed derived from the patented germplasm over to Monsanto.

One of the questions put before the Supreme Court was whether Monsanto can control the use of a plant because it has patented a gene in the plant. On this question, the majority decision ruled in favour of Monsanto; however, as is consistent with an earlier Canadian Supreme Court ruling on the Harvard OncoMouse, the court agreed with Schmeiser that the plant is a higher life form and cannot be patented.³ So Monsanto cannot control the plant but it can control distribution of the gene. This might be viewed as a rather fine splitting of hairs. Monsanto hailed the decision as one that would set a precedent for the protection of intellectual property rights worldwide, while farmers' organizations argued that it recognized their right to save seed grain from their own crops for use in future plantings.

This case is symptomatic of the growing conflict between farmers' organizations and the rapidly expanding biotech industry (Center for Food Safety 2005). From the point of view of farmers' organizations, national policy designed to protect the property rights of farm enterprises (vital to food security and safety) is increasingly coming under international pressure to conform to a set of trade standards set by Washington. From the biotech industry point of view, years (often decades) of expensive innovation in commercial crop productivity can be undercut by national legislation unsympathetic to strict protection of intellectual property rights.⁴ In Canada, for example, the Supreme Court ruled against patenting higher forms of life in *Harvard College vs. Canada (Commissioner of Patents)* (2002, 4 SCR). Biotech trade publications predicted that one result would be a massive drop-off of investment by the biotech industry in Canada.⁵ Meanwhile, international farmers' groups argue that patenting life has seriously undercut the normal and necessary agricultural practices of both small and large farm-

ers around the world. Farmers are finding it increasingly difficult to save seed, to create hybrid varieties that respond well to field tests in their particular environmental circumstances, to share seed (or field equipment that might harbour seeds), and to make alternative uses of their property such as following organic practices. Many farmers see this infringement as a concerted attack on their autonomy and property rights, one that erodes their economic standing and undercuts other property relations in the rural production system.

In this article I use this conflict to examine Canadian policy advice emanating from the field of law and economics in order to illuminate one of those analytical layers in which property manifests itself, that is, at the level of legal ideology (von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006). As has been argued elsewhere, various kinds of social practices can create, maintain and change what property is. One of those influential types of practices involves the reproduction or change of legal ideas through discussion or dispute in "interaction settings such as courts, parliaments, universities, the mass media or local forums" (von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006:15). In Canada, such policy advice, if accepted, would seriously impact both the patent act and related legislation and thus shape future property relations in the rural agricultural sector. Should nation-states protect long-standing farming practices through patent regulation that limits the impact of intellectual property rights? In February 2003, the Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee set up by the government to advise it on biotechnology issues, released a series of recommendations on the Patent Act, among them that innocent bystanders be protected and that a privileged provision for farmers be included in the act. This differs from other policy advice, however, which suggests that regulators create a "level playing field" by imposing TRIPS standards, thereby avoiding severe U.S. trade penalties. Some question that there is a good "innocent bystander" case to be made (Siebrasse 2004b). Siebrasse uses an economic logic to argue that such a defense would increase society's ills by creating an incentive for patent-infringement. Further, he argues that farmer autonomy should be of negligent interest to policy makers and to the courts, so long as there are clear mechanisms for providing the correct balance between farmers' property interests and those of the biotech industry. The Supreme Court accepted these economic arguments in the Schmeiser case but I will argue against them here on the grounds that they are based on a perverse⁶ understanding of property and are contributing to a significant erosion of farmer economic viability.

The “Facts” of the Case

In his seminal critique, Clifford (2001:603) wrote of the “systems, or economies, of truth” deployed in the writing of ethnography. Law, of course, has its own “economy of truth”—in searching for clarity, the “facts” are often dealt with selectively. One way to destabilize the resulting analysis, then, is to introduce facts that the law, in its wisdom, has considered irrelevant. In this article, I do not pretend to a level of objectivity that other “fact sifters” have lacked. Instead, in this section of the article, I focus on the web-like structure of the “facts” in order to draw attention to the selective “economies of truth” employed in both court reasoning and in law and economic scholarship. That I deploy my own methodologies of “sifting” is without question. What is questionable is the “superior logic” of one “economy of truth” over another—a point I will return to in the following sections of the paper.

Here then are some selective facts about the Schmeiser case, gleaned not only from court decisions, but also from media reports on the case. Needless to say, interviews with Schmeiser in the media, other media reports and the Supreme Court records contain many divergent dates and interpretations. I have tried to indicate just a few of these disagreements in what follows:

- Beginning in 1996, Monsanto GM varieties were introduced for canola, cotton, potatoes and soy. One of the most important characteristics of many of these varieties was the built-in tolerance for Monsanto herbicides.⁷ Monsanto did not make this or any other genetic modification limited to the first generation.⁸ In other words, these genetic modifications “bred true” and would be found in any plant generation that sprang from a GM parent.
- Percy Schmeiser is a farmer and a businessman who develops and distributes traditional varieties of farm seed.⁹ He has served as Mayor of Bruno and as a member of the Provincial Legislature. Like many farmers worldwide, Schmeiser shares seed with fellow farmers, does field tests on sports or hybrid varieties and markets or lends seed (CBC News Online 2004).
- In 1996, five of Schmeiser’s adjacent neighbours contracted with Monsanto to use Roundup Ready canola seed. In that same year, Schmeiser grew a 370-acre field of canola from which he saved seed to replant in 1997 (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:60).
- In 1997, Schmeiser found and sprayed canola plants near a ditch on his property, and subsequently noticed that they were not killed by this application (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:61). That fall, he harvested

these surviving plants and kept the seed from them separate (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:62).

- Also in 1997, Monsanto received a tip on their “toll-free snitch line,” which they had set up for farmers to turn in neighbours they suspected of growing the seed without paying the licensing fee (CBC News Online 2004).
- Monsanto subsequently directed their “rural auditors” to enter Schmeiser’s fields without permission and take samples of his canola crop (CBC News Online 2004). Alternatively, these samples may have been taken “from the public road allowances bordering on two of Schmeiser’s fields” (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:63).
- In March of 1998, Monsanto notified Schmeiser of their belief that he was growing Roundup Ready Canola without a license, based on the samples taken in 1997.
- In 1998, Schmeiser conducted a field test on three acres of his canola crop and discovered 60% of the canola plants sprayed with Roundup survived in clumps—thickest near the ditch, thinning the deeper into the field they were found (CBC News Online 2004). He also had treated and then planted seed from his 1997 crop on 1,000 acres (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:63).
- Unbeknownst to Schmeiser, the company that treated this seed held back some of it to turn over to Monsanto’s agents. The resulting “audit” on these samples determined that 95 to 98% of Schmeiser’s canola crop was made up of Roundup Ready Canola (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:64).
- In subsequent court proceedings, Monsanto presented evidence from their lab scientists that Schmeiser’s seed contained DNA sequences patented under claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the Canadian patent, plus plant cells claimed in 22, 23, 27, 28 and 45 of the Canadian patent for Roundup Ready Canola (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:65).

Developing Patent Law for a Fit with International Markets

Many “facts” in addition to those listed above never entered into the Supreme Court analysis, nor do they enter into Siebrasse’s critique of the innocent bystander defense.¹⁰ In this section of my article, I widen the facts under consideration by relying on a recent book entitled *Information Feudalism* in which Drahos and Braithwaite (2002) document the rise and growing influence of an epistemic community¹¹ made up of corporate owners of lucrative patents in the U.S. Drahos and Braithwaite did an

extensive study on this powerful group, and they point out how successfully the group represented various trade imbalances with other nations as being the result of *property theft*. Economic consultants hired by this epistemic community designed a campaign to convince American legislators of the impact of this theft, first by labelling it *piracy*, and second, by providing a quantification of the staggering lost income to American businesses—a difficult and contested undertaking, but one at which they were ultimately successful (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002). The consulting economists also proposed a solution to these financial losses: the U.S. should impose trade sanctions on countries that did not conform to U.S. patent law and that were resisting the TRIPS Agreement—particularly countries in the forefront of that resistance such as Indonesia, Thailand, Korea and Brazil. Given that the piracy was characterized as generating billions of dollars of lost income to American industries, leading in turn to job losses and economic stagnation, this trade sanction solution was quickly endorsed by U.S. legislators. Despite a history of being one of the “greatest patent-infringing nations on earth” (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002:33), the U.S. emerged as the international watchdog for patent protection—and at the same time experienced an explosive growth in patent applications to the U.S. Patent Office (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002:33). Drahos and Braithwaite see it as no accident that this policy also facilitated dominance by a growing sector of the American industrial machine—a sector that increasingly relied on patent law to enable them to gain “cartel-like monopolistic gains” from the market (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002:53; see also DeBièvre 2002).

In their interviews with key players in the development of this U.S. trade policy and in the aggressive promotion of TRIPS internationally, Drahos and Braithwaite (2002:71-73) were told that the main strategy was to get negotiations over international intellectual property law away from the lawyers and into the hands of the economists. This strategy was designed to push past multilateral negotiations that were not moving fast enough for key U.S. players. Informants explicitly reported that the resulting economic calculus of job and productivity losses was very effective in getting U.S. legislators and policymakers on side. This strategy was spearheaded by major corporations in the pharmaceutical (Pfizer), computer (IBM) and entertainment (U.S. Motion Picture Association) industries, but quickly brought on board other industrial players such as biotechnology (Monsanto). While in the short term, the resulting “level playing ground” for intellectual property protection did create the results legislators hoped for (higher levels of innovation and trade,

stronger economic growth), the longer-run outcome has been what Drahos and Braithwaite (2002:166) characterize as “global cartelism.” It has also resulted in a large-scale privatization of the public knowledge domain.¹² In fact, the private property being protected by aggressive trade practices was largely public domain knowledge.¹³ “Patents, instead of being a reward for inventors who place private information into the public domain, have become a means of recycling public information as private monopolies” (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002:165; see also Grajal 1999).

The Canadian Supreme Court Decision

The above strategy for promoting U.S. patent law internationally has had an impact on U.S. legal culture, particularly in terms of property law. For example, in 1981, the Reagan appointee to the Anti-Trust Division, William F. Baxter, instituted a “hands off” policy “when it came to policing the use of intellectual property rights by corporate America” (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002:166). The benefits of this “hands off” policy is now part of the debate over patent reform in Canada, and is being felt in Canadian legal culture as well. In part, this impact can be seen in the Supreme Court decision on the Schmeiser case. The majority opinion ruled that the Schmeiser case was different from the Harvard Onco-Mouse case because the former involved a mammal while the latter involved a plant. Furthermore, the conditions of “use” in the Schmeiser case (that is, the “use” of the patented genetic material in normal farming operations) could not be disputed. Schmeiser’s farming activities in effect “deprive[d] the inventor in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, of full enjoyment of the monopoly conferred by law” (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:35).

One is reminded here of Haraway’s (1991) observation that science practices and law are increasingly blurring the distinction between life and machine, particularly through genetic patents. In the majority ruling on the Schmeiser case, an analogy was made between cells and plants, and Lego blocks and structures, such that if an infringement use were alleged in a structure built with patented Lego blocks, it would not be a bar to finding infringement if only the component parts were patented and not the entire structure. Exploitation of the gene, whether or not the special attributes of the gene were part of the exploitation, was the key to discovering an infringement. Whether or not the farmer used the seeds in order to access the special plant characteristics protected under patent, then, was irrelevant. So too was the biological nature of the spread of the patented genes in plants that reproduced.

In reaching this decision, the majority ruling cited Siebrasse (2004a) and his “remedial benefit-based approach to the innocent user problem.” In effect, bystanders were never innocent if a cost-benefit analysis could show harm to the patent holder, or benefit to the one infringing the patent. Siebrasse later emphasized that this strict cost-accounting approach should not result in any extraordinary harm to farmers, arguing that “this article takes the general remedial rule to be that the farmer will be liable, at most, to the extent of the benefit she derives from the patented crop, regardless of knowledge or intent” (2004b:354). This, he feels, is consistent with an assumption that “the overarching goal of the law should be to deliver the greatest net social benefits” (2004b:352). But how are we to calculate these net benefits?

The Greatest Net Social Benefits?

Monsanto begins the process of seizing control of farmers’ practices by getting them to sign the company’s technology agreement upon purchasing patented seeds. This agreement allows Monsanto to conduct property investigations, exposes the farmer to huge financial liability, binds the farmer to Monsanto’s oversight for multiple years, and includes a variety of other conditions that have effectively defined what rights a farmer does and does not have in planting, harvesting, and selling genetically engineered seeds. [Center for Food Safety 2005:3]

Siebrasse (2004b) relies on an assumption that the greatest net social benefits are always easily calculated. Thus, in weighing farmers’ rights against biotech company rights, he is only interested in “which combination of rights will bring about the greatest net social benefits” (2004b:353). But in assessing benefit, Siebrasse and others from the law and economics perspective show a number of biases. For example, Siebrasse (2004b:ft 13) explicitly assumes that “encouraging inventions relating to higher life forms is desirable” and that “patents are necessary to this end.” Challenging either of these assumptions erodes his subsequent argument.¹⁴ Aside from the many questions that civil society organizations have raised about the benefits of GM crops, particularly in Europe, there is significant criticism of the “wider social benefits” enjoyed in North America after the introduction of GM crops—particularly as relates to the impact on farmer property rights.

One of the interesting aspects of this case is that some of the loudest criticisms of Monsanto come from farmers, the very group that it might be argued are benefitting

from patent developments in the biotech industry.¹⁵ Indeed, Siebrasse (2004b) claims that the best measure of the benefits of GM seed must be the willingness of farmers to enter into contract arrangements with Monsanto to gain access to it. But his argument relies on the highly contested image of the fully informed atomistic actor in the free marketplace confronting many available choices. In fact, many farmers are critical of the biotech industry and patents precisely because they reduce their choices, especially as relates to using GM seed. Given cross pollination and seed dispersal, seed contamination has become a severe problem—separate studies done in the U.S. and in Canada found GM traits in 83% of non-GM canola seed stock, over 50% in corn, and 50% in soy (Center for Food Safety 2005).¹⁶ Thus, obtaining seed that contains no genetic modifications has become almost impossible.¹⁷ Despite this, when a non-GM crop shows contamination from genetic traits patented by Monsanto, the courts have viewed this as theft of intellectual property. According to a 2005 Center for Food Safety report, Monsanto has filed over 90 lawsuits against 147 American farmers and 39 small farm businesses in the past few years. They have won millions of dollars in recorded judgments (final monetary awards are not available for most judgments¹⁸), and further undisclosed amounts in confidential out-of-court settlements with farmers. Because of the way patent law has been applied, they have been successful in prosecuting many farmers who claimed that Monsanto genetic materials in their crops were an accidental by-product of normal farming operations. The “chill effect” of such court cases is becoming a decisive factor in North American farm decisions.¹⁹ And, it could be argued that it is no accident that very few alternative sources of clean, traditional seed remain to which farmers can turn.

As von Benda-Beckmann et al. (2006) have argued, understanding the complete “bundle of rights” that a property-holder has accumulated is necessary to understanding their dominance in the wider production process. Monsanto’s tactics to protect their intellectual property rights in GM strains of major food crops must be considered in the context of their growing domination of agricultural seed distribution and herbicide production. For example, they have been very aggressive in buying up domestic and international farm seed businesses,²⁰ and in patenting not only new genetically-modified germplasm but also the laboratory techniques and various proteins that are used to produce them.²¹ Monsanto GM varieties were introduced for canola, cotton, potatoes and soy beginning in 1996, and GM varieties now dominate in each of these important crops in area of acreage planted (Center for Food Safety 2005). Since Monsanto also produces the dom-

inant herbicides used in agriculture, they benefit from their introduction of GM strains that tolerate these; since the introduction of Roundup Ready varieties, Roundup herbicide application in the United States has increased by over 138 million pounds (Center for Food Safety 2005). This dominance in the seed and herbicide marketplace explains why American and international farmers' organizations have filed a private antitrust action against Monsanto claiming that Monsanto and others (including DuPont, Dow Chemical, Novartis and AstraZeneca) used patents and licensing arrangements to "fix prices and restrain trade" in both the GM corn and soybean seed markets (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002:164).

One might be excused then for wondering if an a priori assumption of the good that GM patents do in the world is justified. If we were to measure all the social costs of these types against the benefits of intellectual property protection, the cost-benefit analysis may be a bit more challenging. In order to satisfy shareholders, Monsanto's corporate objective must be to shift as much profit from farmers' pockets to Monsanto as possible; to the extent that their patents allow for this, Monsanto benefits. To the extent that normal farming practices and plant reproduction limits their ability to do this, Monsanto must find ways to constrain farmer choices and to deflect nature from the legal analysis. Interpreting such aggressive and cartel-like behaviours of the biotech industry as of "net social benefit" relies heavily on a law and economics approach, as well as a very narrow interpretation of property theory.

The Property Logic in the Law and Economics Position on Patenting Life

Perhaps the most disturbing trend in Siebrasse's analysis of the conflict between farm systems around the globe and the expanding (overwhelmingly Western) biotechnology industrial complex, is the "unpacking and recasting" of property and rights-based arguments (see Siebrasse 2004b:365) that materially assists (one might argue) continued monopolistic expansion of the latter at the expense of the former. For example, Siebrasse argues that the primary purpose of patent law is to provide appropriate incentives to produce socially valuable inventions, while the benefits of farmer autonomy (recast as respect for farmer's property rights) are appropriate incentives to the socially valuable applications of scarce resources. Balancing these two socially valuable outcomes is not difficult, in Siebrasse's mind, because economic rationality provides remedies when the two property rights can reasonably be said to be in conflict.²² However, as Siebrasse's article unfolds it can be seen that this "objective" eco-

nomie stance reveals to him very little reason to protect farmer autonomy at the expense of patent property rights. Even in cases where a farmer is "organic," there would really be no reason to award either negligence or nuisance damages, for example, as "it is far from obvious that a farmer who decides to set up an organic farm in the midst of neighbours who uniformly use genetically modified crops *should* be able to sue his neighbours or the seed supplier for the contamination of his field" (Siebrasse 2004b:361, emphasis added).²³

As the cost-benefit analysis unfolds, it becomes clear that for Siebrasse, property rights must be subject to constant assessment based on perceived (arguably neo-liberal) "social benefits." Rights should only be protected where there is net benefit to society. In the case of farmers versus biotech corporations, Siebrasse feels that the current Patent Act strikes the appropriate balance of rights and that changes to it would be dangerous. Thus, he writes: "a rule that gives the patentee either more or less than the benefit which is caused by the use of the invention will provide too much or too little incentive to invent" (2004b:355). Such a rule would harm society. Instead, he argues:

the inventor is given a property right, which allows the inventor to reap the benefit of the use of the patent by exacting licensing fees. This makes the reward from the invention proportional to the social benefit conferred by the invention; the more useful the invention, the more people are willing to pay for it, and the greater the incentive to invent. To the extent that the patentee cannot capture all of the benefit flowing from the invention during the term of the patent, the incentives will be distorted, as resources will be directed to inventions with the highest privately appropriable benefit, rather than the greatest social benefit. [2004b:365]

In this unpacking and recasting of property rights, if the greatest net social benefit changes over time, then property rights should be won or lost proportionally.

I was interested to note that the Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee, in their recommendations for patent policy change, have followed Siebrasse's economic reasoning to a limited extent. Their report suggests that an economic calculation could guide infringement; for example, where there are no social benefits to be gained from deployment of GM crop seed, or where there is social harm (as in innocent bystanders), then patent rights could be infringed. But Siebrasse does not agree with this limited use of economic rationality. He has calculated that the social costs from the unintended consequences of an innocent bystander defense would be too

high.²⁴ Meanwhile, so long as the courts are judicious with their rewards to patent holders when infringement has taken place, extracting only the benefit gained from the infringement, farmers should not experience any real hardship, nor deterioration of their autonomy (Siebrasse 2004b).

The problem with this economic approach to property is that, taken too far, it undermines the security often touted as the prime advantage of private property, shifting property rights into the realm of state recognized "privilege." And privileges are much more easily revoked than are property rights, as many quota holders in the fishing and dairy sectors can attest (Wiber 1995). More importantly, I would argue that Siebrasse's reasoning is based on a factually incorrect description of the problem. When patent infringement becomes almost inevitable, given pollen distribution and the natural reproductive patterns of canola plants, there is a far more serious problem generated for society than if patent rights are infringed. Patent protection then becomes an effective "chill" mechanism that forces farmers to deal with Monsanto on Monsanto's terms. Siebrasse tries to argue against this conclusion with the analogy that GM canola is like pigs or like commercially-farmed salmon: when there are "escapes" of pigs or salmon onto other people's property, we do not reward the property owner with property rights in the escapees (2004b:360 and *ftnt* 40). But this analogy only works if escaped pigs and salmon had reproductive systems that spread their genetic characteristics over long distances (as do plants that pollinate) causing frequent, accidental insemination of the pigs or salmon held by many other widely dispersed property owners.²⁵ In such a situation, would we think it logical that the owners of the GM pigs or salmon make claims to all resulting progeny until their patent expires? Pigs and salmon notwithstanding, the biased perception of the "objective" observer who calculates the benefits and costs and then advises courts to limit property rights based on (perhaps idiosyncratic) perceptions of net social gain, seem far too precarious a way to settle property disputes.

Conclusions: The Problem of Farmer Autonomy

While Siebrasse relegates farmer autonomy to a respect for property rights, other scholars have interpreted the problem much more broadly. While there may be many advantages from GM crops, as Monsanto and others have argued, these advantages should not blind us to the potential for serious harm to the farming practices of millions of primary producers around the globe—especially if

patents are used to promote cartel-like benefits for the few at the expense of the many. Farm organizations are noting a sharp North–South divide in the impact of GM foods. Particularly in the South, few farmers can afford the high cost of annual seed purchase, and while their national governments attempt to find a reasonable middle ground without attracting U.S. trade sanctions, small-scale farmers push to secure traditional seed saving and sharing practices. But even in the North, farmers are finding their economic position severely eroded under the growing power of the agrobusiness cartels.

As Stone (2002:619) notes, the GM debate has created the opportunity for anthropologists and other scholars to examine "the social life of genetically modified seeds" in real farming systems in many different parts of the world. The "facts" that come to light when we do so, suggest that it is also necessary to study the social life of genetically modified seeds in the boardrooms of international trade, where the North–South divide finds expression in significant power imbalances. From this perspective, it would appear that TRIPS-style patent protection has enhanced the power of the biotech sector to extract maximum trade gains from the global food market. So long as this is the case, the impact of patent law on farmer autonomy will likely be a negative one. When intellectual property rights become the mechanism for turning independent farmers into contract employees of major agrotech industries, particularly given the North–South discrepancy in the distribution of such industries, policy advice on changes to patent acts must consider more needs than those of just the agrotech industries. Where TRIPS protects these cartels and enhances their reach and grasp, we need to be aware of the way that property rights in rural areas will be transformed with long term consequences for the economic health of rural communities. Perhaps a wider interpretation of the (relevant) facts will enable us to better assess where benefit and harm may accrue.

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Notes

- 1 This article was originally prepared for the Rural Property Network Workshop III: "Paradoxical Conjunctions: Access to Rural Resources in a Transnational Environment," Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, March 31–April 1, 2006. I thank the participants for their helpful comments on the original and the reviewers for *Anthropologica* for their helpful comments on the published version.

- 2 Specifically, the canola was genetically modified to be “glyphosate-resistant”; this allows for the application of the common herbicide Roundup (also produced by Monsanto) without damaging the canola. Thus, the canola seed is marketed as “Roundup Ready Canola.”
- 3 This court decision is confusing even for legal scholars. Siebrasse (2004b), for example, refers frequently to “patented plants.” See Drahos and Braithwaite (2002) on the difficulties presented by living organisms under patent law.
- 4 For a balanced view of the conflicting arguments, see Hardon (2004).
- 5 See *Tory’s Intellectual Property Bulletin* 26 May 2004.
- 6 *Perverse* is used here in the sense of deviating from what has been the standard understanding of what is good, proper or reasonable.
- 7 In the majority opinion, the judges characterized this development as “eliminating the need for tillage and *other* herbicides” to control weeds (*Monsanto v. Schmeiser* 2004:5, emphasis added).
- 8 On this point, see Ziff (2005).
- 9 This long-standing process of seed germplasm expansion has been dramatically affected by genetic modification of major food crops. I will return to this point later in the article.
- 10 To take just one example, Canadian farmers are heavily divided on the benefits of Monsanto products. But it has proven difficult to have an open debate about the issue. For example, when one of the faculty members from the University of Manitoba produced a film on the impact of Monsanto policies on prairie farming communities, the University blocked release of the film for over three years. Only when the Canadian Association of University Teachers got involved in the dispute, did the university allow the film to be distributed (see http://www.caut.ca/en/bulletin/issues/2005_sep/video.asp and http://www.caut.ca/en/bulletin/issues/2005_nov/news_video.asp). CAUT was concerned that the position of the University was prompted by a research funding relationship with Monsanto.
- 11 Haas describes an epistemic community as “a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain” (1992:3).
- 12 This, in turn, has triggered dramatic changes on U.S. and Canadian university campuses as administrators attempted to follow government advice that they secure property rights in the discoveries of academic staff that may have commercial applicability (see CAUT legal reviews at <http://www.caut.ca/en/publications/legalreview/default.asp>).
- 13 One study, for example, found that over 70% of scientific papers cited in biotechnology patents originated in public science institutions (universities, farm extension services) compared with the 16.5% that came from the private sector (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002:165).
- 14 For example, how would the calculus of social benefit change if we had definitive evidence that GM crops represent costs that are not being considered here? Are GM foods safe or do they lead to higher levels of disease, allergy problems and environmental damage? Much more research is being done on being able to detect GM components in crops or in processed food than is being focused on broader food safety questions (see Kuiper et al. 2004).
- 15 Farmers’ groups on record for being critical of Monsanto are legion and in North America include Canada’s National Farmers Union, Canada’s Wheat Board and the U.S. National Family Farm Coalition. International organizations working with farmers such as MISEREOR and the International Food Policy Research Institute have also been critical.
- 16 A number of sharp criticisms of the biotech industry have originated from contamination cases, including a case that pitted upland Mexican peasant farmers against the producers of GM corn varieties (see www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A37992-2004Nov9.html). Cross species contamination has also threatened the farming industry with “super weeds” that are resistant to major herbicides. Another critique emerged from Monsanto’s recent release of Roundup Ready alfalfa, the first perennial plant seed to be patented. This has led to a lawsuit by the Western Organization of Resource Councils challenging the U.S. Department of Agriculture approvals for the GM forage crop (see www.worc.org/issues/art_issues/gmalfalfa.html).
- 17 One anonymous reviewer of this article pointed out that this problem is restricted to the “global north,” while in the “global south,” traditional seed is still much more widely used. That indeed is the point, as increasing pressure is placed on southern nations to conform to TRIPS, southern farmers may soon find themselves in the same situation.
- 18 Such undisclosed returns from intellectual property protection would need to be high indeed to justify their annual budget of US\$10 million and a full-time staff of 75 devoted solely to investigating and prosecuting American farmers (Center for Food Safety 2005:4).
- 19 The term *chill effect* refers to using the threat of litigation to suppress the behaviour of others. Fear of being subject to legal action leads people to modify their behaviour or curtail expectations (see Eckersley 2004).
- 20 According to the Center for Food Safety (2005), there is only one large competitor with international seed distribution left in the U.S., and they have an agreement with Monsanto to distribute Monsanto GM seeds. Meanwhile, research on and production of conventional seed varieties has sharply declined. The result is that farmers find it very difficult to access high quality, reliable, non-GM seed.
- 21 Drahos and Braithwaite (2002:154-156) document a “herd-like rush to the patent office” aimed at four broad patent targets: units of life, molecules and other elements of those units, the instructions for the assembly of those units, and the methods of manipulation of all of the above. See also Magnus et al. 2002.
- 22 Here Siebrasse follows a well-worn path in economic property theory. Bromley (1989) argues that all property imposes costs on others. The problem, as Furubotn and Pejovich (1972:1142) pose it, is not “how can we constrain A from harming B?,” but rather “should A be allowed to harm B or should B be allowed to harm A?” The goal then is to avoid the more serious harm. For a critique of another policy application of this approach to property see Wiber (2000).
- 23 See the special issue of the journal *Focaal* edited by Müller (2006a) and her contribution to the volume in which she outlines how the Canadian courts dismissed such a case involving organic farmers (Müller 2006b).

- 24 Evidentiary problems, for example, would “make it difficult for the patentee to enforce its rights against *intentional* users” (Siebrasse 2004b:364-365).
- 25 Perhaps if pigs could fly? The logical flaw in the salmon analogy is even more serious. Farmed salmon do not normally escape into the cages of other salmon farms, as Siebrasse points out, but they do escape into the wild where their genetic characteristics cause problems when they become incorporated into wild salmon stocks. How do we calculate the net social benefits or costs of this outcome?

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Project Law—a Legal Intermediary between Local and Global Communities: A Case Study from Senegal

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Abstract: This article focuses on the working methods of international development agencies. It pays attention to the societal impact of normative orders regulating the conceptualization and implementation of development projects. On the basis of a slum sanitation project in Senegal, it outlines how transnational concepts of rural property relations interfere with local concepts and what kind of reactions a project might set in motion locally, nationally and internationally. Attention will also be paid to the dynamics entailed in the triangular structure of transnational and rural actors and the state and its representatives.

Keywords: development agencies, project law, Senegal, slum sanitation, rural property relations, Maraboutic order

Résumé : Ce texte traite des méthodes de travail des organisations de développement international. Il porte une attention particulière à l'impact social des règles normatives qui régularisent la conceptualisation et l'implémentation des projets de développement. En se basant sur un projet d'assainissement au Sénégal, il démontre la façon dont des concepts transnationaux des relations de propriété foncière s'imbriquent avec des concepts locaux et quel le genre de réaction qu'un projet peut déclencher au niveau local, national et international. Un autre aspect important du texte est la dynamique qui résulte de la structure triangulaire entre d'une part les agents transnationaux et ruraux et d'autre part ceux de l'État et de ses représentants.

Mots-clés : organisations de développement, droit des projets, Sénégal, assainissement des quartiers pauvres, relations de propriété foncière, ordre des Marabouts

Introduction

This article analyzes the impacts of processes of transnationalization and globalization on rural property relations, and draws attention to the working methods of international development agencies. I focus on this field of action through the analysis of a development project from Senegal, which began in 1987 and is ongoing. Development agencies are certainly at the forefront of the globalization process. Yet, they also work closely with rural “target groups,” trying to empower the poor and to strengthen institutions in an attempt to realize a balance that more closely reflects their own notion of social justice.

All development agency political interventions are formed by a particular kind of law, so-called “project law.” This kind of law strongly influences the observed paradoxes of ongoing processes of globalization and transnationalization, which in turn are concurrent with an increasing homogenization and fragmentation of legal and social relationships. On the one hand, project law has a homogenizing impact on social change because it structures the development political consulting process through norms that are thought to be applicable worldwide. These norms step into all those sociopolitical contexts that are subject to any social change whatsoever. On the other hand, project law also contains behavioural demands on the local population; it offers project-dependent provisions of new structures for decision making or regulations for the allocation of new resources. Therefore, project law also enhances the possibilities of fragmentation in recipient countries. And because each project has its corresponding legal body, various law bodies in any one setting might also clash in different ways with local customary, religious or state law. Project law is thus Janus-faced and development agencies are often regarded increasingly as important legal pluralistic actors in a cumulatively fragmented field of competing normative systems.

Although a considerable amount of literature already deals with the operation of international development

agencies, including those from an anthropological viewpoint,¹ little attention has been paid to the societal impact of normative orders regulating the conceptualization and implementation of development projects or to the sociopolitical power structure that generates such regulations. For instance, David Mosse, an influential scholar of the anthropology of development, who has called for an “opening up [of] the implementation black box so as to address the relationship between policy and event” (2003:5), has himself largely neglected the convoluted processes of legal decision making. While all development interventions take aim at societal contexts that are marked by their own legal organization of social, economic and political living conditions, it is regrettable that most social anthropological analyses refer only to questions of “power,” “policy,” “discourse” or “cultural factors.”²

In this article, attention will be paid first to the question of how transnational concepts of rural property relations interfere with local concepts and what kind of reactions a project might set in motion locally, nationally and internationally. Attention will also be paid to the dynamics entailed in the triangular structure of transnational and rural actors and the state and its representatives. The Senegal case study reports on a belated attempt to regulate so-called “wild settlements” in the greater Dakar area. I then shift my focus to the ways that the problem descriptions are produced and administered as a distinct property of development agencies; further, I ask how they determine the project law to be applied and how these problem descriptions, as a legitimating part of the normative orders of development agencies, conflict with other normative orders such as prevailing state law or the Maraboutic order. Finally, I discuss the manner in which such problem descriptions entail a layered structure that reconfigures the access rules to rural property.

My experience with the project began with some prior consultations for the German Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ) from 1997 to 1999, and from a private stay in 2000 in Senegal. Additional project information, up to 2004, has also been considered. The case study thus draws on several stays in Dalifort and Pikine (two Dakar shanty towns), on internal project documents such as consultants’ reports, project documents and plans, on several interviews with local stakeholders, on discussions with lawyers and politicians, on a long-term correspondence with a former GTZ team leader, on challenging exchanges with a Senegalese friend, and on additional discussions with the responsible departments at GTZ headquarters in Eschborn (Germany). Before going into the case study details, I will first outline my concept of project law, as I

have applied it in my earlier publications on the issue (Weilenmann 2005a, In press).

What Is Project Law?

“Project law” is a relatively recent concept,³ and one that requires further elaboration. By and large, this concept contains all those legal concepts that are part of the usual techniques of project management in the field of development. For the purpose of this case study, I distinguish two types of legal schemes: first, those which refer to the planning and conceptualization process of development projects and programs in general; and second, those which are negotiated between project personnel and their target groups and thus apply in specific development project contexts.

The approach, as expounded by Günther and Randeria (2001), is predominantly relevant for those legal rules that guide the planning and conceptualization phase of a development project as well as the monitoring and transfer of project responsibilities to local implementing organizations (cf. Weilenmann 2005a). Günther and Randeria (2001) focus mainly on “memoranda of agreement, terms of reference, management systems, administrative and budgeting procedures, accounting and auditing procedures and standards, regulations of purchase, benchmarks for evaluating the progress of the projects and the attainment of project goals, operational policies and operational directives of the donor organizations which are binding on the credit or loan recipient.” Conditionality is regarded as a “tool that creates slots for other instruments to be inserted into the national polity” (Günther and Randeria 2001:70).

Such legal rules regulate a distinct understanding of development co-operation and shape the stated policy objectives and their reasons. While such project law comes into existence and is reproduced within development organizations or in interaction with their partners in developing countries, project law of a different kind emerges during the phase in which development projects are institutionalized and implemented.

Project law also encompasses those legal rules which are formed by project personnel during the implementation process and in interaction with so-called target groups (cf. Thomson 1987). Von Benda-Beckmann (1989) specifically considered this process by analyzing the role of project law during the phases of institutionalization and implementation. In this manner, project law lays down behavioural demands for the local population, devises new structures for decision making and the allocation of resources, and regulates the various relationships between project personnel and target group(s).⁴

Examples include the so-called new fora for dialogue and peace with local stakeholders or new legal mechanisms to obtain official land titles. These processes are initiated and later negotiated by the responsible project personnel, or are the concretization of generic terms such as sustainability, participation, the target group concept and the like. Here, the benchmark depends on the country-specific requirements of a project-related target system but will be further influenced by corresponding time frames and budget of the project. Most importantly, project law incorporates criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of parts of the total population, thus regulating access to scarce—and frequently also disputed—resources in local settings.

Is Project Law a Form of Law?

Having discussed the project side, we can now turn to the law component of project law—the question is whether project law is actually law or just one of several internal orders. According to Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, many of these concepts and principles are “formally speaking not yet law, but in effect obtain the same level of obligation” (2001:38). She goes on to add that these

principles and concepts have been developed and elaborated in various parts of international law but they show little internal coherence. To some extent they are still proto-law, not yet fully developed principles [that] float around in development circles as abstract goals of development co-operation. These agencies of development co-operation...play an intermediary role in concretizing rights and obligations and in implementing international law. But they do so as independent actors that have their own interest in the business. [2001:38]

Yet, Randeria (2005:154) wonders whether such normative concepts and goals should be considered law. She suggests considering these demands—which she qualifies as directives—as being part of a “policy process” that, in recent years, has been largely dominated by international development bureaucracies. I quote her at some length here, as she makes a distinction that I wish to challenge:

A distinction between [normative concepts and policy process] at an analytical level is important, precisely because the line between law and policy has become increasingly blurred in recent years in the wake of the transnationalization of both law and policy. Klaus Günther and I have used the term project law in a narrower sense...Not all norms governing development intervention, however, are project law...Development projects, for example in the area of family planning and reproductive health, certainly diffuse and even impose

contraceptive practices, the acceptance of a small family norm...But these disciplinary practices...are better understood as techniques of governmentality than as project law. [2005:154-155]

However, the law also organizes and legitimates power. To dichotomize the two, as Randeria does, and to argue that project law “is a very important technique of governmentality, but not all techniques of governmentality can be subsumed under project law” (2005:155), is thus a very misleading approach. Though I certainly would not call the entire gamut of Western norms and values diffused within the architecture of international aid as project law, it is still important to stress the fact, that project law is a very important governance technique. Additionally, with Foucault (1966) in mind, one should never forget that much of governmentality is also legally organized. Moreover, Geertz has pointed out a particular characteristic of law, namely that “law...propounds the world in which its descriptions make sense...The point here is that the ‘law’ side of things is not a bounded set of norms, rules, principles, values, or whatever from which juridical responses to distilled events can be drawn, but part of a distinctive manner of imagining the real” (1983:173).

Consequently, law as “statute” or “general law” can also be seen as a projective and legitimizing cosmology. The values that are constitutive of law allow for the regulation of “possible” or “thinkable” social problems. Therefore, it is not the pre-conceptions as such, but what these connote that point to underlying power constellations. One could therefore argue that the characteristics of normative behavioural demands testify to underlying policy processes. In this connection, von Benda-Beckmann (1989), Ferguson (1994) and Rottenburg (2002) rightly highlight the models of development policy that underlie such behavioural demands and hence justify intervention. Furthermore, these models, which contain statements about how the world is and how it should be, are not usually based on empirical data. Rather, they bear the mark of normativity because they derive behavioural demands and objectives, as well as the underlying forms of legitimacy, from social consequences that are simply posited without any concrete evidence. As this is a problem that characterizes much of the policy world, I follow Franz von Benda-Beckmann (1989:134) in hypothesizing that development projects have the form of law.

The Critical Role of Problem Definition

The social consequences of development projects often derive from the way problem definitions are designed and administered. Problem definitions assess observed social behaviour in regards to internal normative sets, which

have to be considered when conceptualizing and implementing a project plan. Various authors have already emphasized that development agencies time and again oversimplify the social complexities of the environments in which they operate.⁵ When searching for the reasons behind such simplifications, one becomes aware of the ways in which legal and sociopolitical concerns are turned into development-political questions. In essence, topics suitable for development aid, such as access rules to rural property or patterns of settlement, have to be identified as “problems” in order to become the subject of development projects (see Rottenburg 2002:92). These “problems” then have to be classified according to the normative frames of the developmental donors such as “Poverty Reduction,” “Gender Equality,” “Promotion of Human Rights and Rule of Law,” “Good Governance” and so on.

However, there is no normative code to determine what exactly these labels mean. Instead, their interpretation is subject to an ongoing internal debate in the course of which project profiles are designed. Problem definitions are therefore determined by the vision of the change agents and these visions structure the corporate identity of project personnel. Problem definitions also channel the temporal perspective of a project plan and are always positioned vis-à-vis the notions of other interest groups or (state) institutions in order to identify potentials for collaboration or for blockages and to give structure to expectations about success or failure. For anthropological analyses of project documents, it is thus crucial to examine the various ways in which such problem definitions are produced and administered. One has to investigate how information collection is institutionally organized, when a problem description is regarded as valid and—because of the professional and economic interests at stake—one has to ask how the understanding of such problem-solving is linked to the concrete interests and living conditions of different actor groups.

The Case: Belated Regulation of So-called “Wild Settlements” in the Greater Dakar Area

In 1987 the German GTZ launched a large-scale slum sanitation and reconstruction project in Dakar, which was still functioning at the time of writing. At the outset, the project rationale was set in the context of the official “politics of the bulldozer” that aimed at large-scale slum clearances that always resulted in more social and economic hardship and in uncoordinated re-building of formerly destroyed wooden shacks. A preceding slum clearance had taken place in 1985. GTZ started with a pilot project in one shanty town, Dalifort. Dalifort became a political

development laboratory to develop and test best practices that might be applicable at the wider scale and thereby arrive at a legal definition useful in the regulation of so-called “wild settlements” all over Senegal.

GTZ identified an environmental problem as core to this issue: the growing desertification of Senegal and corresponding migrations to the cities. Shanty towns were thus seen as a direct consequence of desertification. In addition, the agency focused on erratic population growth and the fact that the settlements were growing each day. Since the state owned the land, the settlements were identified as “wild” and “spontaneous” (no visible order) and thus illegal. Huge sanitation problems were reported from the squatter settlements. They were also seen as loci of extreme poverty, unemployment and growing criminality. Therefore, “wild settlements” were identified as a ticking bomb set to undermine the economic, political, social and legal development of the whole of Senegal.

During the implementation phase, additional difficulties arose, such as the complicated working procedures of the state bureaucracy, the doubtful will of the beneficiaries to claim ownership and the so-called sociocultural framework conditions. Strong criticisms were directed at the sluggishness of the ministerial bureaucracy, which obstructed vertical and horizontal coordination of sector administration during Senegal’s slow shift to decentralized state administration; the (limited) willingness of the target groups to be accountable with the state administration for the negotiated cost-sharing model; and, the “traditional” discrimination towards women, which was seen to interfere with the participatory approach.

How Does the Problem Description Interfere with Local Property Relations?

The problem description, which is still in use today, contains some remarkable statements. First, its environmental orientation needs to be queried. The settlers are classified as “desertification” refugees, but historical or political factors have not been considered and the problem is thereby rendered as natural rather than political (cf. GTZ 1998a:2f). The settlers came like a sandstorm to Dakar, where they built up their “hazardous” shanty towns, but the purely environmental explanation is challenged by the results of several large-scale irrigation projects on the Senegal River in the North. These projects aimed at combatting growing desertification but with the improvement of the fertility of the land, they also led to a massive rise in land prices, contributed to a regrouping of the local population and boosted migration to the cities. Parts of the most vulnerable population were crowded out by wealthy Senegalese, and by national and international

brokers (cf. Cotula et al. 2004:35-36). Although officially land could not be bought and is allocated by the rural council, many informal rental and sale arrangements have been made. Moreover, rural councils rarely make such land allocations without the approval of customary chiefs. This raises the additional issue of the way in which the problem description for these projects is positioned vis-à-vis the legal regulations of two other important actors: the postcolonial state bureaucracy and the Maraboutic order.

Actor 1: The Senegalese State Bureaucracy

It is clear that problem identification of the shanty town project has been exclusively oriented toward official state law, since it qualifies the settlements as “wild,” “spontaneous” and “illegal.”⁶ It is predicated on the official land expropriation of 1964. At that time, all land regulated by customary law was identified as unregistered land, thus automatically falling under the official control of the state (cf. Hesseling, 1990/91:15). From that point forward, the state has considered itself the official custodian of this land and individuals could only be granted usufruct rights. Since then, this land—called “national domain” (*domaine nationale*)—has been subdivided into four categories, including three agricultural zones and an “urban zone,” which covers municipal territory.

But as is so often the case, the official discourse on property rights only fogs important legal, political and economic power constellations.⁷ The land expropriation act entails a series of problems, notably regarding the governmental capacity to implement such a rule⁸ and confusion arising from the distinction between national domain and the normal property of the state (*domaine de l'État*). The former Senegalese President, Leopold Sedar Senghor,⁹ legislated, but he applied the law at most only partially. His power position depended heavily on the Maraboutic order, mainly from the Sufi-branch of the Muridiyya, who were particularly well anchored in the countryside (Loimeier 2001:147). In order to stay in power, Senghor decided, just a short time after the act's promulgation, to surrender most of the national domain to religious leaders, the Marabouts of the countryside. Nevertheless, the new law played a role mostly with respect to political manoeuvres and ideological purposes, such as the promotion and propagation of Senghor's ideas on the planned economy (African socialism) and his concept of *Négritude*.¹⁰ In 1970, Senghor gave some lectures at the University of Uppsala where he outlined the advantages of having a comprehensive plan and reported the promulgation of the new law as a successful venue for the promotion of economic development¹¹:

At the time of independence, useable agrarian land was owned by about 15% of the total population. [But because of the former patron-client relations] the farmers were not interested in using fertilizers. In order to solve this problem, we returned to old “Negro-African” customary law, which knew no property right, but only a usufruct right. Ninety-five percent of the lands, which before were in individual hands, were thus transformed into common property—not of the state but of the Nation of Senegal. By this promulgation of a law for the public good, the lands were thus directly placed at the beneficiaries' disposal... Amazingly, this revolution of the lands was accomplished by amicable agreement... During the meetings we organized, we convinced different groups of landowners to effect this change on the night of August 4 with the assistance of “Negro-African” dialogue. [1970:535]¹²

However, the night of August 4 proceeded so peacefully mainly because the Senegalese bureaucracy never controlled the whole territory and thus surrendered, in spite of the law, the national domain to the Marabouts for cultivation. The lack of rural anchorage for the modern state apparatus remains its Achilles heel. Regarding the shanty towns, it was thus not very surprising that the official state bureaucracy stressed the 1964 law on land expropriation only in order to legitimate slum clearances and the appellation of “illegal and wild settlers,” and not in order to recognize any public responsibility for the social and legal protection of vulnerable migrants. Furthermore, the legal distinction between the national domain (*domaine nationale*) and the property of the state (*domaine de l'État*) was cumulatively blurred. The state bureaucracy disenfranchised the urban poor—mainly in Senegal's shanty towns—simply by instigating processes for the expropriation of land for the general good. Thereafter, the land was registered in the name of the state, thus falling within the category of state property, and all formerly existing rights to the land were abrogated. This way, land within the national domain became property of the state, a procedure which was particularly problematic in such densely populated suburbs as Dalifort and Pikine (see Hesseling 1990/91; Loimeier 2001). The partial implementation of the 1964 land law certainly improved the social and legal position of the Maraboutic order and thereby the validity of local customary law. The “hazardous” order in these “spontaneous” settlements was thus influenced by multiple, overlapping and partly competing normative orders that were fed by a power conflict between parts of the official state bureaucracy and the Maraboutic order on the one hand, and by internal frictions within the Maraboutic order on the other.

The Maraboutic order¹³ is based on Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam which is very well established in Senegal. According to Villalón “most people in Senegal are born into a connection to a Marabout [sheik/religious leader]... While these ties are... fluid and manipulable, they are also absolutely central to people’s lives” (1995:121). Mbacke mentions a traditional Sufi proverb which states that those who have no sheik are guided by Satan (1995:5). The Maraboutic charisma, largely dependent on personal relationships, is enhanced by a patron-client relationship between Marabouts and followers. According to Villalón, the patronage function of the Marabouts has been “particularly important in the distribution of land, notably in the periods and areas of expanding peanut cultivation. The relative importance of these two aspects of dependency may vary not only across orders, but also in relation to such factors as caste status, geographic location, and ‘modern’ contacts” (1995: 118). The need for patronage, both material and spiritual, usually requires a long-term relationship. According to Loimeier, the erudite Sufis are recognized as healers, adjudicators, arbitrators, blessing givers, political intermediaries, organizers and leaders of widely ramified economic networks, and principal protectors of their wards (*talibés*). Landless farmers, subordinate to a Marabout and thus beneficiaries of such gratifications, are wards and are required, inter alia, to make gifts and donations, to work for particular economic purposes, collect votes and vote according to specific instructions (2001:115f).

In our context, only two of four important Sufi branches¹⁴ are relevant, the Tijaniyya and the Muridiyya. Both branches are widespread and hierarchically organized. While Villalón stresses the great Maraboutic control of Muridiyya orders (1995:117), Robinson (2000:143f) and Loimeier (2001:116) highlight the role of some particularly erudite Tijaniyya, who obviously developed quite similar patronage networks. Also significant is their influence on the composition of the actual state administration: while Senegal’s first president Leopold Senghor (1960–80) owed his power position mainly to Muridiyya support, his successor Abdou Diouf (1980–2000) depended on the political recognition of the Tijaniyya. The current president, Abdoulaye Wade (2000-), is again a Mouride. This rapprochement with the Mouride leadership, however, caused quite a stir.

Until the late 1960s, conflicts between these two branches were rare mainly because of the geographic and social locations of the different clientele networks: the Tijaniyya recruited its disciples in the urban centres and

in the countryside outside the peanut basin, while the Muridiyya, who developed and controlled peanut cultivation, were anchored in the region of Diourbel. But with growing population mobility from the 1970s onward, many Muridiyya networks extended their recruiting reservoirs to the urban centres as well. From the base of their increasing influence—particularly in Dakar’s shanty towns Pikine, Rufique, Guediawaye and Thiaroye (Loimeier 1994)—powerful Tijaniyya families became alarmed and launched a religiously motivated defamation campaign that declared the Muridiyya to be heterodox and un-Muslim. These frictions, which finally escalated into open conflict in the 1990s, centred mainly on important voter reservoirs such as youth movements and the urban poor.

According to Loimeier (2001:323), however, most sociopolitical analyses overestimate the Muridiyya’s influence on state-supporting structures. Today, Kalifs and Marabouts of the Tijaniyya are mainly anchored in public administration and in the intellectual milieu (as teachers, lawyers, judges and university professors), while many Muridiyya work as businessmen in the informal sector.¹⁵ Within public administration, the Tijaniyya formed very effective networks under Abdou Diouf (1980–2000). They became a state structuring power and achieved public recognition as the “true” Muslim power of Senegal.

Goal, Strategy and Methods of the Development Project

The goal, strategy and methods of the GTZ shanty development project, which has been running since 1987, have not been very responsive to Senegal’s changing power configuration. The goal is to achieve adequate shelter that is environmentally sound by improving standards of living and regulating land tenure for occupation. To achieve such a goal, each project requires a clear understanding of the composition of partner structures and the interests at stake, particularly if, as is the case here, the project opts for a participatory approach by strengthening the dialogue between administrative authorities and populations of the squatter settlements. But up to 2004, this project did not anticipate the political consequences of the growing influence of Tijaniyya’s old-boy networks on the working of public administration and thus ignored the socio-cultural context of target public officers.

In addition, the project sought to develop a general legal procedure that would allow shanty dwellers to get official land title and the required resources for ongoing slum sanitation and reconstruction processes—processes that should eventually be independent of external donor

interventions. The basic structure of this procedure was essentially designed during the late 1990s but has passed through many phases since then (Weilenmann 1998:11f). The central idea is that the procedure should guarantee a strict separation between private construction firms and a private foundation that was initiated by the project. This foundation is responsible for all planning tasks (including evaluation of living quarters to be reconstructed), the mobilization and administration of credit and the payment of bills and so forth. Second, the procedure should guarantee a strict separation between the private foundation and the political structure (municipal and district administration) in order to prevent any (abusive)¹⁶ influence on project execution and to ensure congruency between slum restructuring and the participatively developed project plan.

The procedure ought to work as follows: first, the municipalities file an application with the foundation. The foundation then conducts a kind of mini-feasibility study, from which emanates the expected costs for the regularization and the restructuring of a neighbourhood. This calculation forms the basis for the granting of credit by the donor agency. On the basis of a tender, a qualified private construction firm is engaged. After having done the job, it bills the municipality for the costs. The municipality appraises and forwards the bill to the foundation, which pays the private construction firm directly.

Up to 2000, this procedure was not properly applied. While Senegal's move from a highly centralized ministerial bureaucracy to a decentralized state structure was under way, the German project staff debated the idea of abandoning the existing partner structure and moving project responsibility from the Ministry of Urban Affairs to a private foundation. Dissension with respect to next steps within the GTZ, as well as discussions within the responsible ministries, resulted in a remarkable delay. Since 2002, the procedure for land registration and fee collection has been working as designed—a design that fails to address two sensitive points. It ignores firstly the cultural and historical background of Senegalese interconnections between political and religious power structures and is based on the bureaucracy-bound assumption of strict functional role attributes, which rarely fit well with the complex networks of agrarian states.¹⁷ And secondly, the design contains some elements that are more appropriate for the promotion of new forms of quasi-state status.¹⁸

For example, composition, design, assignment of duties and the mobilization of new funds by the foundation, which have to be separated from the (democratically) legitimated municipal structure, are explicitly described

in the target system and remain therefore largely controlled by applied project law.¹⁹ Important goals of the project included: the generation of a new legal, administrative and financial framework for the formation of an independent and autonomous foundation; a reorganization of the partner structure; and, an improvement of instruments in order to change access rules to rural property and covering of associated costs (GTZ 1998b).

Acknowledged Paradoxes of the Project

The first paradox is that, despite the participatory approach, this project was not as democratic, inclusive and transparent as officially declared (GTZ 2001). According to former GTZ project manager Voigt-Moritz, the participatory planning method is neither an event for the popular masses nor a democratic process (1991:7). In order to identify the customs of everyday life in the shanty towns, the project engaged a local undercover agent.²⁰ He rented a flat in Dalifort, secretly investigated the manner of construction, dimension and design of the wooden shacks, and explored local living conditions. He identified some common procedures of illegal settlement, traced common conflict patterns based on gender and generational relations, observed “patriarchal” processes of local decision-making, analyzed the illegal planning of spontaneous settlements, scrutinized the supervision of unauthorized civil works, and examined fund management. According to Voigt-Moritz, this knowledge was important for understanding the behaviour and composition of local target groups (1991:6). But using this approach makes the starting point of participatory project planning non-transparent. Instead of involving local actors in real participation, such actors are externally pre-selected and ordered to participate in a fully developed project.

The second paradox is that, on the basis of this knowledge, the project focused primarily on the participation of settlers and dignitaries who migrated some time ago, since it was mainly this group who got plots (via the multiple dependencies of the Maraboutic structure) and thus “owned” most of the wooden shacks. But this approach entailed excluding women, youth and the poorest of the poor—the principal target groups of GTZ's development programs. Voigt-Moritz (1991:7) remarked critically that a slum sanitation project could not be in their interests: “Even the rumour of possible slum sanitation might entail rising rental fees. Each upgrading by reconstruction and legalizing of the plots becomes therefore [more] expensive. Thus, some have to leave the district and to look for a place in cheaper, unprotected and illegal quarters and consequently, they are even farther away from their jobs.” Given this approach, the project endangered its own devel-

opment objectives—like the above mentioned irrigation projects at the Senegal River—instead of achieving adequate shelter for the most vulnerable migrants; it resulted in new forms of inner migration.

The third paradox is that the clear focus on well-identified local target groups and on the required procedure for the regulation of so-called “wild settlements” led to a fragmented understanding of the core problem and to a technically oriented project management.²¹ The project never focused on social, cultural and political root causes of the shanty towns. The management realized this point only after it widened the scope of the plan²² in order to tackle belated regulation in other districts of Dakar.

The fourth paradox is that, until 1996, core project philosophy was based upon complete political neutrality: “attempts to promote democracy...[and] to correct clientele disorders are not permissible interventions in the inner affairs of the host country” (Voigt-Moritz 1991:7). The political reorientation of donor countries toward topics such as the promotion of democracy, decentralization or good governance thus took project management by surprise. Until 1996, management ignored the changing legal framework conditions of the wider political stage and only later did it begin to anticipate the local consequences of Senegal’s slow shift from a highly centralized state apparatus to a decentralized public order. Project management thus first developed—through painfully detailed work—a procedure for land registration and fee collection that was, in fact, inapplicable.²³ Later, cultural conflicts such as the increasing lack of accountability of the then-mayors were associated with the ongoing decentralization and democratization process. The then-project leader Roukema argued:

The decentralization process, which has its silver lining, also complicates our implementation difficulties, because some of the mayors are not sufficiently qualified; some are even illiterate. The status of the wild and illegal settlements doesn’t bother them. As long as they can place their well-disposed voters somewhere in their own community, things run well. But if we start pushing the restructuring of the settlements forward, the mayors do not always remain calm. What they need are votes and if some of the inhabitants have to look for other settlement opportunities, the mayors lose political influence. And if something goes wrong in their political sphere of influence, they are not responsible. For instance, if the high-voltage lines fall down, it is not their fault but an engineering error; and if the sewer is overloaded or blocked, the urban planning ministry didn’t do a good job, did they? [Personal correspondence 1999]

The fifth paradox is that, in spite of these contradictions, the project won the “Best Practice Award” of the United Nations at the Habitat II City Summit in Istanbul (1996). And in the year 2000, the project was selected for presentation at the World Exposition in Hannover.²⁴ Both the plan and the underlying concept of the project received a lot of interest from various National Public Administrations and the larger donor community, because they opened space for new options: instead of the former “politics of the bulldozer,” it was thought that a self-sustaining autonomous procedure could be developed with an associated financial framework.²⁵ Criteria applied in granting the award were: the participatory approach, the possible transfer of the method to other countries and the expected auto-financing of target groups. However, none of these criteria apply to the actual handling of cultural and political history and its impact on the property relations of shanty towns in the Dalifort and Pikine cases.

Meanwhile, in parallel with all these events, the “land management” planning section at GTZ headquarters in Eschborn was already criticizing this purely technical approach in 1997. It filed an “over-sectoral pilot project proposal” (GTZ 1997) with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ²⁶), which would explore the pluralistic legal background of these processes in important and rapidly growing cities of southern regions such as Dakar, Johannesburg, Bogotá, Recife and Jakarta. This proposal drew on earlier consulting reports on the role of legal pluralism in running development projects²⁷ and argued that given the limited capacities of target groups, such groups are clearly overwhelmed by this formal and technical approach. In Dakar, according to this proposal, participation is mainly conceptualized with respect to the formal rules of the town, the formal economy, formal state law and the formal role description of public officers. Instead, the new proposal recommended an acceptance of competing legal orders as a social fact and focused on applied action research in order to identify and test new approaches and methods better able to deal with problems of legal pluralism in growing cities. But this proposal never gained the required support at higher levels.²⁸

Unacknowledged Paradoxes of the Project

The project demonstrates the importance of paying sufficient attention to the layered structure of property relations (cf. von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann 1999:20f.), since they are networked with several, more or less separate and partly disconnected discourses on property rights. For example, the international community, represented here by the UN in Istanbul and the com-

mittee responsible for the World Exposition 2000, was drawn to those aspects of the project that were normatively conceived and that thus allowed for international application. In this way, some methods of the project contributed to the so-called “mainstreaming” of urban development projects through property rights that subsequently became a particular characteristic (indeed a “property”) of the global development community.²⁹

Second, the German BMZ as well as the executives of the development agency were, of course, very proud of the “Best Practice Award.” They thus identified the project procedure as an important political vehicle to combat any question of political legitimacy as a competent development organization (the project as trophy). In the run-up phase for the World Exposition in Hannover, the German BMZ and agency executives pushed project management to coordinate the end of the project with the beginning of the exposition. Hence, project management came under severe scrutiny and growing pressure to produce immediate results. In order to demonstrate developmental political efficiency, different phases of the project were therefore adjusted, which in turn resulted in the increasing use of juridical terminology.

Third, on the Senegal scene, structural differences between state law and multiple customary laws came into play. The National Lands Act of 1964 for instance aimed primarily at rural development. But the relative “aloofness of the government, . . . strengthened by the continuing incapability of the local bureaucracy to control the distribution of land and the construction of houses, has led to a situation in which the so-called spontaneous settlements have mushroomed” (Hesseling 1990/91:13). Unsurprisingly, land rights conversion and registration programs remained, for the majority of the rural population, an “empty dream castle” (von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann 1999:18) because those who desired registration were often either civil servants or immigrants who stood apart from the local property networks of the Marabouts. Contrary to the ideology of legal officials, the access rules for rural property remained under the control of neo-traditional authorities.

At the local level, the historically grounded differences between Muridiyya and Tijaniyya, as well as their unequal integration into the state apparatus, play a role. As public officers who were directly informed, the Tijaniyya had access to critical information. In order to guarantee cheap, accessible and equitable access to official land titles, the project negotiated a fixed price with the public administration for zoned lands in shanty towns. These prices were remarkably below real market value. Some neo-traditional authorities, mainly Tijaniyya, then

started to act as brokers by buying these titles in order to sell them on the free market. Such examples come mainly from the district of Arafat. At the same time, this commerce triggered an unforeseen side-effect of project law in the peri-urban zones of Dakar—the local application of an old and discredited land law from 1964. For many Muridiyya, as a result, there was now a vital interest in selling their un-zoned urban plots to migrants at low prices and as quickly as possible.³⁰ Otherwise, they risked an expropriation based on the re-sanctioned land law of 1964.

All these various layers thus demonstrate the importance of distinguishing different kinds of social phenomena which interact continuously with different elements of project law and together influence, form and reconfigure access rules to rural property.

Conclusions

Given an interest in the effects and impacts of processes of transnationalization and globalization on rural property relations, I focused attention in this paper on project law in the development sector. I assumed at the outset that project law would reconfigure access rules to rural property. But contrary to Scott, who regards “the transformation of peripheral nonstate spaces into state spaces by the modern, developmentalist nation-state” (1998:187) as a ubiquitous phenomenon, the slum sanitation project case presented here illustrated, rather, the absence of a direct cause-and-effect relationship. Indeed, like other law, project law has an effect on social action but these effects do not always comply with original intentions. Rather, project law constitutes another layer that shapes and may be shaped by various political, professional and economic interests at stake that are, at least partly, also legally organized. Yet, a focus on the application of project law provides useful insights into the complex “implementation black box” (Mosse 2003:5) of ongoing development projects, in particular because it shows how various specifications of the project (such as the normatively fixed problem definition or the ways a project plan has to be set up) interact with other internal and external normative sets. In this way, it puts into perspective the widespread tendency within development anthropology to see development as a monolithic enterprise (cf. Hobart 1993; Escobar 1995; and to a lesser degree Ferguson 1994) or to argue only with “power,” “policy,” “discourse” or “cultural factors” (cf. Mosse 2005:230f; van Gastel 2005:159-173). Far more important and more useful are case studies focusing on the multiple layers with which internal legal regulations such as project law might interact, and which dissect the complex processes of transnationalization and globalization and their effects on social change.

Finally, I need to stress that project law is tailor-made and thus always substantiated only within a specific development project. Project law can only be applied in the project region of the responsible development agency and only during the effective period of the project. Hence, Randeria (2005:155) rightly points to the limited spatial, temporal and institutional validity of individual project laws. For recipient countries like Senegal, however, different development agencies address different target groups and implement separate projects with different, and even partly contradictory, objectives. In addition, big donors tend to subdivide recipient countries into different spheres of influence and intervention. In this way, various development political actors become important legal pluralistic players, because their projects not only conflict in different ways with distinct sets of local customary law, state law or international law, but will also regularly entail a layered social structure that markedly reconfigures pre-existing bundles of rights. Their varied impact on access to vital resources should not be ignored.

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Notes

- 1 For example see Drinkwater 1992; Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994; Gardner and Lewis 1996; Grillo and Stirrat 1997; Hobart 1993; Sachs, 1992; and Shore and Wright 1997.
- 2 According to Grillo and Stirrat, "there is a widespread tendency... illustrated, for example, by Hobart, Escobar and to a lesser degree Ferguson to see development as a monolithic enterprise, heavily controlled from the top, convinced of the superiority of its own wisdom and impervious to local knowledge, or indeed common-sense experience, a single gaze or voice which is all-powerful and beyond influence." They call this the "myth of development," and argue that it "reflects a surprising ethnocentrism: It is very much the view from North America. Ill-informed about the history of government, it has a Jacobinist conviction of the state's power to achieve miraculous things" (Grillo and Stirrat 1997:20-21).
- 3 Its initial use is attributed to Thomson (1987).
- 4 The target group represents those members of society who should (directly) benefit from a given project, those for whom the project is conceptualized. The impact of the project should thus appear at the target group level (cf. Forster and Osterhaus 1996).
- 5 See Benveniste 1972; Merry 2005; Page 1985; Shore and Wright 1997:3-39; Sutton 1999; and van Gastel 2001 among others.

- 6 The same holds true for the Country Assessment Report of the World Bank from 2002. There too, the rules structuring the settlements are classified as "informal," as if the degree of formalization depended on codification. Therefore, customary land law regulations could be called "informal," even though they have been passed on ritually. Criticism of this biased approach, however, should not be misconstrued. I do not necessarily consider customary law as more appropriate than formal law.
- 7 Property relationships are multifunctional. Often, they constitute only one aspect of a "many-stranded" social relationship (Gluckman 1972:94; von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann 1999:33).
- 8 At the end of colonial times, the implementation of governmental decisions depended heavily on the patronage system of the Maraboutic order (discussed further on). In order to get votes, most political parties pledged and granted the Marabouts special benefits, access to privileges and goods, financial subsidies and legal protection (Loimeier 2001; Robinson 2000; Villalón 1995).
- 9 Senghor was in power between 1960 and 1980.
- 10 The French term *Négritude* refers to a literary and ideological movement led by Black intellectuals in Paris in the 1930s. The founders, Aimé Césaire, Léon-Gontran Damas and Léopold Sédar Senghor, advocated resolutely for a new "African" identity and stressed common values such as the transcultural significance of the community in Africa, the working methods of "Negro-African" customary law, the history of common suffering during colonial suppression and the particular cultural achievements of African history (Ki-Zerbo 1978).
- 11 All translations from German are by the author.
- 12 This date has significance in that on the 4 August 1789, the national assembly of France decided to abolish the liberties of the feudal class. Obviously Senghor believed he could solve the problem notionally by referring to Galbraith's work on "The New Industrial State" (1972) and added that he had decided—like a king—"to replace nationalization by socialization as Senegalization of the society" (1970:535).
- 13 The Maraboutic order includes Marabouts and Kalifs. Both are spiritual leaders. Between the two, a hereditary line exists: the oldest male descendent of a Kalif (who, as a Sufi, is the principal holder of religious-political power) becomes a Kalif, other male descendants are Marabouts.
- 14 According to Mbacke (1995:5), the Quadriyya (10%), the Tijaniyya (50%), the Muridiyya (30%) and the Layèene (5%) are the most numerous Sufi branches of Senegal.
- 15 An empirical study in the so-called "informal sector" of Dakar found that up to 65% of all marketers and retailers, bus and taxi drivers are Muridiyya (Kane 1994:20).
- 16 According to several project documents, corruption or the mobilization of partly kin-based clientele relations to further private or political advantage, are regarded as abuses (GTZ 1998a, 2001, 2004; Voigt-Moritz 1991).
- 17 The then GTZ-team leader, Jan Roukema, acknowledged this difficulty as early as 1998. He proposed the formation of a research unit which would scientifically evaluate the application of regulations, collect lessons learned and explore the social, political and environmental root causes of the mushrooming of these shanty towns. But due to var-

- ious internal dissensions, intrigues and limited budgets, the proposition was finally shelved (Personal correspondence 1999-2000).
- 18 The term *quasi-state status* refers to the growing “referral of sovereignty rights and fundamental administrative tasks (to) groups and institutions” that compete with the post-colonial state for political leadership in rural areas. Both authors stress the unconstitutionality of such power-sharing, since this cession of sovereign rights and principal tasks of public administration happens stealthily through processes of “informal decentralization” and “privatization” (Rösel and von Trotha 1999:10).
 - 19 The project concept contains relevant indicators for the target system as well as an implementation structure; further, a budget model was regularly sanctioned through government-level negotiations between Germany and Senegal.
 - 20 “While social scientists call such a research method ‘participant observation,’” Voigt-Moritz claimed, “we practiced espionage” (1991:6).
 - 21 Richard Rottenburg (2002: 217f) points to the technical game as a kind of meta-code within development bureaucracies. While the technical game marks the social engineering narrative by classifying rising social phenomena as either efficient or inefficient, cultural factors are mainly viewed as local. At best, they are only considered when presumed to reside outside the modern state bureaucracy and the development agencies themselves, and when they are features attributed to so-called target groups (see for example, Crewe and Harrison 1998:43-46).
 - 22 “But now after the project has left,” the then project manager Roukema wondered, “what is going on? The old chaotic system is re-launched, new houses are built again under high-voltage lines, some start buying or selling parts of the main road, others discuss occupying public places and so on. The new rules are thus not accepted. I suppose the target group accepted the new rules only as long as the project, as a kind of antenna of the official state bureaucracy was in, but now, since GTZ left, the same problems arise again!” (Weilenmann 1998:10, author’s translation).
 - 23 The responsible project-leader, Roukema, a Dutchman who worked there from 1996 to 2001, complained that “all is delayed, the set-up of the whole A-phase was not well done, the project just launched a plan relating to a belated regulation, but it did not focus properly on the changing framework conditions (history of the root causes; decentralization)—therefore, the project surely can not end in 2000—as it has been stipulated in all these nice German plans!” (Personal communication 1997).
 - 24 At the Expo2000 in Hannover, four towns from four continents were selected, namely Aachen, Dakar, Shanghai and Sao Paulo.
 - 25 A certain number of upgrading projects have been subsequently carried out by the DUA (Direction de l’Urbanisme et de l’Architecture du Sénégal)/GTZ unit in the districts of Dalifort, Arafat, Medina Fass M’Baou, Ainoumady, Sam Sam I, II and III, Wakhimane, Gueule-Tapée and Rail. And jointly with the EU, the GTZ has also applied the “Dalifort method” in Pikine/St. Louis, Khouma/Richal Toll and Tenghory/Bignona.
 - 26 In Germany, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is called “Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung,” or BMZ.
 - 27 See Weilenmann 1997 and 1998.
 - 28 This is not to say that the GTZ still ignores legal pluralism. On the contrary, in the last ten years, GTZ’s sensitivity with respect to such phenomena has improved remarkably (see GTZ 2004; Weilenmann 2005a, 2005b).
 - 29 See the World Bank’s Country Assessment Report on Senegal 2002.
 - 30 For Dalifort, the former GTZ team leader, Roukema, speaks of “crooks” who “sold these plots to illiterates. They even gave ‘receipts’ of pharmacies and the like in order to convince the innocent unsuspecting” (Personal communication 2009).

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The Structure of San Property Relations: Constitutional Issues and Interventionist Politics

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Abstract: Renewed interest in Kalahari San-speaking peoples in the 1950s led to revival of 19th-century concepts of them as nomads without systemic notions of property. Ethnographic and popular literature drew pictures of peoples without fixed ideas about land tenure, as distinct from usufruct rights or personal property, who solved social conflicts by fission of the group. These concepts can no longer be maintained. Nevertheless, transnational organizations have adopted them to challenge current property arrangements, particularly with regard to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana, employing a neo-liberal ideology based on their own notion of social justice to justify selection of San peoples as a special target group for empowerment in opposition to other “groups” and in challenge to government policies. In so doing, they create social animosity and increase the economic vulnerability of the targetted people.

Keywords: land tenure, property rights, Botswana, San-speaking people, anthropology, essentialism

Résumé : Dans les années 50, un regain d'intérêt pour les populations sanophones du Kalahari a mené à la résurgence de concepts datant du XIX^e siècle les présentant comme des nomades sans notions systémiques de la propriété. La documentation ethnographique et la littérature populaire les ont dépeints comme des populations dépourvues d'idées établies au sujet des modes de faire-valoir des terres, ces derniers étant distincts de l'usufruit et des droits à la propriété personnelle, et comme des populations résolvant les conflits sociaux en scindant le groupe. Ces concepts ne tiennent dorénavant plus, mais des organisations transnationales les ont tout de même adoptés pour remettre en question les arrangements actuels portant sur la propriété. À l'égard de la Réserve faunique du Kalahari central au Botswana, en particulier, ces organisations font appel à une idéologie néolibérale basée sur leur propre concept de justice sociale afin de justifier leur choix de rendre les populations San, érigées en un groupe-cible, plus autonome face à d'autres « groupes » et dans leur contestation des politiques gouvernementales. Ce faisant, ils créent un contexte d'animosité sociale et augmentent la vulnérabilité économique des personnes ciblées.

Mots-clés : modes de faire-valoir des terres, droits de propriété, Botswana, populations sanophones, anthropologie, essentialisme

Introduction

It was common in the 19th century for San-speaking peoples to be described as rootless nomads without systemic notions of property. When such people were observed exercising usufruct rights in land, these rights were assumed to be simply epiphenomena of ecological forces that precluded significant social intervention and certainly not by peoples deemed to be “children of nature.” There was an apparent empirical basis for this view in the structure of class relations in the region that had, through a long historical process, intensified in the colonial era and, culminating in the disruptions of 20th-century world wars and economic depression, led to social inequalities in which San-speakers were in most—but, it must be emphasized, not all—cases relegated to an underclass dependent upon low-wage labour and foraging. This situation was deemed to have its origin in incompatible economic systems—foraging, pastoralism, horticulture—which extended into the primordial past. Overlooked was the fact that concepts of property relations had evolved among all the peoples of the region in an integrated social formation and that diversification had taken place in response to innovations in demands for land and its products along with power struggles associated with these changes.

My intention in this article is to counter these common perceptions of San-speaking peoples as lacking systematic notions of property and to illuminate, using two specific cases, how such misperceptions have formed the basis of ill-conceived interventions by some NGOs to the detriment of the very peoples those organizations wish to help. I do so by re-examining the social and cultural specificities of customary San systems of land tenure in Botswana and demonstrating that these systems share fundamental commonalities with other customary systems in the country. Full accounts of the structure of property relations evolved by San-speakers, who call themselves Zhucoasi, may be found in Wilmsen 1989a and

1989b. In this essay, I first review this structure as it pertains to land and then summarize its congruence with that of other San-, Khoe-, and Bantu-speakers.¹ Although transformed in response to colonial interventions and again in accordance with the Botswana constitution, deliberations over rights in land are still couched in terms of this heritage; it is, thus, necessary to revisit the essentials of this heritage here. I then move to an examination of a dispute between the government of Botswana and a group of San who have been resettled from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). A judgment of a case arising from this dispute has been handed down recently by the High Court of Botswana (Republic of Botswana 2006), and I consider some of the ramifications of this decision.

In contrast to the ecological concept of territory generally applied to putative foragers, which focuses on productivity and the means of production, the constitution of land tenure locates people within the social matrix of relations to land where productive activity must take place. As to untangling the issue of San tenure relations to land, Gluckman offers guidance:

Property law in tribal societies defines not so much rights of persons over things, as obligations owed between persons with respect of things...The crucial rights of such persons are demands on other persons in virtue of control over land and chattels, not any set of persons, but persons related in specific, long-standing ways...To understand the holding of property, we must investigate the system of status relationships. [1971:45-46]

Ownership constrained in this manner cannot be absolute because property acquires its critical role in a specific nexus of relationships. Under these circumstances, there can be no definition of ownership, in a sense of incontestable control, such as inheres in modern capitalist conceptions of property. Rather, being in a property relationship involves being bound within a set of reciprocal obligations among persons and things; everything, and especially land and rights to its use, must be subject to a complex of claims arising from this nexus. More to the point, it is not land itself that is inherited. What actually is inherited is a set of status positions binding an individual to a network of obligations owed between persons among which are those with respect to land. It is through this network that persons become associated with geographic space. Entitlement seems a better gloss than ownership for such a notion of relations to land and I have used this term (Wilmsen 1989a).

Zhu Property Relations

Among Zhu, a person's primary land of identification is always that person's birthplace; this is that person's *nqore* (analogous to hometown). There is a very high probability that this birthplace will be in at least one parent's *nqore*. Thus, an individual Zhu's tenure entitlements in land are a dynamic function of a regional kinship net defined initially by ascription through birth into a descent group and later reinforced by marriage. As will become clear, in a preferred marriage a person does not acquire wholly new entitlements but does acquire reinforcement of entitlements already held. Ascription is bilateral with entitlements at birth vested equally in the *nqoresi* of both parents. To make this clear, the kinship matrix in which Zhu land tenures are set must be elucidated, concentrating on the active dialectic among Zhu kinship, marriage and inheritance of land.

In Zhu customary law, any opposite sex, same generation descendant of a person's parent's parent's sibling (PPsCC, second cousin) or parent's parent's parent's sibling (PPPsCCC, third cousin) is called by a term (*trugqa*, older marrying cousin or *trumaa*, younger marrying cousin) connoting persons "belonging to in-laws" and such persons—and only such persons plus their terminological equivalents—are permissible marriage partners and sexual mates. This is, of course, an ideal which often requires manipulation to be put into practice. Nevertheless, it is a strongly held ideal, as the following quotations from a 1980 interview with Ssao Kau, the then Zhu leader at Cae-Cae, emphasize:

The only people you can marry are people you know, they are family. Or to marry a stranger...we cannot marry a stranger, just any woman who resides in a far off place. We must marry only a woman of our family, or that is, a relative, or a very close [one] like of your father or of begetters of begetters who comes here to this place.

Within this incorporative structure of Zhu kinship, the corporate unity of Zhu land holding devolves from one generation to the next. In response to the question, "Is it good and just to say that people live in a defined country?," Ssao, a Zhu elder, replied:

If a person stays with his relatives. If a person separates from his relatives it is not right to call that place his. Yes. This I will call my land...this land is mine, the whole of it. That is to say it belongs to everyone, the community. Like when we are here, that is to say where these people stay...my land, it is that of the community.

Property right transfers consequent on marriage are, accordingly, largely matters of reshuffling priorities among latent claims by members of a descent consort. This is because the new married pair will already, as children of their related parents, hold a set of entitlements in common. Any preferred marriage, one between PPsCC or PPPsCCC, will unite two strands of an entitlement—one each through a parent from an ascending sibling set of bride and of groom. A most desirable marriage will unite two strands through each parent—from both sets of ascending sibling sets; this is why marriage between sets of brothers to sets of sisters is said to be ideal (Marshall 1976). Marriage strategy is directed toward bringing about this more desirable condition. To the extent that the strategy is successfully employed by sibling sets from generation to generation, kindred ties are strengthened for individuals and local group solidarity is passed on from grandparental through parental to current sibling sets. It is in the politics of implementing this strategy that relations of production are created. Negotiations for and legitimation of marriage ties are important moments in this creative process; they occupy much of the time and energy of descent group elders.

For Zhu, bride service resolves the question of personal status and locates a marriage union with its offspring within the structure of relations between persons and places. The devolution of property begins with negotiations and prestations between principals to a future marriage, primarily future coparents-in-law. This process may extend over a period of many years as Marshall (1960) and Lee (1979) confirm. Devolution begins to take more concrete form with the establishment of a new household located in association with the woman's parents. The period of bride service is measured in terms of offspring, its conditions having been satisfied when two or more children have been born to the union. Children born during this period in the woman's *nqore* will have that locality as their primary country. This confers lifelong mutual obligations between persons in the woman's natal group and her children, and, indeed, on the descendants of those children so long as kindred obligations are met. During this time in mother's home *nqore*, children's devolutionary rights in father's *nqore* are kept open by visiting his primary kin who reside there and participating with them in production from their mutually possessed land. This is a labour process that revalidates entitlements through production relations; as Lee (1979) notes, visitors who stay for longer than a couple of days are expected to contribute to the food supply. Thus, kinship in Zhu society, rather than being a static straitjacket, is a dynamic keyboard on which individuals play variations on a theme of options.

It is now possible to demonstrate that Zhu kinship and land tenure are stable in space. To begin with, the majority of Zhu marriages take place between people who live in closely contiguous *nqores*; in the 1950s-70s, 53% of all partners were married within 30km of their birthplaces and 78% within 60km. In other words, more than half of all marriage partners were born within the same *nqore* and more than three-quarters within the same or adjacent *nqores* as were their spouses. At CaeCae, where I did much of my fieldwork, an eight generation continuity of kin-based entitlement can now be documented. This is precisely the result that one would expect under a structural system that incorporates primary relatives into spatial entities and puts collaterals into contiguous units linked through reciprocal, bilateral marriage. Entitlement—in the sense in which I have been speaking—is vested in all members of this group who apply a reflexive set of reciprocal terms to each other and refer to themselves as “those who have each other.” It is this group of people who form the stable set of descendant tenure holders; they are the *nqore kausi*, “possessors of a place or country,” who have generationally continuous, inherent rights of tenure in their ancestral land. The senior member of this cohort is its hereditary leader (*xaiha*, headman or chief) who is referred to as the “owner of the place or country” (*nqore kau*); he or she is invested with administrative functions concerning the *nqore*. Zhu land tenure, far from being an ecological given, is part of a social universe negotiated in day-to-day interactions with others, not only those acknowledged to be co-members of a particular group but those of other peoples who share the same geographic space. Land, and rights to its access and use, is a continually recurring factor in these negotiations. Consequently, it is necessary to examine the comparative systemic similarities of Zhu social relations to land with those of other southern African peoples.

Other Khoisan Systems

Schapera (1943:5-7) speaks of “this system of land tenure characteristic of Bushmen” in exactly this way; thus, the compatibility of other San tenure systems may be indicated quickly. Barnard (1988:37) highlights the fact that “the deep structure of all the Khoe [Central Khoisan and Nama] kinship systems is essentially the same”; a fact confirmed by cognate terms for locational place and hereditary overseer in six San languages, including Zhu, plus Nama which are derived from common roots referring respectively to a person's or a group's possessed country and to leadership. Other commonalities include bilateral name relations, consanguineal-affinal term transpositions, reciprocal grandrelation and sibling-cohort terms, exten-

sion of relationship terms through namesake equivalence, and marriage to specific cousin categories. Silberbauer (1981) documented this system for Gcwi and Gxana living in what is now central Botswana. Hoernlé (1925:5) had, in the 1920s, noted these factors among Nama and stated further “that the different water holes, or fountains, in the country were always thought of as belonging to certain specific groups.” Carstens (1983:65) notes “the communal nature of land among the Nama” held in trust by hereditary leaders that could not be alienated; at the same time, “certain clans seem to have had greater control than others over specified pieces of land and local springs.” Identical systems for Khoe-speakers in eastern Botswana are recorded, where Esch (1977:11) notes that kinship groups and their marriage networks are associated with overlapping but separately demarcated land areas and says “this is also true of intermarriage between Basarwa [San] and Bakgalagadi...[where] there are created kin relations between the peoples.”

Tswana Property Relations

Despite significant differences in details, the underlying principles of affiliation and legitimization of land tenure among these systems are compatible with Tswana customary institutions. Batswana permit cousin marriage of all types (Kuper 1975; Krige 1981) with preference given by commoners to bilateral cross-cousins (Schapera 1938; Kuper 1982; Griffiths 1997), and with a strong bias among elite overseer classes toward patrilineal parallel cousins (Comaroff and Comaroff 1981; Comaroff and Roberts 1981; Ramsay 1991). Schapera (1941) and Griffiths (1997) describe the sequence of devolutionary payments attending betrothal and marriage, culminating but not ending with the transfer of *bogadi* (bride wealth) cattle or, nowadays, often cash. *Bogadi* transfer may occur at the wedding itself but more often is extended in installments that frequently mark the birth and even the marriage of children resulting from the union (Griffiths 1997). The main effect of *bogadi* is to validate the claim of husband's group to children borne in the marriage by the wife. As such, it is, in Schapera's phrase, “a kin obligation, not a private affair.”

Schapera (1943) encapsulates the essential determinates of place in Tswana customary law: the location of a Motswana's home is determined primarily by kin affiliation—asccribed at birth into a landholding group or acquired by marriage or adoption into such a group—not by income, occupation or social ambition. Tribal land is apportioned by the *kgosi* (chief) among social units constituted as wards—whose members were, in the past more so than now, conceived to be related to an eponymous

founder—under the administration of *dikgosi* (headmen, relatives of the *kgosi*). The basis for establishing a ward was initially kinship or ethnic identity, although this is no longer usually the case. Areas *mofatshe* (rights to use specific sections of land) are allocated to members of a ward and may be passed to descendants, but the land remains the property of the tribe under the administration of the *kgosi* and his *dikgosi*. Entitlement inheres in membership in the tribe—through birth, marriage or adoption—and is activated by application to the headman of the ward to which one belongs (Schapera 1938). Schapera (1943) is clear on the fact that the possessor of land is entitled only to its use and not to its absolute ownership—note the paradox that such usufruct entitlement is a defining feature of the ethnographic nomadic forager model which in southern Africa is said to distinguish San-speaking “Bushmen” from Bantu-speaking agropastoralists.

Herero Property Relations

In Herero customary law, marriage is preferred between bilateral cross-cousins who apply the reciprocal term *omuramwe* (bilateral cross-cousin) to each other, and Gibson (1956) found in Ngamiland during the early 1950s that in nearly half then existing marriages, the wife was from her husband's father's *eanda* (descent group). Although maternal cross-cousins are now preferred, he suggests that Herero rationalization for a former patrilineal marriage bias—that it prevented excessive herd dispersal—may have been valid in the past, since thereby *oruzo* (maternal) and *eanda* (paternal) herds would have been reunited in alternate generations. That marital bias also restricts fissioning of land rights. Entitlement to land—administered by the *omuhona* (headman or chief)—is vested in the *oruzo* group (Vedder 1966; Luttig 1933), while children are born preferentially in mother's natal *onganda* (homestead) to affirm the social-spatial solidarity among generations of the *eanda* group (Luttig 1933). Maternal kinship links are important in negotiating interpersonal relationships, particularly those between MB and ZS.

Compatibility of Systems

Thus, it would appear that before direct colonial intervention San, Herero, Nama and Tswana tenurial systems had as much in common as they now superficially appear to lack. That this should be so is not really surprising given the millennia-long history of associations of peoples whose descendants are now seen as different tribes. We have the testimony of Tshekedi Khama, Ngwato *kgosi* in the 1920s-30s, that in the early 18th century there was little difference between San and Tswana social-political praxis and their internal economic relations, at least as

was discernable to the members of those entities at the time (Tagart 1935). The important thing to note is that—despite significant differences in specific kinship-marriage arrangements and in status hierarchies—there is an equally fundamental structural commonality underlying these systems of land tenure: bilateral ascription of tenure entitlement and obligations by birth into a set of corporate, tenure-holding groups; cousin marriage as a mechanism for defining and restricting the extent of these groups; ritualized reciprocal uncle-nephew or grandparent-grandchild exchanges (not discussed here but see Wilmsen 1989a); preferential birth within tenurial bounds of mother's family; reinforcement of entitlement through marriage or adoption into a group; reciprocal obligations among members; inalienability of entitlements so long as membership of the kin-affine set is maintained; and inalienability of land. In short, the right possessed natively by anyone to participate in the assets and affairs of any one group is the result of a series of parental natal accumulations and of parental maintenances or losses; continued possession of that right is contingent on the exercise of it.

Multitiered ownership of places and things has characterized the remembered and recorded past. Space associated with one particular group was layered upon that of other groups. This was possible, not because of some altruistic urge for accommodation, but because the tenure systems of the different competing peoples were intelligible to each other and ecological requirements were, to some extent, complimentary rather than conflicting.

These customary systems no longer function fully in themselves. It is crucial, however, to recognize that the fundamental structural principles of customary land tenure within Botswana have been constitutionally transferred to the state and all land within the country is *lefatsho wa lerona* (communal land of the nation).² The particular customary law transferred is, it is true, derived almost entirely from *mekgwa le melao ya Setswana* (Tswana law and custom) but, as is evident from the above presentation, this is congruent with, and thus transparent to, the other customary systems of the country. Thus, all citizens are notionally able to understand the principles of tenure which establish their rights in land. Constitutionally, these rights include the entitlement to use, but not own, a parcel of land on which to live and make a living. In the 1970s, authority for land distribution was removed from chiefs and delegated to Land Boards in the various administrative divisions of the country. Regardless of the fact that constitutional rights are not uniformly administered, and that marginalized minorities such as San are more likely to be unjustly deprived, this is the framework

within which adjudication of particular claims to land must now lawfully take place.

Current Misconceptions

It is not, however, the framework chosen by some transnational organizations for their intercession on behalf of San peoples, particularly Survival International (SI) with regard to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana and the NyaeNyae Nature Conservancy (NNNC) in Namibia. In the first case, SI put massive pressure on the Botswana government to reverse the resettlement from 1997 to 2002 of some 1,100 people then residing in the CKGR to locations outside the reserve; to further this end, SI spared no effort to malign the Botswana government in world media and funded drawn out litigation against it. Roughly two-thirds of resettled people were San and the rest Bakgalagadi. In its intervention, SI was interested only in the San, arguing that these people were the sole remaining “pure” foragers and as such should be returned to the reserve to follow their traditional hunting life. SI was able to intervene in this way largely because of the untimely death of John Hardbottle, the founder of the First People of the Kalahari organization. Hardbottle was the only articulate, conscientious public voice Botswana San have thus far had; he did seek alliances with oppressed minorities in other places and accepted help from donor agencies, but he remained firmly in control. His successor, Roy Sesana, has proven to be devious, vacillating and manipulable.

In the second case, NNNC wanted to dissuade Zhu from developing viable farms, which they were then doing, and to establish instead their land as a wildlife reserve in which they could maintain their “natural” hunting life and play “Bushman” with bows and arrows for tourists whose money would flow in (Wilmsen 2003). Despite the fact that revived 19th-century concepts of San-speaking peoples as foragers with no systemic notions of property can no longer be maintained, these transnationals have resurrected those concepts to challenge current property arrangements in the CKGR and NNNC. At the same time, in a confused contradiction, they argue that San-speakers have exclusive aboriginal ownership of those sections of land. Aside from the fact that this also contradicts the Botswana constitution under which, as noted above, all land is communal property of citizens through the agency of the state, this neo-liberal conception of property is irreconcilable with SI's professed communitarian conception of identity and culture, which logically is amenable to the customary system of land tenure just described. Nevertheless, SI and NNNC employ a neo-liberal ideology based on their own notion of social justice to justify selection of a fraction of

San peoples as a special target “group” for empowerment in opposition to other “groups” and in challenge to government policies. In so doing, they create social animosity and increase the political and economic vulnerability of the targetted people. It must not, however, be overlooked that these organizations draw their inspiration for selecting San for singular concern from ethnographic representations that have become deeply entrenched in popular and academic imagination; it was, after all, modern ethnographers who placed San peoples on “the threshold of the Neolithic” (Lee 1972:342) thus offering a “window to the Pleistocene” (Yellen 1984:54) where a purely hunting-gathering life did take place.

Before turning to the CKGR case, a brief look at the precepts on which NNNC actions were predicated will illuminate the discredited anthropological thinking that animates SI in Botswana. In the 1990s, Bieseles (2002) revived the “child of nature” trope to provide an ideological framework for the creation of segregated conditions of pseudo-primitivity in a NyaeNyae wildlife reserve that would force resident Zhu (San) people, who had achieved a degree of farming success before the conservancy was established, into roles of puppet subsistence foragers whose strings would be pulled by the whims of culture tourists—the customers of heritage who consume a prepackaged frozen past (Parsons 2006)—eager to see lots of wild animals pursued by “Bushmen.” She said:

Let me first make clear a basic distinction between hunting-gathering motivation structures and agricultural motivation structures. Typical hunting-gathering economic activity is something which is not planned... it is not highly organized... there is little social hierarchy. Agriculture on the other hand involves a great deal of pre-planning, a great deal of organization, a great deal of delayed gratification. So there needs to be a completely different understanding of cooperation, of collaboration. [2002, Part 4; 4:00:47:37]

This is the language of essentialist antithesis, of racialist discourse (Wilmsen 2002a).³ It is a blood relation to Lauren van der Post’s (1958) view of Bushman thought “not as rational concepts or organized dogma, but as feelings derived from the most vivid of instincts of which a human being is capable.” Bieseles’s misguided judgment is fully congenial with van der Post’s ideas about “Bushman” instinctual irrationality and fits precisely Lévy-Bruhl’s (1912) notions about prelogical mentality.

Essentialist Consequences

This perception is in urgent need of cleansing from our minds (cf. Wilmsen 1996). In 1996, Festus Mogae, then

Vice-President of Botswana, was quoted about removals of “Bushmen” from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in the British newspaper the *Guardian* as saying, “how can you have a Stone Age creature continuing to exist in the age of computers? If the Bushmen want to survive, they must change, or otherwise, like the dodo, they will perish” (Daley 1996). This stricture was not applied to the Bantu-speaking Kgalagadi segment of the removed community, only to ethnographicized “Bushmen,” a clear instance of racial compartmentalization, abetted—unintentionally, but none the less tellingly—by ethnographic authority as well as by media authority. John Simpson (2005:37), world affairs editor for the BBC, wrote that as Stone Age creatures “the superbly interesting and admirable Bushmen are one of the glories of Africa.” Simpson’s purpose was to counter the notion of living human primitives, but his unconscious essentialism runs as deep as, and is here clearly derived from, the ethnographic image. He identifies the reason “Bushmen” are interesting: they are “human treasures of a culture lasting 10 millennia or more” (2002). What other African glories and treasures come to mind? Elephants? Gorillas? Landscapes? Diamonds? Gold? Not, it seems, other peoples; certainly not Bakgalagadi, who have shared the same land and its vicissitudes with “Bushmen” for centuries and now share the same fate of removal from that land (recall Esch’s [1997] documentation of generations of San-Kgalagadi intermarriage in the CKGR).

It should by now be beyond question that poised, celebratory atavism expressed by ethnographic or media authority normalizes xenophobic notions of ontological difference because it makes these notions seem familiar—more subtle but still compatible with strident idioms of racial or religious bigotry. At the level of consciousness on which individuals compartmentalize their knowledge of the world, “at that level [where] people are most vulnerable to the pitfalls of a usually well-hidden discrepancy between professed beliefs and inner reactions” (Blommaert and Verschueren 1996:106), these representations are “weaving the ethnographic curtain between us and them” (Wilmsen 1999:132). They offer, thereby, logical links to scientific racism and thus reinforce alienating categorizations of human diversity. Such representations legitimate partitive ideologies wherever found and however based, which, in turn, may be invoked as authority for racial discrimination, religious intolerance, ethnic cleansing and sectarian war. So Solid Crew gangsta rapper, Ashley Walters, came to realize this. He recounts how a meeting with a schoolboy traumatized by taunts of “nigger” made him realize that in his performances he “was giving racism more longevity by helping to make the N-word

seem like a cool, hip word” (Hill 2005)—an epiphany everyone should seek.

The “Stone Age” attitude was affirmed by the Director of the Department of Wildlife and Natural Resources: “There is no future for the Basarwa [San]. They must join the modern world now.” The government gave households removed from the CKGR substantial compensation in cash and kind and initially offered two heifers, gradually rising to five (or 15 goats) to each household head; as for “Bushmen” in this program, one official’s view was that they were to prove they would not eat the cows—that is, that their inherent “hunter instinct” dragged through to this side of the Pleistocene could be domesticated—before being entrusted with more (Wilmsen 2002b).⁴ “The exploitative relations that are hidden behind ethnicized customary rights are at the heart of this system” (Sichone 2001:374). As Ramsay (2002) points out, however, “the colonial creation of the CKGR has fuelled ongoing neo-colonial and local conflict” that can take on ugly ethnic cum racial dimensions in contestations over land and scarce resources. We must keep this in mind when judging statements made in the heat of these contestations.

In precolonial times, Khoisan-speakers occupied all socio-economic levels—in some places subservient, in others dominant—of southern African society (Wilmsen 1989a). Seventeenth-century Europeans coined the term “Bushmen” shortly after they came to the subcontinent and proceeded to generate the circumstances in which peoples so labelled could exist; but this term was a socio-economic marker, not one that marked a natural state of general difference of being. It was not until the 1950s-60s that ethnographers placed this being on the threshold of the Neolithic, thus generating the circumstances in which peoples so labelled can be thought of as Stone Age creatures. Balibar (1991) argues persuasively that, at the present postcolonial juncture, racism infiltrates discursive practices which, themselves, deny the existence of race and of racial or cultural hierarchies. Racism itself assumes subtle and elusive forms reconfigured without “race” as a classificatory device for demarcating difference (Harrison 1998). Owen White (2000:517) does not absolve “anthropology which, in seeking out the ‘true essence’ of the cultures it encountered, tended to inscribe cultural differences in stone...which, in isolating differences between communities, could easily play into the hands of racists.”

The triumph of anti-racism (to the limited extent it has occurred), in which many anthropologists played a sterling role, has not been so complete that readers of ethnographies are not free to locate odious racist meanings even where anthropological authors deny them.

Anthropologists must confront this painful fact, rather than “continue to teach dichotomous thinking—traditional/modern; civilized/primitive—and hierarchical arrangements ... ranked according to ‘developmental level’” (Shanklin 1998:674). Too many, however, continue to teach dichotomous thinking; Barnard reveals how far this is true: he now joins Lee in consigning San to a Neolithic threshold by proposing that they “are comparable in many ways to north-west European Mesolithic populations” (2002:5-24, 2005). He goes further: “The surrounding agropastoralist populations are similarly comparable to the European Neolithic peoples” (2007:5). As one might expect, the former have a foraging mode of thought that inhibits much forethought, the latter an accumulation mode of thought that induces forethought (2005:3). In the Mesolithic mode of thought, social equality is “natural,” in the Neolithic and thereafter, social equality is “unnatural” (2007:12, Fig. 5). Apparently Barnard has not read the French or American constitutions (and now, many others, including that of Botswana) or the Enlightenment “mode of thought” which engendered them.

Baxi identifies exactly the proper response:

Human rights logic and rhetoric, fashioned by historic struggles, simply and starkly assert that such imposition of primordial identities is morally wrong and legally prohibited...It is the mission of human rights logics and paralogics to dislodge primordial identities that legitimate orders of imposed suffering. [2002:84]

Yet even when the primordial myth is questioned it retains its power to misshape ethnographic images and to influence policy based on these distortions. The myth retains this power in large part because it is endorsed not only by the words but also the actions of “experts” like Biesele who are pursuing their own agendas. Her aim was to lend credence to a “bid to have [NyaeNyae] land managed as a [wildlife] conservancy under emerging Namibian laws” (Biesele and Hitchcock 1999); “Bushmen” were to be part of the wildlife, while other peoples—primarily Herero—were to be excluded. The consequences are articulated by Neil Powell:

outside interests [the conservancy] see it necessary to stabilize a [Zhu] culture...to revive, strengthen, and develop forms of existence that are assumed to have shaped human-nature relationships prior to the point when the system began to “degrade”...In a social sense, the institution-building that is associated with the effort is serving to erode a once resilient local economy...by closing their system from the potential of forming [the kinds of] reciprocal relationships Zhu once had with

Hereros...what has historically been welcomed as acts of reciprocation, today are being articulated “by the Zhu” as acts infringing on their resource tenure. [1998:135-138]

In placing quotation marks around “by the Zhu” Powell signals that the production of an indigenous NyaeNyae Zhu “self” is now orchestrated by extraneous interests. Agencies with professed humanitarian motives such as SI and the NNNC, by rooting their concern—and persuading their clients—to preserve “Bushman” culture in false essentialist premises, a process Mullings (2004:4) calls “racialization from below,” subvert efforts to address issues of San inequality and poverty in realistic political terms. These agencies have adopted self-defeating agendas which do little other than compromise the position of the people they wish to help (cf. Saugestad 2001).

To some, the recent Botswana High Court judgment partially in favour of San rights to remain in the CKGR validates SI’s agenda. It was, however, a pyrrhic victory. As Solway (N.d.), in a scathing criticism of SI’s obstructive tactics, remarks, “after the initial celebration over the judgment, the harsher reality of the interpretation began to set in.” A look at the major elements of the judgment reveals why:

¶55. ...in view of the decisions reached by each of us [the three judges], the court makes the following Order:

1. The termination in 2002 by the Government of the provision of basic and essential services to the Applicants in the CKGR was neither unlawful nor unconstitutional.

2. The Government is not obliged to restore the provision of such services to the Applicants in the CKGR.

3. Prior to 31 Jan 2002, the Applicants were in possession of the land, which they lawfully occupied in their settlements in the CKGR.

4. The Applicants were deprived of such possession by the Government forcibly or wrongly and without their consent.

5. The Government refusal to issue special game licenses to the Appellants is unlawful.

6. The Government refusal to allow the Applicants to enter the CKGR unless they are issued with permits is unlawful and unconstitutional. [Botswana 2006:121-122]

Additionally, each party was ordered to pay their own costs. The reason for this is revealed in one judge’s stand alone judgment:

¶169. On the issue of costs, I have considered whether they should follow the event but decided against it because:

1. I realised that this judgment does not finally resolve the dispute between the parties but merely refers them back to the negotiating table.

2. The Respondent has already incurred considerable costs in financing the two inspections-in-loco conducted by this Court in the CKGR.

3. Roy Sesana who is the main litigant elected not to participate in the trial of a cause he initiated, but resorted to litigating through the media while the matter was still sub judice. This he persisted in despite advice from his Counsel.

¶170. In the circumstances I am of the view that the Court should express its displeasure by denying the Applicants the costs on the four issues in which I found for them. I therefore order that each party shall pay its own costs. [Botswana 2006:397-398]

On the surface this looks pretty good. The Applicants won their claim to possession—not ownership—of certain parts of CKGR land and the right to return there without restriction and also to receive special licenses for hunting in the reserve. On closer inspection, however, the harsher reality asserts itself: the judgment refers solely to “the Applicants,” of whom there were only 189. It does not mention the 700-800 odd other San resettled from the CKGR; and, as Solway (N.d.) notes, the government interpreted the court’s ruling in the narrowest manner, allowing only those 189 applicants and their dependent children to return to the reserve—others would need permits, as do all other Botswana citizens and foreign visitors. The 189 could not bring in to the CKGR the domestic animals which were given to them on resettlement nor any that they may have had prior to that or acquired since. Furthermore, hunting could only be done with bow-and-arrows, spears, and snares as “they have always done” (in the ironic words of the applicants dictated by Survival International); this could not yield an adequate food supply under present conditions. The most difficult ruling, thus, was that government was within its rights to withdraw “basic and essential services”—boreholes and pumps for water, supplementary food (almost always needed, but especially during frequent droughts),⁵ schools, clinics, law enforcement—from the CKGR in 2002 and is not obliged to restore the provision of such services now. Having predicated their case on a retention of “pure” foraging traditions, the applicants, now part-time returnees to the CKGR, argue that they cannot live without their livestock and the basic and essential services formerly provided by government. They are correct. Nobody has lived independently in that part of the CKGR since present climatic conditions were established some centuries ago; this land was used only in favourable seasons as hunting and plant

collecting grounds. In this regard, the contested part of the CKGR is like other areas of the Kalahari that lack secure permanent water.

This has landed the CKGR applicants in a serious predicament: they cannot viably exercise the land use-rights they have won in court, nor is it likely that government will endow them with a second round of compensation should they decide—as I think inevitable—to reside in their ex-reserve locations exercising their hunting rights in favourable seasons. Note also that “this judgment does not finally resolve the dispute between the parties but merely refers them back to the negotiating table”—the terms on which those hunting rights can be put into practice are on that table. SI has threatened to intensify its inflammatory campaign rather than negotiate, insisting that it will destroy Botswana’s economy if necessary to achieve its aims. It seems the damage all parties to the dispute have suffered is not yet over. That damage extends to a second and ultimately graver consequence of this entire sordid affair. The main San association, First People of the Kalahari, under the leadership of Roy Sesana manipulated by the CKGR-focused militance of SI, has become obsessed with the CKGR to the detriment of issues concerning the greater population of San in Botswana (Parsons 2006), who number some tens of thousands. This has allowed the drive for minority rights in Botswana to be so narrowed that international concern is fixated on one small place and one small community at the expense of so many impoverished, powerless others—only a fraction of whom are San—living in different parts of the country (Grant 2006).

Recall that Sesana, by refusing to appear in court in the litigation he initiated, while at the same time presiding over another trial in the media, brought down the court’s displeasure upon all his fellow litigants and thereby placed a heavy financial burden on them. As the only public voice of CKGR San, Sesana had previously played his constituency false. In 2005, when the case was in recess because the litigants ran out of money and prospects for a favourable decision seemed slim, he published in the newspaper *Mmegi* an open letter to the Vice-President of Botswana, Ian Khama:

Your Honour...we, the CKGR community, the people affected by the issue are available. We have got mouths, ears and brains like each and every human being. Nowadays we do not want people to speak on our behalf. We want to speak for ourselves...Your Honour, I think this issue could have been long resolved. The problems came only because people come and put themselves in front of us and started fighting for power to represent us even though we are there and ready to

talk for ourselves. People like that now have to go back and give us a chance to direct our words to any concerned and responsible person in any CKGR negotiations...Your Honour, my chief, I Roy Sesana expect a good response from you. [Republic of Botswana 2005]

By asserting that he and members of his community have normal human attributes, Sesana appeared to reject essentialist rhetoric and seemed to claim responsibility for his own ability to negotiate on behalf of that community. By addressing Khama as “my chief,” Sesana also appeared to assert his common citizenship of the country and claim his common rights thereof. In his response, Khama indicated Government’s availability to discuss an amicable settlement and invited proposals from Sesana on a possible way forward (Republic of Botswana 2005). But Sesana’s rhetoric proved to be merely an opportunistic charade; when SI returned with new donor cash to resume litigation, he dropped all pretense of negotiation.

SI will lift the burden with more cash from gullible international organizations and celebrities too absorbed in their own agendas to verify the false accusations it levies against Botswana. Among the more absurd accusations is that government practices ethnic cleansing and genocide against “Bushmen” (SI spokespersons insist on using this discredited term); this appears to be another transposition from the colonial era, when appalling atrocities—but not genocide—were commonly committed against San-speaking individuals in what is now Botswana. Another absurd accusation is that Botswana produces “blood diamonds.” On the contrary, Botswana has been a leading member of the Kimberly Process since its inception in 2002, ensuring that its diamonds are conflict free (itself an oxymoron—there are no armed conflicts in Botswana). Indeed, in September 2006, the *Wall Street Journal* carried an article titled “Peace Diamonds” in which it was stated that in Africa Botswana had the

lowest level of corruption, faring better on that score than Italy and most of the European Union’s 2004 accession countries. More than one quarter of Botswana’s budget is spent on education, providing free schooling for all citizens under 18. In addition, Botswana was one of the first countries in Africa to establish a free national antiretroviral therapy program for HIV/AIDS. [Mazimhaka 2006:20-21]

In time, when SI’s accusations are shown to be the fabrications that they are, the international media gaze will turn elsewhere and the donor money that might have helped alleviate the poverty of the many will have been

squandered on, not even the few, but on nothing of substance. Indeed, SI's gaze will turn elsewhere; for as Bob (2006:7, 2005) spells out, NGOs must choose carefully what constitutes a creditable issue and where they devote their scarce resources, "pleasing funders while sustaining and expanding their organizations." In this regard it is noteworthy that SI's income from donations in 2002, the year after it opened its CKGR campaign was £701,480 (about US\$1,200,000) which jumped to £999,454 (about US\$1,800,000) in 2004 as its campaign became more strident and a boycott of Botswana's diamonds was instituted.⁶

It is, of course, not possible to say how the CKGR dispute may have been resolved had SI not intervened. There are, however, precedents which imply that a less confrontational process and more equitable outcome were possible. Organizations within Botswana such as *Emang Basadi* (Stand Up Women), a women's rights group, *Reteng* (We Are Here), an umbrella organization for minority associations, and the *Ditshwanelo* (Duty) Centre for Human Rights rigorously pursue rights issues within the country and have advanced the standing of women and minorities substantially. Ditshwanelo was a member of the team engaged in years-long negotiations on the CKGR issue with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks that appeared to be reaching a resolution on which both San and government could agree.⁷ Then attitudes in government hardened when, in May 2001, SI launched its campaign; its methods revealed little regard for Botswana's lawful processes of dispute resolution. SI constantly sought to bypass these processes in hopes of achieving its aims through international media pressure and negative publicity conflating rhetoric-as-persuasion and rhetoric-as-trope to contend that beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak and act for themselves. This is the essentialist, utopian politics that Spivak (1988) warns leads to the asymmetrical obliteration of just those oppressed subjects whom international interventionists like SI profess to wish to save. Alice Mogwe, a Motswana working with Ditshwanelo, remarks that inevitably San "unfortunately tend to be the casualties" (Solway N.d.). As a consequence, these people find themselves ossified as "Bushmen," constructed in a hegemonic meta-narrative to which they increasingly themselves subscribe. For, as Bob (2006:7) demonstrates, international organizations "must reframe their claims, tactics and even their identities for foreign audiences." As a consequence, SI has made CKGR San more dependent on this vicious interventionist cycle. Essentialist and racist representations of "primitive" peoples, of our original ancestors, of living human fossils, of "Bushmen," serve to confine peoples so

stigmatized to subordinate positions and defeat attempts to alleviate conditions of poverty in which most of them live, as the CKGR judgment so starkly testifies. This substitution of tradition for history "victimizes by representation those whose continued subordination the telling of the traditional narrative exists to secure" (Barker 1993:104).

Peter Brosius considers the rhetoric of a parallel campaign in the ethnographic context of Penan people in threatened Malaysian rainforests; he dissects the strategy by which their knowledge of the forest is "transformed into an obscurantist, essentializing discourse which elides the substantive features of that knowledge...in an effort to make a people narratable and create value" in them as "forest people" (1997:60-66). Brosius observes that this Euroamerican meta-narrative has pernicious effects: it imposes arbitrary meanings on a people, and paradoxically makes generic precisely the diversity it wishes to advance. There is an ethical element in this, the true qualities of a people's culture and social life are lost, their existential being becomes defined by others, and they become dependent on foreign protectors as never before.⁸

Neil Parsons long ago recognized that

the challenge of writing Kalahari history is to break the conventional stereotyping of Khoisan people...by questioning the conventional view of their helplessness in the face of oppressors—which is also used to justify their dependency on outside guardians to advance their interests. [1988:75]

Rural Botswana of whatever identity, many of whom share the same degree of poverty with their San-speaking neighbours (Hudson 1976; Kerven 1982; Wilmsen 1989a), see this myopic interventionist attention as privileging a favoured few who are thus perceived to infringe on their own access to resources and land. To paraphrase Powell, relationships within the overall polity which were once resilient and reciprocal are thereby eroded. In response, the Botswana government adopted a defensive, at times self-justifying, stance that deflects human energy and material resources from productive policies aimed at alleviating poverty. Other than the CKGR peoples themselves, this has been perhaps the most serious casualty of this unfortunate affair. For, as Radipati observes with reference to, among others, the CKGR case, "the struggle for human dignity is a dialectical process that serves two different but interrelated functions: of sensitizing others about a plight, while simultaneously encouraging them to be other-regarding" (2006:169).

At the beginning of this essay, I made the case that in Botswana, land acquires its critical role in a nexus of rela-

tionships drawn from pre-colonial concepts of social affiliation through which persons become associated with geographic space. This principle has been incorporated into the Botswana constitution which defines a set of reciprocal obligations among citizens and the state with regard to land and rights to its use. Unless and until the constitution is amended in this respect, interventions on behalf of San claims that state, or citizen, obligations with regard to land rights are not being met must take this principle into full consideration. Perhaps the protracted, acrimonious CKGR experience may lead in the future to more balanced approaches to San land problems which, we may then hope, will result in more satisfactory outcomes.⁹

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Notes

- 1 In this essay, I shall not address the question of Zhu notions of personal property but merely assert that such notions are fully formed and refer readers to Wilmsen 1989a.
- 2 Only a small fraction, less than 10%, of land in what became Botswana was alienated as private property during the 1890s; in Namibia, a much higher proportion is privately owned as a legacy of colonial settler policy.
- 3 Schrire (1980) dissected the essentialist rhetoric of the hunter-gatherer model more than a quarter century ago.
- 4 Most households did, nevertheless, receive the full quota of livestock.
- 5 By 1993, 53% of CKGR residents were dependent on destitute food relief (Republic of Botswana 2006).
- 6 Donation figures are from www.survival-international.org.
- 7 Mazonde (1997) gives a balanced account of the state of negotiations as of 1996; he concludes that all parties—San, NGOs, and government—had realized both gains and losses.
- 8 I thank my son, Carl Wilmsen, for drawing my attention to Brosius.
- 9 A suggestion that this may now be possible was reported in the *Tautona Times* (Republic of Botswana 2008) which stated that on June 12, 2008, on the initiative of now President Khama, a meeting with Sesana and representatives of communities living in the CKGR and surrounding settlements took place at the Office of the President, attended by the Ministers of Local Government and of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism and the Attorney General. It was agreed that there is a need to recognize the commitment by Government to provide these communities, along with other Batswana, with development in education, employment, health and other socio-economic amenities that will improve their quality of life. It was also acknowledged that such developments are not necessarily inconsistent with the rich culture of these communities, and that these can coexist in a manner that is mutually beneficial. The President reiterated the commitment of Government to improving the quality of life of all Batswana, and its preparedness

to engage in constructive dialogue with the affected communities to ensure the sustainable future of the CKGR. Both sides were unanimous in their conviction that the CKGR and its unique natural heritage are an important national resource that should be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations. Sesana and his colleagues undertook to identify two representatives from each of the communities in the CKGR and surrounding settlements to engage in consultations with Government in the development of a sustainable management plan for the CKGR. Both sides committed themselves to expediting the consultation process, and pledged that this would be conducted in a spirit of openness, good faith and mutual trust.

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« Né pour être esclave » : migration transnationale des bergers d'une *comunidad* andine

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Résumé : Cet article traite de la migration transnationale de bergers péruviens des Andes centrales vers des ranchs de la côte ouest des États-Unis. Sur la base de recherches ethnographiques dans la *comunidad campesina* (communauté paysane) de Usibamba, nous nous intéressons aux conséquences de cette migration à long terme pour les familles restées au pays, en particulier les épouses, et pour le fonctionnement de la *comunidad campesina*. Nous analysons de quelles manières paradoxales cet exode des bergers remet en question le contrôle qu'exerce la *comunidad* sur ses membres, mais en même temps renforce son régime disciplinaire. Des exemples empiriques montrent comment le rôle des femmes dans la *comunidad* évolue en réponse à cet exode masculin.

Mots-clés : migrations transnationales, Andes, Pérou, *comunidad campesina*, bergers, rôles sexuels

Abstract: This article discusses the transnational migration of Peruvian shepherds from the central Andes to ranches on the west coast of the United States. On the basis of ethnographic research in the *comunidad campesina* (peasant community) of Usibamba, we delve into the consequences of this long-term migration for the families left behind, especially the wives, and for the operation of the *comunidad campesina*. We analyze the paradoxical ways in which the exodus of shepherds leads to a questioning of the control of the *comunidad* over its members but at the same time strengthens its disciplinary regime. Empirical examples show how the role of women in the *comunidad* is shifting as a result of this male exodus.

Keywords: transnational migration, Andes, Peru, *comunidad campesina*, shepherds, gender

Introduction : l'exode des bergers des Andes

J'ai été surprise de recevoir un appel de Diego en provenance d'une ville de la côte ouest des États-Unis; j'étais de retour chez moi après un long stage de terrain dans des communautés des Andes péruviennes. Je savais que Diego était parti pour travailler comme berger sur un ranch aux États-Unis. Malgré le plaisir que m'apportait la surprise de retrouver sa voix, ma joie se dissipa rapidement : le ton de sa voix ne laissait aucun doute sur le fait que les choses allaient très mal pour lui. Diego m'expliqua qu'après un mois de travail au ranch, il s'était évadé vers une ville voisine. Il ne pouvait plus endurer sa solitude et avait réussi à se cacher chez des amis péruviens. Il essayait de trouver du travail comme journalier au noir, parce que ses réserves financières s'épuisaient rapidement.

Dans le présent article, nous discutons d'une forme spécifique de migration transnationale, nommément celle des gardiens de moutons des hauts plateaux andins du Pérou vers des ranchs de la côte ouest des États-Unis. Le métier de berger est perçu comme un des moins désirables qui soient aujourd'hui, et c'est un emploi qui n'intéresse pas les citoyens américains à cause de la solitude, des responsabilités 24 heures sur 24, des mauvaises conditions de vie et des maigres salaires. L'industrie américaine des ranchs ovins compte donc sur l'apport de bergers d'origine étrangère pour garder ses troupeaux (Bedoya 2003). Les programmes américains de travailleurs étrangers (US Guest Work) autorisent des bergers à entrer aux États-Unis avec des visas spéciaux. On n'engage que des hommes comme bergers et ils n'ont pas la permission de faire venir leurs femmes et enfants. Les communautés andines constituent un bassin permanent de bergers qualifiés qui ont besoin de trouver des sources de revenu de remplacement (Altamirano 2004).

L'absence à long terme d'un nombre important d'hommes perturbe de façon significative la vie dans les

villages d'où ils proviennent. Dans les pages qui suivent, nous discutons de divers aspects de cette migration sur la base d'une recherche ethnographique menée dans la *comunidad campesina* (communauté paysane) d'Usibamba, une communauté paysanne du district de San José de Quero, à l'est de la capitale péruvienne Lima. Nous avons mené cette recherche à l'occasion de plusieurs études de terrain entre 2003 et 2008. Nous racontons l'histoire de la migration des bergers de ce coin des Andes vers les États-Unis et montrons ce que cet exil à long terme signifie pour les familles laissées derrière. Nous poursuivons avec une analyse des effets de cette migration sur le fonctionnement de la *comunidad campesina*, l'institution locale de régime foncier et d'exercice du pouvoir, dont l'organisation dépend lourdement du travail physique et de la participation active de ses membres masculins. Finalement, nous montrons comment, en réglementant la migration, les pratiques de gouvernance communautaire interagissent avec le domaine familial et contribuent activement à reformuler les rapports entre les sexes.

À Usibamba, la stricte réglementation communautaire relative aux émigrants a engendré un régime transnational de discipline et de punition. Nous pourrions dire que les migrants d'Usibamba sont pris entre, d'une part, un régime d'exploitation d'une main d'œuvre migrante internationale, et d'autre part, un régime disciplinaire excessif de gouvernance communautaire. Les Usibambinos désignent les deux systèmes comme des régimes « d'esclavage ». Le présent article s'intéresse à la symbiose entre ces deux régimes. Pourquoi les migrants d'Usibamba demeurent-ils membres de la *comunidad* quand celle-ci leur fait payer si lourdement leur absence? Pourquoi les migrants font-ils preuve de tant de soumission à suivre les règles et à subir les punitions imposées par les autorités communautaires, et acceptent-ils les insultes et l'hostilité exprimées par leurs collègues *comuneros*? Nous montrerons qu'en exerçant sa protection sur les épouses des migrants restées au village, la communauté renforce son emprise sur les *comuneros* absents. Simultanément, plusieurs épouses assument les responsabilités de leurs maris absents, et en conséquence, les relations entre les sexes dans la *comunidad* basculent. Il en résulte une situation fascinante où la *comunidad campesina* andine, essentiellement masculine, et qui en tant qu'institution de gouvernance locale dépend de la collaboration active de ses membres, se trouve simultanément affaiblie, renforcée et « féminisée » par la migration transnationale des bergers.

Les femmes et les enfants « laissés derrière »

Quand Diego est parti pour les États-Unis, sa femme Julia est restée derrière avec leur fille de trois ans, et enceinte de leur deuxième enfant. Sa grossesse n'était pas facile. Quand Diego s'est enfui du ranch aux États-Unis, il s'est passé vingt jours avant que Julia reçoive de ses nouvelles. Elle s'était beaucoup inquiétée. De plus, elle avait dû endurer les insultes et les insinuations de la femme de Vicente, l'homme qui avait offert à Diego l'emploi de berger au ranch. Actuellement, la commission versée à un Usibambino (un citoyen d'Usibamba) qui vous trouve un emploi aux États-Unis est de l'ordre de 3 500 à 4 000 dollars américains; normalement, le bénéficiaire paie de 2 500 à 3 000 dollars avant le voyage, et son épouse au village paie le solde après que son mari ait travaillé un certain temps au ranch. La femme de Vicente prétendait que le second paiement lui était toujours dû. Elle reprochait à Julia le fait qu'en s'enfuyant du ranch, Diego avait entaché la réputation de Vicente et qu'il serait désormais impossible de faire embaucher de nouveaux Usibambinos au ranch. Elle blessait aussi Julia en faisant allusion à « la vie de liberté » de Diego aux États-Unis. « Tu es idiote, Julia, Diego ne reviendra pas, il commence une nouvelle vie aux États-Unis. Au ranch, ils travaillent pendant 24 heures, et ils sont contrôlés. Mais qui contrôle Diego maintenant qu'il a quitté le ranch? » Julia a rapidement payé les 1 000 dollars qu'elle devait pour ne plus avoir à endurer ces insultes et insinuations.

La grossesse de Julia s'est trouvée compliquée pour d'autres raisons que la fugue de Diego. Elle devait prendre soin de sa fille, s'occuper des animaux et gérer le magasin que Diego avait ouvert peu de temps avant son départ. Pour l'aider dans son travail et lui tenir compagnie la nuit, une jeune sœur de Julia s'était installée chez elle après le départ de Diego. En plus de l'aide qu'elle lui apportait, la présence de la sœur était une manière pour la famille de signifier aux autres villageois que Julia ne souhaitait pas de « compagnie ».

Le seul téléphone public à Usibamba se trouve dans un des magasins locaux. Les femmes des migrants se rassemblent ici pour parler à leurs maris quand, après plusieurs mois au ranch, les hommes font un court séjour dans une ville d'importance régionale aux États-Unis. En fait, Diego a entendu son fils pleurer pour la première fois grâce à ce téléphone public. À plusieurs reprises, quand Julia a réussi à rejoindre Diego sur son téléphone portable, celui-ci se trouvait dans un bar. Mais Julia n'a pas voulu lui en faire reproche. Bien que les femmes des migrants n'aiment pas cette situation, elles comprennent

que les hommes aillent en ville de temps en temps pour avoir du bon temps, et c'est quelque chose qui est accepté pourvu qu'ils continuent d'envoyer de l'argent à leur famille à Usibamba. Selon les femmes, il est impossible qu'un homme demeure pour son contrat de trois ans sans avoir de relations sexuelles. « *La espera es larga y la carne es débil* » (l'attente est longue et la chair est faible) est un dicton répandu ici. C'est une réalité avec laquelle les femmes doivent composer aussitôt qu'elles apprennent que leurs maris vont partir vers un ranch nord-américain. Leur plus grande crainte est que leur mari se perde dans la boisson et flambe tout son argent dans les bordels. Comme le fait remarquer Mathers « un berger vit selon un cycle – six mois ou plus de vie organisée dans un ranch, puis départ en ville pour quelques semaines ou quelques mois de dérèglement avec une bonne soulerie. » (1975:8). Une autre inquiétude sérieuse de ces femmes est que leur mari ne fonde une autre famille aux États-Unis. Les femmes discutent de toutes ces questions entre elles quand elles sont assises autour du téléphone public et attendent les appels de leurs maris.

Les migrants de leur côté craignent que leurs femmes « esseulées, sans protection » ne deviennent « les proies » des hommes restés au village. La famille joue un rôle important dans la protection et le contrôle des femmes des migrants. Par exemple, on installe des membres plus jeunes de la famille (frère, sœur, cousins) dans le foyer de « ces femmes esseulées ». C'est aussi à cause de cette crainte que les Usibambinos exilés répètent continuellement pendant leur conversation téléphonique qu'ils ne sont pas partis pour leur plaisir. Ils insistent sur le fait qu'ils travaillent 24 heures par jour, dans des conditions très primitives, et qu'ils font ce sacrifice pour le bien de leur famille. Ils soulignent qu'ils passent leur temps à travailler et à économiser de l'argent, ce qui ne leur laisse pas le temps de penser à quoi que ce soit d'autre. Ce qu'ils ne disent pas, toutefois, c'est que tant de sacrifices méritent une récompense de temps en temps.

Julia s'inquiétait du fait que son magasin soit devenu beaucoup plus populaire chez les hommes de village depuis le départ de Diego. Pour se soustraire au harcèlement et éviter les ragots, elle ferma le magasin peu après la naissance de son fils. Et comme la somme de ses responsabilités devenait trop lourde à porter, elle vendit aussi quelques animaux. Diego lui reprocha ces décisions et à plusieurs reprises, lors de leurs conversations téléphoniques, il lui rappela que la personne qui souffrait le plus pour le bien de la famille, c'était lui. En général, les femmes d'émigrants se retrouvent avec une énorme charge de travail quand elles deviennent du jour au lendemain responsables de toutes les tâches agricoles, un

travail normalement accompli par leurs maris. Il est fréquent que d'importantes décisions relatives à la terre, à l'irrigation, à l'achat d'animaux ou à des travaux de construction demeurent la responsabilité des maris absents qui les communiquent par téléphone.

Les enfants souffrent aussi quand leur père s'éloigne, et cette absence peut devenir un événement traumatique. La réunification avec leur père après des années de séparation n'est pas nécessairement moins douloureuse. Les hommes sont blessés quand ils reviennent finalement à la maison et que leurs propres enfants ne les reconnaissent pas; ils les ont quittés enfants et les retrouvent adultes. Les migrants considèrent cette situation comme une des conséquences les plus déchirantes de leur absence prolongée.

Celia, la fille de Diego âgée de trois ans, commença à souffrir d'insomnie et de cauchemars quand son père partit pour les États-Unis. En plus des pleurs et des cauchemars, il n'est pas rare que des enfants se retrouvent avec des problèmes d'estomac (diarrhées et vomissements) et des fièvres après le départ de leur père. Les mères expliquent ces maladies en disant que l'enfant « a pris peur » (*tiene susto*) (Pribilsky 2001).

Les Usibambinos décrivent le *susto* (la frayeur) comme la perte de l'âme, qui se produit quand un événement dramatique survient dans la vie de quelqu'un. On perçoit la séparation soudaine d'avec leur père comme un événement perturbateur dans la vie des enfants, qui provoque la fuite de leur âme hors du corps. Puisqu'il s'agit d'une maladie spirituelle, le *susto* ne peut pas être diagnostiqué ou soigné par un médecin conventionnel. Pour guérir le *susto* il faut avoir recours à des traitements rituels : les mères préparent ou achètent au marché des sirops préparés à partir de différentes espèces de fleurs. Quand le *susto* est vraiment fort, on appelle le *curandero* (le guérisseur rituel) pour qu'il accomplisse la *limpia* (le nettoyage), qui implique entre autres de frotter un cochon d'Inde vivant sur le corps de l'enfant. Au cours du rituel, l'animal finit par mourir. Ce rituel est devenu assez fréquent chez les familles dont le père est à l'étranger.

Comme beaucoup d'autres enfants de migrants, Celia a « pris peur » depuis le départ de Diego. Julia a acheté des sirops de fleurs et l'a fait frotter avec un cochon d'Inde pour la calmer. Chaque fois que Julia appelle Diego, Celia demande à parler à son père et à écouter sa voix, répétant toujours la même question : « Papa, quand est-ce que tu reviens à la maison? » Comme son frère est né durant l'absence de Diego, Celia est jalouse d'avoir à partager avec lui la carte de crédit téléphonique de 10 minutes, mais Julia lui rappelle que son père veut aussi entendre les pleurs de son fils. Julia s'inquiète du fait que

son fils ne connaisse pas son père avant le retour de ce dernier.

L'exemple de Diego et Julia montre comment l'émigration à long terme perturbe la vie familiale. Toutefois, comme nous le verrons, la vie familiale est aussi influencée par les mesures que prend la *comunidad campesina* – la principale structure d'exercice du pouvoir à Usibamba – à l'égard de ses migrants. Dans la partie qui suit, nous examinons comment la migration affecte le fonctionnement de la *comunidad* et les conséquences qui en résultent pour la vie familiale et les relations entre les sexes.

La comunidad et le pouvoir à Usibamba

Usibamba est un village d'environ 2500 habitants¹ situé à une altitude entre 3 600 et 4 100 m dans les hauts plateaux centraux du Pérou. La vie au village est dure à cause de la pauvreté, du manque d'infrastructures de base et des conditions climatiques extrêmes. Pour endurer ces conditions difficiles, les villageois recourent aux boissons alcoolisées, mâchent de la feuille de coca et ont de nombreuses festivités. L'élevage et l'agriculture sont les deux activités économiques les plus importantes du village. L'autre pivot de l'économie est la migration vers les villes régionales, vers la capitale Lima et vers les États-Unis.

La *comunidad campesina* d'Usibamba possède 3 640 hectares de terres et regroupe environ 450 membres. La majorité des ménages comptent au moins une personne qui est membre de la *comunidad*, et qui a donc accès à un lopin de terre individuel et à l'utilisation des pâturages communaux. En principe, seuls les hommes sont membres de la *comunidad*, mais dans certaines circonstances particulières, des femmes peuvent être admises comme *comuneras*, par exemple des veuves ou des mères célibataires qui agissent comme chefs de famille. Les femmes ont toutefois une position de seconde classe dans la *communauté* et leur droit d'accès aux terres est restreint.

La très vaste majorité des 3 640 hectares (ha) de terre de la *comunidad* d'Usibamba est divisée en lopins individuels. La *comunidad* demeure propriétaire de ces lopins et les *comuneros* ne reçoivent que des droits d'usufruit sur les terres. Le droit aux terres est régi par un système complexe de réglementation communale. Les jeunes hommes mariés de 18 ans deviennent *comuneros* en payant une cotisation. En échange de leur adhésion à la *comunidad* et de leur allocation de terre, ils doivent remplir plusieurs obligations. Par exemple, ils doivent prendre part aux *faenas*, des corvées organisées par la *comunidad* pour réaliser des travaux publics comme l'entretien des canaux d'irrigation, la construction de bâtiments et l'ouverture de chemin. Ces *faenas* se terminent toujours par des libations rituelles et un repas communautaire. La

non-participation aux corvées est punie par des amendes. Les *comuneros* doivent aussi participer à un large éventail de comités locaux de même qu'aux assemblées communales (*asambleas*) et en général ils doivent se comporter en citoyens responsables et respectables. Entre autres choses, cela signifie s'occuper de l'éducation de leurs enfants, ne pas se présenter aux réunions en état d'ébriété et obéir aux autorités communautaires. Ces comportements sont consignés dans un dossier personnel dont il sera tenu compte quand des terrains se libèreront et seront réalloués parmi les *comuneros*, en septembre de chaque année. Quand des *comuneros* désobéissent aux règles, leur terre peut leur être temporairement ou définitivement confisquée. Ils peuvent aussi être expulsés de la *comunidad*, ce qui signifie qu'ils perdent leurs privilèges de membres et que, s'ils sont réadmis plus tard, ils devront rebâtir leur « dossier » à partir de zéro.

Selon leur rapport avec la *comunidad*, on distingue différentes catégories de villageois avec diverses obligations et prérogatives. Ces catégories fluctuantes et controversées font l'objet de discussions et de redéfinitions continues, mais on peut les décrire comme suit. Un *comunero activo* (un membre actif de la communauté) est un membre de plein titre de la *comunidad* : il a l'obligation de participer à tous les travaux communautaires et d'être présent à toutes les assemblées. Il a droit de vote à l'assemblée générale et son allocation de terre atteint le maximum (5,5 hectares dont un maximum de 2 ha de terres irriguées). Nous pourrions dire que le *comunero activo* est le « citoyen de plein titre ». Pourtant, à cause de l'actuelle pénurie de terres, beaucoup de jeunes hommes qui deviennent membres de la *comunidad* ne reçoivent qu'un petit lopin de terre ou pas de terre du tout. Nous avons calculé par exemple que la superficie irriguée que possèdent les *comuneros actifs* est de moins de 1 ha, soit beaucoup moins que les 2 ha auxquels ils ont droit. Au fil des ans, les *comuneros* essayent d'agrandir leur part en réclamant les lopins de terre qui deviennent libres. Pour recevoir de nouvelles terres dans le processus de réallocation, il est important d'afficher un bon dossier en tant que *comunero responsable*. Toutefois, à cause de la pénurie actuelle de terres, même les *comuneros* « parfaits » n'obtiennent jamais une allocation complète de terre.

Un *comunero pasivo* (un membre passif de la communauté) est quelqu'un qui a pris sa retraite après 25 ans de service à la communauté. Il n'a plus l'obligation de participer aux corvées. Il n'a pas le droit de vote mais il peut prendre la parole dans les assemblées pour conseiller les membres actifs. Il a une allocation de terre réduite, de 4 ha. En d'autres mots, un *comunero pasivo* est un citoyen retraité qui reçoit beaucoup de respect en vertu de son

engagement passé envers la comunidad. Finalement, un *no-comunero* (non-membre de la communauté) est un résidant du village qui ne fait pas partie de la comunidad. Il n'a pas le droit de vote, mais il peut prendre la parole dans les assemblées, quoiqu'il soit beaucoup moins respecté et reçoive considérablement moins d'attention qu'un *comunero pasivo*. Les *comuneros* des diverses catégories sont sujets à des amendes différentes pour les mêmes manquements.

Il existe un clivage social marqué entre les *comuneros* et les *no-comuneros*. Même si les *no-comuneros* sont tenus de fournir du travail à la comunidad, ils ont moins d'obligations et paient des amendes moins lourdes que les *comuneros*. D'autre part, ils n'ont ni droit de vote ni d'allocation de terrain. On peut dire que les *no-comuneros* sont des citoyens de second ordre, avec moins d'obligations et moins de droits.

Il existe diverses raisons pour lesquelles des villageois ne deviennent pas membres de la comunidad. Certains peuvent être inéligibles (nouveaux venus, habitants de résidences multiples, « personnalités irresponsables ») ou encore expulsés de la comunidad. Des hommes qui n'ont pas besoin d'un accès aux terrains communaux pour gagner leur vie peuvent décider que le prix à payer pour devenir membre est trop élevé en regard des services qu'ils reçoivent en retour. Dans ce cas, on peut parler d'une forme d'auto-exclusion. C'est particulièrement le cas des hommes qui ne dépendent pas de l'agriculture pour leur gagne-pain, comme les travailleurs de la construction, les boutiquiers, les chauffeurs d'autobus et de taxi et les enseignants.

Pour les *comuneros*, le défaut de participer aux assemblées et aux *faenas* est puni par des amendes. Le régime disciplinaire qu'impose la comunidad à ses membres est tel que ceux-ci se définissent comme des « esclaves de la communauté ». Les *comuneros* se plaignent des assemblées communales qui sont longues et astreignantes, occupant facilement une journée entière, et du travail qu'ils doivent fournir sans contrepartie. Ces régimes de réglementation sévère et ces récriminations contre l'esclavage constituent un aspect bien documenté des comunidades campesinas au Pérou (cf. Degregori et Golte 1973). Simultanément toutefois, la comunidad est considérée comme une institution prestigieuse qui maintient l'ordre, la discipline et le sens des responsabilités, en d'autres mots, qui crée de « bons citoyens ». Les *comuneros* sont fiers d'être disciplinés et organisés, en contraste avec les *no-comuneros* qu'on décrit comme indisciplinés et anarchiques. Les *no-comuneros* sont considérés comme « libres » mais en même temps, des villageois de second ordre, un genre de « non-citoyens ». La situation de Diego,

que nous avons exposée en début d'article, est représentative à cet égard. Diego n'est pas un *comunero*, et aux yeux des *comuneros*, cela explique qu'il ait déserté du ranch aux États-Unis. En tant que *no-comunero*, selon eux, Diego manque de la discipline et de la maîtrise de soi que la participation à la communauté impose aux *comuneros* pendant leurs années de service. Selon ce raisonnement, Diego n'est pas capable d'endurer « l'esclavage des ranchs états-uniens » puisqu'il n'a pas été formé en tant « qu'esclave de la comunidad ».

Alors que de nombreux *comuneros* rêvent de travailler aux États-Unis pour échapper à la pauvreté, ils considèrent aussi que le travail en exil est une forme d'esclavage. Ils gagnent bien, mais dans des conditions de travail horribles, où ils sont victimes d'humiliation et de discrimination. Dans les mots d'un migrant *comunero*: « *Nosotros nacimos para ser esclavos siempre fue así y así sigue siendo todavía y seguirá por siempre* » (« Nous sommes nés pour être esclaves cela a toujours été ainsi et ça l'est encore et cela durera pour toujours »).

Tels étaient les gémissements d'Antonio à la fin de sa fête d'adieu avant de partir travailler dans les ranchs au Wyoming. Il était complètement saoul et en larmes au moment de proférer ces paroles, après avoir dit qu'il craignait d'être exploité par les *gringos* dans son emploi aux États-Unis (*voy a ser cholo de los gringos*)².

Certains déclarent explicitement qu'ils refusent de travailler pour les *gringos* [*no quiero ser cholo de los gringos*]. Ils préfèrent se plier au régime disciplinaire de la comunidad. Toutefois, un *comunero* qui s'exile pour travailler comme berger aux États-Unis n'échappe pas complètement non plus aux exigences de la comunidad. Nous verrons plus loin comment la comunidad fait payer chèrement les migrants pour leur absence.

Contexte et organisation de la migration des bergers

La migration des bergers d'Usibamba a commencé à la fin des années 1970, mais le vrai exode a pris place pendant les années 1980. Nous avons calculé qu'en 2005, 147 Usibambinos travaillaient aux États-Unis. L'émigration en général et celle des bergers en particulier n'est pas un phénomène nouveau dans les hauts plateaux centraux du Pérou (Paerregaard 1985). « Depuis au moins le début des années 1920, il existait un important mouvement de migration à partir des villages des hauts plateaux » (Roberts et Samianego 1978:248). Les Usibambinos ont aussi émigré vers Lima et vers les régions de forêt tropicale des basses terres de l'Oriente. À Lima, toutefois, les salaires sont faibles et le coût de la vie est élevé. La migration vers les basses terres tropicales n'est jamais

devenue populaire parce que les conditions climatiques sont très différentes de ce que connaissent les Usibambinos dans les Andes. À cause de ces raisons, la majorité des travailleurs migrants se déplacent au voisinage d'Usibamba, nommément vers les villes de Chupaca et Huancayo. L'attrait de l'émigration vers les États-Unis tient aux salaires très élevés en comparaison des revenus péruviens.

À l'origine de la migration des bergers de la région vers les États-Unis, il faut citer la Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation, une société minière américaine établie en 1915 à La Oroya. Les villageois d'Usibamba travaillaient à la mine et gardaient aussi les troupeaux de la compagnie. Quand ses concessions furent expropriées durant la réforme agraire de Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975), la compagnie quitta la région. Mais le savoir-faire des bergers des hauts plateaux et leur capacité à travailler dans des conditions difficiles n'étaient pas passés inaperçus. De sorte qu'après leur retrait du Pérou au début des années 1970, les directeurs de ces sociétés commencèrent à recruter des bergers de la région pour leurs ranchs en Amérique du Nord, situés avant tout dans les états de l'Ouest (Altamirano 1998).

Dans le passé, on engageait comme bergers des Basques d'Espagne ou de France, familiers avec la garde des moutons dans les Pyrénées, mais vers 1965, les Péruviens ont commencé à remplacer les Basques qui n'étaient plus intéressés à ce travail (Pericles 2001, León 2001). En 1969, la Western Ranch Association ouvrit un bureau de recrutement à Lima pour trouver des bergers des hauts plateaux pour le compte des ranchers américains. Au début de 1972, une cinquantaine de bergers péruviens étaient entrés aux États-Unis avec des contrats officiels (Douglass et Bilbao 1975:324).

L'admission aux États-Unis de bergers péruviens a lieu dans le cadre de contrats pour des employés agricoles avec un visa H-2A d'une durée maximale de trois ans. Ce visa ne demeure valide que tant qu'ils travaillent comme bergers. À la fin du contrat, l'ouvrier agricole doit retourner au Pérou. La plupart des bergers sont recrutés au Pérou par des représentants de deux grandes associations de ranchers nord-américains : la Western Ranch Association (WRA) basée en Utah et les Mountain Plains Agricultural Services (MPAS) basés au Wyoming³. Pour obtenir un contrat, un berger doit avoir plus d'un an d'expérience à garder des troupeaux de plus de 1000 bêtes en pâturage ouvert. De plus, les candidats doivent passer un examen de connaissances et de savoir-faire. Quand un candidat est choisi, ses frais de voyage vers les États-Unis sont défrayés par le ranch.

En plus des procédures et des examens officiels, les réseaux de village jouent un rôle central dans l'obtention d'un emploi à l'étranger. Cette pratique qui consiste à *jalar* (tirer) les autres membres de la comunidad dans les réseaux de migration est une tradition de longue date dans les Andes. Dans le passé, quand un berger d'Usibamba travaillant aux États-Unis apprenait l'ouverture d'un poste, il en informait immédiatement ses compères du village qui pouvaient entamer les démarches officielles. À cette époque, le nouveau berger versait son premier mois de salaire en guise de remerciement à celui qui l'avait « tiré ». Aujourd'hui, les intermédiaires sont des gens qui travaillent depuis plusieurs années aux États-Unis, et les honoraires qu'ils demandent pour leurs services ont augmenté en même temps que la demande pour leurs services : ils atteignent aujourd'hui de 3 500 à 4 000 dollars. La réputation du propriétaire du ranch (*patrón*) de même que l'état où est situé le ranch sont des facteurs qui influent sur le prix de la recommandation (MREP 2005).

Les bergers travaillant aux États-Unis subissent beaucoup de pression pour faire appel à de nouveaux membres de leur famille et les recommander aux intermédiaires et employeurs (*patrón*). Sans une telle ouverture, il est presque impossible d'être embauché comme berger (Paerregaard 2002:129). Le fait qu'un parent migrant néglige ou refuse de vous recommander est source de ressentiment et de conflit parmi les familles d'Usibamba. En contrepartie, pour la réputation des intermédiaires, il est très important que les bergers qu'ils font venir fassent preuve de fiabilité et de compétence. Sinon, les intermédiaires se retrouvent en difficulté face aux propriétaires de ranchs. C'est pour cette raison que Vicente, l'intermédiaire de Diego, était très en colère contre lui pour avoir déserté son emploi après seulement un mois.

Le revenu des bergers aux États-Unis varie entre 650 et 1200 dollars US par mois (MREP 2005). Cet écart important dans les rémunérations tient au fait qu'en Californie, contrairement aux autres états, les syndicats ont réussi à faire hausser la rémunération des bergers (La Opinion 2001). L'employeur assure généralement le gîte et le couvert au ranch. Les bergers vivent dans des tentes ou des roulottes dans des pâturages lointains, complètement isolés du reste du monde. Ils travaillent de longues heures, nourrissant les animaux, intervenant dans les agnelages difficiles, éloignant le troupeau des mauvaises herbes toxiques et tenant les coyotes à distance. Une fois par semaine, le patron les visite pour inspecter leur travail et leur apporter à manger. Le renouvellement des contrats dépend de la recommandation du patron, de sorte que les bergers hésitent beaucoup à se plaindre ou à exiger de meilleures conditions de vie.

La vie sur les ranchs d'élevage nord-américain est une expérience plutôt désagréable (CCLS 2000 et 2005). En plus de la dureté de la vie et des conditions d'exploitation, tous les migrants s'entendent pour dire que la solitude est quasiment insupportable. Werner (1991) considère que leur contrat est un « contrat avec la solitude ». En même temps, ils voient ces contrats comme la seule possibilité de gagner un peu de capital et d'améliorer leur vie à Usibamba. Le fait est, toutefois, qu'ils ne parviennent pas tous à s'accommoder de la solitude et que la désertion est un problème répandu. Dans les années 1950, de nombreux bergers basques abandonnaient aussi leur emploi pour des positions mieux payées comme mineurs, concierges et journaliers (Douglass et Bilbao 1975:314). Comme nous l'avons vu, Diego s'est sauvé en ville après un mois au ranch. Dans les villes, ils peuvent gagner plus d'argent et travailler dans de meilleures conditions, mais du moment qu'ils quittent le ranch, leur séjour aux États-Unis devient illégal et ils courent le risque d'être attrapés par des officiers de l'immigration américaine et déportés.

La comunidad et ses migrants

Comme expliqué plus haut, le fonctionnement de la comunidad est basé sur la participation active et non rémunérée de ses membres. Comme les migrants sont incapables de remplir ces tâches, ils doivent demander aux autorités communautaires la permission de s'absenter. Obtenir cette permission ne pose pas de difficulté. Cependant, en demandant cette permission, les migrants se soumettent au régime communal.

Au début de la migration des bergers vers les États-Unis, la comunidad n'imposait aucun tarif aux migrants, bien qu'on s'attendît à ce que ceux-ci rapportent des cadeaux. Au fil des ans, la migration augmenta et l'on établit une tarification qui augmenta avec les années (cf. Celestino 1972). Aujourd'hui, le tarif à payer est beaucoup plus élevé que la somme des amendes qui devraient être perçues pour l'absence d'un membre aux assemblées et aux faenas pendant son séjour à l'étranger. De plus, le tarif à payer augmente quand un migrant repart pour un deuxième ou un troisième contrat.

La Règlementation interne de la Comunidad Campesina de Usibamba stipule ce qui suit :

Les comuneros ont droit à la permission suivante: permis de travailler à l'étranger pour une période de trois ans, ils sont tenus de verser la contribution suivante: la première fois : 150 dollars américains; la deuxième fois : 200 dollars américains; la troisième fois : 300 dollars américains; la quatrième fois et les fois subséquentes : 400 dollars américains.

En retour de ces paiements, les migrants demeurent membres de la comunidad et conservent leur terre qui, en leur absence, peut être exploitée par leur femme ou d'autres parents. Les membres de la famille ont aussi la permission d'utiliser le pâturage communal. Les épouses peuvent voter en leur nom aux assemblées de la comunidad. Enfin, la comunidad soutient les comuneros dans leurs démarches pour obtenir le permis de travail américain en émettant des documents qui attestent leur expérience comme berger et des certificats de bonne conduite. Ces certificats sont importants pour remplir les démarches officielles à Lima.

La comunidad n'établit pas de limite quant au nombre de comuneros qui sont autorisés à travailler à l'étranger, ni quant au nombre d'années pendant lesquelles un comunero peut s'absenter. Nous avons calculé qu'en 2005, 42 comuneros vivaient aux États-Unis avec un permis de la comunidad. Ces 42 comuneros versaient 6 634 dollars américains, de sorte que les permis des migrants sont de loin la principale source de revenus de la comunidad.

Dans les archives communautaires, la plus ancienne demande formelle d'une permission de partir vers les États-Unis date de 1981. Les arguments utilisés dans les demandes officielles reviennent toujours au même. Les comuneros qui demandent une permission de s'absenter expliquent que le principal motif de leur exil vers les États-Unis est d'améliorer la situation économique de leur famille. Ils soulignent qu'ils n'oublieront pas leur communauté, leur pays natal; non seulement paieront-ils le tarif communautaire obligatoire, mais ils feront une contribution personnelle supplémentaire à la communauté. Nous présentons ci-dessous une de ces lettres :

Président du Comité exécutif de la Communauté d'Usibamba

Chères autorités de la Communauté

En tant que membre actif de cette Communauté, je me présente avec le respect que mérite votre autorité et demande votre attention pour la requête suivante.

Voulant travailler pour soutenir ma famille comme n'importe quel être humain et ayant entrepris les procédures pour travailler à l'étranger (aux États-Unis), je vous demande, à nos autorités, un congé de trois ans pour travailler comme berger dans un ranch aux États-Unis. Ma requête est conforme aux résolutions de la réglementation interne de notre Communauté et je me plierai au paiement des frais correspondant aux assemblées et aux travaux communautaires durant mes trois années d'absence. De plus, je suis d'accord pour contribuer quelques grains de sable au bénéfice de notre communauté. Après mon retour à Usibamba, je poursuivrai mon service à la Communauté, remplissant tous

les engagements et obligations comme tous les membres de la communauté.

En conséquence, je vous demande instamment, notre Président, d'accéder à ma requête parce qu'elle est juste.

Usibamba, 4 avril 1984

L'expression « contribuer quelques grains de sable » (*colaborar con algun granito de arena*) au bénéfice de la communauté est une expression figée relative à la position des migrants. Elle signifie que par leur contribution financière, les migrants démontrent leur engagement envers la communauté et soutiennent son développement futur. Par conséquent, en plus des frais qu'ils ont à payer pour le permis, on demande aux comuneros migrants des contributions monétaires supplémentaires (leurs petits grains de sable). Par exemple pour l'achat de matériaux de construction comme du mortier et des briques pour les bâtiments publics. Autre exemple, en 2005, lors d'une réunion générale de la comunidad, il a été décidé que les migrants devaient acheter le ciment pour la construction d'une statue sur la place centrale du village. Plus récemment, on leur a demandé de contribuer à l'installation d'ordinateurs et de l'internet dans le village. Chaque année, les migrants défraient aussi l'anniversaire de la comunidad, le championnat de soccer et d'autres festivités du village.

Ci-dessous, nous présentons une lettre des autorités de la comunidad à un comunero aux États-Unis, dans laquelle on exprime de façon très explicite la notion de faire des contributions « en échange » du droit de demeurer membre de la comunidad. Bien que le ton de la lettre soit formel et poli, le contenu est très direct et à la limite menaçant.

Usibamba, 4 mars 1987

Par la présente, nous voulons vous faire savoir que lors de la dernière assemblée générale du 28 février de cette année, les comuneros ont décidé que les comuneros qui se trouvent à l'étranger doivent contribuer leur grain de sable, en d'autres mots envoyer leur collaboration ou leur cadeau. S'ils ne se conforment pas à cette demande, ils perdront leur statut de comunero.

En conséquence, Luis, nous en tant qu'autorités, te demandons de nous fournir une machine à écrire pour le bureau de l'administration centrale, puisque les autres comuneros qui vivent à l'étranger nous ont déjà transmis leur cadeau.

Les autorités de l'Administration centrale reconnaîtront votre contribution de grande valeur et vous alloueront les terres qui vous reviennent. Salutations sincères. Pour le progrès de notre comunidad.

Luis est devenu comunero en 1979. Il a rempli 4 contrats de trois ans aux États-Unis. Il a toujours demandé à la comunidad la permission de s'absenter et il a versé tous les paiements nécessaires. Malgré cela, la comunidad lui a régulièrement demandé d'autres contributions, auxquelles il a toujours souscrit. Après douze ans, il est revenu au village et a continué comme comunero.

La lettre qui suit exprime comment les comuneros s'attendent à ce qu'on tienne compte d'eux, en échange de leurs contributions, dans la réallocation annuelle des terres

Californie, 9 août 1984

Messieurs des autorités, en réponse à la lettre que vous m'avez envoyée pour demander ma contribution d'un demi-million de soles pour ce projet, autorités, je suis complètement d'accord avec ce montant que je vous enverrai à la fin de ce mois. Autorités, je peux même donner davantage pour certains projets comme ceux du conseil municipal et d'autres. [...] Mais autorités, je vous demande instamment d'écouter ma requête : je vous demande de me donner mon premier lopin de terre irriguée. Jusqu'à maintenant, je n'en ai jamais reçu, et c'est ma seule récrimination. Voyons, messieurs des autorités, comment s'exprimera votre conscience. Là s'arrêtent mes revendications, autorités, jusqu'à une prochaine lettre.

Au revoir à vous tous, autorités, et transmettez mes salutations à tous mes frères comuneros en général.

Merci.

Mauro [...]

Ces lettres illustrent le ton respectueux et soumis dans lequel les comuneros migrants s'adressent aux autorités communautaires et célèbrent la comunidad en référant à la santé de la comunidad, le progrès de la comunidad, les confrères comuneros, etc. En même temps, elles démontrent sans équivoque quels sont leurs intérêts matériels et combien leur relation en est une d'échange.

Malgré l'acquiescement des frais et des contributions additionnelles, la comunidad rappelle continuellement aux migrants qu'ils sont absents du village, et donc de mauvais membres. On considère que les paiements en argent n'ont pas la même valeur que la contribution en travail physique et en sueur (*sudar la camiseta*, mouiller sa chemise de sueur). Les migrants et leurs familles connaissent donc souvent une forme de harcèlement de la part de la comunidad. Par exemple, en 2005, le président de la comunidad a demandé aux comuneros migrants une contribution de 200 Nuevos Soles (NS, environ 57 dollars américains) en compensation de leur absence d'une série d'assemblées et de faenas de voisinage. La contribution devait être utilisée pour l'achat de ciment

pour la place centrale du village. Mais en même temps, les femmes de ces migrants ont été informées qu'elles devaient remplacer leurs maris dans ces assemblées et faenas. On leur imposait des amendes si elles ne remplissaient pas ces devoirs.

Les femmes des migrants ont écrit la lettre suivante aux autorités communautaires.

Usibamba, 25 mars 2005,

Nous, les femmes des comuneros qui travaillent à l'étranger, nous présentons avec le respect que méritent nos autorités, et faisons valoir ce qui suit :

Comme tout le monde le sait dans tout le village, nos maris contribuent avec des dollars pour les assemblées et les faenas qu'ils manquent en étant hors du pays. Nous ferons les contributions qu'on attend de nous. Maintenant, on nous impose des amendes pour nos absences aux assemblées et aux faenas. [...] Nous avons expliqué la situation à nos maris migrants et ils ne sont pas d'accord avec les amendes, puisqu'ils considèrent que toutes les assemblées et les faenas sont comprises dans le tarif annuel qu'ils payent à la communauté pour obtenir la permission de travailler à l'étranger.

En conséquence, nous vous prions, notre président du Comité exécutif, d'accepter notre requête et de retirer toutes ces amendes, ce qui est juste.

[Signatures et numéros d'identité des femmes]

En exigeant des femmes qu'elles travaillent aux faenas, la comunidad leur rappelle qu'elles doivent défendre l'honneur et la réputation de leurs maris. On peut invoquer que c'est une manière pour la comunidad de résister à la monétarisation du travail communal. On considère ce travail collectif comme un symbole de participation et d'engagement communautaire auxquels on ne peut pas substituer d'argent. Même si la comunidad autorise le paiement d'un tarif pour compenser pour l'absence d'un membre, cette « monétarisation » mine l'essence de la comunidad comme une institution fondée sur le travail en collaboration. Cette fois-là, les femmes des migrants ont décidé d'adopter une position commune. Finalement, elles sont parvenues à un accord selon lequel les autorités oublieraient les amendes si leurs maris acceptaient de payer la contribution supplémentaire de 200 NS pour construire la place centrale.

Les salaires élevés des bergers migrants engendrent aussi beaucoup de ressentiment, en particulier parce que cela leur permet d'acheter des parcelles de terrain résidentiel à Usibamba. Une autre source d'inquiétude est liée au fait que certains migrants, après leur retour des États-Unis, achètent des maisons dans les villes de la région et abandonnent la communauté.

Aujourd'hui, de plus en plus de jeunes hommes du village décident de ne pas s'inscrire à la comunidad parce qu'ils trouvent que les avantages de devenir comunero (accès aux terres, participation à l'exercice du pouvoir local, soutien financier sous forme de prêts, image de citoyen à part entière) ne compensent pas pour les nombreux désavantages (obligation des corvées, lourde réglementation et interférences dans leur vie personnelle). Si c'est déjà le cas pour des hommes qui vivent au village, il est évident que ce le sera encore davantage pour les bergers migrants, particulièrement s'ils envisagent de rester à l'étranger pour plusieurs années. Un non-comunero qui part pour travailler aux États-Unis n'a aucune permission à demander à la comunidad et n'a aucun frais à payer.

On peut se demander pourquoi il est si important pour les comuneros de demeurer membre de la comunidad quand ils sont si lourdement taxés. Certains comuneros migrants décident effectivement de se retirer de la comunidad. À une occasion, la comunidad d'Usibamba a monté les tarifs à un niveau tel que la majorité des membres migrants ont décidé de ne pas payer et de perdre leur statut de membre. Une raison fondamentale de demeurer comunero tient au fait que la comunidad est une institution très prestigieuse qui, historiquement, était synonyme d'appartenance et de citoyenneté. Comme le décrit Cohen pour les communautés mexicaines, puisque la plupart des migrants laissent leur famille derrière, il est crucial qu'ils conservent leur statut au sein de la communauté (Cohen 2001:962, 963). Une raison plus matérielle – mais pas nécessairement plus importante – tient bien sûr au fait que le titre de comunero est la seule façon pour la femme et les enfants d'un migrant de gagner l'accès aux terres communales. Dans la section suivante, nous verrons les effets des migrations transnationales sur les rapports entre les sexes dans la comunidad, et comment celle-ci utilise la protection des femmes des migrants comme un autre levier pour resserrer son contrôle sur les migrants.

L'adultère et les nouveaux rapports entre les sexes dans la *comunidad*

La plus grande crainte de chacun des hommes qui part pour les États-Unis est que sa femme n'entreprenne une relation avec un autre homme et plus spécialement que cet homme « marque un but », c'est-à-dire qu'il mette sa femme enceinte. Cette inquiétude est fondée sur de nombreux exemples de comuneros qui ne sont jamais revenus des États-Unis après que leur femme fût tombée enceinte d'un autre homme. Ils ne pouvaient revenir parce qu'ils avaient peur de devenir la risée de tout le village. Tout Usibambino qui voyage vers les États-Unis sait qu'à partir du moment où il quitte le village, d'autres hommes

s'intéresseront à sa femme. Parmi les remarques ironiques exprimées par les hommes quant à la vulnérabilité de la situation de ces femmes à Usibamba, on entend: « Voilà une vache bien éloignée de son taureau. On devrait prendre soin d'elle, parce qu'elle a besoin de l'attention d'un taureau; autrement, la vache deviendra stérile » ou encore « Si son mari est au loin, quelqu'un doit l'arroser, l'irriguer; autrement, elle va sécher. »

Les hommes mariés utilisent diverses stratégies pour courir le moins de risque possible une fois qu'ils ont décidé de partir pour les États-Unis. Par exemple, ils vont se dépêcher de mettre leur femme enceinte avant leur départ, réduisant par là la possibilité qu'un autre homme « marque un but » pendant leur absence. De cette façon, ils s'assurent aussi que leur femme sera « occupée » pendant qu'ils sont au loin et n'aura pas le temps « de s'enrayer et de courir les liaisons. »

La comunidad punit l'adultère comme un comportement immoral et un geste contraire aux bonnes mœurs. Plusieurs comuneros qui ont entretenu des liaisons avec les femmes de comuneros migrants ont perdu leur statut et leur terre. La comunidad n'intervient toutefois que si un comunero s'engage dans une liaison avec la femme d'un autre comunero. Si des comuneros ont des liaisons avec les femmes de non-comuneros ou avec des femmes non mariées, la comunidad n'interviendra pas puisqu'aucun comunero n'aura à se sentir trahi. En fait, la répression de l'adultère n'a pas beaucoup à voir avec le maintien d'une norme stricte de moralité publique, mais bien plutôt avec la sauvegarde de « l'honneur masculin » des comuneros. Nous voyons là une double attitude en ce qui touche le respect des femmes des comuneros migrants. D'une part, des camarades comuneros harcèlent ces femmes et en parlent dans un langage des plus sexistes. En même temps, la comunidad punit les comuneros qui ont des liaisons avec ces femmes dans le but de protéger l'honneur des comuneros migrants.

On trouvera ci-dessous une lettre d'Agustin Alejandro, un comunero qui se plaint auprès des autorités au sujet d'un autre comunero qui a entrepris une liaison avec la femme de son fils. Il demande aux autorités de prendre les mesures qui s'imposent.

Messieurs des autorités principales de la communauté

Je soussigné, Alejandro...avec le respect obligé qui me caractérise, me présente et expose ce qui suit :

Ma belle-fille, Mme Emilia..., femme de mon fils Rubén, a quitté le village en compagnie du comunero Lucio...Ils ont quitté leurs foyers avec l'intention de n'y jamais revenir. Après exactement deux mois et huit jours, ils sont revenus...

Ce cas d'adultère constitue une trahison du foyer de mon fils et de la société en général. Nous ne pou-

vons accepter des comuneros comme celui-là au sein de la communauté. On sait que mon fils Rubén a quitté la communauté pour les États-Unis avec une permission de trois ans. Il reste encore un an avant son retour. Je n'aurais jamais imaginé que mon fils allait être trahi par cette sorte de gens.

Je demande à cette noble assemblée l'appui nécessaire pour prendre les mesures de punition ou de sanction appropriées, conformément aux règlements internes de notre comunidad.

En conséquence de la situation expliquée ci-dessus, je vous prie, Messieurs des autorités et Messieurs de l'assemblée, d'imposer ladite punition qui n'est que justice.

Usibamba, 17 juillet 1991

L'idylle entre Lucio et Emilia est une des plus célèbres histoires d'amour touchant des migrants d'Usibamba. L'un et l'autre étaient mariés et avaient responsabilité de famille. Leur liaison commença pendant l'absence de Rubén et ils décidèrent de s'enfuir de la comunidad. Personne dans le village n'a compris pourquoi, après deux mois d'absence, ils ont décidé de revenir. Peut-être des difficultés ont-elles surgi entre eux ou ont-ils eu des regrets de ce qu'ils avaient fait. Après que le père de Rubén eût déposé sa plainte, la comunidad convoqua immédiatement une assemblée qui, par un vote majoritaire, décida que le comportement immoral de Lucio était un geste à l'encontre des bonnes mœurs de la communauté et qu'il méritait une punition. Lucio perdit sa qualité de comunero : il dut rendre sa parcelle de terre à la comunidad, et perdit son « dossier de service »

En punissant Lucio, la comunidad avait partiellement restauré l'honneur de Rubén. Après son contrat de trois ans comme berger, Rubén est revenu à Usibamba. Tout le monde dans le village appréhendait sa vengeance, mais l'esclandre n'eut pas lieu et Rubén retourna vivre avec Emilia et ses enfants comme si rien ne s'était produit. Rubén ne retourna jamais travailler aux États-Unis comme berger.

Cependant, pour Lucio et sa femme, il était difficile de nourrir leurs enfants sans accès aux ressources communautaires. Lucio entreprit donc, avec l'appui de sa femme, de regagner son statut de comunero. Sa femme écrivit la demande suivante aux autorités de la Communauté.

Cher Président du Comité exécutif de la Communauté paysanne d'Usibamba

Je, Maria...en tant qu'épouse de M. Lucio, comunero actif identifié par le No,...me présente avec le respect approprié que vous méritez et fais valoir ce qui suit :
Mon mari Lucio ayant été disqualifié en tant que comu-

nero, je vous supplie, vous et les comuneros de l'Assemblée, que vous rétablissiez mon mari comme un membre de la communauté de plein titre et que vous l'autorisiez à continuer à servir la communauté en remplissant tous ses devoirs de comunero, puisque ce qui lui est arrivé est une erreur et un malheur. Je vous supplie, membres de l'assemblée, d'agir avec votre conscience parce que comme famille, nous avons des enfants à nourrir, élever et éduquer. J'espère donc en votre compréhension à tous.

En conséquence, je vous prie, Président et membres de la communauté en général, d'accepter ma requête parce qu'elle est juste.
Usibamba, 7 août 1991

Lucio obtint la permission de redevenir comunero, mais son dossier était effacé et il repartait à zéro. Cette histoire illustre le fonctionnement disciplinaire par lequel l'honneur de l'offensé est rétabli et le délinquant morigéné. Cette année, Lucio est même Président du comité de Vigilance. À ce titre, il est responsable de la sanction des comportements répréhensibles des comuneros...

Un autre exemple de l'intervention directe de la comunidad dans les rapports entre les sexes dans le domaine familial survient quand les prérogatives d'un comunero sont formellement transférées à sa femme. Cela ne se produit que lorsqu'un comunero a entrepris une nouvelle vie aux États-Unis et n'a pas l'intention de revenir. C'est le cas de Raquel et Hugo. Peu après la naissance de leur fille en 1994, Hugo est parti travailler pour la Western Ranch Association (WRA). À la fin de son contrat de trois ans, en 1997, il décida de rester illégalement aux États-Unis. Même s'il continua de verser ses contributions à la communauté, il cessa d'envoyer de l'argent à sa famille. Avec le temps, Hugo cessa aussi de payer sa cotisation annuelle à la communauté, ce qui le mettait à risque d'être destitué en tant que comunero. Évidemment, lui ne risquait pas grand-chose, mais Raquel pouvait perdre son allocation de terrain si Hugo perdait le statut de comunero.

Les parents d'Hugo à Usibamba ont confirmé Raquel dans ses doutes que celui-ci avait fondé une nouvelle famille aux États-Unis. Raquel présenta donc une requête formelle à la comunidad pour pouvoir remplacer Hugo en tant que membre, et Hugo envoya une lettre de Californie pour soutenir la demande de Raquel :

Requête: être considérée comme une femme comunera en remplacement de mon mari.
Cher Señor Président du Comité d'administration de la communauté paysanne de Usibamba :

Raquel,... je me présente devant vous avec le respect que vous méritez et je vous expose ce qui suit :

Sachant que mon mari M. Hugo... a quitté son emploi sur un ranch aux États-Unis. Il n'est jamais revenu et demeure illégalement aux États-Unis depuis 1997 et a contracté mariage avec une autre femme aux É.-U.. Je ne reçois aucune nouvelle de lui et j'ai négocié avec mon beau-père, señor Félix... pour que son fils me reconnaisse les droits de garde de notre fille.

Je demande à votre autorité d'être considérée comme une comunera en lieu de mon mari M. Hugo,... qui est devenu membre de la comunidad en 1994.

En conséquence, je vous prie Señor Président, d'accepter ma requête parce qu'elle est juste.
Usibamba, 30 septembre 2000

Bakersfield, Californie 6 mars 2000

Le Président du Comité d'administration de la communauté paysanne de Usibamba.

Président :

Je vous transmets mes salutations fraternelles avec tout le respect que vous méritez. Après ces vœux, je veux exposer les raisons de cette lettre.

...D'abord, je suis un membre actif de la communauté et depuis que j'ai joint l'organisation communale, j'ai rempli tous mes devoirs comme les autres comuneros.

Deuxièmement, comme vous le savez tous déjà, j'ai quitté notre communauté pour travailler à l'étranger dans l'espoir d'un avenir meilleur. Aujourd'hui, à cause de forces indépendantes de ma volonté, je ne puis continuer à être comunero...

C'est seulement maintenant que je demande à votre honorée personne et aux autres membres de la communauté de transférer les terrains communaux que j'utilise... à Raquel... qui assumera la responsabilité d'être une membre active de la communauté pour le bien de notre magnifique terre d'Usibamba et pour son avenir... C'est tout pour aujourd'hui, comuneros, jusqu'à la prochaine occasion. J'espère que j'aurai une réponse rapide de votre personne estimée et des autres membres du Comité administratif et de tous mes concitoyens. J'espère que ma requête sera acceptée parce qu'elle est juste.

Fidèlement vôtre,
Hugo...

Leur requête conjointe fut accueillie et l'assemblée générale de la comunidad décida formellement de remplacer Hugo par Rachel en tant que membre de la comunidad. Raquel pouvait aussi conserver son dossier de service à la comunidad, qui comprenait les nombreuses compensations qu'il avait payées pour obtenir la permission de s'exiler. Formellement, Raquel était maintenant une mère célibataire, et donc éligible en tant que comu-

nera. En tant que membre féminine, toutefois, Raquel avait droit à un hectare de moins de terres communales qu'Hugo. Bien que les femmes occupent toujours une position de dépendance, il est intéressant de noter que leur rôle et leur présence dans la comunidad gagnent en importance à cause de la migration et des infidélités de leurs maris. Non seulement les femmes remplacent-elles leurs maris durant les assemblées et les activités communautaires, mais elles les remplacent même comme membres officiels de la communauté s'ils décident d'entreprendre une nouvelle vie. Ainsi, la migration affecte et modifie simultanément les rapports entre les sexes dans le domaine familial et dans la communauté.

Conclusion : des régimes « d'esclavage » en compétition dans un contexte transnational

Depuis les années 1980, la migration des bergers des hauts plateaux andins du Pérou vers les ranchs d'élevage aux États-Unis a connu une croissance considérable. L'industrie américaine des ranchs ovins compte sur des bergers étrangers pour garder ses troupeaux à cause des conditions de travail misérables. Compte tenu de la situation économique difficile dans les Andes, les bergers péruviens sont disposés à accepter une vie de solitude. D'une certaine manière, on peut considérer la migration vers les États-Unis comme une façon de s'évader du régime d'esclavage de la communauté vers un autre système d'esclavage. Les Usibambinos perçoivent la comunidad et les ranchs nord-américains comme des « régimes d'esclavage »⁴.

Comme les bergers sont embauchés pour des contrats de trois ans et n'ont pas la permission d'emmener leurs familles, les impacts sur les parents qui restent au village sont significatifs. À Usibamba, un des villages andins qui fournit des bergers pour les ranchs américains, les femmes et les enfants souffrent à divers égards de l'absence de leur mari et père. Le fait que la migration occasionne diverses angoisses personnelles et familiales n'est pas nouveau, mais peu de recherches avaient été consacrées à l'effet de la gouvernance locale sur ces angoisses, et c'est ce que cet article a cherché à documenter.

Usibamba correspond à l'image d'une comunidad andine typique en tant qu'institution strictement organisée et disciplinée où l'on obéit à des formes locales d'ordre et de justice rigoureuses (Yambert 1980). Par exemple, Usibamba continue de faire honneur à la redistribution annuelle des terres parmi la comunidad et observe un régime strict de discipline et de punition dans la gestion de la communauté et son contrôle sur la terre. Nous avons plongé dans les diverses conséquences d'un niveau élevé de migration sur le fonctionnement de la comunidad.

Plusieurs études portant sur des communautés paysannes et indigènes dans d'autres régions d'Amérique latine, comme le Mexique, se sont intéressées à la question de savoir ce qui advient à la comunidad en conséquence des migrations transnationales (Cohen 2001; Van Wey et al. 2005; Mutersbaught 2002). Par exemple, van Wey et ses collaboratrice (2005) montrent que la forte capacité organisationnelle des systèmes traditionnels d'exercice du pouvoir dans les villages autochtones ouvre la possibilité pour la comunidad d'obtenir des contributions de la part des migrants pour des projets communautaires. Alors que ces auteurs insistent sur un renforcement des systèmes de gouvernance indigènes comme résultat des migrations transnationales, à Usibamba, nous percevons des forces contradictoires.

À Usibamba, nous trouvons la situation paradoxale où la dépendance de la comunidad aux revenus en provenance des migrants augmente, pendant que ceux-ci sont de plus en plus contraints de démontrer leur subordination dans des registres matériels autant que symboliques. On accorde plus d'importance que jamais aux notions qui constituent le fondement idéologique de la comunidad, telles que la discipline, l'ordre et l'importance du devoir citoyen. Entre autres choses, cela s'exprime dans les tarifs et contributions en augmentation constante que doivent « consacrer » les comuneros vivant aux États-Unis en « paiement » pour leur absence. Le point est qu'il serait trop facile pour les migrants de simplement payer pour des substituts dans les corvées collectives. Cela pourrait résulter dans une différenciation de classes entre migrants riches et comuneros pauvres employés par les premiers. En imposant des exigences plus strictes et en gardant continuellement les migrants subordonnés, la comunidad résiste à la monétarisation du travail communautaire. Pour les migrants, l'avantage de demeurer membre de la comunidad est que leur famille conserve le droit d'utiliser les terres communales tandis que les comuneros qui entretiendraient une liaison avec leur femme seront punis par la comunidad. De cette manière, l'institution protège leur honneur tandis que la migration des bergers péruviens s'appuie sur et consolide le régime disciplinaire de la comunidad andine.

Un certain nombre de migrants refusent toutefois de se plier aux exigences croissantes de la comunidad et prennent leurs distances d'avec son régime disciplinaire, malgré les lourdes conséquences que cela peut avoir sur leur réputation et leur famille demeurée à Usibamba. De manière similaire, de nombreux migrants s'évadent aussi du régime d'esclavage des ranchs nord-américains en s'enfuyant pour s'embaucher dans des emplois illégaux mais mieux rémunérés. L'envers de cette médaille tient au danger d'être

arrêté par la police et incarcéré ou déporté. En conséquence, les tentatives d'échapper à ce régime disciplinaire communautaire transnational peuvent précipiter les migrants et leurs familles dans des situations limites de précarité matérielle et de conflits. La migration a aussi des conséquences importantes sur les rapports entre les sexes.

À plusieurs égards, l'absence à long terme des hommes modifie les relations entre hommes et femmes dans la communauté. D'abord, le sexisme contre les femmes a augmenté dans la mesure où les hommes qui restent au village ont tendance à harceler les femmes laissées derrière. D'autre part, la comunidad punit les comuneros qui nouent des liaisons avec les femmes des migrants, protégeant par là l'honneur des comuneros exilés. La migration a ainsi amené l'adultère au centre des discussions et des sanctions punitives dans la communauté. En second lieu, à mesure que les femmes remplacent leurs maris absents dans diverses tâches, la présence des femmes dans les activités communautaires est en croissance régulière. La comunidad encourage aussi les femmes qui veulent remplacer formellement leur mari si ceux-ci les abandonnent et décident de rester aux États-Unis. Par ce biais, les femmes acquièrent graduellement mais systématiquement plus de tâches et de responsabilités dans la comunidad campesina traditionnellement dirigée par des hommes. Bien que les femmes soient encore subordonnées, on peut affirmer que la comunidad se fait « féminiser » contre son gré.

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Notes

- 1 Selon le dernier recensement officiel de 1993. INEI (1993). Resultados Definitivos de los Censos Nacionales: IX de Población y IV de Vivienda realizado el 11 de Julio de 1993.
- 2 Le terme *cholo* réfère habituellement à des personnes à la peau foncée d'origine andine. Comme on l'utilise habituellement avec une connotation péjorative et discriminatoire, l'étiquette est perçue comme une insulte par la plupart des Péruviens. *Gringo* est un terme utilisé dans plusieurs pays d'Amérique du Sud pour désigner des étrangers blancs, particulièrement les Nord-Américains.
- 3 Selon les informations fournies par la WRA, ils ont 700 bergers d'inscrits dont 82 % sont péruviens, 12 % chiliens et les autres mexicains (MREP 2005:6). MPAS (Mountain Plains Agricultural Services) a 300 ouvriers agricoles enregistrés dont 80 % sont péruviens (MREP 2005:6). L'ambassade des États-Unis émet en moyenne 300 visas H2A chaque année (MREP 2005:6).

- 4 Jurgen Golte souligne que la migration a toujours été un moyen pour les paysans des Andes d'échapper au régime disciplinaire « d'esclavage » de la comunidad (Degregori and Golte 1973).

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Intervention transnationale et moralisation de la gestion de la propriété en milieu rural au Maroc

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Résumé : Cet article explore la transformation des relations de propriété dans le cadre de l'intégration de l'espace rural au sein des processus de mondialisation néolibérale. Il s'agit d'analyser l'interconnexion entre différentes échelles qui reconfigure les relations de propriété en milieu rural. Dans certaines circonstances, cela entraîne un réarrangement des marges de manœuvre des différents acteurs impliqués fondé sur des discours religieux et moraux qui lient l'espace rural à son environnement global. L'article met en évidence les conditions socio-juridiques dans lesquelles l'identité religieuse populaire fournit un référentiel pour une gestion locale appropriée de la propriété rurale face à une standardisation globale des relations de propriété. Les données empiriques présentées proviennent de la région du Souss dans le sud-ouest du Maroc.

Mots-clés : transnationalisme, pluralisme juridique, propriété rurale, anthropologie de la moralité religieuse, agriculture, Maroc

Abstract: This article explores transformations of property relations within the framework of the integration of rural areas with processes of neo-liberal globalization. The way that interconnections among various scales reconfigure property relations in rural environments is analyzed. In certain circumstances, these changes involve a rearrangement of the space for manoeuvre of various actors based on religious and moral discourses which bind rural areas to their global environment. The article highlights the socio-juridical conditions under which popular religious identity provides a frame of reference for appropriate local management of rural property vis-à-vis a global standardization of property relations. The empirical data presented come from the Souss region of southwest Morocco.

Keywords: transnationalism, legal pluralism, rural property, anthropology of religious morality, agriculture, Morocco

Introduction

Cet article analyse la transformation des relations de propriété en milieu rural, dans la foulée des effets croissants de la mondialisation. À l'instar d'autres régions du monde, le Maroc est aujourd'hui le théâtre d'une reconfiguration des relations de propriété selon des dimensions morales et religieuses. Le rapport entre propriété et appartenance sociale ainsi qu'un ensemble de considérations morales, religieuses et socioculturelles touchant à la conception de la possession transforment ces relations de propriété, tandis que le monde rural se trouve déjà en relation avec la sphère globale. L'expansion de l'approche néolibérale a remis en question certains arrangements de la gestion de la propriété rurale, de même que la confrontation avec de nouveaux modèles de propriété a engendré un état de confusion sociale ainsi qu'une vulnérabilité économique dans le milieu rural. Cet état de fait a facilité la propagation des dogmes et des conceptions religieuses. Ces tendances religieuses et morales qui cherchent à conditionner la gestion de la propriété sont propagées par des réseaux transnationaux, des mouvements religieux, mais s'expriment aussi dans le domaine de la coopération pour le développement notamment par l'intermédiaire d'ONG religieuses ou de doctrines religieuses de développement plus ou moins explicites (Tomalin 2006; Hefferan 2007)¹. L'article avance l'hypothèse que cette situation peut donner lieu à un renforcement de l'expression locale du religieux, sans qu'il y ait pour autant un rattachement du local à un modèle transnational du salut.

Ces influences religieuses deviennent perceptibles dans le quotidien des populations rurales du Souss, une zone rurale hétérogène du sud-ouest du Maroc. Les données empiriques que j'y ai recueillies mettent en lumière le développement récent d'une configuration de ce type. Bien que les influences partiellement contradictoires des acteurs transnationaux aient effectivement conditionné les relations de propriété en milieu rural, elles n'ont pas nécessairement accentué la dépendance de la zone rurale

aux processus de globalisation (Edelman et Haugerud 2005). Au contraire, il semble même que ces confrontations entre différents acteurs transnationaux, d'une part, et entre eux et les communautés locales, d'autre part, ont considérablement stimulé l'effort de production de répertoires normatifs locaux compatibles, répertoires qui s'avèrent en même temps compétitifs et adaptables à un environnement global. En réalité, la population rurale réactualise une certaine morale inhérente aux relations sociales de propriété et réévalue des éléments religieux intrinsèques à ces relations tout en accentuant ce qui est considéré comme standard juridique traditionnel².

L'analyse se fera en plusieurs étapes. Dans un premier temps, nous présenterons les principales données empiriques. Elles concernent les relations de propriété en milieu rural, les règles d'accès aux ressources naturelles, ainsi que le cadre juridique et social de la propriété. Ces trois éléments serviront de point de départ à la compréhension des transformations des relations de la propriété foncière au niveau local. Dans un deuxième temps, l'analyse portera sur la situation d'insécurité juridique permanente relative à la propriété dans le Souss rural. Partant de ces observations générales, le regard de ressera sur différents modes d'exploitation de la forêt, sur leur rapport avec différents modèles de propriété et sur leur inscription à différentes échelles. L'émergence d'une production en association agricole de denrées pour l'exportation, qui est en fait une économie locale fondée sur des valeurs religieuses, constitue une première stratégie locale développée face aux défis d'un marché capitaliste.

Cette économie morale s'est trouvée menacée une vingtaine d'années après sa mise en œuvre par l'intervention de différents acteurs transnationaux et par l'introduction d'un modèle économique concurrentiel inspiré d'une conception externe et pseudo-traditionnelle de la propriété et de l'accès aux ressources. La production d'une huile comestible par des coopératives féminines en tant que mode particulier d'exploitation de la forêt a déclenché des polémiques entre acteurs transnationaux, et entre ces derniers et la population locale. L'intervention compétitive des acteurs transnationaux caractérisée par des approches et des interactions spécifiques sera ainsi présentée dans un troisième temps. Ce point permet d'examiner la manière dont la situation décrite dans les deux premiers temps a été affectée par l'engagement grandissant de ces nouveaux acteurs. L'analyse se concentrera sur la réaction de la population locale et sur l'accentuation progressive des aspects moraux des relations de propriété. Nous aborderons également les discours et les catégorisations qui ont accompagné le processus d'adaptation des différents modèles de propriété. Ces modèles

sont refaçonnés par des influences provenant d'échelles différentes.

La conclusion, enfin, proposera de revisiter le modèle qui explique la gestion de la propriété en milieu rural par la seule morale religieuse locale. Nous défendrons l'idée que l'économie morale locale se réajuste de façon à intégrer les conditions de l'environnement global.

Du point de vue méthodologique, l'approche centrée sur les interactions d'échelles (« scaling approach », Tsing 2000; Herod et Wright 2002; Purcell et Brown 2005) servira à analyser le rôle du religieux dans la gestion de la propriété. Cette approche devrait permettre d'explicitier les liaisons entre les processus locaux et leur encadrement global. L'argumentation soulignera que l'approche centrée sur les interactions d'échelles nous permet, en dépit d'un certain scepticisme à l'égard de la signification et de la portée d'un concept spatial géographique élargi aux sciences sociales (Brenner 2001), d'évaluer les enjeux de pouvoir sur l'espace dans une configuration complexe. Cette approche est également susceptible de mettre en lumière la façon dont des acteurs locaux défendent une marge de manœuvre par une stratégie d'adaptation sélective au transnational. Afin de protéger leur modèle de propriété et les rapports sociaux qui le portent, les acteurs locaux réévaluent la dimension morale de cette propriété. Le réajustement des échelles en interaction s'accomplit sous l'effet d'influences transnationales, de dominations économiques, de discours religieux, de standardisations du politique et de l'environnementalisme au niveau local. Ce développement paraît donc permettre aux acteurs locaux de renforcer leur sphère juridique locale en se référant au religieux afin d'endiguer l'insécurité juridique dans la gestion de la propriété. Le processus d'intégration de la propriété rurale dans des rapports transnationaux a donc provoqué des effets paradoxaux; il a contribué au maintien de l'insécurité juridique et sociale de la gestion de la propriété rurale, mais a en même temps renforcé la marge d'action de la population rurale face aux représentants de l'État national ainsi que face aux différents acteurs transnationaux.

Au niveau théorique, l'article propose d'intégrer le phénomène de réémergence du religieux dans la gestion de la propriété aux débats récents sur la force transformatrice qui est souvent associée à la conception d'une économie morale (Hann 2003; Edelman 2005; Scott 2005) et d'une responsabilité locale. Tant l'économie morale, telle qu'elle est présentée dans la littérature classique (par exemple, Scott 1976), que la responsabilité locale s'avèrent cruciales pour comprendre la complexité du développement rural dans le contexte de la globalisation néolibérale (Massey 2004, Gibson-Graham 2005). Le processus

décrit dans cet article fait émerger des éléments nouveaux pour l'analyse, éléments qui peuvent venir compléter la conception classique et qui contribuent à la compréhension des rapports récents entre différentes échelles dans le domaine de la gestion de la propriété foncière rurale. L'article s'inscrit ainsi dans la discussion sur la conceptualisation d'une responsabilité sociale au niveau local (Zigon 2007). Cependant il n'a pas l'ambition de contribuer à la discussion sur « comment faire » ou « quoi faire au lieu de » dans le domaine de la coopération pour le (post)développement (Gibson-Graham 2005; Pieterse 2000). L'objectif est plutôt d'offrir une analyse anthropologique des conséquences de l'interventionnisme transnational et compétitif sur la revitalisation d'une religion locale moralisatrice appliquée notamment à la gestion des relations de propriété en milieu rural.

Le Souss comme localité et espace de négociation des relations de propriété

La région du Souss, une plaine au sud-ouest du Maroc bordée par les chaînes montagneuses de l'Atlas au nord et de l'Anti-Atlas au sud, est caractérisée par une production agricole très diversifiée et une forêt unique. Des zones de production traditionnelle coexistent avec d'autres qui se sont munies de dispositifs modernes. Dans la plaine, le paysage est dominé par des exploitations modernes groupées autour des plantations d'agrumes et de légumes en serres. Le Souss abrite aussi une forêt d'arganier qui constitue un écosystème unique. L'arganier (*Argania spinosa* (L) Skeels) est l'arbre emblématique de la région, une espèce endémique apparue durant l'ère tertiaire et le seul arbre composant en milieu semi-aride des forêts capables de résister à la désertification progressive. En 1998, toute la région de l'arganeraie a été classée comme Réserve de la Biosphère de l'UNESCO (MADR 2001).

L'arganeraie joue un rôle essentiel dans les activités de production locale. Elle est intégrée dans la zone d'activité agricole (voir p. ex. El Aich et al. 2005; Nouaim 2005). Traditionnellement, des céréales sont cultivées dans la forêt en culture pluviale. Au fil du temps, la production de cultures commerciales (*cash crops*) en agriculture irriguée s'y est répandue. La dégradation continue de la forêt a été imputée à cette exploitation intensive et en premier lieu à la pâture des troupeaux de chèvres. L'huile d'argan extraite des noyaux de l'arbre au terme d'un procédé complexe est aujourd'hui le produit le plus réputé au niveau international. L'unicité de l'écosystème forestier de l'arganeraie et le fait qu'une production agraire partiellement traditionnelle et partiellement moderne s'y effectue ont attiré l'attention d'acteurs transnationaux très différents.

La plupart des Souassa, les gens du Souss, sont des *fellahin*, des paysans³. Ils sont en majorité des locuteurs berbères (Tachelhit) et se définissent eux-mêmes comme des Ishilhayen. Il y a, néanmoins, une proportion considérable de locuteurs arabes dans la plaine, surtout dans les espaces urbains, mais également dans quelques enclaves rurales.

L'organisation politique au niveau du village est peu structurée; elle fluctue entre des configurations plutôt centralisées et d'autres où le pouvoir est beaucoup plus disséminé. Cela touche les institutions officielles comme les institutions informelles et traditionnelles : dans quelques villages, des personnes prééminentes ou des oligarchies élitistes dominent la sphère politique en se basant soit sur les structures informelles soit sur celles intégrées dans l'appareil de l'administration étatique. Dans d'autres villages, des institutions collectives et informelles, les assemblées (*jma'a-s*), assument la responsabilité des affaires publiques. Il faut donc souligner l'existence d'une stratification sociale différenciant une élite rurale issue de la post-indépendance (1956), une classe moyenne étroite et instable et une majorité de petits agriculteurs et journaliers⁴. Le rôle de l'État marocain se manifeste à tous les échelons, notamment dans l'administration locale ainsi que dans l'organisation de l'agriculture, et ce en s'appuyant sur un réseau d'agences agricoles et en interagissant avec des acteurs transnationaux (Turner 2006).

Encadrement multiple de la propriété rurale et accès aux ressources naturelles du Souss

Toute considération traitant des transformations récentes des relations de propriété rurale doit tenir compte de l'ensemble de conventions juridiques, de droits et d'obligations sociales, mémorisé au niveau des villages, ensemble qui, dans une large mesure, détermine jusqu'à présent les pratiques⁵. C'est un répertoire juridique fondé sur des traditions locales qui rallie des aspects du droit coutumier (*'urf*) à la législation étatique, ainsi qu'à l'Islam orthodoxe, soufi et populaire. La gestion de la propriété rurale et l'accès aux ressources naturelles dans le Souss sont donc encadrés par un ensemble qui inclut et combine des éléments venant de différents régimes juridiques et religieux.

Sans trop entrer dans les détails, donnons un bref aperçu de ces répertoires. Au niveau de la législation étatique, une classification complexe intègre différents types de propriété dans un ensemble juridique qui se décline en plusieurs variantes entre propriété individuelle privée et propriété collective permanente ou temporaire. La loi étatique elle-même consiste en un amalgame de différents

répertoires normatifs. Elle puise dans la législation du protectorat français (1912-1956) ainsi que dans la loi islamique malékite et tient compte, sous forme de généralisations, des droits coutumiers issus de diverses époques et de diverses versions locales.

La loi islamique en général est considérée comme étant peu favorable aux intérêts de la population paysanne (Bouderbala 1999)⁶. Notamment, la conception islamique de la propriété en milieu rural s'exprime en termes de taxes et d'impôts. Les différents modes de production agricole collective entrent en contradiction avec l'interdiction, dans l'Islam, de pratiquer l'intérêt usuraire, à cause de son caractère spéculatif (Turner 2003). Le régime successoral selon la loi islamique constitue un autre point de friction, car il conduit à la partition de la terre agricole et des moyens de production, ce qui empêche la persistance des propriétés rurales.

Au niveau local, les règlements émanant de la loi nationale sont adaptés aux pratiques coutumières (Bouderbala 1997; Leveau 1985; Swearingen 1987). Selon les circonstances concrètes, cette pratique juridique peut être légitimée comme tradition séculaire ou comme règlement ancré dans l'Islam populaire. De plus, ce qui est entendu comme « coutumier » existe dans la version codifiée par l'État et dans diverses variantes appliquées au quotidien. Cela signifie que le coutumier n'est pas fixé, qu'il est toujours en évolution en fonction des besoins du moment. Par exemple, la version étatique joue un rôle important dans la législation de l'arganeraie tandis que les traditions adaptées régissent la location et les diverses formes de gestion des propriétés collectives, ou encore les associations agricoles.

En fait, l'individu dispose d'un ensemble de droits et d'obligations divers provenant de différents types de propriété et de différents règlements d'accès aux ressources naturelles dont l'efficacité, cependant, dépend des circonstances concrètes et des décisions prises par les acteurs. Les familles d'un village combinent l'exploitation de leur propriété individuelle privée (*melk*) comme, par exemple, les champs irrigués et le cheptel, avec l'accès partagé à d'autres ressources, telles que la forêt et les terrains collectifs utilisés comme pâturage. De plus, les villageois disposent de droits de jouissance individuels supplémentaires : depuis l'ère du protectorat français, la totalité de la forêt au Maroc est classée comme domaine étatique, les riverains ne disposant que d'un droit de jouissance limité. C'est également le cas pour la forêt d'arganier. Dans le Souss central, les riverains ont un accès individuel à une parcelle pour exploiter les fruits d'arganier. Ils peuvent également utiliser la parcelle à des fins agricoles. En revanche, le pâturage est un droit collectif tem-

poraie. Le règlement prévoit également des périodes de fermeture et d'activité obligatoires pour tout usager, notamment pour le ramassage des fruits. Cette législation sur la forêt est toujours en vigueur (MADR 2001).

L'économie morale, une stratégie locale face à l'état d'insécurité juridique permanente

Un bref aperçu du modèle local des associations agricoles et de leur relance dans le Souss permet de comprendre ce qui était en jeu lorsque l'« arganmania » internationale toucha la région.

La transformation fondamentale des relations de la propriété foncière s'accompagnait de la mainmise des colons français sur de vastes terrains dans la plaine du Souss (Popp 1983; Swearingen 1987). De grandes plantations d'agrumes et plus tard de légumes y ont été créées à partir des années 1940 malgré la loi du protectorat qui interdisait aux colons de s'engager dans cette partie du Maroc classée « Maroc inutile »⁷. Cette époque marque au Souss le début d'une production agricole orientée vers les marchés extérieurs. Ce mouvement se poursuit après l'indépendance du Maroc et aboutit à la transmission des fermes des propriétaires français aux mains d'une nouvelle élite rurale. En plus de cette élite rurale naissante, seul un petit nombre d'investisseurs locaux, disposant de budgets moyens et plus proches de la classe inférieure, parvient à acheter des terrains. Ainsi s'amorce la stratification sociale de la population paysanne. Ceux qui ont été forcés de vendre leurs terrains depuis l'époque du protectorat sont devenus des journaliers dépendant de l'offre d'emploi des grands fermiers (pour les détails, voir Turner 2003). Les données suivantes, collectées au cours de nos propres recherches dans le centre de la plaine du Souss, donnent une idée de la répartition du foncier au début des années 2000 : 3 % des propriétaires disposent d'environ 33 % de la surface agricole, 7 % d'environ 21 %, 11 % d'environ 20 % et 79 % des propriétaires se partagent les 26 % restants⁸.

Lorsque la propriété foncière passa aux mains des Marocains, le besoin important de main d'œuvre agricole dans ces fermes, notamment pour la gestion de l'irrigation, permit aux paysans qui avaient vendu leurs terrains de trouver un emploi. Cependant, effet secondaire de la modernisation, le surpompage hydrique dans la région du Souss augmenta considérablement le coût de l'eau. À partir des années 1980, les fermiers commencèrent donc à rationaliser le système d'irrigation et à économiser la main d'œuvre grâce à l'introduction de techniques modernes comme l'irrigation au goutte à goutte. En conséquence, de nombreux ouvriers furent licenciés.

Pendant ce temps-là s'opéra une nouvelle transformation dans la région après l'introduction de la tomate comme nouvelle denrée commerciale destinée au marché international: les paysans paupérisés commencèrent à réactiver le modèle traditionnel des associations de production agricole (*chr'ka*) afin de trouver un nouveau moyen de subsistance.

Ce modèle repose sur le principe du contrat de coopération entre, d'une part, un propriétaire et fermier ayant assez de moyens pour assumer le rôle d'investisseur et, d'autre part, un petit paysan. Ce dernier n'a souvent à offrir pour sa part que sa force de travail et, dans le cas précis étudié ici, la main-d'œuvre de tous les membres de sa famille, y compris les femmes. En principe, la répartition des responsabilités entre les deux partenaires est toujours à négocier. La version la plus courante est nommée *khémisset* d'après les cinq (*khamisa*) composantes de la production agricole : la terre, les semences, les outils (engrais inclus) et l'eau sont à la charge de l'investisseur; le travail est fourni par « l'associé actif ». Pour devenir « associé actif », il faut donc trouver pour partenaire un investisseur qui fournisse les moyens de production à l'exception du travail. À la fin d'un cycle agricole, les deux partenaires se partagent le profit selon la répartition initiale. En cas de *khémisset*, l'investisseur prendra quatre parts des bénéfices, alors que le travailleur n'aura droit qu'à une part. Les champs utilisés pour les cultures peuvent faire partie de la propriété de l'investisseur ou être loués par lui. Il ne s'agit que rarement du terrain appartenant au travailleur qui, dans ce cas-là, peut réclamer deux parts des bénéfices.

Les fermiers disposés à servir d'investisseurs ne font pas partie du petit groupe de l'élite rurale. Ce dernier regarde les petits journaliers et les propriétaires de petits terrains comme un obstacle à une production agricole moderne. Les investisseurs potentiels sont ceux des propriétaires qui ont réussi à résister aux offres de vente de terrains susmentionnées et ont gardé un sentiment de solidarité envers leurs compatriotes paupérisés. Ces associations ont disparu durant la période du protectorat. Elles avaient la réputation d'être basées sur des relations de dépendance et d'exploitation de celui qui ne participe que par sa capacité de travail.

Ce modèle sembla applicable à la production de tomates et permit à ceux qui n'étaient pas propriétaires de terrains de participer aussi au marché agricole moderne. Tout d'abord, les investissements nécessaires ne furent que très faibles par rapport aux plantations d'agrumes qui prédominaient jusqu'alors. De plus, comme la culture de la tomate nécessite toujours un champ fertile, il fallait cycliquement louer de nouveaux terrains. Au

fil du temps, une grande partie des terrains agricoles étaient tombés en jachère. Ce manque de terrains irrigables entraîna une extension de la production de tomates dans la forêt où les petits paysans disposaient toujours de leurs droits de jouissance individuels. En s'associant avec des investisseurs, ils pouvaient mettre à contribution leurs droits d'exploitation de parcelles de la forêt. Il y eut alors un changement considérable dans le système de production en coopération. La production se concentra dès lors sur la forêt et mit ainsi les associés actifs dans une situation plus favorable, puisqu'ils pouvaient profiter de leurs droits de jouissance comme composante territoriale d'un contrat *khémisset*.

Toutefois, ce système présente de multiples risques. La production en association est un système de coopération qui n'est pas couvert par la loi. Ainsi ces associations opèrent dans une insécurité juridique. L'État, en effet, considère cette manière de produire en association comme une méthode ancienne de production assimilable au capitalisme rentier oriental. De plus, les agences agricoles de l'État sont plus favorables à la concentration des moyens de production entre les mains des élites rurales de l'après-indépendance et n'ont aucun intérêt à assurer un cadre favorisant la survie des petits producteurs (pour les détails, voir Turner 2003). La loi islamique orthodoxe non plus n'est pas favorable à un mode de production basé sur le risque et la spéculation illicite.

D'une part, il faut reconnaître que ces associations se trouvent toujours dans une situation juridique incertaine au-delà du contexte social et local. D'autre part, on peut souligner que les Souassa se mirent à consolider cette forme de production fondée sur leurs valeurs religieuses et sociales. Ils l'intégrèrent dans le répertoire juridique local et créèrent ainsi un terrain de confiance nécessaire entre partenaires inégaux. La seule référence juridique fiable dans la gestion de la propriété est donc celle légitimée par le consensus local, ancrée dans une conception morale de l'Islam populaire. C'est ainsi qu'avec le rétablissement de la production agricole en association, une réévaluation de la morale locale eut lieu. Les associations se fondent désormais sur un contrat oral conclu en public devant l'assemblée du village et sont reconnues par les institutions locales. Conclure un contrat s'accompagne de pratiques religieuses comme le partage d'un repas béni.

L'interdépendance des deux parties est régie par un ensemble d'obligations à connotation religieuse. Le recours à la religion assure une protection des partenaires productifs autrement vulnérables vis-à-vis des partenaires investisseurs. Celui qui travaille la terre s'engage à remplir le contrat par un serment religieux; ainsi il est tenu de montrer sa capacité et sa fiabilité. Pour sa part, le par-

tenaire investisseur apporte sa réputation de personne pieuse et honnête comme garantie qu'il remplira le contrat. L'association lie dès lors des partenaires aux positions asymétriques; celui qui offre sa force de travail ne reçoit comme garantie de la future bonne conduite de l'investisseur que la réputation de ce dernier. Pour être crédible, ce dernier devrait être de préférence *hajj*, c'est-à-dire qu'il doit avoir accompli le pèlerinage de la Mecque. Il est largement admis qu'un *hajj* ne peut se permettre un comportement compromettant et qu'il est en général soucieux de ne pas endommager son « capital spirituel ». Par conséquent, un investisseur potentiel dont la réputation se trouve entachée ne trouvera plus d'associés. L'individu religieux Souassa est en fait défini par l'adoption d'une identité morale locale qu'il doit exercer à travers un comportement approprié, des actes symboliques et des actions de la vie quotidienne qui lui permettent de gagner la confiance de l'entourage. Il se doit, par exemple, d'investir une partie de ses biens dans l'infrastructure sociale de la communauté et dans l'entraide (*tou'iza*). Il se doit aussi d'observer des règles de redistribution de ses bénéfices et d'accomplir des gestes de solidarité prescrits par des préceptes religieux. Ainsi, il doit régulièrement pratiquer la charité (*sadaqa* signifie littéralement « bienfaisance »), aider les pauvres, contribuer à l'organisation des rituels locaux ou montrer son intention de partager une partie de ses revenus d'une autre façon.

Les obligations qu'il doit assumer envers son partenaire sont, cependant, limitées et liées à des occasions précises. L'investisseur invite son partenaire à l'occasion de la conclusion du contrat, il lui accorde un crédit pendant la pousse des cultures, il consent à une petite association supplémentaire, par exemple l'élevage de quelques chèvres, même si cela ne lui rapporte pas grand-chose, et il fait des petits cadeaux à l'occasion des fêtes religieuses. Les relations de coopération ainsi fondées peuvent durer pendant des années.

La faible position du partenaire travaillant apparaît surtout à la fin du contrat. Il est, par exemple, du devoir de l'investisseur de s'occuper de la vente de la récolte. Il peut donc en profiter pour prétendre avoir obtenu un prix plus bas que le prix réel. Son associé, ayant droit à sa part du bénéfice, ne peut en appeler qu'à la réputation de l'investisseur. La religion locale agit alors comme un répertoire provisoirement mis en veille et revalorisé à l'occasion. De cette manière, les obligations distributives liées au foncier et à son exploitation sont réintroduites dans un système de production commerciale et sont mises à jour en particulier par les associés d'aujourd'hui.

L'exploitation de la ressource forestière pour la production et pour l'exportation a accru la pression sur la

forêt d'arganiers. En plus, l'introduction de la production intensive de la tomate a favorisé l'établissement d'un marché des parcelles. Concrètement, les terrains dans la forêt accessibles selon le droit coutumier de jouissance individuelle ont été commercialisés. Ces parcelles ont été de plus en plus traitées comme des terrains *melk* et les ayant droit ont commencé à louer ou à vendre leur droit de jouissance.

L'intervention compétitive des acteurs transnationaux et son impact local

En plus de l'introduction de l'agriculture moderne, d'autres facteurs contribuèrent au cours des années 1990 à l'interaction du Souss avec un environnement élargi. Des phénomènes antérieurement locaux s'inscrivirent désormais dans un contexte global et par conséquent dans une perspective juridique relevant de l'échelle transnationale⁹. Ainsi c'est tout le modèle local d'une économie morale, avec la dimension sociale de la propriété et de l'accès aux ressources naturelles, qui se trouva mis à l'épreuve.

Cette phase débuta par la prise en considération, au niveau transnational, de l'importance de l'arganeraie comme un écosystème unique. La coopération en faveur du développement porta sur l'utilisation durable des ressources naturelles, sur la protection de l'environnement et sur la conservation du patrimoine. En même temps, la modernisation de l'agriculture et la lutte contre la pauvreté s'organisèrent très rapidement dès que les acteurs transnationaux découvrirent l'arganeraie comme un champ d'intervention. Le Souss accueillit alors des organisations d'aide au développement, comme l'organisation allemande GTZ (Coopération Technique pour le Développement), Oxfam Canada, ainsi que des acteurs globaux comme la Banque Mondiale (BM), le Fond Monétaire International (FMI) et l'UNESCO. Le principal « paquet » de règles législatives est fixé par le programme de l'UNESCO « Man and the Biosphere » et par le programme de l'ONU contre la désertification. La structure la plus large est définie par les conventions internationales telles que la « Convention de Rio » (1992) et la « Convention de la Lutte contre la Désertification » (1994) (voir Turner 2006). Parallèlement quelques agences de développement se sont également engagées comme consultants dans l'agriculture hypermoderne.

Toute approche légitimant l'intervention transnationale dans ce monde rural et son adaptation économique promeut l'universalisation de « marchandises de la globalisation » tels que la démocratisation, la mise sur pied et l'extension d'une société civile, la régionalisation, la décentralisation administrative, la bonne gouvernance, le

développement durable et la protection de la biodiversité (Jenson & Santos 2000). Les acteurs globaux influents mentionnés ci-dessus encouragèrent le lancement de ces « marchandises néolibérales » au niveau national. Ce programme peut également être qualifié de tentative de moralisation tacite.

L'interconnexion du Maroc et en particulier du Souss avec l'échelle de la législation transnationale ne se déroule pas sans difficultés. Bien que le gouvernement marocain ait transposé des normes juridiques transnationales dans le droit national – l'État marocain est le signataire des conventions et des contrats transnationaux – elles ne sont que rarement appliquées sur le terrain. En raison de cette stagnation du processus d'interconnexion juridique au niveau national, les puissants acteurs transnationaux commencèrent à intervenir directement au niveau local par l'intermédiaire d'organismes de coopération et par la création d'ONG locales afin d'appliquer leurs propres normes en contournant l'immobilisme des institutions gouvernementales. Ce fait est l'objet d'intenses débats non seulement au Maroc, mais aussi entre acteurs publics et acteurs de la société civile marocaine d'une part, et des acteurs transnationaux et bailleurs de fonds comme l'Union Européenne d'autre part (voir par exemple Roque 2004; Sater 2007).

Dans le même temps, la connexion de la région avec le marché global et l'économie néolibérale s'est intensifiée. L'ouverture du marché du foncier aux investissements agricoles, ainsi que la convention de libre échange avec les États-Unis (2006) et l'accord d'association avec l'Union Européenne (2004) complétèrent la mise en forme de ces interactions d'échelles reliant directement la région avec l'économie globale (Cohen 2003; Desrues 2005). Les acteurs du développement appliquèrent une approche participative et tentèrent de prendre en considération les besoins de la population locale. Cependant la mobilisation des Souassa dans le projet de mondialisation demeure limitée. Cette réticence locale s'explique entre autres par le fait que les conceptions transnationales contradictoires, par exemple celle de la protection de l'arganeraie comme « patrimoine de l'humanité » et celle de l'intégration de la même ressource dans l'économie néolibérale, aboutiraient de toutes manières à priver les Souassa de leurs droits.

Tandis que des discours contradictoires sur ces différentes facettes de l'intégration du Souss dans le processus de mondialisation influençaient la notion locale de propriété, y compris les dimensions morales et religieuses de la production en association agricole dans la forêt, un autre acteur transnational est intervenu à partir de 1999 – la Salafiyya, un mouvement islamique (Turner 2007). Les Salafi, imbus de leur devoir de donner des conseils reli-

gieux à la population locale sur n'importe quelle affaire rurale, furent toutefois bien peu préparés à cette tâche. En réalité, la théologie Salafi ne semble guère être en phase avec la vie rurale. Pourtant, les Salafi critiquèrent sans arrêt les Souassa pour ce qu'ils voyaient comme des violations des prescriptions islamiques. Les adhérents de ce groupe propagèrent une approche juridique intégrant une vision islamique universelle de la gestion de la propriété et de l'accès aux ressources naturelles, qui se trouva en directe contradiction avec le modèle néolibéral. Les positions des Salafi ont cependant en commun avec ce dernier leur faible compatibilité avec les exigences d'une société rurale. Idéologie néolibérale et prescriptions Salafi sont introduites de force par des intéressés externes. Mais le modèle Salafi se montre inconciliable avec d'autres impacts transnationaux. Les Salafi commencèrent par établir un réseau de bienfaisance publique et d'aide sociale en accord avec les prescriptions islamiques, et opposé au modèle local de solidarité pieuse qu'ils rejetèrent comme étant païenne. Ils instaurèrent une taxation islamique, le *zakat*, mais interdirent de prélever des taux d'intérêt qu'ils assimilaient à une action commerciale.

Tout cela s'est déroulé sous les yeux des agents de l'État. L'attitude des représentants étatiques envers les acteurs du développement a été marquée par une hétérogénéité et une ambivalence remarquables. L'État marocain approuva officiellement la coopération en faveur du développement et de la sauvegarde de l'environnement, mais s'opposa en même temps à ses conséquences négatives sur l'agriculture moderne des grandes fermes.

Vis-à-vis de la Salafiyya, l'attitude des serviteurs de l'État resta longtemps indéfinie. Ce n'est qu'après les attentats à la bombe de Casablanca en mai 2003 qu'une campagne fut lancée pour contrer l'influence Salafi dans le Souss (Turner 2007).

Les régimes de propriété rurale face aux défis transnationaux

L'économie morale fondée sur l'identité religieuse locale dans l'arganeraie est devenue la cible de la critique plus ou moins ouverte des acteurs des interventions extérieures. Ces acteurs transnationaux impliqués dans la protection environnementale de la forêt considérèrent que les associations de producteurs dégradèrent la biosphère. Il faut souligner que ces agents du développement ignorèrent complètement la connotation socio-religieuse de la production en association. Le fait que les liens entre les membres des communautés rurales reposent sur un maillage d'obligations distributives et de droits partagés leur échappa et ils ciblerent leurs efforts sur les conséquences écologiques dévastatrices de ce système. Il

faut en effet reconnaître que depuis l'introduction de l'agriculture moderne, les habitudes d'exploitation de la forêt développées par tous les paysans du Souss ne furent jamais en accord avec les principes d'un développement durable. Le seul fait du surpompement incessant en constitue une preuve évidente. En conséquence, une exploitation alternative de l'arganeraie fut lancée par des agences de développement : la création de coopératives de femmes produisant de l'huile d'argan destinée au marché mondial des produits biologiques s'inscrit dans cette dynamique (voir Allard et al. 2008). Ce modèle était destiné à prendre en compte toutes les exigences de la coopération en faveur du développement, les implications juridiques de la création de la Réserve de biosphère, la combinaison de l'approche écologiste avec la lutte contre la pauvreté et pour l'amélioration de la situation de la femme rurale.

Le Souss connut ainsi à partir de 1998 une explosion de créations de coopératives féminines de différents types initiées par divers partenaires du développement. Seule la population de la région où il existait préalablement des associations productrices de tomates refusa d'appliquer ce nouveau modèle. Sans entrer dans les détails (voir Turner 2005), on peut simplement constater que les Souassa comprirent la critique adressée à leurs associations agricoles comme une critique de leur réseau social et de leur religiosité locale.

Dans ce contexte, certains Souassa soupçonnèrent les agents du développement d'une approche inspirée par une religiosité occidentale de type « chrétien-néolibéral » et cherchant à infiltrer leurs croyances locales à l'instar de la rhétorique Salafi. Cet aspect conditionna le dialogue entre les Souassa et les agents du développement. Pour les Souassa, une coloration religieuse-morale des interventions transnationales sembla perceptible malgré le fait que – ou comme certains suggérèrent, à cause du fait que – ces agents ne firent jamais référence à l'Islam local. La stratégie plus ou moins commune de ces acteurs extérieurs fut en effet de ne jamais s'immiscer dans les questions religieuses afin d'éviter toute accusation de partialité ou de velléité missionnaire. Néanmoins, le discours environnemental transnational notamment paraît inspiré d'une néo-spiritualité et d'une « religion séculière » de la nature ; il prône une responsabilité globale pour une exploitation raisonnable des ressources naturelles locales et s'exprime au travers d'une sorte de paternalisme moral¹⁰.

Nous constatons donc l'interaction d'une morale religieuse globalisatrice qui joue un rôle de plus en plus important dans le discours développemental avec la réalité complexe d'un pluralisme juridique qui puise sa légitimité dans les idéaux d'une morale locale et rurale (voir

p. ex. Harper 2000; Belshaw et Caldri 2002; Tyndale 2006; Marshall et van Saanen 2007). Les motifs moralisateurs de ces deux discours concordent remarquablement. Des processus d'interaction entre différentes échelles se sont produits lorsque la confirmation locale du cadre religieux et moral de la propriété rurale s'est mise à interagir avec le développement transnational. Les Souassa envisagèrent alors d'adapter ce discours environnemental-spirituel aux sensibilités locales dans le but de mettre à jour leur répertoire socio-religieux de gestion de la propriété. Il faut souligner, cependant, que la combinaison entre ces messages quasi-religieux (respect de la création divine; idée d'un péché environnemental, etc.) et un certain altruisme chez les représentants des organisations de coopération pour le développement ne facilita pas l'acceptation de ces derniers. Au contraire, les Souassa s'en méfièrent considérant que la propagation d'un code moral purement altruiste privé de comportements sociaux réciproques et de tout intérêt commercial ne pouvait être qu'un signe de démente. En effet, la conception locale de la morale ne peut être dissociée de ses manifestations matérielles et de l'idée de réciprocité.

Ce qui était pour les uns un moyen de lutte contre la pauvreté rurale, notamment en faveur de l'amélioration de la situation de la femme, était pour les autres une grande menace pour le dernier bastion de l'Islam: la famille. Les Salafi étaient définitivement contre les coopératives féminines. Ils ne cessèrent de critiquer sévèrement ces coopératives comme lieux où l'on accorderait aux femmes une liberté signifiant le libertinage. Cependant, les organisateurs ou les partenaires de ces projets, comme Oxfam Québec et Oxfam Canada, refusèrent de prendre note de cette critique et ignorèrent la polémique en cours dans les villages.

En revanche les Salafi ne s'en prirent pas aux associations agricoles malgré leur position ambiguë devant la loi islamique, mais insistèrent pour qu'elles soient réformées. Leur préoccupation était moins le caractère d'économie à risque des associations et leur ancrage dans l'Islam populaire avec sa charge spirituelle spécifique, que l'obsession de protéger la femme travailleuse. Ils demandèrent un habillement correct des femmes même pendant le travail agricole, ce qui signifie, entre autres, le port du voile ainsi que de gants. De plus, ils exigèrent de surélever les brise-vent pour les transformer ainsi en paravents anti-regard. L'introduction de telles mesures aurait considérablement augmenté les coûts. De surcroît, même l'investisseur qui est censé faire des visites de contrôle devrait crier avant de s'approcher du champ. Mais l'exigence la plus curieuse était l'interdiction des chants traditionnels pendant le travail. Ce dernier point

rendit finalement l'approche religieuse des Salafi peu crédible aux yeux de la majorité des Souassa.

L'actualisation d'une morale des relations de propriété : discours et catégories imbriquées

D'un point de vue général, l'articulation de tous ces facteurs affecta profondément le modèle économique et accentua les contradictions dans le tissu même du pluralisme normatif et moral. Les dynamiques décrites ici déclenchèrent finalement un regain d'affirmation locale face aux diverses interventions transnationales. Les ONG et les autres acteurs du développement, les représentants du pouvoir politique central de l'État et les activistes islamiques compromirent la gestion informelle de l'accès aux ressources qui tirait sa légitimité de sa référence aux valeurs coutumières. Cette perturbation de l'ordre local conduisit les Souassa à organiser une forme de résistance essentiellement passive, comme le refus d'accepter la création de coopératives, même si en même temps ils intégrèrent quelques éléments nouveaux aux conditions locales.

Cet ajustement du répertoire juridique local fut facilité par la référence aux coutumes prônée par les acteurs du développement. Le discours transnational sur la revitalisation de la tradition se révéla très utile (von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2007). Mettre en place des programmes de revitalisation des « bonnes » traditions devint l'une des principales stratégies des acteurs transnationaux; ces derniers définirent eux-mêmes ce qu'étaient ces « bonnes traditions ». Autrement dit, le processus d'intégration des normes transnationales fut envisagé à travers une instrumentalisation de cette partie des traditions d'exploitation des ressources naturelles qui semblait compatible avec ces normes de protection de l'environnement et de développement durable. Dans le même temps, la définition des traditions écartait des coutumes jugées néfastes au champ d'action des activistes transnationaux. Le discours de ces derniers colporte l'idée que beaucoup de normes que les agents du développement s'appliquent à implanter au niveau local sont déjà préconçues dans le savoir local. Ce dernier devint donc un argument crucial que les Souassa mobilisèrent dans les négociations avec les autorités de l'État et avec les acteurs externes. Les prescriptions sur le système de droits et d'obligations attachés à la propriété selon la compréhension locale de l'Islam, et en contradiction avec l'Islam Salafi, font partie intégrante de l'approche locale. Cette approche permit la « mise en valeur » de l'Islam populaire ou « tribal » comme ressource et capital spirituel, comme propriété intellectuelle, savoir local et inventaire culturel. Les particuliari-

tés de la version locale de la religion comme les pèlerinages, le rôle des confréries religieuses, les rites d'intégration sociale ou simplement la manière de prier sont considérés comme des marqueurs de l'identité Souassa.

Ainsi, l'approche néolibérale ramena le coutumier sur la scène locale; elle engendra la formation de versions actualisées du droit local adaptées aux besoins spécifiques des communautés Souassa. Cependant, avancer l'hypothèse que le niveau local consacre ainsi des valeurs transnationalisées ou globales serait un malentendu¹¹. Par exemple, parallèlement, les Souassa résistèrent en se référant aux droits fondamentaux si souvent mentionnés par les acteurs transnationaux eux-mêmes. Tout le répertoire des arguments issus du discours des droits de l'homme émergea alors. En s'opposant aux ONG et à l'armada des organisations donatrices, les Souassa s'appuyèrent aussi sur le discours des droits des minorités en accentuant entre autres la « berbérité » de la culture locale, chr'ka compris, et les particularités de l'Islam populaire. Il en résulta un amalgame entre arguments en faveur des droits fondamentaux, un discours religieux-moralisateur et un plaidoyer pour la revitalisation de la tradition qui sembla prometteur aux paysans. Pour défendre leur économie morale, ils instrumentaliserent également le discours sur la femme rurale¹². D'une part, on alla par exemple jusqu'à organiser des « grèves » de femmes membres des coopératives de production d'huile d'argan. Ces initiatives indiquèrent clairement le décalage entre la vision des promoteurs des projets de coopératives, soit un encouragement de la femme rurale par sa participation à la coopérative, et la perception qu'en avaient les femmes bénéficiaires elles-mêmes. Les femmes Souassa se percevaient comme des ouvrières d'une usine et point comme des partenaires d'un programme ayant pour but d'améliorer leurs conditions de vie. D'autre part, les Souassa résistèrent à la tentative des Salafi d'exercer un contrôle extrême sur la sphère féminine ; ils prétendirent que l'établissement des coopératives aurait conduit à du progrès. Ils développèrent donc des stratégies pour se servir d'un acteur transnational contre un autre. C'est ainsi que la menace venue de l'extérieur se transforma en une opportunité pour s'affranchir graduellement à la fois des acteurs transnationaux, des Salafi et des représentants de l'État.

Tout en relevant l'enjeu que constitua l'ajustement du mode de vie Souassa à l'environnement global, les Souassa saisirent cette opportunité unique pour repenser en profondeur le fondement moral du système d'échange et de redistribution lié à la gestion des ressources naturelles. De plus, ils y attachèrent l'espoir de voir s'apaiser les tensions en cours alors dans l'« arène compétitive » de la propriété. Finalement, les interactions

entre divers échelons situés entre le local et le global produisirent un effet favorable et intégrateur. On approuva la transposition de normes de l'échelon transnational dans la vie locale; ainsi par exemple, une simple compétition à propos de l'accès à une parcelle contestée dans la forêt se transforma en un problème relevant désormais de l'exploitation durable, de la défense du savoir traditionnel et de l'égalité des sexes. De cette façon, ces thèmes commencèrent à jouer un rôle dans la vie normative des villageois et à influencer le discours normatif local.

La comparaison du modèle local avec les diverses suggestions extérieures de réformes révéla finalement les avantages d'un modèle local équilibré, renforcé par quelques emprunts au répertoire transnational. Ainsi les Souassa préservèrent la signification de la propriété pour la construction de réseaux sociaux et d'alliances stratégiques. L'arrangement le plus remarquable, celui qui assura la protection la plus solide de l'ordre local, fut de faire reposer ce dernier sur un règlement moral de la gestion des ressources, un ordre adapté de façon à permettre la participation des Souassa aux échanges globaux et qui, finalement, ancre l'identité collective rurale dans la version locale de l'Islam populaire.

Conclusion

Le point de départ de notre analyse étaient les relations de propriété en milieu rural dans le Souss, relations régies par un règlement juridique local et informel se constituant et se transformant en référence au régime juridique de l'État, aux différentes versions du droit religieux et du droit coutumier, *urfi*. Cet arrangement juridique « sensible » était le seul en mesure de garantir une certaine sécurité juridique en matière de gestion de la propriété et de règlement de l'accès aux ressources naturelles dans l'espace rural. Cependant, suite à l'intégration de la zone rurale marocaine dans le processus de la mondialisation, des influences juridiques multiples exercées par des acteurs transnationaux se sont progressivement imposées dans la région. En conséquence de cette transformation, la sécurité juridique de l'économie morale locale demanda un réarrangement du cadre juridique. Face aux contraintes d'une standardisation juridique transnationale, les Souassa mirent le renforcement de leurs répertoires et institutions juridiques au premier plan, et profitèrent des incompatibilités et des concurrences entre les diverses propositions de modèles juridiques et moraux. Ainsi, ils assurèrent la persistance d'un modèle de production consistant en une économie de marché à référence religieuse basé sur un ensemble de formes multiples de propriété. Les acteurs locaux mirent l'accent sur les obligations sociales et morales liées à la gestion de la pro-

priété en intégrant dans leurs répertoires locaux certains aspects suggérés par les agents transnationaux tout en refusant l'intégration d'autres principes. On peut supposer que l'état actuel des choses ne convient guère ni aux promoteurs du néolibéralisme ni à ceux de l'Islam politique et transnational.

Pour conclure, il faut souligner que la charge moralisatrice des régimes de propriété rurale au niveau local provoque des répercussions sur le niveau transnational lui-même. L'attachement à la morale locale se montre nécessaire pour la création d'un répertoire multi-référentiel mais bien enraciné dans des légitimations locales et religieuses. La légitimation de la pratique est donc toujours multiple; elle est construite au moyen d'arguments provenant d'échelles variées dont les acteurs poursuivent des objectifs différents.

Le pouvoir d'action des acteurs locaux se révèle renforcé et la marge de manœuvre des différents acteurs transnationaux restreinte. L'influence des différentes propositions externes d'idéologies religieuses, économiques et développementales aurait pu créer une scission sociale parmi les villageois; cela ayant pu être évité, la conscience collective s'en est trouvée renforcée. La défense des relations de propriété en milieu rural peut être comprise comme une forme de résistance contre une insécurité juridique déclenchée de l'extérieur et servant en même temps au maintien du contrôle local des ressources naturelles. Du point de vue Souassa, il s'agit d'appriivoiser le néolibéralisme par le maintien de notions morales. En dépit de toutes les innovations, la notion de propriété dans ce milieu rural se définit toujours par les relations sociales et non par la substance même de la propriété. Le pouvoir accru de la population rurale n'implique pas nécessairement un surplus de justice ou une meilleure protection de l'environnement, mais un surplus de marge d'action grâce au jeu sur les différentes échelles (Purcell et Brown 2005). En plus, la revalorisation des aspects religieux dans la gestion de la propriété endigue l'insécurité juridique. Ces effets de stabilité ne concernent que le réseau des usagers de la ressource forestière qui acceptent de s'associer et se soumettent à certaines règles morales et religieuses. Il s'agit donc d'un groupe restreint et localisé. L'élite rurale se trouve hors de ce système et n'est pas tenue par ces règlements moraux. Elle est cependant affectée par la moralisation religieuse du reste de la société locale et est ainsi obligée de montrer un certain attachement à l'Islam populaire.

La description et l'analyse présentées ici peuvent servir comme point de départ empirique pour une contribution à la discussion sur l'économie morale; nous montrons que l'approche classique de Scott (1976) doit être mise en

rapport avec la discussion récente sur l'économie des soins et de la responsabilité. Cette approche combinée doit être placée au cœur même des débats sur la coopération en faveur du (post)développement en général, et plus spécifiquement sur le développement juridique. L'aspect le plus saisissant du cas étudié réside dans la capacité créatrice des acteurs locaux devenus artisans de leur propre (post)développement. Au centre de nos considérations se trouve donc moins le discours sur le développement comme tel que celui sur les conséquences d'une transnationalisation du droit pour les milieux ruraux, conséquences qui mettent en branle toute la gestion des relations de propriété.

Pour ce qui est de la théorie, il faut souligner qu'une moralisation religieuse de la gestion de la propriété en milieu rural ne s'exprime pas nécessairement à travers des mesures de résistance visant à protéger une économie locale et vulnérable face au marché global, comme cela a été suggéré dans la littérature classique sur l'économie morale (Scott 2005) et abordé dans le cas d'interactions d'échelles (Gibson-Graham 2002), de même qu'à travers l'étude de mouvements sociaux (Edelman 2005). Au contraire, notre cas démontre qu'il peut également s'agir d'une résistance aux influences transnationales afin de protéger une conception morale de propriété rurale, mais une résistance rendue efficace par l'ouverture et qui permet d'interagir avec le marché global. Une résistance qui, de prime abord, paraît dirigée contre l'intégration dans le système capitaliste peut en réalité avoir des objectifs contraires. Tandis que Gibson-Graham (2005) et d'autres insistent sur une stricte séparation entre économie communautaire et économie capitaliste, l'exemple du Souss montre une forme d'interpénétration consciemment gérée et manipulée par les acteurs locaux, et non pas simplement imposée par le « capitalisme global »¹³. En effet, il devient évident que les Souassa visaient consciemment à faire participer leur économie rurale au marché global ou, comme ils disent, à intégrer le marché global dans l'économie Souassa; le résultat en est un marché global domestiqué par le local au moyen de valeurs religieuses. Le cas des Souassa ajoute également ceci aux débats sur l'économie morale : les paysans ont eu besoin de devenir plus traditionnels pour s'intégrer dans un environnement transnational.

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Notes

- 1 Nous faisons référence ici aux activités missionnaires, à l'émergence des « méga-églises », ainsi qu'à l'activisme religieux transnational, principalement des mouvements chrétiens et islamiques qui tous abordent le thème de la propriété. Le message religieux et moral porte souvent la vision d'un comportement économique spécifique et d'un exercice approprié du droit de propriété. Ce message va d'un appel à abandonner le modèle économique monétaire jusqu'à la justification religieuse d'un néolibéralisme extrême. Pour un bref aperçu cf. Coleman 2005.
- 2 Le point de départ théorique de ces considérations réside dans la conception de la propriété comme fait social total et paquet de droits et d'obligations mettant l'accent sur les liens entre dimensions sociale et économique de la propriété. Cf. von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2006.
- 3 Noms propres, toponymes etc. sont transcrits dans l'orthographe habituellement utilisée ; les termes arabes sont en transcription simplifiée sans marques diacritiques.
- 4 La provenance locale des données empiriques de cet article ne sera pas précisée et ce, afin de respecter l'anonymat des informateurs. La recherche de terrain sur l'impact juridique transnational sur l'arène locale a été régulièrement effectuée pendant plusieurs semaines chaque année entre 1996 et 2005. Des données provenant de plusieurs endroits et de configurations concrètes dans la plaine du Souss sont utilisées dans l'analyse. Depuis 2001 la recherche fait partie d'un projet du Groupe de Recherche sur le Pluralisme Juridique de l'Institut Max-Planck d'Anthropologie Sociale, Halle (Allemagne) concernant le Développement Durable et l'Exploitation des Ressources Naturelles, le Pluralisme Juridique et le Droit Transnational dans la Réserve de Biosphère de l'Arganeraie.
- 5 Ce sujet a largement attiré l'intérêt des chercheurs ; il suffira dans cet article de se limiter à un bref aperçu. Voir Bouderbala 1999.
- 6 Voir Sait et Lim (2006) au sujet de la propriété en Islam en général et dans le contexte des termes en vogue comme réduction de la pauvreté, liaison de la propriété avec les droits de l'homme, etc.
- 7 Pour les détails de ces transactions, voir Popp 1983; Swearingen 1987.
- 8 Ces données se rapportent à un cercle rural au centre du Souss. Cette unité administrative est composée d'une vingtaine de villages et peuplée d'environ 22 000 habitants.
- 9 L'article ne traite pas de l'impact du phénomène migratoire sur la re-moralisation de l'accès aux ressources au niveau des villages. Le renforcement de la sécurité juridique informelle dans le domaine de la propriété s'est inspiré d'un échange d'idées entre les migrants régulièrement en visite au village et les Souassa sur place, un processus duquel l'élite rurale est toutefois restée exclue. Voir Lacroix 2005.

- 10 Voir les articles relatifs à ce sujet dans Taylor 2005; voir par exemple Hefferan 2007 pour l'exemple des ONG à proprement parler religieuses.
- 11 Voir Tomalin 2006 sur l'absence d'un programme de recherche sur « la religion et le développement » et l'approche fondée sur les droits de l'homme et sur les droits civiques.
- 12 Le manque d'espace nous empêche de traiter dans cet article du discours sur le genre, à l'exception de quelques aspects importants signalés dans l'argumentation sur le religieux; voir Turner 2005.
- 13 Le Souss est loin d'être un exemple isolé; cf. p. ex. les questions que Lawson (2005) pose à Gibson-Graham (2005) concernant les relations entre économie communautaire et capitalisme globalisé.

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Rural Property in an Age of Transnational Migration: Ethnic Divisions in Southeastern Albania

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Abstract: In this article we analyze the effects of transnational migration on rural property relations in post-socialist Albania. Our analysis proceeds by comparing changes in property relations regarding agricultural land in three villages inhabited by different ethnic groups. We demonstrate that the immigration laws of neighbouring countries contribute to a differentiation of migration opportunities and thereby property relations along ethnic lines. The migration practices of Vlach, Macedonian and Albanian villagers unravel the legal designations of land rights instituted by land reform, transforming the Albanian countryside and differentiating villages. Our findings, therefore, attest to the significance of migration as a transnational social field with strong effects on rural property relations. Migration flows, immigration laws, localities of migrants' origin and receiving areas constitute each other in scalar transnational dynamics. These dynamics may lead to ethnically differentiated changes in rural property relations if immigration laws employ ethnic markers to define lines of exclusion and inclusion.

Keywords: property, transnational migration, ethnicity, land, Albania, Southeastern Europe

Résumé : Dans cet article, nous analysons les effets des migrations transnationales sur les rapports relatifs à la propriété rurale dans le contexte post-socialiste de l'Albanie. Notre analyse compare les changements de rapports de propriété relatifs aux terres agricoles dans trois villages peuplés par des groupes ethniques différents. Nous démontrons que les lois sur l'immigration des pays voisins contribuent à une différenciation des opportunités de migration et, conséquemment, des rapports de propriété le long des frontières ethniques. Les pratiques migratoires des villageois Vlach, Macédoniens et Albanais fragmentent les dénominations légales des droits fonciers institués par les réformes agraires, transformant du coup la campagne albanaise tout en différenciant les villages. Nos conclusions témoignent de l'importance de la migration comme champ social transnational aux lourdes conséquences sur les rapports de propriété rurale. Les vagues migratoires, les lois sur l'immigration et les localités d'origine des migrants ainsi que celles qui les accueillent se constituent par le biais de dynamiques scalaires transnationales. Ces dynamiques peuvent mener à des changements différenciés sur le plan ethnique concernant les rapports de propriété rurale si les lois sur l'immigration font usage de marqueurs ethniques afin de définir l'exclusion et l'inclusion.

Mots-clés : propriété, migration transnationale, ethnicité, terre, Albanie, Europe sud-orientale

Introduction

Southeastern Europe has experienced massive transformations of rural property relations over the past two decades. With the collapse of socialism, property reforms became top priorities for post-socialist governments and transnational lending institutions (Verdery 2003). For rural areas, the reforms implied radical changes in property rights to various kinds of rural resources, including agricultural land and forest (Szelényi 1998). The legislative changes meant that millions of rural people set out to renegotiate the social relationships governing the use of resources and control over those (Hann 2003; Verdery 2003).

Yet post-socialist property reforms have been only one factor influencing property relations in Southeastern Europe. As we argue in this paper, migration has emerged as another important transforming factor. In the wake of the collapse of socialism and the Yugoslav wars, rural people left their villages of origin in numbers unparalleled since World War II (Bonifazi et al. 2006). Some left permanently, others temporarily, in search of political asylum, employment opportunities or the promise of a better future elsewhere. While some moved to the cities and towns of their own countries, others crossed state boundaries to live abroad. Many have assumed transnational lives, maintaining various kinds of ties with their villages of origin at the same time as they are incorporated into societies abroad (Nicholson 2002; Sandu 2005; Eastmond 2006). Over time, in the villages of origin as in the localities of destination, transnational migration thus caused significant changes in rural populations (Carletto et al. 2006), economies (Horvat 2004), identities (Fox 2003) and—we surmise—property relations.

Ethnicity has been noted as one of the organizing principles of these migrations (Brubaker 1998). It has figured prominently as a “push factor,” pushing people of certain ethnic categories out of their home villages, and as a “pull factor,” pulling them toward destinations where

they are granted privileged access. The flows of refugees fleeing from ethnic cleansing in Ex-Yugoslavia may be an apt example of the former (e.g., Hayden 1996). The latter has received attention under the rubric “migrations of ethnic affinity” (Brubaker 1998). It has primarily been associated with the “return” migration of ethnic Germans, Jews, Hungarians or Russians to their putative home countries (Brubaker 1998; Fox 2003; Münz and Ohliger 2003). As heterogeneous as these migrations have been, they typically involved a special permeability on the part of the receiving country. This permeability originated from a common understanding that the country had a particular responsibility for ethnic affiliates abroad and found its expression in immigration legislation that considerably eased access for some ethnic categories while excluding others (Brubaker 1998).

In this article, we look at the effects of transnational migration on property relations in southeastern Albania.¹ We use the term “transnational” to call attention to “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et al. 1994:6). This allows us to connect our study to broader research on migration as a transnational social field (Portes et al. 1999; Levitt 2001; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). Within this field, we are interested in connecting transnational migration with two factors: first, property relations as a particular aspect of political, economic and cultural relations in the places of origin (see Portes 2001); and second, the influence exerted by the immigration laws of settlement countries on social relations in the places of origin (see Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). In more concrete terms, we examine changes in property relations in Albanian villages set in relation to different transnational migration practices. In addition, we seek to uncover the role of law—highlighted in Turner and Wiber’s introduction to this section—by analyzing the effects of ethnic categories established in immigration regulations on transnational migration.

Our empirical analysis deals with property relations regarding agricultural land in three Albanian villages. The focus is on agricultural land because land remains a key productive resource in the Albanian countryside. Albania, in turn, offers a unique opportunity to study the transformation of rural property relations, although rural Albania may not be representative of rural conditions in other parts of the world. Just as in other previously socialist countries, Albania’s post-socialist governments mandated the transfer of property rights to agricultural land from the previously dominant agricultural co-operatives to rural households (de Waal 1998). The policy reforms were accompanied by intense negotiations at the local

level over the distribution of land parcels and enforcing authority (de Waal 2004). Moreover, Albania has one of the highest emigration rates in the world, with approximately one fifth of its resident population living abroad (mostly in Greece and Italy). The consequences of migration for rural production and life are very visible as 40% and more of the original population in 1990 has left some rural areas (King 2005). Furthermore, ethnically differentiated migration has transformed ethnic identities and relations, leading to “a new situation of transnationalism” (de Rapper 2005:192).

Our argument builds on de Rapper’s conclusion that transnational migration, as conditioned by the immigration laws of other countries, differentiates Albania’s countryside along ethnic lines. Yet in contrast to de Rapper’s attention to discourses about identities, we instead focus on changes in property relations regarding agricultural land. Differences in migration opportunities, we surmise, affect people’s propensity to migrate and their opportunities to go abroad. In this way, ethnically differentiated migration opportunities may differentiate rural property relations along ethnic lines. We develop our argument by way of studying three villages in southeastern Albania that are inhabited by different ethnic groups (Vlach, Macedonian and Albanian). The villagers enjoy different access to foreign labour markets, which is at least in part due to the immigration laws of the neighbouring countries. Before we turn to our cases, we take a brief look at the Albanian countryside under socialism and review the stipulations of Albania’s post-socialist land legislation.

The Albanian Countryside under Socialism

Në radhë të parë, jemi shqiptarë

(In the first place, we are Albanians)

Popular saying in socialist Albania

By the 1980s, Albania was not only one of the most isolated countries in the world, but it also retained a much larger share of its population in rural areas than other countries in Western and Eastern Europe. In the perception of its political leadership, the country was surrounded by hostile powers, including both capitalist and socialist countries. This fear caused the socialist regime to split from the Warsaw pact countries in 1961 and break with China, its last remaining ally, in 1979. The ensuing isolation largely stopped exchanges of people, products and information between Albania and other countries (Pettifer 2001). Isolationist policy also caused the socialist regime to emphasize national food sufficiency. The regime restricted internal rural-urban movements to retain the labour force required in agriculture. As a result, many people remained

in the countryside, while their peers in Western and Eastern Europe migrated to urban areas from the 1950s to the 1970s (Sjöberg 1991). By 1990, 63% of all Albanians continued to live in the countryside, most of them working in agriculture.

Collectivization and state planning served to ensure national food self-sufficiency for the socialist regime (Sjöberg 1991). By 1967, private ownership of land was eradicated and agriculture fully collectivized. Control over productive decisions shifted from individual producers to agricultural co-operatives. The co-operatives, in turn, were subject to a centralized system of state planning and procurement that emphasized the cultivation of grain for bread production. As a result, wheat fields covered large parts of the country, extending from the fertile plains into marginal sites with low yields in the mountains. At the same time, state planning and procurement worked to reduce economic differences among rural villages. Villages located in marginal areas received a similar level of state support in return for lower procurement quotas than villages in favourable areas. Similarly, collectivization brought about a levelling of economic differences among households within villages. Collectivization and state planning thereby turned Albania into “an island of increasing poverty” characterized by “extreme, spartan egalitarianism” (Vickers and Pettifer 1997:12).

Just as Albania’s agricultural policy served to reduce economic differences, social policy sought to diminish ethnic distinctions. Albania has always included a number of ethnic groups, even though the proportion of ethnic Albanians is much higher than in other Balkan states. Alongside the majority of ethnic Albanians, which accounted for roughly 90% of the total population in 2003, the country is inhabited by groups of Bosniak, Greek, Macedonian, Serbian-Montenegrin, Roma, Vlach and Yvgjet origin (Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler 1998; Berxholi et al. 2003).² While many members of minority groups live interspersed among the ethnic Albanian population, some—especially Bosnians, Macedonians and Vlachs—live in ethnically homogenous villages. Despite the diversity of these groups, Albania’s socialist regime sought to play down the distinctiveness of their cultures and histories (de Rapper 2005). In its perception, national unity was critical for developing a strong Albania, an Albania that could withstand invasion by neighbouring powers. The regime therefore emphasized membership in the Albanian nation regardless of ethnic identity, promoting a singular national identity by way of a one-language policy and the systematic integration of ethnic minority representatives into the political system (Grupi Shqiptar i të Drejtave të Njeriut 2003).

By way of this brief review we want to indicate the economic and social egalitarianism that characterized the Albanian state’s strategy for the countryside under socialism. The socialist regime sought to create a countryside where rural people became members of agricultural co-operatives regardless of their economic situation and ethnic affiliation, and where villages would fare relatively equally independent of the variation in local conditions. Considering the profound economic inequality and distinct ethnic identities characterizing pre-socialist Albania, the socialist policy worked to level economic and ethnic differences to some extent. By the 1980s, virtually every village was accessible by road and possessed irrigation, a school, and a cultural centre, even if it was located high up in the mountains. Similarly, the majority of adult villagers were members of a co-operative receiving relatively equal remuneration for their work (Vickers and Pettifer 1997).

Furthermore, this egalitarianism appeared to shape the initial debates about a desirable post-socialist countryside. The majority of political leaders and common people expected the countryside to be populated by a class of relatively equal small producers (Cungu and Swinnen 1999). This vision found its expression in the Land Law of 1991. The Law sought to re-create private property rights to land 24 years after its nationalization under socialism. It stipulated not only that all collective farmland was to be distributed on an equal basis to the rural population, but also that this rule applied to the whole country independent of distinct local histories and conditions. It took into account “neither former ownership, nor the land boundaries and sizes before collectivization” (Article 8). Instead, it stipulated the full distribution of all collectivized land on a per capita basis (*për frymë*) to the members of former agricultural co-operatives (Article 5). In addition to co-operative workers, other rural dwellers who were not members of co-operatives such as state farm employees, teachers or military personnel were also awarded land, albeit in smaller quantities (Article 6). This concern for economic and social equality set Albania apart from the rest of Central and Eastern Europe where most collective farmland was restituted to its historical owners or their heirs. Albanian critics of the Land Law, therefore, quickly labelled it a “communist law,” as it smacked of the egalitarianism that had been so dominant under socialism.

In the remainder of this article, we examine how the 1991 Land Law played out in three villages inhabited by different ethnic groups. We trace actual changes in property relations regarding agricultural land to examine how those consolidated, modified or unravelled the egalitarian

vision for the Albanian countryside contained in the Law. Our analysis proceeds by way of three case studies, the first of which we turn to now.

The Vlachs: Mass Exodus to Greece

The Vlachs number about 200,000 in Albania (Schwandner-Sievers 1999). They speak a Romance language and reside not only in Albania but also in neighbouring countries. In Albania, many Vlach villages are located in the rugged Gorë and Mokra mountains of southeastern Albania. One of these villages we call Bagëtia,³ the site of our first case study, situated at 1,087m above sea level amidst immense old-growth forests and mountain pastures.

During socialism, Bagëtia was part of a co-operative with two other mountain villages of ethnic Albanians. Although the mountainous terrain was not suitable for crop production, central planning required the co-operative to produce wheat, rye and corn. Each year the co-operative had severe difficulties in meeting the production quotas set by the Ministry of Agriculture. Livestock husbandry had to make up for the low productivity of crops, producing meat, wool and dairy products. Yet despite these difficulties, Bagëtia and the other two villages were on relatively equal footing with co-operatives in better biophysical conditions.⁴ This was mainly so because of the massive support the state provided to crop cultivation in the form of machinery, services and inputs. In addition, the state invested in the villages' infrastructure despite their remote location; a road connected Bagëtia to the lowlands. The village also had a cultural centre, an elementary school, a store selling consumer goods, a small irrigation system, livestock shelters and two large grain depots. Adult labourers worked in co-operative brigades and engaged in small-scale household production just like their peers in other Albanian villages.

Agricultural production and public infrastructure collapsed in Bagëtia after the co-operative was decollectivized in 1991. As the Albanian state liberalized domestic markets and, in particular, international trade, the cultivation of basic grains was no longer profitable. It did not pay because output prices dropped and input prices soared. At the same time, the gravel road that once connected Bagëtia to the lowlands became impassable due to lack of maintenance. The closest place to catch a minibus to a lowland market was now an hour's walk away along a narrow and rugged mountain path. In addition, by 2004 the village possessed only three public faucets and, in the winter, was often cut off from electricity for days at a time. The villagers could no longer receive Albanian radio or television programs—despite the satellite dishes on their houses, which allowed them to receive Greek,

German and Italian channels. If they wanted to make a phone call they had to walk up a mountain about 500m before their mobile phones reached the net.

As living conditions deteriorated at home, new opportunities arose for the villagers across the border. Available jobs and living conditions in Greece proved highly attractive to many people from Bagëtia. According to returning migrants, an unskilled labourer could earn €25 a day in agriculture or €50 a day in construction in Greece in 2004.⁵ At the same time, in the lowland towns around Bagëtia there were hardly any jobs available in agriculture and in construction, a labourer could make only between €8 and €15 a day. Moreover, Greece promised the villagers the opportunity to take up a modern life, an opportunity many did not see in Albania.

Migration to Greece was not only attractive for these economic and social reasons but it was also made easy by Greek immigration policy. The Greek state granted Vlachs three-year visas (*viza 3-vjeçare*) for a small fee that allowed them to work in Greece. Greek legislation also allowed Vlachs older than 65 to register as residents in Greece, which entitled them to a monthly pension of €200 (*pensioneri i grekut*). The Greek state provided Vlachs this preferential treatment because it regarded all Albanian Vlachs (as well as other Albanian Greek Orthodox) as of Greek origin (Schwandner-Sievers 1999; Konidaris 2005). In the Greek view, Hellenic heritage was seen as passed on through Byzantine culture to contemporary practitioners of the Greek Orthodox religion.⁶

The new opportunities in Greece dramatically affected livelihood strategies in Bagëtia. Between 1991 and 2004, almost two thirds of the original 70 households permanently left the village. Of the remaining 24 households, 20 had one or more persons permanently or seasonally working in Greece. These households typically received significant remittances from Greece, giving them annual incomes of several thousand euro and allowing them to build second houses in the lowlands. Only four of the remaining households stayed entirely in Bagëtia. They lived off of the occasional sale of livestock as well as pensions and social assistance paid by the Albanian state, which hardly exceeded a couple of hundred euro per year. The 100 or so people remaining in the village, therefore, engaged in varied livelihood strategies as illustrated by the following examples.

Maks and Lisa Dulellari exemplified the “orphaned pensioners” alluded to by de Soto et al. (2002:46). This elderly couple had two sons and a daughter living near Athens. The children regularly sent remittances so that, economically, Maks and Lisa were well-off. Maks said he missed his children and grandchildren but was generally

happy with his life as a shepherd. Lisa, on the other hand, felt increasingly lonely. What she missed, she said, "is the sound of children shouting, their happy voices. But now it is silent, [you hear] only the sound of livestock when it comes in from the pasture. Imagine in winter, nothing whispers."

The Dulellari's favourable economic situation was radically different from the dire circumstances in which Dhimitri Tanellari found himself. In 2004, Dhimitri had become a lonely, disillusioned old man of 62 years who lived alone after his wife passed away in 2003. He had to live on about €1,000 a year, as he had no children in Greece. Of this, the pension he received from the Albanian state accounted for about €700 while the remainder resulted from the sale of his yearly calf. Each year Dhimitri collected wild plums to make some 40ℓ of *raki* (strong liquor), which helped drown his sorrows.

Many of the households who left Bagëtia had completely broken off their ties to the village. Only a few people came back for special occasions such as important Orthodox holidays. Frosina Geri, for instance, a hale and hearty old lady of 73, returned to Bagëtia three times a year on Christmas, Easter and Mary's Assumption (*Shën Marien*). "Here [in Bagëtia]," she said, "I have my dead father, my sisters and brothers and as long as I can still walk I want to come and see them!" Yet her connections with Bagëtia did not go beyond this. She barely managed to keep up her house and had long given up any interest in agricultural land.

Property Relations Regarding Agricultural Land: From Distribution to Restitution

Kur erdhi kooperativa, ju më vodhët tokën time, tokën e babait dhe gjyshit tim. Tani unë do e marr atë propë!
(When the co-operative came, you stole my land, my father's land and my grandfather's land. Now I take it back!)

Maks Dulellari, Bagëtia

The massive exodus to Greece had a strong bearing on property rights to land in Bagëtia. Starting immediately after the collapse of the socialist regime, the departure of many households gave considerable maneuvering space to a local land reform that differed considerably from the legal stipulations laid down in national legislation. Instead of the equal distribution of co-operative farmland on a per capita basis, villagers ultimately settled on restituting the land to historical owners and their heirs. Migration facilitated this process because many of the emigrating households envisioned a future abroad or in the lowland villages, and thus displayed very little interest in asserting their claims to agricultural land in Bagëtia. At the same

time, those who stayed behind felt very attached not only to the place but also the particular parcels of land they or their ancestors had worked in the past.

Nevertheless, the decision to reconstitute was not implemented without controversy. Before the villagers finally agreed upon restitution, three land commissions attempted to distribute the co-operative land. The first commission was established under the socialist regime to distribute 0.15ha of co-operative farmland to each household. It worked on this process for less than a week before the order came to dissolve the co-operative. The subsequent commissions did not acknowledge distributions made by the first commission. The second land commission intended to implement the legal stipulations of the land reform law. Headed by the former chief of the co-operative, this second commission distributed 0.13ha per capita. The figure was chosen because this was the maximum land area a household could own and still be eligible for social assistance. Yet, before the second commission was able to issue a provisional land certificate (*tapi*), the head of the commission left Bagëtia for Greece. It was, therefore, left to a third commission to issue land certificates. At the time of writing, these provisional documents were the only *legally* valid form of land ownership in Bagëtia, as the cadastral service never came around to confer formal land titles to villagers.

The distribution mandated by the Albanian state quickly encountered open opposition in Bagëtia. Families with few members and claims to large areas of ancestral land resisted the distribution and did not shy away from using physical force to assert their claims. A crucial role in advocating for and enforcing restitution fell upon Maks Dulellari, who resisted equitable distribution on the grounds of historical justice. Maks had worked his father's land for 12 years as a young man before it was collectivized by force. Throughout the time of the co-operative, he had remained an outsider in the community, never forgetting the bitter moment when he was forced into the co-operative. Maks, therefore, thought that the right time had come to reclaim his landholdings.

Maks had to fight hard to get his land claims recognized by fellow villagers. When the land commissions assigned some of the land claimed by him to other families in the village, he went out with his wife, children and grandchildren to plant 2.5ha of wheat. Furthermore, Maks declared: "I will not give my land back. And if someone dares to plant something on it I will kill him!" To back up his words, he bought an old German carbine which he always carried with him. Facing these actions and proclamations, the proponents of distribution called the police. According to his account, Maks was arrested and jailed 12

times. The police confiscated his rifle, the family's new television set, their radio and carpets. One time after a bitter night in jail, Maks remembers, one of the policemen threatened him, "return the land, or I will crash this chair on your back!" But none of the pressure or threats worked. Before his resistance crumbled, other families in the village began to follow Maks' example and claim their historical landholdings as well.

Maks and other proponents of restitution got their way because many other villagers simply did not bother to put up a fight. Some of them tried to resist restitution initially but ultimately shied away from the social conflicts their resistance would entail with local big men like Maks Dulellari. Moreover, as we pointed out above, the massive out-migration that started in Bagëtia in 1991 eased many potential conflicts. One household, for example, sold their house and left to live in a lowland village after their 0.15ha homegarden was restituted to the pre-collectivization owner. Since the family wanted to leave Bagëtia anyway, they did not bother to put up a fight. Villagers, therefore, eventually settled on restituting the land, even though it caused some households to end up with very little or no land because their ancestors had sold their holdings prior to collectivization.

The Macedonians: Seasonal Labour Migration to Macedonia

The second village, which we call Dardha, is one of nine Macedonian villages located on the shores of Lake Prespa in southeastern Albania. Together, these villages are home to some 4,500 people, whose origin in the region dates back to medieval Bulgarian and Serbian empires (Apostoli 2002). They speak a Macedonian dialect and have re-established relations with people across the border in what is now called the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, after ties to former Yugoslavia had been completely cut off during socialism. Dardha is home to a population of about 340 persons in 81 households, a number which changed little between 1990 and 2004.

During socialism, Dardha excelled in high agricultural productivity. The village controlled more than 100ha of fields and pastures of which about 60ha were irrigated. Dardha's people cultivated mainly wheat and corn in a co-operative they had formed together with the inhabitants of surrounding villages. Starting in the early 1980s, they also raised an expanding herd of livestock that by 1990, included some 90 head of cattle, 250 sheep, 800 goats and more than 100 draft animals. In addition, the village kept some 1-2,000 chickens in a battery farm. A book about the Prespa region, therefore, lauds Dardha because

"the duties of the plan were realized...in agriculture and livestock, and even more was produced" (Apostoli 2002:43).

Despite this strong economic performance, Dardha did not stand out among other Macedonian, Vlach and ethnic Albanian villages in southeastern Albania in terms of amenities. In fact, its infrastructure was comparable to that of Bagëtia: Dardha had a cultural centre, an elementary school, a cistern for storing drinking water, an irrigation system, stores selling consumer goods, shelters for livestock and grain depots. The only significant difference was the chicken farm in Dardha, for which there was no equivalent in Bagëtia. Otherwise, most of the villagers worked in one of the three co-operative brigades, cultivated small household plots and raised some animals on their own account.

After decollectivization, the conditions for viable commercial agriculture rapidly deteriorated in Dardha as in Bagëtia. Most importantly, much of the village's vital irrigation infrastructure was looted in the upheavals of 1991, seriously diminishing the productivity of the once fertile land. As in Bagëtia, lack of market access came to be another major impediment because it took three hours on a bumpy gravel road to reach the nearest Albanian market and farmers had to rely on public transportation for marketing.

As agriculture was no longer a profitable activity, villagers looked across the border for new opportunities. Not only was the Macedonian border closer than the next urban centre in Albania, but being ethnic Macedonians, the villagers did not face restrictions in migrating to Macedonia and taking up employment there (King and Vullnetari 2003:32). Especially with regards to employment, they received preferential treatment by Macedonia, which had become independent from Yugoslavia in 1991. Their ethnicity entitled them to unrestricted labour migration because of the weight the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia accords to ethnic identity. From the viewpoint of the Macedonian state, an ethnic Macedonian (*Makedonec*) was someone who was an Orthodox Christian, spoke Macedonian, and identified as Macedonian. This emphasis on ethnic identity reflected not only the country's recent secession from former Yugoslavia but also the culmination of a nation-building process that the country had pursued since the end of the Second World War (Perry 1997). For this reason, the constitution of Macedonia specifically mentions a "concern for the status and rights of persons belonging to the Macedonian people in neighbouring countries" (Article 49). Thus, it became common practice for the Macedonian state to grant citizenship to ethnic Macedonians living in

Albania. For the villagers of Dardha this meant that virtually all held dual citizenship in 2004.

The jobs available across the border proved highly attractive to the people of Dardha. Over the course of the 1990s, a growing number of households began sending a member or two to Macedonia for seasonal employment. They took on jobs as masons, master bricklayers or hired hands in agriculture. Although wages in Macedonia were not much higher than in Albania, it was much easier to find work there. By 2004, seasonal labour migration to Macedonia had become the most popular way to make a living in Dardha. The migrants usually worked in Macedonia for between three and eight months a year and returned home during the winter months. Of the 81 households in the village, 45 had one or more members working seasonally in Macedonia. There were only 24 households that did not engage in any seasonal labour migration and 12 households had members working seasonally in Greece.

Sterjo Shumka and his family illustrate the livelihood strategies of migrant households in Dardha. Sterjo lived nine of 12 months in Monastir, Macedonia, where he worked as a bricklayer or hired labourer in agriculture. His wife Drita stayed in Dardha together with their 13-year-old son. The couple's three daughters lived with their father in Monastir, where they went to high school and university. Except for the short stints when Sterjo was at home, Drita took care of all farm activities, including the cultivation of one hectare of agricultural land and more than a dozen sheep and goats. This was difficult because the land and the livestock would have normally required more work than one person could do. Drita, therefore, worked their land at a very low intensity, as did other migrant households in Dardha.

Property Relations Regarding Agricultural Land: From Individualization to Co-ordination

Unlike in Bagëtia, the implementation of the land reform in Dardha followed the legal stipulations of the land reform law. The villagers formed a land commission in 1991 and distributed the collective farmland on a per capita basis. Every household received some six parcels of land, including vineyards and cropland of different qualities. The total area depended on the number of people living in the household. The result of this distribution was a highly fragmented structure of landholdings. The average holding was a mere 1.2ha, the typical parcel being a thin stretch of land measuring 15m by 150m. Considering this fragmentation and the labour shortage due to migration, Dardha's farmers faced serious problems in cultivating the land. Nevertheless, in face of the

risks associated with seasonal labour migration—such as the possibility of not finding employment—they continued to engage in agriculture to build up a safety net at home.

The villagers solved the problems associated with land fragmentation and labour shortage by co-ordinating their cultivation practices. They co-operated in the cultivation of wheat and corn fields to facilitate the use of large machinery. Together they hired two or three tractors at the beginning of each planting season to plow all fields. Like in co-operative times, the tractor drivers plowed entire blocks, which contained up to 50 individual parcels. During the harvesting season, the pattern was repeated with combine harvesters. For the tractor operator, this meant dealing with 50 different landowners. For the farmers, it required a readiness to deal with the tractor driver on the day when he was going to plow the parcel. If farmers missed the tractor driver, the driver would skip their plots and, during the busy planting season, was unlikely to return to plow it later.

Thus, property rights to agricultural land in Dardha had evolved away from the highly individualized structure created by distribution. Individual households continued to possess exclusive use rights to the parcels allocated to them in 1991. At the same time, they were expected to honour collective agreements among villagers. They felt the social obligation to meet the tractor driver on the arranged day and they had an economic interest in doing so, as there was no other viable form of land preparation or harvesting. Property rights to land in Dardha, therefore, connected individual rights to use land with social obligations about the management of the land. During the agricultural season, the significance of co-ordination was visible in the village landscape: agricultural fields displayed a homogeneous pattern of corn and wheat.

The Albanians: Impediments to Migration

Kodra, as we call our last case study village, is inhabited by ethnic Albanians. Albanians generally believe that they derive from the ancient Illyrians, tribesmen who settled in and beyond the area of what is today Albania (Pettifer 2001). Archeological evidence from sites near Kodra shows that the region around the village has been settled since at least the late Bronze Age (1600-1000 BC).

Kodra itself is located close to the road connecting Tirana with the town of Korça. It lies at 872m above sea level at the entrance of a valley that is surrounded by the high, rolling foothills of Guri i Kamjes. With a population of about 1,000 persons, Kodra was much larger than both Bagëtia and Dardha in 2004. Its population size had remained stable since the collapse of socialism.

During socialism, conditions in Kodra were relatively comparable to those in Bagëtia and Dardha. Kodra was part of a co-operative together with three neighbouring ethnic Albanian villages. In Kodra, the co-operative produced a rich variety of agricultural products including grain, forage, fruits, vegetables and tobacco. In addition to crop production, some 200 cows, 250 sheep and several dozen oxen, horses and donkeys were kept in Kodra. The co-operative infrastructure included a cultural centre, an elementary school, co-operative stores, three irrigation reservoirs, half a dozen animal shelters and two large depots to store the harvest. As with Bagëtia and Dardha, village adults worked the land in brigades and in small homegardens.

Deterioration of economic conditions after the collapse of socialism was less pronounced in Kodra than in Bagëtia and Dardha. Biophysical conditions were favourable to agriculture in Kodra, as the village is located in a fertile valley suitable for growing a diversity of crops. In addition, the village irrigation system remained intact for the most part during the upheavals of regime change. Likewise, urban amenities and markets continued to be accessible, as the small town of Pogradec was close by and could easily be reached via regular minibus routes. In 2004, Kodra still operated its own elementary school, had just re-opened a mosque and was building an evangelical church. In addition, four grocery stores, three bars and a restaurant, a garage, a doctor, and even a private language school testified to the dynamism of the village.

Despite the good conditions, most households in Kodra were only part-time farmers and derived their main cash income from sources outside agriculture. Of the village's 312 households, 53 were full-time farmers or shepherds. One hundred and eighty-eight households received their main cash income from working in the construction or service industries in Pogradec. For only 71 households did the income from seasonal migration or remittances constitute the main source of cash income. The low number of households living mainly on remittances indicated a comparatively low level of emigration; 55% of households in Kodra had one or more members permanently or seasonally working abroad—in comparison to 84% in Bagëtia and 70% in Dardha.

One cause of the comparatively low emigration rate was that Greek immigration law remained restrictive for all Albanians except for members of the Vlach and Greek minorities. Albanians without an employment history in Greece could not obtain a visa to enter the country. Migrants who had worked in Greece before could obtain visas for a three-month period only. For each additional three-month period that they wanted to extend their visa,

they had to overcome bureaucratic hurdles and pay a fee of €150, which was a substantial expense for them. Compared to the regulations pertaining to members of the Vlach minority, who easily obtained a three-year working visa, the disadvantage for ethnic Albanians is obvious. In addition, even if they held proper visas, Albanians were sometimes turned back at the border or had their visas cancelled by Greek police without reason (see Nicholson 2002, 2004).

Immigration law, of course, was only one factor influencing villagers' decisions to migrate. Another factor that worked to discourage migration was the severe discrimination that ethnic Albanians faced in Greece. Discrimination continued despite two Greek regularization programs in 1998 and 2002, through which more than 300,000 Albanian immigrants were legalized (Fakiolas 2003; Konidaris 2005). As a result, some migrants from Kodra who had worked in Greece in the early 1990s chose to work in Italy in 2004 as conditions were better there (see King and Vullnetari 2003). But even there, negative attitudes towards Albanians went hand in hand with increasingly restrictive immigration policies. The most recent of these was the Bossi-Fini Law of 2002, which—while permitting further regularization—criminalized undocumented migration and further tightened the rules for expulsion (Carletto et al. 2006; Kelly 2005).

Nevertheless, despite restrictive immigration laws and discrimination, many villagers continued to find their way into Greece and other neighbouring countries (see Nicholson 2002). Some men without a history of formal employment in Greece crossed the border illegally. Most of them already knew the route through the mountains from past experience. Others chose to go with local smugglers who took people to Greece via Macedonia for the price of €900 per person. They were ready to pay this hefty fee because they calculated that two months of good work would cover the cost of the trip. Migration, therefore, was more attractive to many villagers, especially young men, than working in agriculture or other sectors at home. Nevertheless, the risks taken and expenses incurred appeared to motivate more ethnic Albanians to look for livelihood sources at home than their Vlach and Macedonian peers.

As a result of the impediments to migration and the comparatively favourable conditions for agriculture and off-farm employment, the majority of villagers had remained in Kodra in 2004. Among village households, a variety of livelihood strategies had emerged each of which each depended on particular combinations of migration strategies, agricultural production and off-farm activities. In contrast to Bagëtia and Dardha, agri-

culture continued to be a significant source of subsistence and income for a large majority of the households in Kodra.

Most households had taken up part-time farming, combining subsistence production with small-scale commercial agriculture and wage labour. Lavderim and Xhuli Sherifi, a young couple in their 20s for example, cultivated 0.2ha of land with onions or cornflowers. They sold their crops to merchants who specialized in vegetables or medicinal herbs. Whenever he could, Lavderim made some additional money by working as a hired labourer in construction or agriculture around Pogradec. Although they were both hard workers, Lavderim and Xhuli barely made enough money to make ends meet for themselves, their three children and Lavderim's grandmother. Lavderim had never been abroad and explained that he had no intention of going.

Other households focused on full-time farming as a livelihood strategy. These households practiced small-scale commercial agriculture, cultivating a diverse mix of cash crops, such as grapes, vegetables and fruit trees. They did not engage in labour migration. Some households of this group had started processing their crops, making wine and raki, for instance, and selling the processed products to local bars and restaurants. Instead of crop production, some had gone into raising livestock, focusing on the production of meat and dairy products.

Aside from these full- and part-time farmers, there were also a few households that did not engage in commercial agriculture but worked the land solely for subsistence purposes. Gjergji and Afërdita Proni, for example, were one of the 71 households in the village whose main source of income derived from remittances. The Pronis had two sons living in Greece who sent home about €2,000 per year. Together with Gjergji's state pension of almost €80 per month, this amounted to a substantial amount of money considering rural Albanian standards of living.

Property Relations Regarding Agricultural Land: Contested Distribution

Shteti i ka ndarë një herë ato dhe po ia riktheu pronarëve, do të plasi luftë civile

(The state has already divided it, and if it's returned to the ex-owners, a civil war will break out)

Taxi driver near Kodra

As with Dardha, Kodra's land commission completed their work in 1991, distributing collective farmland to the agricultural labour force. Similar to Dardha, Kodra's households received some five parcels of land, including a share of the fertile land on the valley floor, a piece of the collec-

tive vineyard, a plot with fruit trees, and a plot of cropland on the valley's slopes. Household landholdings were relatively equal, the average holding being 0.7ha. Yet in contrast to Dardha, Kodra's farmers proceeded to farm their land on their own. Land continues to represent a valuable asset for the smallholders of Kodra, as agriculture remains a primary source of livelihood. In this way, property rights to agricultural land in Kodra closely match the expectations that have informed Albania's post-socialist land reforms, especially if one compares the property relations in Kodra with those in the other two villages.

Nonetheless, the distribution effected by the land commission has never found unanimous support among the local population. Many people continue to assert the legitimacy of historical rights to land (i.e., the rights of people to the land that they or their parents had worked prior to collectivization). Therefore, many discussions in the village today centre on the legitimacy of distributing land to the agricultural labour force in 1991. The topic remains highly controversial, as the following conversation, which we overheard in a shared taxi near Kodra, illustrates:

Passenger: I'm for the return of the property that my father left me and which belongs to me.

Driver: But it has already been divided by the state.

P [insists]: It belongs to me because it's mine.

D: What belongs to you? [Turning to the other passengers] Hey, to whom belongs the land, to him or to God? [To the first passenger again] The land belongs to God and He made it for Man, so it belongs to everybody.

P: My father bought it a long time ago, and the others take my land, huh?

D [loud]: The state has already divided it, and if it's returned to the ex-owners, a civil war will break out and Sali and Fatos will be declared "Enemies of the People."

The conversation reached a critical point here. Sali Berisha and Fatos Nano were opposition leader and prime minister at the time this conversation took place. "Enemies of the people" (*armiq të popullit*) had been a category created by the socialist regime to condemn wealthy peasants and deviants from the Party line. People who fell into this category were publicly ostracized under socialism and lived a miserable life. It was the harshest treatment that the driver could think of for politicians who supported the restitution of land to historical owners. Yet it did not deter the passenger from insisting on his point:

- P [louder]: They are assfuckers! If the state wants, it takes your land, and there is nothing you can do!
- D [conciliatory]: The state eats my shit, that's all it does! [But] what you want is that ten persons eat and 900 others die. No, no, look [the taxi passes by a cemetery], two metres belong to us, nothing more.

Contestations over property rights to land were not just theoretical debates, as some villagers took things into their own hands, just as Maks Dulellari had done in Bagëtia. Hassan and Mira Proni, for instance, were involved in a dispute about an agricultural parcel for many years. The elderly couple in their 60s received the parcel adjacent to their home in the course of distribution. They even received a provisional certificate to the land from the land commission. Yet neither the land commission's decision nor the certificate prevented Bujar Sherifi, a fellow villager and former head of the commune council, from claiming the plot for his own household. Bujar based his claims to the plot on historical rights he held and threatened that he would destroy any crops planted by the Pronis. The couple responded by filing several complaints with the commune administration and Pogradec deputy to the national parliament, but their efforts were in vain, and the conflict over the plot was unresolved.

Conclusion

Taken together, our case studies indicate that migration contributed to radical transformations of rural property relations in Albanian villages after 1990, unravelling the legal specifications contained in national law. These transformations originated from negotiations over property at the local level, defying the uniformity of Albania's land legislation (see de Waal 2004). The negotiations were strongly influenced by rural people's pursuit of economic opportunities and a better life, which motivated many to migrate abroad. Migration, in turn, was conditioned by ethnic categories used in the immigration laws of neighbouring countries. Immigration laws thus contributed to changes in rural property relations that were ethnically differentiated.

Our account thus suggests that migration has significant influence on rural property relations (see Nuijten and Lorenzo, this volume). Moreover, its influence is conditioned by the particular form it takes. This is particularly true for transnational migration; that is when people cross national borders and maintain social relationships across them (see Levitt 2001; Portes 2001). Transnational migration connects localities across national borders, affecting

both the localities of origin and migrants' destinations. At the same time, changes in the originating and receiving areas affect the transnational flow of migrants. In this way, migration, sending localities and receiving localities constitute each other in a transnational social field (Basch et al. 1994; Portes et al. 1999; Levitt 2001). This mutual constitution is a key feature of the scalar dynamics discussed by Turner and Wiber (this volume), involving practices and processes operating at the local, national, and transnational levels.

As much as transnational migration is about flows of people across national borders, it comes about by the barriers states and other political, social or religious institutions erect to control the flows (see Massey 1999; Levitt 2001). In other words, transnational migration offers attractive opportunities for the pursuit of livelihoods and a better life because of the simple fact that the opportunities are not equally available to everybody. Among the key barriers states purposively erect to exclude or include are immigration laws. These laws are an important influence on migration flows and the forms migration takes, yet they are also only one conditioning factor among several. People always find ways to negotiate the immigration laws of other countries, for example through "illegal" migration. Furthermore, the attractiveness of a country for migration depends on other factors such as attitudes regarding migrants.

Immigration laws may be defined in national law, yet they are transnational by their very nature. First, the influence of immigration laws reaches far beyond national borders as they are embedded in transnational social fields (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). As migration has become a significant livelihood strategy in many parts of the world, immigration laws generate repercussions not only in immediately bordering areas but thousands of kilometres away. More importantly, as laws respond to migration flows, they are influenced by changes in localities far away. Second, the notions informing immigration laws are often transnational. Many laws use ethnic categories to define lines of exclusion and inclusion. More specifically, the idea of an ethnic homeland has found its way into many immigration laws (Brubaker 1998). For example, most of the new constitutions written in Southeastern Europe tie the definition of citizenship to ethnic markers, dividing resident populations into ethnic majorities and minorities and extending citizenship to co-ethnics living abroad (Verdery 1996). The idea of an ethnic homeland is also enshrined in many other constitutions and immigration laws across the world (Brubaker 1998).

Transnational migration contributes to an increasing differentiation of rural property relations as part of its

broader effects on places of origin (see Landolt et al. 1999; Landolt 2001; Levitt and Jaworksy 2007). As some people enjoy better opportunities to pursue livelihoods and better lives abroad than others, migration becomes a significant factor transforming rural property relations. Migrants pursue different claims on rural resources than those who stay behind. Moreover, migrants' claims on resources are likely to depend on whether they move on a more permanent basis or seasonally, individually or as whole households. Consequently, transnational migration affects the distribution of property rights to rural resources in the localities of origin (as it will in the destination areas). It also influences the legitimacy of competing justifications available to people making claims on resources, such as the need for subsistence. Furthermore, it affects the range of uses considered legitimate for rural resources, above all through the once dominant concern with productive uses of land. Migration, therefore, emerges as a key field of transnational agency with direct influence on rural property relations.

The differentiation of rural property relations may occur along ethnic lines if ethnic markers distinguish people's migration opportunities. Of course, the pursuit of economic opportunities, political freedom and a better life remain the primary drivers of migration. Yet ethnic markers differentiate people's ability to engage in migration, just as transnational migration opens up ethnic definitions for renegotiation (see Glick Schiller et al. 1992). Ethnic markers thus emerge as a primary factor conditioning changes in property relations. They emerge as a significant influence not because of any inherent differences in property relations between ethnic groups nor are the ethnic differences "home-grown" in any sense; ethnically-differentiated property relations arise under such circumstances because of transnational dynamics involving migration flows, immigration barriers and receiving areas as much as the localities of migrants' origin. Correspondingly, international immigration laws may not determine migration flows and thus property relations, but they may contribute to the emergence of ethnically-differentiated property relations in migrants' originating areas.

Finally, transnational migration challenges the very tenets of "rural" and "property" in "rural property relations," as it does with the notion of "home" (Eastmond 2006). How can one consider property relations in a "transnational village" (Levitt 2001) to be any longer "rural" if they are influenced by transnational migration flows and conditioned by the immigration laws of other countries and by what is happening in receiving localities? Transnational migration, therefore, challenges the presumably

sharp divide between rural and urban, the association of rural areas with a particular dependency on natural resources and the premise that rural villages are relatively stable communities with few "externals" (see Turner and Wiber, this volume). Similarly, transnational migration shakes the conceptual foundations of "property" by challenging the position of the nation-state as the politico-legal institution sanctioning property relations. Property is a key field in which nation-states assert and solidify authority over people and territory. Nation-states, in turn, are often key politico-legal institutions recognizing claims on resources as property. Therefore, as transnational migration weakens the broader authority of nation-states, it touches a key foundation of property relations and contributes to the unevenness of the state's presence in people's lives (see Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003; Caglar 2006). It may even strengthen customary arrangements against national law, as is highlighted in our account and the case discussed by Nuijten and Lorenzo (this volume), giving rise to "transnational custom" in the process—but that is a subject we must leave for another paper.

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Notes

- 1 See Turner and Wiber (this volume) for a discussion of the property concept. Drawing on their discussion, we understand property relations regarding agricultural land as emergent patterns of actual land use practices that are considered legitimate and in turn, influence individual practices.
- 2 We emphasize that these ethnic categories are problematic as they tend to naturalize distinctions that are socially constructed. For insightful discussions of ethnic identities in Albania see Schwandner-Sievers 1999 and de Rapper 2005.
- 3 This name, the names of the other two study villages and the names of all villagers are pseudonyms in order to protect the identities of our informants.

- 4 This comparison (and similar ones involving the other two case study villages) is informed by a random survey of 98 villages supervised by Daniel Müller under a different component of the research.
- 5 Unless noted otherwise, all salaries and prices in this chapter are those paid in 2003-2004, assuming an exchange rate of 125 Lek to the Euro.
- 6 The Greek view is not the only interpretation of the Vlachs' historical origins and cultural affiliations. Some Vlach organizations in Albania take a "pro-Romanian" stance, basing their claim on linguistic evidence that shows that the Vlach language is closely related to Romanian (Schwandner-Sievers 1999). In our own fieldwork, we found that most Vlach villagers considered themselves to be autochthonous people (*autokton*).

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Thematic Section

Human Nature, Human Identity: Anthropological Revisionings / La nature humaine et l'identité humaine revues par l'anthropologie

Part 1: "The Human" as the Issue of Anthropology

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Issue

What are our specifically human attributes, our capacities and liabilities? It is the proposition of this volume that the issue of what it is to be human be made central to our anthropological-disciplinary project.

In his early-modern formulation of "anthropology" as an Enlightenment science, Immanuel Kant imagined a venture that was at once ontological, epistemological and moral-cum-political. Scientifically, anthropology embodied a premise and a promise that a knowledge of humankind which transcended the limits of the merely customary, commonsensical and revelatory was an appropriate goal. Ethically, anthropology embodied an opposition to the ideology of an ancien regime which insisted on essential differences of nature and of worth between patrician and plebeian, man and woman, French and German, Christian and Jew; anthropological science might provide a way to a "cosmopolitan" peace among the community of humankind. Reacting "romantically" against such notions, Kant's pupil, Johann Herder, considered that there was no such thing to know as "humankind," only Germans and French and so on: humans differently ensconced in communities of blood and soil. According to George Stocking (1992:347, 361), the discipline of anthropology has been dialectically torn, throughout its modern history, between "the universalism of 'anthropos' and the diversitarianism of 'ethnos.'" Are human beings to be regarded as the same *in as much as* they all inhabit different cultural worlds or *over and against* their inhabiting such worlds? Do they become human within culture or does their humanity (consciousness, creativity, individuality, dignity) transcend cultural particularities? How, in Clifford Geertz's phrasing (1973:22), is one to square generic human rationality and a biological unity of humankind with the great natural variation of cultural forms?

Ernest Gellner, shortly before his death, took a customarily forthright stand on the matter: Even between "consenting adults," classifying human beings in terms

of bounded social or cultural domains was a misguided and dangerous practice (1993:3), while the ideology of relativism—cognitive or moral—was tragic nonsense (1995:8): we are all human, and we should not take more specific classifications seriously. In this introduction I would set the scene for a volume that aims to be equally forthright. It is appropriate scientifically, and necessary ethically, to claim “the human” as our central, disciplinary focus of enquiry: the human comprises a *complex singularity* which might be better known, whose lot might be bettered, and whose existence is the guarantor of communitarian (sociocultural) diversity. This might be phrased as a call for an explicitly Kantian anthropology. It comprises the ontological project of defining the human, its capacities and liabilities as universalities beyond the idioms of social, cultural and historical difference; it is the epistemological project of finding ways best to approach the human in its particular, individual irreducibility, to apprehend the objectivity of subjectivity; and, it is the moral-cum-political project of endeavouring to secure the human, to nurture the opportunities of individual expression above and beyond the contingencies of social, cultural and historical circumstance.

Context

It is arguable that globalism makes the singularity of the human ever more apparent (as well as more vehemently repressed). The phenomenology of the individual human actor on a global stage makes a communitarian rhetoric of historically determined and collectively limited identities more visible as ideology (Amit and Rapport 2002). The idea that selfhood is constituted by, and then forever tied to, particular cultural milieux, particular beliefs and practices, particular histories, habits and discourses—and the related claim that individuals who exit such collectively secured life-worlds must find themselves ontologically devastated, without social anchor or cognitive guarantee—is refuted by the growing evidence of individual lives whose home is movement and transition (Rapport and Dawson 1998). In Marc Augé’s terms (1995:20), the individual actor in transit through global spaces becomes the indispensable “anthropological concrete.” Traditional notions of societies identified with cultures conceived as complete wholes were always ideological conceptions—of anthropologists as much as the people studied. The experience of globalism helps us rid ourselves of them. For they rest on an organization of space which globalism overwhelms and puts in perspective. It is the likely case, Augé considers (1995:47), that no one has ever been unaware of the illusory nature of relativistic communitarian rhetorics. The image of a closed and self-suf-

ficient world of culture and society was never more than a useful image, a provisional myth, even for those who identified with it: a semi-fantasy of nativism and of Maussian theory alike. The global context of human practice, however, no longer makes it possible to talk in ontological terms of totalizing cultures, localized societies and representative individuals. How will anthropology respond to the death of exoticism and a grand divide between the West and the Rest?

In 1988 the inaugural debate of the newly formed Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory (GDAT) was held at Manchester University. The motion was “Social Anthropology is a Generalizing Science or it is Nothing.” In his Introduction to the later, published version of the debate, Tim Ingold opined that tensions between the general and the particular, between “science” and “humanism” were as old as anthropology itself and “vital to the constitution of the discipline” (GDAT 1989:1). They acquired a special urgency, however, in an era of globalism where anthropology has become increasingly conscious of its inevitable involvement with its subjects of study—the “interpenetration” of field and academy (Clifford 1986). They also acquired an urgency in an era of audit cultures where the gap between scholarly aspirations and material pressures may be experienced as increasingly wide. Hence the theme of the GDAT meeting.

Almost 20 years on, neither pressure showing any sign of easing, it is interesting to revisit the arguments of the main speakers. The motion was proposed by Keith Hart (seconded by Anthony Good) and opposed by Anthony Cohen (seconded by Judith Okely). Hart opened in Kantian vein by describing science and democracy as the two great and inextricably linked ideas that have driven modern history. His contention was that “our civilization desperately needs to reconstitute the original Enlightenment goal of progress through the systematic application of reason, in a world where nature and human society are understood to be dependent” (GDAT 1989:6). Anthropology had a significant role to play, moreover, in the formulation of a new human science whose *object of knowledge* remained the same as it was in the 17th-century-England of Newton and Locke—that “isolation hospital for science, technology and civil rights” (Veblen 1904:305)—even as the *methods of knowing* might evolve. The object of scientific knowledge was always the objectively real; its methodology had moved on from the purely positivistic to incorporate notions of history and reflexivity, uncertainty, vagueness and subjectivism. Anthropology’s role in this was to address “human nature *plus* culture *plus* society” as a single phenomenon of study. To distance the general from the particular was to “fracture

the dialectic on which all knowledge rests” (GDAT 1989:25): anthropological science must deploy its own methodologies towards an elucidation of the generally human in the guise of sociocultural particularity.

For his part, Anthony Cohen emphasized how anthropology’s mission concerned “the *irregularities* among people” (GDAT 1989:10). Compared with the complexities of ethnography—the complication and differentiation—was not generalization a dull and unambitious mode of discourse? Comfortable, but mindless and bland? If the essential self of the individual actor was frustratingly elusive, non-specifiable, then how much more absurd were general statements about collectivities? Societies and cultures ought to be painted as “barely generalizable aggregates of differences rather than fictive matrices of uniformity” (GDAT 1989:10). It was only a discreditable arrogance and insensitivity that would have us trumpet “the aspirations, sentiments and sensibilities of tribes, lineages, ethnic groups, sects, or other, even more general categories: pastoralists, hunters, indigenous peoples” (GDAT 1989:12). Interestingly, Cohen also referred back to 17th-century England: it was a matter of recognizing the truth of Hobbes’s postulate, he concluded, that societies and cultures were constructs of individuals (not the other way round) and that generalization must be approached with the very greatest skepticism and caution lest it dulled the sharpness of the originary particularity. (One must recognize the world of difference between positing the sociocultural as a web of significance collectively spun and as a collective fund of symbolic *materiel*, individually spun to particular significance.)

After a vote, the motion was defeated: Anthropology was *not* necessarily a generalizing science, the audience decided in 1988. What strikes me now, however, is the way that the arguments put forward by Hart and Cohen approach one another. The self is a complex composite, Cohen explains, and notions of synthetic fictions are to be discredited; the general statement is superficial or false: there is a human genius for individuality, idiosyncrasy and situationality. For Hart, meanwhile, “if our aim is to teach students to represent the uniqueness of individual experience, no version of academic Anthropology that I know seems an adequate means of helping them to do so” (GDAT 1989:7). Anthropology must practise as an eclectic anti-discipline, compassing the “artistic” and the “scientific,” so-called, if it is to pursue knowledge and assist in the carrying forward of that modern revolution which promised an end to bureaucratic oppression and to religious mysticism alike. The core of the Enlightenment quest for human rights must know what is “natural” in us all, as individual citizens of potentially global civil soci-

eties, as opposed to what is “merely conventional or arbitrary” (GDAT 1989:4).

I find myself in agreement with both Cohen and Hart. Experience is individual and of momentary creation (Cohen); a generalizing human science of nature plus culture plus society is necessary to approach the uniqueness of individual experience and to improve the individual lot in just, democratic societies of global reach (Hart). The paradoxical tension between general and particular is resolved in the recognition that in the individual particularity *is* the universally human. Human nature is individual nature. “Anthropology is a *chimera* or it is nothing,” was one intervention from the floor of the debate, from Ray Abrahams, that seems to me nicely to capture this paradox. Anthropology bestrides a dialectic in a chimeral fashion. It is a hybrid figure, a seeming contradiction-in-terms, of a fanciful kind. It would insist at the same time on doing justice to the intensity and idiosyncrasy and momentariness of experience *and* of holding fast to the singularity of the human condition wherein that experience arises. This is not a static compromise moreover—an averaging, discerning a middle way—but gaining insight, obtaining knowledge, by way of a constant moving between opposite poles, “truth, being alive, was not half-way between anything. It was only to be found by continuous excursions into either realm, and though proportion is the final secret, to espouse it at the outset is to ensure sterility” (Forster 1950:174). These words, appropriately enough given the above mention of artistry, come from the novelist E.M. Forster. Forster is considering how to give an account of “English society” or “English character,” which at the same time does justice to its contrariety and the individualities of which it is composed: how might one write holistically and at the same time retain a sense of openness? It is a conundrum which corresponds to our own: how to aspire to an objective account of the human condition and of sociocultural milieu—ultimately of global society—*without* reducing, abstracting or otherwise corrupting the detail that pertains to individual experience? Forster’s answer concerns narrational flow. The novelist arrives at a truth by juxtaposing descriptions of different people and distinct domains of knowledge, bringing them together *so that their differences connect*. Importantly, this connection does not take the form of an integration or a common denomination: finding a middle way between which compromises on the difference. Rather, separate people, social interactions and worldviews are kept separate, their integrity respected, while the writer undertakes an interpretive and imaginative metaphorical journey into the realms of each. Social life is not to be

appreciated by eliding difference, nor by occupying one side of a divide or another, nor by attempting to place oneself halfway between the two. Rather, the truth of social life is that it is “alive” and always a transition: it is to be found in, and to be described by way of, the writer’s movement between experiences and understandings of people and places (Rapport 2002).

It is the case, Forster concludes, that “preachers or scientists may generalise, but we know that no generality is possible about those whom we love; not one heaven awaits them, not even one oblivion” (1950:245-246). Forster’s conclusion is chimeral. His generalization (“we know that no generality is possible”) concerns a particularity that refutes the possibility of generalization. Subjective knowledge—knowledge of and about the individual subject—does not reduce to abstractions: and yet this itself might be the knowledge that the novelist has to convey: the generality of particularity. There is a lesson here for anthropological science. The writing of human truths may be a paradoxical, chimeral one. But one needs the pole of human generality—as ontology and as ethic. Methodologically, one moves between the human as complex singularity and as individual diversity without cessation, maintaining the dialectical tension between the two, arriving at a truth through the movement of one’s analysis.

Terminology

Georg Simmel gave the term “co-present dualism” to the kind of descriptive and analytical connectivity which E.M. Forster would advocate. “One of the deep-lying circuits of intellectual life,” Simmel propounded (1950:309), is where “an element presupposes a second element which yet, in turn, presupposes the first.” Such a dialectical unity has a mysteriousness about it: “one of the points where being and conceiving make their mysterious unity empirically felt.” Nevertheless, the dialectic is fundamental: constitutive of both things and relations; from the tension between the poles, and the flow of life between them, both structure and process are generated. Social life, Simmel advised, was to be appreciated as replete with constitutive, co-present dualisms, from “public and private,” to “rule and practice,” “antagonism and solidarity,” “liberty and constraint,” “invention and convention,” “rebelliousness and compliance” and “form and meaning.” “The general and the particular” and “the human and the individual” are basic to this list, I would aver: it is from the tension between *these* poles that the fundamentals of the human condition, and our possible apprehension of it, derive. To hope to approach the human condition is to keep the dialectic “alive,” “co-present,” in one’s descriptions and

analyses. “Only connect” (E.M. Forster); one contrives intellectually to occupy the general and the particular simultaneously.

There have been a number of calls in recent years for anthropologists to deploy a kind of dialectic in their disciplinary conceptualizations. By Marilyn Strathern (1990), it has been urged that there is sense only in recognizing the simultaneity of “nature-culture”: there can be no either/or for humans-as-cyborgs. By Tim Ingold (1998), it has been argued that “biology-culture” be appreciated as a kind of unity: the ontologies here are recursive, and human beings dwell in both, crafting both, simultaneously. For Robin Fox (2005), the “nature–nurture” antithesis must continue to be seen as fundamental to the anthropological project: a relationship whose synthetic processes remain unresolved. From Maurice Bloch (2005), there is the exhortation to “rehabilitat[e] ‘human nature,’” whose study represents anthropology’s “ultimate and central aim”; re-embrace the relevance of that 19th-century anthropological vision which sought to balance local proclivities against global capabilities, diffusion against evolution.

For some, in “human nature”—and, by extension, all conceptualization concerning the general nature of the human—we inherit a project compromised beyond redemption. It bespeaks an essentialist and reductionary history; “human nature,” it is claimed, is tied irredeemably to imperialist enterprises of Western science and politics, of Christianity and masculinity. Others might argue that its very unscrupulous usage makes the concept unavoidable, and necessary for anthropology to unpack, to witness and explain, if not to rehabilitate. It is moreover the case, as Donna Haraway has observed (1997:1), that “the invention and reinvention of nature [is] perhaps the most central arena of hope, oppression, and contestation for inhabitants of the planet earth in our times.” The nature of the human, in other words, is as much a rallying point of radical critique as of reaction; while no discursive notion can finally protect itself from “unscrupulous” usage. Yet again, it might be retorted, the “impurity” of the concept’s history amounts to a particular appropriateness: the character of “human nature” is a fitting accompaniment for a human condition equally “impure” in its confusing of objectivity and subjectivity, of the political, the theoretical and the personal, of knowledge and desire. Human life is complex and impure: a science that would approach the human might admit impurities as unavoidable, intrinsic to its own conceptualization.

At the outset, the editors of the present volume withhold judgment. Certainly, I suspect that the stance I might adopt as author of this introduction is not quite the same

as that of all those who contribute below. No matter. Consensus over terms is not the issue. What is at issue is the capacity and the need for anthropology to engage with questions of human generality: to relate the specifics of identity as illuminated by fieldwork and ethnography to the broadest notions of the human condition, however polemical, political, even gendered in ethos such a discursive and intellectual move might be. What the editors *have* asked is that their contributors take bold steps, make forthright claims: endeavour to show how the particularities of anthropological research can provide insights into the most general of human questions. In all cases, insight is to be gained not from focusing on one aspect of the dualism to the exclusion of the other, nor by collapsing the opposition in a synthesis, but by focusing on the tension between the general and particular and making continuous excursions between the two. Each case study has implications for an anthropological inscription of the human. The politics of “the human” figure in these treatments as much as the ontological and epistemological.

One does not intend a master trope or panacea, but the notion of “human nature” is workable for identifying a certain anthropological agenda: claiming a particular history and a future project of disciplinary import.

Structure

Part 1 of the volume, “The ‘Human’ as the Issue of Anthropology,” continues after this introduction with an article by Nigel Rapport, where the concept of the human is elaborated upon as a matter of universal capacities as well as a matter of global political-cum-moral inference. Is there a possibility for anthropology to provide both a science of humanity and a morality whose premises and insights go further than identity politics and the rhetorics of distinction? Part 2 of the volume, “The Human in Nature,” comprises two articles (by Michael Jackson and Katja Neves) which focus on different ways in which “nature” as a notion has been deployed as a conceptual and rhetorical figure: from scientific and poetic endeavours to know an environment, to political measures to save and celebrate it. Is there something particularly human in the awareness to which we can accede concerning our dwelling within nature? Part 3, “The Human in the Body,” comprises two articles (by Margaret Lock and Julie Park) which together focus on notions of human health and attitudes to disease and death. What light is thrown on the human body by the ways in which ability and disability are recognized and treated? A particular focus is on the ways in which new technologies (“post-genomic”) are appropriated in social and political contexts in order to make judgments

concerning “human nature” and appropriate human behaviour in the everyday. And in Part 4, “The Human in Culture,” two articles (by Regna Darnell and John Gray) explore the ways in which “culture” as a concept is given significance, first in the record of North-American anthropological endeavour in the academy, and second in the lives of Nepalese, Hindu householders. For both, “culture” is a mechanism by which the nature of the human is accorded a proper and known position in the nature of the universe. Might not social-scientific intellectual modelling and Hindu practice be compared as kinds of totemic endeavour: evidence of a universality to the ways human beings find it good to think?

The parts of the volume work in different ways to bring the human universal back into anthropological focus. The consciousness with which identity is approached every day in social life and the consciousness with which we have come to question our standing within nature and culture alike, *could* be interpreted as the triumph of Enlightenment rationality. Today it is not solely the social scientist who ponders whether one is human in as much as one inhabits different sociocultural worlds or over and against such inhabiting: it is the very nature of social and political, legal and constitutional engagement.

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Part 1 : « L'Humain » en tant qu'enjeu de l'anthropologie

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Traduit de l'anglais par Michel Tanguay, Montréal

Enjeu

Quels sont nos attributs, nos capacités et responsabilités spécifiquement humains? C'est la proposition du présent volume de mettre au centre de notre projet disciplinaire en anthropologie la question de savoir ce que c'est que d'être humain.

À l'aube de la modernité, dans sa formulation de l'anthropologie comme une science des Lumières, Emmanuel Kant imaginait une entreprise qui fût à la fois ontologique, épistémologique et de morale politique. Au plan scientifique, l'anthropologie comportait une prémisse et une promesse qui voulaient qu'une connaissance de l'espèce humaine qui transcende les limites de ce qui nous est accessible par la coutume, le sens commun et la révélation constitue un objectif opportun. Au plan éthique, l'anthropologie incorporait une opposition à l'idéologie de l'ancien régime qui insistait sur les différences essentielles de nature et de valeur entre patricien et plébéien, homme et femme, français et allemand, chrétien et juif; la science anthropologique pourrait tracer la voie d'une paix « cosmopolite » parmi la communauté humaine. Dans une réaction « romantique » contre de telles notions, Johann Herder, élève de Kant, considérait qu'il était impossible de connaître une telle chose que « l'humanité », mais bien plutôt des Allemands et des Français, et ainsi de suite. Selon Georges Stockings (1992:347, 361), la discipline anthropologique a été dialectiquement déchirée, au long de son histoire moderne, entre « l'universalisme de "anthropos" et la diversité des propositions de "ethnos" ». Faut-il considérer les êtres humains comme similaires *dans la mesure où ils habitent tous des univers culturels différents*, ou *envers et contre le fait qu'ils habitent de tels mondes*? Est-ce qu'ils deviennent humains au sein des cultures ou est-ce que leur humanité (conscience, créativité, individualité, dignité) transcende les particularités culturelles? Comment concilier, selon l'expression de Clifford Geertz (1973:22), la rationalité humaine générique et l'unité biologique de l'espèce

humaine avec les grandes variations naturelles des formes culturelles?

Un peu avant sa mort, Ernest Gellner adopta une position franche et tranchée sur la question : même entre « adultes consentants », classifier les êtres humains en termes de domaines culturels ou sociaux délimités constitue une pratique erronée et dangereuse (1993:3), tandis que l'idéologie du relativisme – cognitif ou moral – constituait une absurdité tragique (1995:8) : nous sommes tous humains et nous ne devrions pas prendre au sérieux des classifications plus spécifiques. Dans la cadre de la présente Introduction, je veux mettre la table pour un volume qui vise à être également tranché. Il est opportun, au plan scientifique et nécessaire, au plan éthique, de définir « l'humain » comme le champ de recherche central de notre discipline : l'humain comprend *une singularité complexe* qui mérite d'être mieux connue, dont il est possible d'améliorer le sort et dont l'existence est garante de la diversité (socioculturelle) des communautés. On pourrait formuler cette position comme un appel à une anthropologie explicitement kantienne. Elle implique le projet ontologique de définir l'humain, ses capacités et responsabilités, comme des universalités au-delà des expressions de différence historique, culturelle et sociale; c'est le projet épistémologique de trouver des manières pour mieux approcher l'humain dans son irréductibilité individuelle particulière, pour appréhender l'objectivité de la subjectivité; et c'est le projet à la fois moral et politique d'entreprendre d'engager l'humain, pour cultiver les opportunités de l'expression individuelle au-delà des contraintes des circonstances sociales, culturelles et historiques.

Contexte

On peut soutenir que la mondialisation rend toujours plus apparente la singularité de l'humain (en même temps que sa répression plus virulente). La phénoménologie de l'acteur humain individuel sur une scène globale rend plus visible en tant qu'idéologie la rhétorique communautaire d'identités déterminées par l'histoire et délimitées par les collectivités (Amit et Rapport 2002). L'idée que l'individualité est constituée par – et par conséquent définitivement associée à – des milieux culturels particuliers, des pratiques et croyances, des histoires, habitudes et discours particuliers – et le corollaire qui établit que les individus qui s'excluent de tels mondes ou vies sécurisés doivent se trouver ontologiquement dévastés, sans ancrage social ou garantie cognitive – se trouve démentie par le nombre croissant des individus qui choisissent d'établir leur demeure dans le mouvement et la transition (Rapport et Dawson 1998). Dans les termes de Marc Augé (1995:20), l'acteur individuel en transit dans les espaces

globalisés devient « le ciment anthropologique » indispensable. Les notions traditionnelles de sociétés identifiées avec des cultures conçues comme des ensembles complets ont toujours été des conceptions idéologiques – émanant des anthropologues comme des groupes étudiés. L'expérience de la mondialisation nous aide à nous en débarrasser. Puisqu'elles reposent sur une organisation de l'espace que la mondialisation supprime et met en perspective. Augé considère (1995:47) qu'il est probable que personne n'a jamais été dupe de la nature illusoire des rhétoriques communautaires relativistes. L'image d'un monde fermé et autosuffisant de culture et de société n'a jamais été plus qu'une image utile, un mythe intérimaire, même pour ceux qui s'y identifiaient : une semi-fiction de nativisme et de semblable théorie maussienne. Le contexte global de la pratique humaine rend aujourd'hui impossible de parler en termes ontologiques de cultures totalisantes, de sociétés localisées et d'individus représentatifs. Comment l'anthropologie répondra-t-elle à la mort de l'exotisme et à l'immense fossé entre l'Occident et le reste du monde?

En 1988, s'est tenu à l'université de Manchester le débat inaugural du *Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory* (GDAT) nouvellement constitué. Le thème en était « L'anthropologie sociale est une science généralisante, ou elle n'est rien. » Dans son introduction à la version du débat publiée plus tard, Tim Ingold émet l'opinion que les tensions entre le général et le particulier, entre « la science et l'humanisme » sont aussi anciennes que l'anthropologie elle-même, et « vitales pour la constitution de la discipline » (GDAT 1989:1). Ces tensions ont acquis une urgence particulière toutefois, dans une ère de mondialisation où l'anthropologie est devenue toujours plus consciente de son engagement inévitable avec ses sujets d'étude – l'interpénétration du terrain et du monde universitaire (Clifford 1996). Elles ont aussi acquis une nouvelle urgence dans une période de « cultures de l'audit », où l'on peut ressentir comme grandissant l'écart entre les aspirations académiques et les pressions matérielles. D'où le thème de l'assemblée du GDAT.

Près de 20 ans plus tard, alors que ces pressions ne semblent montrer aucun signe de relâchement, il est intéressant de revisiter les arguments des principaux conférenciers. La motion a été présentée par Keith Hart (secondée par Anthony Good) tandis que Anthony Cohen s'y est opposé (secondé par Judith Okely). Hart a ouvert le débat dans la veine kantienne en décrivant la science et la démocratie comme les deux grandes idées inextricablement liées qui ont agi comme moteurs de l'histoire moderne. Il affirmait que « notre civilisation a un besoin désespéré de reconstituer l'objectif original des Lumières à savoir le

progrès par l'application systématique de la raison, dans un monde où l'on conçoit la nature et la société humaine comme interdépendantes » (GDAT 1989:6). L'anthropologie avait de plus un rôle significatif à jouer dans la formulation d'une nouvelle science humaine dont l'*objet de connaissance* demeurait le même qu'il était dans l'Angleterre du 17^e siècle de Newton et de Locke – « cet hôpital de contagieux pour la science, la technologie et les droits civils » (Veblen 1904:305) – même alors que les *méthodes de connaissance* peuvent évoluer. L'objet de la connaissance scientifique a toujours été le réel objectif; sa méthodologie a évolué à partir du strict positivisme pour intégrer des notions d'histoire et de réflexivité, d'incertitude, de flou et de subjectivisme. Le rôle de l'anthropologie dans cela était de s'intéresser à « la nature humaine *plus* la culture *plus* la société » comme un seul phénomène à l'étude. Établir la distance entre le général et le particulier consistait à « fracturer la dialectique sur laquelle repose tout savoir » (GDAT 1989:25) : la science anthropologique doit déployer ses propres méthodologies en vue d'une élucidation de ce qui est généralement humain sous les apparences de particularités socioculturelles.

De son côté, Anthony Cohen mit l'accent sur la manière dont l'anthropologie se donne pour mission de cerner les « irrégularités parmi les gens » (GDAT 1989:10). En comparaison des complexités de l'ethnographie – la complication et la différenciation – est-ce que la généralisation n'était pas un mode de discours ennuyeux et dépourvu d'ambition? Confortable, soit mais bêtifiant et terne? Si l'essence de l'acteur individuel nous frustre à force d'être insaisissable, indéfinissable, alors comment, à plus forte raison, formuler des assertions générales sur les collectivités? On devrait dépeindre les sociétés et les cultures « comme des agrégats à peine généralisables plutôt que comme de fictives matrices d'uniformité » (GDAT 1989:12). Ce n'est que par une arrogance et une insensibilité blâmables que nous nous permettons de proclamer « les aspirations, sentiments et sensibilités des tribus, des lignages, des groupes ethniques et sectes, et même d'autres catégories encore plus générales : les nomades, les chasseurs, les populations autochtones » (GDAT 1989:12). Chose curieuse, Cohen référait aussi à l'Angleterre du 17^e siècle : la question était de reconnaître la vérité du postulat de Hobbes, à savoir que les sociétés et les cultures sont la construction d'individus (et non le contraire) et qu'il faut aborder la généralisation avec un maximum de scepticisme et de précautions, si l'on ne veut pas éteindre l'acuité des particularités originales. (Il faut reconnaître qu'il existe un monde de différence entre le fait de définir le socioculturel comme une toile de signification tissée col-

lectivement et comme un fond collectif de matériel symbolique, tissé individuellement en une signification particulière.)

On prit le vote et la motion fut battue : l'anthropologie n'était *pas* nécessairement une science généralisante, décida l'assemblée en 1988. Ce qui me frappe aujourd'hui, toutefois, c'est combien les arguments mis de l'avant par Hart et Cohen étaient rapprochés. L'identité est un composé complexe, explique Cohen, et il faut discréditer les notions de fictions synthétiques; l'affirmation générale est superficielle ou erronée : il existe un génie humain pour l'individualité, l'idiosyncrasie et la situationnalité. Pour Hart, entretemps, « si notre but est d'enseigner aux étudiants à représenter le caractère unique de l'expérience individuelle, il n'existe pas à ma connaissance de version de l'anthropologie académique qui constitue un moyen pertinent d'atteindre cet objectif » (GDAT 1989:7). L'anthropologie doit être pratiquée comme une anti-discipline éclectique, contournant, pour ainsi dire, « l'artistique » et « le scientifique » si elle doit rechercher la connaissance et contribuer à pousser de l'avant cette révolution moderne qui promettait de mettre fin à l'oppression bureaucratique en même temps qu'au mysticisme religieux. Au cœur de la quête des Lumières pour les droits humains, doit se trouver la connaissance de ce qui est « naturel » chez chacun de nous, en tant que citoyens individuels de sociétés civiles potentiellement globalisées, par opposition à ce qui s'y trouverait de « simplement conventionnel ou arbitraire » (GDAT 1989:4).

Je me trouve d'accord à la fois avec Cohen et Hart. L'expérience a un caractère individuel et de création momentanée (Cohen); une science humaine généralisante portant sur la nature plus la culture plus la société est nécessaire pour approcher le caractère unique de l'expérience individuelle et pour améliorer le sort des individus dans des sociétés justes, démocratiques, de portée globale (Hart). La tension paradoxale entre le général et le particulier est résolue en reconnaissant que la particularité individuelle *est* l'universellement humain. La nature humaine est la nature individuelle. « L'anthropologie est une *chimère* ou elle n'est rien, » fut l'une des interventions que l'on put entendre en provenance de la salle lors du débat, prononcée par Ray Abrahams, et qui semble, pour moi, capturer de belle manière ce paradoxe. L'anthropologie chevauche la dialectique à la manière d'une chimère. C'est une figure hybride, des termes en apparence contradictoires, d'un genre raffiné. Elle insiste à la fois sur le besoin de rendre justice à l'intensité, à l'idiosyncrasie et au caractère momentané de l'expérience *et* sur le besoin de s'accrocher à la singularité de la condition humaine au sein de laquelle surgit cette expérience.

À plus forte raison, il ne s'agit pas d'un compromis statique – une voie du milieu établissant une moyenne, un outil de discernement – mais une manière de gagner en intuition, d'obtenir des connaissances, au moyen d'un va-et-vient constant entre des pôles opposés, « la vérité, étant vivante, ne se trouvait à mi-chemin de rien. On ne pouvait la trouver que par des excursions continuelles dans l'un ou l'autre domaine, et bien que le secret final se trouve dans l'atteinte de proportions justes, adopter ces proportions au point de départ est une garantie de stérilité » (Forster 1950:174). Ces paroles, qu'un peu plus tôt je rangeais dans le domaine artistique, sont du romancier E.M. Forster. L'auteur se demande comment rendre compte de « la société anglaise » ou du « caractère anglais », pour à la fois rendre justice à sa diversité interne, à sa multiplicité, et aux individualités qui la (ou le) composent : comment quelqu'un peut-il à la fois écrire de manière holistique et conserver un sens d'ouverture? C'est une énigme qui correspond à la nôtre : comment aspirer à rendre compte objectivement de la condition humaine et des milieux socioculturels – et ultimement de la société comme un tout – *sans* réduire, abstraire ou corrompre d'autre façon les détails qui appartiennent à l'expérience individuelle? Forster trouve sa réponse dans le flot narratif. Le romancier parvient à une vérité en juxtaposant des descriptions de différentes personnes et de divers domaines de connaissance, les rapprochant *de telle manière qu'une connexion s'établisse entre leurs différences*.

Il est important de concevoir qu'établir de telles connexions ne constitue pas un compromis sur la différence, ce n'est pas une voie médiane, non plus qu'une intégration ou un dénominateur commun. En lieu, on garde séparés des gens, des interactions sociales et des regards sur le monde séparés, on respecte leur intégrité, pendant que l'auteur entreprend son voyage métaphorique d'interprétation et d'imagination dans les domaines de chacun. Ce n'est pas par l'élimination des différences que l'on peut apprécier la vie sociale, non plus qu'en occupant un côté ou l'autre d'une division ou en tentant de se placer au beau milieu entre les deux. La vérité de la vie sociale tient plutôt dans le fait qu'elle est vivante et toujours en transition : pour la trouver et la décrire, il faut le mouvement de l'écrivain entre les expériences et les interprétations des gens et des lieux (Rapport 2002).

Forster conclut que « les prédicateurs ou les scientifiques peuvent généraliser, mais nous savons qu'aucune généralité n'est possible à propos de ceux que nous aimons; aucun paradis ne les attend, pas même un oubli » (1950:245-246). La conclusion de Forster est chimérique. Sa généralisation (« nous savons qu'aucune généralité

n'est possible ») réfère à une particularité qui réfute la possibilité de la généralisation. La connaissance subjective – la connaissance qui porte sur le sujet individuel – n'est pas réduite à des abstractions : et pourtant, il se peut que cela même soit la connaissance que le romancier doit véhiculer : la généralité de la particularité. Il y a là une leçon pour la science anthropologique. L'écriture des vérités humaines peut être une écriture paradoxale, chimérique. Mais nous avons besoin du pôle de la généralité humaine – comme ontologie et comme éthique. Au plan méthodologique, nous nous déplaçons sans cesse entre l'humain comme singularité complexe et comme diversité individuelle, maintenant la tension dialectique entre les deux, parvenant à une vérité par le mouvement de notre analyse.

Terminologie

Georg Simmel a attribué le terme « dualisme co-présent » au genre de connectivité descriptive et analytique dont E.M. Forster se fait le champion. « L'un des circuits profondément enchâssés de la vie intellectuelle, » propose Simmel (1950 :309) en est un « où un élément présuppose un second élément, qui a son tour présuppose le premier. » Une telle unité dialectique comporte un élément de mystère : « un des points où exister et concevoir font empiriquement sentir leur mystérieuse unité. » Quoi qu'il en soit, la dialectique est fondamentale : constitutive à la fois des objets et des relations; de la tension entre les pôles et du courant de vie entre les deux se trouvent engendrés et la structure et le processus. Simmel observe que la vie sociale doit être appréhendée comme peuplée de dualismes co-présents qui la constituent, de « public et privé » à « principe et pratique », « antagonisme et solidarité », « liberté et contrainte », « invention et convention », « rébellion et obéissance » et « forme et signification ». « Le général et le particulier » et « l'humain et l'individuel » sont des essentiels de cette liste, ajouterais-je : c'est de la tension entre ces pôles que dérivent les fondements de la condition humaine et de notre capacité à l'appréhender. Espérer approcher la condition humaine c'est garder la dialectique « vivante », « co-présente » dans ses descriptions et analyses. « Connectez simplement » (E.M. Forster); notre effort intellectuel vise à occuper le général et le particulier simultanément.

Au cours des dernières années, on a souvent demandé aux anthropologues de déployer une forme de dialectique dans les conceptualisations relatives à leur discipline. Marilyn Strathern (1990) insiste sur le fait qu'on ne trouvera de sens qu'en reconnaissant la simultanéité de la dyade « nature-culture » : pour les humains-en-tant-que-cyborgs, il ne peut y avoir de proposition soit/soit. Tim

Ingold (1998) veut que l'on apprécie la dyade « biologie-culture » comme un genre d'unité : les ontologies sont ici récursives, et les êtres humains les habitent toutes deux simultanément, tout en les façonnant. Pour Robin Fox (2005) l'antithèse « nature-nourriture (au sens d'éducation) » doit continuer à être perçue comme fondamentale du projet anthropologique : une relation dont les processus synthétiques demeurent non-résolus. Maurice Bloch (2005) nous exhorte à « réhabiliter la "nature humaine" » dont l'étude représente « le but central et ultime de l'anthropologie » ; embrassez de nouveau la pertinence de cette vision anthropologique du 19^e siècle, qui cherchait à conserver l'équilibre entre les inclinations locales et les capacités globales, entre la diffusion et l'évolution.

Pour certains, avec « la nature humaine » – et par extension, avec toute conceptualisation relative à la nature générale de l'humain – nous héritons d'un projet compromis au-delà de toute rédemption. Ce projet témoigne d'une histoire essentialiste et réductionniste ; « la nature humaine », dit ce projet, est irrémédiablement liée aux entreprises politiques et scientifiques occidentales, au christianisme et au pouvoir masculin. D'autres pourraient défendre que son usage vraiment sans scrupule rend le concept inévitable, ce qui implique pour l'anthropologie la nécessité de le disséquer, d'en témoigner et de l'expliquer, voire même de le réhabiliter. C'est d'autant plus le cas, comme l'a observé Donna Haraway (1997:1), que « l'invention et la réinvention de la nature [est] peut-être l'arène la plus centrale d'espoir, d'oppression et de contestation pour les habitants de la planète à notre époque. » En d'autres termes, la nature de l'humain est autant un point de ralliement de la critique radicale que c'en est un de la réaction ; tandis qu'aucune notion discursive ne peut, au final, se protéger d'un usage « sans scrupule ». Mais encore ici, à cela on pourrait répliquer que « l'impureté » de l'histoire du concept équivaut à une justesse particulière : le caractère de la « nature humaine » est un complément pertinent pour une nature humaine également « impure » dans sa manière de confondre l'objectivité et la subjectivité, le politique, le personnel et le théorique, la connaissance et le désir. La vie humaine est complexe et impure : une science qui approche l'humain pourrait accepter les impuretés comme inévitables, intrinsèques à sa propre conceptualisation.

Au départ, les éditeurs du présent volume ont réservé leur jugement. Pour sûr, je soupçonne que la position que j'adopte comme auteur de la présente introduction n'est pas la même que celle des collaborateurs énumérés ci-dessous. Peu importe. L'enjeu n'en est pas un de consensus sur les termes. Ce qui est en jeu, c'est la capacité et la nécessité pour l'anthropologie de se coller avec des

questions de généralité humaine : de relier les aspects spécifiques de l'identité tels que mis en lumière par la recherche de terrain et l'ethnographie avec les notions les plus larges de condition humaine, aussi polémique, politique, voire même sexué, en l'éthos, un tel geste discursif et intellectuel fût-il. Les éditeurs ont bel et bien demandé aux contributeurs des gestes d'audace, des affirmations sans détour : des tentatives de montrer comment les particularités de la recherche anthropologique peuvent fournir des perspectives sur les questions humaines les plus générales. Dans tous les cas, les intuitions se révéleront lorsqu'on évitera de mettre le foyer sur un aspect du dualisme à l'exclusion de l'autre, ou d'écraser une antithèse dans une synthèse, pour plutôt s'intéresser à la tension entre le général et le particulier, et mener de continues excursions entre les deux. Chaque étude de cas comporte des conséquences pour l'inscription anthropologique de l'humain. Les politiques de « l'humain » apparaissent dans ces traitements tout autant que les dimensions ontologiques et épistémologiques.

Nous ne visons pas une panacée ou un trope maître, mais la notion de « nature humaine » est utile pour identifier un certain programme anthropologique : nous réclamer d'une histoire particulière et d'un projet futur d'importance disciplinaire.

Structure

La première partie du volume « *L'Humain* comme enjeu de l'anthropologie » se poursuit après cette introduction avec un article de Nigel Rapport, où je construis sur le concept de l'humain en tant que matière universelle de même que comme matière d'inférence politique-et-morale globale. Existe-t-il une possibilité pour que l'anthropologie fournisse à la fois une science de l'humanité et une moralité dont les prémisses et les perspectives dépassent les politiques de l'identité et la rhétorique de la distinction ? La deuxième partie du volume, « *L'Humain* dans la Nature », comprend deux articles (de Michael Jackson et Katja Neves) qui s'intéressent aux différentes manières par lesquelles on a déployé la notion de la « nature » comme une figure conceptuelle et rhétorique : des entreprises scientifiques et poétiques pour connaître un environnement aux mesures politiques pour le protéger et le célébrer. Y a-t-il une dimension particulièrement humaine dans la conscience à laquelle nous pouvons accéder relativement à notre manière d'habiter la nature ? La troisième partie, « *L'Humain* dans le Corps » comporte deux articles (de Margaret Lock et Julie Park) qui portent tous deux sur les notions de santé humaine et sur les attitudes envers la maladie et la mort. Qu'apprenons-nous sur le corps humain dans nos manières de reconnaître et traiter

les capacités physiques et les handicaps? On s'y intéresse en particulier à comment on s'approprié les nouvelles technologies (« post-génomiques ») dans des contextes sociaux et politiques de manière à émettre des jugements relatifs à la « nature humaine » et à des comportements humains quotidiens pertinents. Enfin, dans la quatrième partie, « L'Humain dans la Culture » deux articles (de Regna Darnell et John Gray) explorent comment on attribue des significations au concept de « culture », d'abord parmi les archives de la production académique nord-américaine en anthropologie et en second lieu dans la vie de chefs de famille hindous et népalais. Dans les deux cas, la « culture » est un mécanisme par lequel la nature de l'humain se voit accorder une position appropriée et connue parmi la nature de l'univers. Serait-il possible de comparer la modélisation intellectuelle sociale-scientifique et la pratique hindoue en tant que genres d'entreprises totémiques – preuve d'une universalité des manières où les êtres humains prennent plaisir à penser?

Les différentes parties du volume fonctionnent de manières différentes pour amener l'universel humain sous le foyer de l'anthropologie. La conscience avec laquelle nous approchons l'identité tous les jours dans la vie sociale et la conscience avec laquelle nous en sommes venus à interroger notre position au sein de la nature comme de la culture, pourraient être interprétées comme le triomphe de la rationalité des Lumières. Aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas seulement le praticien des sciences sociales qui se demande si l'on est humain dans la mesure où l'on habite différents mondes socioculturels, ou bien envers et contre le fait d'habiter ces mondes : c'est la nature même de l'engagement social et politique, juridique et constitutionnel.

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Quiconque : vers une moralité anthropologique pour l'individu global

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Résumé : « Quiconque » était le titre d'une moralité chrétienne médiévale. Cet article explore la façon dont il serait possible d'établir anthropologiquement une moralité pour un *ego* universel dont les capacités et les responsabilités seraient analysées non pas en termes chrétiens mais existentialistes. En faisant appel à des notions tant ethnographiques que philosophiques de l'existential, l'article propose une réponse en développant trois arguments, concernant respectivement: 1) les *capacités* de Quiconque; 2) une interprétation de la bonté en lien avec l'*espace*; 3) une *mathématique* de moralité liée à la valeur de la simple vie humaine.

Mots-clés : nature humaine, existentialisme, individualité, capacité, moralité

Abstract: "Everyman" was the title of a mediaeval Christian morality play. This article asks how might it be anthropologically possible to inscribe a morality for a universal ego whose capabilities and liabilities were construed not in Christian terms but in existentialist ones. Drawing on notions of the existential that are ethnographic as well as philosophic, the article pursues an answer by developing three arguments, concerning: (1) the capacities of Everyone; (2) an understanding of goodness that relates to space; (3) a mathematics of morality tied to the value of the single human life.

Keywords: human nature, existentialism, individuality, capacity, morality

Introduction: « Quiconque »

« Quiconque » était le titre d'une moralité chrétienne écrite en anglais aux alentours de 1500 (et fortement apparentée à une pièce flamande, *Elckerlijck*). Dans une dramatisation allégorique de ce qui était compris comme une lutte morale globale, la pièce dépeint la Mort rendant visite à un personnage du nom de Quiconque et l'informant de sa fin imminente. Les spectateurs assistent au parcours *émotionnel* du protagoniste, qui passe du désespoir et de la peur à la résignation qui est le prélude à la rédemption chrétienne. On assiste aussi à un parcours *social*, alors que Quiconque est abandonné par ses faux amis: Parent, Cousin, Camarade et Biens Matériels; il se rabat sur ses propres ressources: Connaissance, Force, Intelligence, Beauté et Bonnes Actions. Connaissance prononce ces vers célèbres: « *Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide, / In thy most need to go by thy side* ». Ensemble, Quiconque et ses ressources entreprennent de dresser un Livre des Comptes pour sa rencontre avec Dieu et le jugement décidant de son sort éternel. *In extremis*, cependant, lorsque Quiconque doit rejoindre son tombeau, ses ressources aussi manquent de l'abandonner. On assiste enfin à un parcours *intellectuel*, qui amène Quiconque à réaliser que seule Bonnes Actions demeure un compagnon fidèle pour son âme. Sous le message chrétien de la pièce, la vérité universelle est que l'individu risque d'accéder de la vie terrestre à la comptabilité divine sans être muni de rien qu'il ait pris ou reçu du monde, mais seulement de ce qu'il y a donné.

Après 500 ans d'indéfectible accompagnement par Connaissance, la science anthropologique se trouve peut-être en position d'être plus éclairée quant à la condition humaine : de faire la part des choses entre les véritables universaux humains et les relativités chrétiennes. Cependant, le projet de moralité globale reste d'actualité et est toujours aussi pressant. Nous nous attelons, encore et toujours, à chercher comment donner la latitude qu'il mérite au parcours émotionnel et intellectuel de l'acteur

individuel dans les milieux sociaux : à son existence corporelle mortelle. Il existe, comme l'écrit Ernest Gellner (1995:8) « a moral crisis », qui est « also the fruit of our liberation from want and tyranny. Our [anthropological] predicament is to work out the social options of our affluent and disenchanting condition. We have no choice about this ».

Mon intention dans cet article est de proposer un concept de moralité pour un ego global dont les capacités et les responsabilités sont interprétées non pas dans le cadre d'un message chrétien mais existentialiste. Comment, comme anthropologue, pourrait-on inscrire la connaissance d'après le Siècle des lumières dans une autorité quotidienne de la loi avec le but de sécuriser globalement les devoirs et les droits, les normes et les espaces empreints d'humanité, de la vie individuelle accomplie? Mon essai pourrait avoir pour titre « Le drame de Quiconque ». L'article s'organise en trois grandes parties. Dans la première, j'expose brièvement ce qui peut être compris comme étant les *capacités* de l'individu mortel, de Quiconque. Dans la deuxième, j'entreprends de proposer une interprétation de la *bonté* telle qu'elle pourrait être pratiquée dans un *espace* d'humanité où l'on s'abstiendrait de projeter ses propres désirs sur les autres afin que Quiconque puisse réaliser les siens. Dans une troisième, j'explore la possibilité d'une *mathématique de moralité* s'appuyant sur la première : sur la *valeur* absolue de la vie individuelle de Quiconque.

Avant de commencer, un mot au sujet du style. Le débat sur l'écriture culturelle des années quatre-vingt a entraîné la reconnaissance d'une rencontre nécessaire de l'analytique, du personnel et du politique. L'anthropologie produit des textes de conviction personnelle. Comme l'écrit Edmund Leach : « There are no "laws" of historical process, there are no "laws of sociological probability" » (1961:51-52); ce que les anthropologues revendiquaient autrefois comme vérités historiques, sociales ou culturelles, provenait d'eux-mêmes, de la connaissance d'eux-mêmes, le seul « ego » connu « at first hand » (1989: 137). L'anthropologie livre « a kind of harmonic projection of the observer's own personality » (Leach 1984:22).

Ernest Gellner n'est pas partisan du débat sur l'écriture culturelle. Cependant, son appel aux anthropologues à offrir des solutions aux relations nécessaires entre la connaissance globale et la moralité globale – un appel, comme celui de Leach, qui venait de la situation « centrale » d'une chaire d'anthropologie sociale à l'Université de Cambridge – est né d'un sens de conviction. Comme il a souligné (1993:54) : « The existence of trans-cultural and amoral knowledge is *the fact of our lives* », le point de départ d'une anthropologie de la condition humaine

contemporaine. Mais, plus que la connaissance transculturelle, la formulation d'une moralité au-delà de la culture était *la* chose nécessaire – peu importe la difficulté de cette œuvre. Dans le style de Gellner et de Leach, cet article est un exercice anthropologique de conviction personnelle. Le focus est sur l'ego global. L'article favorise une perspective existentielle-anthropologique (Cohen 1994; Rapport 1997a, 2003, 2007; Jackson 2005) qui essaye d'illuminer la condition de l'individu humain – son intention et expérience consciente – *indépendant* de son adhésion aux groupes sociaux et aux milieux culturels. Il est nécessaire, a écrit Anthony Cohen (1994:192), de « décoloniser le sujet humain » et de voir « la société comme [partout] composée de et par les individus conscients d'eux-mêmes ». L'anthropologie peut tenter de rendre aux personnes leur individualisme par une reconnaissance des « subtilités, nuances et variétés de consciences individuelles qui sont dissimulées par les masques catégoriques que nous [et autres idéologues] avons inventés si habilement », et donc soutenir les droits des individus à être eux-mêmes (Cohen 1994:180). Ici, dans le « drame de Quiconque », je retourne aux racines et aux sources du Siècle des lumières pour créer un modèle de la moralité (influencé par l'anthropologie), pour l'acteur individuel sur la scène globale.

Les capacités de Quiconque

De quoi un être humain est-il capable, et de quoi est-il sujet? Je suis tenté de dire qu'un être humain est capable de créer des univers; et qu'il ou elle est responsable d'assujettir les autres à ces univers, ou d'être lui-même assujetti dans ceux des autres. « Tenté de dire », parce que cette formulation abstraite remet en question les penchants structuralistes et post-structuralistes en anthropologie (Mauss 1979; Lévi-Strauss 1962:114, 1966:326, 1975:20; Bourdieu 1977), et suppose l'existence de capacités universelles chez l'être humain au-delà des particularités des contextes sociaux, culturels et historiques.

Certains philosophes ont été moins circonspects à cet égard. On peut dire qu'un univers entier est détruit chaque fois qu'un être humain meurt, de l'avis de Kant, alors que pour Nietzsche : « The individual is something quite new which creates new things, something absolute; all his acts are entirely his own » (1968:767).

Je me sens à l'aise sur le plan anthropologique, cependant, avec des formulations d'un tel type existentiel (cf. Cohen et Rapport 1995). Elles me semblent à la fois moralement nécessaires et empiriquement justifiables, et je désire continuer d'esquisser ce que l'on pourrait appeler les capacités de Quiconque, l'acteur humain universel.

« L'existence précède l'essence » : cet aphorisme de Sartre (2001:28) nous fournit un point de départ. Cette formule est d'une grande importance car elle reconnaît intrinsèquement que la conscience et l'activité humaines ne sont jamais réductibles à des notions de prédétermination, de conditions préalables ou d'identités et de structures sociales existantes – à ce qui, en d'autres mots, est souvent supposé en anthropologie déterminer les conditions de leur possibilité. La conscience et l'activité humaines iront toujours au-delà de l'essence de ce qui est ou a été.

La pensée de Sartre évoluait entre des formulations plus existentialistes et d'autres plus marxistes, mais fondamentalement, face à une thèse marxiste – en substance, que les hommes font leur propre histoire mais ils ne la font pas comme il leur plaît; ils ne la font pas dans des circonstances choisies par eux mais dans des circonstances directement rencontrées, données et transmises du passé – Sartre répond (1956) qu'alors que les individus font leur histoire sur la base de conditions préalables, ce sont eux et non pas des forces inhumaines qui la font effectivement. De plus, ils agissent en fonction de leurs propres relations à ces conditions, et de leurs interprétations de celles-ci.

L'expérience vécue se caractérise par une irréductibilité dialectique, explique Sartre (1956). Les individus ne sont pas déterminés par des conditions préalables ou extérieures, mais sont toujours en rapports actifs avec celles-ci : la façon dont sont vécues ces conditions n'est ni conditionnée ni passive (cf. Jackson 1989:2-3; Fernandez 1993:12). En fait, la dialectique est telle que les conditions et l'expérience de celles-ci émergent simultanément dans leur forme et signification : les conditions sont exclusivement ce qui est ressenti comme telles, tandis que le soi individuel émerge en faisant l'expérience du monde. Lego et le monde environnant sont engagés dans un façonnage mutuel : « Sans monde pas d'ipséité, pas de personne; sans l'ipséité, sans la personne, pas de monde » (Sartre 1956:144). À chaque individu correspond un perpétuel et unique jeu d'interaction entre ce qui est donné et ce qui est vécu: une unité synthétique unique de l'environnement vécu.

Ceci confère à la vie humaine une forme caractéristique: une émergence et une transcendance. Dans les termes de Rollo May (1958:60): « World is never something static, something merely given which the person then "accepts" or "adjusts to" or "fights." It is rather a dynamic pattern which, so long as I possess self-consciousness, I am in the process of forming and designing ».

L'interaction entre ce qui est donné et ce qui est interprété possède ainsi deux caractéristiques primordiales : une ouverture dans l'instant, et une ouverture dans le

temps. Puisqu'il y a une relation indéterminée entre les conditions et la façon dont elles sont vécues, il n'y a aucun moyen de dire comment l'interprétation individuelle va évoluer. Le sens est produit dans le contexte de vies particulières, alors que l'interprétation du contexte est elle-même de provenance individuelle; la contextualisation représente une « personnalisation » du monde (Rapport 1999). De plus, les individus peuvent générer des (interprétations des) conditions environnantes qui sont multiples et transitoires, et se retrouver à agir dans une mosaïque changeante de réalités (Rapport 1993). Ni l'identité individuelle ni le monde ne sont jamais finalisés ni terminés; ils sont toujours en fabrication. De même qu'il n'y a pas d'identité individuelle prédéterminée de l'extérieur, il n'y a pas non plus de nécessaire cohérence interne quant à l'individualité à venir; il y a, à la place, une liberté radicale de faire et refaire l'individualité.

Un corollaire de ceci est que toute fixité, habitude ou routine dans le monde est une chose à laquelle on est parvenu, et à laquelle on doit continuer de travailler pour qu'elle se maintienne. Même lorsque la routine prend la forme d'institutions socioculturelles – structures sociales et systèmes d'identité classificatoire – il n'y a pas de stabilité dans celles-ci au-delà de leur reconnaissance et de leur emploi continus par des interprètes individuels. Un second corollaire, cependant, est que même lorsque de telles institutions *sont* des aspects de l'environnement maintenus inchangés par les actes d'interprétation de différents individus, il n'y a pour autant aucun moyen de dire que les significations que chacun tire de l'expérience de ces institutions manifesteront une quelconque cohérence ou standardisation (Rapport 1997b). Il reste ici, comme l'exprime Michael Jackson (1989:33), une « ambiguity at the heart of all social existence: the indeterminate relationship between the eventfulness and flux of one's own life and the seemingly frozen forms of ongoing cultural tradition ». Le routinier est un accomplissement ambigu.

En fabriquant leurs propres circonstances, les gens imaginent, interprètent, gèrent, contestent et endurent les conditions préexistantes d'une manière complexe et qui est propre à chacun. Et si une partie de leur entreprise de faire le monde et de lui donner un sens implique que les individus fassent usage de formes culturelles données et conventionnelles – langues, comportements, institutions –, celles-ci doivent cependant être vues comme des « instrumentalities, not finalities » (Jackson 1989:1). Ce sont des moyens permettant aux individus d'arriver à des fins diverses et évolutives : des objets animés par diverses *Weltanschauungen* (visions du monde) et projets de vie individuels.

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Les capacités de la conscience et de l'activité humaines à établir des univers individuels évoquent des questions de pouvoir. Le pouvoir peut être conçu d'un point de vue existentiel comme un attribut inhérent des individus qui, par leur perpétuelle activité dans ce monde, créent et recréent les environnements significatifs dans lesquels ils vivent. De ce point de vue les individus sont chacun des « centres d'énergie » (Bateson 1973:126). Leur pouvoir existentiel est à la fois métabolique, une propriété des individus en tant qu'organismes physiques incarnés, et intelligent, en rapport avec leur capacité de sentir et de comprendre. Le caractère donné du monde est transfiguré en un dessein individuel.

Déjà dans l'utérus – le corps qui se développe et qui agit – les individus commencent à devenir distinctement eux-mêmes, à acquérir des identités et des personnalités. Le mouvement physique est crucial à ce stade, ainsi que l'interprétation de ce que transmettent les sens comme résultat de ce mouvement. Ce qui se développe est un environnement personnel que les esprits individuels habitent, ce que James Fernandez appelle notre « subjectivité phénoménologique » humaine (1992:127). À partir du moment où la source d'énergie individuelle commence à se mouvoir dans son environnement et à devenir elle-même, une histoire unique d'incarnation, d'engagement avec le monde, se déploie et croît en établissant sa propre logique, ses propres habitudes, ses propres façons de faire et d'être, et ses propres finalités.

Bien sûr, l'organisme-plus-son-environnement individuel n'est pas seul au monde. Il est distinct, mais pas seul. Il est engagé dans un parcours singulier d'activité-dans-le-monde (dans-son-monde) et d'interprétation, mais il est entouré d'une pluralité d'autres choses-dans-le-monde, organiques et non-organiques, dont certaines sont engagées dans des parcours comparables au sien. De ce point de vue, les sciences sociales pourraient être conçues d'une manière générale comme l'étude des effets que les choses-dans-le-monde énergétiques individuelles ont les unes sur les autres. Ceci est loin d'être une matière facilement généralisable (et c'est la raison pour laquelle un respect pour le cas individuel touche au cœur même des sciences sociales en tant que projet). Parce que chaque centre d'énergie individuel est mené par son propre métabolisme, dans sa propre incarnation physique, suivant son propre historique d'activité-dans-le-monde, on ne peut pas déterminer comment chacun réagira aux autres choses; plus spécifiquement, il est difficile, si ce n'est impossible, de prédire si, et de quelle manière, un être humain va affecter un autre être humain avec lequel il entre en contact. Il en est ainsi pour trois raisons: en premier lieu, parce que chacun est lancé dans sa propre his-

toire de vie, chacun est engagé dans la poursuite d'univers de vie dont la direction et la logique ont été distinctes dès leur commencement; deuxièmement, parce que chacun entre en contact avec les autres en leur étant étranger: chacun dépend pour comprendre les autres d'appareils corporels qui sont distincts et particuliers, qui lui fournissent sa propre perspective sur le monde et aucune autre; et troisièmement, parce que les procédures d'interprétation de chacun se caractérisent par une créativité – un caractère « aléatoire » même (Rapport 2001) – qui rend leur production de perspectives imprévisible même à elles-mêmes.

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Une façon appropriée de concevoir la vie sociale humaine, suggère Ralph Waldo Emerson, est comme une rencontre entre la « force naturelle » de différents individus, sous la forme habituelle des conventions sociales, des traditions culturelles, des conditions physiques: « [L]ife itself is a mixture of power and form » (1981:280). Une vie sociale « florissante », propose-t-il, résulte d'une rencontre « bien proportionnée » entre la force intrinsèque des individus et ces conventions, traditions et formes de surface, qui agissent à la fois comme des éléments-tamppons et comme des points de contact entre elles-mêmes et les autres: « [w]e live amid surfaces, and the true art of life is to skate well on them » (1981:280).

L'espace de Quiconque

Une façon de résumer ce que nous avons entendu plus haut de Sartre et des autres concernant la distinction entre existence et essence, est de dire que les individus sont plus que leur appartenance à des groupes sociaux et culturels à des moments particuliers (cf. Rapport 2001: 205). Ils ont une existence, un pouvoir et un potentiel, qui les distinguent des arrangements sociaux existants – de toutes leurs habitudes et identités du moment. De façon temporaire et superficielle, ils rencontrent les autres par le biais de celles-ci. Intrinsèquement, pourtant, ces rencontres du moment ne rendent pas compte de la véritable individualité de la vie humaine: sa propension à ironiser les habitudes socioculturelles dans lesquelles il se trouve; sa capacité à créer des environnements significatifs pour elle-même et ce, perpétuellement (cf. Burridge 1979; Carrithers 2000; Chodorow 1999).

Quels sont les droits ou les devoirs dont on pourrait dire qu'ils sont inhérents à cette vie individuelle, vécue au milieu de celles des autres mais intrinsèquement distincte de celles-ci? De quelle façon les capacités des individus à construire des univers pourraient-elles être le mieux servies par des arrangements sociaux – considérés ici non pas comme des conditions déterminantes mais

comme des facilitateurs du parcours individuel? On garantirait ainsi aux individus la liberté de jouir des fruits de leur créativité et d'éviter d'être assujettis aux intentions des autres. Ceci représente un point de départ très différent de celui d'un Durkheim, par exemple, qui lie le moral au conventionnel : ce qui est moral est synonyme de reproduction sociale et d'éradication des « pathologies » sociales. On pourrait plutôt concevoir le moral comme une sorte d'espace existant au-delà des arrangements sociaux et permettant de sortir de ceux-ci : un domaine personnel qui est garanti aux individus pour eux-mêmes en tant que (créateurs d') eux-mêmes.

Iris Murdoch (2001) amorce bien les choses, je trouve, lorsqu'elle propose de définir la « bonté » moins en termes de « faire du bien aux autres » que comme « s'abstenir de faire du mal aux autres » : éviter de projeter ses propres désirs sur les autres. Si la bonté *per se* était « souveraine » – plutôt que rattachée à des conventions sociales existantes – alors un milieu moral supposerait la mise en place d'arrangements pour aider les individus à « se réaliser ». On ne peut pas prévoir ce que cette expression implique pour une autre vie – on ne le sait même pas totalement pour la sienne propre – mais on peut espérer se comporter de façon à ce qu'à chaque vie soit accordé l'espace dont elle a besoin.

Ce dont il est essentiellement question ici n'est pas l'espace physique *per se*. Plutôt, on cherche à considérer cet espace symbolique – intellectuel, émotionnel, physiologique même – dans lequel un individu peut se sentir « chez lui » (Rapport et Dawson 1998). La notion de *Lebensraum* comme besoin ou revendication physique est vraiment une chose que nous devrions chercher expressément à éviter. Les 70 ans qui se sont écoulés depuis les revendications de souveraineté institutionnelle du nazisme ont été le témoin d'une explosion de stratégies identitaires collectives et d'exigences similaires de sacro-saintes (voire « purifiées ») terres-patries – que ce soit sur la base d'une identité ethnique ou religieuse. Ces années ont aussi été le témoin d'une croissance démographique et de mouvements globaux, au point que concevoir son espace en termes symboliques plutôt que physiques extensifs est devenu tout aussi nécessaire pour les individus que pour les nations, groupes ethniques ou Églises. Nous assistons à une « compression culturelle » (Paine 1992), un empilement de frontières socioculturelles – rituelles, résidentielles, économiques – au sein du « même » espace-temps, au point que, pour les individus, voyager dans leur territoire d'origine implique de plus en plus de se confronter à une cacophonie de différences revendiquées. Ce qui inspirait à E.M. Forster la réflexion suivante:

The world is very full of people – appallingly full; it has never been so full before, and they are tumbling over each other. Most of these people one doesn't know and some of them one doesn't like; doesn't like the colour of their skins, say, or the shape of their noses, or the way they blow them or don't blow them. [...] Don't try to love them: you can't, you'll only strain yourself. But try to tolerate them. [1972:55]

J'aime les termes physiologiques dans lesquels Forster formule les notions de dégoût et de tolérance. Ce à quoi ils appellent en partie, me semblerait-il, est une conceptualisation de l'espace dans lequel l'individu est chez lui – l'espace que l'on s'accorde à soi-même et aux autres comme domaine personnel réservé, comme « chez soi » – en concevant celui-ci en termes de routines physiques. Sur le plan moral, on respecte la sacro-sainte souveraineté du corps individuel mortel (cf. James 2006). Ce « chez soi » est alors mobile, et aussi ramassé que le corps de l'individu. Il est également fluide et tout aussi capable de variation et d'évolution que l'est ce corps individuel : à l'exercice ou au repos, paré de différents vêtements et humeurs, à différents moments du cours de la vie.

John Berger exprime bien cela lorsqu'il dit que l'on peut trouver son « chez soi » dans des « words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat » : « no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived » (1984:64). De ce point de vue, le « chez soi » d'un individu est conçu comme une sorte de bulle symbolique : un espace subjectif de corps-plus-habitudes, comprenant des visions du monde, des routines physiques et des « projets de vie » (Rapport 2003:215-239). La bulle l'accompagne lorsqu'il se déplace – dans l'espace et le long de sa trajectoire de vie – et c'est un environnement qu'il commande en toute légitimité – sur lequel il est reconnu comme possédant un contrôle souverain.

Si le « chez soi » est conçu de cette façon, comme une sorte de sensorium corporel prolongé (Fernandez 1992:134), il est alors possible de repenser la localisation physique comme une sorte de « relation d'hôtes ». C'est-à-dire que l'on s'abstient d'attribuer, d'une quelconque façon permanente ou absolue, la propriété d'un espace physique, en démarquant ses « hôtes » et ses « invités ». Au lieu de cela, on attribue un caractère réciproque et sériel à ces rôles, de façon à ce qu'aucun individu ne doive être envisagé comme totalement « chez lui » dans un endroit, ou comme totalement « en visite » (cf. Massey 1992). Qui est « chez lui » ou « en visite » est une question qui touche à la nature et au motif d'échanges conventionnels particuliers plutôt qu'à des appartenances absolues. D'un autre côté, les conventions sociales sont « chez elles » dans un emplacement physique alors que leurs utilisa-

teurs individuels sont de passage : les statuts d'hôtes et d'invités sont situationnels et alternent. C'est ce que George Steiner décrit comme la récompense digne et humaine que l'on peut espérer lorsque l'on investit son identité non dans un territoire physique – ou dans la fixité d'une quelconque relation terrestre – mais dans la finitude physique de son être. Cela implique, suggère-t-il (1997:327) de cartographier le « territoire naturel » de la vérité dans la vie humaine non pas en termes d'espace mais de temps. Exprimé d'une autre façon, voilà la vraie perspective migrante qui conçoit l'expérience des groupes sociaux et des milieux culturels « en termes de voyage » (Clifford 1992:101, 1994). Le « chez soi » est une vérité personnelle que l'on porte en soi, et dont on continue à façonner l'identité tout au long de sa vie.

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J'ai soutenu qu'il est nécessaire de considérer le sacrosaint espace d'une vie individuelle souveraine en termes symboliques, et les arrangements sociaux « moraux » comme ceux qui facilitent les transitions (vers la « réalisation de soi »), que ce soit dans le transit physique dans l'espace ou au cours de la trajectoire de vie. L'appartenance est conçue ici non pas en termes d'identifications singulières et mutuellement exclusives avec un territoire, ni en termes d'adhésion absolue à certains rôles sociaux (membre et étranger, hôte et invité), mais en termes de leur adoption sérielle. On se souvient de la suggestion d'Emerson, qui envisageait une « rencontre bien proportionnée » entre les formes de la vie sociale et la « force naturelle » des individus qui anime ces formes : les conventions de surface agissent comme des tampons et des points de contact entre l'activité-dans-le-monde interprétative des différents individus. La vie sociale « florissante », pour réitérer le conseil d'Emerson, tiendrait à un patinage habile sur les surfaces sociales. Je ne vois pas ce qu'il y aurait d'étrange à considérer ce type de rencontre superficielle comme la base d'un contrat social moral.

Pour commencer à justifier cette affirmation, je pourrais vous rappeler les enseignements d'Anthony Wallace (1962, 1964, 2003). La prémisse de Wallace était la suivante : une routinisation des relations dans un milieu social ne nécessite pas forcément d'uniformité psychologique, pour des individus qui partagent un tempérament « culturel » homogène : « threaded like beads on a string of common motives » (Wallace 2003:214). Les individus peuvent interagir d'une manière stable et mutuellement gratifiante, s'organiser socialement en des groupements bien ordonnés et variables, tout en ayant des intérêts, des habitudes, des personnalités, des valeurs et des convictions radicalement différents : tout en n'ayant aucune carte cognitive communément partagée par leurs membres. En

fait, l'absence d'uniformité cognitive est peut-être une condition nécessaire pour que la coordination sociale soit possible; si tous les participants devaient partager une connaissance commune de leurs arrangements sociaux, ou même la lourde tâche de connaître leurs différences, alors leur routinisation ne serait peut-être pas viable. Ce qui serait nécessaire pour maintenir des relations ordonnées est ce que Wallace a nommé des « structures d'équivalence » (Wallace 1962:356) : des ensembles d'attentes comportementales équivalentes tels que les individus participants puissent mutuellement prévoir les réactions des autres. L'individu 'A' sait que, lorsqu'il pose une action a1, l'individu 'B' va en toute probabilité poser une action b1, qui va le conduire à en poser une a2, etc. Dans le même temps, l'individu 'B' sait que quand elle pose une action b1, l'individu 'A' répond par une action a1, qu'elle fait suivre d'une b2. Mais les individus 'A' et 'B' n'ont pas besoin d'être d'accord sur le moment précis où l'interaction a commencé, ni sur l'action de qui – sur qui agit et qui réagit –, encore moins sur ce que ces actions signifient.

En bref, les comportements des individus pourraient former des systèmes conjoints et fiables en reconnaissant que dans certaines circonstances le comportement des autres est prévisible et peut être mis en relation en toute confiance avec ses propres actions. Cette formulation des relations sociales, selon Wallace, convient non seulement aux interactions entre, par exemple, des conducteurs d'autobus et des passagers dont les intérêts en matière d'évitement des embouteillages peuvent être très différents, mais aussi entre différents groupements sociaux (patrons et travailleurs) qui ne partagent pas forcément les mêmes idéologies, et entre différents groupements culturels – Amérindiens et Blancs, qui entretiennent des relations commerciales et houleuses depuis des années sans pour autant se comprendre mutuellement.

Cependant, le conducteur d'autobus et les passagers (des Amérindiens et des Blancs) partagent effectivement quelque chose de bien précis, souligne Wallace (1962:356-357), et de solide. Leurs intérêts pour le respect des horaires se recoupent, leurs motivations pour se trouver dans le bus sont complémentaires, et ils possèdent des attentes comportementales mutuelles très élaborées. De plus, les relations entre tous les chauffeurs et tous les passagers ont été standardisées dans le cadre du système urbain, régional, national ou mondial. Wallace a qualifié ceci de « contrat » (2003:223) : un cadre dans lequel les rôles équivalents ont été spécifiés et mis à la disposition de toutes les parties dont les motivations rendaient leur adoption prometteuse. Et nous pouvons étendre ceci aux parents et enfants, époux, amants et amis, dont les routines interactionnelles peuvent elles aussi être caractérisées.

sées par « des croyances et des aveuglements » (Compton-Burnett 1969:30) où les univers cognitifs demeurent uniquement privés (Rapport 1993).

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Rappelons ce dont il est question ici. Nous examinons des arrangements sociaux susceptibles de préserver une sorte d'espace moral qui place les individus au-delà de toute relation et identité existantes, et tels qu'ils puissent être libres d'épanouir leurs capacités d'autocréation, de « se réaliser ». Ici les individus sont conçus comme des « mutual guests » (Steiner 1997) de « contrats comportementaux » (Wallace 1962), dans des espaces physiques et sociaux sur lesquels ils n'ont pas de prétentions absolues de propriété parce qu'ils sont « chez eux » dans des routines physiques (Berger 1984) et des projets de vie (Rapport 2003). Ici la « bonté » morale (Murdoch 2001) consiste à reconnaître une souveraineté aux environnements personnels des individus, à leurs « phénoménologies subjectives » (Fernandez 1992).

Le milieu social dont nous examinons la forme est ainsi paradoxal : un milieu qui préserverait une vision morale et l'espace des vies individuelles pouvant toujours dépasser le cadre de celui-ci. S'agit-il d'un mirage? Personnellement, je ne le crois pas. Wallace est très pragmatique dans sa description des milieux sociaux comme des « organisations de diversité » abritant des « structures d'équivalence » qui permettent la conciliation de vies individuelles radicalement différentes par le biais d'attentes superficiellement coïncidentes concernant le comportement de l'autre (cf. Goodenough 1963; Szwed 1966; Paine 1974; Schwartz 1978). Un calcul social *peut* renfermer des dualités paradoxales – voire même, des multiplicités. Les conventions sont animées par la contradiction; un projet apparemment collectif de comportements habituels englobe un nombre illimité de projets de vie individuels distincts et contradictoires. Des arrangements sociaux pourraient, en résumé, faciliter l'émergence de vies qui dépassent leur propre cadre, qui vont au-delà de ce qui semble superficiellement être leur objet.

La valeur de Quiconque

Notre discussion a jusqu'à maintenant concerné les types d'arrangements sociaux qui pourraient faire justice aux capacités d'autocréation d'un individu et leur assurer un espace symbolique. Il y a, cependant, un élément manquant, ou qui n'a pas été suffisamment explicité. La valeur : qu'en est-il du système de valeurs qui élèverait l'épanouissement individuel – la préservation d'un domaine réservé personnel dans lequel on pourrait « se réaliser » – au bien suprême? Car il est clair que la définition de la bonté que propose Iris Murdoch, et plus géné-

ralement la critique libérale de l'irréalité du collectif organique, du bien public, du « bien supérieur » de la communauté, sont dans le même temps des jugements de valeur : des évaluations de « la bonne vie ».

La vision libérale a été critiquée au cours des dernières décennies pour sa prétendue myopie à l'égard de sa propre nature idéologique : ses jugements de valeur élevés au rang de vérités universelles. J'ai choisi de débiter cette section en attirant l'attention sur ces projets *en tant que valeurs* parce que je pense qu'ils fournissent malgré tout un moyen d'évaluer la condition humaine qui est universalisable : ils reconnaissent une vérité universelle de la condition humaine, sa nature individuelle. En partant de la valeur on peut accéder à la vérité; le libéralisme renferme une mathématique de la valeur qui s'accorde avec les réalités de l'individualité – des réalités dont la moralité pourrait partout aider à soutenir l'existence (Rapport 1997a, 2005).

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J'ai lu John Stuart Mill avant de lire Durkheim, et il me semblait, comme lecteur moins mature, qu'il existait chez Durkheim (et dans les théories de structuration sociale) une ampleur et une largeur de vision qui manquaient chez Mill (et dans les théories de l'individualité). Mill brossait un portrait saisissant des libertés individuelles (« All good things which exist are the fruits of originality »; « The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it » [1972:123,170]), mais n'était-il pas, peut-être, naïf? Est-ce que Durkheim n'aurait pas surpassé Mill par son insistance à la contextualisation des individus, leurs libertés et valeur, leurs intérêts et originalité, dans des cadres sociaux? N'est-il pas vrai que le processus de la contextualisation – voyant toujours le personnage contre un arrière-plan holistique, qui circonscrit et conditionne la nature de l'existence de ce personnage (Dilley 1999) – promet toujours une analyse qui est plus inclusive et fondamentale (peu importe que le contexte soit ou non fourni par l'histoire, la société, la langue, la classe sociale, la culture, ou l'inconscient)?

Mais, peut-être pas. Il se peut qu'en comprenant «contexte» de cette façon, les anthropologues se dupent (Hobart 1985). Peut-être que les généralisations de la science sociale, qui réduisent, sont, comme raille Edmund Ions (1977), une forme moderne de l'astrologie et également de logique circulaire. N'est-ce pas vrai que les tentatives structuralistes d'effacer le subjectif du discours analytique donnent suite simplement à des tautologies obscures : « les structures sociales produisent des cultures qui engendrent des pratiques qui reproduisent des structures »? Est-ce que les efforts poststructuralistes pour écarter la possibilité de connaissance sûre tout en

avançant des propositions de base, traitées comme données – « connaissance-pouvoir », « discours », « habitude-mémoire », « effets-sujets » – ne reviennent pas à des tautologies métaphysiques (cf. Jenkins 1992:175-176)? De plus, dans leur fonctionnement, est-ce que ces cadres qui contextualisent et collectivisent ne seraient pas aussi objectivistes, déterministes et totalisants que n'importe quelle prédiction astrologique? Dans leur insistance doctrinaire pour voir les individus comme simplement des effets socialisés et réagissants, sans conscience ou action indépendantes, il y a en effet une tendance au totalitarisme dans ce modèle; dans la réduction qu'effectue Durkheim, le social est le moral, et il est correct que les acteurs individuels soient déterminés par l'objectivité des faits sociaux et des représentations collectives. La « difficulté » avec la contextualisation communautaire est aussitôt morale qu'analytique (Amit et Rapport 2002).

Si c'est une question de maturité d'approche, alors, il me semble maintenant que les efforts de maîtrise socio-structurelle, qui réduisent les phénomènes à des cadres contextualisants (et collectivisants), sont rigides et craintifs; ces efforts s'effarouchent devant l'original, le hasard, l'illimité, l'individu et se nient à prendre la responsabilité créative de ceux-ci (Rapport 2001).

Tous les noms collectifs et les termes d'identité – « la culture », « la nation », « la classe » – ont l'effet de réduire le sujet, « transmutant l'ambiguïté et l'équivoque des expériences vécues en des articles de connaissance hermétiques et déterminés » (Jackson 2002:125). Les individus deviennent les expressions épiphénoménales des catégories réifiées, tandis que, en réalité, ils continuent d'être le seul « concret anthropologique » (Augé 1995:20).

En retournant à ce point à une « mathématique » libérale de la valeur, observez comment Mill (1972[1859]:25) juxtapose et oppose le singulier et le collectif dans les propositions suivantes, et trouve des raisons d'offrir au singulier une protection :

If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. [...] The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

La valeur qui sous-tend ces énoncés pourrait être résumée par la formule : « whatever crushes individuality is despotism, no matter what name it is called » (Mill 1972:121). Je partage cette valeur mais ce qui m'intéresse principalement ici est d'examiner comment Mill confère à ses arguments une certaine configuration mathématique. Le singulier doit être protégé parce que les opinions qui naissent librement en lui et en viennent à être développées à sa façon sont non seulement les moyens par lesquels cet individu conserve sa propre santé spirituelle, mentale et physique, mais aussi les moyens par lesquels les autres – en dernière instance l'humanité –, maintenant et dans le futur, peuvent progresser vers une vérité qui dépasse les conventions existantes. Le singulier est protégé parce que la collectivité est elle-même un ensemble de singuliers – et rien de plus – et que dans la nature du singulier se manifeste la nature de l'ensemble. Si l'état de santé de l'espèce nous importe, alors on ne peut ignorer l'état de santé des individus, desquels l'ensemble est composé. Le singulier représente une valeur absolue : il renferme la vérité humaine.

Je trouve une mathématique comparable dans une fascinante remarque de Ludwig Wittgenstein, quelque cent ans après Mill : « No cry of torment can be greater than the cry of one person » (1980:45).

La souffrance humaine, semble dire Wittgenstein, ne peut pas être transformée en cette sorte d'économie morale, de mathématique massifiante et collectivisante, qui projetterait de noyer la souffrance de l'individu dans le calcul de son groupe – et qui n'est que trop courante dans la rhétorique communautaire concernant « le bien commun » et dans les discours anthropologiques sur le relativisme culturel (Geertz 2000:44, 164). Souffrir représente une sorte d'absolu, entier en soi. Sa nature ne se prête pas à l'agrandissement mathématique : dans l'individu est la totalité de l'humain.

La différence entre Mill et Wittgenstein se situe au niveau du domaine discursif. Mill évalue l'individu dans le contexte d'un discours politique d'État libéral : Wittgenstein évalue l'individu dans le contexte d'un discours existentiel de bien-être corporel. Et la différence est peut-être instructive. Car le siècle qui sépare Wittgenstein de Mill a été le témoin d'avancées majeures dans notre compréhension des conditions entourant la santé émotionnelle, mentale et physique de l'être humain individuel. Son existence corporelle mortelle, les potentialités de sa souffrance et de sa santé, ont représenté une part considérable du savoir que la science de la psychologie, la neurologie, la biochimie, la génétique – sans compter l'anthropologie – nous ont nouvellement dévoilé. La nature de l'existence corporelle humaine-individuelle – et la nature

mensongère des soi-disant super-organismes collectifs (l'État nazi ou stalinien ou islamiste) – sont devenues encore plus apparentes (cf. Jackson 1996; Harris 2007). Il est donc approprié, dans cette circonstance, que l'effort libéral soit porté sur la corporalité de l'individu tout autant que sur son incorporation politique. On érige un code moral fondé sur la sécurité de l'existence corporelle de l'individu : qu'il soit chez lui dans des routines physiques sûres (James et James 2004, Wilson 2005). Les avancées technologiques nous permettent maintenant de pratiquer des interventions – médicales, politiques – à un tel niveau microsocal. Nous sommes en quête d'une mathématique de la valeur centrée sur le caractère absolu du bien-être physique de l'individu comme une voie vers la souveraineté politique. C'est dans l'individuel, non dans le typique, que l'on peut trouver l'humain : « we all live in the particular » (Abu-Lughod 1990:157). La moralité du domaine réservé de l'individu est empreinte d'une mathématique de la valeur qui reconnaît la suprématie du cas individuel.

Conclusion: le drame de Quiconque

Dans la moralité chrétienne du XV^e siècle, la maîtrise de soi de Quiconque l'avait déserté : le voyage suivi du soi souverain lui était dénié et il ne lui était resté que les effets des bonnes actions qui le reliaient aux autres. Cet article s'est penché sur les relations morales que, 500 ans plus tard, l'on pourrait imaginer pour des milieux sociaux qui faciliteraient le cours des vies individuelles et valoriseraient leur épanouissement. J'ai soutenu qu'il fait partie des capacités de Quiconque de créer des univers individuels en relation dialectique avec les conditions existantes : un arrangement social serait moral lorsque le droit des individus à se réaliser est protégé. La souveraineté et la sécurité de l'*habitus* corporel d'un individu possèdent une valeur absolue.

Des arrangements sociaux paradoxaux tournés vers un au-delà d'eux-mêmes – vers là où le projet de vie d'un individu pourrait le mener dans le futur – ont été imaginés comme des sortes de contrats volontaires, épisodiques. Ces contrats conservaient une sorte de fixité – physique et constitutionnelle – alors que les individus les traversaient, adoptant alternativement les rôles d'hôtes et d'invités. En tant qu'« adhérents » à ces contrats, les individus partageaient des attentes comportementales mutuelles mais non plus d'appartenance imputable ou fixe. Ils s'accordaient l'un à l'autre une reconnaissance mutuelle et anticipaient une gratification mutuelle, mais n'exigeaient pas de compréhension mutuelle. Chacun respectait la souveraineté de l'espace symbolique de l'autre : une sorte de domaine réservé personnel et universel, de plein droit privé.

Dans ce domaine, les activités des individus peuvent déboucher continuellement sur leurs propres identités, non limitées par les conventions existantes.

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Quand, en 1890, James Frazer a publié son traité anthropologique, *The Golden Bough*, et a contextualisé les relations et notions morales chrétiennes par rapport à celles du paganisme, il a scandalisé le monde euro-chrétien et a failli perdre son poste à Cambridge. Au temps d'Edmund Leach, il était possible d'être plus ouvertement professeur d'anthropologie sociale, directeur de King's College, et président de la Société d'Humanisme de Cambridge. De la même façon, alors qu'il occupait la chaire d'anthropologie William Wyse, Ernest Gellner pouvait faire du prosélytisme en faveur d'un rationalisme universel, contre les revendications du fondamentalisme religieux et du relativisme culturel : « cognitive relativism is nonsense, moral relativism is tragic » (1995:8). Ces deux choses, le fait que Leach et Gellner pouvaient s'exprimer comme ils l'ont fait, et ce qu'ils ont exprimé, me semble des avancées quant au climat moral et, plus précisément, vers une anthropologie morale.

Avec, comme arrière-plan, des pressions globales pour accorder à la religion et au relativisme un espace public et souverain pour l'attribution d'identités collectives et classificatoires, l'anthropologie insiste pour maintenir les distinctions (et les distances) entre le savoir scientifique, la moralité, et la culture : les trois discours ne sont pas les mêmes. Cet article est écrit à partir de la conviction du besoin de préciser les caractéristiques d'un espace social qui pourrait contenir ces trois discours (science, moralité, culture) en équilibre. Je soutiens que c'est de cette façon que l'anthropologie – « l'inscription de l'humain » – fournit des indications pour un plus grand accomplissement et une plus grande liberté de l'acteur global individuel, de Quiconque, comme incarnation de la condition *humaine*.

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Part 2: The Human in Nature

Phénomènes limites : un essai sur l'ambiguïté de la nature

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« Dans un sens la nature est indépendante de la pensée »
A.N. Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*, 1971

Résumé : Au lieu de soutenir que la nature est un ensemble de phénomènes *sui generis* interreliés, cet article explore l'idée de la nature comme manifestation d'une frontière existentielle entre ce qui peut et ce qui ne peut pas être appréhendé, choisi et contrôlé directement par l'action humaine ou l'agence. Par le biais d'exemples ethnographiques, de réflexions personnelles et de digressions théoriques, cet article révèle que les seuils instables entre l'*eigenwelt*, le *mitwelt* et l'*umwelt* sont des lieux d'oscillations incessantes, ambivalentes et fâcheuses entre les façons d'être passives et actives de même qu'entre la vie et la mort.

Mots-clés : nature humaine, phénoménologie, discours, Romantisme, nouvelles technologies reproductrices

Abstract: Rather than argue that nature is a collection of phenomena that are *sui generis* interrelated, this article explores the idea of nature as a manifestation of an existential frontier between what can and what cannot be apprehended, selected and controlled directly by human action or agency. Through ethnographic examples, personal reflections and theoretical digressions, this article reveals that the unstable thresholds between *eigenwelt*, *mitwelt* and *umwelt* are loci of ceaseless, ambivalent and unfortunate oscillations between ways of being passive and active and between life and death.

Keywords: human nature, phenomenology, discourse, Romanticism, new reproductive technologies

C'était en Suisse – ou, plus précisément, au cours d'une excursion au Sommet de Rigi Kulm, 5 906 pieds au-dessus du lac Lucerne – que je me suis trouvé à méditer sur la place de la nature dans le romantisme européen et sur l'idée de nature humaine qui y est si intimement liée. C'était ici que d'innombrables visiteurs du XIX^e siècle faisant le 'grand tour' passaient une nuit afin de voir le soleil se lever sur les Alpes. Un Victor Hugo extasié compara le paysage à un monstrueux océan aux vagues gigantesques, et celles-ci au souffle pétrifié de Jéhovah qui avait agité la surface originelle des eaux du monde, alors que le cœur de William Wordsworth « bondit » devant « la terrible majesté » (1960:280) à laquelle fut confronté son regard pendant sa visite des Alpes françaises en 1791, et dans *The Prelude* il confia que les montagnes lui avaient révélé « la raison universelle de l'humanité » (Livre VI, ligne 476). En revanche, un Mark Twain irrévérencieux raconte que lui et son compagnon de voyage étaient si épuisés par l'ascension du Rigi Kulm depuis la ville de Wäggis, au bord du lac, que pendant deux matinées d'affilée ils dormirent trop tard et manquèrent complètement le légendaire lever de soleil. Le troisième jour, ils se réveillèrent alors qu'il faisait sombre et coururent au sommet pour découvrir que le soleil n'était pas, comme il le croyait, en train de se lever, mais était en fait sur le point de se coucher (2003:143-162).

Les bêtises de Twain mises à part, il est tentant de voir dans la « soif d'Alpes » européenne une réponse au tumulte politique et social qui accompagna l'urbanisation et l'industrialisation à partir de la fin du XVIII^e siècle. Reculant face aux horreurs de la révolution française, dont il avait d'abord embrassé les idéaux, le jacobinisme et le communisme utopique de Wordsworth se transformèrent vite, après un engouement pour la classe ouvrière rurale, en une foi dans la nature. Que ce revirement vers

la nature implique un retour vers Dieu est suggéré non seulement dans les images de Wordsworth de « Dieu et la Nature en communion » (*The Prelude*, ligne 446), mais aussi dans la poésie de Gerard Manley Hopkins. Dans *God's Grandeur*, écrit plus de 70 ans après *The Prelude* de Wordsworth, Hopkins (1953) évoque lui aussi un monde spolié :

Des générations ont marché, marché, marché;
Tout est flétri de commerce; brouillé, souillé de labeur
Et porte la marque de l'homme et partage son odeur :
le sol
Est maintenant dénudé et le pied, chaussé, ne ressent
rien. [Hopkins 1953:27]

En dépit de tout cela, écrit-il, « la nature n'est jamais épuisée », et « ici réside la précieuse fraîcheur au fond des choses » – le signe divin – par lequel il nous est possible de retrouver notre humanité originelle (27).

Dans son essai de 1849 sur la nature, Ralph Waldo Emerson définit la nature comme des « essences inchangées par l'homme » (2003:182), et soutient que chaque génération rêve de « jouir d'une relation originelle à l'univers » (181), c'est-à-dire, d'une relation directe et sensible avec le monde naturel qui permette de se décharger du « fardeau de la tradition » (1995:260) pour devenir « une partie ou une particule de Dieu » (2003:184). Selon Hindle, des idées semblables imprègnent l'œuvre de Mary Shelley qui, pendant le printemps humide et « morose » de 1816, alors qu'une « pluie incessante [les] confinait souvent », elle, Percy Bysshe Shelley et leur jeune fils William à leur villa sur le lac Léman en Suisse, rédigea son terrible réquisitoire contre les postulats de la science et ses défenseurs principalement masculins, affirmant que « l'effet de toute tentative humaine de railler le prodigieux mécanisme du Créateur du monde » serait « suprêmement effroyable » (Hindle 1992:xvii). Et comme Wordsworth, Hopkins et Emerson, elle assimile la nature non seulement au divin, mais aussi au féminin. La nature était toujours une mère, ou du moins « elle ».

De nos jours, nous sommes peut-être moins enclins à polariser la nature et la culture, voyant la première comme une sorte d'essence immaculée qui est recouverte ou corrompue avec le temps par une réalité artificielle ou secondaire que nous appelons culture ou civilisation. Les nouvelles technologies génétiques et de reproduction, et les progrès médicaux en transplantation d'organes, semblent avoir dissout les séculaires distinctions entre nature et culture, et réclament un nouveau vocabulaire synthétique de biosocialité, d'hybridité et de biopouvoir. Même la frontière entre la parenté biologique, basée sur des liens naturels ou de consanguinité, et la parenté adoptive,

assistée, fictive et artificielle semble impossible à tracer (Strathern 1992). Pourtant, en dépit de ceux qui soutiennent que les innovations sociales et technologiques contemporaines rendent la dichotomie nature-culture démodée, des voix continuent à s'élever pour protester contre la destruction des habitats « naturels » et de la biodiversité, et les abominables et incontrôlables répercussions « contre nature » de la manipulation génétique.

Les historiens des idées ont souvent vu ces conceptions fort différentes de la nature non seulement comme indiquant des visions du monde postmodernes et prémodernes, mais comme définissant différentes étapes dans l'histoire humaine. Ainsi, R.G. Collingwood présente trois idées bien différentes de la nature, chacune basée sur une métaphore-clé différente. Les Grecs anciens comparaient la nature à l'esprit. La nature était « saturée et imprégnée par l'esprit » (1944:3), et possédait sa propre âme ou vie. En revanche, les penseurs de l'Europe des Lumières comparaient la nature à une machine créée par Dieu, mais exigeant une gestion humaine rationnelle. À partir de la fin du XVIII^e siècle, émerge la vision scientifique moderne d'une nature comme pendant à l'histoire – évoluant et progressant avec le temps. Le problème avec le modèle de Collingwood est qu'il est si profondément enraciné dans la notion moderniste de téléologie qu'il est incapable de reconnaître que, bien que différents épistèmes aient pu dominer le discours public ou scientifique à différentes époques et dans différentes sociétés, chacun est présent partout, tout le temps, comme une potentialité qui pourrait se réaliser sous certaines conditions. Ainsi la vision helléniste se trouve exprimée dans les notions occidentales contemporaines de la Terre comme organisme vivant (l'hypothèse de la Gaïa), ou dans l'idée que la relation réciproque et éthique qui fonde l'intersubjectivité humaine devrait également guider nos relations avec le monde naturel (Abraham 1997), alors que la vision des Lumières de la nature comme une chose devant être domestiquée et dominée au bénéfice de l'humanité sous-tend l'ethos d'exploitation du capitalisme moderne (Horkheimer et Adorno 1972).

Je ne m'intéresse ici pas tant au débat sur le fait que la nature doive être manipulée et gérée, ou au contraire protégée et préservée; je cherche plutôt à explorer en quoi ces deux modes de relation au monde naturel sont des façons d'aborder des phénomènes qui sont sur les limites de l'entendement et du contrôle humains¹. Le mot nature n'est bien sûr pas le seul que l'on puisse utiliser pour indiquer le seuil entre les domaines humain et extra-humain. Dans la pensée médiévale, c'était le macrocosme – l'immense univers au sein duquel le petit monde de l'existence humaine s'inscrivait. Pour Karl Jaspers, il s'agit de

« l'Englobant » (*das Umgreifende*) – un terme « subversif » pour marquer les limites de la connaissance et nous éveiller de nouveau à ce qui rend l'être possible mais dont l'être ne peut jamais être saisi par « la perspective du conceptuel » (1955:73, 60). Chez les aborigènes d'Australie, c'est le Rêve, le champ largement invisible et ambiant des essences et des présences ancestrales dans lequel passe la vie au moment de la mort et dont la vie est retirée par des rituels de croissance et de renaissance. En Afrique de l'Est, c'est la brousse, un domaine d'énergies sauvages et d'esprits de la nature que les anthropologues auraient, il y a une génération, appelé le surnaturel. Les termes sont moins importants que le champ de forces phénoménologique qu'ils recouvrent – apparaissant *en même temps* comme un domaine de dangereuse altérité et une source d'énergies vitales sans lesquelles la vie humaine et la socialité humaine ne pourraient perdurer. Je souhaite insister sur le fait que notre relation vécue à la nature – que nous la concevions psychologiquement comme intérieure à nous ou physiquement comme extérieure – est, comme toute autre relation intersubjective, profondément ambivalente. D'un côté, les gènes, les émotions, les paysages et les climats nous donnent vie; de l'autre, les mutations génétiques, les émotions non maîtrisées, et la nature sauvage sous forme d'ouragans, de tornades, de tsunamis, d'éruptions volcaniques, de tremblements de terre, de feux de forêts et d'inondations peuvent détruire vies et moyens de subsistance.

Commençons par explorer deux façons bien différentes de se relier à la nature (entendue comme se situant aux frontières internes ou externes de notre emprise physique et conceptuelle). La première est basée sur la notion d'affinité, la seconde sur la notion d'antipathie. Revenons à la Suisse et au Rigi Kulm pour expliquer ce que j'entends par là.

Mon excursion au Mont Rigi m'a renvoyé à ma Nouvelle-Zélande natale. Pas seulement parce que les paysages alpins y ressemblaient tant, avec les mêmes collisions silencieuses de cumulus sur les cimes lointaines et les ombres des nuages coulant sur les pentes verdoyantes des hautes vallées. C'était parce que, enfant, j'ai développé une profonde identification avec la terre, si bien que quand je pensais au monde dont j'étais l'héritier naturel, je ne pensais pas d'abord à la famille ou à la descendance, mais au cours paisible d'une rivière locale, à une forêt de pins, à un vestige de la végétation d'origine, à une colline depuis laquelle, par temps clair, je pouvais voir la montagne Taranaki. Ces éléments *physiques* délimitaient un microcosme *social* dont je sentais intimement faire partie. Hiver comme été, j'explorais, je cartographiais, je nommais et je m'imbibais de ce monde à moi jusqu'à le

connaître comme le fond de ma poche. C'était à la fois mon univers de vie et moi-même. Vivant, harmonisé et enchevêtré. Si bien que lorsque je me suis jeté dans les longues herbes au-dessus de Rigi Kaltbad, inhalant les parfums de féтуque, de trèfle rouge, de boutons d'or et de luzerne, attrapant une odeur de fumier qui provenait des bâtisses à colombage au pied de la pente, entendant le ronronnement d'un petit avion qui montait et descendait au gré du vent, j'étais à nouveau un enfant, m'abandonnant au paysage du Taranaki et trouvant dans ses vues, ses sons et ses odeurs les éléments d'un monde stable auquel je me sentais appartenir totalement. C'était sans aucun doute cet abandon ou soumission à la contemplation de la nature qui attirait tant de pèlerins du XIX^e siècle au Rigi Kulm. On pouvait ressentir un étrange réconfort en se mettant en phase avec l'immensité qui s'étendait devant nos yeux – le toit accidenté des Alpes, festonné, en dents de scie, tacheté de neige, avec ses pentes effondrées et ses cirques, et les forêts et les pâturages bien plus en aval où une fenêtre miroite au soleil et d'où vous entendez le cliquetis syncopé des clochettes des vaches. Mais sentir les fleurs sauvages, lézarder au soleil, ou admirer la vue – toutes des images d'acquiescement participatif – ne constitue qu'une facette de l'attitude moderne à l'égard de la nature. Car la nature est aussi une chose à laquelle on se mesure et on se teste, une sorte de terrain d'essai pour un ethos masculin qui perçoit la nature comme un objet à conquérir, à transformer ou à apprivoiser – un ethos auquel fait justice la remarque d'Edmund Hillary à George Lowe après son ascension de l'Everest en 1953 avec Tensing Norgay: « Eh bien, on l'a eu ce salaud » (Hillary 1975:162).

De là où j'étais couché, je pouvais discerner à l'horizon les cimes du Eiger et de la Jungfrau. Alors que de nombreux visiteurs étaient venus au Rigi pour voir le lever du soleil sur ces Alpes, d'autres avaient cherché à être les premiers à les vaincre, souvent au péril de leur vie. Le Matterhorn, par exemple, a été conquis par l'alpiniste anglais Edward Whymper en 1865 après six tentatives infructueuses qui ont coûté la vie à sept de ses compagnons d'ascension.

Deux modes différents de relation à la nature sont suggérés ici, le premier caractérisé par l'union et l'abandon, le second par la dualité et la domination. Alors que le premier suggère une soumission consentie à une nature qui est autorisée à pénétrer et même à prendre possession du corps et de l'âme, le second implique de se tenir en dehors ou en surplomb d'une nature qui a été soumise ou reléguée à l'arrière-plan. C'est le point de vue panoramique ou classique, induisant une séparation entre sujet et objet, observateur et observé, celui qui agit et celui sur lequel on agit.

Ces contrastes s'appliquent également à nos relations avec les autres, et c'est pourquoi je préfère toutes les considérer comme intersubjectives. En fait, la co-présence de *trois* dimensions de relation – le corps individuel, le corps politique, et le corps de la terre – est typique des cosmologies dans toutes les sociétés humaines. Ainsi, la notion chinoise classique de « mondes internes et externes de l'expérience comme ayant des systèmes de physiologie identiques » (Rawson 1968:231), les images hindoues et hippocratiques du monde comme un corps humain, la vision des Dogon de la Terre comme étant composée de minéraux qui correspondent aux différents organes du corps, les rochers étant les os, les petits cailloux blancs des rivières les orteils, et une famille de glaises rouges le sang (Calame-Griaule 1965:27-57), et les métaphores indo-européennes de pied ou de front d'une colline, de bouche ou de bras d'une rivière, de ciel qui se couvre ou se met en colère, et des arbres généalogiques avec leurs branches et leurs racines. Plutôt que de traiter ces ensembles « synecdotiques » comme des formes poétiques d'expression ou des indicateurs d'un mode de pensée « paléologique », j'aimerais montrer comment ils fournissent une raison pour agir dans des contextes où les êtres humains sont confrontés aux limites de leur capacité à comprendre et à contrôler leurs univers de vie.

Mon premier exemple est tiré de l'année que mon épouse et moi avons passée à vivre avec une famille aborigène dans les forêts humides du sud-est de la péninsule du Cape York en Australie. Bien que les Kuku Yalanji ne conçoivent pas la nature et la culture en termes abstraits, ma suggestion d'interpréter la nature comme se situant aux limites de notre entendement et de notre pouvoir d'agir est en accord avec la façon dont les Kuku Yalanji conçoivent leur univers de vie. La culture (un terme que de nombreux Aborigènes ont maintenant adopté) englobe tout ce qui se trouve *au sein de* leur univers de vie, y compris la terre, la langue, les parents et alliés, et les écosystèmes de l'océan ou de la forêt dans lesquels ils évoluent. Bien que cet univers soit divisé en deux moitiés sur la base d'une distinction écologique entre habitants des forêts (*ngalkalji*) et habitants des côtes, tout et tout le monde dans cet univers est conçu comme étant interconnecté intimement ou par alliance. Ce qui se situe hors de cet univers de vie, en revanche, obéit à des « lois différentes » et constitue une menace, quoique des étrangers puissent être progressivement acceptés au sein d'une famille comme alliés ou comme amis (*jawun*). Les Kuku Yalanji expriment ces distinctions sociales en termes olfactifs. Les gens de la mer sentent l'eau salée et le poisson de mer; les gens de la terre sentent la viande de marsupial; les étrangers ont une forte odeur qui est assez dif-

férente. « De quelle façon leur odeur diffère-t-elle »? ai-je demandé à mon informateur Harry Shipton. « Les anciens disaient que les waybala (blancs) sentent comme la bave d'une anguille », dit-il, « mais ils sentent le bama (indigènes) après avoir vécu avec nous quelques temps ».

« Et moi »?, ai-je demandé.

« Tu sens le bama », a dit Harry.

Dès le début de notre travail de terrain, mon épouse et moi avons été frappés par les liens et les courroies de communication qui existent au sein de l'univers de vie des Kuku Yalanji. De plus, il devint clair pour nous que savoir déchiffrer ces correspondances était nécessaire à la vie et à la subsistance quotidiennes de chacun.

La plupart des après-midis et des soirées, nous allions pêcher sur une plage avoisinante ou sur une jetée de la rivière Bloomfield. Manquant de patience et d'habileté pour pêcher, je me laissais quelquefois glisser dans la rêverie, écoutant le vent dans les casuarinas, observant la longue courbe de la baie Weary ou les sombres étendues de palétuviers de la Bloomfield. Mais une telle relation esthétique avec les environs était étrangère à nos hôtes, qui étaient constamment à l'affût de signes vitaux indiquant un danger caché, révélant une source de nourriture, ou laissant présager un événement social. Les gens scrutaient en silence la mer ou la rivière dans l'attente d'un mulot qui saute, d'une pastenague qui traînasse, ou de bancs de harengs, et si nous avions été dans la forêt, ils auraient été à l'affût de serpents venimeux ou de nourriture de brousse. Assez vite, je perdis mon habitude de rêvasser et commençais à être absorbé par les riches significations de l'environnement. Un iguane sur une feuille de palmier annonçait une tempête à venir. Un oiseau marteau entendu pendant les mois de froid signifiait que les mulots seraient abondants. Des arbres à fèves en fleurs ou le tamarin sauvage mûrissant signifiaient que des œufs de poules sauvages pourraient être trouvés. La chair d'un quartier de pomme virant au rose signifiait que le foie des pastenagues serait lui aussi rose, et donc bon à manger, quoique le fait de manger des pastenagues au cours des mois précédents (octobre-novembre) risque d'attirer des tempêtes.

La saison humide approchant, je devins de plus en plus fasciné par les inquiétudes de la famille à l'égard du tonnerre et des éclairs. Alors que je voyais les orages comme des phénomènes naturels, nos hôtes les interprétaient en termes sociaux; ils étaient des expressions de la malveillance humaine et d'états d'esprit turbulents. Ainsi, l'expression *jarramali bajaku* (littéralement, « excessivement orageux ») est utilisée pour des personnes qui perdent le contrôle d'elles-mêmes lorsqu'elles ont bu ou

pris des drogues, alors que le terme *jarramali* désigne tout orage cyclonique ou de mousson pouvant matérialiser la malveillance des étrangers. Les questions de contrôle font allusion à la psychologie individuelle, aux relations avec les autres et aux relations avec les éléments naturels.

Noël 1993. La chaleur et l'humidité étaient accablantes. Si bien que ma sueur dégouttait sur les pages de mon journal de bord alors que je décrivais la tension qui s'était créée dans notre campement. Elle avait éclaté comme un orage au lendemain de Noël. Sonny en était venu aux mains avec son beau-frère, sa sœur aînée l'avait couvert d'injures, une autre de ses sœurs lui avait envoyé quelques coups de poing pour faire bonne mesure, et la plus jeune sœur, Gladys, et son mari étaient alors partis pour Ayton afin de fuir la situation. Alors que le premier orage de la saison humide approchait, le ciel vira à l'indigo et le vent se souffla encore plus fort. Il y avait un crépitement de feuilles mortes qui tombaient, bruit que les Kuku Yalanji décrivent par le mot *yanja*, suivi au loin du bruit sourd du tonnerre, comme si quelqu'un déplaçait des meubles lourds dans une pièce du dessus – bruit qui a aussi son propre idéophone, *kubun-kubun*. Avec attention, les gens suivaient le cours de l'orage, discutant d'où il venait et vers où il se dirigeait, identifiant ses sons, observant ses effets sur les feuillages, le comparant avec des orages passés. En fait, le caractère de l'orage imminent était analysé de la même façon que les gens analysaient les étrangers – essayant de lire leurs intentions, de deviner leurs motivations, d'identifier leur humeur. Alors que cette discussion se poursuivait, différents membres de la famille firent des incursions dans la brousse à la recherche de vignes sauvages (*kangka*), d'écorces de charmes (*jujabala*), et de xanthorrhée (*nganjirr*). Sonny, redevenu sobre, se mit à la tâche, faisant brûler à l'extérieur de notre campement des écheveaux d'herbe, d'écorces de charmes et de xanthorrhée. Lorsque le parfum sucré de la résine de xanthorrhée (*kanunjul*) se propagea dans la clairière, je supposai qu'il était destiné à faire fuir les moustiques. Mais Sonny me dit que l'orage sentirait l'odeur de la fumée et s'éloignerait. Je demandai plus tard à McGinty, qui n'était pas un Kuku Yalanji, s'il pouvait m'expliquer comment le fait de brûler de la xanthorrhée pouvait écarter les tempêtes. L'idée sembla à la fois l'amuser et l'embarrasser, en partie parce que son propre peuple sur la baie de la Princesse Charlotte utilisait une méthode différente pour éloigner les orages (un certain type of coquillage), en partie parce qu'il ne voulait pas me donner l'impression qu'il était un *myal* (un sauvage) superstitieux. Ce soir-là, alors que je l'aidais à installer sa bâche et sa tente sur la plage, il plaisanta sur les

gros nuages menaçants qu'on voyait à l'horizon. « Il risque de pleuvoir bientôt », dit-il laconiquement. « On ferait mieux de dire à cet orage d'attendre que j'aie monté ma tente. »

Chez Gladys à Ayton, en revanche, l'humeur était sombre. La plupart des membres de la famille s'étaient réunis derrière ses portes closes, blottis et anxieux à l'approche de la tempête. L'un des enfants donna à mon épouse un indice sur la raison pour laquelle ils étaient si apeurés: « Si tu manges des choses que tu n'es pas supposé manger, une tempête viendra te punir. » Les éclairs étaient-ils un agent d'une justice punitive, débusquant ceux qui auraient violé un tabou alimentaire ou sexuel, ou transgressé un lieu sacré? De telles choses sont difficiles à deviner pour un anthropologue, car qui sait quels secrets coupables une personne peut cacher, et si ceux-ci se retrouvent projetés en craintes de châtement externe. Une chose était claire, cependant, et c'était l'association entre orages et étrangers vengeurs.

Un matin, McGinty me dit qu'un étranger de Kowanyama était venu à Wujal quelques années auparavant. Le bruit courait qu'il était un *burri-burri* (un sorcier), capable de manipuler les tempêtes à ses propres fins scélérates. Cet après-midi là, Sonny s'ouvrit à moi, et m'expliqua le lien entre les tempêtes et les alliances familiales – un lien qui serait immédiatement compréhensible pour les anthropologues familiaux de longue date avec l'ambivalence et l'incertitude qui caractérisent les relations entre parents par alliance. Comme le Mae-Enga des Hautes-terres de l'Ouest de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée l'a dit de façon notoire, « On épouse les gens que l'on combat » (Meggitt 1964:218). Comme les parents par alliance, donc, les orages proviennent *d'ailleurs*.

Chez les Kuku Yalanji, deux domaines analogues de relations sont postulés: les relations entre catégories sociales, et les relations entre éléments environnementaux.

Les termes-clés, et les relations entre eux, peuvent être présentés ainsi:

Belle-mère: beau-fils: orage: xanthorrhée.

Quand des orages approchent, on craint que des catégories sociales qui devraient rester séparées se rapprochent dangereusement: soi et ses ennemis, les membres et les non-membres. Cette situation est comparée à la violation de la relation d'évitement entre belle-mère et beaux-fils, et par association à toute transgression de choses qui devraient rester séparées, telles les gens et les fruits interdits.

Le problème: comment éloigner l'orage?

La solution: en activant les analogies évoquées ci-dessus.

L'action pratique: des branches de xanthorrhée sont brûlées. La xanthorrhée (de même que l'écorce de charmes et la vigne sauvage) est le beau-fils de l'orage. L'orage sentira la fumée de xanthorrhée. Et tout comme une belle-mère évitera son beau-fils si elle sent son odeur, la tempête s'éloignera lorsqu'elle percevra des effluves de son beau-fils, la xanthorrhée.

Cette brève excursion dans l'ethnographie des Kuku Yalanji nous permet de voir que les forces sauvages que nous appelons nature sont (1) à la fois intrapsychiques et intersubjectives, (2) sociales et physiques, de par leur caractère, et (3) potentiellement destructrices et créatrices. Dans le même temps, nous avons vu l'ingéniosité avec laquelle les gens cherchent à contrôler la nature sauvage, qu'il s'agisse de la folie momentanée d'un individu saoul et fou furieux ou le danger passager d'une tempête cyclonique. Cependant, le contrôle peut prendre deux formes bien différentes. Il peut impliquer une répression et une sublimation – qui sont des stratégies d'évitement – ou il peut impliquer une gestion et une maîtrise – qui sont des stratégies d'engagement. Dans la théorie psychanalytique, ces deux thèmes sont enchevêtrés de façon paradoxale. Comme le remarquait Rôheim, il est « dans la nature de notre espèce de maîtriser la réalité sur une base libidinale » (1971:105) – en reportant les gratifications immédiates, et en déchargeant ses énergies instinctives dans des activités et des objets non-instinctifs. Pour Freud, la civilisation est « fondée sur la renonciation à l'instinct », qui « présuppose précisément la non-satisfaction (par suppression, répression ou d'autres moyens?) de puissants instincts » (1961:44). « Cette "frustration culturelle" », observe Freud, « domine le vaste champ des relations sociales entre êtres humains ... [et] est la cause de l'hostilité contre laquelle toutes les civilisations ont à lutter » (1961:44). Mais la maxime de Freud, « où *id* est, laisse *ego* être », omet de reconnaître la mesure dans laquelle notre nature intérieure n'est pas seulement une série d'instincts à réprimer, mais une source de vitalité qui doit être canalisée et libérée (Marcuse 1966). En termes existentiels, ceci implique que les êtres humains ne peuvent jamais trouver d'épanouissement total dans une conformité servile à des schémas de comportement externes et socialement construits, car il doit y avoir, chez chaque individu, un sentiment qu'il ou elle n'est pas simplement jeté dans un monde qui a été construit par d'autres en d'autres temps, mais qu'il l'intègre activement et de façon vitale comme quelqu'un pour qui le monde donné est aussi un moyen par lequel sa propre destinée particulière est accomplie. Mais revenons un instant au tonnerre et aux éclairs.

Mon sujet est le paradoxe du pouvoir – le fait que les mêmes forces qui menacent un être – que soit de l'inté-

rieur comme les énergies libidinales ou de l'extérieur comme les éléments naturels – puissent, si elles sont harnachées et canalisées, non seulement offrir une protection mais générer et régénérer la vie. Dans les années 1890, l'ethnographe W.E. Roth rapporta (1903:8) que dans de nombreuses régions du Nord du Queensland, le tonnerre et les éclairs étaient des moyens de sorcellerie, mais que les gens invoquaient parfois ces mêmes forces pour pousser les colons blancs hors de leurs terres (1897:168). J'ai entendu des histoires identiques de la part de Harry Shipton en 1993. Il y a de nombreuses années, m'a raconté Harry, un propriétaire de ranch blanc, exaspéré par les *bama* qui décimaient son bétail, monta à un campement qui bordait une rivière et abattit une fillette. Poussé par son désir de vengeance, le père de la petite fille se présenta chez le rancher sous la forme du tonnerre. Le rancher tira des coups de feu contre le tonnerre mais ses balles traversèrent le corps du tonnerre sans lui faire de mal. Alors, d'un seul éclair, le tonnerre foudroya et tua le rancher. Dans une autre des histoires de Harry, un certain homme blanc qui « s'amusait avec beaucoup de filles *bama* », les mettant enceintes et créant des problèmes, a été débusqué par un éclair alors qu'il conduisait son tracteur dans un champ de cannes Mossman. « Bang! Lui mort, juste comme ça. »

Chez les Kuranko du Nord-est de la Sierra Leone, le tonnerre et les éclairs constituent aussi des moyens de sorcellerie, et parmi les plus redoutables maîtres de ce pouvoir se trouvaient les chefs guerriers, Bol' Tamba Marah et son plus jeune frère Firawaka Mamburu Marah (connu sous le nom de Belikoro [« Puissant Ancien »]), qui tous deux frappaient leurs ennemis par la foudre et intimidaient leurs propres sujets de la même manière.

Ce qui est fascinant dans ce cas, c'est la relation ambivalente et controversée entre le pouvoir séculier et le pouvoir occulte. D'ordinaire, ces pouvoirs sont séparés et complémentaires, un peu comme l'Église et l'État dans l'Europe moderne. Et en effet, une distinction stricte est faite au Kuranko entre le domaine des pouvoirs sauvages (*suwage*) associé aux médecines magiques (*bese*), aux esprits de la brousse (*nyenne*) et aux sociétés secrètes (*sumafan*), et assimilé à la brousse (*fira*), et le domaine de la coutume (*namui* ou *bimba kan*) et de la loi (*seriye* ou *ton*), associé au pouvoir séculier (*noé*) et à la chefferie (*mansaye*), et assimilé aux communautés humaines (*sué*). Mais bien que ces domaines soient déclarés différents par leur essence, ils sont en pratique interdépendants, et chacun est également vital à l'univers de vie kuranko.

La « brousse » kuranko fait référence à une nature perçue comme un champ de force qui se situe à la marge de l'entendement et du contrôle humains – à la fois comme

une source d'énergie qui permet la vie – sous forme de gibier, de plantes médicinales, et de riz (la culture de base) – et comme des pouvoirs qui peuvent détruire la vie – sous forme de sorcellerie, d'animaux sauvages et d'esprits malins de la brousse. Pour les Kuranko, le paradoxe du pouvoir se décline comme suit : le lieu de la plus grande insécurité est aussi le plus vital. Pour exprimer ceci en termes cybernétiques, le système social – défini comme le domaine de rôles non-négociables, de règles fixées, de valeurs ancestrales et de sagesse reçue – tend vers l'entropie à moins de continuellement puiser dans les énergies vitales de la brousse et de compter sur ces dernières – la fertilité de son sol, ses ressources naturelles, et même les *genii loci* qui la revendiquent comme leur appartenant. Mais alors que les Kuranko conceptualisent généralement la brousse comme un domaine *extérieur*, le terme englobe aussi des pouvoirs *intérieurs* tels que le 'don naturel' d'intelligence, la capacité reproductive des femmes, la puissance des hommes, et la disposition de magnanimité qui définit le fait d'être une personne (*morgoye*). En fait, dans les mythes kuranko, la personne est représentée non par les ancêtres mais par les *animaux* totémiques qui sauvèrent les vies des ancêtres du clan à des époques lointaines de danger. Et c'est la brousse qui est la source de la vie dans les rituels d'initiation. Car si l'initiation est l'apothéose de la sublimation, pendant laquelle les instincts sont soumis à un strict contrôle – la sexualité trouvant son expression dans le mariage et la procréation, le corps étant discipliné, les émotions apaisées, les paroles mesurées et l'égoïsme surmonté – c'est aussi le moment où l'individu confronte, dans les associations de culte, les pouvoirs sauvages des djinns qui, comme les animaux totémiques, sont aussi des moyens de conférer à des êtres humains ordinaires des pouvoirs extraordinaires.

Le personnage quasi-humain du djinn (*nyenne*) incarne ce qu'on pourrait appeler un pouvoir naturel, sauvage ou libidinal. Un tel pouvoir est ambigu: il peut jouer pour ou contre nous. En termes kuranko, il est difficile de savoir si ce pouvoir sera bienfaisant (*sabu nyuma*) ou malfaisant (*sabu yuge*). On entend nombre d'anecdotes dans lesquelles un djinn donne la force d'un lutteur, la grâce d'un danseur, l'intuition d'un devin et l'inspiration d'un musicien, et il y a des lieux associés aux djinns dans chaque village kuranko, où le malheureux peut faire des offrandes de nourriture dans l'espoir de recevoir de l'aide, et où le bienheureux va remercier le djinn pour l'aide reçue. Plusieurs des devins avec lesquels je travaillais avaient reçu leur don d'un djinn, qui leur était apparu en rêve pendant un accès de maladie, et on disait souvent tant de la musique que des instruments de musique qu'ils

venaient de la brousse. Le grand musicien malien Ali Farka Touré attribue son génie aux djinns. Lorsqu'il avait treize ans, une série de visions et d'expériences étranges ont transformé sa façon de jouer, et il a intégré un nouveau monde qu'il compare à une longue maladie ou à une crise d'épilepsie. « C'est différent de quand on est dans un état normal; on n'est plus la personne qu'on connaît » (Touré 1996). En dépit de ces témoignages, les djinns sont capricieux, et leur aide comporte souvent un prix à payer. Parfois, ils se contentent de reprendre leurs faveurs et de disparaître. Parfois, comme dans les histoires européennes où quelqu'un vend son âme au diable, ou dans les histoires colombiennes de « billets de banque baptisés » (Taussig 1980), de tels pactes faustiens engendrent des faveurs sordides. Chez les Kuranko, un djinn qui vous a fait une faveur peut réclamer la vie de l'un de vos enfants ou de vos parents en retour. Habitants premiers de la terre, les djinns peuvent autoriser les êtres humains à exploiter celle-ci à condition qu'ils leur fassent des offrandes sacrificielles au début de chaque saison agricole, mais même dans ce cas un djinn peut faire en sorte qu'un cultivateur se coupe avec une machette ou se blesse avec une houe. Un djinn peut prendre possession d'une personne, le rendant fou ou provoquant chez lui des crises de délire. Un djinn peut apparaître dans un rêve sous la forme d'une belle femme (*succubus*) ou d'un bel homme (*incubus*), mais le contact sexuel peut alors provoquer l'impuissance ou la stérilité.

Ce qui est en jeu ici, c'est un combat existentiel entre ce qui est simplement donné à une personne – son rôle, son tempérament (*yugi*), ou ses droits de naissance – et ce que cette personne désire au-delà de ce qu'elle a ou de qui elle est. L'opposition entre ville et brousse induit une opposition entre des forces centripète et centrifuge – la première trouvant son expression dans les coutumes et les conventions, la seconde dans des possibilités antinomiques. La nature, dans le sens où j'ai utilisé ce terme, signifie un *no-man's land* entre le connu et l'inconnu, la nécessité et le désir. Alors que tout système social exige une conformité soumise à des protocoles ancestraux, la vie sociale deviendrait vide de sens si chaque personne n'était pas consciente de sa capacité de créer le monde social. Cette capacité ne s'appuie pas seulement sur ce qui a fait ses preuves, mais aussi sur des rencontres dangereuses avec des sources de pouvoir extra-sociales – des esprits de la brousse, des lieux sauvages, des expériences limitrophes.

Qu'un être trouve son origine non pas seulement dans sa position mais dans sa disposition, dans sa place au sein de l'ordre établi des choses autant que dans sa relation avec des forces qui n'ont pas été apprivoisées, domesti-

quées ou socialisées, ne pourrait être mieux illustré que dans les cas de possession par des esprits, car, comme d'innombrables études ethnographiques l'ont montré, c'est en s'autorisant à être vaincu, pris, infiltré ou chevauché par des pouvoirs sauvages que l'on découvre les ressources pour continuer à vivre face aux difficultés et à l'oppression quotidiennes. Ainsi, dans le passionnant récit de Janice Boddy sur le culte Zar au Nord musulman arabophone du Soudan, nous apprenons que les humains et les esprits *zar* existent dans des mondes parallèles mais contigus, ce dernier « dans le domaine de la nature » et normalement invisible aux humains (1989:3), sensiblement comme les djinns kuranko. Par le biais de la possession, les femmes soudanaises sont tirées hors de leurs univers de vie quotidiens, transcendant leur être habituel, et voyant le monde avec des yeux nouveaux :

Quand les tambours battent et battent, tu n'entends rien, tu entends de loin, tu te sens loin. Tu as quitté le *midan*, le domaine du zar. Et tu vois, tu as une vision. Tu vois avec les yeux d'un Européen. Ou tu vois avec les yeux d'un Africain de l'Ouest, selon de quel esprit il s'agit. Tu vois alors comme un Européen voit – tu vois d'autres Européens, des radios, des bouteilles de Pepsi, des télévisions, des réfrigérateurs, des voitures, une table garnie de nourriture. Tu oublies qui tu es, ton village, ta famille, tu ne sais plus rien de ta vie. Tu vois avec les yeux de l'esprit jusqu'à ce que les tambours s'arrêtent. [Boddy 1989:350]

Comme les travaux de Janice Boddy le suggèrent, le monde des esprits est de plus en plus touché par la mondialisation, si bien que la nature marque non pas simplement la frontière entre la ville et la brousse, mais aussi entre des mondes locaux et globaux. On constate aussi l'élargissement des horizons par les changements dans les fantasmes de sorcellerie en Sierra Leone. Au lieu de la prétendue sorcière qui imagine pérégriner la nuit sous une forme impalpable ou animale et pomper avec ses consœurs la substance vitale d'une victime assoupie dans une autre région du pays, les sorcières contemporaines imaginent voyager par un avion de sorcières dans ce que Rosalind Shaw appelle « l'espace global illimité et attirant » (Shaw 2002:202) :

Elles [décrivent] souvent une grande ville prospère où des gratte-ciels sont accolés à des maisons d'or et de diamants; des Mercedes-Benz descendent des routes magnifiques; des vendeurs de rue font rôtir des « brochettes » (kebabs) de viande humaine; des boutiques vendent des « robes de sorcières » stylées qui trans-

forment celles qui les portent en des animaux prédateurs dans le monde humain (no-ru); des magasins d'électronique vendent des enregistreuses et des télévisions (et, plus récemment, des magnétoscopes et des ordinateurs); et des aéroports de sorcières dépêchent des avions de sorcières – des avions si rapides, m'a-t-on dit une fois, qu' « ils peuvent faire un aller-retour à Londres en moins d'une heure » – vers des destinations partout sur la Terre. [Shaw 2002:202]

De tels voyages imaginaires peuvent bien nous paraître bizarres – de même que les tentatives des Kuku Yalanji d'éloigner les orages en brûlant des branches de xanthorrhée. Mais les êtres humains ont tendance à penser et à agir de façons remarquablement similaires quand ils sont confrontés aux limites de ce qu'ils peuvent comprendre ou contrôler. À chaque fois que nos actions sont inefficaces ou contrecarrées, et que notre entendement est mis en échec, nous avons typiquement recours à nos propres émotions, corps, et pensées pour changer notre *expérience* du monde que nous ne pouvons changer. Nous évoluons ainsi constamment entre des modes réel et imaginaire d'engagement avec le monde, selon ce que permettent les circonstances et nos propres capacités. Ce type de revirement opportuniste entre une action directe et une inaction stratégique rappelle la distinction d'Aristote (1941) entre liberté d'action « active » et « passive » (*Métaphysiques*, Livre V, ch.12), la première faisant référence à une action d'un sujet sur le monde qui change celui-ci d'une façon ou d'une autre, la seconde à un assujettissement du sujet aux actions des autres – celui-ci souffrant, recevant, étant mû ou transformé par des forces extérieures.

La crise environnementale à venir

Les inquiétudes très répandues en Occident concernant le réchauffement de la planète, la dégradation de l'environnement et les technologies polluantes ont donné naissance à de nombreuses formes d'éco-activisme et d'éco-philosophie, sans compter une abondante littérature qui célèbre les vertus du monde naturel tout en décriant sa profanation. Dans le monde universitaire, les études environnementales sont un secteur en expansion dans les facultés de sciences pures comme de sciences humaines.

En mars 2006, l'un des doyens de ce domaine – le scientifique et environnementaliste nippo-canadien David Suzuki – a reçu la médaille Roger Tory Peterson du Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Harvard. Dans un discours de réception passionné, Suzuki fit remarquer que nous étions arrivés à « un moment remarquable dans l'histoire de la vie sur Terre » et appela son public, ainsi que le monde développé en général, à adopter un programme environne-

mental basé sur des notions de durabilité et de responsabilité. Dans la conception globale de l'humanité de Suzuki, son invocation de notre capacité à déterminer notre destin collectif, et un idéalisme qui présume de l'existence d'un point de mire futur à partir duquel il sera possible de juger notre époque, on peut voir un peu de l'*hybris* intellectuelle à laquelle des auteurs aussi différents que Sartre et Bourdieu se sont attaqués. Pour Sartre, le style ampoulé des intellectuels est un signe de surcompensation pour leur *manque* de pouvoir politique ou social (1983:229), un argument qui fait écho à l'idée que l'engouement romantique pour la nature était une façon d'échapper à la fange ingérable de la vie urbaine industrielle. Quant à Bourdieu, sa question est: « Comment peut-on éviter de succomber à ce rêve d'omnipotence, qui tend à susciter des accès d'identification aveugle à de grands rôles héroïques? » Comment peut-on éviter ce que Schopenhauer appelait la « comédie pédante » – l'absurde prétention de croire qu'il n'y a pas de limites à la pensée, de voir « un commentaire académique comme un geste politique ou la critique de textes comme un acte de résistance, et de vivre des révolutions dans l'ordre des mots comme des révolutions radicales dans l'ordre des choses » (2000:2).

Ma propre position est quelque peu plus compréhensive à l'égard des intellectuels publics comme David Suzuki, bien qu'elle n'en soit pas moins critique, dans la mesure où je rejette l'idée que la pensée éclairée opère exclusivement du point de vue de la raison.

Pour ceux qui se consacrent à sauver la planète de la catastrophe écologique, il peut sembler scandaleux qu'un anthropologue comme moi remette en question la rationalité de leurs actions ou du savoir scientifique sur lequel leurs actions sont fondées. Plus outrageant encore serait d'insinuer que leurs actions puissent être comparées aux actions magiques de, disons, ces Kuku Yalanji qui tentent d'éloigner un orage imminent en faisant brûler des branches de xanthorrhée. Mais la comparaison *se doit* d'être faite, ne serait-ce que sur la base du fait qu'il y a, dans les deux cas, peu de chances que les actions envisagées écartent effectivement les forces qui menacent les univers de vie locaux ou planétaires en question. En d'autres mots, bien que l'action humaine soit toujours sujette à une rationalisation – dans le cas des Kuku Yalanji, l'argument selon lequel les gens peuvent agir sur les forces de la nature parce que ces forces sont fondamentalement sociales et donc susceptibles d'être contrecarrées par les actions humaines; dans le cas occidental, l'argument voulant que les gens soient en mesure d'éviter un désastre environnemental en utilisant des preuves scientifiques et des processus démocratiques pour faire pression sur les gouvernements pour qu'ils changent leurs politiques –

l'action humaine est motivée en premier lieu par un impératif existentiel de faire quelque chose plutôt que rien, et c'est seulement secondairement que se pose la question de savoir quelle *techné* intellectuelle, culturelle ou rituelle est la plus sensée ou la plus raisonnable. Parce que nos actions naissent d'un *besoin* d'agir avant de naître d'une quelconque conception de *comment* agir, toute action est dans une certaine mesure « magique », ce qui veut dire qu'aucune action ne peut être entièrement expliquée par une référence aux modèles invoqués pour la justifier. Conséquemment, l'action suppose un élément de foi (on agit sans être absolument certain du résultat), tout en affectant le monde *de façon oblique*, via la propre subjectivité de l'acteur. L'aspect ritualiste ou magique de l'action implique deux mouvements. D'abord, l'échelle du macrocosme – le lieu, dans mes exemples, des orages et du réchauffement planétaire – est réduite à l'échelle du microcosme, qui est notre environnement le plus immédiat, le monde à notre portée, le monde qu'on a sous la main. Ensuite, en modifiant notre expérience au sein de ce monde immédiat, nous créons en nous un sentiment d'avoir fait une différence pour *le* monde. C'est en agissant sur notre propre nature – en se montrant inquiet, en angoissant publiquement, en prenant la parole, en affirmant notre solidarité avec d'autres âmes dans le même état d'esprit – que nous transformons notre expérience de la nature extérieure qui est, en fait, beaucoup plus résistante à notre entendement et à notre contrôle que nous ne sommes disposés à l'admettre.

C'est précisément comme cela que Bronislaw Malinowski explique l'efficacité des incantations magiques trobriandaises. Bien que les charmes soient adressés à un jardin nouvellement planté, à un canoë voguant sur l'océan, ou à un outil agricole, ce sont les effets *immédiats subjectifs* des incantations qui comptent réellement – la façon dont elles complètent l'action en donnant de la confiance, en amenant de l'optimisme, en augmentant l'espoir, ou en suscitant de la discipline. Comme l'observe Malinowski, « c'est vers la nature humaine que la force est dirigée » (Malinowski 1922:401).

Comme les habitants des Îles Trobriand, nous avons indéniablement besoin de croire que nos actions peuvent avoir des effets réels sur le monde plus large, mais les transformations planétaires sont le produit d'une telle multitude de causes et d'effets imprévus que le pouvoir de l'action humaine corrective consciente est beaucoup plus limité que nous ne l'admettons. Mais un tel scepticisme quant à la portée de notre responsabilité et pouvoir d'action ne devrait pas être interprété comme un argument contre l'action et la parole humaines, dont la nécessité à la fois précède et transcende notre connaissance de leurs

conséquences. Nous devons agir, même si nos actions ne font que créer l'illusion que quelque chose a été fait, que des changements se sont produits, que ce soit à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur.

C'est pour cette raison que j'ai identifié la nature à la ligne de frontière entre les mondes que nous connaissons le mieux et les mondes que nous connaissons le moins, entre les sphères locales où notre parole et nos actions font effectivement une différence et les sphères qui se trouvent largement au-delà de notre portée, même si nous aimerions qu'il en soit autrement. La nature n'est donc pas, comme Aristote l'avait définie, une essence (*Métophysiques*, Livre V, ch. V), ancrée à l'intérieur ou distante à l'extérieur, mais un seuil sur lequel la pensée et le langage vacillent et le mystère commence. Si quelque chose est dans notre nature, c'est le fait que nous sommes condamnés à vivre entre deux eaux, aussi défaits par ce que nous faisons, pensons et disons, que forcés d'agir, conduits à comprendre, et tenus de parler.

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Note

- 1 Ma notion de frontière ou de limite implique un seuil ou un horizon où les notions usuelles de l'individu, de l'agence et du monde se désintègrent, où la vie est menacée, mais pourtant où l'individu ou les individus pourraient se revitaliser ou renaître. Les concepts de borderlinking de Brache Lichtenberg Ettinger et la notion d'expérience limite de Michel Foucault sont comparables à la notion de situation limite de Jaspers puisque la possibilité de voir le monde renouvelé est inextricablement liée à des situations dans lesquelles nos modes de pensées et de paroles habituels sont étirés jusqu'à leurs limites voire même radicalement interrompus. Selon Foucault, « qu'est-ce que c'est que la pensée philosophique sinon que la réflexion critique de la pensée sur elle-même », « en quoi consiste la pensée sinon dans l'effort de savoir comment et dans quelle mesure il pourrait être possible de penser différemment au lieu de légitimer ce qu'on connaît déjà? » (Foucault 1990:8-9; voir Jaspers 2000:97, et Ettinger 2002:223-224).

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Urban Botanical Gardens and the Aesthetics of Ecological Learning: A Theoretical Discussion and Preliminary Insights from Montreal's Botanical Garden

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Abstract: Although gardens have received relatively little attention from environmental anthropologists, this article suggests that they have great potential as sites for studying the complexity and versatility of human relations with non-humans. By means of a theoretical discussion illustrated through the example of the Botanical Gardens of Montreal (Quebec, Canada), this article scrutinizes the kinds of ecological learning that can occur in urban botanical gardens. It explains how the ephemerality of gardens ultimately leads to the emergence of an ecological aesthetic of attachment, relationship and holism whereby human selves come to conceive of their existence as inextricably linked to non-human selves.

Keywords: ecological learning, holistic aesthetics, botanical gardens

Résumé : Les anthropologues de l'environnement ont accordé relativement peu d'attention aux jardins. Pourtant, comme le soutient cet article, ces lieux ont un fort potentiel en ce qui concerne l'étude de la complexité et de la versatilité des rapports entre les humains et les non humains. Au moyen d'une discussion théorique basée sur l'exemple du Jardin Botanique de Montréal (Québec, Canada), cet article scrute les types d'apprentissages écologiques pouvant se produire dans un jardin botanique en milieu urbain. Il explique la façon dont le caractère éphémère des jardins mène ultimement à l'émergence d'une esthétique écologique de l'attachement, de la relation et de l'holisme par lesquels les êtres humains en viennent à concevoir leur existence comme inextricablement liée aux êtres non-humains.

Mots-clés : apprentissage écologique, esthétique holistique, jardins botaniques

Introduction

They always called it Magic and indeed it seemed like it in the months that followed—the wonderful months—the radiant months—the amazing ones. Oh!, the things which happened in that garden! If you have never had a garden you cannot understand, and if you have had a garden you will know that it would take a whole book to describe all that came to pass there. [Burnett 1998:282]

In this article I address the intersection of human–non-human natures in the context of urban botanical gardens in North America, and more specifically at the botanical gardens of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. In so doing, I contribute to efforts within environmental anthropology to scrutinize the myriad of socio-culturally situated processes that inform the interactive formation of human knowledge of non-human systems. Nevertheless, I take this important body of literature further by arguing that even though the context of botanical gardens—and indeed gardens in general—has received little attention by environmental anthropologists, it has enormous potential for a better understanding of the complexity and depth of human–environment relations. As such, this article represents a small but significant contribution to anthropological engagements with human–nature interfaces.

To be sure, there exists an extensive anthropological literature on the human ecology of gardens in non-urban and non-Western settings that came out of a tradition of anthropological research in the Indonesian archipelago (for example, Eyde 1983; Rappaport 1968; Sillitoe 1983). The gardens in these studies, however, are qualitatively different from the types of gardens with which I am concerned in this article. Specifically, the gardens that interested Oceanist anthropologists are said to either mimic or to be, to a great extent, embedded in surrounding ecosystems. As more recently described by Tsing (2004),

there is significant ecological and aesthetic continuity between these “farm” gardens and the rainforest ecosystems in which they have been established.

Western gardens, by contrast, and urban botanical gardens in particular, are most commonly described as quintessentially non-nature. This perspective is understandable, since these gardens are often enclosed by high walls and surrounded by (sub)urban landscapes with which they appear to have no continuity whatsoever. Moreover, botanical gardens bring together assemblages of plants that do not exist together in natural ecosystems, which are manicured into fanciful shapes, and which are frequently displayed according to historical relationships between colonial powers and colonized peoples. In the context of environmental anthropology’s constructivist turn, therefore, it should come as no surprise that these types of gardens are usually described as modernist abominations in which nature must submit to colonial fantasies of conquest and mastery (see for example Verdi 2004; Sharma 2006).

There is no doubt that botanical gardens often do reflect modern values of control and colonial fantasies of conquest. In spite of this, however, gardens are the only spaces that many urban dwellers have for engaging with non-human natures—regardless of the extent to which humans have already transformed these natures. As Cooper contends (2003), Western gardens are places where people living in cities can consider, negotiate and perform relationships between human and non-human ontologies, thus setting limitations and creating possibilities for what can be perceived and known. He further argues that these types of relationships and performances can occur in spite of the ephemeral nature of urban botanical gardens. In this article I go one step further, showing that the ephemeral nature of botanical gardens is actually essential to these relationships and performances. In other words, I contend that these relationships and performances occur not in spite of, but rather precisely because of, the ephemeral nature of gardens.

At first sight, this argument appears to contradict classic philosophical discussions of ontology, which assume that ontologies are either fixed or that they unfold around stable and clearly identifiable forms. As Butler (1993) demonstrates, however, not only do such fixed ontologies not actually exist, but believing in them has the effect of rendering invisible the reality of actually existing relationships. The ephemeral nature of gardens makes them especially promising places for to people move beyond the illusion of stable forms; in this case away from conceptualizing nature as an object that is fundamentally separate from humans.

In ephemeral contexts, there are no interactions among fixed forms but rather complex relationships among dynamic systems. Botanical gardens may appear as fixed inert landscapes and indeed this is how they are experienced by many of the people who visit them. For the gardeners, however, what occurs at the juncture of human and non-human interactions is experienced as a constantly changing living space in which the non-human has its own ideas of what it wants to do and how. What results, therefore, is a process of constant negotiation between gardeners and plants, in which the gardener learns which forms of interactions with plants allow them to bring a particular garden into existence. It is, therefore, through the ephemeral that the apparent permanence of the garden is brought into existence. As a result, there is a constantly shifting tension between the two. Negotiating this tension teaches that human and non-human ontologies are mutually constituting and this is what educational programs at botanical gardens can potentially instill in urban dwellers. For these reasons, in this paper I argue that gardens may even promote the type of environmental perception that entails a recognition of degrees of shared ontology between humans and all the other biological entities that inhabit gardens (Bateson 1979). I will also contend that consequently gardens constitute crucial venues for child and adult ecologically-sensitized education in urban centres.

Indeed, the main purpose of this article is to develop a general exploratory approach to the kinds of deeper ecological learning that visitors and gardeners may potentially experience in gardens. It stems from the recognition that many educational programs at botanical gardens share the premise that by learning to cultivate or to actively appreciate gardens, people acquire sets of mental and practical skills that promote the aesthetic appreciation of “Nature.” I am particularly interested in accounting for the kinds of gardens and gardening experiences that promote types of transformative experiences whereby human-selves come to appreciate the extent to which the nature of being human is at once similar and different from being a plant, a bee, a tree, a flower or a bird for example. It is this type of transformative learning—whereby human and non-humans selves become implicated in one another—that I call an aesthetic process of ecological learning. In turn, this entails the emergence of an aesthetic of attachment and relationship: an aesthetic where the person recognizes their ecological embeddedness. In other words, I argue that when one is in the presence of ecological learning, rather than more narrow forms of instrumental (“how to”) practical learning, the very notion of what constitutes a self changes into

a holistic concept of the self—forming a basic cognitive, emotional, sensorial gestalt—that is in turn understood as always relationally and dynamically connected to the surroundings of which the person is a constitutive part.

In this context, the aesthetics of ecological learning is conceptualized as a twofold process through which persons learn about the biological and ecological processes that take place in gardens, and in so doing, they open themselves to learning about the living patterns that connect (Bateson 1979; Ingold 2004a, 2004b) human beings to all the other species that inhabit gardens. This is an important pursuit for environmental anthropologists, as it has often been proposed that such appreciation increases the likelihood that people will become stewards (Ingold 2000; Milton 2002) not only of the gardens in which they dwell but also of other environments with which they subsequently engage. It is hoped—and I believe with good reason—that deep aesthetic appreciation of one environment, even in the case of the highly landscaped garden, is transferable to other very different contexts.

In engaging these questions, I will follow a non-conventional understanding of what constitutes environmental learning, knowledge and teaching. In the present context, these are understood not as instances of instrumental knowledge transmission, but, as Catherine and Gregory Bateson advanced (Bateson and Bateson 1988; Bateson 1979), as processes where issues of epistemology (the fundamentals of knowing) and issues of ontology (the conceptualization of being) intersect. Indeed, Gregory Bateson (1979) and Catherine Bateson (Bateson and Bateson 1988; Bateson 2004) introduced the theory of learning that informs my analysis of the educational intents of Montreal's Botanical Gardens in this article. Basically, the two anthropologists developed their work as an alternative to a branch of behavioural science that explained learning almost exclusively in terms of conditioning, the acquisition of bodily skills and instrumental memorization. The Batesons argued that human beings are also capable of "deutero learning." Or that, in simpler words, humans "learn how to learn" (Bateson and Bateson 1988). This is the type of learning that emerges as people develop the capability to be responsive to the feedbacks that are produced by changes in the environments—and relationships—of which they are a part. This entails not only the purposeful adjustment of habitual embodied practices and thinking habits according to perceived contextual alterations, but also an awareness of the perceptual shifts that this carries. This notion of learning is particularly relevant in the context of the ephemeral reality of gardens where plants, trees, flowers, insects, worms (to name a few of its constituent inhabitants) undergo constant change.

While the discussion that follows is predominantly theoretical, I illuminate my theoretical discussion and conceptual points with substantive descriptions of scholarly studies and accounts of gardening activities, as well as with materials I collected on three educational programs at Montreal's Botanical Gardens (MBG). Section 2 of this article provides a general anthropological context for exploring the issue of human–environment engagements, which I adapt for the study of botanical gardens. Section 3, in turn, provides a brief survey of sociological and philosophical studies of urban gardens on the basis of which I suggest anthropologists could expand their approaches in order to contribute to these studies with innovative understandings of how learning takes place in urban gardens. Section 4 takes this line of investigation even further to suggest a scholarly approach more specifically devoted to ecological learning at botanical gardens and which I subsequently apply in the final substantive section of this paper (section 5) concerning the Botanical Gardens of Montreal.

In so doing, I build on, and take further, current sociological and anthropological studies of gardens and gardening (see Bhatti 2003, 2006; Bhatti and Church 2000; Chapman and Hockey 1999; Morris 1996; Percival 2002; Sime 1993) to provide a much needed discussion of the deeper forms of learning that often take place at botanical gardens. In a world of unprecedented environmental crisis, it is critically important to account, as the present article does, for the emergence of the types of ecological aesthetics whereby human selves are conceived in essence as connected to the non-human selves with whom they share their existence (see also Berleant 1997; Carlson 2000). To be sure, as Harries-Jones says of our current attempts to overcome human–nature dualism, "ecological aesthetics has a key role to play in overcoming the apart-ness of the industrial sciences from the rhythms and patterns of biology and in awakening our senses to a perception of the destructiveness and obscenities of this apart-ness" (2005:67).

A Brief Theoretical Discussion of Botanical Gardens and Their Unique Potential for Learning

In Western societies, strongly influenced by Judeo-Christian world views, the Garden of Eden occupies central stage in cosmological explanations for the existences and destinies of billions of people. Longing and searching for "paradise lost" has justified and legitimized the institutionalization of religious belief, practice and political organization. Wars have been fought to ensure that "the right people," those elected by God, are bestowed the honour

of ascending to paradise upon their death. Even our current environmental crisis is often presented around themes of gardens of paradise. The solution to global climatic change is often discussed in terms of restoring the planet to its Eden-like state—that which humans *supposedly* enjoyed until their industrial, scientific, modernist, Faustian downfall. And yet, we know so little about gardens and how much they tell us about the ways in which human–environment relations in such places promote deep forms of learning about the inextricability of human and non-human natures.

Throughout this article, I will illuminate the unique nature of ecological learning at gardens through an engaged review of anthropological and sociological studies that support Ingold's (2000) hypothesis that "dwelling," actively engaging with an environment, accentuates our capability to empathize with "nature" thus dismantling human–nature duality. He demonstrates that human environmental knowledge results from active engagement with biophysical surroundings, and from learning how to be attentive to the clues and signs by which environments—in this case gardens—open up "creative receptivity" (Cooper 2003). Relying on detailed ethnographic information from hunter-gatherer cultures, Ingold reports that "humans... are brought forth into existence as organism-persons within a world that is inhabited by beings of manifold kinds, both human and non-human" (Ingold 2000:5). Ingold's work is thus directly applicable to the discussion of human environmental relations in landscaped gardens.

I will also build on and expand Milton's (2002) argument that environmental commitment depends on emotional attachment. The two interrelated concepts of "dwelling" and "emotional attachment" underscore the significance of understanding the ways in which environmental knowledge and environmental commitment stem from sensorial and emotional interactions with "nature" (however constructed such "nature" may be). As such, they are highly pertinent and easily applicable to the study of human–environment interactions that take place in gardens with educational mandates.

In spite of the fundamental importance of these works, however, a rigorous and effective understanding of ecological learning cannot rest at accounting for the sensorial and emotional dimensions of ecological knowledge and learning. Indeed, the major challenge "in any ecological aesthetics is to find ways of delving beneath the surface of direct sensory experience of nature to include the less visible aspects of natural history, such as diversity, complexity, and species interactions in ecosystems" (Harries-Jones 2005:70). This gestalt perspective advocated by

Harries-Jones both engages with and expands upon the sensorial-emotional perspective advocated by Ingold and Milton. This is essential to developing more holistic approaches to ecological learning and knowing at botanical gardens (see also Ingold 2004b).

In order to effectively expand on the emotional-sensorial perspective, two additional analytical processes are required: (1) understanding the ways in which emotions and sensoria affect one another; and (2) accounting for the ways in which culture, sociality and historicity affect people's sensorial and emotional experiences through time and vice versa, how sensorial and emotional processes become part of cultural, social, political and historical processes (for example, Classen 1998; Howes 2005). These two analytical processes are essential for a holistic theorization of ecological learning as advocated by Gregory Bateson and Catherine Bateson, which in turn is crucially important in the context of our current environmental crisis and can be readily observed in the context of learning in botanical gardens.

The main theoretical contribution of this article will be to illuminate these processes of ecological learning in the context of urban landscaped gardens. As Bhatti and Church (2001) have argued, the social sciences have not yet engaged the full potential of gardens for addressing a series of crucial environmental questions: is it possible—and to what extent—to conceive of gardens as spaces of transformative knowledge-acquisition, whereby people develop an aesthetic appreciation of "nature" that allows them to overcome human–nature dualisms? Can gardens be understood as dwelling spaces where urban citizens pursue the kinds of ecological in-skillment that lead to unified perceptions of human and ecological environments? Is this distinct notion of ecological learning a potential step toward teaching urban children and adults about human–environment holism? And finally, what is the potential for such transformative aesthetic appreciations to translate into ethical commitments to environments and into concomitant ecological practices?

In relation to all of the above, Cooper (2003, 2006) argues that *some* gardens constitute not only objects of profound thoughtful appreciation, but they do so in a unique fashion. Contrary to the earlier perspectives that Cooper challenges, he argues that gardens are fundamentally distinguishable from art *and* from pristine nature since in gardens falsely assumed schisms between subject–object or human–nature, do not hold true. Given its relevance for the present article, let us consider this line of reasoning a bit more closely.

First, as Cooper argues, in promoting integrated multi-sensory, emotional, cognitive, and meditative per-

ception, gardens are far more complete—*gesamt*—than any form of art—*Kunst* (Cooper 2003:105). Second, gardens should not be seen as imitations or symbolic representations of “wilderness” which, as Cooper points out, amounts to a very poor conceptualization of mimesis (Cooper 2003:107). Consequently, the experiences that most people have of gardens are not reducible to the expression of meanings that derive from socially constructed semiotic conventions for the representation of nature. In this sense gardens do not communicate specific messages about human–nature unity—or lack thereof. As we will see below, if gardens do communicate “something” about humans and nature, they do so at a much deeper epistemological level whereby the very notion of what constitutes a human self is transformed to be conceived—in essence—as part and parcel of a relational and dynamic process that inextricably connects humans and non-humans.

For Cooper then, what is unique about some gardens, rendering them objects of a serious and distinctive form of aesthetic–environmental appreciation, is that they evoke imagination, possibilities and connections, thereby allowing people to consider things that they would not normally consider in their day-to-day lives. This is what he calls the “penumbral capacity” of gardens. He argues that this “penumbral capacity” of gardens provides an “aptness for evocations of what would otherwise be difficult, even impossible, to render present and palpable” (Cooper 2003:109). The learning that can take place in gardens is therefore qualitatively different from the learning that can take place in learning contexts that are more concrete and structured. This argument builds on the assertion that the artistic production of gardens is best described as a form of “creative receptivity.” Quoting from Gabriel Marcel, Cooper explains that the artist is “creative” because there is no “debasement of [themselves] in dull imitation of the empirical world” while at the same time they are also “receptive,” in the sense that there is the humble recognition that “even our most creative efforts owe to something that [is] granted to us as a ‘gift’” (Cooper 2003:110).

As I understand it, Cooper’s argument implies three sets of aesthetics that intersect in gardens: (1) the ecological aesthetics of organic species; (2) the aesthetics of the gardener who relies on such “nature-given aesthetics” and on dynamic environmental processes to compose particular living landscapes; (3) the aesthetics of the garden’s visitors. I would like to emphasize that even though there is an element of learned embodied aesthetic-sensitivity (Classen 1998) to something that is partly “given,” “creative receptivity” occurs both in producing *and* in exper-

riencing the garden.¹ I suggest that the unsettled impositions of these three aesthetics are the bases of the “penumbral capacity” of gardens, or what I would call their evocative-allegorical potential. In fact, it is only insofar as the intersections of these aesthetic realms open up—rather than close—experiential, cognitive, and semiotic *possibilities* that gardens spark “creative receptivity.” In so arguing, Cooper allows us to contend that it is by stimulating “creative receptivity” that *some* gardens become objects of serious, distinct appreciation and embodied sensitivity. Such reflection, in turn, brings forth human–nature unities as they manifest themselves in our awareness that “our activity [aesthetic appreciation] originates neither from outside nor from the inside: self and other are co-originating through mutual expression” (Cooper 2003:111). In fact, a core goal of gardens that promote deep ecological learning is to increase awareness and responsiveness to the patterns that link the aforementioned processes of co-construction.

This process of co-construction emerges from the fact that “the garden is one of the most ephemeral of human creations[, s]ubject to everyday vagary of the weather, to changes in fashion and changes of ownership” (Mosser and Teyssot 1991:11). The constantly changing nature of gardens recruits people to act. Because of it, there is no predictable outcome to how gardens work. As such, it is necessary for people to pay very close attention to the unfolding of events and to fine-tune their understanding and actions to the plants. As Latour (1991) has argued, interactions between people and plants (and other non-human species) creates a hybrid field that is neither human nor plant, but both at the same time. Within these fields, the actions of either side have effects on the other side. From this perspective, gardens may very well be the result of human constructions of nature, but this does not equate with human control of nature. Herein lies a great opportunity to overcome human–nature dualism and to understand the mutual causality that connects humans and non-human beings (see also Neves-Graca 2005). In the next section I look at empirical examples from the social sciences that reveal these dynamics in action.

Building a Social-Scientific Approach to Dwelling, Learning and Environmental Appreciation in Gardens

Social science approaches to ecological learning in gardens provide theoretical and empirical illumination of Latour’s concept of hybridity, which revolves around actor-networks that connect ontologies that may initially appear to be different or even incompatible. In fact, these ontologies only come into being through these networks

and in relation to one another. Emma Power, a cultural geographer, relies on actor-network theory and methods to overcome a series of human–nature binaries that are often present in scholarly approaches to gardens and gardening (Power 2005). The notion of “enrolment” is the key concept grounding Power’s analysis. Quoting Hitchings, Power reports that her focus on enrolment “describes a process through which actors attempt to enlist the interest or action of another so that their own desired performance can take place” (Power 2005:41). The data that Power collected by observing and interviewing 22 gardeners reveal growing levels of gardener reflexivity as gardeners engage with the highly dynamic and complex phenomena of plant, flower and tree growing. In the words of one of Power’s research participants, enrolling plant collaboration in gardening activity is rarely a straightforward process: “I put a lawn in and went out to a nursery and bought a whole lot of plants...stuck them in and half died” (Power 2005: 45). In fact, as another participant points out, in any successful garden, plants do as much enrolling of humans as do gardeners of plants: “each tree has individual needs in terms of water, sunlight, protection from the winds... all that sort of thing, and I’ve been learning all this sort of thing, year after year” (Power 2005:46).

Power’s ethnographic endeavours are in line with Cooper’s philosophical argument that “nature” and gardeners co-construct one another within the confines of the garden. Power’s contribution stems from her critique of scholarly accounts of gardens that “emphasize the triumph of human action over an inert and docile landscape” (Power 2005:39). She contends that if we are to fully understand the learning processes that supposedly take place in garden setting—the specific character and form of which have “received little attention within academic writing” (Power 2005:39)—it is essential that we also consider the agency of non-human entities. The main contribution of her research is to show that:

when gardening is understood to involve a dynamic engagement between human and non-human actors, gardens can no longer be read as simple reflections of human cultures and understandings. Rather, there are a myriad of non-human actors whose interactions with each other and the gardener contribute to the appearance of the garden and how gardeners understand and engage with the space. [Power 2005:49]

Bhatti and Church (2001) have accounted for private home gardens and gardening in order to explore the dynamics of human–environment relations. They reveal that gardens are ideal sites for understanding how lay

environmental knowledge develops and how human–nature connections are forged. This is another crucial step towards building a social-scientific approach to dwelling, learning and environmental appreciation in gardens. As Bhatti and Church explain, their approach uses “gardens as an everyday site for considering how human agency through routine practices connects with the sensory presence of nature...and how these connections are structured through broader economic, social and cultural processes” (Bhatti and Church 2001:366). In short, these authors raise two crucial points related to the theorization of ecological aesthetics: first, that it is in the actual practices of gardening that people learn about nature and how to face ecological dilemmas, ambiguities and opportunities (Bhatti and Church 2001: 370-374); second, that it is paramount to consider that the human–nature connections that people develop in the garden are to a great extent made possible, and sustained by, social relations with family and friends. In their words, “past and present social interactions are important in the construction of the garden not just as a leisure space but also as a site for understanding and sensing nature” (Bhatti and Church 2001:178).

The core argument here is that ecological sensitivity and commitment to environmental goals and values emerge not only out of dwelling and experiencing nature (however commoditized and under “control” this nature may be), but also through socializing with other individuals. I will return to this point in my discussion of ecological-educational programs at the MBG. For the moment though, I would like to stress its importance. What Bhatti and Church say is key not only for a rigorous social-scientific understanding of the unity of the sensory, emotional, cognitive and social processes in human–nature relations: it is also central to avoiding the deadly pitfalls of idealized transcendental notions of ecological aesthetics (see Biehl and Staudenmeier 1995).

As I stated above, these studies provide a solid scaffolding to develop an analytical model that accounts for ecological learning in gardens. However, I also proposed that I subscribe to a non-conventional understanding of ecological learning, one that promotes “the recognition of degrees of shared ontology between humans and all the other biological entities that inhabit gardens.” More specifically, I argue that ecological learning extends beyond Ingold’s (2000) situated “dwelling” and Milton’s contextual emotional attachment. I argue that ecological learning and the emergence of an aesthetic of relationship, holism and attachment amounts to a transformative experience whereby the self becomes deeply aware of the continuum that exists between self and environment. In ecological learning, human selves become aware that their

actions and existence are not separate from those of the non-humans with whom they engage and interact. Thus, the very conceptualization of “self” is transformed into a gestalt where self-connected-to-surrounding is the basic unit of perception and action. Following Gregory Bateson, I call this holistic form of awareness “ecological aesthetics.” In the section that follows therefore, I will provide a brief discussion of the notion of ecological aesthetics in relation to the issue of ecological learning as well as to the more specific development of educational projects designed to bring forth integrated views of self and nature.

The Aesthetics of Ecological Learning

This section follows Cooper’s (2003, 2006) proposition that some gardens provide opportunities for “profound” ecological learning to occur. In the field of anthropology, Bateson and Bateson (1988) offer the most sophisticated discussions of such “serious” learning. Therefore, this section relies mainly on their contributions.

Catherine Bateson is no stranger to the serious and profound kinds of learning that can, and do, take place in gardens. Recounting the story of her arrival in Tehran with her husband and her two-year-old daughter in 1972, Bateson relies on the experiences she shared in a Persian garden to tell us about important lessons she and her daughter learned that day. In that garden, mother and daughter observed the ritual slaughter of a goat. This was, in and of itself, a very new experience for both of them. But part of the newness of that experience was the fact that the entire garden in which they were—from the geometrical patterns of the landscaping, to the plants that inhabited it, to the ways in which garden and non-garden were clearly demarcated—was a reflection of a cosmology that differed from that which Catherine and her daughter had known in the United States. Nevertheless, as much as mother and daughter may have been taken aback with the differences that separated guests from hosts in that garden, participating-observing the ritual they came to see that beyond the surface of difference there lay a commonality expressed in the desire to learn how self and other were all at once similar and dissimilar. For Bateson and her daughter, these were lessons about themselves, their relationship, about the people of their new home-country, about how to live with—and even transcend—cultural difference. She tells us:

That brief encounter in a Persian garden offered its participants many kinds of experience. There was room for hostility, anxiety, for fear of strangeness and distaste at reminders of the flesh and of mortality. There

was room for awe in the presence of humankind’s transcendent visions imposing its abstract geometries...The sacred was represented and so was the organic, intimacy and strangeness...With so many layers of possibility, there was room for a great deal of learning, but reason too for rejecting learning. [Bateson 1994:13]

Bateson’s understanding of knowledge is holistic, and process-based: she does not see knowledge as a series of pieces of instrumental information about the world that are then safely tucked away in people’s heads, but rather as a process that is inherent to this affair we call living (see also Belenky et al. 1997). Rather than talking about knowledge (as if “it” were an object), Bateson prefers to talk about “paths of attention and improvisation...across the life cycle” (1994:10). She urges us to look for the “habits of learning and the ways of building a repertoire from which to improvise, the metaphors that link one experience to another” (Bateson 1994:10).

One of the most interesting venues for investigating issues of ecological learning is to look at the ways in which children undergo such processes. Lindeman-Mathies (2005) for example, provides interesting insight into how children come to appreciate nature and to develop emotional attachments to non-human beings by means of school-related activities. Lindeman-Mathies researched the implementation of an educational program, “Nature on the Way to School,” meant to increase children’s aesthetic sensitivity to the common plants and animal species of their environments. Before the program was implemented, children were more attracted to exotic species and pets than they were to endemic plants and animals. The program consisted of a series of strategies by means of which teachers guided students in the “discovery” of the nature that surrounded their schools and villages. Most of these activities entailed outdoor trips in search of environmental clues about specific plants and animals. Or, as in the case of one particular task, students had to find an ordinary local plant of their preference and frame it in situ to draw to people’s attention to it, whereupon the student would explain what they found so special about that plant. The results are undisputable. Most children widened their knowledge of biodiversity by a considerable degree, and most became very fond of their newly discovered species (Lindeman-Mathies 2005).

While “Nature on the Way to School” was not situated within the confines of a garden, it bears great similarity to the educational intentions I have observed at MBG, and which I describe in further detail in the penultimate section of this paper. Lindeman-Mathies’ work shows how crucial a role aesthetics may play in ecological education, which is also at the core of some of MBG’s edu-

cational programs. Moreover, her work is a case for the importance of ecological teaching that results in increased appreciation of biodiversity and recognition of its value. This is most certainly crucial in view of our current global environmental predicament.

Thorp (2005, 2006) offers additional insight into possible strategies for conceptualizing a socio-anthropological approach to issues of environmental learning and appreciation in gardens. Her work documents an educational project at an elementary school in Michigan that consisted in transforming part of the school's grounds into a vegetable garden. The initial intention was to use the gardens to educate students about basic science, but it soon became obvious that deeper kinds of learning were taking place. Thorp 2006 contains descriptions of how the school's environmental learning project unfolded. It makes clear how important these lessons were for the children. A note from one of the student participants reads, "last year there was not even plants this year there are lots of plants there are pumpkins tomatoes and sun flours and there are butifl." Other pages of Thorp's book are rich in pictures of smiling children dwelling within the school garden, or proudly standing in front of their "crops."

Echoing Ingold (2000) and Milton's (2002) propositions, Thorp found that in dwelling within the garden environment, and in actively engaging with the processes of planting and growing "crops," the children learned about the connectedness of humans and nature. In Thorp's words "stepping out of the classroom and into the garden, we enter a place of rhythmic continuity. For our children, the garden offers an alternative to the dissociation and fragmentation of modernity" (2005:126). She thus comes to see gardens as spaces of connection among people, and between people and the garden, place and food. Her findings also show that children became highly committed to their gardens, as well as to the social relations they developed amongst themselves in order to cultivate the gardens.

In Thorp's words (2005), there is great hope in the potential that gardens have for ecological learning: "perhaps for these children this is their first small step toward constructing a cosmology of interdependence rather than of dominance. In that small patch of earth outside the cafeteria doors, students come to understand that by caring for the earth, the earth reciprocates with great bounty" (Thorp 2005:127). The story of these children's environmental learning in the school garden is a story about the unfolding of human-nature relations, beauty, community spirit, love, reciprocity and wonder (Thorp 2006). Judging by the enthusiasm with which some of the children spontaneously extended these experiences to

their own homes and through time, this is also a story about a growing commitment to sustain human-nature relations.

As we will see in the section that follows, educators at the MBG have aimed to teach children and adults a repertoire of experiences and lessons from which they may improvise successfully—sustainably—in their interactions with nature. This repertoire builds on metaphors of unity and connectedness and thus the attempt to develop new habits of learning that overcome human-nature dichotomies. Nevertheless, as the popular saying goes, old habits die hard and new habits are difficult to imagine. Thus, the challenge of implementing holistic ecological education programs occurs at two levels: first, there must be willingness to learn (Bateson 2004); second, this willingness must entail openness to a transformative process whereby the self becomes aware of the patterns that connect it to an arbitrarily conceived "other." It is here that the Batesons' notion of "deutero learning" becomes relevant (Bateson 1979; Bateson and Bateson 1988; see also Harries-Jones 1995 for a thorough discussion of Gregory Bateson's work).

The point is that deutero learning is a conceptualization of knowledge as a constantly unfolding process, and not as the static accumulation of bits of information about the world. One must consider, however, that some socio-cultural settings are likely to create incentives, opportunities and freedoms that encourage people to learn how to learn, while others might go as far as repressing deutero learning altogether. I suggest in the next section that, even though only at the implicit and non-articulated level, the central educational intention of the MBG is to promote the type of environment where deutero learning may indeed occur.

To the extent that deutero learning can be understood as "the type of learning that emerges as people develop the capability to be responsive to the feedbacks that are produced by changes in the environments—and relationships—of which they are part" (see above), it dovetails with Gregory Bateson's notion of aesthetics: a form of awareness and responsiveness to the pattern that connects humans with non-human creatures (Neves-Graca 2005). The challenge is that Bateson's notion of aesthetics surpasses the phenomenological level of the sensoria. While the etymological roots of the word aesthetics refers to our sensory capabilities, for Bateson aesthetics entails "responsiveness to the pattern which connects" which, in turn, entails knowledge that is not completely accessible at a phenomenological level. At the same time however, Bateson's notion of ecological aesthetics entails a much more holistic understanding of human-environment phe-

nomena in that it calls us to account for the inter-relatedness of two very wide gestalts: human sociocultural contexts and processes in relation to the historicity of ecosystems. Harries-Jones captures this issue most cogently when he argues that the challenge of ecological aesthetics is to be able to approach people's ecological responsiveness as entailing much more than direct sensorial and emotional experience by also encompassing, as cited above, "less visible aspects of natural history, such as diversity, complexity, and species interactions in ecosystems" (Harries-Jones 2005:70). Hence, Harries-Jones adds a warning for those of us who might feel inclined to, like fools, quickly rush into describing and analyzing such aesthetic experiences:

The conjoining patterns of change that make up biological order, make it difficult for any observer to construct any single point of reference and to rely upon that point of reference in order to appraise unity and interconnection in natural order. Not only are there multiple levels of connection in an ecosystem which have to be taken into account, but no observer is able to step outside an ecosystem and look back at it from above and so achieve some sort of visual look at its unity. [Harries-Jones 2005:70]

What kinds of educational programs then, might we consider as promoting awareness and responsiveness to the patterns that connect humans to non-humans while avoiding the pitfalls of producing simplistic maps for navigating such unchartable existence? The next section of this paper offers few preliminary clues.

Montreal's Botanical Gardens: Educational Intents

The idea of using botanical gardens as educational spaces overlaps with their *raison d'être*. Many of the Botanical Gardens I have explored in Europe and North America offer a range of educational programs for adults and children. It is rare, however, that one encounters educational programs based on the "aesthetics of ecological learning" as defined in the previous section. It is in this sense that gardens like the MBG are truly exceptional.

An example of an educational program at a botanical garden that approximates the mandate of an ecological-aesthetics educational agenda, is the Environmental Journalism Fellows Program,² which runs at the National Tropical Botanical Gardens (NTBG) in Kauai, Hawaii (Valenti and Tavana 2005). This program, focuses on educating journalists from around the world (though mostly from the U.S.) on issues pertaining to botanical sciences, ethnomedicine, biodiversity and sustainability. The core

objective of this program is to educate journalists who cover environmental issues on how it is that science is produced, as well as on the basic background that is necessary for a well informed understanding of scientific developments.

However, the Environmental Journalism Fellows Program seems to have also had a very "fruitful" unintended consequence. This occurred in a context where participants became aware that their own tendency to see "nature" and human as ontologically separate entities said more about their own taken-for-granted cultural views than about actual human-nature separateness. In the words of one participant: "the fellowship allowed us to escape the dualism of Western environmental thought by showing positive ways a culture uses the land for everyday purposes as models of humans interacting with nature while managing to respect and protect it" (Valenti and Tavana 2005:306). Some of the participants in this program developed a deep appreciation of the NTBG, which they describe as follows, "it stretched my mind...All my senses are charged giving me a sense of hope, with a new beginning" (Valenti and Tavana 2005:308).

Expanding on such transformative experiences so that people may increasingly recognize degrees of shared human-nature ontology is also at the core of the educational goals of the MBG. It would be impossible, nonetheless, for a single educational program to promote the type of aesthetic responsiveness I discussed in the previous section in relation to deuterio-ecological learning. In effect, since ecological aesthetics entails an irreducible gestalt, ecological knowledge can only stem from multifarious perceptual-emotional-cognitive engagement, appreciation and reflexivity.

The irreducibility of ecological aesthetics makes it inaccessible through single-level unilinear experience. This obviously relates to Harries-Jones' warning (see above) concerning the complexity of ecosystemic dynamics, especially their multi-level connections, which make it impossible for a knowing subject to stand outside an ecosystem to grasp and produce a map of its unity. Let us see then how a series of educational strategies at the MBG aim to increase people's responsiveness to patterns that connect people to nature without reducing such patterns either to bits of instrumental knowledge or giving people the illusion that they are about to "achieve some sort of visual [external, all encompassing] look at its unity" (Harries-Jones 2005:70).

MBG is organized such that it provides an array of contexts for learning about nature and human-environment relations. These include, for example, long-term hands-on gardening programs and a courtyard of the

senses where people are invited to explore their sensory connections to a diversity of plants. There are numerous spots to rest, meditate and appreciate beauty, day camps for youth, short-duration “theoretical” courses, horticultural workshops, thematic exhibitions, guided tours and, of course, the less visible labs where scientific research is conducted. People with “friends of the garden” membership also receive a quarterly magazine with detailed information about the learning projects that take place at the garden and information regarding specific horticultural and gardening topics.

Having talked to some of the people responsible for organizing these programs, I learned that ideally garden visitors or better said, garden “friends,” would experience the multifaceted nature of these numerous programs such as to approximate, as closely as possible, the conditions that are more likely to induce Bateson’s “responsiveness to the patterns which connect humans and nature.” In effect, during my conversations with those who are responsible for the gardens, I carefully explained my hypothesis concerning the relation between aesthetics and ecological learning. Much to my pleasant surprise, my ideas were not only understood quite immediately, but I also found my interlocutors to be in agreement with—even excited about—my interpretation of the garden’s educational intents.

For the sake of brevity, I will describe three educational projects that have been developed for children in order to show how each entails a particular subset of a holistically-orientated understanding of education pertaining to human–environment connectedness. These three examples are: “Butterflies Go Free,” “Halloween Pumpkins” and “Youth Gardens.” These are but a few examples of a much wider program so that, as I said, ideally the same children would participate in these and additional educational activities that take place at the gardens, *each proving a particular set of part-whole perspectives*.³

The “Butterflies Go Free” program⁴ consists of a temporary exhibition at the gardens’ main greenhouse. It normally runs each year from the last week of February to the end of April. It is organized by the Montreal Insectarium at the MBG and is a very popular event. The greenhouse’s humid-warmth is a welcome respite in view of the inhospitable temperatures that characterize Montreal’s winters. Upon stepping into the greenhouse, one is immediately embraced by a most agreeable fragrance released by dozens of different flowers that are put there to feed and host butterflies. It is an explosion of colour, scent and form. Of the several multi-sensory exhibitions that MBG hosts, this is certainly one that has a great impact on visitors.

First of all, children—as well as their adult companions—learn about the bodiliness of environmental perception. They learn to use the senses to pay attention to the species with which they interact: to use visual clues, to pay attention to smell and to learn the importance of touch. They also learn about the emotional connections they can develop during such interactions with each other and in relation to the butterflies that are released.

The display is organized such as to emphasize these points at various levels with posters and with the help of enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides. Secondly, there is plenty of information on posters and leaflets that explain the biology and behaviours of butterflies and moths. Thirdly, the same sources make links between the ecosystemic context of butterflies, the importance of worldwide biodiversity, and related cultural diversity, myths and narratives. Finally, the display extends beyond the spatial confines of the greenhouse and the temporal constraints of the exhibition. There are, for example, comprehensive programs that teach people how to engage in butterfly farming in their own backyards and, in the summer, children have an opportunity to help tag monarch butterflies before their great migratory voyage to Mexico. These are most certainly lessons that include a much wider sensitization to relations between biodiversity and cultural diversity or to the global scope of ecosystems and related human activity.

“Youth Gardens” is an educational program developed for children from eight to 15 years old.⁵ It runs from April (when students plant vegetable seeds), through May and June (when students spend time caring for their seedlings, planting and growing), through the summer (spent tending these gardens two days per week), to mid-September when students harvest their crops. This program brings back reminiscences of Thorp’s (2005, 2006) ethnographic descriptions of a similar plan and therefore, I will not dwell on its educational importance any further. Nevertheless, I do wish to point out that this is the type of context where students learn about nature through direct engagement that requires the capability to become attuned to environmental feedback. To be sure, crops will fail if they are not watered in the proper amounts and at the right points in time. Hence, I suggest that this is the type of learning context where, by dwelling within an environment and becoming attuned to it (Ingold 2000), students may overcome human–nature dualism, and even develop, as Thorp’s students did, deep emotional attachments and commitment to nature (Milton 2002). As with the butterfly program, “Youth Gardens” also extends beyond its immediate scope and is linked, for example, to the wider schooling community through “Teachers in Action.”⁶

Having learned that in the garden human–nature relations entail reciprocity, another program focuses on the pleasure of engaging actively with “nature” and of being able to share artistic endeavours with family, friends and the wider Montreal community. I refer here to “Pumpkin Carving” events. These are held in the fall and consist of a call to submit carved pumpkins that are then put on display in the same greenhouse where “Butterflies go Free.” This program is particularly successful in teaching young children about the incalculable value of enjoying the connectedness of nature, beauty appreciation, human creativity and human *communitas*. Put together, all these lessons are certainly a very good step in the direction of a more holistic understanding of human–environment relations in the urban context of a botanical garden.

Concluding Thoughts

Gardens, especially highly landscaped urban botanical gardens, have been neglected as a serious venue for discussing and understanding human–environment relations. This situation is slowly changing as philosophers and social scientists alike begin to explore gardens and the environmental experiences of learning they may afford. Still, the potential to consider fully the possibility that serious learning about environmental processes can occur in gardens has not been realized. I argue in this paper, however, that such a lacuna can be tackled, for we have at our disposal solid sociological and anthropological scaffoldings upon which to build new and more comprehensive approaches.

In the final instance, I suggest that the educational programs of MBG have been designed such that—intentionally or coincidentally—they provide people with multi-referential, multi-level, sensory, cognitive and emotional opportunities for bringing forth and analyzing holism and relationships as part and parcel of much wider ecological patterns (Harries-Jones 1995). Moreover, I argue that they have done so without reducing this unity to single-level reductionist forms of representation and teaching. As an ensemble, the educational programs of MBG do not entail abstract or detached lessons about nature and how nature works. Rather, they provide a multi-perspectival context for students to form emotional connections with other persons and with the gardens at the same time (Milton 2002). These in turn, are achieved through encouraging participants to actively dwell in and engage with the garden environment, and thus learn how to pay attention—attune their perceptual and cognitive apparatuses—to environmental clues, changes and beauty (Ingold 2000).

Paraphrasing Bateson (1994), I would say that the educational programs of MBG motivate people to build a

repertoire of human–nature connective metaphors that may inform new improvisation of habits for their relations with the environment and, thus, increase their responsiveness to patterns that connect humans to other humans, as well as to plants and to animals (Bateson 1979; Bateson and Bateson 1988). In gardens, people discover the joys that come from sensorial engagement with their surroundings. In so doing, many people develop emotional ties with these landscapes and become committed to such places. For some people, this amounts to a much deeper form of aesthetic appreciation and to a form of ecological learning that transforms their understandings of human–environment connectivity. I suggest that for the latter, this entails a renewed comprehension at the gestalt level of the unity that exists between human social-cultural worlds and the ecosystems in which they are embedded.

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Notes

- 1 Obviously, they also reflect the aesthetic orientations of particular societies, classes, genders and cultural views at specific political-historical junctures (Bhatti 1999; Bourdieu 1984). However, this particular issue is not the focus of the present paper.
- 2 See for example www.ntbg.org/cms_files/EnvironmentalJournalismFellowship_2007Announcement_081106.2.pdf.
- 3 See also <http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/menu.htm>.
- 4 See http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/info_vert/papillons/papillons.htm.
- 5 See http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/act_educ/camps.htm#jardins_jeunes.
- 6 See <http://www.fondationmuseums.qc.ca/teachersinaction/index.html>.

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Part 3: The Human in the Body

Demoting the Genetic Body

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Abstract: A summary of research findings about the “genetic body” revealed through genetic testing is followed by a discussion of the emerging science of epigenetics in which genes are understood as just one actor among many in the onset of disease. Current knowledge about the genetics of Alzheimer’s disease is set out and ethnographic data presented based on interviews with individuals who have been genetically tested for this disease. It is argued that genes will never be a powerful divinatory tool for the future in connection with common complex diseases such as Alzheimer’s.

Keywords: genetic testing, epigenetics, susceptibility genes, Alzheimer’s disease, risk, embodiment

Résumé : Un résumé des conclusions de recherches portant sur le « corps génétique » que révèle le dépistage génétique est suivi d’une discussion sur la science émergente de l’épigénétique, cette dernière considérant les gènes comme un élément parmi d’autres dans le déclenchement des maladies. L’article présente ensuite l’état actuel des connaissances sur les caractéristiques génétiques de la maladie d’Alzheimer et des données ethnographiques recueillies lors d’entrevues réalisées auprès d’individus ayant été testés génétiquement pour la détection de cette maladie. L’article soutient que les gènes ne seront jamais un puissant outil divinatoire dans le futur quant à la prévention de maladies aussi courantes et complexes que celle d’Alzheimer.

Mots-clés : dépistage génétique, épigénétique, prédisposition génétique, maladie d’Alzheimer, risque, incarnation

It is well known that Franz Boas (1940) adopted a concept of culture that was pluralistic, relativistic and devoid of biological determinism. Even so, his research, much of it explicitly designed to overthrow racist arguments and erroneous assumptions about the relationship of biology to behaviour, was grounded in biological measurement that clearly demonstrated the inter-dependence among culture, social change and biological difference. When writing about Boas’ approach, George Stocking argued it could well serve as a guide, not only for the history of anthropology, but also for its future direction (1982:18). I am inclined to agree, although, of course, things are not so straightforward as they appeared to be in Boas’s time, and his belief that anatomical difference among humans could be explained on the basis of race is obviously a major stumbling block (but we must not stand guilty of presentism).

For much of the 20th century, anthropologists worked hard to refute the concept of race and the task continues. If anything, race is having a misplaced revival as a result of findings from molecular biology (Duster 2006; Montoya 2007) This subject has been so divisive over the years that the majority of cultural anthropologists have set the material body to one side on the assumption that it can, in effect, be treated as a universal. However, as Callon (1986), Goodman et al. (2003), Haraway (1991), Lock (1993, 2002) and others have pointed out, to “black box” the material body entirely, and with it any chance of considering the social ramifications of the co-production of nature–culture presents a problem. This is particularly so if we wish to gain some insight about the way in which biomedical technologies have the potential to fundamentally transform individual experiences of embodiment, identity-making, human relationships and allocation of responsibility for health and illness, thus enabling the remaking of what is assumed to be “natural” (Strathern 1992).

In this article I will focus on just one of these technologies, that of molecular genetics, and in particular on

genetic testing, a technology that will become increasingly used as whole genome scans at relatively low cost are made available. It is likely that, in the not too distant future, individuals will routinely be informed about details of their personal genome profile as part of basic clinical care (Brice 2004), while hundreds of DNA tests for identifying genes associated with specific disorders are already available (Yoon et al. 2001).

A growing body of social science literature has begun to both conceptualize and demonstrate the impact that this molecularized information is having on individuals and families who have been given information about their "genetic body." A few of the findings from this research pertinent to the main argument of this paper will be presented first, followed by a brief discussion of a paradigm shift currently taking place in molecular genetics, central to which is an argument about the "de-throning" of the gene. The recognition by scientists of the significance of this new "epigenetic" approach (to be explained below) calls into question the reliability of risk estimates for complex diseases based on genes alone. In the final part of the paper, current knowledge about the genetics of late onset Alzheimer's disease is set out. This is followed by findings from ethnographic research in which individuals believed to be at risk for Alzheimer's disease, after receiving individualized test results for the gene in question, discuss their responses to this newly internalized knowledge about embodied risk.

These research findings strongly indicate that a profound sense of identity transformation has not taken place as a result of this particular genetic testing; on the contrary, individual narratives about future confrontation with aging and possible dementia remain much as they were before testing. This finding is in large part due to inherent, irresolvable uncertainties associated with genetic information about complex disease, the social implications of which for further routinization of individualized genetic profiling will be spelled out in the conclusions.

The Genetic Body

Novas and Rose, seeking to theorize broadly the transformation that is taking place as a result of emerging knowledge in molecular genetics posit, following Foucault, that as a result of recent advances in the life sciences, including human genetics and genetic medicine, a "mutation in personhood" has come about (2000:485). This transformation is not merely, they suggest, a modification of lay, professional and scientific ideas about human identity and subjectivity, but is also a shift in "presuppositions about human beings that are embedded in and underpin

particular practices" (Novas and Rose 2000:486). One result is the emergent figure of the "genetically at risk" individual. "Individuals [of this type] and their families...have taken unto themselves the responsibility for the government of their risky genes, in relation not merely to a secular norm of individual health, but an obligation to one's kin, to those one loves, and to the future" (Novas and Rose 2000:507). Novas and Rose are careful to qualify their claims: "Ideas about biological, biomedical and genetic identity will certainly infuse, interact, combine and contest with other identity claims; we doubt that they will supplant them" (2000:491).

Similarly, Rabinow has suggested that new congeries of people will emerge as a result of knowledge founded in molecular genetics, activities he labels "biosociality." But Rabinow (1996:103) too is careful to point out that older forms of cultural classification of bio-identity will not disappear. A sizeable body of literature has now shown that these qualifications are valid, and that when genetic information is incorporated by individuals into accounts about illness causation such knowledge supplements previously held notions about kinship, heredity and health. For example, writing about Huntington's disease, a single gene disorder with onset in adulthood (sometimes very late in life) for which there is no known treatment, Cox and McKellin argue that "theories of Mendelian inheritance frame risk in static, objective terms" abstracted from the messiness of human contingency and biography (1999: 140). In everyday life, genetically tested individuals and their families jointly engage in a complex "social calculus of risk" that is fluid, contingent and inter-subjective.

People who come from families with Huntington's disease vacillate about testing, sometimes for many years. This vacillation is partly a result of the uncertainties involved about age of onset of the disease which cannot be predicted with accuracy, and partly because there is no treatment for this condition. In this latter respect, Huntington's disease is the same as by far the majority of the so-called single gene, Mendelian disorders. Moreover, recently acquired knowledge complicates estimations of future risk—it is now known that an unequivocal link does not exist between the presence of a Huntington gene and the expression of the actual disease, as was formerly believed to be the case (Langbehn et al. 2004). There are a small number of cases where a clear prediction cannot be made, making "educated choices" about the value of testing problematic. As genomic knowledge accumulates it has become apparent that this situation also applies to certain other single gene disorders, so that the biopolitics of genetic risk are increasingly riddled with estimations that gloss over embedded uncertainty.

At the time when Rabinow (1996) first introduced the concept of biosociality, the idea of groups literally coming together on the basis of a specified chromosomal abnormality as Rabinow suggested (with a touch of irony one assumes) seemed farfetched to many. In retrospect his insight has proved to be prescient. An article in the *New York Times* in late December 2007 discusses the experiences of some families with extremely rare genetic mutations who, as a result of a new diagnostic technology—DNA microarray analysis—learn about the DNA mutation that has affected one or more of their children and, with access to email and the internet, have made contact with similarly affected families (Harmon 2007). Both disorders discussed in this article are usually diagnosed as autism or mental retardation, but by making use of microarray analyses, newly identified chromosomal disorders that are apparently fully determined by aberrations in specific segments of DNA can readily be spotted at a current cost of US\$3,000. So far only six children have been diagnosed with the disorder known as 16p11.2, a condition that is not inherited. The other condition discussed in the *New York Times*, 7q11.23, has been found in 11 children worldwide. Without doubt, other cases will emerge as microarray analysis becomes more widely used. The making up of these “new” diseases is a powerful example of how certain syndromes and behavioural disorders are increasingly likely to be reclassified as genetic disorders once the molecularized body is rendered more visible. However, the question of what conjunction of variables brought about the chromosomal aberrations in the first place remains, of course, unaddressed.

The search by the parents of two children diagnosed with these new disorders forms the import of the article in the *New York Times*. In both instances the parents experienced considerable comfort and hope for the future as a result of talking with families where children had been given the same diagnosis as their own child. One parent complained before receiving the results of the microarray analysis that the diagnosis of autism they had previously been given did not mean anything because, quite simply, it was “too non-specific.” He and his wife rejoiced at the genetic diagnosis because it relieved them of guilt and offered a glimmer of hope for treatment in the future, particularly after they had contacted parents in a similar situation; they were then able to take great solace from realizing that they were not alone (Harmon 2007).

Recently, Raspberry and Skinner (2007) have asked whether increasing use of genetic information and technologies will bring about a paradigm shift in the “knowable body” and in everyday conceptions of health. They

question whether biomedicine is moving toward a single notion of “body as text”—an informatics notion of the body—or, alternatively, whether genetic information will simply “deepen” our understanding of the conventional biomedical body (Raspberry and Skinner 2007). Their findings from a study carried out with 106 ethnically diverse families in the southeastern United States in which children had been diagnosed with a genetic disorder showed that, in most instances, genetic information was simply incorporated to provide “another piece of the puzzle” in determining what was wrong with the child. Further, similar to the findings reported in the *New York Times*, they found that a genetic diagnosis frequently gives legitimacy to a disorder as “truly” biological, allowing families to escape from catch-all “soft” diagnostic categories such as autism and ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder). And affected families dare to hope for a “cure” in the not too distant future by means of molecular engineering. Even so, a “hybrid notion of causality” persists in the minds of the families: despite the recognition that chromosomal deletions have caused very real bodily changes, questions about the range of phenotypic expression and its severity are inevitably uppermost. The genetic body made knowable through technology requires continual reassessment on the basis of its actual expression. Knowledge about genetic reality rarely transcends or precludes the ever present uncertainty, hope, wishful thinking and sometimes despair that constitutes everyday life when a genetic disorder has been identified.

In summary thus far: with remarkable rapidity, as genomic technologies advance, segments of DNA are being marked out as “natural” signifiers for who among us should be counted as genetically at risk, but DNA segments are rarely, and possibly never, straightforward *determinants* of disease, as was formerly assumed to be the case. When considering the responses of individuals and their families to proposed genetic testing, or alternatively to actual test results, the age of onset of the disease in question, its specific pathological effects, and the fluidity of basic science knowledge about the condition (subject to continual modification as the result of new technologies), affects the kinds of accounts that people create about personalized genetic information.

Moreover, it is well recognized today that genetic testing is not merely an individual matter, but inevitably has broader social consequences, not the least of which are the undeniable implications for kin, as well as possible stigma, and work and insurance related repercussions (Draper 1991; Nelkin and Tancredi 1989). It should also be noted that research in connection with several diseases

shows that only 10 to 20% of people come forward for testing when it is offered to them (Quaid and Morris 1993) and that, when tested, individuals often simply ignore or repress the results (Hill 1994; Rapp 1999). It appears that many people are choosing not to exert “genetic prudence” and that a burning desire to know about the genetic body is by no means always the case.

Before turning to a consideration of the genetics of late onset Alzheimer’s disease—an example of a common complex disorder, a condition in which it is universally agreed that numerous genes and environmental variables are involved in causation, course and eventual outcome—I will introduce a little of the current thinking associated with the science of epigenetics. This emerging paradigm in the world of molecular genomics highlights the problematic nature of genetic testing for complex disease, raising a degree of uncertainty that far exceeds that noted above in connection with testing for single gene disorders.

Beyond the Dogma of Genetic Determinism

Genes have recently suffered the indignity of being demoted by many, perhaps the majority of experts in the world of genomics, from real, substantial entities to the status of a concept. Although genes continue to be very powerful heuristically, research has made it clear that scientists do not know where genes begin or end (Stotz et al. 2006); nor are they stable and they do not, on their own, *determine* either individual phenotypes or even the biological make up of future generations. Quite simply, genes are not *us* and the gene can no longer pass as the fundamental animating force of human life; it has been dethroned, Fox Keller informs us, from its place as “part physicist’s atom and part Plato’s soul” (2000:277).

It is paradoxical that this current definitional disarray of the gene was brought to a head as a result of the Human Genome Project. As is now well known, when mapping the human genome, scientists involved labelled 98% of the DNA they had isolated as “junk” because it did not conform to their idea of how the blueprint for life was assumed to work. In recent years, things have changed dramatically and junk DNA, thrust summarily to one side in order to focus on the task of mapping only those genes that code directly for proteins, can no longer be ignored. This junk is composed largely of RNA that, although it does not code for protein production, is nevertheless deeply implicated in gene expression and regulation and so must now be sifted through systematically (Eddy 2001; Mattick 2003, 2004). The activities of non-coding RNA are believed to comprise the most comprehensive regulatory system in complex organisms; they function to create the “architecture” of organisms, with-

out which chaos would reign (Mattick 2003). This non-coding RNA has also been shown to profoundly affect the timing of processes that take place during development, including stem cell maintenance, cell proliferation, apoptosis (programmed cell death), the onset of cancer and other complex ailments (Petronis 2001). Consequently, the research interests of many molecular biologists are no longer confined largely to mapping structure, but have expanded to the elucidation of the mechanisms of cell and organ function throughout the lifespan of individuals and through evolutionary time. Central to this endeavour is to understand gene regulation—above all how, and under what circumstances, genes are switched “on” and “off”—in other words, what brings about their expression.

Using this new approach, the effects of evolutionary, historical, environmental and cultural variables on developmental processes, health and disease are acknowledged. Determinist arguments are, in theory, no longer appropriate, and both micro- and macro-environmental effects on cell activity and its immediate surroundings are key to this type of research. This emerging epigenetic knowledge (as it has come to be known) has exploded the central dogma on which molecular genetics was founded. Metaphors associated with the mapping of the human genome—the Book of Life, the Code of Codes, the Holy Grail and so on—are entirely outmoded. With the cell at centre stage, genetic pleiotropy,¹ gene-gene, gene-protein and gene-environment interactions cannot be ignored and biological pathways are no longer thought of as necessarily linear or unidirectional. A space has been opened up between genotype and phenotype, a space of endophenotypes—unstable, shifting interim states—that was partially recognized one hundred years ago but then conveniently set to one side until relatively recently (Gottesman 1994).

One can argue that Mendelian genetics—particularly the hard-nosed, reductionistic, deterministic version created by James Watson and Francis Crick—“fit” very neatly into the sweep of modernity. Genes make us what we are in this vision. The hope of some, especially with the mapping of the human genome, was that we would be able to engage in fundamental genetic engineering and manufacture genomes designed to eradicate disease, poverty, ignorance and criminality (as the past editor of *Science*, Daniel Koshland, so infamously said (1989)), while at the same time enhancing our desire for aesthetically pleasing, perfect offspring.

The molecularized universe has turned out to be so very much more complicated and exciting than most people had imagined. It is a universe entirely in tune with postmodernity. It is a landscape littered with a pastiche of

shape-shifters (smart genes, transcription factors, jumping genes and so on), an environment of the unexpected in which boundaries formerly thought to be stable are dissolved. It is evident that some genes encode for more than one protein, while many others do not encode for proteins at all—entirely upsetting the central dogma of genetics that prevailed until the beginning of this century, namely that any one gene sets off a unidirectional flow of information from DNA to RNA to protein to phenotype. Increasingly it has become clear that multiple factors, including events both internal and external to the body, enhance or inhibit gene expression with the result that it is now agreed by many molecular biologists that research into phenotypic expression must make use of a “wide-angled lens,” one that takes into consideration a systems biology, multifaceted approach that includes social variables.

This means that our efforts to divine individual futures by means of genetic testing for anything but the rare Mendelian disorders are precarious indeed and the majority of clinicians and basic scientists, with some notable exceptions, are well aware of this.

Epigenetics—Contextualizing the Molecular Body

The philosopher Lenny Moss has pointed out an enigma evident in the natural sciences that periodically comes into stark relief whenever conceptual ground begins to “shake or shift” (2002:219). The problem is how to account for the “apparently ‘purposive’ nature of the living organism in the purely mechanistic terms of our post-17th century understanding of nature” (Moss 2002:219-220). Even more vexing, argues Moss, is the question of “how to locate ourselves—the purposive, flesh-and-blood investigators—within the conceptual framework of our biological inquiry” (2002:220). Moss identifies a continuum along which strategies for coping with this enigma can, in theory, range. At one end lies full-blown pre-formationist theory in which The Creator determines all. René Descartes fell closer to the other end of the spectrum—one of pure epigenesis—where “ostensibly purposive life-forms were spontaneously generated from inert matter” (Moss 2002:220) although many of Descartes’ followers never did make the break with preformationism.

Moss (2002) concludes that neither of these extremes has been of direct relevance for biological investigation over the past 100 years; investigators have instead come to an agreement that *both* genes and levels of interaction greater than the gene are involved. However, as philosopher Paul Griffiths notes, “it is a truism that all traits are produced by the interaction of genetic and environmen-

tal factors [but] the almost universal acceptance of this view has done little to reduce the prevalence of genetic determinism—the tendency to ignore contextual effects on gene expression and the role of non-genetic factors in development” (2001:1). Both evolutionary and developmental processes are reduced to a purely mechanical reproduction of genes and any deviation from this is understood as mutational, as not normal. Moss argues that the idea that living matter can organize itself into a “self-sustaining, self-organizing, boundary-maintaining entity” has been difficult to establish in the face of the apparent attractiveness of genetic determinism. Demands that the door be opened to fundamentally different conceptions of the organism, in which the genome is situated in a living organism, have been rebuffed (Moss 2002:222).

This is where epigenetics comes in as a science devoted in part to contextualizing the genome. Space does not permit a detailed summary of current theories of epigenetics; suffice it to say that the very word *epigenetics* has more than one meaning (Van de Vijver et al. 2002), and that the discipline is not that new, but was born in the 1940s (Jablonka and Lamb 2005:82). Most current research into epigenetics focuses primarily on the expression and regulation of genes. Related questions at the phenotypic level ask why monozygotic twins do not always manifest the same diseases and, why, when they do, the age of onset can differ by up to two decades (Schmiedeskamp 2004). This narrowly conceptualized epigenetic approach immediately makes the limitations of genetic determinism patently evident.

A broader, more critical form of epigenetics, known as “developmental systems theory” (DST), supported by a mix of philosophers and biologists is currently gaining ground. Using this approach, it is argued that epigenetic phenomena should be recognized as having independence from genetic variation. The starting point is an ontological reversal of genetic determinism and gives priority to dynamic interactions among very many variables with numerous possible outcomes. The biologist Scott Gilbert argues that the DST approach implies that “our ‘self’ becomes a permeable self. We are each a complex community, indeed, a collection of ecosystems” (Gilbert 2002:213). At the biological level a fundamental question arises as to whether a gene, defined as a DNA sequence, can indeed count as *the* unit of heredity, especially as recent research strongly suggests that epigenetic phenomena can be transmitted from one generation to another (Champagne and Meaney 2001). Griffiths summarizes the DST approach as one that encourages researchers “to investigate how a trait actually develops, what resources its reliable development depends upon, whether there are many

developmental routes to this outcome, or only one, over what range of parameters is this developmental outcome stable, and how the 'environment' changes as a function of initial development differences that produce this trait" (2001:4).

At a more general level, the question currently being frequently asked is: "if the program for life is not in our genes, then where is it?" Biologist Richard Strohman notes that many developmental biologists have been arguing quietly for a long time that "there *is* no program in the sense of an inherited, pre-existing script waiting to be read." Rather, he argues "there are regulatory networks of proteins that sense or measure changes in the cellular environment and interpret those signals so that the cell makes an appropriate response" (2001:25) and Evelyn Fox Keller argues for the notion of a "distributed" program (2000:146). This regulatory system, a dynamic-epigenetic network, has a life of its own, so to speak, with rules that are not specified by DNA. Systematic research into epigenetics is just beginning to take off (Jablonka and Lamb 2005; Neumann-Held and Rehmann-Sutter 2006) and, although genetics play an indispensable role in this research, ultimately the objective is directed towards explaining what it is about life, health and illness that genetics alone cannot explain.

The "significance" of DNA has been radically altered as a result of all these recent findings and contingency is the name of this game. The question becomes one of whether or not DNA has any "agency" or "activity" at all, concepts that Neumann-Held and Rehmann-Sutter argue are, in any case, thoroughly anthropomorphic (2006:2; see also Moss 2003). From the societal perspective, what, then, does it mean to assume, as biological determinists apparently do, that mapping the human genome actually configures human identity; that biology fully informs who we are? Can we indeed "know" ourselves on the basis of our genetic make-up?

Gudding (1996) argues that technologies that enable rapid DNA analysis permit a massive redeployment of agency and morality to the gene. He reminds us how DNA evidence is increasingly used as the irrefutable mark of individual identity, whether in the courtroom as forensic evidence, or in determining if a female athlete is really what she claims to be. Our biographies are today written, at least in part, in terms of structural chemistry, as many of the early geneticists had envisioned. Genotype does not determine phenotype, but traces of DNA can determine, with considerable certainty, whether someone was present or not when a particular event took place and DNA analyses are now routinely used to verify the remains of people who have been "disappeared," during

the Argentine Dirty War and in Kosovo for example. Similarly, by conflating sex, gender and genes we assume that we can be "truthfully" informed on the basis of DNA testing, about who among us are men and who are women. But this is only one very limited aspect of embodied identity, a decontextualized glimpse of a chemical identity, leaving the dynamics of individual growth and change, self-reflection, the effects of early nurturance and social and environmental interactions of all kinds entirely out of the picture.

Fox Keller sums up where she believes we now stand:

Genes have had a glorious run in the twentieth century, and they have inspired incomparable and astonishing advances in our understanding of living systems. Indeed, they have carried us to the edge of a new era in biology, one that holds out the promise of even more astonishing advances. But these very advances will necessitate the introduction of other concepts, other terms, and other ways of thinking about biological organization, thereby loosening the grip that genes have had on the imagination of the life sciences these many decades. [2000:147]

Fox Keller, while she is clear that the concept of the gene is "good enough" for many experimental purposes, concludes that it is time to think about adopting new concepts to bring about more appropriate insights into the workings of living systems. Gelbart (1998) insists that the term *gene* may have become a hindrance to the understanding of many biologists, and Fox Keller adds that this problem is no doubt even more marked among "lay readers" (2000:148). However, the research findings set out below suggest that, at least in connection with some diseases, people from affected families are by no means wedded to the idea of the gene as a powerful deterministic force.

The Genetics of Alzheimer's Disease

Alois Alzheimer originally observed a case of what is now known as "early onset" Alzheimer's disease (AD). This form of dementia occurs in only approximately 170 extended families worldwide, has long been thought of as a "genetic disease" and is associated with three specific genetic mutations each of which has been mapped (St. George-Hyslop 2000). It is not strictly true to claim that the gene determines even this autosomal dominant form of the disease because the age of onset for identical twins can vary by as much as a decade (Tilley et al. 1998). Early onset AD usually (but not inevitably) manifests itself somewhere between the ages of 35 and 60, progresses relatively quickly to death, and accounts for 2 to 5% of all diagnosed cases of the disease.

In 1993, the first publication appeared that made an explicit association between a variation of the gene known as APOE and increased risk for the common, late onset form of AD (Corder et al. 1993). This finding forced some revisions of the received wisdom of the time—namely that Alzheimer’s disease in older people is “sporadic” and does not “run in families.” The APOE gene, present in all mammals, is located in humans on chromosome 19 and is essential for lipid metabolism. This gene comes in three universally distributed forms APOE ϵ 2, APOE ϵ 3, and APOE ϵ 4, and evidence from over 100 laboratories indicates that it is the APOE ϵ 4 allele that puts individuals at increased risk for AD. From 14 to 16% of Caucasian populations (the most extensively studied population) carry at least one ϵ 4 allele, however, it is unanimously agreed that the presence of the allele is neither necessary nor sufficient to cause the disease for reasons that are as yet very poorly understood. In other words, the ϵ 4 allele is an example of a “susceptibility gene,” one that contributes to disease causation only under certain circumstances (Bertram and Tanzi 2004).

It is estimated that at least 50% of ϵ 4 carriers never get AD. Research in connection with the allele shows that when it is implicated in AD, exactly the same final biological pathway is involved as that set in motion by the autosomal dominant genes associated with the early onset form of the disease; but the biological changes in which APOE ϵ 4 in its homozygous form is implicated become manifest later in life, usually between the ages of 65 and 75 (Selkoe 2002). For individuals who are heterozygous and have only one ϵ 4 allele, the age of onset is usually later. Given that somewhere between 30 and 60% of patients diagnosed with late onset AD do not have the ϵ 4 allele (Myers et al. 1996), there must be at least one other and probably several more pathways to AD. Scientists involved assume that such pathways are constituted by mutually interactive genes and non-coding DNA in conjunction with environmental factors, internal or external to the body. These alternative pathways become evident late in life, usually after age 70 or later, but they too result in the same final common pathway as that for early onset and ϵ 4-linked AD, with the characteristic pathological signs (evident in most but not all cases of AD) that can only be seen at autopsy—plaques, tangles, and cell loss in the brain. Because, in addition to APOE ϵ 4, it is assumed that several more genes must be implicated in late onset AD, intensive gene hunting continues unabated.

The current situation has recently been summarized by neurogeneticists, Bertram and Tanzi, as follows: “First, and most importantly, the heritability of AD is high...this had been demonstrated in various studies...over the past

decades.” But, these experts go on to note, “most of the research currently being done has faulty methodology, lacks replication, and is inattentive to haplotype structure” (Bertram and Tanzi 2004:R135). Using the citation index *PubMed*, Bertram and Tanzi show that in 2003 alone a total of 1037 studies were carried out on the genetics of AD, of which 55 analyzed genes were reported to have a positive association with increased risk for the disease, while 68 tested negative. On repeat testing, most of the positive associations could not be shown again. Candidate genes have been examined on every single chromosome and mitochondrial DNA has also been investigated. These authors conclude with a caveat: “while the genetic association *per se* [of APOE ϵ 4 with AD] has been extremely well established...there is no consensus as to *how* this association translates pathophysiologically,” nor how it functions in conjunction with the other numerous candidate genes (Bertram and Tanzi 2004:R137).

Until recently, because the disease is limited to older people and because researchers thought that it was sporadic in origin, pedigree studies with large extended families have not been carried out in connection with late onset AD. Now that the results of such research are beginning to accrue, the inconclusive nature of knowledge about APOE is glaringly evident. The more such articles appear, a clear impression is created that too much weight has been given by most researchers to the assumed contribution of the ϵ 4 allele to AD, although there is virtually unanimous agreement that this allele is regularly implicated in both familial and sporadic forms of AD and also in heart disease. Alan Templeton, a biological anthropologist, is particularly critical of the conclusions drawn by most researchers in connection with APOE function. He points out that genomes are “commonly organized into clusters of functionally related genes” and that APOE is part of one such cluster. Templeton argues that when this type of gene is associated by linkage with a specific phenotype, great caution is called for because the gene may simply be a marker for another gene or genes located nearby on the same, clustered segment of DNA (Templeton 1998:376).

Even given the obvious complexity, Mayeux, a genetic epidemiologist commenting on the genetics of AD in a *New Yorker* article, made it clear that he does not believe researchers will be held back too much longer from genuinely insightful knowledge: “a decade from now your doctor will look up your gene profile and decide whether you have a high risk for Alzheimer’s, and then give you a prophylactic treatment of some sort.” But, he adds, “right now, you don’t know what the hell to do!” (Halpern 2005:93).

Despite this optimism, population research in connection with the genetics of both early and late onset AD suggests that no straightforward solution is in sight; this epidemiologically based approach has amply demonstrated that genes are shape-shifters without peer, the products of evolutionary and recent human history, dietary and climatic patterns, possibly of toxic environments and, at times, of serendipitous mutations. Most epidemiological research into the genetics of AD has been carried out since the early 1990s, when the significance of the $\epsilon 4$ allele was first identified but, as noted above, these studies have been confined largely to so-called Caucasian populations (Growden 1998; Korovaitseva et al. 2001; Roses 1998; Saunders 2000; Silverman et al. 2003). Even though the methodology has been criticized, this research makes it clear that the relationship between APOE $\epsilon 4$ and AD incidence is probably significantly weaker than is commonly assumed. For example, one community-based study found that 85% of elderly homozygous $\epsilon 4$ individuals whose average age was 81 showed no sign of dementia when given standard tests for cognitive functioning (Hyman et al. 1996).

Adding to the uncertainties, APOE $\epsilon 4$ has been shown to work in unexpected ways in specific populations. Among Pygmies and other groups of people whose subsistence economy was, until recently, predominantly that of hunting and gathering, possession of an $\epsilon 4$ genotype *apparently* protects against AD. This finding holds when controlled for age (Corbo and Scacchi 1999). Low rates of AD have been reported for parts of Nigeria and the presence of an $\epsilon 4$ allele does not appear to place individuals at increased risk (Farrer et al. 1997). On the other hand, APOE $\epsilon 4$ is significantly associated with dementia among African Americans, although less so than in Caucasian populations (Farrer 2000). Once again, the methodology of this research has been criticized, but the data appear sufficiently robust to conclude that risk reducing factors (in Africa) and risk enhancing factors (in North America) must be implicated, among them other genes, their protein products, diet, environment and, quite possibly, still other variables. An over-emphasis on $\epsilon 4$ and more generally the genetics of AD in the research literature obscures the fact that many other risk factors are associated with AD, ranging from toxic environments, head trauma, education levels, chronic stress, prions and so on.

It is evident that basic science and epidemiological findings about late onset Alzheimer's disease are subject to continual revision and are far from conclusive. Moreover, and adding greatly to the uncertainty, although usually not openly acknowledged, the diagnosis of AD is disputed by some researchers, particularly because, even though it is the most commonly diagnosed of the demen-

tias, it is nevertheless a "waste basket" category applied after other diagnoses have been ruled out (Whitehouse 2008). It is no surprise then, that current guidelines about genetic testing for APOE status do not support its routinization in clinical care, particularly because there is no known treatment for the disease. However, it is possible that this situation may change in the not too distant future. Recently, the *Pharmacogenetics Journal* presented preliminary findings concerning a new drug, Rosiglitazone (Risner et al. 2006). This drug alters glucose metabolism in the brain and, it is reported, has a positive effect on cognitive functioning but only on those patients with mild to moderate AD who are APOE $\epsilon 3$. This finding, by the team of Allan Roses who was the first to report that APOE $\epsilon 4$ puts individuals at increased risk for AD and who is now the CEO of the pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline, suggests that *should* this drug move successfully through clinical trials, AD genotyping will likely become routinized in clinical settings. Other researchers are working on similar drugs believed to function differentially according to genotype.

What does this current state of knowledge about late onset AD genetics imply for biosociality and subjectivity? Clearly, learning that you carry an $\epsilon 4$ allele should not precipitate such a dramatic effect as learning that you have one of the deadly genes associated with early onset Alzheimer's disease or the toxic form of the gene associated with Huntington's disease. Learning about one's APOE status does not provide information about a highly probable future; it only raises a possible scenario involving the kind of uncertainty that anyone living in a family where AD is present has inevitably confronted as part of their daily life.

Embodying Knowledge about the APOE Gene

Several private companies offer testing for APOE, and an "Early Alert Alzheimer's Home Screening Test" kit is marketed directly to consumers (Kier and Molinari 2003). In addition, an NIH-approved (National Institutes of Health) randomized controlled trial under the name REVEAL (Risk Evaluation and Education for Alzheimer's disease) is in progress. I am going to turn, in the concluding section of this paper, to findings from interviews with individuals involved as subjects in the REVEAL study.

Families where one or more members have been diagnosed with AD were enrolled as subjects for this research. The educational level of these individuals is high—a mean of 17 years at three research sites, and of 15 years at one other. As a group, participants were given a lengthy power point education session about the genetics of AD; if they

then decided to continue to participate in the project, blood was drawn and a few weeks later everyone was informed in private which of the APOE alleles they carry. At the same time, they were shown a graph that depicted increased risk estimates for individuals with their particular APOE type. This “disclosure session” was followed by 12 months of follow-up monitoring during which the research subjects responded to three rounds of structured interviews. The intent was to find out what impact knowledge about their respective APOE genotype had on anxiety levels, sense of wellbeing, and other variables, all “measured” using standardized scales.

I was asked to contribute a qualitative component to the REVEAL study and, after much thought, having obtained an understanding that the findings might well not support the original objectives of the project, I agreed.² Open-ended interviews were carried out with a sub-sample of 79 REVEAL subjects at four sites in the United States 12 months or more after REVEAL participants initially received their genotype (Lock et al. 2007).³

Participants in the study identified it as an important source of information about Alzheimer’s disease and the information they were given emphasized the role of genetics in risk for AD, although it was made absolutely clear during the education session that in none of its forms does the APOE gene determine Alzheimer’s disease. Perhaps not surprisingly then, having completed the REVEAL study, people continued to rely on predictions about the future rooted in family histories and personal experience; data about genetics and risk based on personalized probabilistic risk estimates most often supplemented rather than competed with or displaced existing thoughts people already held about AD causation and their own particular risk.

Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine how genetic information given out as part of REVEAL might radically transform the way individuals perceive their own risk when only 27% of the interviewed sample was able to recall their genetic results correctly, and an almost equal number (23%) remembered either incorrectly or nothing at all. The remaining participants retained the “gist” of the information they were given. This was so despite the fact that many volunteered to participate in REVEAL specifically because they wanted the genetic test done, although the main reason for participation was to assist in scientific research. When asked about their genetic results, responses like that of Vicki were not uncommon: “I was just thinking on my way in here today, oh I bet they’re going to ask me about which genes I have. And I can’t remember!...I should have reviewed.” Paul also emphasized the difficulty he had recalling his results:

Even though she [the genetic counsellor] has explained this to me several times, I still couldn’t tell you which one of the markers, of the four, they were watching—you know, she just handed me some information and said, “Here are your markers.”...we had gotten all this information at the opening meeting. And we all dutifully took home our notes of this. And come back three months later or whatever, and they’d throw out these things again and I said, “Oh, cripe.” And I still don’t know whether I have a 10% or a 20% or a 50% chance.

While few remembered their APOE status or risk assessment, 50% retained at least the gist of the information—often expressing their results in general terms such as “having a lower risk than I imagined,” “having the bad gene,” or being “next to worst.” For example, Tessa said: “I keep forgetting. I have problems with it, I know I’m either an e2 or e4, but keep forgetting which. The thing that I do remember is whichever one I am, that it’s not a factor.” This was equally the case for people like Jacqueline who were given higher risk estimates because they had at least one e4 allele: “You know, I can’t even remember. I would come in from one meeting to the next, and I couldn’t remember what my risk was. And to this day, I’m not 100 percent sure, but I know that it’s elevated.”

On the other hand, for some individuals the genetic results were memorable, but this did not necessarily mean that their significance was understood, as Helen’s reaction suggested:

In fact, when I first came back to have the follow-up study after we found out the results they asked me that percent and whether it was 3/4, 2/2 or whatever. I don’t even remember. The number didn’t stick...to me it was simply like a 50/50 probability...okay, it’s 3/4—so I put that down. It’s more like a parrot thing than a, “yes, I know what this means.”

One of the individuals tested had seven relatives affected with AD and, not surprisingly, despite learning from the REVEAL education session that e4 alleles do not *cause* the disease, she found it difficult to come to terms with this information, particularly when she was informed that she was homozygous and had tested as an e4/e4.

Given that there is little that can be done either to prevent or treat AD, responses of the following kind were not uncommon: “I think [REVEAL] provides useful information...Just don’t ask me how I would use it.... I honestly don’t know.” Another said: “Well, I know where I stand, and my children know where they stand—maybe get it, maybe not.”

Explanations for Alzheimer Causation

Although some REVEAL subjects entered the study precisely because they believed that AD is intimately related to genetic makeup, upon completion of the project, virtually everyone considered genetics to be just one of several possible causes for late onset AD—and this is what they were taught in the education session. Only 4% regard genetics as the *only* factor involved. Other popular theories in addition to genetics included diet (35%), environment (29%), level of physical activity (19%), aluminum (19%), age (16%), depression (17%) and mental activity (17%). Less popular but consistently named explanations included stress, head injuries, smoking and alcohol. Muriel did not know what causes AD exactly, but she juggled several different ideas based on her own experience with her mother:

I mean there's always the diet thing and I do somewhat watch that because I'm certainly aware of the diet connections...there is this other thing about keeping your mental activity up as you get older, you know, stimulate the brain; do crossword puzzles, learn new things and keep your brain working. My mother did that though. She watched her diet and she was very careful and doggone it, it didn't keep it from happening. And the genetic side, of course, is also not understood. There's not just one cause.

Rosie speculated about the role pollutants in the environment play in causing AD; she takes vitamins, exercises and avoids using aluminum cookware in the hope of preventing the disease. However, she links her mother's illness to the stress of having many children late in life, smoking and "slowing down" as she got older. For her, the role of genetics is complicated and ambiguous:

I think (genetics) are a minute aspect of it. It's genetics and environment. People want to say a lot about genetics, and I have to say, we don't know enough. I think that genetics is the big buzzword...Now, with my mom, I think that it could have been a predisposition, but with the stress of having three little ones in her fifties and I guess going through the change of life or whatever, I don't know, all of that could have played a role. Maybe she got depressed and the depression could have led—I don't know. I can't say that I a hundred percent think that it's genetics, even though I did the APOE test. And I forgot what I had! But I refuse to buy into that paradigm. I refuse to believe that there is really an increase [in risk]. I think there are other things that they don't know about...and I think that stress and environment helps make a weakness into a disease.

Ideas of "susceptibility" or "predisposition" were very common among REVEAL participants. Julia's view of genetic risk, for example, stressed the interaction of genetic factors with other variables:

I think at some point that genes act up. And I don't know what the trigger is, but it's going to send some message that's going to cause something else to happen. I think we can recognize the gene, but I don't know that they know what causes the gene to do the bad stuff...so I think there's something larger happening that allows these abhorrent genes or whatever, to run havoc in your body...I don't think they really know how to take a mixture of factors of genetics and gender and whatever, to say, okay, this is what really sparks this clogging of your brain.

Lila also speaks of "genetic potential" but believes she has some control over the manifestation of the disease. She draws from her experience with diabetes:

I'd like to think that I have something to do with how it manifests itself. It's sort of like diabetes, which I have a very strong family history for. And knowing that there's certain things in terms of diet or exercise that research has shown may avoid triggering that genetic potential helps. You have the genetic potential, no question. Whether or not it shows up or not has a lot to do with what you do, your environment. I'd like to think the same way about Alzheimer's.

The concept of "blended inheritance," put forward some years ago by Richards, refers to a prevalent understanding he documented among the British public in which a mixing or blending of influences from each parent is common, rather than one entailing a Mendelian transmission of genes (1996:222). Such ideas stem from a long tradition of such reasoning evident as early as classical times (Turney 1995:12).

The REVEAL qualitative findings showed, like earlier work on single gene disorders such as that of Richards (1996), of Cox and McKellin (1999), and of Raspberry and Skinner (2007), that there is a tendency among many respondents to identify a family member who in some way resembles the afflicted person as the individual most likely to be at risk for developing the disorder, whether individual genotypes are known or not. For example, Katherine said, "I showed you the picture of me and my dad. We look like clones, practically, physically. And nobody's really said—I don't know whether or not that makes a difference, a person's physical appearance. But I have a suspicion that it does." Robert commented:

Do I think I have a higher than normal chance? Yes. Heredity. And also I'm so much like my mother, who had Alzheimer's. There's a very high likelihood that one or more of her children will have a predisposition toward it. And I would say I'm front-runner because of so many other characteristics I have that are very much like my mother's.

Despite the high education level of the REVEAL participants, given the uncertainty about the way in which the APOE gene contributes to AD causation and the emphasis in the REVEAL study on the undoubted contribution of other variables, it is not surprising that narratives about the allocation of future risk among participants' families were grounded in ideas about blended inheritance. Furthermore, contributing greatly to the uncertainty is the late onset of the disease and the fact that the increased risk estimates given to these research subjects exceed a "normal" population by only 10% by age 70 and 30% by age 85, for all but the four individuals heterozygous for the $\epsilon 4$ allele. These figures apparently did not constitute potent omens of the future for any of the participants and many assumed they might well die of something else. Unless knowledge about AD causation advances considerably, it seems that in families where AD has been diagnosed, even after genotyping, few of the next generation will think of themselves in any straightforward way as "genetically at risk."

Conclusions

The hubris associated with the Human Genome Project was always out of place. Most scientists involved knew from the outset that mapping the genome was a relatively straightforward step towards a second challenge of a much bigger order, namely, understanding how genes function in vivo. As the extent of the complexity of functional genomics became increasingly apparent, it was abundantly evident that there were going to be few, if any, easy answers to the problems confronting society in connection with complex diseases. DNA is one actor among very many others, internal and external to all organisms, that influences disease causation, and the boundaries of organisms are permeable (Fox Keller 2006). Aside from rare mutations, DNA alone should not be understood as a reliable signifier for individual futures (Lock 2005).

The REVEAL researchers argued, as part of their justification for carrying out the trial, that it is patronizing *not* to hand out information that can readily be made available to people. But what kind of knowledge is this genomic information, embedded as it is in abundant uncertainty? And, given the contingency associated with the action of APOE, and the way in which risk estimates are

created on the basis of age, gender, family history and APOE genotype alone, can these estimates be considered to have much value? Should such genotyping, even though it is of use for basic science research, count as disinformation as far as individuals are concerned?

Given that the interview results make it abundantly clear that little or no change in connection with embodied identity takes place on the basis of knowledge about the APOE genotype and that family histories, family likeness, past experiences and care-giving duties trump genotypic information (see Lock 2008), it seems that the guidelines as they exist are appropriate. But, as genetic profiling becomes cheaper, it is very likely that APOE typing will become a routine part of medical care.

As noted above, the epigenetic model strongly suggests that, for complex diseases, DNA will never, on its own, be a powerful divinatory tool, even when gene functioning is better understood. However, we have all been schooled to take individual responsibility for health and illness, to practice risk avoidance and exert prudence. It was pointed out long ago that an individualized, depoliticized approach to disease causation permits government to rescind responsibility for toxic environments and reinforces societal inequities making the poor more vulnerable to ill health and shortened life expectancies. Globalization and the neoliberal economy exacerbate this situation and make it unconscionable.

Genetic testing and screening, not surprisingly, follows the same individualistic approach. After all, genes are by definition an individual matter, but equally they are a family matter and they respond to human pre-history, history, the immediate past and the present. As research in molecular biology surges forward, the interpenetration of nature with history and culture and the permeable boundaries of self and other, are made increasingly apparent. It is encouraging to find that many of the individuals who participated in the REVEAL study apparently have an intuitive, if somewhat inchoate, grasp of what is at issue.

The image of the "genetic code" is one of the most powerful metaphors of our time (Neumann-Held and Rehmann-Sutter 2006). But we can hope, perhaps with the assistance of new concepts and an increasingly successful dissemination of recent scientific insights, that the extreme fascination that genes have exerted on so many of us, scientists and the public alike, in which they are anthropomorphized as extraordinarily powerful agents will begin to abate. However, this change will be uneven because, in the case of the relatively rare single gene disorders, the genetic contribution clearly outweighs other variables. And the fear associated with certain genes, such

as the symbolically powerful BRCA genes linked to breast cancer, will not easily dissipate.

Even so, to persist in taking a reductionistic approach to disease causation and its management would be perverse and short-sighted in the extreme. Robust epidemiological findings of long standing, local and global, about the impact of poverty and inequities on development, health and illness, are increasingly substantiated by epigenetic insights and demand action. A redistribution of responsibility for human development, health and illness involving a move away from decontextualized bodies—assumed to be largely determined by genes and individual behaviour—is urgently needed. If he were alive today, I am certain that Franz Boas would wholeheartedly embrace such a move towards the re-situating of bodies in context—a move that would have been supported also by key founders of the field of genetics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But before this transformation can be fully accomplished, some new captivating metaphors will have to be created and adopted into everyday usage.

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Notes

- 1 Pleiotropy means the diverse effects of a single gene or gene pair on several organ systems and their function.
- 2 One justification for this research, it was argued, was that testing for susceptibility genes was likely to become increasingly common, especially in the private sector, and therefore knowledge about how people deal with risk information when it is not possible to make predictions with a high degree of confidence was urgently needed. A second justification was that to withhold information about their bodies from people is patronizing. A third justification was that in many families where someone has died of AD, some members of the next generation believed that they had a nearly 100% chance of contracting the disease. If individuals could be taught that even if they were homozygous for APOE ϵ 4, their lifetime risk for getting AD was never more than approximately 52% for men and 58% for women, then anxiety levels may well have been lowered. The fourth explicit justification for the research was to create a pool of APOE ϵ 4 individuals whose blood could be used at any time to enrich clinical trials.
- 3 The four sites were Boston University, Case Western University, Cornell University and Howard University. Janalyn Prest and Stephanie Lloyd, formerly affiliated with the Anthropology Department at McGill University, acted as research assistants and conducted and coded the qualitative interviews from Phase I of the REVEAL study. Heather Lindstrom, formerly in the Anthropology Department at

Case Western Reserve, also conducted some interviews. Julia Freeman and Gillian Chilibeck, formerly affiliated with the Anthropology Department, McGill University, conducted the interviews at Howard University and transcribed and coded the data. Funding for this research was provided by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), grant # 205806. The REVEAL project was supported by National Institutes of Health grants HG/AG02213 (The REVEAL Study), AG09029 (The MIRAGE Study), AG13846 (Boston University Alzheimer's Disease Center), and M01 RR00533 (Boston University General Clinical Research Center).

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Concepts of Human Nature, Personhood and Natural-Normal in New Reproductive Technology Discourses in New Zealand

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Abstract: I examine how concepts of human nature, personhood and natural-normal are deployed in New Zealand in interviews with people with hemophilia and in public submissions on the subject of Human Assisted Reproductive Technologies (HART). "Genetically-determined" and "relational" personhood concepts are identified in discussions of the implications of HART for the living. Discussions of HART draw on or imply contextualized concepts of "natural-normal," alternately excluding or including science from human culture and nature, and pathologizing infertility and certain family forms. My analysis employs concepts of biosociality, care and genetic citizenship.

Keywords: personhood, biosociality, hemophilia, human assisted reproduction, New Zealand, gender

Résumé : J'examine la façon dont les concepts de nature humaine, de personne et de naturel-normal sont déployés en Nouvelle-Zélande dans des entrevues effectuées auprès de personnes hémophiles ainsi que dans des soumissions publiques abordant le thème des techniques de reproduction humaine assistée. Les questions relatives au fait d'être une personne « génétiquement déterminée » ou « relationnelle » sont relevées dans les discussions portant sur les conséquences de la reproduction assistée pour les êtres vivants. Ces discussions suggèrent des concepts contextualisés de ce qui est perçu comme « naturel-normal » ou s'en inspirent, excluant ou incluant tour à tour la science dans la définition de la culture et de la nature humaine, et pathologisant l'infertilité ainsi que certains modèles familiaux. Mon analyse fait usage des concepts de la biosociabilité, des soins et de la citoyenneté génétique.

Mots-clés : Personne, biosociabilité, hémophilie, reproduction humaine assistée, Nouvelle-Zélande, sexospécificité

But, I'm sort of worried if we are preventing people from getting hemophilia. There [are] still the spontaneous people, and treatment for them is just going to be very hard because it won't be as available...and there won't be groups like there [are] now because not so many people will have it. [Nadine, a single woman carrier of severe hemophilia, who hoped to have children in the future without using new reproductive technologies, Interview 2006]

From an early age I knew that I would not have a child with hemophilia. It didn't ever cross my mind that I would have a child with hemophilia. [Debbie, a married woman carrier of severe hemophilia who wished to have children by using new reproductive technologies, Interview 2006]

In this article, I compare and contrast how concepts of human nature, personhood and natural-normal are deployed in texts derived from two separate studies in New Zealand. One is a set of interviews with people with hemophilia carried out in 2005-06, in which both Nadine and Debbie participated. The other is an analysis of archived submissions from the "general public" to the Parliamentary Health Committee in 2003 on the subject of Human Assisted Reproductive Technologies (HART).

The two introductory snippets of conversation serve to indicate some of the diverse ways in which people with the same genetically inherited coagulation disorder respond to the possibilities afforded by new reproductive technologies, especially prenatal diagnosis (PND) and preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD).¹

What Is Hemophilia?

Hemophilia is a blood coagulation disorder inherited on the X-chromosome. People with it bleed longer than others. Without adequate treatment hemophilia may be life-threatening or lead to severely damaged joints and bodily organs through repeated bleeds. In New Zealand,

state-funded treatment is available to all those diagnosed and most people with hemophilia respond well to treatment.²

Because women have two X chromosomes, women who carry the gene mutation for hemophilia are usually protected from bleeding problems by their non-affected X chromosome and are almost always protected from the most severe forms. However, about one third of all women who carry the mutation do suffer from some bleeding issues.³ Men, having only one X chromosome, always have hemophilia if they have an affected gene. All of their daughters, but none of their sons, will be carriers. The children of women carriers have a 50% chance of inheriting the mutation.

Family members with hemophilia inherit the same mutation and therefore usually have the same level of severity. Although hemophilia is an inherited condition, in any one generation about 30% of hemophilia cases are new “spontaneous” mutations. These new mutations are subsequently inherited.

It was these “spontaneous” families who would receive a surprise diagnosis of hemophilia that were the subject of Nadine’s concern. Nadine welcomed the ability to be able to prevent having children with hemophilia, although she thought that hemophilia was “not so serious nowadays” because of the availability of safe and effective treatment. However she was also worried about preventing hemophilia. This was partly because she believed (and so did her brother), that her brother was the person he was because of hemophilia. Nadine admired him. But it was also because she cared about future people with hemophilia. She foresaw that through using PND only “spontaneous” families would have hemophilia and they would not have the political support and care of a numerically strong and experienced hemophilia community. Therefore, Nadine hoped that at least some people who were aware of hemophilia in their family would have children with it.

In contrast, Debbie had been so scarred by her father’s experience of hemophilia that she would not countenance bringing a boy with hemophilia into the world, despite her and her husband’s desire for children and the availability of treatment. Her care was for her own future child.

Much to the relief of Debbie and her husband, hemophilia was listed in December 2005 as one of the serious disorders for which two state-funded cycles of PGD were permitted. This was legally possible because of the passing of the HART Act in 2004 which, among other things, set up the machinery to produce guidelines on the permissible grounds for the selection of embryos for PGD. Fortuitously, the two lines of research informing this

paper, hemophilia and HART, were drawn together dramatically for me when I interviewed Debbie and her husband on the day the funding for PGD was announced.

Recognizing Personhood, Human Nature and Natural–Normal in the Texts

I am particularly interested in statements about when and how one becomes a person, or a non-person.⁴ Carsten, writing about approaches to the study of the person, refers to the well-known distinction between “Western bounded and autonomous individuals, and non-Western ‘relational’ persons” (2004:28), which has been elaborated on most particularly by Strathern (e.g., 1992). Carsten points out that while stories relating to assisted reproduction can be interpreted in terms of genetic connection and individual rights indicative of an emphasis on the individual human being, they can also be interpreted as being about “how close ties are intrinsic to the social constitution of persons” (Carsten 2004:83). She suggests that a reason why the autonomous individual is so prominent in anthropological writings on the West is because of where we go looking. If we look instead in contexts where relatedness comes to the fore—and I suggest that encounters with certain medical technologies provide some examples—“some rather less bounded and more relational ideas about the person are revealed” (Carsten 2004:28).

The medical technologies discussed in these interviews and submissions provide contexts for explorations of cultural concepts of personhood because their use problematizes taken-for-granted understandings of kinship, instigates debate about how personhood comes into being and poses urgent questions of interpersonal rights, claims and responsibilities. For example, in debating reproductive technologies, some submissions argue that new beings become fully human only through interactions with other persons and environments, while others assert that full personhood is present at the moment of conception and the embryo has all the rights of a legal person. My explorations in these contexts in New Zealand indicate that both relational and non-relational ideas of persons are prominent, and both may be drawn on to support arguments for or against the use of particular technologies.

I define statements about “human nature” as those which distinguish between humans, other species and inanimate objects, and comment on what are natural or unnatural attributes or desires. Frequently, these statements also concern personhood. One individual argued that the use of a sperm or egg donor reduced humans to animals (Submission 56). Another individual submission (35) asserted: “To reduce human beings to manipulated technological events is indeed playing at being

Frankenstein.” Such statements delineate what is “not human” in the views of their authors.

Statements concerning natural–normal I recognize, quite literally, by the use of those and cognate terms in the texts as well as by the occurrence of their opposites, for example *unnatural* or *artificial*. Sometimes nature and the divine are conflated: “the natural laws of nature are the divine laws of creation” (Submission 57, Individual), an association also noted by MacDonald (1994) in the Canadian context.

Imagining the Hemophilia Community

The hemophilia community may be considered an “imagined genetic community,” as discussed by Simpson (2000). However, despite the importance of family and genealogy to this condition, what is imagined is not a nation or ethnic group but a transnational community based on narratives of hemophilia as being no respecter of ethnicity, nation or class. As in Anderson’s (1983) original conceptualization of “imagined community,” print media and now the internet, video and digital media, as well as calendars and reports of frequent meetings at all levels, from local groups to world congresses, confirm this relatedness. Collective representations based in shared genes, blood, blood-borne viruses, suffering, caring and treatment issues are anchor-points in this imagining.

The concept of a life-confirming “biosociality” as Taussig et al. (2003) describe for the Little People of the United States, drawing on Rabinow’s (1996) work also has a good deal to offer in conceptualizing hemophilia internationally. These authors explain that Rabinow “has used the term *biosociality* to describe the conscription into a new identity politics as people come to align themselves in terms of genetic narratives and practices” (Taussig et al. 2003:60). Sociality in the hemophilia community operates through the informal support of friends in local branches; via email and phone at the national level of the New Zealand Haemophilia Foundation (NZHF); through partnerships (“twinning”) between national organizations from developed and less developed countries; and through the World Federation of Hemophilia. “The language of kinship” (Rapp et al. 2001:395), as well as other metaphors of relatedness, such as comparisons with the United Nations, abound, especially at the biennial World Congress.

In many respects, this network and organization conforms to Rabinow’s descriptions of biosociality: medical specialists, laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, a range of other specialists, patients and their families with shared historical narratives and common traditions act and interact on behalf of this imagined community as well

as in their own interests (Rabinow 1996:102). Relatedness here is not based just on recognition of a shared bodily condition—although this is a precondition—but on common experience, especially the experience of care. Living with a bleeding disorder and its complications, living with and dying from blood-borne infections (notably HIV and Hepatitis C), taking common cause against the corporate and state authorities that failed in their duty of care in preserving a safe blood supply, memorializing those who have died, and working tirelessly for safe and adequate treatment now and for the future in concert with others, characterize this community. As Nadine indicated, these are significant ties, sufficient to persuade her that there are reasons for the hemophilia community, and for herself, to be cautious in approaching HART as a means to prevent the conception or birth of babies with a hemophilia mutation. Her expression is of concern for continuing hemophilia-based biosociality.

In understanding her approach as informed by an ethic of care, I have been influenced by Herzfeld’s (2001) discussion, which in turn draws on the work of other scholars, especially Das and Borneman. Herzfeld (2001:217) asks: “How can anthropology contribute to a rethinking of the social that will make it, not the space of regulation, punishment and blame, but rather that of relief, care and acceptance?” This question can be asked of the concept of biosociality too, but rather than setting up regulation in opposition to relief, as does Herzfeld, the social can be rethought as being a space of regulation and relief, punishment and care, blame and acceptance.

My reworking of biosociality is similar to the concept of “genetic citizenship” elaborated by Heath et al. (2004: 153). This group of scholars has been working over many years with organizations based around shared genetic conditions. For them, a space for an ethics of care has emerged from the diverse entailments and changes in techno-science and the public sphere. Among the repercussions is a breakdown of distance between lay and expert and creation of new spheres of regulation, choice and participation. “Genetic citizenship” alludes to these new contexts and to the concomitant changes running from the individual to the state and to large multinational companies or other organizations.

In this article, I prefer to use the reworked concept of biosociality with an emphasis on care to refer to relationships within the hemophilia community, whether within New Zealand or internationally. However, the concept of genetic citizenship becomes useful in thinking about the relationships between the hemophilia community and the nation. I believe that these theoretical developments which point to complexity and a recursive counterpoint between,

for example, regulation and relief, prompt a more satisfying ethnographic account.

Although I attempt a gendered analysis of the hemophilia interviews, in this community it is difficult to disentangle gender from hemophilia or indeed kinship status.⁵ In my representations of a gender analysis I am mindful that “gender” is always complicated.

The HART Submissions

In addition to the detailed and varied data derived from our work with the hemophilia community, this paper is also built on submissions by self-selected members of the general public in relation to legislation on HART.

The story of HART legislation and the public submissions in New Zealand is long and complex. In the report of the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification (1991) was a view that certain areas in relation to HART should be amenable to legislation. A report focusing on assisted human reproduction was completed in 1994 and was followed by the introduction of two separate Bills, a Member’s Bill and a Government Bill, on the issue into Parliament in 1996 and 1998. Both these Bills drew on the earlier reports as well as on subsequent events including the experience of legislation and the technologies themselves in other countries, notably Britain. They differed in several respects, especially in how HART should be regulated, but also shared a good deal of common ground. Although public submissions were called for on these Bills, little progress was made until 2003, when Cabinet decided that a Supplementary Order Paper should be drawn up which could give a clear direction on several points of difference between the Bills. A new call for public submissions was made. All these submissions were treated by the Parliamentary Health Committee as if they were on the 1996 Bill. Oral submissions were also heard. However, the body of text for our analysis comprised only the written submissions.

Although anyone could make submissions, only 79 individuals or groups did so. One of the submissions was private. Thirty-two submissions were made by individuals or what appeared to be small family groups. One of these individuals was a member of an email pro-surrogacy network, one was a donor-conceived person and a third was the son of a woman with Huntington’s disease. Others did not reveal personal links to the issue. The other submissions were made by organizations. These included academic experts, named religious groups, ethics committees, the Law Society, the Human Rights and Health and Disability Commissioners, an environmental group, anti-abortion organizations, an abortion reform organization, disability groups, providers and users of fertility

services and various groups promoting women’s issues and family policy. There were no written submissions from self-identified ethnic groups. Maori had been consulted orally by the Parliamentary Health Committee which itself had Maori members.

In January and February 2006, two graduate summer scholars in Anthropology (University of Auckland), Laura McLauchlan and Elizabeth Frengley, and I, took a discourse analytic approach to the 78 public written submissions (Park et al. 2008). In this process, we were and continue to be guided by Sarah Franklin’s (1999) analysis of the British Parliamentary Debates on a similar Bill and by the successive detailed analyses of these debates by Michael Mulkay (for example, 1996).⁶

Updating Hemophilia

With colleagues, I have been doing fieldwork with people with hemophilia in New Zealand since 1994, examining a wide range of issues that impinge on their lives: the everyday experiences of living with hemophilia for men and women, blood-borne infections, gender issues, reproductive decision-making and bio-political sociality, to name a few. Midway through 2005, Deon York, a young man with severe hemophilia and a Masters degree in Anthropology, and I commenced a second up-date study of “living with hemophilia in Aotearoa New Zealand” focusing on new technologies and treatments (Park and York 2008). Three of the focal issues in this update are pertinent to this paper: carrier testing, prenatal testing including PGD and gene therapy. Carrier testing involves a DNA test of those girls or women who are the daughters of women carriers or else suspected spontaneous carriers. If the family mutation has not already been identified, blood samples also need to be requested from several family members to pinpoint the mutation. I have included gene therapy here partly because, although not a reproductive technology, people often imagine that one of its uses may be as part of reproductive technology. Gene therapy is not available at present, but is likely to involve the introduction of normal copies of the affected DNA sequences, most likely via a viral vector.

We formally interviewed 37 people who responded to our invitations to participate and interacted with many more through the community activities in which we participated.⁷ This recent study is a little larger than our first update study five years earlier, but much smaller than the initial study where, through a questionnaire, nearly 200 people participated and we interviewed 80 (Park et al. 1995). It is estimated that there are around 600 people in New Zealand with hemophilia.

Differences between the Two Sets of Texts

The documents from the two studies, hemophilia and HART, contrast rhetorically. The HART submissions try to persuade legislators of the rightness of their views, to alert them to less obvious implications and to adduce what the citizen or group sees as relevant evidence. They contrast with the hemophilia interviews where people often do not have decided views but tend to ruminate, like Nadine, with lots of “buts” and “however,” and are not always sure of how they would act in any given set of circumstances. Nonetheless, some, like Debbie, did express strong views.

The documents also contrast in terms of prescriptiveness. Within the hemophilia community, some people would never use PND or PGD; some would not use it for hemophilia, but might for something “more serious”; others intended to use it; and many others would consider it, or would have considered it, were it available during their child-bearing years. But while the whole range of views for and against new reproductive technologies existed within the hemophilia community when individuals considered what they would do personally, we have yet to meet a person with hemophilia who expressed the view that these new technologies should not be available. Even people who were quite vehement about not using them themselves thought that they should be available to others. Here is a major contrast with the views expressed by some of the general public in the HART Bill submissions. Many of them were opposed to reproductive technologies being available at all.

Concepts of Persons

New reproductive technologies are a touchy subject within the hemophilia community as well as outside it. Two sisters who carried severe hemophilia were interviewed for an article in a weekend national newspaper not long before our update study began. The two women were lobbying for the approval and funding of PGD because, based on their father’s dreadful experience of severe hemophilia and associated problems, they were adamant that they would never bring a boy with hemophilia into the world. This article caused considerable comment and was spontaneously mentioned in several of our interviews and informal conversations by people who had boys with severe hemophilia. Typically, they expressed sadness and sympathy toward the sisters who had shared their late father’s suffering, but these parents of boys with hemophilia wanted to reach out to them to say that hemophilia is not like that now in the 21st century. They told us that a boy born now can live a full life, with some pain and suffering

certainly, and regular need for treatment with replacement clotting factor, but nothing bad enough to make that life not worth living. Although not stated outright, but intimated with “you knows” and facial expressions, some parents implied that in their enthusiastic support for PGD, the sisters, or the reporter, had unwittingly denigrated the value of lives currently being enjoyed by people with severe hemophilia. Although the sisters took pains to say that this was *their* experience and *their* view, the publicity and their impassioned pleas for PGD were taken to reflect on lives being lived and, perhaps, the decisions that other parents have made.

This is a consideration that looms large. In all three phases of our study, women⁸ carrying hemophilia have said to us, “what does it mean for [my son with hemophilia or my brother] if I abort a fetus with hemophilia or have PGD to avoid a boy with hemophilia?” Franklin’s (1999) study showed that this line of thought was influential in the British Parliamentary Debates, and the New Zealand legislation makes provision for it in section 4(b) of the HART Act (2004): “the human health, safety, and dignity of present and future generations should be preserved and promoted.” Similar concerns have been widely reported internationally, for example, Rapp et al. (2001) for the U.S. and Ivry (2006) for Japan.

This is the question that leads us most directly to understandings of human nature and personhood that are expressed in the interviews and submissions: what does it mean to living people with a genetically inherited condition if an embryo or fetus with it is selected against?

People in the hemophilia community who asked this question were invariably women carriers or their husbands, and they did so rhetorically. Even when pressed, they would sometimes sidestep an answer. People who asked it usually had gone ahead with their pregnancy or had no intention of having a prenatal test, a termination or PGD. But on a few occasions, our participants told us what they thought others meant by it and a few participants, when pressed, told us what they meant. The question meant that deciding not to have a boy with hemophilia questioned the value of the lives of those with hemophilia in the past, present and future. Within the community, people were well aware of this line of thinking. Some of them believed that reproductive decisions did have implications for others, but nonetheless maintained that “what is right for the family is right.” Others dismissed the whole notion that reproductive decisions aimed at preventing the inheritance of genetic conditions devalued living persons with that condition. These different viewpoints appeared to entail different concepts of personhood.

Hartouni states, “who or what is called a person is, among other things, a highly contingent historical formation; it is both the site and the course of ongoing cultural contests and always under construction as a self-evident fact of nature” (Kaufman and Morgan 2005:321). This was indeed the case in this instance. I could discern two lines of thought about how human personhood comes about within the hemophilia community that underlay decisions not to test or abort because of the implications for other children or adults or the community. The differences of expression are subtle but underlying them are diametrically opposed conceptualizations of the process of becoming a person.

One conceptualization I have labelled the “genetically-determined person” to indicate the cultural idea that identity or personhood is conferred by genetics. For hemophilia, for example, if you select against a fetus or embryo that is carrying a slightly scrambled bit of genetic code on that part of the X-chromosome that governs the proteins involved in the clotting cascade, then you are denigrating the value of a living person with the same bit of scrambling. The embryo is *just the same as* a living person because of that shared mutation. Within the HART submissions, this reasoning underlay the mainly Christian-identified ones that maintained the notion that human life and personhood begins at “conception” or when the egg is “fertilized.” While this was sometimes stated as a self-evident truth—“it is a new human being, thus assuming all human rights, it has forty six chromosomes” (Submission 56, Individual)—or discursively implied, for example, using terms like “murder” or “kill” to refer to the disposal of embryos, others used varieties of the genetically-determined person concept as evidence. They argued, in more detail than Submission 56, that all the genetic material that would, as they saw it, govern the individual’s life is present at conception and therefore the embryo has personhood.

Six submissions used this argument. Three were made by individuals, two by Catholic groups and one by an anti-abortion group. This was also a particularly strong argument in the British debates, and was labelled by Franklin (1999:145) as “developmental essentialism.” This line of thought, as Franklin explains, is based on the assumption that the embryo has *within itself* the potential for development.

A similar underlying argument of genetically-determined personhood was found within disability rights discourses in the HART submissions. For example, Submission 74, from the Disabled Persons Assembly, maintained that the prevention of disability is offensive to those with a disability, and compared this to the offence caused to

women when female births are prevented. The phrase “curing us out of existence,” used to argue against HART, suggests that the identity of the “us” is determined by genetics.

The contrasting conceptualization I call the “relational person.” This argument within the hemophilia community agrees that living with hemophilia is tough, but not as tough now, with good treatment, as it used to be. The following is a composite argument compiled from phrases derived from several conversations and interviews: “My son or brother is the fine person he is because of his struggles with hemophilia. Indeed, the challenge of living with hemophilia can be the making of a better person. Through his hemophilia, he has met some wonderful people and has enriched other people’s lives and we have met those people too.” Therefore to select against a mutation causing hemophilia is to devalue the people in the hemophilia community who are who they are, not just because they have a small genetic similarity, but because they have learned to deal with it in companionship with others.

This is a relational argument that constructs personhood as the product of an on-going relationship between genetic endowment and experience–environment including meaningful human relationships. Nadine’s perspective used this concept but also elaborated on it using a concept of biosocial care. Women carriers and their husbands commonly used this concept of becoming human when explaining their views on HART.

There were few references in the HART submissions to the relational person concept, although one from the son of a woman with Huntington’s disease did touch on it, writing about the value of adversity to the development of a sense of responsibility (Submission 36). The nearest most submissions came to it was an acknowledgment that an embryo was not safe if it was outside “the sanctuary of the mother” (Submissions 18, Christian Heritage Party; Submission 68, Family Life International), which is a tacit acknowledgement that a particular environmental interaction is required for the safe development of an embryo, but which simultaneously constructs women as safe “containers.”⁹ Franklin, too, noted that reference to the relational character of the embryo was very rare in the British debates. She cites just two speakers who referred to the necessity of maternal-embryo interactions or parental and societal interactions for an embryo to develop into a human being (1999:150-151).

In contrast to these authors and interviewees who believed that using reproductive technology had implications for people already born, other people thought such views were “nonsense” or “ridiculous.” Like Debbie, they might be adamant that these decisions related only

to the family circumstances of those making the decision at that time, especially whether a particular family or individual could cope with caring for a(nother) child with hemophilia, and whether they were accepting of the possibility of having a child with hemophilia. These decisions were closely related to the parents' perceptions of the seriousness of hemophilia. This was frequently encapsulated in the hemophilia community by "what's right for the family is what's right."

This phrase is a key statement of situational ethics and a strategy for accommodating diverse views in this biosocial community, where some members are opposed to abortion, for example, but do not wish to deny others the possibility of it. This position is paralleled by some of the HART submissions, for example, one from a mother with Huntington's disease, in support of PGD who said she was "not fighting for a genetically modified baby, just a healthy one" (Submission 7, Fertility New Zealand). Her submission represents those who saw these technologies as a means of avoiding pain and suffering for future babies, with no implications for those already born, including herself, but with enormous implications for affected families. They refused the genetic determinism which says that an embryo or fetus is just like a living human person and instead focused on the needs of future babies and families to support their arguments for the availability of PGD.

Perhaps not surprisingly, because it is an umbrella group for organizations like the HFNZ, the Bill submission which is closest to the perspectives of people with hemophilia came from the New Zealand Organisation of Rare Disorders (Submission 64). This drew attention to possible benefits and downfalls of reproductive technologies (genetic screening for example), recognized that rights of disabled people needed protection but advocated that where the technology exists to identify painful and deteriorating diseases at such an early stage, it should be able to be used. The argument in this submission emphasized the concept of quality of life for the child, recognized what I have called the genetically determined person (but distanced itself from it) and emphasized the relational person perspective.

Gendered Talk about Persons

Not everyone in the hemophilia community was used to discussing the issues around HART, although interestingly, discussions about gene therapy were much less circumscribed. Women spoke more readily about these issues, a point discussed in our earlier publications where we noted that it was men's bleeding and women's reproductive capacities that were stressed, even though men passed on hemophilia as much as women and quite a number of women

also had bleeding problems (Park 2000, 2005). Reproductive choices are not generally regarded as men's issues in New Zealand and are therefore not usually the topic of masculine conversation. When Deon, as interviewer, and Neil, a man in his 50s with severe hemophilia, had a conversation about amniocentesis and CVS, they remarked on the gendered nature of such talk in this community:

Deon: This issue, though I mean, it's something that, it's not your usual topic of conversation [they both laugh], but have you talked about it much with other people?

Neil: Umm, only with people involved with hemophilia, and I think only women, that I'm aware of, in fact, yeah.

D: So you don't think it is really an issue that men with hemophilia would discuss?

N: I have never heard it discussed among men with hemophilia, either of those procedures.

D: And why do you think something like that hasn't been discussed, considering its implications for hemophilia?

N: Well, it, um...[pause]...I think that's very relevant to a remark that we heard recently and that is that, you know, it's not solely the woman's role to determine, you know, the future of a child and yet in a number of circumstances, those two tests that we talked about, it seems to me have been, sort of largely, largely an area of "Women's Issues" and, apart from the topic, you know, not being as interesting as rugby, and that fact that, you know, it's into the women's issues sort of sector, maybe that's why you don't get half a dozen people, men with hemophilia, sitting around talking about chorionic villi sampling [laughter ensues from both sides]

D: And while watching rugby, it wouldn't really work would it! [Interview 2006]

The humour in this exchange comes from Neil's self-ridicule as an acknowledged rugby fanatic as well as from the idea that this is a ludicrous topic of conversation among men. It was significant that when Neil had discussed it, he described women as his conversational partners and this seemed to be the case for the others too. For example, Euan, another middle-aged man with hemophilia, said that one of his women friends in the hemophilia community had talked with him about amniocentesis, and he and his young adult daughter have had considerable discussion about the merits of prenatal tests and PGD. Ben, an older teenager with hemophilia, planned to talk with women—his mother and sister—about these issues when the time came.

Discussions about reproductive choices are largely left to women carriers and their husbands and partners. As Andy (mid-20s with severe hemophilia) said, "see we haven't discussed it much simply because she is not the

carrier and we know what the odds are with our children.” Prenatal testing is not usually a big issue for men with hemophilia and their partners because they already know that any daughters will be carriers. Carrier women and their partners have many more choices to make and more hangs on those choices. However, the perspectives and experiences of men and boys with hemophilia are important to a full appreciation of the repercussions of these choices, especially as women and their partners include as a very important part of their decision-making what they consider might be the implications of their choices for men with hemophilia who are their focus of care. In our update study, then, we addressed questions about reproductive choices to men with hemophilia, and found that this, though sometimes difficult, was rewarding and revealing.

The nine men with hemophilia in the update study did not interpret prenatal testing or PGD by women in the community as having implications for the value of their own lives. One used the term “ridiculous” to describe this assumption. Two of the men had not had, or would not have, biological children, at least partly because of hemophilia, but this did not mean they devalued their own lives. A couple of the men said that they did not think that hemophilia was serious enough for abortions to be considered but all of them thought that having the various technologies available for the hemophilia community was a good thing: “the more options the better” was a common opinion. Some were quite enthusiastic, particularly about PGD. Marty, for example, a younger man, thought PGD was more desirable “because you don’t really see a face,” whereas he was opposed to abortion for hemophilia. One young man did remark that if prenatal testing were available to his mother, and she had used it and had a termination, then he would not be here now, but he still favoured the availability of HART. The others talking about the topic did not link it to themselves. Unlike several of their sisters or mothers, they explained that they did not think it reflected on them in any way. Instead, they focused on avoiding pain and suffering for the grandchildren and on saving their daughters from the impact of caring for a child with hemophilia: “I know that it would dictate so much of their life for 20 years and beyond,” said one man, referring to his daughters.

While I have discussed caring here in terms of gender, gender in the hemophilia community is also implicated in whether one is “a person with hemophilia” or “a carrier” or a spouse or partner. It is also inseparable from kinship. Thus the analysis could also be carried out in terms of “having hemophilia” or “being a father.” Men with hemophilia are largely making decisions on the basis

of caring for their daughters and future grandchildren, while women—the “daughters” and “carriers”—are caring about their fathers, brothers and sons and to a more limited extent, their daughters. Men married to women carriers tend to express similar views as their wives, in contrast to men with hemophilia. As Herzfeld (2001) has pointed out, discussions of caring have moved beyond fixed notions of gender.

Another consideration mentioned by the men with hemophilia was reducing the burden that hemophilia places on the health service and on New Zealand taxpayers. This broader anxiety concerned a lot of people within the community, men and women, as hemophilia is one of the most costly medical conditions to treat. This is an instance where the concept of genetic citizenship is useful. As members of the nation and beneficiaries of a state-funded hemophilia treatment program, for which they have lobbied long and hard, many people in the hemophilia community in New Zealand are concerned at the health dollars that their treatment uses and the opportunity costs that their treatment represents for others. One mother, a nurse, said that she often thought about how many knee operations could be done with the dollars spent on her son’s treatment products. These considerations often lead to self-regulation of daily activities to minimize the demands on treatment products as well as to considerations about limiting the numbers of children with hemophilia.

Thus although the men drew on an ethic of care, as did Nadine, they came to opposite conclusions from her about the use of prenatal and preimplantation testing because the focal points of their caring were different. These men with hemophilia completely ignored genetically determined concepts of personhood. Although they might be classified by some as “disabled” they entirely avoided the disability rights discourse (and also disagreed with the argument). Frequently, they acknowledged a relational person concept when talking about how their lives with hemophilia had shaped them as persons, often, they thought, for the better, but they did not use this argument in relation to HART. Instead they concentrated on caring for future babies in families, for the health care needs of other members of the nation and the financial burden fellow citizens carried for hemophilia treatment, to argue for the availability of HART for people with hemophilia.

What Is Natural–Normal?

People with hemophilia have become used to genetic technologies: they are already beneficiaries. In the mid 1990s, in response to the devastation caused to people with hemo-

philia by HIV/AIDS and hepatitis in the blood supply, a few drug companies began producing a synthetic clotting factor replacement product using polymerase chain reaction techniques. These genetically engineered products have reduced the risk of viruses to close to zero and are used by previously untreated persons and many others who have switched to them from plasma-derived products. Just as regular treatment, which involves venous access, is normalized within their lives, so too is genetic technology. The product just sits there in the fridge alongside the milk and the juice. It is what allows children to be healthy and to grow up without too many limiting restrictions on their lives: in their words, to grow up "normally."

Several people spontaneously raised this background of familiarity with genetically engineered (GE) products that gave them or their children the prospect of a near-normal life when they responded to our questions about technologies that involve manipulation or selection of genes. These include gene therapy as a treatment for hemophilia and assisted reproductive techniques using genetic selection, such as PGD. They explained that without hemophilia they would be opposed to GE because of what they had seen on TV or read in the paper about the dangers of genetic modification of crops, cross-species genetic transplantation and so on. But dealing with hemophilia meant that they had to do serious research, not have knee-jerk reactions. This had led to their being more open-minded. They would consider all options that would help make their child's life healthier and happier and have him or her more protected from bleeds. While those participants who discussed this were very cautious about any GE crops, they were prepared to consider GE for medical purposes, including for hemophilia, if there were careful ethical scrutiny and long-term successful trials. This is a group of people whose lives are safer and more normal because of genetic engineering. They are a world away from the submissions against the HART Bill which described people born through these techniques as a "new type of person" or "second class citizen," who would represent a "threat to the integrity of the human race" (Submissions from three individuals, Family Life International and GE Aware).

Normal within the hemophilia community means that children will have a life expectancy no different from other New Zealanders, that they will be able to have consistent schooling without long periods of time off to recover from bleeds, that pain will be minimized (although not entirely avoided), that their joints will not be arthritic, that they will be able to have tertiary education, get a good job, have a family, live to see their grandchildren and have interesting leisure activities, and that they will enjoy being

able to contribute to society. They will still have to have treatment. At present, this is from two to three times a week to once a day. They will not be able to play a full range of sports (including rugby, a deprivation which is very difficult for many New Zealand boys), they will have to be careful about how they do everyday activities (for example, taking a lid off a jar, not tripping over a stick), they will have a somewhat restricted range of employment choices, and they will need to plan and be well-organized when it comes to activities like going camping or travelling (the clotting factor, needles and all the rest of it have to come too) or having routine medical and dental procedures. Women with hemophilia-related bleeding problems often need medical help to manage menstruation and extra care during childbirth for them and their babies.

Most people now imagine that gene therapy will be more like an effective and longer lasting clotting factor replacement treatment, perhaps needed only every few months, rather than a once and for all "fix." If available and safe, it too will be normal within their lives and make their lives more normal.

How something is natural or normal is defined by the contrast with what is unnatural or abnormal as many scholars have pointed out (Douglas 1966; Foucault 1977; Said 1978). The contrasts people made were sometimes expected and sometimes surprising. For example, some of the HART submissions drew on Christian- or God-related assertions that procreation is a natural and therefore a divine process, for example, "the natural laws of nature are the divine laws of creation" (Submission 57) and therefore that it should not be tampered with. Others used science as proof of what they took to be the scientific fact that the human person began at fertilization and, therefore, because of that immediate personhood, no HART should be permitted. But astonishingly, in view of the realities of modern, industrial dairy-farming where the whole life of the cow is regulated by techno-science, one person who thought HART was unnatural, suggested that instead "more holistic or organic methods" like those used in dairy herds should be used with humans (Submission 6, Individual)! Unfortunately, he did not explain this further. Recourse to nature and the natural was also used to support aspects of the Bill. For example, arguments in support of PGD and other treatment and research involving embryos up to 14 days old stated that because the development of the primitive streak did not occur until around 14 days, before this time the embryo could be manipulated.¹⁰

The relation of science to human nature was another area of interest. Some argued that it was part of human

nature to be curious and to experiment, so science is really just an aspect of human nature. Further, a few submissions noted that it was in the nature of science to progress, so that new technologies were a natural outcome of science. In the sense that it is part of human nature to construct and inhabit culture, of which science is a part, science is therefore naturally human rather than in opposition to nature. As Franklin (1999:146) points out in reference to similar statements by British parliamentarians, the inexorable progress of science parallels and supports the inexorable development of the genetically determined person. In yet other submissions, science is imagined as alien to human culture and represented as outside human control: a force in its own right. The use of science (and science fiction) in these documents is a topic that deserves its own analysis (see Strathern 1992; Mulkay 1996; Franklin 1999).

In the HART documents, a pathologizing discourse of infertility is discernable: "we feel deeply for those unfortunate couples that are unable to conceive, or unable to carry a child" (Submission 68, Family Life International). Such expressions of care and concern were deployed by those who nonetheless were opposed to HART but who did not wish to appear heartless. Those who wished to provide and support such services stressed the naturalness of *couples* wanting to have a *family*, thereby normalizing heterosexuality, the nuclear family and having children. This despite the statistics from fertility clinics indicating that about half the clients are single or lesbian women, who, from the point of view of those opposing HART, would not be seen as "normal" couples nor as forming "proper" families (MacCormick et al. N.d.). These arguments work on the assumption that it is part of human nature to want to have children and to have these children in a heterosexual relationship: a widespread cultural belief and one that underlies much academic work on kinship (Borneman 1996). Some submissions anticipated that this would be a likely argument and requested consideration for "non-traditional" families in relation to HART. The prospect of such families having access to HART was, of course, one of the reasons why some groups and persons, especially Christian-identified ones, were opposed to the whole process: it was part of the unnaturalness that these artificial technologies would promote. Furthermore, a few argued, using a "slippery-slope" metaphor, that this would lead to the breakdown of society as we knew it.

Where almost everyone agreed, however, was in relation to the unnaturalness and distastefulness of commodification of sperm, eggs, embryos and wombs. The reasonable expenses of a surrogate, some argued (seven submissions from fertility organizations, ethics commit-

tees, an academic and an individual), should be recompensed, but only two individual submissions (Submission 46; Submission 67, a member of a pro-surrogacy network) argued for a fee for service, similar to that paid to the fertility specialist. All were careful to differentiate any such fees from payment for a baby.

Some of the HART submissions wished to alert the legislators to the fact that normalization of these techniques would bring pressure to bear on women—making women responsible for having normal babies, and therefore likely to suffer blame and guilt if they did not (Submission 2, Individual). This is also a sensitive area within the hemophilia community, with women being forced to make choices in a context where the very existence of various tests and procedures has made not testing also a choice (Park and Strookappe 1996).

Within this community it is well understood that approximately one in three boys with hemophilia are born to families where there is no known history of it. Because of this, as we were told many times, no matter how carefully people with hemophilia manage their reproduction to avoid passing on hemophilia, there will always be these "spontaneous" people. These people were the focus of Nadine's concern. Because it is at present inconceivable that there could be prenatal population screening for such a rare condition (1:5000 male births) as hemophilia, the condition is not likely to disappear.

While there appeared to be no blame attached to known carriers having one or two children with hemophilia, families rarely went beyond that. Their own personal resources for caring and providing, as well as their awareness of how much hemophilia costs the health service, were some of the reasons for limiting family size—an aspect of genetic citizenship, as noted above.

Some reasons for not testing and "taking your chances" with a pregnancy which might result in a child with hemophilia were based on a critique of the concept of "normality." Several people, including men with hemophilia, women carriers and their partners, argued that it was good for the community at large to have a range of people in it, including people with hemophilia. For example, a few people in our initial study said that their hemophilia helped their friends realize that it was possible to be an "OK Kiwi bloke" without playing rugby. More recently, others mentioned the destructiveness of the idea of the perfect baby, pointing out that there were many ways other than having an inherited genetic disorder that babies can differ from the ideal of perfection. The spectre of "designer babies" was there in this anxiety, incorporating concerns about terribly controlling parents who constrain the natural development of their children. Also

mentioned was the idea that it is normal for human beings to have some things wrong with us and we need to learn to accept that. Concerns about eugenics, where the boundaries of “serious” disorders lie and who decides them, were frequently mentioned. As the opening quotation suggests, even severe hemophilia may be seen as “serious” or “not so serious.”

Despite the frequently mentioned guideline based on “what’s right for the family,” not everyone was comfortable with this. One young man commented, “but OK, at what point do we (i.e., society) say ‘No’ to the choices that individuals want to make?” Worries about commercialism or unregulated use of selection also led to disquiet. Such concerns were also detectable in many of the HART submissions, both those for and against the use of such technologies. These fears all relate to caring for future human persons and for an ethical society where “human rights and dignity,” as so many of the HART submissions reiterated, are respected.

Conclusion

New reproductive technologies are an arena in which anthropological as well as socially important questions can be explored. Even in one small nation there is considerable complexity in the ways in which personhood and what is normal are conceptualized. The contrast between the strength of the relational person concept within the hemophilia community and its relative absence in the submissions to the Parliamentary Health Committee on the New Zealand HART Bill and in the British parliamentary debates lends support to Carsten’s (2004:28) suggestion that the anthropological prominence of the autonomous Western individual may derive from “undue emphasis on judicial, philosophical, and religious sources.” The emphasis in these law-making contexts on the autonomous, genetically determined person gives further support to her proposition.

Men with hemophilia entirely ignored the genetically determined person concept in discussing the meaning of HART for the hemophilia community. Although they acknowledged the relational person argument in other contexts, they refused the idea that prevention of the yet-to-be-born with hemophilia had anything to say about the value of people with hemophilia who were already born. Instead, a future-oriented ethic of biosocial care and genetic citizenship underlay their relative enthusiasm for HART. This care encompassed their own multi-generational families and the hemophilia community, as the concept of biosociality would suggest, but extended well beyond that to the health system and to their fellow citizens, in line with understandings of self-regulating genetic

citizenship where people with a debilitating and costly preventable condition feel a sense of responsibility to the nation and limit the number of affected children born. In contrast, when Nadine, a carrier woman and sister of a young man with hemophilia, invoked the ethic of care she had in mind the future hemophilia community but she used it to argue for the exercise of caution in the use of HART.

Nadine’s argument is particularly interesting, especially in light of Borneman’s critique of certain social theory which places “the reproduction of persons as the central logic of social organization. In other words, [Borneman] says, in this view people develop relationships, not in order to care for each other, but in order to reproduce” (Herzfeld 2001:224). Nadine’s perspective collapses this distinction. She argues that people who know that they carry hemophilia should continue to consider having children who might have hemophilia *in order to care* for one another, and especially for those who do not know that they are carrying it. She can come to this view because of her emphasis on care as an integral component of biosociality and also because her experience is that “hemophilia is not so serious nowadays.” People with it can live near-normal lives because of the quality of medical care and the technological developments, including GE, which have improved and are expected to continue to improve treatment. While some members of the hemophilia community express fears about the high costs of treatment and who will pay for this treatment in the future, this was not a consideration for Nadine at this point.

The contrastive and situational conceptualization of normal is very evident in both the HART and hemophilia contexts, with some major differences notable between them. The most significant is the normalization of GE in the lives of people with hemophilia and therefore their relatively sanguine—but not overly optimistic—approach to gene therapy and PGD. The concept of normal itself and its hegemonic power are critiqued both by people with hemophilia and those making submissions to the HART Bills. Arguments in favour of respect for, or at least acceptance of, human physical and social variation appear in support of a range of specific arguments about reproductive technologies and varied decisions about using them.

Recourse to arguments invoking normal and natural was made repeatedly in the HART submissions both to support and to deny the use of HART. In the process, infertility and new family forms were pathologized. For example, it was argued that couples can fulfil the normal reproductive script by the use of HART, and also, that the use of HART is unnatural, giving rise to improper

human relationships and to a different class of person. Science too was constructed as part of normal human culture—a natural development of human intellect—as well as a development which threatened the normal, threatened human nature and was outside human control.

The addition of care to the concept of biosociality has assisted me to produce an analysis that I believe (and hope) is more complete and respectful of the very divergent views represented in the submissions and interviews and more consonant with the ways in which many people with hemophilia express their ethical dilemmas. Genetic citizenship and biosociality used in tandem refine and define both concepts and, in turn, clarify some of the dimensions of care for individuals, the biosocial community and the nation. They allow a greater understanding of the contrasting perspectives of people differently situated in the hemophilia community or in the debates about legislation on HART.

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Notes

- 1 Prenatal testing involves a DNA test using a sample taken through chorionic villus sampling (CVS), at around 11 weeks gestation. CVS involves removing fine “hairs” from the placenta. The hairs are cultured, then the DNA is compared for the hemophilia gene marker. Amniocentesis, which involves the extraction of fluid from the amniotic cavity surrounding the fetus, may also be used, but this test cannot be undertaken until 12-14 weeks. Both tests have a risk of spontaneous miscarriage of between 0.5 and 1%. PGD involves DNA analysis of single cells of in vitro fertilized embryos, and the implantation into the womb of only those embryos that are not males with hemophilia.

- 2 The two most common forms of hemophilia affect the production of protein factors VIII or IX, which are important components of the normal process of blood clotting that prevents prolonged bleeding. Production of these proteins is controlled by two genes and the type and location of the mutation on the gene influences its expression in terms of severity as well as in other ways. People with severe hemophilia have less than 1% of normal clotting factor, and may bleed internally even without receiving a knock or strain. People with mild hemophilia have 5-25% of normal factor and will usually bleed only in response to trauma. Despite advances in treatment, 10-20% of people treated develop antibodies to the treatment product. Effective treatment is still possible but is much more complex.
- 3 Processes that occur in cell division may limit the amount of protection that women receive from their unaffected X chromosome. The level of severity for affected women is less predictable because of the potential role played by their other X chromosome.
- 4 Statements about personhood I define as statements about human beings as social agents.
- 5 For example, so few women (one in the entire population during the time of the study) had severe bleeding problems that it is not possible to compare the statements of men with severe hemophilia with those from women with the same level of severity. Nor is it possible to do a comparison of being a carrier only based on gender alone because all male carriers also have hemophilia. The term “carrier” is used almost exclusively for women carriers in the hemophilia community. The exceptions are when people remind themselves that men also carry the gene into the next generation (see Park 2005). Because many of the public submissions to the Parliamentary Health Committee were made by groups, organizations and couples it was not possible to analyse them in terms of gender.
- 6 A reviewer drew my attention to a paper by Maggie Macdonald (1994) in which she carried out a somewhat analogous exercise, analyzing key metaphors in briefs to the Canadian Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. There are some evident parallels, for example in the invocation of “nature,” but also some differences in our mode of analysis. The New Zealand Royal Commission on Genetic Modification reported in 1991 and I have not, to date, studied the submissions to it.
- 7 These activities included regional and national meetings, attending conferences with Hemophilia Foundation members, participating in weekend camps for various age and gender groups and a range of informal social occasions as well as some home visits.
- 8 Women carriers and their husbands tended to voice these concerns. This is an instance where the mode of caring may be gendered but also, simultaneously, may be related to both carrier status and kinship roles.
- 9 As pointed out by a reviewer, the submissions that depict women as safe containers are in contrast to portrayals of women in medicalized childbirth, where women, their wombs and their capacity to safely deliver babies, as noted in much feminist scholarship, are systematically depicted as dangerous to the baby’s survival (Davis-Floyd 2003; Wendland 2007). However, from the point of view of anti-abor-

- tion, anti-HART groups, the womb is infinitely safer than the lab or operating theatre for the embryo or fetus.
- 10 The primitive streak is an early embryonic stage which serves to organize later development. It is sometimes taken to be a key step toward the formation of a potential human being.

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Part 4: The Human in Culture

Anthropological Approaches to Human Nature, Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism

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Abstract: This article reflects on how anthropology has traditionally dealt with the alternation of cultural specificities and human universals. It revisits the foundational anthropological concept of cultural relativism in light of the inevitability of standpoint and ethnocentrism. Today, within the discipline of anthropology, it is possible, indeed necessary, to update the conceptual apparatus in order to maintain the potential to speak truth to power and to undertake a cross-culturally sophisticated critique of globalization as we once did of evolution. The methods and messages of anthropology remain crucial to contemporary practice of the discipline in Canada and elsewhere.

Keywords: human nature, cultural relativism, Americanist tradition, history of anthropology, ethnocentrism

Résumé : Cet article se penche sur la façon dont l'anthropologie a traditionnellement traité de l'alternance des spécificités culturelles et des universaux humains. Il revisite le concept anthropologique fondateur du relativisme culturel à la lumière de l'inévitabilité du point de vue et de l'ethnocentrisme. De nos jours, au sein de la discipline anthropologique, il est possible, voire nécessaire, de mettre à jour nos outils conceptuels afin de résister à la pression des pouvoirs en place et d'entreprendre une critique transculturelle sophistiquée de la mondialisation, comme celle que nous avons su faire de l'évolution. Les méthodes et les messages de l'anthropologie demeurent essentiels pour nos pratiques contemporaines au Canada et ailleurs dans le monde.

Mots-clés : nature humaine, relativisme culturel, tradition américaniste, histoire de l'anthropologie, ethnocentrisme

Introduction

This article revisits what may seem to many to be an old-fashioned kind of anthropology, one grounded in but not identical with the Americanist tradition that grew up around Franz Boas and his first generation of students in the early decades of the 20th century (Darnell 2001).¹ It is not a research paper in the traditional sense but rather a reflection on what makes us anthropologists and how some aspects of that professional identity have maintained continuity over time. My tracing of this genealogy is necessarily personal, since my own linguistic-cultural anthropology and history of anthropology have emerged from it.

The critical research strategies of Boas's resolutely anti-evolutionist paradigm built upon an emerging cross-cultural comparative database and ranted against premature generalization. Postwar positivism in North America has obscured the theoretical coherence of this paradigm to a point where heroic historicist efforts are now necessary to restore its meaning. Such a reassessment is underway. The exemplars I have chosen for this coalescence of revitalized Americanist ideas are not scholars conventionally understood to share a single intellectual project. Moreover, many of them are not anthropologists in the narrow sense. They all, however, have moments of thinking like anthropologists and of addressing issues on which we are the long-established experts within the humanities and social sciences.

The strand of Boasian thought that intrigues me is not the mainstream of this tradition in its heyday, however, or at least not as that mainstream is too often caricatured. Rather, I want to suggest that today, we confront similar trajectories toward simple answers that cry out for resistance from both the ethnographers and the theorists among us. The question of human nature has been foreshortened in the social sciences and humanities, with an accompanying lack of nuanced attention to the culturally specific. Ethnography, particularly in cultural studies,

has been dismissed as mere detail rather than as the real-world verisimilitude that instantiates the plasticity of human nature. Anthropologists, more than any other social scientists, have the ethnographic skills to characterize human nature as simultaneously diverse and uniform. The critical identity of the human resides in personal and cultural agency (what Edward Sapir called “the impact of culture on personality”) and on the species-wide capacity for reflexivity. I believe that our discipline urgently needs, at present, to move in tandem between theory and ethnography, between the universal and the culture-specific, the biological and the cultural. We are uniquely poised to avoid the larger culture’s predilection toward renewed speculative and premature generalization based on rigid dichotomization of what are, in the real world, continuous phenomena with overlaps and ambiguities.

One of the significant fracture lines in contemporary anthropology revolves around the binary causality attributed by many to culture and biology, with the apparent corollary that anthropologists must choose between the two traditional ends of this continuum. Segal and Yanagisako (2004) have recently argued that the North American discipline should jettison its long-established commitment to the multiple perspectives of the four traditional sub-disciplines. Their exhortation to “unwrap the sacred bundle” implies that American anthropologists have accepted the inevitability of the traditional quadratic structure passively and unreflexively (although they present no evidence for this purported mental state of their colleagues).

Segal envisions the American Anthropological Association umbrella of professional identity and socialization devolving to the presumably incommensurable specialized positions of the Association’s 34 constituent sections.² Yanagisako apparently takes pride in having presided over the dismantling of the Stanford University Department of Anthropology into two bitterly opposed camps, roughly geared around the oppositions of culture versus biology and cultural analysis versus science (Segal and Yanigisako 2004). Presciently, the program has since been reunited, if not reintegrated.

My own position is that if the scientists and the humanists within our discipline decline to communicate with one another, we have ceded the strongest claim of anthropology to provide a unique and critically useful edge on understanding the essence of human nature and identity. Neither perspective alone is complete or autonomous. Anthropology is not, of course, the only social science discipline to have struggled with such internal diversities of method and interpretation. There has long

been a polarization, for example, between experimental and social psychology, human and physical geography, and clinical practice and experimental medicine. Anthropology alone has insisted—until quite recently and, I trust, only in certain quarters—that the two approaches are not conceptually separable. In my view, for example, Borofsky (2002) sets such a high standard for evidence of collaboration across the sub-disciplines that his model fails to capture a more generalized professional ethos of awareness that the specialized problems of culture and human nature attacked by particular anthropologists do not, or at least should not, exist in a vacuum.

This position has seemed obvious to me since my first encounters with anthropology. In a long-ago undergraduate theory course, the Boas-trained instructor offered her students two alternatives in approaching the question of human nature: psycho-biological universals or comparative ethnography. Most of the class found the former more titillating, but in retrospect I think we have gotten further with the latter. The universals have been harder to get at, given our ethnographic methods and predilections.

Moreover, the past four decades sometimes have seemed to over-emphasize the universals, or at least to assume we can formulate them directly, unmediated by surface diversities. I want to explore some of these arguments in anthropology and related disciplines and to hypothesize that they constitute instances of premature generalization, much like those which concerned Boas in the paradigm of classical evolution. Today’s universalists ask, for the most part, the right questions about human nature and identity, but the answers are more complex.

Linguistic Theory and Universals

Since my own career began in linguistic anthropology, I begin by exploring the (usually ethnographically uninformed) obsession of contemporary linguistic theory with universals. For most of my professional career, the science of language has abrogated responsibility for the description and explanation of the real languages around whose study it crystallized as a professional discipline. Noam Chomsky’s focus on Saussurean “langue,” the “competence” of “ideal speaker-hearer in a perfectly homogeneous speech community,” cavalierly dismissed as “mere performance” the real speech on which analyses of unwritten languages have traditionally been based (1965:1). Chomsky argued that any linguistic feature that turns out not to be universal is thereby excluded from the universal grammar that he aspires to formulate. Such a theory is non-falsifiable, since all counterexamples can be rejected as mere “butterfly collecting.” This rather crude

position has not actually changed much since the 1960s. Chomsky (1987) now asserts that the study of language is not actually about languages at all; it is about the human capacity for language, understood to be replicated everywhere with trivial variations that are uninteresting to theory as he conceives it.

The equally unfalsifiable corollary, of course, is that since most theoretical linguists speak English, English will serve as well as any other language or languages as a [universal] linguistic metalanguage. Those linguists who continue to work on real languages, along with their speakers, are reduced to apologizing for the particularity of their work; many have acceded to its categorization as non-theoretical. Sadly, this has been the price of a place in the mainstream. Cognitive science, for all its breakthroughs in framing language alongside other modes of human neurological and cultural–communicative complexity, has, I believe, prematurely adopted the overvaluing of Chomskian universalist baggage.

From an anthropological standpoint, we urgently need the ethnographic verisimilitude provided by learning how speakers of particular languages accomplish social order. Polish-born linguist Anna Wierzbicka, long-based in Australia, offers an elegant methodological contrast to the Chomskian approach through her meticulous attention to the content and context in which particular languages (usually Polish, English and various Australian Aboriginal languages) have developed their characteristic features and continue to be spoken (Wierzbicka 1972). Wierzbicka calls her putative universals “semantic primitives” (i.e., basic conceptual categories defined at the lexical rather than at the grammatical level). These universal concepts are combined in language-specific ways, facilitating translation by paraphrase into a metalanguage of underlying componential forms. Thus, for example, seeing is a universal capacity or concept, whereas colour is one form it takes in many, perhaps even most, human societies. What is seen—for example, particular colours identified in the lexicon—varies with culture and language (Wierzbicka 1972). Ethnoscience in 1960s anthropology developed a parallel ethnosemantic logic, albeit largely independently.

Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) equally elegant critique of contemporary linguistics also suggests that we (philosophers, linguists and, by extension, anthropologists) ought to be working from the languages and their speakers to the universal theory rather than the other way around. They privilege pragmatics, defined as “a politics of language.” In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, Chomsky is a theorist of the arbour; his model is abstract and linear, excluding what it cannot incorporate tidily. Their own con-

trasting “rhizomatic” standpoint emphasizes the mutual entailment of language and its social field. They aspire “to make Chomsky’s trees bud and to shatter linear order” through such a pragmatics (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 157). They differ from the cognitive scientists in considering the human mind more like a grass than a tree.

Social scientists are not, of course, immune from classificatory aspirations to grand generalization. As a long-ago student of Erving Goffman, I was constantly frustrated by the disarticulation between the elegance of his holistic approach to communicative behaviour, moving beyond language to interaction, and the facile assumption that his interactionist framework applied universally (with a surprising failure to distinguish his metalanguage from everyday language). Concepts such as “tie-signs,” “stigma,” “impression management,” or “the presentation of self in everyday life” manifest themselves in diverse forms that Goffman himself failed to explore across cultural borders. Although his arguments doubtless contained a modicum of the “devil’s advocate,” a position he often adopted with glee, Goffman appeared to genuinely believe that we ethnographers of speaking could never learn about other societies the kinds of things he thought he already knew intuitively about his own by virtue of childhood socialization. His own society, moreover, was unproblematized in his research projects which subjected mental patients, homosexuals, compulsive gamblers and Shetland Islanders to the vagaries of his own member-of-culture intuitions (Goffman 1967). Goffman’s superb ethnographic intuition remains strangely unreflexive, lacking the defamiliarization of anthropological fieldwork.

The method of introspection, especially in its reflexive guises, can certainly provide insight. But contemporary understandings of reflexivity acknowledge its partiality, its status as one among many standpoints. Goffman’s definition of sociology as a science (Goffman 1981) never acknowledged the contingent character of his own position—for example, that being Canadian affected his standpoint—although McGregor (1985) argues persuasively that his lurking cynicism about human relations fraught with danger represents a peculiarly Canadian mindset. The kind of reflexivity entailed by the work of ethnography seems to me infinitely more interesting than intuition in isolation.

The member-of-culture may respond to our discovering of the shared patterning underlying surface incommensurability with a hearty “so what?” to the explicit formulation of that which every civilized person always already knows. But once one establishes that there is more than one way to do anything, the search is on for a level of generalization that facilitates meaningful comparison.

One of those levels might be found in intra-cultural variability. Anthony Wallace, for example, contrasts the over-facile attribution of homogeneity to all members of a culture, reproducing itself by “replication of uniformity,” to the “organization of diversity” in which the actions of the members of a culture complement one another without necessarily understanding their differences (1962:passim). The organization or attainment of social order, in such a model, precludes premature glossing over of functional complexity.

At another level of generalization, structuralism as formulated by developmental psychologist Jean Piaget (1970) recognizes patterns as significant only when they occur across structural levels, for example, from physics to chemistry to biology, or from species capacity to cultural pattern to individual action. Within levels of structure, he considers information to be descriptive rather than explanatory or theoretical. Chomsky’s (1957) descriptive versus explanatory adequacy follows a similar train of logic.

Sometimes the anthropologist’s response to theory generated from a culture-specific, Western, or logocentric standpoint is simply to render it cross-cultural by applying the generalization to alternative data, without necessarily critiquing the limitations of premature generalization inherent in the source. Much has been made in linguistics of language philosopher Grice’s (1966) universal maxims for linguistic interaction, the pragmatics as opposed to the grammar of speaking. Perhaps most significantly for ethnographers, Grice speaks about a “cooperative principle” that entails interaction and collusion to create effective communication. Grice’s specific maxims, despite their generalized formulation, however, are not universal in their application; ethnographers have found no magic formula. In illustration, I present his maxims and append some First Nations illustrations of the need for more nuanced and culture-specific formulations of the application:

(1) **The Maxim of Quantity:** speakers must provide as much information as required but no more than this.

First Nations speakers assume that background information is shared. Thus, the interpretive task of the unprepared listener may be insurmountable. Private behaviour, among known persons, in all cultures has this property of eliding what is already known, but most Canadian First Nations elaborate this maxim as an aesthetic principle for valued speech. Minimalism reigns, even at the cost of effective information transfer.

(2) **The Maxim of Quality:** speakers must not present statements they believe to be false or for which they lack adequate evidence.

First Nations speakers are much more concerned than mainstream Canadians to know where information comes from and how reliable it is, a preoccupation arising naturally from transmission of important cultural knowledge through oral tradition.

(3) **The Maxim of Manner:** speakers should avoid obscurity and ambiguity, be brief and orderly.

Anyone who has ever heard a First Nations elder in pedagogical mode will need no elaboration of the challenges to universality herein. Relevance is in the ear and mind of the listener and is not necessarily understood fully at the time of speaking.

(4) **The Maxim of Relation:** Grice takes for granted that conversations have beginnings, middles and ends, and respond to the transitory and immediate needs of interlocutors.

In First Nations communities, ideally conversations evolve across occasions, relationships and lifetimes.

My somewhat belaboured point is that ethnographers cannot use Grice’s maxims or Goffman’s interactional frames as purported universals. We ought to be searching for things like them but we cannot expect their detailed realizations to be universal. The level at which the maxims are general or universal remains an empirical or ethnographic question. Functional universals such as Grice’s co-operative principle are more likely to emerge than substantive ones.

Ethnographic Standpoints

Whether we begin inductively or deductively, the challenge is how to move between the external analysis and what Boas called “the native point of view,” from the etic to the emic. What Edward Sapir (1933) labelled “the psychological reality of the phoneme” applies beyond meaningful units of sound to meaning within culture more generally. Sapir (1916) was also the Boasian anthropologist who formulated more abstract ways of getting at “time perspective” in American aboriginal culture. But I would not want to claim that he ever got both trains of thought into the same argument. This is the characteristic Boasian toggle switch between science and history (Darnell 2001), between universal human nature and the impact of culture on human social identity. One involves individual agency, intra-cultural variability, and member awareness, whereas the other privileges analytic distance and aspires to objectivity.

Claude Lévi-Strauss’s (1964) vast vistas of myth diffusion, adaptation and reintegration are patterned in ways that could not possibly be formulated by the member-of-culture situated at a single point or local area within a continental cultural region. There is a wonderful old teaching film (The National Film Board’s *Behind the Masks*)

where Lévi-Strauss is explicating mask designs and the carver is trying to dispute his imputed meanings. Lévi-Strauss brushes off anything the artist tries to say as irrelevant to his own argument. His grand rhetoric about the universal products of the human mind holds a similar degree of generality, “a view from afar” (1985) of culture and identity. Yet Lévi-Strauss turns to ethnography to make his case. He makes it effectively when his meticulously detailed comparisons reveal similar “deep” or underlying patterns in social structure, political organization, village settlement pattern, myth, art, language, et cetera, particularly for the South American societies he studied firsthand. Part of this quintessential French intellectual longed to concentrate the universalist argument on the culture of the Parisian intellectual (as did Pierre Bourdieu). Another part of Lévi-Strauss remains stubbornly attracted to the well-chosen ethnographic comparison as a method of articulating the universal. Darnell (2004) argues that the historicist side of the Boasian argument is recapitulated in this analyst-based, external perspective on the meaning of culture in terms inaccessible to its members and that Lévi-Strauss is, in some very serious sense, a Boasian as well as a structuralist. His structuralist universals have historical manifestations as they move among intersecting cultures.

The key to the significance of the ethnographic standpoint is that the validity of the counter-example holds utterly different significance in inductive and deductive research. A scientific theory that fails to account for a single counter-example is, at best, limited in its applicability. I am more interested, however, in the scientific status of the near-universals that may be derived from comparative ethnography.

Again, I turn to a linguistic model widely borrowed by anthropologists: Jakobson (1968) identified similar “markedness” of phonological patterns in child language acquisition, aphasic patterns of loss and regaining of speech, and putatively universal laws of sound change. In all three domains, some things were found to be more basic, more common, than others. There are many languages without phonemic (meaning-changing) voiced stops (b/d/g), but if there is no contrast of voiced and voiceless, the language will almost always have the voiceless series. Glottalized series appear only alongside a prior contrast of voiced and unvoiced. Furthermore, a language that distinguishes voiced and voiceless stops will be likely to have a similar distinction at other points of articulation. Occasional exceptions do not invalidate or falsify this “near-universal” statement about universals. Interpretation and contextualization abound in such a model. It generates explanations of particulars in relation to gen-

eralizations based on many cases. For example, comparative linguists turn to historical contact to explain anomalies and to show patterned change in progress.

In “The Study of Geography” in 1889, Boas contrasted science with history–geography–cosmology and asserted the necessity of employing alternating methods according to the problem at hand. In the intervening years, of course, many of us have come to question the idea that science itself lies beyond interpretation. But it is certainly the case that we cannot do science without grounding our knowledge in interpretation. Further, many of us, especially those influenced by feminist theory, deem the standpoint of the investigator to be inseparable from phenomena observed.

British social anthropology also wrestled with the question of whether our “science” is universal. A collapsed Azande granary roof led Evans-Pritchard (1937) to muse on what we would now call the social construction of science. Evans-Pritchard deals with it by suspending the judgments of his home world and getting his head around how the Azande interpretative system uses witchcraft to explain the apparently random consequences of termite-driven collapse. He even acknowledges the superior explanatory power for Azande survivors of witchcraft as the source of harm, relative to the depersonalized random chance taken for granted by Western science.

Malinowski (1922) made similar points about the inseparability of spells and practical knowledge in the construction and use of sailing canoes in the Trobriand Islands. I suspect that this debate has suffered in intervening years because “we” are hung up on the word “science,” which we hubristically assume has no precise equivalent outside the European Enlightenment legacy (although Chinese, Indian and Arabic “sciences” share many of its features). Because of the prestige of science, however, non-Western peoples around the world legitimately valorize their own forms of “indigenous knowledge” by claiming for them the prestige of “science.” Human inquiry, both naturalistic and philosophical, is certainly a universal. But again, contents and the degree of their systematization differ dramatically, and we are hard-put to understand the alternatives insofar as we attempt to do so in categories derived from our own tradition(s).

Clifford Geertz (1988) contrasts the eye–I-witnessing strategy of Malinowski with the apparently objective journalism of Evans-Pritchard, the universalizing and homogenizing elegy for the primitive in Lévi-Strauss, and the moralizing cross-cultural critique best known through the work of Ruth Benedict. National traditions in anthropology have conceptualized the cross-cultural in remarkably parallel ways.

Returning to North America, Benedict elegantly problematized the ethnocentricity of the normal and abnormal across cultures. Her relativism was one of tolerance rather than of nihilism. Benedict's methodology now seems naively ethnocentric in its borrowing of terms from Western abnormal psychology (the megalomaniac Kwagiuth and the paranoid-schizophrenic Dobuans) and Greek mythology (the Dionysian Plains and the Apollonian Zuni). Nonetheless, Benedict (1934) provided a surprisingly unsensationalized treatment of these contrasts, which she deployed in her musings about where the America of the interwar years had gone off track. Cross-cultural contrast provided the method that allowed for reflexivity and that engendered a critique of American society and its discontents. Benedict's later work (1946) moved "beyond relativism" to explore universals on which judgment, subsequent to ethnographic effort to understand phenomena in their own terms, could and should be made.

Sapir's "Culture Genuine and Spurious" (1924) which appeared a decade before Benedict's classic work, had been virtually unintelligible to his cronies in Rockefeller-sponsored interdisciplinary social science. His colleagues assumed the inevitability and desirability of "the American way." And Margaret Mead's 17 years of *Redbook* magazine columns (which she co-authored during the 1960s and 1970s) would hone this sort of critique, through ethnographic contrast, to its fullest elaboration. As the United States moved inexorably out of its isolationism to manifest destiny beyond the continental frontier, anthropologists provided guidance to both politicians and the general public. Even in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Benedict (1946) was able to move beyond the naïve cultural relativism with which she is usually associated today to advise on how to reincorporate Japan into the civilized world, as defined by the victors.

Benedict's images of cultural diversity are grounded in an unarticulated, and therefore unquestioned, assumption of universals located not all that far from the surface of human behaviour. Selection from her "arc of cultural possibilities" presupposes a content and internal logic for the selections and adaptations made by unique cultures (Benedict 1934). Something like this model is implicit in all comparative ethnography, whether or not its critical cross-cultural implications are drawn explicitly.

Not all cultures have such clear patterns. Rapid culture change was responsible for Benedict's poignant quotation of a California Digger Indian that the cup of his culture was broken (Benedict 1934:33). She recognized that such change often caused disintegration of traditional cultures, but did not theorize what interwar Americanist anthropology called "acculturation."

In a latter-day resuscitation of Benedict's strategy, Eric Wolf (1999) accepts her implicit expectation of seeking out interesting patterns, selecting three "extreme" cultural elaborations from different levels of social organization (the Benedictine version of the Kwagiuth, cannibalism of the Aztecs, and whatever one might want to call Hitler's National Socialist genocide campaigns). Discussion of these diversities is *only* interesting, I argue, insofar as it entails underlying universals and a method for pinning down their nature. Wolf's point is that relations of power operate in all societies but manifest themselves differently depending on the complexity and specific culture history and political economy of the society.

I have argued elsewhere (Darnell 2001) that Whorf's (1956) efforts to correlate language, thought and reality through the study of grammatical categories followed a pre-existing Benedictine labyrinth. He contrasted the grammatical categories of Standard Average European (SAE) with those of Hopi, a language whose encoded way of seeing the world seemed better suited for explicating Einstein's relativity theory than for devising the physics on which it was based (Whorf 1956). But there is in Whorf, as in Benedict, the possibility of "multilingual awareness," of reflexivity, of becoming (dialogically) bilingual and bicultural, of negotiating multiplex identities.

I will address just one more example of an important theorist whose ideas would be so much more interesting after a good introductory course in anthropology. Richard Rorty (1979) deconstructs the "mirror of nature" paradigm that has enmeshed Western philosophy in metaphysics and argues that all we are left with is the possibility of "edifying conversations" and perhaps the history of science. That is, he gives up on the idea of "truth" or even of closer approximations to something(s) in the real world. We can *merely* talk to each other. Even more sadly, however, he rejects the edifying potentials of ethnography and argues that the conversation he envisions can only be intelligible within the bounds of Western philosophy itself (Rorty 1979). Edification is divorced from the capacity for empathy.

Following a precedent long ago set by Boasian maverick Paul Radin (1927), I have been arguing the contrary position, that dialogic interaction, (i.e., conversation) is both possible and edifying across cultural boundaries. We anthropologists have been doing that for a long time. Radin's exegesis of Winnebago philosophy was arrived at through edifying conversation. His exemplar attests to the anthropological capacity to imagine communities other than our own. We have the capacity to talk to others and to arrive at levels of abstraction where the questions we ask emerge despite the difficulties of getting to their cul-

ture-specific answers. We can learn new categories, acquire new tools to think with. We do these things all the time within our own society. The possibility of ethnography rests upon the same communicative potentials across human communities.

Conclusion

Ethnography is necessarily an enterprise of the bricoleur. But we must not fall into the trap of thinking that that precludes generalization about human nature and personal or group identity. We have allowed the world to see anthropology too much as the study of disappearing exotica and too little as a way to integrate increasingly broad communities as we think together about a globalizing world and its discontents and resistances. Globalization, like human nature, is not as simple as it seems on the surface, and we must take care that our productive concepts lead us not to premature conclusions but to careful generalization that does not mask underlying diversity, whether cultural or biological.

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Notes

- 1 This paper was originally presented in Montreal in May 2006 at a Plenary Session of the Canadian Anthropology Society on Human Nature and Human Identity. I thank Nigel Rapport and Katja Neves for the invitation to participate in these reflections on the conference theme and fellow panellist Margaret Lock for her overlapping insights.
- 2 In the Canadian context (Harrison and Darnell 2006), the model of national confederation as an umbrella for more diverse provincial interests and perspectives may, perhaps, seem more viable than in the U.S. Moving back and forth between federal and provincial jurisdictions need not signal incommensurability even when the positions are not identical.

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Where Truth Happens: The Nepali House as Mandala

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Abstract: This article documents the existential possibility of the philosophical unreality of fundamental unity and diversity in the world. I explore this human experience through the cosmology and domestic architecture of Hindus in Nepal. In tantric Hinduism of Nepal, the presence of the worldly diversity of people and things as expressions of a cosmological unity is an existential experience and a fundamental moral issue. I describe how domestic space, configured in everyday activities as a mandala, is the medium through which these abstract cosmological ideas are given tangible form. Domestic mandalas are maps, microcosms and revelations of the truth of the cosmos. In them, everyday life becomes a dialectic of the practical and cosmological directed toward an ever-deepening tacit and embodied revelation of the ultimate unity and truth of the universe.

Keywords: cosmology, phenomenology, Nepal, architecture, mandala

Résumé: Cet article documente la possibilité existentielle de l'irréalité de l'unité fondamentale et de la diversité dans le monde. J'étudie cette expérience humaine par le biais de la cosmologie et de l'architecture domestique des Hindous du Népal. L'hindouisme tantrique népalais conçoit la présence de la diversité des personnes et des choses dans le monde comme l'expression de l'unité cosmologique. Il s'agit d'une expérience existentielle et d'une dimension morale fondamentale. Je décris la façon dont l'espace domestique, configuré comme un mandala dans les activités quotidiennes, est le moyen par lequel une forme tangible est attribuée à ces idées cosmologiques abstraites. Les mandalas domestiques sont des cartes, des microcosmes et des révélations sur la vérité du cosmos. Par eux, la vie quotidienne devient une dialectique entre le pratique et le cosmologique qui s'oriente vers une révélation tacite et incarnée, s'approfondissant sans cesse, de l'ultime unité et vérité de l'univers.

Mots-clés: cosmologie, phénoménologie, Népal, architecture, mandala

The man who contents himself with the role of spectator of the world and of life and translates everything into a dialectic of abstract concepts exists indeed in one sense but not in another. For he wishes to understand everything and commits himself to nothing. The "existing individual," however, is the actor rather than the spectator. He commits himself and so gives form and direction to his life. [Copleston 1963:215]

Introduction

According to the philosopher Marvin Farber (1944, 1946): "experience (as well as logic) shows that" a monistic universe—"a complete unified reality"—is untenable; so too is its opposite, a world of a diversity of singularly unique events. If this is true logically and experientially, then the radically monistic Hindu universe—the truth of a fundamental unity that transcends time, space, cause and effect, and dissolves the diversity of all worldly phenomena—in which people of Nepal live is also untenable. My aim in this article is to show how and why in their everyday experience Nepali villagers do not find the truth of monism untenable. I do so through an account of how in their practical activities of preparing, cooking and eating rice, Nepali householders spatially configure their domestic compounds into mandalas, sacred diagrams that are simultaneously maps of the cosmos and machines for revealing the truth of cosmos as a fundamental unity. Living in domestic mandalas is productive of knowledge of the cosmos they represent.¹ Further, unlike the explicit and contemplative knowledge propounded by Farber about the truth of monism, the revelation of the fundamental unity of the cosmos produced in everyday activities is largely tacit and embodied. The approach taken in this particular case of Nepali domestic activities as simultaneously acts of building and revealing the cosmos is the general proposition that being-in-the-world is primarily praxical and embodied and that tacit knowledge enables, informs and enriches the actions

and knowledge upon which people explicitly focus their everyday lives.

The human condition is contingency: what it is to be human emerges primarily through our everyday, practical engagement with the world rather than through a contemplative reflection upon the world (Arendt 1958; Heidegger 1962; Jackson 1996). Accordingly, there is a difference between the lived immediacy of being-in-the-world and the distanced and reflexive accounts about being-in-the-world, between a pre-reflexive, pre-theoretical and praxical relation to the world—embodied actions of using and doing things in everyday life—and a contemplative and reflexive relation to the world. “The knowledge whereby one lives is not necessarily identical with the knowledge whereby one explains life” (Jackson 1996:2). Bourdieu makes a similar distinction: between the practical posture of people living-in-the-world with something “practical at stake” and the theoretical posture of the “external...non-practical, non-committed and non-involved” observer (or philosopher) who constructs theoretical models of living-in-the-world (Bourdieu 1990:60). He warns us not “to slip from the model of reality to the reality of the model” (1977:29): to assume that the model of reality constructed by the non-involved observer is the reality of the lifeworld of social actors about whom the model is constructed. From this perspective, Farber’s analysis of the untenableness of monistic unity and chaotic diversity is epiphenomenal; it derives from the theoretical posture of the philosopher who constructs models of reality using formal logic and an abstract concept of “the world of experience” (1944:38). The possibility of monistic unity and its relation to chaotic diversity has a different look from the perspective of the lived experience of the Nepali people who do have something at stake in the world of everyday life: on the one hand, their pursuit of worldly prosperity; on the other hand and paradoxically, their renunciation of worldly prosperity.

Such being-in-the-world and the practical knowledge for doing so is largely embodied and tacit. “My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my ‘symbolic’ or ‘objectifying’ function” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:162). We are conscious with and through our bodies; we live in and constitute the world as embodied subjects. Further, this being-in and constituting the world as lived bodies is primordially spatial. Humans inhabit spaces through their body’s constitutive consciousness and actions. We see, hear, feel and move in relation to things with our bodies and these things have a spatial relation to our bodies so that our inhabited space is constituted as bodily space. Through the lived body’s consciousness and actions, we project ourselves into the

world, embrace it, encompass it, and “*dwell*” (Heidegger 1975a:145) in it. We do not exist as conscious subjects without it; it does not exist for us without our consciousness. In this sense, body and the surrounding spatial environment are mutually constitutive; there is no body outside its sensuous relations to the world.

“We can know more than we can tell” (Polanyi 1966:4). Much of the knowledge by which we live our everyday lives is tacit. It cannot readily be put into words; activities can be meaningful even if the meaning is not able to be explained in words, explicit concepts or to be subject to reflection (Jackson 1966:34). “This sort of knowledge can be represented—made present—only through action, enactment, or performance” (Fabian 1990:6). This is not just the case that tacit knowledge is not formulated linguistically and not available for reflection, rather its effectiveness in enabling everyday life is founded on it not being explicit and linguistic (Polanyi 1966; Bloch 1998:11).

By synthesizing this praxical, embodied and tacit nature of everyday experience and knowledge, a pervading theme of this paper is the way Nepali villagers come to understand their paradoxical world of prosperity and its renunciation through the everyday concepts and actions of purity and impurity. More than being about the state of the physical body, purity and impurity affect the patterns of social relations and spatial movement of outsiders in the domestic mandala—what might be called spatial disciplines of the body. They are also the everyday registers through which abstract and largely unspoken cosmological themes of excessive attachment (impurity) to worldly diversity (the essence of prosperity) as well as the dissolution and detachment from it (purity) are experienced and known. This means that the activities of everyday domestic life and the places where they take place are multifaceted—corporeal, social and cosmological. As people move about their domestic compounds, they not only carry out everyday activities—entertaining guests, processing grain, preparing food, eating a meal—but also build their houses into mandalas, produce an embodied, tacit and revelatory knowledge of the enigma of attachment and renunciation and turn it into a “bodily hexis,” that is, a permanent corporeal disposition of thinking and feeling (Bourdieu 1977:93-94).

How can I verify that Nepali villagers produce and gain this personal knowledge of the cosmos that I claim to be describing in this article? Again using Polanyi (1962), verification has the character of internal relations by which experience and knowledge themselves are constituted. In everyday life, the process of verification consists of demonstrating tacit knowledge through performing embodied practices, the same process through

which it was produced and acquired: we can only verify that we have acquired the tacit knowledge necessary to speak a language by speaking it (Gill 2000:56). So, too, my description of Nepali villagers' performance of embodied everyday domestic practices, and the explicit knowledge they verbalized among themselves and to me (another form of embodied practice) about them, is the mode of verification of their tacit knowledge of the cosmos that the ethnography itself transforms into explicit knowledge. As Polanyi writes:

Yet personal knowledge in [our lifeworld] is not made but discovered, and as such it claims to establish contact with reality beyond the clues on which it relies. It commits us, passionately and far beyond our comprehension, to a vision of reality. Of this responsibility we cannot divest ourselves by setting up objective criteria of verifiability—or falsifiability, or testability, or what you will. For we live in it as in the garment of our own skin. [Polanyi 1962:64]

Kholagaun Chhetris

The people whose paradoxical lifeworlds I describe are members of a clan of high caste Chhetris living in the hamlet of Kholagaun in the village of Banaspati located in southern reaches of the Kathmandu Valley.² Kholagaun consists of approximately 100 household groups (*pariwār*). Two-thirds are members of a single agnatic Chhetri lineage. The other households are from a variety of castes: Brahmin, who are the highest ranking caste in the hamlet; other lineages of the next highest ranking caste, Chhetri; mid-ranking and touchable castes of Newar and Magar; and untouchable castes of Blacksmiths and Tailors. Kholagaun Chhetri household groups range in size from single person households (2), to nuclear households (39) and complex joint households (24). In most cases each household group occupies a single "house" (*ghar*) consisting of the house building and the compound that surrounds and encloses it.

In their rites and cosmological ideas, Chhetris of Kholagaun practice a syncretism of Vedic Hinduism and Tantrism characterized by three propositions about the world and the human condition. First, the danger of human being-in-the-world is excessive attachment to people and things of the world, the consequent illusion and loss of consciousness of the ultimate reality. This is the cause of humans being entrapped in the continual cycle of death and rebirth. Second, liberation and release from the cycle of death and rebirth is attained through knowledge of the ultimate unity of the cosmos (*Brahma*) which transcends all worldly concepts of time, space and cate-

gory. Third, there are the systematic equivalences between the macrocosm and the microcosm, that is, there are homologies and mystical connections between multiple planes of existence—the cosmos, the city as mesocosm (see Levy 1990), the temple and house in the *Vāstu Śāstras* (see Kramrisch 1976 and Chakarbarti 1999), the body and the mystic diagram, mandala.

This understanding of the human condition is founded upon a Hindu (tantric) cosmology that describes being-in-the-world as an enigmatic and paradoxical configuration of the diversity of human individuals and social groups on the one hand, and a transcendent unity on the other. Fundamental reality is an absolute unity that is a spaceless, timeless, causeless void. Juxtaposed to but derived from and encompassed by this ultimate cosmic unity is the ordered diversity of spaces, times, people, animals, natural forces and material things of the everyday world. The origin of this worldly diversity is described in the self-sacrifice of the primeval cosmic being, *Purusha*,³ who embodies the fundamental unity of the cosmos. All that can and will exist is immanent in his body. His self-sacrifice is a creative act unleashing the diversity potential in his body and establishing the microcosmic-macrocosmic system of correlations between planes of existence. As a result of Purusha's sacrifice, all perceptible time and space, every different corporeal being and thing, and all the variety of natural energies and forces in the world are both distinct phenomena and an expression of the unified cosmos. To focus on the former is to experience reality as constituted only by the diversity of sensible worldly phenomena and to become attached to people and things through social and material relations (see Gray 1995). To understand such attachments as the goal of life is to be shrouded in ignorance, to be caught in the continual cycle of death and rebirth and to be consigned to a continual life-in-the-world of illusion. To focus on the latter is to experience the everyday world of diversity as ultimately an illusion that hides the fundamental unity of the cosmos; such enlightened knowledge leads humans to eschew the illusion of attachments and gain liberation or release from the round of death and rebirth.

Kholagaun Chhetris as Householders

The cosmological paradox of fundamental unity and epiphenomenal worldly diversity, asceticism and attachment, religious knowledge and illusion, liberation from and entrapment in the cycle of rebirth, also permeates the lifeworlds of Kholagaun Chhetris in the Hindu notion of the four stages of life through which high-caste people proceed. Together, they are cosmology iterated in the microcosmic form of the human life span.

The first stage is the *Brahmachārya*, the Life of the Celibate Student when a boy studies the religious texts under the guidance of a guru as a prelude to and a pre-condition for marriage and entering the Householder stage of life. Most Chhetri boys go through the Brahmachārya stage only as part of the rite of passage (*Bartaman*) in which they become adults. For women, the passage to adulthood and the Householder stage of life is the rite of marriage. The second stage is the *Grihastha*, the Life of the Householder, of life-*in-the-world*, fully and actively engaging with the diversity of people and things motivated by practical, everyday concerns. It includes marriage, raising children, living in a household and producing the material needs for its members, and worshipping the deities (see Gray 1995). The third stage is the *Vanaprasta*, the Forest Dweller, when, having discharged the duties of the Householder, a man and his wife retire to the forest where they devote themselves to meditation and the practice of austerities including chastity. All of the previous stages are a preparation for the final and most radical renunciation demanded of the final stage of life, the *Sanyāsin*, or Wandering Ascetic, when a person renounces all worldly desires, together with the social relations and attachments entailed by them.

All adult Kholagaun Chhetris consider themselves to be in the Householder stage. Both males and females experience a period of renunciation prior to marriage: for boys, it is the renunciation of the celibate Brahmachārya enacted during *Bartaman*; for girls, it is the analogous renunciatory celibacy of remaining a virgin until marriage. Kholagaun Chhetris told me that they could not remember anyone from the village who had become a Forest Dweller or a Wandering Ascetic. In effect, the four stages-of-life are reduced to a juxtaposition of two contrasting modes of being-*in-the-world*. One is the Householder, the ordinary person-*in-the-world* whose life is defined by moral duties (*dhārma*) that motivate actions and the aim of such action is to produce “practical” and beneficial results (“fruits”) in this world. It is this action in and for the world that both produces and engages the diversity of people and material things which are the objects of one’s attachments, desires and passions. But as a result of such worldly-oriented action and attachments, the Householder is caught in the continual round of birth-death-rebirth into the world. The other mode of being-*in-the-world* is the Renouncer, personified by the asceticism and detachment of the Brahmachārya, Vanaprasta and Sanyāsin. The goal of such detachment is to achieve liberation from the round of birth-death-rebirth and to realize the fundamental unity of one’s self with all other selves and things.

To be a Householder, then, is to live in an enigmatic lifeworld that is at once practical and cosmological. As they engage in everyday domestic activities, Kholagaun Chhetris are at the same time fulfilling their sacred duties. Their Householder dharma is to live in and form attachments to the world; their aim is to prosper not just in the narrow sense of material wealth but also in the wider sense, captured by the Nepali word *samṛddhi*, of an abundance of those things that characterize the “good life”: children, health, well-being and peaceful relations with oneself, other human beings and the deities. At the same time, they are enjoined to remain detached from these manifold worldly attachments, to resist enslavement by them (Madan 1987:3) in order to achieve liberation by seeing through the veil of illusion that conceals the fundamental unity of the cosmos. Their goal is to live a life characterized by the enigma of detached attachment or passionless passion.

Chhetri Houses

The house is the primary locus and focus of the Householder’s life-*in-the-world*. Its architecture is another iteration of the enigmatic character of the human condition of the Householder. In Kholagaun, there are two types of houses usually consisting of two storeys. The type I call “traditional” (see Figures 1a and 1b) is built with sun-dried mud bricks, carved wooden window frames and doors, mud floors and tile or thatched roofs. Traditional houses generally have an open plan ground floor with four visible pillars forming a rectangle around a central pillar, a kitchen in far corner often behind a low wall to obstruct visibility from the doorway, and a worship room generally located on the second floor. The other type of house I call “contemporary” (see Figures 2a and 2b), indicating its more recent construction using concrete for wall construction with wooden window frames and doors. The main difference is that these newer houses have separate rooms rather than an open plan with the kitchen located in the room furthest from the main entrance or on an upper floor.⁴

Although they are distinguished by building materials and interior room layout, both types share four common architectural features. First, houses are built on rectangular sites surrounded by a low wall that defines the boundary of the domestic compound. They are located toward one edge of the site away from approaching public roads or paths, leaving space for a courtyard. This results in a configuration of nested domestic spaces—boundary, courtyard, verandah, main entrance and interior of the house (see Figures 1 and 2). Second, houses are oriented with the main entrance opening out onto the



Figure 1a: Traditional house

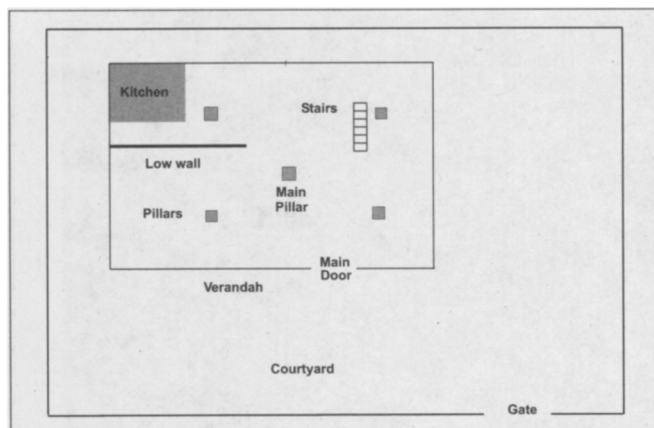


Figure 1b: Sketch plan of traditional house (ground floor)

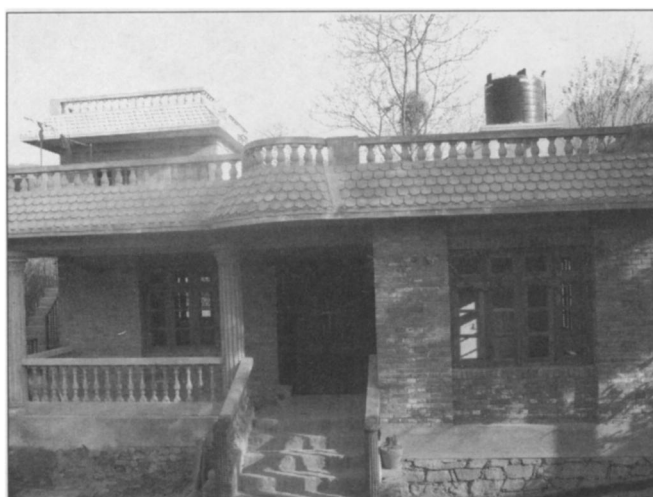


Figure 2a: Contemporary house

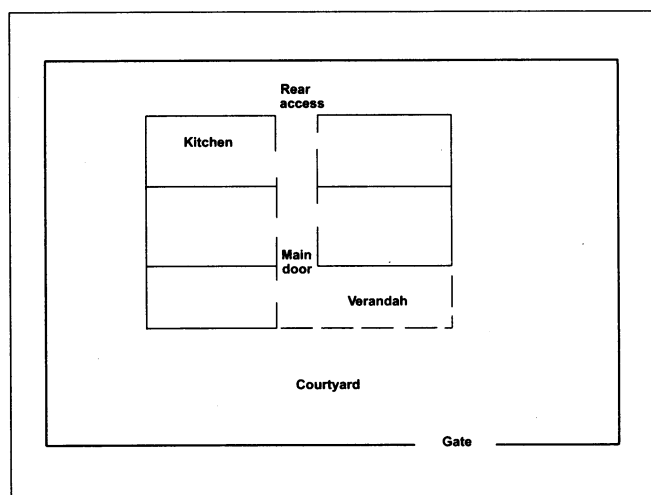
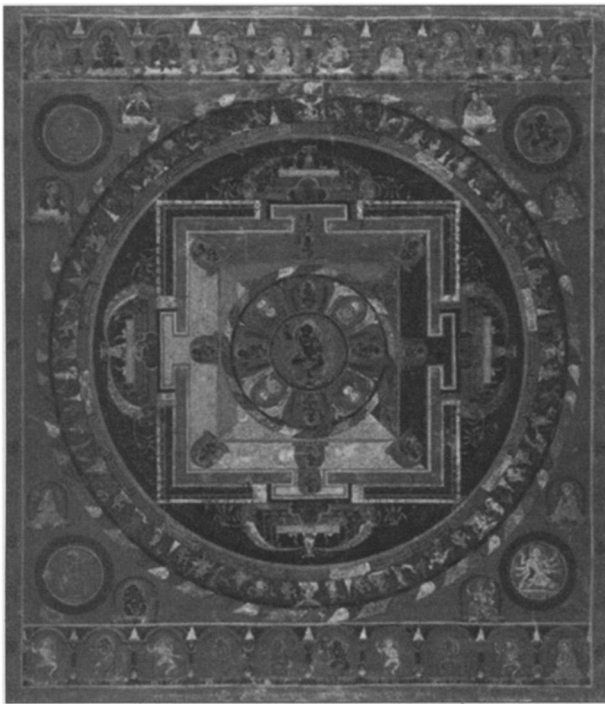


Figure 2b: Sketch plan of contemporary house (ground floor)

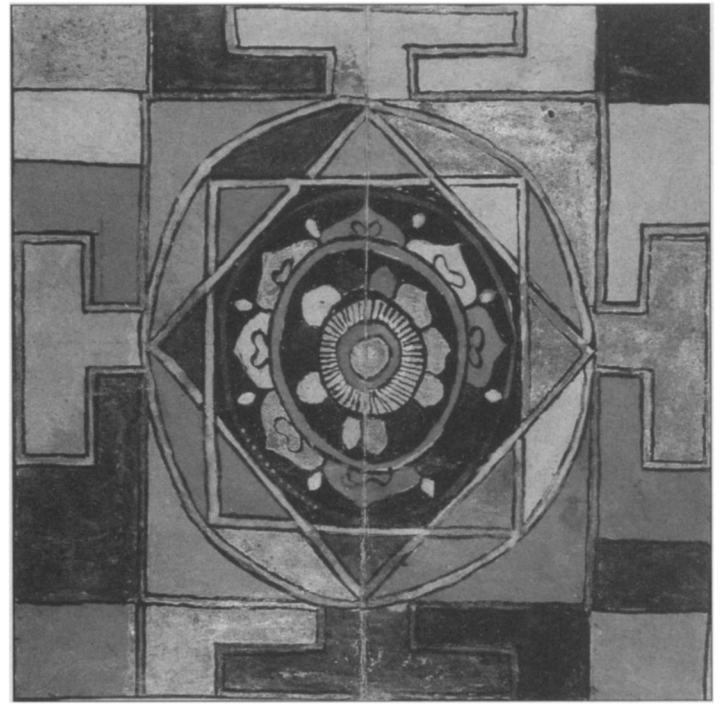
courtyard allowing household members a clear view of it and anyone who may be approaching the house from the public path or roadway. Courtyards are distinct spaces and one of their important architectural functions is mediating between the house and public thoroughfares outside the boundary of the house compound that are potentially dangerous places where impure people of lower castes, malign witches, malevolent ghosts and other spirits linger. Third, houses have a covered and raised verandah spanning the front of traditional houses and some portion of the front of contemporary houses; its location makes it another mediating space, now between the courtyard that is visible and the interior of the house that is not visible to those outside the compound. Finally, houses are in the spatial configuration of a mandala.

House as Mandala

A mandala is a mystic diagram. In Nepal, people use at least two terms, *mandala* and *yantra* to refer to drawings with cosmic significance.⁵ Both are allegorical diagrams that represent the nature and order of the universe (see Figure 3). They are “map[s] of the cosmos...the whole universe in its essential plan” (Tucci 2001:23). Tucci’s incisive description highlights three attributes of mandalas and yantras. First, their primary referent is the cosmos but each represents it in a different graphic mode: mandalas use pictures and icons to depict religious concepts and deities who in turn personify the primary bodies and natural forces of the universe as well as the qualities of humans; yantras use purely geometric designs—squares, circles, triangles and the point—whose shapes



Nairatma



Nepal, c. 18th century

Figure 3: Two forms of the mandala⁶

likewise stand for religious concepts, deities and the natural forces and human qualities they personify. Second, mandalas and yantras are maps of the cosmos and, as such, the *spatial* arrangement of the pictures and geometric elements in the composition depict important characteristics of the cosmos. Third, more than just an allegorical map of the cosmos, mandalas and yantras are microcosms of it. Whether composed of pictographic or geometric elements, they are revelatory of the fundamental unity of the cosmos as well as the normally hidden system of correlations between planes of existence immanent in that unity: the cosmos, the deities, the human world, and the body and psyche of the individual (Hopkins 1971:25; Tucci 2001:45); “knowledge of such mystical connections leads to power” (Gourdriaan 1979:57-58) and is a basis for ritual action and its efficacy (see Daryn 2002:164ff).

Despite their differences in representational form, mandalas and yantras share fundamental compositional design elements for expressing this cosmology and providing a “machine” (Zimmer 1972:141) for revelatory knowledge: as a whole they are oriented to the cardinal directions each of which is associated with a deity; they have a centre point (*bindhu*) surrounded by a concentric girdle—either circular or polygonic—of line(s) and space(s) that provide the dynamic quality of movement;

and they have an outer boundary line enclosing a sacred space. This spatial configuration is constructed from three primary geometric elements: the square, the point and the circle, each representing a fundamental dimension of the cosmos.

The square is the perfect four-cornered polygon. In Hindu iconography, it is the geometric image of the space for terrestrial dwelling; it creates the spatial abode in-the-world for deities and humans. In the process of creation, the cardinal directions orienting the square and the terrestrial space it creates are the source of each other’s existence. The four sides and the cardinal directions—east, south, west and north—are mutually constitutive; likewise the four corners and the intermediate directions—southeast, southwest, northwest and northeast. Each of the eight directions are associated with deities representing, reigning over and personifying particular aspects of the cosmos—the planets, natural forces, and human qualities. By focusing on these elements, we can abstract from the complex mandala a basic design configuration consisting of a four-sided, four-cornered polygon aligned with the cardinal directions surrounding a centre. In this configuration, the emphasis is on the terrestrial world as a space of human habitation created and defined by the sacred geography of the cardinal directions and their reigning deities. In this auspicious con-

figuration (see Figure 4), the mandala is a cosmological space for action in-the-world. The directions and their reigning deities have distinct qualities and meanings that organize terrestrial space into a template for orientating human action. Kholagaun Chhetris align their action in particular directions—either by physically performing it in a particular part of a structure or diagram or by bodily facing a particular direction during action—so that the nature of the action is compatible with the quality or characteristic of the direction toward which it is aligned. Such harmonious and auspicious alignment portends beneficent outcomes for the actions through which Kholagaun Chhetri Householders engage with and form attachments to the diversity of people, things and deities of the world in order to achieve a prosperous life-in-the-world.

Both the point and its central location in the diagram are a spatial rendering of the fundamental unity and truth of the cosmos in its un-manifested form before and after space, time and the diversity of beings and things of the world. Like Purusha, all is immanent in it; it is the point from which the world in all its diversity is created and it is the point into which all creation dissolves. Movement outward from the central point that forms a surrounding space is the force of creation and evolution of worldly diversity and the entrapment of attachment to it; movement inward toward the point is the force of dissolution and devolution of worldly diversity and liberation from its illusory power through knowledge of the fundamental unity.

The circle defines another type of space, a concentric zone around the all-embracing centre point without reference to the cardinal directions. The concentric zones do not immediately suggest the expanse of terrestrial space of human living but the space created by and for the diversity of people and things. Its orienting reference, then, is the centre point “as the universe in its un-manifested form” (Mookerjee and Khanna 1977:96), “as the principle from which all form and creation radiates” (Bühne-mann 2003:41). The zone(s) marked out by concentric spaces around the point depict simultaneously the outward, expanding, centrifugal act of creating from the centre point the diversity of things and beings, as well as the space for them, and the inward, contracting, centripetal act of their dissolution into the centre point. By focusing on the point and surrounding concentric zone(s) elements, we can abstract another basic mandala design configuration consisting of concentric zones—whether circular or polygonic—around a point. In this revelatory configuration, the mandala is a guide for understanding the cosmos, whether achieved by meditation or action upon its form. In sensual and embodied contemplation, as the eye

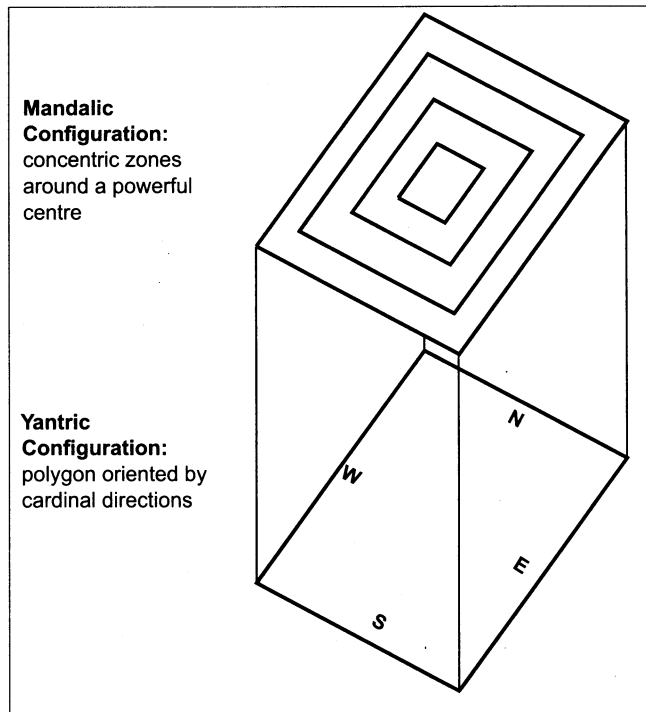


Figure 4: Two configurations of domestic space

fixes on the centre point and is drawn to move outward by the surrounding lines, the beholder experiences the un-manifested source, visualizes the creation of the diversity of people and things and feels the attachment to the world that traps humans in the round of death and rebirth. As the eye is pulled inward by the power of the point at the centre, the beholder experiences the obliteration of diversity, discovers the illusion of attachment to it and comes to understand the true nature of the universe as fundamentally a timeless and spaceless unity in which all forms of individual consciousness merge in the centre.

Intentional Construction of Auspicious Houses

As can be seen from the photos and sketch diagrams, Kholagaun Chhetri houses have the three characteristics of the auspicious configuration of the mandala: a four-sided polygon oriented to the cardinal directions with a materially or ritually established central pillar. Kholagaun Chhetris intentionally build this auspicious mandalic configuration into their houses through three interweaving processes of construction.⁷ The first is the material construction of the house which has a number of stages: selecting the site, preparing the site, positioning the house on the site, laying the foundation and building the external structure and, finally, inhabiting the house. The second is linking these stages of material construction to the

flow of cosmic time so that they take place at auspicious times calculated by the household priest to be compatible with the horoscope of the owner. The third process is making the house an auspicious *place* for domestic activities, portending well-being and prosperity for the owner and his household group. This involves creating a harmonious spatial conjunction between the house and the space in which it is built, a space that is created in the act of building. Spatial auspiciousness entails ensuring compatibility and harmony between the physical structure and the spatial milieu in which the house is erected: during the process of selection of the site, worship is performed to the Deity of the Earth (*Bhumi Puja*); and, before the laying of the rectangular foundation, a “Foundation Ritual” (*Jug Puja*) is performed. In this rite, idols of deities associated with the cardinal directions are buried in the four corners and another in the centre of the rectangle. When the foundation is laid, these deities become part of the house structure itself and orient it auspiciously to the cardinal directions. In addition, rites are performed to neutralize evil or harmful presences from the land and the house itself.

This theme of auspiciousness is carried through into the spatial layout as well. Kholagaun Chhetris intentionally situate particular types of spaces auspiciously in relation to the cardinal directions.⁸ The three most important are the main entrance, the worship room and the kitchen. The main entrance is, in most cases, oriented to the south for two reasons, at once practical and cosmological. First, it situates the courtyard so that it receives the warming sun during the cold winter months. Second, while the south is the inauspicious direction of the *Yama*, the deity associated with death, when entering the house, people are facing north, the auspicious direction of the deities, so that movement into the house towards the north portends the beneficence of the deities. The worship room should be in the northeast, the direction of the deity *Isān*, god of purity, knowledge and wisdom, which is the state, outcome and benefit of performing puja. In the majority of houses (66%) for which I have detailed room layout plans, the worship room is located in the northeast; in those houses in which the worship room is located in another quadrant of the house, the worship alter and idols are located in the northeast corner of the room itself. The kitchen with its cooking fire should be in the southeast, the direction of the deity Agni, the god of fire. However, in most Kholagaun Chhetri houses (72%), the kitchen is in the northern quadrant. This pattern makes sense in relation to the location of the main entrance in the southern quadrant: placing the kitchen in the northern quadrant of the ground floor means that it is the space or room farthest from the main entrance. When looked at according

to the location relative to the main entrance, rather than aligned with a cardinal direction, almost all kitchens in traditional and modern houses are located far away from the main door either by being placed in the farthest corner or room of the ground floor or on an upper floor. In the next section I analyse how locating the kitchen far away from the main entrance in terms of physical distance is placing it culturally in the centre of the domestic mandala.

Conventional Construction of Revelatory Houses

Bourdieu developed the concept of “bodily hexis” (1977:93) to describe the way in which the knowledge and dispositions through which we conduct our everyday lives have not just a reflexive form in ideas and concepts that we may be able to verbalize but also a tacit form (see Polanyi 1962, 1966) in the gestures and movements of the body. This duality of the verbal–reflexive and tacit–corporeal characterizes the forms in which Kholagaun Chhetris experience cosmological ideas, build them into their houses, and their houses into mandalas. To paraphrase Bourdieu, “bodily hexis is [cosmology] realized, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of feeling and thinking” (1977:93–94). Bodily hexis entails moving in space and such motility creates culturally significant spaces. In the remainder of the paper, I describe how Kholagaun Chhetris create concentric spaces of inclusion and exclusion through the durable patterns of household activities and movement in their compounds (see Munn 2003). This creation is mediated by an ensemble of concepts and symbols that Kholagaun Chhetris constantly used to talk about purity and the dangers of impurity of lower caste people; these concepts, symbols and people transfigure the abstract cosmological concepts of diversity and unity, attachment and detachment, illusion and revelation, into everyday bodily practices of purity and impurity and activities of cooking and eating in the kitchen.

Purity and Impurity

For Kholagaun Chhetris, being Householders means that there are no more important media for living in the world than their bodies and the food they eat to sustain them. Purity (*chokho*) and impurity (*juthho*) are conditions of what Kholagaun Chhetris called the “physical” or “material” body (*bhautik sarir*) that people have because of and in order to live in the material world (*sansār*). Like Hindus throughout South Asia, they identify substances produced by the body—saliva, perspiration, urine, excrement, blood, semen and mucus—as the primary sources

of impurity as well as the products and signs of embodied life-in-the-Householder's-world. Eating is paradigmatic of actions that cause impurity. When people eat, the food they touch as well as the hand which conveys the food to their mouths become polluted with their own saliva. Likewise, defecating, urinating, sexual intercourse, menstruation, sleeping (during which time people perspire), and blowing one's nose are all everyday and necessary acts in which a person's own body becomes impure. These sources of impurity are all substances that flow from the inside to the outside of the body and the impurity they produce is the result of transgressing the body's boundary. This means that vital, life-maintaining, organic processes inherently "produce" impurity. Kholagaun Chhetris cannot avoid them as part of their physical being-in-the-world just as they cannot avoid the passions and attachments of their moral being-in-the-world as Householders. This parallel necessity of, on the one hand, corporeal life and the impurity it entails and, on the other hand, the dharma of the Householder and the attachments it entails suggests that impurity is the everyday bodily transfiguration of attachment, and by implication, that purity is the everyday bodily transfiguration of detachment.

Purity as Detachment

Purity is a state of perfection characterized by a completeness, wholeness and integrity that has not been corrupted by human action (see Madan 1987:58ff) or by breaching the boundary between inside and outside. Maintaining or restoring purity entails bodily deeds of detachment and asceticism. Bodily-produced impurity is personal and temporary. It is personal in the sense that only the individual whose body produces the impure substance necessarily becomes impure. It is temporary in the sense that a state of purity is easily restored by two kinds of activities—cleansing and abstinence. In cleansing, impurity is removed and the integrity of the body's boundary restored with running water that courses over the body and flows away. This is effective because water has the property of absorbing the quality of the object with which it comes into contact. For this reason, cleansing always involves water flowing over the impure part of the body taking the impurity it has absorbed away from the body and thereby re-establishing its wholeness by creating a separation from the organic substances which breached its boundary. The physical separation from polluting organic substances effected by bathing is a sensual practice of detachment from the corporeal life of the Householder and the worldly attachments it necessarily entails and from which it is impossible—like organic life itself—

to abstain. By cleansing after coming into contact with impurity inevitably produced by the processes of the body, Kholagaun Chhetris perform and experience their detachment from these processes.

The other method of purification is ascetic practice, usually consisting of abstinence from eating and copulation, activities which produce impurity. Such abstinences involve avoidance or non-involvement with things of worldly enjoyment—good-tasting food and the physical pleasure of sexual intercourse. They are metonymic of a Householder's lifeworld and the necessary attachment to or passion for people and things—food, kinship relations and sexual relations. The purity achieved by abstinence from such passions and pleasures is another corporeal experience of detachment in the midst of the attachments of everyday life.

Impurity as Attachment

Impurity also has a permanent and collective form associated with castes whose members are affiliated through current or presumed historical practice with occupations that require contact with the impure substances or actions of others' bodies: Washermen with other people's sweat in the clothes they wash; Tailors with the skin of dead animals used in the drum they play at weddings; and Leatherworkers with the skin of dead animals in making shoes. In these castes, the occupation involves not just physical contact with pollution but also a permanent and excessive attachment to it in the sense that the activity is understood to have traditionally provided the means of subsistence. People engaging in these occupations embody such impurity and pass it on genealogically so that collectively the pollution defining them as a distinct caste group is part of their corporeal substance. Even if a particular person in one of these castes does not engage in the traditional occupation, Kholagaun Chhetris still insisted that they still embodied the collective impurity of the caste through genealogical transmission.

If the body is the source and locus of impurity as the everyday transfiguration of attachment, food and water are its main conductors. Caste groups in Banaspati are characterized and ranked as "caste groups from whom drinking water is accepted for consumption" and "caste groups from whom drinking water is not accepted for consumption." Within the former category there is a further hierarchized division between "castes from whom boiled rice is accepted for consumption" and "castes from whom boiled rice is not accepted for consumption."

Such an extended and elaborate ensemble of concepts and practices about the dangers of impurity transmitted through food and physical contact renders the prepara-

tions and consumption of food not just nutritionally essential but also socially sensitive and cosmologically significant. It is through the patterns of including and excluding impure people from the increasingly interior concentric zones of the domestic compound—courtyard, verandah, and kitchen—where rice is prepared and eaten, that Kholagaun Chhetris protect themselves and their food from the impurity of low caste people and, at the same time, map the cosmos onto their domestic compounds, building them into a mandala of concentric zones around the kitchen as the centre (see Figure 5).

Courtyard

The courtyard is the space most visible from outside the low boundary wall and most vulnerable to the impurity and dangers of impure people from outside the compound. It is the place where raw grains are dried or processed. When rice is harvested in autumn, it is threshed in the fields and brought to the house as paddy (*dhān*) to be dried in the sun before milling. Once milled to remove the chaff, rice (*chāmal*) is in the next stage of its transformation into food. After milling, the courtyard is the place where rice is winnowed to remove the remaining chaff. It is still considered raw because it is uncooked and it has not been subjected to human action corrupting the wholeness of the grains. It is in the process of cooking that the grains become vulnerable to the impurity of lower castes.

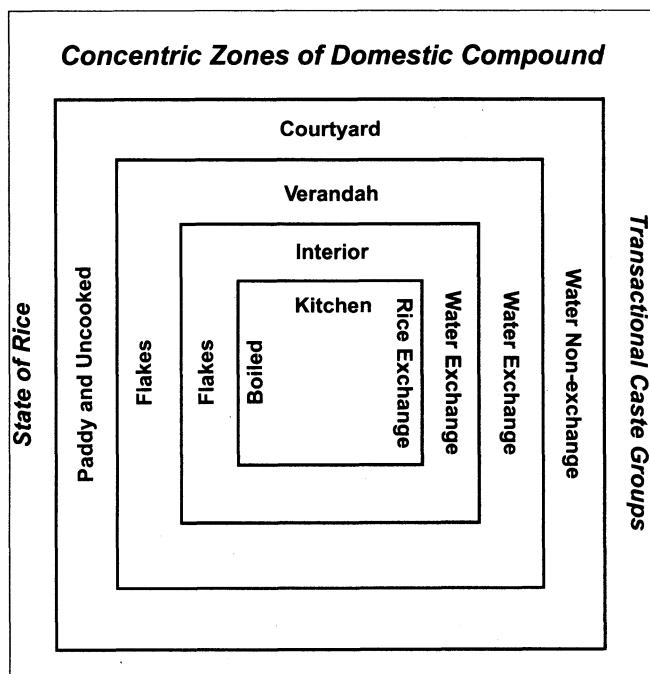


Figure 5: The domestic mandala in the concentric configuration

Because raw grain is immune from impurity, there are few, if any, protective spatial exclusions. The courtyard is the place where anyone is allowed to enter relatively freely. In this respect the courtyard is the only place where members of untouchable castes can enter. The reverse is also the case: Kholagaun Chhetris do not fear becoming impure by entering the courtyard of low caste people.

Verandah

The verandah mediates the visible courtyard and the invisible interior of the house. Since it runs across the front of the house which faces into the courtyard, it is, like the courtyard, visible from outside the boundary. But like the house interior, the verandah is also a raised area above the courtyard on the same level as the ground floor and it is covered by a roof. Its architecturally mediating character is matched by its use as a socially mediating space between the public courtyard and the more secluded house interior. In traditional houses, there is often a raised wooden platform at one end of the verandah that people use for sitting in the sun and entertaining guests accompanied by snacks; in modern houses, either chairs or a grass mat are brought out for host and guest. In terms of spatial inclusions and exclusions, the visitors and guests entertained by Kholagaun Chhetris on their verandahs are most often people of equivalent purity. They sometimes sit and talk with people of lower castes from whom they will accept water but snacks are not offered. People of untouchable castes (from whom they will not accept water) are usually not allowed on the verandah, particularly when snacks are being served.

These spatial inclusions and exclusions are imposed because the method of preparing the snacks makes them more susceptible than raw paddy and uncooked rice to impurity and danger. Snacks are prepared inside the house where, in the process of converting raw grain into an edible state, the food, the preparer and the cooking process are out of sight and touch of people in courtyard and on the verandah. The most common snack is tea served with a small metal bowl of rice flakes (raw milled rice that has been boiled, then roasted and finally pounded into rice flakes). Alternately, dry-popped maize, dry-roasted soybean or commercially made biscuits may be served with tea.

Because of their method of preparation, rice flakes and other snacks are susceptible to impurity, but less so than other forms of cooked food. When rice or other grains are cooked, they are placed in a medium—either water, oil or air (dry)—and heated over a fire rendering them porous, that is, the boundary of the grain becomes per-

meable and open to absorbing the qualities of the medium in which it is being cooked. The medium absorbs and conducts to the food the impurities of anyone who touches or sees the grain with evil intent during its transformation from raw to cooked. Different cooking media have different potentials for absorbing and conducting: water has the most, air the least and oil is in between. The snacks served on the verandah are doubly shielded. First, they are cooked inside the house out of touch of low caste people who might be in the courtyard. Second, they are cooked and served dry (*sukhā*) to guests without further cooking or preparation.

Compared to the courtyard, the verandah is more “interior.” By this I am referring to the increasing need to protect the purity of food with spatial exclusions upon people from outside the household group because the snack served is cooked and more vulnerable to impurity and danger than the raw grains dried and winnowed in the courtyard.

Kitchen

Kholagaun Chhetris eat two main meals each day, usually consisting of lentil broth, a curry of vegetables or meat and rice cooked in water (*bhāt*). Water is the most transitive medium because it readily absorbs the character of any object with which it comes into contact. As a result, it can purify as well as pollute. In purificatory bathing, water flows over the object or person, absorbs the pollution and takes it away into the ground. Conversely, while it is boiling, rice sits in water which conducts the state of the cook to the permeable rice.

Because of food’s openness to absorption, cooking and eating in the kitchen are dominated as much by an explicit concern with protecting the purity of the food, the people who eat it and the place where it is cooked and eaten as by the practical tasks of preparing food and consuming it (see Daryn 2002:30-31). The kitchen in traditional houses consists of an earthen stove in the corner of a raised earthen platform (see Figure 6). Women told me that mud is a very absorptive surface that is particularly prone to pollution from eating—bits of food made impure by saliva may fall on the ground—so they must sweep and seal the floor with a purifying mixture of cow dung and water after every meal. In some modern houses, where the kitchen is a separate room with floors of less or non-absorptive concrete, marble or other hard surfaces, the floor need only be washed with water after each meal to remove impurity.

The kitchen has the most exclusive spatial prohibitions. Only Brahmins and other Chhetris, the castes from whom they will accept cooked rice, were allowed to enter



Figure 6: Kitchen in a traditional house

Kholagaun Chhetri kitchens when meals were being prepared and eaten. People of the water-acceptable castes were allowed to enter the verandah during a meal; they were occasionally allowed to come just inside the main entrance to ask a question but they could not enter the kitchen. When food was not being prepared or eaten, people of water-acceptable castes could enter the kitchen, but I never saw this happen. Untouchables (water-unacceptable castes) could not even enter the house of a Kholagaun Chhetri without causing defilement of all living spaces, public and private. Thus whenever an Untouchable wanted to interact with a Kholagaun Chhetri, they had to remain in the courtyard and call out to the householder.

Compared with the courtyard and verandah, the kitchen is the most interior of domestic spaces. For Kholagaun Chhetris, it is the room where their food and their bodies are most vulnerable to impurity and danger so they do their utmost to ensure it is pure by locating it in the most inaccessible place, purifying it before and after eating and imposing the most exclusive spatial prohibitions on people entering it. Taken together, courtyard, verandah and kitchen form a concentric series of increasingly exclusive interior spaces where rice and the people eating it are increasingly vulnerable to impurity and danger, and where maintaining and protecting purity is increasingly important.

Everyday Practice, Cognitive Knowledge and Embodied Revelation

What I have tried to illustrate is that among Kholagaun Chhetris, the Hindu (tantric) concern with equivalences between various planes of existence means that the activities of everyday domestic life and the places where they take place are multifaceted—corporeal, social and cosmological. Eating nourishes the organic body, pollutes the

social person, and is an embodied experience of a Householder's attachment, illusion and the entrapments of life-in-the-world; washing after eating cleans the body, cleanses the social persona of impurity and is the embodied experience of detachment and renunciation so central to balancing the attachments of the Householder's life-in-the-world. Concomitantly, in carrying out these activities, Kholagaun Chhetris create multifaceted concentric spaces in their house—at once functional, social and cosmological—that form a mandala. Their houses likewise are multifaceted: they are places to live their daily lives, they are maps of the cosmos, and they are machines for revelatory knowledge.

Conclusion

I now end by returning to Heidegger to reflect upon Nepali domestic architecture by way of a contrived pun, "architechnē," that sees architecture as more than the making and manipulation of space for human use but also as a structure of revealing. In architechnē, the production and practical use of space for human dwelling is at the same time a presencing of its enframing truth.

In contriving the word architechnē, the prefix "archi" refers to the architect and the practice of architecture which "produces space" (Till 1969:9); "creates boundaries out of otherwise unbounded space" (Kent 1990:2); is "the thoughtful making of spaces" (Khan in Till 1969:9); "is integrally identified with human activity, experience and expression, for, in ordering space, [it] also orders human action" (Blier 1987:2); and, "involves not just the provision of shelter from the elements but the creation of social and symbolic space—a space which both mirrors and moulds the world view of its creators and inhabitants" (Waterson 1991:xv). In all these definitions of architecture, the central idea that the architect—whether professional, vernacular (see Rapoport 1969:2), indigenous (Waterson 1991:xv) or the architecture without architects (Rudofsky 1964)—makes space for human habitation. *Technē* is a Greek word that Heidegger points out is usually associated with the skills and activities of a craftsman in making something useful. However, for him the essence of *technē* is a bringing-forth (*poiesis*) into presence through the human use of skills and activities, something that is possible and concealed; it is a form of revealing; and revealing (*alētheia*) is the essence of truth:

It [*technē*] reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us... Thus what is decisive in *technē* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the

revealing... It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *technē* is a bringing-forth. [Heidegger 1977:295]

For Heidegger, truth is not a set of propositions, statements or knowledge about the ultimate nature of the world and the people and things that exist within it. Instead the world is fundamentally a field of possibilities in which the existence and nature of phenomena—the people and things that exist for us—are not given directly to our consciousness. Phenomena have only possibilities for our experience of them; human thought and action bring forth certain of these possibilities to consciousness. Which possibilities are brought forth depends upon an historically and culturally specific whole or framework against, from and within which entities appear in consciousness. This enframing whole is usually tacit, consisting of "what is taken for granted by the humans who inhabit such a world" (Ihde 1979:105). From Heidegger's perspective, then, truth is a structure of revealing to consciousness certain of the world's possibilities and, by implication, of concealing other of the world's possibilities. *Technē* refers to human action which brings forth this structure of revealing and concealing. In this context of truth and *technē*, architecture may be thought of as a production and ordering of useful space for human habitation and architechnē as the bringing forth of inhabited space as a structure of revealing and concealing.

Kholagaun Chhetri domestic compounds are the result of architecture and architechnē. As architecture, they are configured by instrumental design and practical conduct both as auspicious spaces portending beneficent and prosperous outcomes from the everyday tasks of Householders to bear and raise children, to sustain themselves through productive activity and to worship the deities, and as increasingly pure and exclusive spaces to protect inhabitants from the impurity of lower caste people. These are the possibilities of the world that come forth into Kholagaun Chhetris' everyday consciousness as their lifeworld of the Householder. They appear in their consciousness against, from and within their cosmology of attachment and detachment, entrapment and liberation, illusion and revelation.

However, in Kholagaun Chhetri everyday engagement with domestic space, household members and household activities, the structure of revealing that is their cosmology is, paradoxically, obscured. "It disappears into usefulness" (Heidegger 1975b:46). Yet, as Heidegger's approach helps us to see, Kholagaun Chhetris come to know the structure of revealing that is their cosmos only through their everyday active engagement with and consciousness of the things of the world. This is what I was

trying to illustrate with the spatial distribution of activities surrounding the preparation and consumption of rice and the associated spatial prohibitions. The concentric space constructed by these activities and spatial prohibitions produce a tacit and embodied knowing of the Hindu [tantric] cosmos. This is the sense in which everyday acts are architechnē acts, bringing forth the cosmos in the form of the domestic compound as the structure of revealing. This mandalic space is both a map of the cosmos and a machine for revelation of its fundamental truths. In this sense, Kholagaun Chhetri architechnē is human action and skill that brings forth a spatial structure of revealing the enigma of the Householder's lifeworld as detached attachment—a space where truth happens.

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Notes

- 1 The mandala form is widespread throughout South Asia. See Gutschow and Kölver 1975; Gutschow and Bajracharya 1977; Kramrisc 1976; Barré et al. 1981; Levy 1990; Slusser 1982; and Gellner 1992.
- 2 The ethnographic material upon which this paper is based was collected during periods of fieldwork in Banaspati between 1973 and 2004.
- 3 See the *Rig Veda* "Hymn to Purusha" (10:XC).
- 4 When I began fieldwork in 1973, all the houses in Kholagaun were of the traditional type. By 2001, traditional houses were in the minority (31 of 69). Most of the new houses were built by young men after their marriages when they separated from their joint families and established separate household groups.
- 5 In Nepal *mandala* tends to refer to mystic diagrams associated with the Buddhism of Newars and Tibetan groups and *yantra* with the Hinduism of Brahmin-Chhetris.
- 6 From "Early Tibetan Mandalas: The Rossi Collection." With the kind permission of Rossi & Rossi Ltd., London, Ajit Mookerjee Collection. From *Yantra: The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity*, by Madhu Khanna, Thames and Hudson, London.
- 7 See Levy for a description of the Newar house as also an interweaving of the material and the symbolic (1990:186-192).
- 8 In explaining the construction and layout of their houses, Kholagaun Chhetris rarely mentioned the Hindu Vastu Shastras (*bastu*), the elaborately codified architectural texts that use mandala spatiality in the construction of temples, neighbourhoods, villages, cities and houses.

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L'invention du hamac et la maison maya au Yucatán

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Résumé : Quelques faits permettent de penser que ce fut au XVII^e siècle que le hamac venant des Caraïbes commença à être adopté par la population maya. En tant que marchandise, le hamac n'a toutefois pu pénétrer la communauté maya sans d'abord emprunter un long et complexe processus social qui le convertirait en valeur d'usage. Une telle adoption, et sans doute une telle adaptation, ne furent possibles que grâce aux fils fabriqués à partir de la plante de sisal, originaire de la péninsule du Yucatan. Il aura aussi fallu que les Mayas acquièrent la technique du tissage et que celle-ci se généralise. Avec le hamac, les familles mayas découvrirent un objet domestique étonnant qui allait donner lieu à des transformations formelles et structurales de leurs maisons.

Mots-clés : sisal, hamac, Mayas, demeure traditionnelle, milieu habité, Yucatán

Abstract: Facts suggest that the Maya began to adopt the Caribbean hammock in the 17th century. The Maya, however, could not absorb the hammock as a household good until they had borrowed a lengthy and complex social process that would render the hammock useful to them. This adoption and adaptation were not possible without rope manufactured from the sisal plant which originated in the Yucatan peninsula. It was also necessary that the Maya acquire the technique of weaving and that it spread. With the hammock, Maya families discovered a surprising domestic object which gave rise to formal and structural transformations of their houses.

Keywords: sisal, hammock, Maya, traditional housing, lived environment, Yucatan

Introduction

Malgré son énorme importance, l'invention du hamac de sisal au Yucatán est, pour emprunter la terminologie durkheimienne, un fait social négligé par les chercheurs en sciences sociales, spécialistes de l'histoire de cette région du Mexique. À en juger par les sources historiques disponibles et consultées, il ne fut accordé qu'une importance minimale à la substitution que firent les Mayas du lit traditionnel fait de planches, le *barbacoa*¹, par le hamac. Bien que le thème mériterait, sans nul doute, une recherche plus ample et plus détaillée que celle ayant mené à l'écriture de cet article, je m'efforcerai de signaler le potentiel de changement social que représente un objet domestique, à un moment donné, et d'ouvrir quelques pistes et poser quelques questions face à l'importance et à la signification d'un tel événement.

Les historiens de la culture maya ont divisé son devenir en plusieurs étapes ou époques. Morley, par exemple, voit trois époques : celle du Préclassique, de 1500 av. J.-C. à 317 apr. J.-C.; celle du Classique, de l'année 317 à 889; et celle du Postclassique, de 889 à l'année 1697, quand furent conquis les derniers Mayas organisés (Morley 1972:29). De même, sous le régime colonial, l'organisation sociale et politique de la communauté maya avait certaines caractéristiques au début et certaines autres au moment de l'apparition du mouvement d'indépendance (Farriss 1984; Patch 1990; Quezada 1993). On peut dire, pour simplifier, que le peuple maya, tout comme d'autres collectivités humaines, n'est jamais resté statique.

Un de ces changements qui, à première vue, peut sembler tout simple fut dans la façon de dormir lorsque le hamac de sisal (plante dont on extrayait la fibre avec laquelle on fabriquait le fil, semblable à du coton) s'est substitué aux barbacoas. Les Mayas qui luttèrent contre les conquistadors espagnols ignoraient l'art de dormir dans un hamac; il fallut plus d'un siècle de colonisation avant que leurs descendants n'en fissent leur objet de prédilection pour se reposer et dormir. Comme nous le ver-

rons, ce changement eut une grande portée sociale puisque le hamac ne fut pas seulement adopté, il fut également adapté à la culture locale. Les voyageurs européens et nord-américains qui vinrent au Yucatán à la fin du XVIII^e siècle et durant le XIX^e siècle observèrent, admiratifs, que, dans cette région, presque toute la population, que ce soient les habitants d'une ville ou d'une localité rurale, les hommes, les femmes et les enfants, tous dormaient dans des hamacs. Ils en vinrent même à penser qu'il s'agissait là d'un objet propre à la culture maya préhispanique parce que ceux qu'ils virent et qu'eux-mêmes utilisèrent étaient des hamacs de sisal, le sisal étant originaire de cette région.

Dans cet article, je soutiens que, grâce au sisal, les Mayas, probablement à la fin du XVII^e siècle, ont pu adopter le hamac originaire des Caraïbes. Le sisal est la clé permettant de comprendre l'émergence d'une version yucatèque du hamac. Mais son adaptation par les Mayas ne s'est pas faite du jour au lendemain; le processus s'est en effet étendu sur plusieurs décennies, surtout parce que, en ce qui concerne la sphère familiale, l'adoption du hamac nécessitait la construction d'une nouvelle maison, différente des anciennes demeures où se trouvaient les barbacoas sur lesquels on dormait. Il fallut adapter les dimensions et la structure des nouvelles maisons aux mesures du hamac, et c'est ainsi que surgit la maison maya telle que nous la connaissons aujourd'hui.

Je tiens à préciser que si je parviens à de pareilles affirmations, c'est sur la base de deux éléments. Premièrement, l'observation et l'analyse des transformations subies par les demeures rurales contemporaines, c'est-à-dire la tendance – opposée à la précédente – de la population maya rurale à changer son habitude de dormir dans un hamac (de nylon et de coton) pour celle de dormir dans un lit, ce qui entraîne une nouvelle configuration de l'espace résidentiel des Mayas en milieu rural yucatèque. J'ai souligné dans deux essais antérieurs (Baños 2002 et 2003a) que la vraie nouveauté de cette tendance a été la rapidité du processus de substitution du hamac par le lit, comparativement aux décennies passées pendant lesquelles il n'y eut aucun changement. Ce processus revêt une signification plus grande qu'on pourrait le penser. Son observation et son analyse nous révèlent le degré de pénétration dans la communauté maya d'une nouvelle valeur : celle du privé qui accompagne d'autres valeurs propres à la modernité sociale qui se répand dans tout le pays.

Deuxièmement, je m'appuie sur la consultation de plusieurs sources historiques afin de connaître l'organisation du milieu résidentiel maya pendant les premières années du contact et pendant la conquête, ce dont je discuterai amplement un peu plus loin. Mes questions ini-

tiales ont été : quelle est l'origine du hamac? Comment est-il arrivé au Yucatán et comment en est-il venu à faire partie de la culture maya yucatèque? Par la suite, je me suis rendu compte que c'était le terme générique même de hamac qui m'avait dissimulé à la fois le hamac de sisal aujourd'hui disparu – qui avait été véritablement révolutionnaire – et les implications sociales de ce phénomène, à savoir que le hamac de sisal a non seulement changé la façon de dormir mais a aussi favorisé la modification de la forme et, en fait, de toute la structure de la maison maya.

Les antécédents conceptuels

Avant d'entrer véritablement dans le vif du sujet, il me paraît utile de revoir les idées sur la maison et l'organisation spatiale mayas véhiculées par les études sur ce thème, l'une des raisons étant, comme je l'ai déjà mentionné, que j'ai moi-même été aveuglé par ces arguments et ces images.

Tello Peón (1995:61-62), dans son étude intitulée « *La vivienda maya : persistencia de la tradición vernácula* », considère que, grâce à certains écrits comme celui de Diego de Landa (1864), intitulé en français « Relation des choses de Yucatan », nous pouvons savoir que la maison « vernaculaire yucatèque », comme elle l'appelle, date d'époques antérieures à l'arrivée des Espagnols. Comme je le démontrerai plus loin, Tello Peón a fait une lecture erronée du texte de Landa. Pourtant, ce témoignage écrit en 1560 par le religieux franciscain – nommé évêque du Yucatán en 1572 – est essentiel pour identifier les changements que la maison maya a connus pendant la période coloniale.

Nous trouvons cette même idée chez Chico Ponce de León et Tello Peón qui affirment :

Malgré la lente évolution sur plusieurs siècles de la maison maya pendant lesquels se sont façonnées ses caractéristiques spatiales, technico-constructives, fonctionnelles, ambiantes et expressives, les données archéologiques montrent que les établissements préhispaniques très anciens possédaient les mêmes caractéristiques que celles de la maison vernaculaire telle qu'elle nous est parvenue. [1997:31]

Il semble toutefois que de pareilles données archéologiques ne soient pas si certaines, comme le signale l'archéologue Robles Castellanos (1991).

Plus tard, dans *l'Atlas de procesos territoriales de Yucatán*, Tello Peón développe ses arguments :

La maison que l'on considère comme traditionnelle du peuple yucatèque, qui date d'époques antérieures à l'arrivée des Espagnols, est celle que l'on définit comme la

maison vernaculaire ou la maison maya [...]. Produit résultant d'expériences séculaires, cette maison présente une très forte identité spécifique qui dérive de la transmission d'aptitudes et de connaissances respectant les caractéristiques du milieu ambiant (climat, image, ressources naturelles) et socioculturel traditionnel (économie, utilisation de l'espace, mode de vie, activités, etc). [1999:286]

De la même façon, Repetto Tio (1991) trouve que dans la littérature archéologique sur les Mayas, on a considéré, en général, qu'il existe une continuité ininterrompue dans la tradition de construction de la maison, depuis l'époque préhispanique jusqu'à nos jours.

Robles Castellanos (1991:6-10) soutient que l'intérêt commun des archéologues et des ethnologues depuis des années pour l'étude de la structure familiale (la parenté) maya préhispanique et de l'arrangement résidentiel a permis la compréhension de l'organisation des établissements et de la société mayas antiques. Et il continue : en ce qui concerne les unités familiales liées aux maisons individuelles, les rapports et les documents officiels du début de la colonie indiquent que chez les Mayas yucatèques, les familles étendues patrilinéaires et patrilocales installées dans des unités résidentielles individuelles dominaient. En plus, ces maisons individuelles, probablement habitées par des familles étendues patrilocales, étaient réparties autour « d'édifices centraux », un arrangement qui semble caractéristique des communautés du Nord du Yucatán depuis l'époque préclassique jusqu'à la conquête espagnole. S'appuyant sur Roys (1943), Cook et Borah (1978), l'auteur mentionne que la conquête du nord du Yucatán par l'Espagne a établi un nouvel ordre économique, lequel devait, à la fin du XVI^e siècle, modifier l'habitation originelle ainsi que l'organisation des établissements (Robles Castellanos 1991:6). Cette idée, en soi correcte, n'est malheureusement pas développée par l'auteur.

Cook et Borah (1978:37) affirment, en effet, qu'il y eut une modification de la maison originaire et ils arrivent à cette conclusion sur la base de l'information contenue dans les *Relaciones histórico-geográfica de Yucatán*, qui est une source historique de qualité. Mais il semble qu'il s'agit là d'une interprétation peu fondée car les deux auteurs ne tiennent pas compte de nombreux détails, tant il était pour eux plus intéressant d'élaborer un mode de calcul de la population, en l'absence d'autre source pour en déterminer le nombre. Ces auteurs avaient constaté que les familles étendues patrilinéaires prédominaient mais ils voulaient déterminer le nombre moyen d'habitants par unité domestique en établissant, à cette fin, combien de maisons il y avait dans le *solar*, mot qui désigne

le terrain comprenant une ou plusieurs maisons, incluant également la cour, et constituant l'unité territoriale de chaque famille. Mais, ce faisant, ils ne décrivent pas véritablement les caractéristiques physiques de la maison originaire.

En outre, avant la conquête, les Mayas vivaient dans des hameaux éparpillés dans la forêt et « les Espagnols modifièrent radicalement les unités familiales indigènes et, en ce qui concerne la redistribution et la concentration de la population indienne, ils le firent assez vite » (Cook et Borah 1987:37). La politique des réductions fut un succès car la maison « sylvestre » des Mayas fut transférée dans des villages que les conquérants établirent comme chefs-lieux municipaux ou religieux. Par contre, quand les auteurs affirment que l'habitation originaire s'était modifiée, ils se réfèrent à l'ensemble résidentiel et non à la maison ou à l'endroit où dormaient les Mayas.

En général, en raison du caractère limité des sources archéologiques qui permettraient d'élucider la structure sociale antique et préhispanique, les chercheurs ont fait appel au cadre ethnologique pour répondre à ces questions. L'étude de Wauchope (1938)² constitue une des premières tentatives en ce sens.

Toutes ces idées de continuité citées ici se doivent d'être réexaminées en tenant compte de l'adoption du hamac de sisal par les Mayas. Une constante de tous les travaux cités est qu'ils sont centrés sur l'analyse de l'espace extérieur des maisons, c'est-à-dire l'ensemble des constructions, et sur la façon dont leurs habitants sont organisés, mais ils laissent de côté la distribution et les fonctions de l'espace intérieur des maisons.

Il n'y a pas lieu d'insister longuement sur la recension des antécédents sur ce thème. Il suffit, en effet, de rappeler que, dans la littérature spécialisée, nombreux sont les concepts pas toujours convenablement définis. Parmi eux : l'espace habité, l'espace résidentiel, les unités d'habitations traditionnelles. Tous ces concepts font en général référence à l'espace privé (*solar* et maisons) dont disposaient les familles pour mener à bien leurs activités quotidiennes de reproduction biologique et sociale. Par exemple, « la composition résidentielle » à laquelle se réfère Robles Castellanos (1991) est un ensemble composé de la cour, de la cuisine et de la maison. D'autres concepts fréquemment utilisés sont : l'espace domestique, l'habitat maya, la demeure vernaculaire maya, la demeure typique maya et la demeure traditionnelle. On se demande parfois combien de personnes dormaient dans une maison mais personne ne semble trouver important de se demander dans quoi ou comment elles dormaient. Cela est lié au fait que – jusqu'à aujourd'hui – c'est dans l'espace extérieur de la maison maya que se tiennent la plus grande

part des activités quotidiennes d'un foyer et on suppose que, à l'intérieur de la maison, il n'y avait aucune division pour les lits ou barbacoas où on dormait et que l'espace intérieur ne servait qu'à dormir.

Brèves considérations théoriques

Sans prétendre développer ici une théorie explicative de la maison maya, j'entends toutefois offrir quelques considérations théoriques qui puissent permettre de comprendre ses changements. Un spécialiste reconnu signale que : 1) puisque toutes les cultures et tous les groupes humains possèdent des maisons de l'un ou l'autre type, on peut généraliser et les comparer entre elles; 2) la maison étant un lieu premier pour la majorité des personnes, cela lui confère une importance particulière; 3) la maison représente la majeure partie du milieu construit, même si on trouve différents autres types d'édifices; 4) la maison est le produit le plus typique du profil vernaculaire donc, le plus marqué par la culture; et 5) la maison varie avec la culture, et la recherche des raisons de cette variabilité pose l'importante question du rôle de la culture (Rapport 2003:37). Voilà pourquoi je définirai le milieu culturel de la communauté maya durant la période coloniale, et pas seulement celui propre à la société yucatèque; je définirai de la même façon le milieu habité externe maya – celui de l'ensemble habité – et le milieu habité interne maya – celui de la maison.

Rapport (2003) admet quatre définitions du milieu qui vont de l'abstrait au concret : 1) une organisation de l'espace, du temps, du sens et de la communication; 2) un système de lieux, un de ces lieux étant la maison et les activités qui sont menées à l'intérieur de la maison; 3) un paysage culturel; 4) une entité composée d'éléments fixes, mi-fixes et non fixes. Ce genre de conceptualisation, selon l'auteur, permet de mieux distinguer les utilisations non seulement de la demeure, donc la nature des différentes demeures, mais aussi des rues, des lieux spécialisés, et du voisinage (Rapport 2003:43-44).

Je tiens à concentrer mon attention sur le mode d'habitation maya et à distinguer deux niveaux d'analyse : la façon d'habiter l'extérieur et la façon d'habiter l'intérieur. Dans le milieu habité extérieur ont lieu les multiples activités des membres de l'unité domestique : cuisiner, cultiver, laver le linge, élever des animaux domestiques, et ainsi de suite. Le *solar* délimite le milieu habité extérieur. Très peu d'activités quotidiennes ont lieu dans la maison qui ne sert pratiquement que d'espace pour dormir. On n'y cuisinait pas et elle était occupée par des lits couverts de nattes certainement faites en sisal. C'est ce que j'appellerai le milieu habité intérieur ou milieu de l'intimité.

Dans les lignes qui suivent, je traiterai en premier du milieu habité intérieur et décrirai ensuite le milieu où se déroule l'interaction familiale pour, finalement, caractériser le milieu culturel de l'interaction des familles dans la communauté.

Le milieu habité intérieur

Tous les spécialistes du thème s'entendent pour dire que, avant l'arrivée des Espagnols au Yucatán, la maison ne réservait d'espaces privés à aucun de ses membres. Ils relèvent cependant l'observation de Landa pour qui la maison des Mayas était divisée en deux parties : un dortoir et une salle de séjour. Et c'est là le petit détail omis par Tello Peón (1995 et 1999) et par d'autres.

Dans le chapitre XX de sa *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, Diego de Landa écrit :

La manière de bâtir les maisons dans le Yucatán était de les couvrir avec de la paille, et ils en avaient de fort bonne et abondamment, ou avec des feuilles de palmier, tout à fait propres à cet usage; ils en élevaient le toit, lui donnant une pente considérable, de manière à ce que les eaux de pluie n'y pussent pénétrer. Ils élevaient ensuite un mur au milieu, partageant la maison dans sa longueur, laissant dans ce mur quelques portes pour communiquer avec la partie qu'ils appelaient les derrières de la maison, où ils avaient leurs lits; l'autre moitié était blanchie à la chaux avec beaucoup de soin. Chez les seigneurs, ces murs étaient recouverts de peintures agréables; c'était dans cette partie qu'on recevait les hôtes et qu'on les logeait. Cette pièce n'avait point de porte; mais elle était ouverte tout le long de la maison, le toit descendant fort bas, afin que l'on y fût à l'abri du soleil et de l'eau. On dit aussi que c'était pour se rendre maître de l'ennemi intérieur, en temps de nécessité. Le menu peuple bâtissait à ses frais les maisons des grands, et comme elles n'avaient point de portes, on regardait comme un grave délit le moindre tort fait aux maisons d'autrui. Elles avaient toutefois, par derrière, une petite porte pour le service des communs. Pour dormir, ils avaient des lits de bois faits en treillis de cannes, tapissées de nattes, et ils s'y étendaient recouverts de leurs étoffes de coton. Durant l'été, ils dormaient d'ordinaire sur le devant, étendus sur leurs nattes, les hommes principalement. [Landa 1864:112-113]

Cook et Borah (1978:38) considèrent qu'il s'agit là de la description de la maison d'un seigneur, ou *halach hui-nic*, et non de celle du menu peuple. Il ne me semble pas que ce soit le cas. Prêtons, en effet, attention à la note explicative suivante : « Chez les seigneurs, ces murs étaient recouverts de peintures agréables... » par laquelle

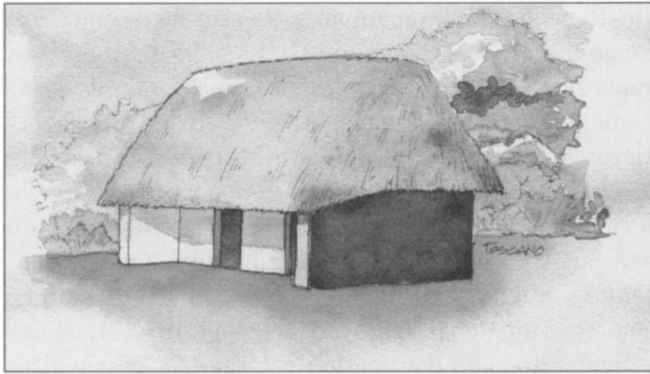


Figure 1: Maison maya selon Landa 1580. Dessin de Omar Toscano.

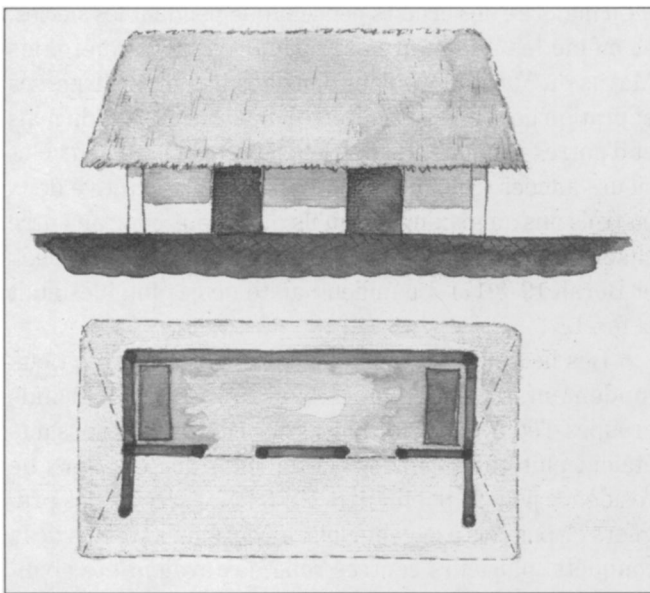


Figure 2: Maison maya vue de côté et d'en haut. Dessin de Omar Toscano.

l'auteur veut signifier qu'il existe des maisons différentes de celles qu'il décrit et qu'elles appartiennent aux seigneurs alors que chez les gens du commun, cette moitié-là était blanchie à la chaux avec beaucoup de soin. Un autre paragraphe va dans le même sens : « Le menu peuple bâtissait à ses frais les maisons des grands; et comme elles n'avaient point de portes, on regardait comme un grave délit le moindre tort fait aux maisons d'autrui ». Il est facile de comprendre que toutes les maisons mayas n'étaient pas uniformes, pas exactement semblables les unes aux autres, et qu'elles présentaient des variantes quant à la taille, au volume et aux couleurs.

Ce qui est intéressant, c'est que Landa remarque à l'intérieur de la demeure maya une sorte de chambre dor-

toir, découverte que les chercheurs ont négligée quand ils affirment que nous avons là la demeure d'un principal, et pas celle d'un quelconque habitant, l'assise architecturale de la maison décrite ressemblant à celle de certains temples, comme celui des guerriers à Chichen Itzá.

L'autre source historique disponible qui nous permet d'avoir une idée sur la maison maya, est la publication du premier recensement demandé par la Couronne dans la province et intitulé *Relación histórico-geográfica de la gobernación de Yucatán* dans lequel est décrit le matériel utilisé pour la construction des maisons, mais jamais la configuration de l'espace intérieur des maisons mayas en 1580³. En l'an 1579, le gouvernement du Yucatán embrassait un vaste territoire divisé en cinq provinces : Mérida, Campeche, Valladolid, Tabasco et Salamanca de Bacalar. Il avait comme capitale la ville de Mérida.

Pour continuer, je citerai quelques paragraphes descriptifs qui correspondent à la relation des lieux de peuplement en différents endroits de la péninsule. Il est important de noter que les personnes qui écrivirent les témoignages cités n'étaient pas familières avec la terminologie propre à la construction et, parfois, elles ne connaissaient pas le mot descriptif convenable. Dans le recensement du lieu de peuplement appelé Cansahcab, on peut lire: « Communément, les Indiens construisent des maisons en bois qu'ils recouvrent de paille ou de feuilles de palmiers abondants en certains endroits... Et les maisons sont orientées vers le soleil levant, le nord et le midi et rarement, voire jamais, vers le soleil couchant. » (*Relaciones histórico-geográficas de la gobernación de Yucatán* 1983:96). Dans le recensement de Sotuta et Tibolon, il est dit :

Communément, les indigènes font leurs maison en bois, pour ce faire ils la renforcent de gros poteaux plantés dans la terre, et ils montent la maison dessus de long en large, comme il se doit, à la façon d'une maison en tuile et ils la recouvrent de guano ou feuilles de palmier, et ils l'encerclent de branchages qu'ils enduisent à l'extérieur de boue que les champs leur offrent abondamment, et ils construisent d'autant plus facilement leurs maisons qu'ils s'aident les uns les autres; et d'autres maisons recouvertes de paille ne sont pas rénovées avant cinq ou six ans et, bien qu'ils pourraient les faire en chaux et en pierre, ils disent que ces deux matériaux ne sont pas bons à cause de l'extrême chaleur qu'il fait de mars à septembre, avant l'arrivée de températures plus modérées, bien que les anciens fissent, eux, leurs maisons en pierre avec certaines parties somptueuses. Et les maisons sont orientées vers le soleil naissant, le nord et le midi, rarement ou jamais vers le soleil couchant. [*Relaciones histórico-geográficas de la gobernación de Yucatán* 1983:149]

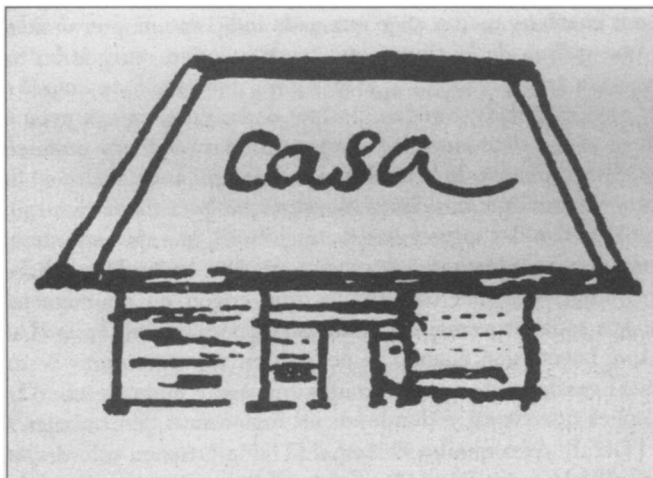


Figure 3

Le recensement de Titzal et Tixtual (province de Peto) fournit une illustration très importante et c'est la raison pour laquelle le dessin est fourni : « ... les maisons qu'ils se construisent sont en *guano*, composé de feuille de palmiers, et ils disposent des perches avant d'y mettre le *guano* et elles reposent sur des poteaux en bois très épais, qu'ils posent en premier avant de dresser la maison; c'est ainsi qu'ils montent la maison. » (Relaciones histórico-geográficas de la gobernación de Yucatán 1983:241).

Sur la base de ces sources historiques, on peut affirmer : 1) que la façon d'habiter l'intérieur était simple et se réduisait pratiquement au fait de dormir; 2) que les conquérants espagnols n'ont pas rapporté à l'intérieur de la maison l'existence d'un objet ressemblant au hamac; 3) que la maison maya, au début de la colonie, était de forme linéaire et que ni les fonctionnaires du gouvernement ni les *encomenderos*⁴ chargés du rapport n'ont rapporté que la maison maya ait eu une forme curieuse comme des extrémités de forme absidale; 4) que les espaces intérieurs de la maison – chambre ou pièce unique – devaient avoir quelque signification symbolique à laquelle il n'a pas été prêté attention.

Une chercheuse reconnue sur le sujet signale que le *macehual* (ou homme du commun) et sa famille s'entassaient dans une maison d'une seule pièce couverte par un toit soutenu par des poutres verticales; souvent aussi on y gardait le grain. Mais la vérité est qu'ils n'avaient pas besoin de beaucoup plus d'espace pour le reste des biens de la famille. Les observateurs – continue l'auteure –, sans exception, soulignaient la pauvreté du mobilier; quelques nattes pour dormir et des tabourets, grossièrement taillés, des paniers, des courges évidées, de rudimentaires fait-tout en céramique, et les outils communément utilisés pour la préparation de la *milpa*⁵ et du maïs (Farriss 1992:285).

Revenons maintenant au processus de changement de ce milieu. Certaines questions clefs restent sans réponse pour qui veut comprendre le processus de changement de la maison maya. Qu'est-il advenu des « derrières » de la maison? Quel fut le sort réservé à ces lits ou barbacoas? On n'en sait rien. Comment et sous quelle forme le hamac a-t-il remplacé le lit? En fait, on n'en sait pas trop non plus sur l'origine du « hamac yucatéque » qui se perd dans les profondeurs du temps, comme le dit Renán Irigoyen (Irigoyen 1974). Il ne fait cependant aucun doute que c'est pendant la colonisation espagnole qu'a évolué la façon de vivre et de dormir du peuple maya.

Le milieu habité extérieur

« La majorité des érudits pensent que pendant les siècles, et même les millénaires antérieurs à la conquête, les Mayas du Yucatán vivaient dans des hameaux dispersés et pratiquaient une agriculture nomade, cultivant du maïs et d'autres produits. Ils défrichaient un champ pour plusieurs années (celui qu'ils défrichaient était cultivé deux ou trois ans au maximum) qu'ils quittaient pour un autre champ, dès qu'était épuisée la fertilité de la terre » (Cook et Borah 1978:17). Le milieu habité de ces familles était la forêt.

Les lieux de peuplement mayas obéissaient à deux fondements : la religion et l'agriculture. Les grands groupes d'édifices qui formaient des ensembles imposants étaient plutôt des centres cérémoniels que des lieux de résidence pour la population. En fait, à l'arrivée des premiers Espagnols à la péninsule, aux premiers temps de la conquête, plusieurs centres religieux avaient été abandonnés. Ayant cessé d'être gouvernés par une théocratie, les Mayas avaient conçu une autre forme d'organisation sociale et politique, conformément à l'agriculture itinérante qu'ils pratiquaient. Dans un tel schéma social, les guerriers et les *Ah-kines*, les prêtres, avaient la même importance.

Pour les Européens, cette dispersion dans laquelle vivaient les Mayas était un signe de très grand retard estimant qu'il y régnait le désordre le plus complet. Pour la mentalité espagnole, le caractère dispersé des habitants de la société maya ressemblait à la façon de vivre des animaux sauvages (Quezada 1993:82). Les conquistadors ne purent pas ou ne surent pas comprendre que dans cette société maya-là, il y avait un ordre. Le *cuchcabal* était l'unité territoriale qui permettait le contrôle de la vie sociale et politique de cette population dispersée. La péninsule du Yucatán était, elle, gouvernée par des seigneurs appelés *halach huinic* qui résidaient habituellement dans la plus grande communauté d'un *cuchcabal*.

Les frontières entre les différents domaines n'étaient pas très claires, ce qui provoquait fréquemment des guerres entre eux. Le *cuchcabal* était organisé de bas en haut, de la façon suivante : tout d'abord un ensemble de maisons appelé *cuchteel* où l'autorité était exercée par l'homme le plus âgé. Ensuite, un ensemble de *cuchteeles* formait le *batabil* administré par un *batab*. Enfin, à leur tour, les *batabiles* formaient le *cuchcabal* ou domaine seigneurial maya (Quezada 1993:32-44). L'activité économique du *cuchcabal*, très faible, sans l'utilisation d'une monnaie d'échange, était une économie non marchande, autosuffisante.

La logique du pouvoir et l'organisation sociale chez les Mayas était celle de l'agriculture nomade, aussi ignoraient-ils la propriété privée et n'étaient pas attachés à la terre, à un lieu déterminé. Voilà pourquoi la politique des conquistadors espagnols à l'effet de fonder des villages et des villes, dans la logique de la perception du tribut et de la conversion religieuse, rencontra une forte résistance, les Mayas préférant vivre dispersés dans la forêt (Quezada 1997; Bracamonte 2001).

Dans les villages, le clergé obligeait les Mayas à rompre les grandes unités résidentielles de familles étendues, à regrouper leurs maisons à proximité les unes des autres, et à les construire avec une porte orientée vers la rue – contrairement à l'habitude de l'orienter vers la cour –, car ainsi, supposait-il, il serait plus difficile de dissimuler une conduite condamnable (Farriss 1992:339). Au moyen de la politique des réductions, d'ordonnances successives, les conquistadors obtinrent par la force le déplacement de la maison de la forêt vers un terrain à bâtir dit *solar*. Les Espagnols appelaient *solar* un terrain aux dimensions précises, mais non fixes, que la population recevait au nom de la Couronne et qui devait être utilisé comme assise résidentielle de la famille (Valero de García 1991). De cette façon, symboliquement, les Mayas se convertissaient en sujets du roi d'Espagne. Pour la population maya, la résidence dans un village et sur un *solar* représenta une camisole de force et il lui fallut longtemps avant de pouvoir s'adapter à la nouvelle situation. En fait, les conquistadors virent la pertinence d'abandonner l'autorité communale aux mains des *halach hunics* qui en retour furent reconnus comme *caciques* (chefs) de la République des Indiens (Quezada 1993).

En apparence, ce déplacement de la forêt vers un terrain à bâtir n'altéra ni la structure ni la forme des maisons dont la dimension variait en fonction du nombre de personnes composant la famille, un plus grand nombre d'individus signifiant un espace plus grand pour accueillir lits et nattes. Farriss fait l'observation suivante : « Parfois le groupe de parenté en son entier vivait dans une grande maison d'un seul tenant » (1984:134). Mais en éloignant les

Mayas de la forêt, en les confinant au *solar* et en les rassemblant dans des villages, on s'en prenait à leurs visions cosmique et « païenne » du monde. Il est bon de rappeler que si la plupart des maisons mayas étaient orientés vers l'orient, c'est parce qu'il semble que, pour eux, il était très important de recevoir les premiers rayons de soleil.

Les autorités coloniales espagnoles méconnurent ou préférèrent ignorer la structure corporative de la famille étendue. Pour promouvoir la moralité chrétienne et l'efficacité administrative, elles imposèrent aux Mayas de nouvelles normes de comportement qui déformèrent, au sein de la famille, l'équilibre entre obligations et droits. En détruisant cet équilibre, elles mirent en péril la sécurité matérielle de ses membres. C'est ainsi que les Espagnols divisèrent la famille étendue, tant sur les plans physique que fiscal, en unités conjugales. La division résidentielle, sans doute l'innovation coloniale la plus destructrice pour le système existant, fut imposée par le clergé catholique. Si celui-ci a insisté pour que chaque couple ait un foyer (une maison) complètement indépendant, ce fut surtout pour combattre, selon lui, une propension marquée des Mayas à l'inceste (Farriss 1992:270-271). Finalement, il semble que l'on permit à tous ceux ayant un lien familial avec le père de vivre dans des cours contiguës. Ainsi, dès le début de la colonisation, dans le milieu habité extérieur, dans la cour, se déroulaient toutes les activités quotidiennes propres à une famille, comme cuisiner et laver le linge. C'est un milieu de transition entre la milpa et la famille, et qui en tant que tel servait également à des cultures de moindre importance, comme le sisal ou les légumes, et à l'élevage des animaux domestiques.

Le milieu de la communauté maya et le sisal

Nancy Farriss soutient qu'en ce qui concerne la culture, il est difficile d'affirmer qui a assimilé l'autre, si tant est que se soit produite une quelconque assimilation. Les Espagnols apportèrent avec eux quelques-unes de leurs cultures de base et quelques uns de leurs animaux domestiques, mais l'hostilité tant du climat que de la terre contraignit tous les habitants du Yucatán à dépendre de la triade mésoaméricaine traditionnelle : le maïs, les haricots et les piments, et également de la grande variété de fruits tropicaux. Sauf pour certains outils métalliques rudimentaires, pour les armes à feu et la poudre et pour l'adoption incomplète et sans enthousiasme par les hommes mayas de pantalons et de chemises pareils à des pyjamas que leur avaient imposés les moines au nom de la décence, il faudrait reconnaître que l'impact matériel de l'Europe a été minime et que l'influence inverse a été pratiquement nulle (Farriss 1992:181).

La tendance à l'autarcie familiale, déjà visible à l'époque préhispanique, s'affirma encore plus. Comme on l'a déjà dit, les Mayas du temps de la Colonie étaient essentiellement des agriculteurs. Ils ont continué à produire pour eux-mêmes, pratiquant sans doute quelque type de troc très localisé, pour les marchés régional et de l'exportation contrôlés par les Espagnols, les mêmes produits de base que ceux que les *macehuales*⁶ avaient toujours produits : des nattes et des paniers, des cordes en sisal, de grossières sandales en peau de cerfs, des poteries (quoiqu'on y fasse peu référence et il semble que les courges et les paniers étaient plus fréquemment utilisés, sauf pour la cuisine) et, surtout, la traditionnelle couverture de coton, que toutes les femmes tissaient sur leurs métiers à ceinture (Farriss 1992:267).

Le commun des Mayas avait rarement de l'argent sonnante et trébuchante. Dans leur fonctionnement, les transactions étaient pareilles à des distributions entre particuliers, au cours desquelles l'acheteur s'engageait à une remise ultérieure de maïs, de coton, de cire ou de tout autre produit, en échange de l'article acquis (Farriss 1992:83). L'absence ou l'importance limitée des marchés locaux indique, au contraire, que, pour ce qui concerne leurs nécessités de base, les Mayas étaient autosuffisants. Il existait peut-être une sorte de troc local, et le fait que, durant l'époque coloniale, une petite partie des indigènes se soit spécialisée dans la fabrication d'articles domestiques rudimentaires, révèle clairement que les techniques de base du tissage, de la poterie, du travail du cuir et de la menuiserie étaient à la portée de tous les macehuales, que chaque famille élaborait ses propres vêtements et le mobilier du foyer (Farriss 1992:202).

Ce qu'il nous faut retenir ici c'est l'économie d'auto-subsistance et les mécanismes de réciprocité, sur lesquels fonctionnait la société maya, qui permettaient la re-création d'une économie à très bas niveau marchand.

Le sisal

Les Mayas pratiquaient la culture du sisal bien avant l'arrivée des Espagnols; avec sa fibre, ils fabriquaient fils et cordage. Mais c'était une culture de moindre importance, pas une culture de base, mais complémentaire. L'historien Rubio Mañé, selon ce que rapporte Casares G. Cantón et d'autres auteurs (1998:230), affirme qu'aussi bien Landa (1864) que Cogolludo (1957) nous parlent très peu du sisal dans leur énumération des produits de la terre yucatèque. Ce dernier signale que les Indiens faisaient beaucoup de cordages (Casares G. Cantón et al. 1998:230), et compte tenu du fait qu'au Yucatan il n'y a pas d'autre fibre, il induit que ces cordages étaient faits en fibre de sisal.

Pour sa part, en 1566, Fray Diego de Landa établit que : « Ils ont une herbe sylvestre, la meilleure, qu'ils cul-

tivent également dans leurs maisons, de laquelle ils tirent, à leur façon, la fibre qu'ils utilisent pour faire de multiples objets » (1864:n.p). À la fin du XIX^e siècle, l'historien yucatèque Juan Francisco Molina Solís écrit : « Ils avaient l'habitude également de semer dans les cours de leurs maisons le sisal (dit *ci*) avec lequel ils fabriquaient des cordes pour leur usage domestique » (1896:245). Ils en tiraient principalement de la fibre qu'ils transformaient en cordes et cordages. Eligio Ancona (1917:216) affirme, en se référant à la même époque : « Le sisal fut très loin d'attirer l'attention des conquistadors et de leurs descendants les plus immédiats. Ils ont laissé les Indiens continuer à le cultiver et d'en bénéficier selon le système maya. » Pour cet auteur, c'est un arbuste à la nature généreuse, qui n'est affecté ni par l'abondance ni par la rareté des pluies.

Le sisal fournissait donc la fibre, matière première du hamac, mais il manquait encore la technique d'un tissage fort différent de celui que les Mayas utilisaient pour la fabrication des sacs, des nattes et des tissus de coton.

Le hamac

Selon Irigoyen, en l'an 1526, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo présente dans *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* un objet provenant de ce que nous appelons maintenant les Caraïbes de la manière suivante :

Il est bien de parler des lits qu'utilisent les Indiens dans cette Isle Espagnole (Saint-Domingue) qu'ils nomment hamac; et qui est ainsi conçu : une toile tissée pour une part, et ouverte pour une autre, de cases croisées tel un filet, pour qu'elle soit plus fraîche, et qui est faite en fils de coton par les Indiennes elles-mêmes, et mesure plus ou moins dix à douze paumes de long et de la largeur qu'ils désirent [...]. [Irigoyen 1974:10]

Le mot hamac procède comme le mot *barbacoa* de la région des Caraïbes. C'est un mot *taino*, dialecte de la langue arauak, qui signifie arbre. De tels hamacs étaient de grossiers maillages faits de fils de chanvre ou de sisal⁷. Le fait qu'ils fussent légers, frais, facilita leur accueil dans la maison maya. Mais entre leur arrivée au Yucatan et celle dans la maison maya, il y a un espace historique long et complexe.

Irigoyen (1974:9) signale que Juan Francisco Molina Solís, analyste fidèle et méticuleux du passé yucatèque, affirme dans son importante œuvre historique que le hamac est arrivé dans la péninsule au XVII^e siècle. Par ailleurs, dans l'encyclopédie *Yucatan en el tiempo*, publiée en 1998, les auteurs reprennent l'hypothèse antérieure et soulignent que le hamac serait arrivé au Yucatan par la partie orientale de la péninsule (aujourd'hui le Quintana Roo), partie la plus proche et la plus liée aux Caraïbes. La don-

née de cette source qui retient le plus l'attention est que son utilisation fut très limitée (Casares G. Cantón et al. 1998:219-221). Parce que ni le hamac des Caraïbes ni celui de coton, importés tous les deux, ne pouvaient être achetés par la population maya, l'usage du hamac ne se généralisa que lorsque les Mayas s'approprièrent la technique de la trame, ce qui ne leur fut certainement pas difficile car ils connaissaient d'autres formes de tissage des fibres de sisal et de coton.

Un écrivain yucatéque confirme que :

Les résidents espagnols qui ne pouvaient supporter la forte chaleur du Yucatán, surtout en été, eurent l'idée de convertir en lit « le doux hamac » de Saint-Domingue. Et son usage s'étendit si rapidement qu'au bout de quelques années de gouvernement colonial, même les Indiens les plus pauvres et misérables abandonnèrent leurs lits de planches pour se reposer dans les doux et frais filets de confortables hamacs ». [Hernández Fajardo 1977:88]

Cette idée de l'introduction du hamac du haut vers le bas et de la ville vers la campagne est toutefois incorrecte, parce que schématique et linéaire.

Nous savons que la population maya ne pouvait acheter les hamacs importés et nous savons aussi que la matière première était à portée de la main, qu'il ne manquait que la technique pour qu'elle la fabrique elle-même et qu'il soit ainsi à sa portée. J'ai idée qu'un facteur clé pour son expansion fut le rôle joué par les moines franciscains qui ont très bien pu apprendre la technique de fabrication à Saint-Domingue⁸ puis postérieurement, apporter le métier, les fils et les aiguilles, et enseigner à leurs fidèles la fabrication du hamac, comme ils enseignaient d'autres matières et d'autres métiers dans leurs paroisses. Il est possible que les Franciscains aient vu un avantage du hamac sur la barbacoa, puisque le hamac, en séparant les corps, diminuait la promiscuité dans laquelle vivaient les Indiens. En effet, sur la barbacoa la proximité des corps est inévitable; les Franciscains pensaient que cela représentait une atteinte à la morale et aux bonnes mœurs, d'autant plus que les Mayas n'utilisaient pas beaucoup de vêtements.

D'autre part, une technique ancestrale permettait aux Mayas la fabrication de fils à partir de la fibre obtenue du sisal. C'est cette connaissance qui permit certainement d'obtenir un fil de sisal adéquat pour le hamac. L'hypothèse selon laquelle le hamac était déjà présent dans le Yucatán colonial ne doit pas être écartée. En effet, dans le dictionnaire de Motul, écrit dans le dernier quart du XVI^e siècle, il est fait référence au hamac. En langue maya, le hamac est dit *hayabil-kaan*, ce qui pourrait signi-

fier « des cordages pour se coucher », ou *yaab-kaan* qui signifierait « plusieurs cordages ». Il nous faut cependant préciser que la présence du hamac ne signifie nullement son usage généralisé. Il a probablement fallu un laps de temps assez important entre le moment où les indigènes mayas s'approprièrent la technique de fabrication et celui où ils découvrirent l'avantage de dormir dans un hamac de sisal. L'étape suivante fut de construire un nouveau modèle de maison avec de nouvelles dimensions et une structure conforme à la taille d'un hamac tendu, telle que nous la connaissons aujourd'hui.

Quand le hamac fit-il son entrée dans la maison maya? Toutes les sources indiquent que, un siècle après le début du régime colonial, le hamac n'était toujours pas entré dans la maison maya. Par exemple, dans un document où il est fait mention de la nomination de Don Xiu Cimé comme *cacique* du village de Oxkutzcab (12 Septembre 1665), il lui est demandé, entre autres responsabilités :

[de] veiller à ce que chaque famille ait sa propre maison, sans que les uns et les autres aient à se mélanger, même s'ils sont parents, qu'ils la conservent toujours propre et en bon état et qu'il y ait une croix ou une image de Notre Seigneur et de la Sainte Vierge, des chapelets, des barbacoas, des nattes, des coqs et des poules, et toutes les autres choses que, par ordonnances, il leur est demandé d'avoir. [Quezada et Harada 2001:90, c'est moi qui souligne].

Si, comme nous l'avons vu, prédominaient les familles étendues, on peut s'interroger sur les dimensions des demeures pour qu'elles pussent contenir les barbacoas sur lesquelles ils dormaient et sur le nombre de personnes qui dormaient sur une barbacoa? ...

L'ordonnance des autorités coloniales à laquelle il est fait référence ci-dessus mériterait une plus longue analyse car, par exemple, elle nous rappelle l'insistance espagnole à convertir la famille étendue en familles nucléaires et à les mettre dans des maisons à part : le *cacique* devait « veiller à ce que chaque famille vive dans une maison à part ». Il est évident que la promiscuité n'était pas qu'une préoccupation morale; il y avait là également une dimension économique qu'il m'est impossible de discuter ici, par manque d'espace. Il me paraît intéressant de signaler que ce fut à travers ce type d'ordonnances royales, au moyen de la coercition, que certaines coutumes imposées devinrent populaires ou qu'elles finirent par faire partie du milieu culturel de la communauté maya. Tel est le cas de l'autel qui acquit un emplacement privilégié, conservé jusqu'à aujourd'hui, à l'intérieur des humbles demeures rurales. En revanche, les colonisateurs n'imposèrent pas le hamac de sisal que la communauté maya adopta grâce

à d'autres mécanismes plus souples comme l'éducation ou l'instruction dispensées par les Franciscains. La recommandation faite au nouveau cacique de veiller sur les barbacoas et les nattes indique qu'elles étaient encore présentes dans la maison maya.

À quel moment l'usage du hamac de sisal s'est-il donc généralisé? Nous ne le savons pas avec certitude et c'est la raison pour laquelle je recourrai une fois de plus à une source indirecte. La première référence au hamac par un voyageur nous est fournie, en 1769, par James Cook dans ses « Notes sur une traversée depuis le Rio Belise, dans la Baie du Honduras, jusqu'à Mérida, capitale de la province du Yucatán dans les Indes Occidentales Espagnoles » et nous est rapportée par Irigoyen :

Les populations pauvres vivent dans de misérables cases construites de branchages de palmiers (choisies pour leur forme droite) et recouvertes de feuillages jusqu'au sol, ce qui les fait ressembler à de grandes ruches. Elles ne sont pas surélevées comme celles des Espagnols, et tout comme eux, ils dorment dans des hamacs de plantes, comme ils les appellent, bien qu'ils soient fabriqués à partir de la fibre de l'aloès, tout comme le chanvre vient de la tige ; ils jettent simplement une toile de coton sur le hamac ; et quand ils voyagent, si la nuit les surprend, ils dorment dans leurs hamacs accrochés à deux arbres. [Irigoyen 1974:16]

Nous pouvons ainsi supposer que, au début de XVIII^e siècle, l'usage du hamac s'était généralisé. Une autre référence indirecte nous est offerte par l'historien Juan Francisco Molina Solís (Tome II, 1988:396-403). Il nous dit que parmi les objets fabriqués à la fin du XVII^e siècle, il y avait les nattes, qui servaient de couchages aux indigènes, mais jamais il ne mentionne le hamac. En revanche, dans le tome III, il assure que le Yucatán, au début du XIX^e siècle, recevait d'Espagne, entre autres produits, du fil de coton qui, à mon sens, était utilisé pour les hamacs. En outre, il enregistre la présence du hamac comme un des produits commerciaux fabriqués à partir du sisal (Molina Solís 1988:520-526). Ainsi, il est possible que le hamac ait de plus en plus été apprécié par les Mayas dans ce passage du XVII^e au XVIII^e siècle.

L'usage du hamac a été un processus lent. Il n'entra dans la maison maya qu'une fois que la population eût acquis la maîtrise absolue de la technique du tissage, les matières premières quant à elles pouvant être facilement tirées de son environnement et de son milieu social. Le hamac est entré dans le foyer des Mayas comme valeur d'usage, et non comme valeur d'échange. Le processus commençait lorsqu'un membre de la communauté apprenait la technique du tissage. L'étape suivante fut sa pro-

pagation, et il est possible que la division même du travail en vigueur dans les communautés mayas et les mécanismes d'aide réciproque aient permis la lente avancée de l'adoption du hamac de sisal.

La dernière partie du processus ne fut pas non plus automatique. Il ne fut sans doute pas facile de changer de façon de dormir, de se défaire des barbacoas et d'adopter les hamacs. S'ils sont frais, les hamacs neufs de sisal sont inconfortables à cause des pointes effilées et rêches de la fibre de sisal qui, souvent, provoquent une irritation de la peau. Une communauté ne change pas sa façon de dormir d'un moment à l'autre, il lui faut des générations et ce sont les jeunes qui s'adaptent le plus facilement.

Enfin, un autre argument nous amène à penser que le hamac est un ingrédient occidental de la culture maya, et c'est le suivant : dans les anciennes cultures du sud du continent américain, concrètement dans la région amazonienne, le hamac est présent dans les rituels les plus fortement ancrés dans l'histoire de ces peuples. Chez les indiens Urubu, selon Dibia, le hamac permet de donner un caractère symbolique au mariage et à la mort :

Une fois bu le *cahuén* (boisson qui provient de la plante du même nom) – parfois il y en a assez pour que cela dure deux ou trois jours – au moment où le soleil est au zénith, le chef appelle le couple à la cabane où a lieu la danse et installe les époux dans le même hamac [...]. À ce moment-là, le chef prend un morceau de tissu rouge avec lequel il enveloppe leurs têtes tout en disant : « Vous voilà mariés ». [Dibia 1999:154]

En outre, quand décède un membre du groupe, son cadavre est enveloppé dans un hamac soutenu par des lianes que l'on emporte vers un coin de la *capoeira*⁹. Ensuite, après avoir creusé un puits de 2 mètres de long sur 1,30 mètre de large et 1,60 mètre de profondeur, on plante à l'intérieur de la tombe deux arbres vigoureux récemment coupés, entre lesquels on fixe le hamac contenant le cadavre autour duquel sont déposés ses effets personnels (Dibia 1999:154). De telles cérémonies au cours desquelles le hamac aurait quelque rôle rituel ne furent jamais pratiquées par les Mayas pour qui dormir dans un hamac était un héritage parmi tant d'autres de la colonisation espagnole dans la péninsule du Yucatán.

Hamac et artisanat

Le hamac fut non seulement adopté par la population maya de la campagne, il gagna aussi en popularité auprès de la population entière de la péninsule, y compris parmi les gens fortunés vivant dans les villes. L'encyclopédie *Yucatán en el Tiempo*, déjà mentionnée, rapporte que, lors de l'Exposition Agricole de 1871, furent présentés

des modèles de hamacs confectionnés à l'aide de fils de coton d'origine anglaise, qui furent longtemps utilisés. Ces hamacs industriels étaient fort coûteux, hors de portée de la population maya, quoiqu'il y eût, évidemment, des hamacs moins chers. Selon Irgoyen (1974), le voyageur Stephens¹⁰, de même que Wauchope (1938), dans son travail ethnographique au début des années trente du XX^e siècle, affirme que les lits étaient très rares dans la péninsule de Yucatán.

En fait, au fur et à mesure de l'évolution de l'économie du Yucatán, le hamac devenu une marchandise, donna naissance à une industrie locale. De nombreuses familles et même plusieurs communautés cessèrent de le fabriquer pour elles-mêmes. En revanche, quelques municipalités comme Tixkokob et Chemax furent le centre de l'industrie artisanale qui s'appuyait sur le labeur familial et plus fréquemment sur celui de la femme maya. Durant la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle, parmi les activités artisanales et commerciales les plus répandues au Yucatán, la fabrication des hamacs – avec la broderie des *huipils* (vêtements féminins) – était la plus importante (Littlefield 1976:56). Il y en avait de toutes sortes et de toutes qualités. À partir de 1930, commença l'utilisation du fil de coton, de la soie synthétique et de *crochet* d'origine nationale. Plus tard, en 1950, on se mit à utiliser le fil de nylon.

Selon Hernández Fajardo (1977), au Yucatán, au milieu du XX^e siècle, on pouvait trouver six sortes de hamacs : ceux faits de cordes grossières (de sisal); ceux faits de cordes plus fines; ceux de fil fin de sisal; les hamacs faits de cordes de chanvre; les hamacs faits dans une toile forte; et ceux de fil de coton. Il est à noter que les hamacs en sisal sont ceux qui offraient la plus grande variété et qu'il y en avait de différentes couleurs en accord avec les tendances de la mode et du marché. Quel qu'ait été le processus d'induction et d'adaptation, le hamac yucatèque s'est ouvert son propre chemin parmi les hamacs de la région caribéenne. En d'autres termes, comme le hamac a acquis ses titres de noblesse dans cette région du pays, personne ne doute que le tissage du hamac, qu'il soit fait de fils de sisal, de coton ou de nylon, ne soit une activité artisanale maya et yucatèque. On peut être sûr que le hamac continuera d'être utilisé par la population yucatèque; par contre, il ne sera plus l'objet qui oriente l'organisation de l'espace de la maison rurale.

La nouvelle maison maya

Pour moi, c'est l'usage généralisé du hamac qui a permis la transformation structurelle de la maison : les poutres furent renforcées et la largeur de l'habitation établie en fonction des dimensions d'un hamac sur toute sa longueur. Il reste à comprendre les raisons de la forme semi-circu-

laire de ses côtés. C'est ainsi que l'utilisation du hamac pour dormir fut à l'origine de la maison maya typique, telle que nous la connaissons tous, plus simple et certainement plus confortable, ce qui lui valut de demeurer plusieurs siècles sans subir de transformations importantes. En tant qu'objet domestique, le hamac est étonnant : le simple fait de le décrocher transformait automatiquement la chambre à coucher en un vaste espace, celui dont ses habitants avaient besoin pour vivre ensemble, sans la nécessité d'un paravent ou d'une division de la maison. Il faut en outre souligner que cette modification de la maison maya ne fut rendue possible que parce qu'elle n'obligea pas à changer l'habitude familiale de dormir tous ensemble sous le même toit. Elle permit la séparation des corps sans un trop grand éloignement les uns des autres, tout en conservant l'atmosphère fraternelle.

Ce fut par le hamac de sisal que la maison maya obtint un nouvel équilibre, un équilibre parfait, parce qu'il convertit la maison en un espace de repos le jour et en un espace pour dormir la nuit, ce qui était difficilement envisageable avec les encombrants lits. Wauchope (1938), dans l'étude qu'il mena à bien en 1934, fait une description détaillée de la maison maya dans toute l'aire maya, pas seulement dans la péninsule du Yucatán. Ce qui intéressait l'auteur, c'était de discuter si la forme en demi-cercle des extrémités de la maison maya provient de l'époque précolombienne (alors qu'il existe, en effet, de nombreux faits archéologiques suggérant l'existence d'une maison rectangulaire) ou si elle est apparue après la conquête.

L'étude ne nous révèle rien de nouveau mais l'auteur penche toutefois pour l'idée que, aux premiers temps de la conquête, la maison n'était pas encore de forme semi-circulaire en ses extrémités. Le sujet demeure pour lui ouvert puisqu'il y a deux siècles de carence d'information : "This absence of any mention of rounded end is so conspicuous as to be significant" (Wauchope 1938:19). Il va même jusqu'à comparer les descriptions détaillées de Landa (1864) et Stephens (1984) pour soutenir avec encore plus de force que le changement de disposition de la maison maya eut sûrement lieu pendant la période coloniale, sans qu'il lui soit possible d'en préciser le moment, par manque d'information sur le sujet (Wauchope 1938:100).

Ce que l'étude de Wauchope révèle clairement, et c'est bien là le plus important, c'est que l'année où il réalisa son travail de terrain (1934), dans presque toutes les maisons, on dormait dans un hamac, y compris dans la ville de Mérida, comme le confirme Hernández Fajardo au milieu des années quarante dans l'*Enciclopedia Yucatanense*.

La maison maya à la fin du XX^e siècle

La majeure partie des descriptions connues de la maison maya contemporaine fait ressortir quelques variations en ce qui concerne les toits (de branchages, de fourrages ou de *guano*) et les murs (des branches et de la paille avec de la boue et de la maçonnerie) mais aucune différence en ce qui concerne sa structure en ellipse, assez uniforme (García Preciat 1977; Rangel 1980; Tello Peón 1995). Cette maison est généralement composée d'un espace multifonctionnel et d'une annexe, ouverte, pour cuisiner. La construction que l'on appelle maison ou demeure est faite d'une pièce, rectangulaire, avec deux extrémités semi-circulaires, selon des axes de 5 à 8 mètres. Elle n'a pas de fenêtres et certaines n'ont qu'une porte orientée vers l'est, mais en général, elles en ont deux, situées au milieu de chaque côté, face l'une à l'autre, mesurant environ un mètre de largeur sur deux mètres de hauteur.

Au moment de dormir, les hamacs sont accrochés aux poteaux (*noh-hocomes*) et aux montants (*balos*). Une grande bassine et un récipient placés en un endroit quelconque servent à la toilette. Cette maison, ce local, servent de salle de séjour et de dortoir. À côté, généralement telle une annexe, il y a une cuisine qui consiste en un petit abri de trois mètres sur trois. Sur un côté, trois pierres sont posées en triangle et servent de foyer (Moya Rubio 1988:80). Une coutume profondément enracinée chez les Mayas est celle de manger assis sur un banc, autour d'une petite table basse placée près du foyer dans cette cuisine¹¹. Rappelons que, depuis des siècles, la plus grande part des activités quotidiennes de la famille ont lieu dans cet espace ouvert, l'aire de la cuisine et du solar. Maison et solar ont toujours été des unités intrinsèques où se déroule le processus de socialisation et de reproduction sociale du groupe familial.

Le milieu habité extérieur, vieux de quelques siècles, et qui était composé de deux espaces spécialisés, tend aujourd'hui à se diviser beaucoup plus rapidement qu'à d'autres époques¹². Une telle durée est due—en partie— au fait que dans les sociétés mésoaméricaines, espace et temps avaient une dimension fortement liée à l'agriculture, activité de laquelle dépendait la survie de tous. On comprend que l'une des clés du rapide processus de changement de la demeure maya, ces dernières décennies, est le démembrement de la sphère productive et du milieu habité.

Le milieu culturel des communautés mayas a changé avec les années. La taille et l'importance des lieux de vie mayas créés durant la Colonie variaient, généralement, en fonction du nombre d'Espagnols fondateurs ou de la richesse potentielle de la région. Comme nous l'avons vu,

les colonisateurs furent à l'origine du concept de milieu habité intérieur, avec l'intention d'accorder une valeur prééminente à la famille nucléaire sur la collectivité. Et, bien qu'ils ne soient pas parvenus à changer de fond en comble le mode de vie des Mayas, ils imposèrent la présence de certains objets, tels que des images religieuses, un autel, un coffre et le hamac, entre autres.

L'extension du terrain à bâtir (le solar) que recevaient les Mayas fluctuait de quatre à cinq *mecates* chaque côté (un *mecate* représentant 20 x 20 mètres), pour un total de vingt *mecates* carrés. Selon Hanks (1990:96), le mot maya employé au Yucatán pour appeler ce type de terrain est *kahtalill*. Il était presque toujours limité par une clôture faite de pierres, placées l'une sur l'autre, appelée *albarrada* (muret). Le propriétaire du solar était le plus ancien du groupe domestique et il se transmettait en ligne paternelle. Avec le temps, le solar se fracturait en fonction de ses dimensions et du nombre de garçons. Quelques pères se refusant à le diviser, le solar devenait l'assise résidentielle d'unités domestiques complexes, de plusieurs familles nucléaires, à différentes étapes du cycle de reproduction biologique (Hanks 1990:95-98).

Au vu de cette relation avec le groupe familial, le solar était — dans quelques cas, il continue de l'être — un espace social complexe et pas seulement un morceau de terre pour l'installation du domicile familial. Indépendamment de son appartenance à une famille nucléaire ou multigénérationnelle, il se caractérisait par l'utilisation économique et sociale qui en était faite (Kirk 1982). Comme l'indique Repetto Tio, « la plus grande part des activités quotidiennes comme laver, cuisiner, s'occuper des plantes et des animaux domestiques, ainsi que les jeux des enfants, se déroulait dans les espaces compris entre les murets qui séparent chaque maison des autres maisons » (Repetto Tio 1991:16). Tout comme la milpa et la résidence, le solar qui était le lieu privilégié du processus de socialisation du groupe domestique acquérait une valeur symbolique et un pouvoir très important à l'intérieur du groupe; et une place prestigieuse dans le contexte d'une autre échelle spatiale, celui de la communauté locale (Brown 1999 et 2002).

Le temps et les rythmes de la vie sociale étaient marqués par le cycle de la milpa : travailler, semer et récolter étant les activités régulières de la journée. De nombreuses autres activités trouvaient leur place dans un temps qui était celui de la culture du maïs et d'autres cultures complémentaires. Les paysans mayas se levaient très tôt le matin pour profiter des premières lueurs du jour et éviter le soleil étouffant de la mi-journée. Durant les heures de plein soleil, ils s'adonnaient à quelques activités artisanales à l'ombre d'un arbre feuillu. Le soir, sans la solli-

citation de la télévision, ils avaient l'habitude de se coucher tôt, une fois la nuit tombée.

La milpa, le solar et la maison étaient des milieux spécialisés – dans la production, la reproduction/récréation et le repos, respectivement – avec des significations symboliques diverses. Dans la milpa, se pratiquaient les rituels (*cha'a-chac*) pour demander la pluie et les fruits de la forêt; dans le solar, se pratiquaient les rituels d'action de grâce (*hua'ji-cool*) pour la bonne récolte; et dans la maison, les rituels pour la protéger des mauvais vents et des maladies (*hetz-luum*). La modernité tend à étouffer les pratiques productives traditionnelles, partant la valeur symbolique de ces espaces. En même temps, la famille rurale de la péninsule a connu de nombreux changements sur les plans du nombre et de l'organisation, tendant vers la famille nucléaire.

Conclusion

On peut dire que le sisal a joué un rôle clef dans les processus de transformation de la maison et donc du paysage rural tout comme lorsqu'au milieu du XIX^e siècle, son exploitation a favorisé l'émergence de constructions monumentales qui ont caractérisé les haciendas productrices de sisal.

C'est seulement quand un des membres de la famille apprenait la technique du tissage que, peu à peu, la communauté adoptait le hamac et rejetait les barbacoas. Il ne s'agissait pas de changer simplement de maison, mais bien de transformer la structure de la demeure pour une autre plus conforme avec le nouvel objet, sans la partie arrière de la maison, et avec seulement deux portes, et ainsi de suite. Ainsi naquit la maison typique telle que nous allons la connaître à partir du XVIII^e siècle. Tout ce qui précède fut un processus qui prit du temps, certainement des décennies pour se généraliser, et aboutir entre la fin du XVII^e et la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle, de façon telle que, au début du siècle suivant, le hamac qui était déjà définitivement adopté en terre maya allait même donner naissance à une industrie artisanale reconnue. Cependant, après avoir régné pendant plus de deux siècles, le hamac a commencé à décliner à cause de plusieurs facteurs, les uns objectifs (ou structuraux), les autres subjectifs (ou idéaux). J'appelle décadence du hamac le fait que cet objet ait cessé d'être le vecteur à partir duquel la maison maya définit ses dimensions et ses caractéristiques. Lors du processus de décadence, on continue d'utiliser le hamac qui devient une option combinée avec le lit.

Le milieu habité interne est un de ces espaces microscopiques où l'on peut observer les manifestations d'un processus social complexe qui révolutionne la vie quoti-

dienne des habitants de la campagne ou de la ville. Selon Pierre Pellegrino (2000), l'espace domestique – le milieu habité – est une des constructions culturelles à partir de laquelle les personnes peuvent organiser leurs relations avec le monde des objets, avec la réalité extérieure, avec les autres. De cette façon, on peut comprendre l'espace domestique comme une construction culturelle à partir de laquelle les personnes organisent leur relation avec un monde hétérogène d'objets et avec le monde des « autres ». Ainsi, l'étude de l'espace domestique rural nous révèle les fils ténus reliant l'infiniment petit au plus vaste, le traditionnel au moderne.

Pour terminer, je voudrais souligner que le processus contemporain de substitution du hamac par le lit s'appuie sur les sujets sociaux que sont les nouveaux noyaux familiaux, les jeunes qui se sont socialisés et éduqués dans un contexte envahi par les moyens massifs de communication qui se fonde sur de nouveaux rapports de production, sur une nouvelle division du travail familial et sur des revenus provenant du travail salarié (Baños 2003b). Avec l'arrivée de l'électricité et des moyens massifs de communication, l'horizon culturel du paysan du XXI^e siècle s'est considérablement étendu, autant que l'espace culturel des citadins. Voilà pourquoi nous assistons encore à un processus de changement social ample et profond.

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Notes

- 1 Selon le *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* (dictionnaire critique et étymologique, espagnol et hispanique) de J. Corominas et J.A. Pascual, « Barbacoa » est un américanisme. C'est le nom donné aux armatures et échafaudages à usages multiples, provenant d'une langue aborigène des Caraïbes (505).
- 2 Dans ce travail, un classique sur le thème de la demeure maya moderne, réalisé au début des années trente, l'auteur décrit les matériaux et les techniques de construction, parlant même des différents types d'habitations rurales qui prédominaient dans l'espace où se développe la culture maya

- à cette époque (Wauchope 1938). Il n'apporte toutefois pas beaucoup d'informations sur l'évolution de la configuration intérieure de la demeure maya yucatèque.
- 3 Guillén de las Casas, gouverneur et Capitaine Général du Yucatán, fut le fonctionnaire de la Couronne chargé d'accomplir l'ordre royal de fournir une liste des lieux de peuplement espagnols et indiens sous sa juridiction. Le livre intitulé *Relaciones Histórico-geográficas de la Gobernación de Yucatán* est une compilation de ces listes remplies aussi bien par les fonctionnaires coloniaux que par les *encomenderos*, et fut publié par l'UNAM en 1983.
 - 4 À l'époque de la colonisation espagnole de l'Amérique, l'encomendero était la personne qui se voyait confier, par décret royal, la responsabilité des autochtones.
 - 5 Le mot milpa, d'origine nahuatl, a été préféré par les Espagnols à celui de « kol » dans la langue maya. Contrairement au reste du Mexique contemporain où le terme milpa désigne la monoculture du maïs, au Yucatán, il s'agit d'un système de production complexe dont la culture principale, le maïs, est combinée à plusieurs autres produits tels que le piment, la courge, la tomate, la yucca et autres.
 - 6 Terme d'origine nahuatl utilisé par les espagnols à l'époque coloniale pour parler des indigènes.
 - 7 Selon ce que rapportent Casares G. Cantón et d'autres auteurs, Enrique Manero dans son article « Henequén del siglo XVI », mentionne que le mot hamac était propre aux Indiens de Cuba et de Haïti et qu'eux-mêmes appelaient la fibre *jeniquen*, le terme *henequén* étant le nom que la population yucatèque utilise pour désigner le sisal. Il ajoute que dans l'Isle d'Hispaniola ou Haïti, le sisal était connu comme une plante aux étroites feuilles vertes, longues d'une brasse et terminées par une pointe très dure (Casares G. Cantón 1998:231-232).
 - 8 La confection du hamac exige la connaissance des techniques du maillage ou du tissage; on monte un métier qui consiste en deux planches de bois avec un support pour la partie inférieure et une traverse, toujours en bois, pour la partie supérieure. Et quelques aiguilles spéciales qui retiennent le fil à tisser, entre autres.
 - 9 Chez les Urubu du Brésil, il s'agit d'un espace dégagé dans les bois où se pratique un sport.
 - 10 Irigoyen (1974) rend compte des notes, au sujet du hamac, qu'écrivirent les voyageurs européens. Tous s'accordent pour dire que pour la majorité de la population yucatèque, le hamac est l'unique moyen pour dormir.
 - 11 La salle à manger moderne n'a toujours pas pénétré l'espace domestique rural, pas même les résidences rurales faites de blocs de ciment et de voûtes.
 - 12 Une auteure, qui a mené des recherches dans la partie nord du pays, signale que « certains traits communs aux maisons et aux solaires de la campagne manifestent l'interprétation faite des fonctions de production et de consommation et du peu d'individualisation accordé aux espaces personnels » (Pepin Lehalleur 1996:76).
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“As Much American as a Canadian Can Be”: Cross-Border Experience and Regional Identity among Young Borderlanders in Canadian Niagara

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Abstract: This article analyzes interviews with young people who grew up on the Canadian side of the Canada-U.S. border in the Niagara region, a major North American transportation and trade corridor as well as a tourist destination. The analysis reveals histories of everyday cross-border links combined with some hybridized, but more often differentiating and exclusionary, constructions of border space and identity. Possible implications of these findings for official cross border regionalism and the wider project of North American deep integration are considered.

Keywords: borders, Canada, Niagara, identity, class, race

Résumé: Cet article fait l'analyse d'entrevues réalisées auprès de jeunes ayant grandi du côté canadien de la frontière canado-américaine dans la région du Niagara, un important couloir maritime et commercial ainsi qu'une destination touristique. L'analyse laissent entrevoir des récits de liens transfrontaliers quotidiens mêlés à des constructions hybrides de l'espace frontalier et de l'identité, causant souvent, par contre, la différenciation et l'exclusion. De possibles conséquences de ces conclusions pour le régionalisme transfrontalier officiel et pour le vaste projet de profonde intégration nord américaine sont également mises à l'étude.

Mots-clés : frontières, Canada, Niagara, identité, classe, race

Introduction

The Niagara region is a major North American transportation and trade corridor as well as a tourist destination.¹ Regional business and political leaders from both sides of the border have promoted cross-border linkages as key to ensuring the area's competitive position within a restructuring and securitizing North America. In this article, I consider the relationship between these efforts and everyday Canadian borderlander experiences and identities vis-à-vis both the proximate American “other side” and the rest of Canada. Interviews with young people who grew up on the Canadian side of the Canada-U.S. border in the Niagara region reveal histories of everyday cross-border links combined with some hybridized, but more often differentiating and exclusionary, constructions of border space and identity. Possible implications of these findings for official cross border regionalism and the wider project of North American deep integration are considered.

Theorizing Border Experience and Identities

Despite “the partial unbundling of traditional territorial national borders and the formation of new bordering capabilities” (Sassen 2005:524), studies of international borders and border regions have challenged both “state-centric predispositions” and “facile assumptions about globalization and the imminent demise of states and their borders” (Anderson and O'Dowd 1999:598). An interdisciplinary border studies has been documenting how the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of the EU and NAFTA, and the global securitization initiated by the U.S. so-called War on Terror, have been linked to changes in the functions and meanings of national borders rather than their disappearance (Newman 2006).²

Among the contributions made by anthropologists are ethnographic studies of border communities that focus

on “everyday life, and on the cultural constructions which give meaning to the boundaries between communities and between nations” (Wilson and Donnan 1998:4; see also Donnan and Wilson 1999). Drawing inspiration from such studies and Newman’s suggestion that the collection and analysis of narratives are useful “if we really want to know what borders mean to people” (2006:154), this paper draws upon interviews conducted with young people who grew up in Canadian border communities in Niagara to explore the dynamics of everyday cross-border linkages and regional identities at this site.

Newman refers to the “classic” definition of the frontier or borderland (citing Martinez) as “the region or area in relative close proximity to the border within which the dynamics of change and daily life practices...[are] affected by the very presence of the border” (2006:150). The work of Anzaldua (1999) and Rosaldo (1993) on the Mexico-U.S. borderlands portrayed such spaces as sites of potentially transformative cultural hybridity, an approach that challenged older paradigms of the “binary absoluteness of cultural areas and identities” (Kearney 1995:557).

While border regions continue to be identified as potential “hotspots of hybridity and creolization” and “seedbeds” of cosmopolitanism (Durr Schmidt 2006:246), grounded studies of borders and borderlanders have suggested that while border identities are often “shifting and multiple” they are still “framed by the specific state configurations which encompass them and within which people must attribute meaning to their experience of border life” (Wilson and Donnan 1998:13).

Some of the complexities of border practices and identities are suggested in two case studies useful to my thinking about Canadian Niagara. The first is Durr Schmidt’s (2002, 2006) work on the everyday border crossing and border reinforcing dynamics found among poorer East German borderlanders living in the German-Polish twincity of Guben-Gubin. Durr Schmidt describes how these borderlanders reaped material and psychological benefits through cross-border shopping (that allowed them to stretch their limited income and compare themselves favourably to Poles who were “worse off”) while embracing an everyday “latent Europhobia” (because of their belief that EU enlargement to include Poland would lead to a decline in German living conditions). He also points out how this everyday Europhobia was in tension with the institutionalized “Europhoria” of a more “transnationally oriented elite” (2006:259).

Also helpful is Vila’s (2003a, 2003b, 2003c) discussion of borderlander identities in the cities of Ciudad Juárez and El Paso at the U.S.-Mexican border. Like Durr Schmidt, Vila finds both border crossing and reinforcing

and uses interviews to reveal how national and regional identities articulated with other axes of class, race, gender and sexuality to produce hybrid but also more exclusionary identities and practices (2003a, 2003b). He also emphasizes the need to document “multiple readings of the border situation, where different narratives coexist in the same locale” (2003c:322). Both case studies are helpful in pointing to how border crossing may coexist with nationalized and other articulating identities and in directing attention to differentiated border practices, identities and projects in borderland spaces.

The Canada-U.S. Border

The fact that 80% of Canadians live within 160 kilometres of the U.S. border led Gibbins to describe Canada as a “borderlands society” and to suggest that “the border penetrates deeply into Canadian consciousness, identity, economy and polity to a degree unknown and unimaginable in the United States” (1989:2). Historical work on the Canada-U.S. borderlands has meanwhile been challenging exclusively national histories by emphasizing the “continual negotiation of the borderlands well into the national eras and the cross-border relationships forged by migrations of labour, capital, toxins, and trade to the present day” (Jameson and Mouat 2006:229). Ramirez, for example, outlines the history of extensive movement across Ontario-U.S. borders from the 19th century to the Depression, a period when “Canada was one of the leading contributors of population and labour to the United States” (2001:183; see also Bukowczyk et al. 2005).

At the same time, there is increased scholarly attention to the changing meanings and functions of a contemporary Canada-U.S. border within a restructuring and securitizing North America (e.g., Sadowski-Smith 2002; Gabriel and MacDonald 2003; Andreas and Biersteker 2003; Drache 2004; Pratt 2005; Sparke 2006). The changing Canada-U.S. border can be located within what Clarkson calls the “constrained hegemonification” of North American trilateralism wherein “political and economic pressure from the United States drives developments in each of its peripheries, but is limited by Canada’s and Mexico’s different responses” (2006:604). The “asymmetric interdependence” (Andreas 2005) of Canada-U.S. bilateralism, more particularly, has ensured ongoing debate about the degree to which the Canadian economy, sovereignty, identity and cultural distinctiveness are threatened by the power of the United States (Barlow 2005). In a discussion of post 9/11 developments, Nichol (2005:778-779) refers to divergent U.S. and Canadian “geopolitical narratives” vis-à-vis their shared border arguing that while securing the northern border against

the alleged threat of international terrorism emerged as central to U.S. discourse and policy, Canada continued to be preoccupied with facilitating cross-border trade while simultaneously constructing the border as “a line of defense” against U.S. domination.

The Niagara Border Region

The more macro-oriented scholarship on North American integration and the changing meanings and functions of the Canada-U.S. border informs this examination of everyday border life and identity in Canadian Niagara. This Niagara case study, in turn, offers insight into the lived working out of these processes and how local engagements may shape their future trajectory.

The Canadian Niagara border region is adjacent to the boundary line that follows the dramatic Niagara River running 55 kilometres from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie. The isomorphism of the boundary and the Niagara River in this region contributes to a “naturalizing” (Donnan and Haller 2000:13) of the border that downplays its history and politics. The current borderline, a product of the 1783 Treaty of Paris and War of 1812 (Carroll 2001), is both longstanding and largely uncontested (but see Grinde 2002).³

Four bridges open to vehicular traffic and three railway bridges currently span the Niagara River. The Lewiston-Queenston Bridge links the two villages of Queenston, Ontario and Lewiston, New York. Two bridges (Whirlpool and Rainbow) connect the cities of Niagara Falls, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York, while the Peace Bridge joins the town of Fort Erie, Ontario to the major urban centre of Buffalo, New York. The Peace Bridge is the second busiest Canada-U.S. border crossing (after the Ambassador Bridge linking Windsor and Detroit).

The border economy is shaped by wider patterns of economic restructuring and neoliberalism. Under Free Trade and then NAFTA, Canadian (and American) Niagara has suffered from de-industrialization involving layoffs and closures in the still dominant but declining manufacturing sector. The growing “new economy” in Canadian Niagara has been represented by the lower paid service sector, especially the seasonal agro-wine-casino tourist industry.

The regional economy is also affected by what Donnan and Wilson, in the context of the Irish border, describe as the “see-saw” effects of cross-border “differentials in state tax, consumer prices, and the currency exchange rate” (1999:119). In Niagara such effects impact the degree and direction of cross-border shopping, recreation and investment and residents have an acute awareness

of the relative economic opportunities on each side of the border. Over the years that the cohort interviewed here were growing up, a confluence of political and economic factors favoured the Canadian side of the Niagara River producing a sense of advantage over the immediate American side (in contrast to a wider U.S. hegemony). At the same time, however, incomes in Canadian Niagara were significantly below the Ontario average and the region experienced youth out-migration (Niagara Economic Development Corporation 2005:18).

Official Cross Border Regionalism

Sparke has discussed how NAFTA “led many regional business communities on either side of...the Canadian-U.S. border...to reimagine their local regions as newly ‘borderless’ business gateways and development hubs” (2006:159). In the years immediately preceding September 11, 2001, reports from the Canadian newspaper, the *Niagara Falls Review*, reveal how local political leaders from both sides of the Niagara River were promoting cross-border cooperation in trade, transportation and tourism as a route to greater regional prosperity (see Meyers and Papademetriou 2001).

In 1999, for example, cross-border cooperation was identified as key to achieving the goal (voiced by the Mayor of Buffalo) of having “the cheapest, fastest border in North America” (Transportation Woes A National Crisis *Niagara Falls Review* November 2, 1999: A9). There was cross-border political focus on the need to improve the capacity of the regional transportation infrastructure (highways and bridges) to handle a doubling in bilateral trade since 1988 and to thereby strengthen the region’s competitive position within North American economic space (Linking Of Trade Routes Beneficial to Canada, U.S. *Niagara Falls Review*, June 23, 2000: A6).⁴

The challenges of official cross-border regionalism were, however, apparent in negotiations over expanding the capacity of the Peace Bridge, the major border crossing in the region.⁵ When the freight process came to a complete halt in 2000 (and had to be subsequently restarted from the beginning), local business and political leaders moved quickly to reiterate the importance of a cross-border regional vision. Thus, for example, the General Manager of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, announcing construction of a new truck lane at the Lewiston-Queenston bridge, reiterated the need to “keep the truck traffic in Niagara” and added “we have to start thinking and acting as an international zone: We can’t afford parochialism” (L-Q Bridge Gets Third Truck Lane, *Niagara Falls Review* May 31, 2000: A1).

Similarly in the spring of 2001 the Canadian Consul General in Buffalo told the Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce that “to attract tourism and more economic development, you need a thriving region. You need to get beyond the parochialism” (Business Groups Told Border Should Be Invisible, *Niagara Falls Review* March 1, 2001: A6). A related editorial plugged a “one region, two nations” model while reassuring its Canadian readership that cross-border regionalism did not mean that “we’ll become Americanized, just that we’ll work with our neighbours towards common goals” (They’re Playing Our Tune, *Niagara Falls Review* March 2, 2001: A4).

Such efforts were evident in a plan to promote both sides of the Niagara River as a tourist destination under the rubric of the “Two-Nation Vacation” (It’s Time For a Two-Nation Vacation, *Niagara Falls Review*, February 10, 2000: A6) and the subsequent creation of a Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance. The Mayor of Fort Erie described cross-border cooperation in tourism as the natural outcome of “a common history, a common language, a common culture and common values” while the President of Niagara Falls Tourism commented that borders “are put on a map so we know who picks up the garbage and who does the policing” but are less important to tourists “looking for a destination experience” (Cross-border Effort Puts All Niagara on Tourism Map, *Niagara Falls Review* June 23, 2001: A3).

A week before September 11, 2001, an article about the growing tourist industry of Niagara Falls, Ontario and de-industrialization of Niagara Falls, New York, quoted the Mayor of Niagara Falls, New York discussing her vision of placing customs outside of the two cities in order to create a borderless Niagara. She stated: “we’re really one country—we’re so much alike. It would be the country of Canada and the U.S.—a tourist area without the customs booths that clutter the natural beauty” (A Tale of Two Cities, *Niagara Falls Review* September 4, 2001: A1). The vision echoed her personal binationalism because as she explained: “I feel just as Canadian as I do American” adding that she had relatives in Canada who felt the same way. Significantly, however, the newspaper report suggested that neither country was likely to support the envisioned “Niagara Americana.” The idea seemed even less imaginable in the context of post-9/11 rebordering.

As Wilson and Donnan point out, in the case of long-standing borderlines such as the Canada-U.S. border, while “the boundary line itself may not shift...relations across it as well as within it—between a border people and their political core—may be subject to repeated redefinition” (1998:21). September 11 marked a dramatic

“redefinition” of this relationship in Niagara as everyday and official cross-border regionalism confronted U.S.-initiated securitization of the border and subsequent moves to implement a joint Canada-U.S. Smart Border Accord.

Faced with increased border crossing delays and a decline in cross-border traffic in the initial aftermath of 9/11, local political and business leaders worked to maintain the momentum of cross-border economic regionalism. An effort to accommodate the heightened emphasis on securitization within a “borderless” discourse was evident when the District Director for Canada Customs and Revenue Agency in Fort Erie, in the context of a ceremony with U.S. Customs Services to mark International Customs Day, stated that “when it comes to the protection of our communities, or keeping our streets and families safe, there is no border and there are no boundaries” (Border Co-operation Lauded: Customs Contributions Marked at Peace Bridge Ceremony, *Niagara Falls Review* January 30, 2002: A3).

There were signs however, that heightened securitization was also linked to more nationalized responses. As early as the end of October 2001, a *Niagara Falls Review* editorial was urging rejection of a proposed security perimeter around “Fortress America” emphasizing that Canada was an “independent country” and that the plan would “risk losing our own right to control our borders” (Don’t Rush to Lock the Border, *Niagara Falls Review*, October 31, 2001: A4). A more concrete manifestation of a renationalizing of local border space was suggested when the Chief Inspector at the Port of Buffalo responded to concerns voiced by the Mayor of Niagara Falls, Ontario about bridge traffic gridlock, by saying “people have to realize they are coming into a different country” (Ease Border Restrictions: Thomson: Fears 10-Mile Traffic Backlog, *Niagara Falls Review* March 16, 2002: A1).

Efforts to distinguish bi-regional from national politics were, nonetheless, ongoing. In the spring of 2003 for example, the General Manager of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, speaking at a luncheon organized by the Niagara Falls (Ontario) Chamber of Commerce, reassured listeners that Niagara border cities and bridges would “weather the storm” created by strained Canada-U.S. relations over the Iraq war, because their local cross-border relationship was based on a “personal ‘people to people’ relationship” rather than “heads of state or government” (Border Myths Addressed By Bridge Official, *Niagara Falls Review*, April 10, 2003: A3).

Early in 2004, however, a *Niagara Falls Review* editorial appeared to counsel acceptance of the new reality of a securitized border when it described holiday delays at the border (from a U.S. orange alert) as “the price we’re

all paying these days to be kept as safe as possible from a potential terrorist threat” (Holiday Security Threat Status a Reminder of Price of Freedom *Niagara Falls Review*, January 2, 2004: A4). By mid-2004 (when the interviewing for this project was ending), a news report of a meeting of border mayors noted that they were addressing “the challenges of living along the Canada-U.S. border” by focusing on “infrastructure improvements, border security and bi-regional marketing” (Border Mayors Meet With Salci, *Niagara Falls Review* May 14, 2004: A3). The inclusion of “border security” and the portrayal of border life as a “challenge,” rather than an economic opportunity, reflected the impact of securitization on the pre-existing project of cross-border regionalism.

Interviewing Borderlanders

So how did the project of official cross-border regionalism and a changing cross-border political economy articulate with everyday borderlander experiences and identities in Canadian Niagara? Like other studies done in Europe (e.g., Hipfl et al. 2003; Jukarainen 2003), my discussion relies on interviews conducted with young people. From the summer of 2001 through to the summer of 2004, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with individuals who came forward in response to largely university-based recruitment efforts to locate young adults who had grown up in Canadian Niagara border communities.⁶ Here I draw upon a sub-set of 42 interviews conducted with individuals who were born between 1976-85 and, at the time of interviewing, ranged in age from 19-27 years (with the majority between 19-21 years). For this cohort, the inception of the Canada-U.S. 1989 Free Trade Agreement coincided with their mid-childhood to mid-teen years (4 to 13), while the 1994 adoption of NAFTA corresponded with their late childhood to late teen years (9 to 18).

The interview phase of the project began (and two of the interviews included here were already conducted), prior to 9/11 but the shifting realities of border life in its aftermath affected the subsequent research design. In response to the fact that those interviewed post-9/11 invariably positioned their retrospective narratives of childhood and teenage years against a changing present of border securitization, the original focus on childhood and teenage years was expanded to allow for some exploration of post-9/11 experiences and perceptions.

Here I analyze interviewee responses to direct questions about everyday links to, experiences with and perceptions of the immediate other (American) side; open-ended questions about the significance of growing up in a border region; and more abstract questions about border

identities. Like others who have explored borderland life through interviews, I am limited by the fact that experiences and views shared in the interview setting are not augmented with observations derived from conventional ethnography. As Donnan and Wilson note, “it is easy to ask people about their identities, but more difficult to discern how their actions and identities are related” (1999:65).

One of the other challenges of this project, was the need to work against apparently self-evident national boundaries and identities. In an attempt to counter the pitfalls of methodological nationalism, “the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002:302), interviews began with more concrete questions about everyday border life before moving to questions exploring a range of spatialized (local, regional, national, transnational) as well as classed, gendered and racialized or ethnicized identities. Even so, constructions of nationalized space, people and identity in the form of “Canadianness” or “Americanness” clearly dominated the interview exchanges.

At the beginning of the interview, respondents were invited to outline their family educational, occupational and cultural backgrounds. A combination of self identification and reported parental (or other guardian) education levels and occupations suggests that roughly one-quarter of the group came from upper middle class backgrounds, one-quarter from lower middle class backgrounds and about half from working class backgrounds. Several of the respondents in the latter two categories emphasized their status as first generation university students.⁷

Interviewee descriptions of their “cultural backgrounds” revealed that seven had a parent who was either American or a Canadian-American dual citizen (four held dual Canadian-American citizenship), a fifth had an American father but did not hold dual citizenship while the sixth and seventh had a father and mother respectively who were dual Canadian-American citizens. About 60% of the sample (26 out of 42) identified at least one parent (and many had both) who had grown up in the Canadian Niagara region. Four mentioned parents with French Canadian or indigenous backgrounds. Four had at least one immigrant parent and two had immigrated to Canada as young children. The majority of interviewees did not explicitly racialize themselves, but physical appearance combined with descriptions of “cultural backgrounds” suggests that most would be considered or consider themselves white with only the two who had been born outside the country likely to be considered or consider themselves to be non-white, non-Aboriginal “visible minorities.”

Everyday Cross-Border Regionalism

Questions about border life began with queries about childhood and teenage border crossings. The responses revealed that these young people grew up with social and economic local cross-border linkages that produced an experience of “ordinary” transnationalism (Strüver 2005:326). As indicated for some, childhood and teenage experiences of border life were shaped by kin ties to the American other side. For four of the seven with a parent who was either American or a Canadian-American dual citizen, there were regular visits to American relatives located immediately across the river in Western New York. A fifth interviewee travelled across the river weekly with his family to attend what had been his American mother’s church before marriage. In addition to these cases, another eight interviewees mentioned ongoing visiting with relatives living on the other side of the Niagara River.

Other kinds of trans-border social ties were forged by one respondent who had crossed the river daily as a child to attend an American elementary school and made many friendships in the process. Others got to know children attending Canadian schools from the American side. Two developed strong friendships with Americans who had rented summer cottages on the Canadian side and others maintained connections to transnational religious and cultural communities through trips to Buffalo.

Those without these kinds of social connections had histories of cross-border mobility linked to shopping and recreation. The childhood years of this cohort were marked by a relatively strong Canadian dollar as well as the introduction of a Canadian Goods and Services Tax that increased domestic prices and encouraged trips to the U.S. Interviewees recalled the frequency with which they travelled as children with family or friends to purchase items such as gas, groceries, clothes and shoes immediately across the river. Several also described attending major league hockey, football and baseball games in Buffalo and sports events at local U.S. colleges. Some crossed the border for children’s sports leagues or competitions (for example soccer, lacrosse, dance etc.), while others attended schools with ski clubs that offered regular cross-border trips to American hills. Other cross-border childhood activities included trips to local U.S. amusement parks and accessing cheaper or more convenient flights from the Buffalo airport.⁸

That cross-border mobility for these latter activities was largely shaped by exchange rates was clear in stories about how such trips declined as the Canadian dollar weakened relative to the American dollar in the early to mid-1990s. While some continued to cross as teens (to

shop, visit bars and clubs, attend sports events and concerts), the economic benefits were less clear. Those from wealthier backgrounds could still take advantage of goods and services on the other side but for most interviewees, border crossings became less frequent as they moved into young adulthood. The changing exchange rates, in turn, encouraged Americans to visit the Canadian side and many interviewees had the experience of serving American tourists in their first jobs as young workers in the tourism and retail sectors.

In the years following 9/11, a combination of increased securitization and other factors reduced cross-border traffic in both directions.⁹ Many of the interviewees emphasized that their already reduced crossings became even less frequent due to the perceived hassle of longer lines, more prolonged questioning and new document requirements. That the deployment of new forms of “smart” border control and surveillance augmented already stratified mobilities and enclosures (Cunningham and Heyman 2004) was clear in the accounts of the two interviewees born outside the country who explained how reports of profiling at the border led them to curtail crossing into the U.S. altogether.¹⁰

Everyday Border Identities

I now want to consider how histories of ordinary transnationalism and more recent developments were combined with borderlanders’ descriptions of their positioning vis-à-vis the American other side and fellow co-nationals. I begin by discussing the more minor, but nonetheless significant theme that identified borderlanders on both sides of the river as “pretty much the same.” I then discuss how this was often linked to a problematized “Americanization.” I follow this with an examination of the more prominent claim that the two sides of the Niagara River were marked by nationalized difference and consider how this latter construction articulated with classed and racialized hierarchies and exclusions.

“Pretty Much the Same”

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the theme of cross-border cultural similarity was present in some of the accounts of those with cross-border kinship ties. One dual citizen who grew up in Fort Erie in a working class household with an American parent who commuted to work in the U.S., described how as a child the border crossing was “not a big deal at all...I didn’t even really think of it as crossing into another country. I just thought we were going over to Buffalo” (46). Another son of an American father from a working class family in Niagara Falls, Ontario suggested that the other side “seemed like it was another Canada...

the only difference was that we had to cross this bridge to get there...the people all seemed the same, we all spoke the same" (45). A young woman from a similar class background, whose uncle and aunt were in a "mixed [Canadian-American] marriage," suggested that "they should just make Fort Erie [her home town] a Canadian/American town 'cause that's what it's like anyway" (19).

Such comments were not restricted to those with family ties to the other side of the border. A young woman from St. Catharines from a wealthier background who crossed primarily for shopping and recreation as a child also commented that at that time, "it didn't...register...sometimes that you were in a completely other country" (16). "The differences," said a young man from a lower middle class family in Niagara-on-the-Lake, "weren't really significant...a lot of things are just the same as over here...there shouldn't really be a border in that sense. We're all just people, we speak the same language [and] except for the currency we're pretty much the same" (37).

One young woman who spent her working class childhood in Fort Erie and crossed frequently for a variety of reasons which included shopping and attending events at a Buffalo aboriginal centre described how "when you go over it doesn't seem as if you are in another country" (38). When asked to elaborate, she acknowledged that crossing the border meant "being interrogated and stuff" but because the other side was "so close" and because "you have people over there that you talk to, [and have] developed relationships with, it doesn't feel like 'oh my God, I'm in another country.'"¹¹

"Americanized" Borderlanders

Several suggested that cross border similarities were the outcome of an asymmetric cultural flow that resulted in an "Americanization" of Canadian Niagara border residents relative to other parts of the province and country. The respondent who described the other side as "another Canada" for example, also pointed to the Americanizing effect of the U.S. media on Canadian borderlanders when he stated that "we watch the same [television] shows as them [those on the other side]...we have all the American channels, I'd say we're as much American as a Canadian can be. So when they [from the American side of the river] come over [to the Canadian side] I really don't even notice the difference" (45).

Another male interviewee from a lower middle class background and with a dual citizen father, claimed that "living in Fort Erie, I don't feel Canadian...it seems almost like you might as well call it Buffalo sometimes." He went on to refer to the allegedly "Americanized" speech pat-

terns of borderlanders on the Canadian side reporting his own experience of being teased by relatives living closer to Toronto who would say to him: "Wow, where are you from?" (35).

Several others also made reference to being told by others from outside the Niagara region that they sounded "American." Some described how they became increasingly conscious of their apparent deviance from a standard "Canadian" speech variety when they attended the regional university and students from other parts of Ontario made negative comments about their speech. A young woman from a working class household in Niagara-on-the-Lake, for example, described how "a few people from way up North...they're like 'you guys sound like Americans' and you're like 'no, no I don't sound like an American'" (15).¹²

As this comment suggests, "sounding American" was experienced as potentially stigmatizing. Indeed this individual added "I think that being so close to the States, we [border residents] don't realize it...but we...kind of become them [Americans]. Like our language is kind of like slang or whatever." Another interviewee with an upper middle class background from Niagara Falls described how students from outside the region would "tell me I'm American." The experience, she said:

opened my eyes big time because I made friends with people from...all throughout Ontario and they just comment on how we [students from the border region] speak...they sound totally different from me and my family and they're just [saying], "you guys are so influenced by the American culture and you don't even realize it." [34]

This individual went on to suggest that these students had "more Canadian national identity" while she felt "like a mix, I don't know what I am." Experiencing this "mixture" as problematic, she was making efforts to remove her own and her sister's "twang" because, she explained, "I want that distinctiveness, I want to be recognized as a Canadian."

A corollary of being "Americanized" was a sense of being "less Canadian" than other co-nationals. The individual from Fort Erie whose father was a dual citizen described encountering university students from outside the Niagara region and thinking "man they're so Canadian" (35), while another previously quoted male dual citizen from Fort Erie also contrasted the border region and border life to more "authentic" Canadian spaces and practices:

I went out east for a little bit, I went up north...and I mean, those are Canadians, you know what I mean?

They watch the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]...I didn't even know what the CBC was. I mean now I do obviously, studied it in school and everything, but...they listen to Canadian music, they watch Canadian TV, they're really Canadian. [46]

While these narratives of cross-border similarity might be understood as echoing the discourse of official cross-border regionalism, they were not explicitly linked to the project of greater cross-border economic co-operation. Only one young man from Niagara-on-the-Lake (who was from an unusually well off background) paralleled the more official discourse when he described both sides of the river as sharing "many important issues" such as international bridges, trade and cross-border shopping. In response to a question about the impact of a border upbringing, he also linked border life to a greater cosmopolitanism when he suggested that living at the border made one "more aware of international issues" and that Americans living on the immediate other side had "more awareness of Canadians and Canadian identity than people that live further in" (25).

While his account suggested a level (cross-border) playing field of "internationalism," other respondents offered a more commonly accepted view that an asymmetrical flow of information resulted in Canadian borderlanders knowing a lot about Americans, but (as one previously quoted young man from Niagara-on-the-Lake put it) Americans being "clueless about us...even though they live right on the border here" (37). This perception and the attribution of cross-border similarities to a problematized "Americanization" suggest a more complex relationship to official cross-border regionalism.

Cross-Border Difference: Nationalized Culture, Class and Race

While some emphasized cross-border similarities, a more prominent theme was that of cross-border difference that many argued was immediately apparent upon crossing the Niagara River. As one male respondent from an upper middle class background in Niagara Falls stated, "it just perplexes me as to how different the two sides are" (44). Sometimes this was discussed in localized terms as when a young man from a working class background in Niagara Falls, Ontario made a point of distinguishing the immediate other side from the United States as a whole. He commented that "the United States itself can be a nice country, it's just that particular city [Niagara Falls, New York] isn't great; they have a really high crime rate and there's a lot of poverty" (48).

More often, however, the cross-border difference was described in more nationalized terms. This was appar-

ent in the account of the "perplexed" young man quoted previously. This respondent emphasized that as a borderlander he had experience with the different American culture across the river, and that this experience distinguished him from fellow Canadian students who had less exposure to Americans and were therefore more likely to "put them all in one group" (44). His experience with a different American culture, he suggested, did not make him Americanized; in fact he explicitly rejected the suggestion that he had an American accent. Instead he claimed that he spoke "normal Canadian" and that his border upbringing probably made him "more Canadian" than non-borderlander students. This latter claim was based on the assertion that as a borderlander he had a greater awareness of American culture and that such an awareness of cultural difference was a key Canadian trait. As he put it:

I almost feel more Canadian living on the border. Because I mean, I met so many people this year [at university] that are from farther inside of Ontario. And I know they think they're Canadian, but really, to me, Canadian is being aware of other cultures and...embracing them. [44]

This respondent then simultaneously identified the border as a marker of cultural difference and positioned himself as a borderlander at the core of, rather than peripheral to, Canadianness (defined in terms of a nationalized cultural awareness and tolerance) because of his relationship to this difference (for critical analysis of the notion of cultural tolerance as national trait see Mackey 1999).

While many alleged contrasts between the two sides were discussed in the interviews, constructions of nationalized cross-border difference consistently included references to economic disparities. The male respondent discussed above, for example, while emphasizing the distinct "cultures" of Niagara Falls, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York provided as evidence the visible poverty of the immediate other side. As he described it "as soon as you go across that bridge...you know you're in the United States because the shops are boarded up...It's a very different feeling...you go over and it's like you're in a ghetto almost" (44).

Another working class male from Fort Erie recalled his childhood memories of cross border shopping and how "every time you're over there [other side of the river], there's always people in the parking lot at Tops [store] asking for money and we always used to find that strange because you didn't see that over here" (13). One young woman who had grown up lower middle class in Niagara-

on-the-Lake linked poverty to danger in her description of how upon crossing the border she would “notice right away that it was a lot dirtier and less safe” so she would head “for the mall and then [get] out of there” (47). This respondent stated “I’m definitely glad that I grew up on this side. That’s one thing I can say, just looking at the other side...they have no money. You can see the clear difference.”

The alleged economic differences were clearly nationalized in the description of one working class male from Niagara Falls who recalled how when he walked across the bridge at Niagara Falls the evident poverty of the other side led him to conclude that “Canada has the advantage over the States, and you can visually see that upon crossing the river. Right off the bat, you can see that” (33). Another working class female respondent from Niagara Falls, Ontario also linked her experience of border crossing to a more generalized patriotism when she recalled the experience of “going over to the United States and seeing the poorer areas... I was always very proud to be a Canadian largely based on that” (22).

While less common than references to cross-border economic disparities, there were enough references to racialized difference by white respondents to suggest that this was also significant in local constructions of cross-border space. A working class male from Niagara Falls, Ontario, for example, recalled the “stark” contrast between the two sides of the border and thinking, as a child crossing into the U.S., “wow, there are a lot of black people who live here” (28). The son of a dual citizen who had discussed the issues of Americanization and the lack of any “culture shock” when crossing the border, also noted how the presence of “black people” in Buffalo contrasted with the “very white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant” make up of his home town of Fort Erie (35).

The role of class and race in constructions of the other side is illuminated in some of the apparently contradictory accounts of interviewees. A working class female from Niagara Falls who had relatives on the other side of the river, for example, suggested in one part of the interview that she did not think of the immediate other side as part of the United States because “they’re just so close to us that they’re kind of a distant part of Canada” (43). Later, however, she was discussing the “scary” experience of being in a “lower class area” on the American side, and how her parents “would lock the [car] doors... [because] being in a different country, you never know what could happen.” Here the role of class in shaping the construction of the other side as an extension of the nation (i.e., a “distant Canada”) versus a negatively experienced “different country” becomes clearer.

Similarly, a lower middle class respondent from Niagara Falls, Ontario in one part of the interview emphasized cross-border similarities describing how those on the other side “look the same, they talk the same, it’s the same TV, everything’s the same, except, you know, a little bit of an accent, but it’s really the same” (3). Elsewhere however, she emphasized cross border differences including an observation that on the Canadian side “everyone” was white while the American side was “white and black.” Likewise, a young woman from a wealthier background in Chippawa illustrated ostensibly nationalized differences between the two sides by contrasting the “middle class” neighbourhood with the “really seedy neighbourhood” in Buffalo where her family went to buy her some tap shoes as a child. She recalled the latter area being “like a different country... dirty and ... really scary.” The presence of “more black people” on the other side, moreover, led her to “being a little intimidated” and feeling “like I had a Canadian stamp on my forehead” (9).

These comments demonstrate how attributions of cross-border difference by white interviewees invoked class and race in ways that produced nationalized constructions of “Canadianness” as white and (at least) middle class. The emphasis on the poverty of the U.S. side drew attention away from class disparities on the Canadian side of the river while constructions of a “white” Canada worked against recognition of a multiracial region (most strikingly the historic presence of African-Canadians in Niagara).¹³ That nationalized, classed and racialized constructions of cross-border difference were hierarchized and exclusionary moreover was clear in the suggestion of one respondent from Niagara Falls quoted earlier, that (despite her own cross-border kinship links to the contrary) there was little in the way of cross-border dating or intermarriage due to negative “stereotypes” about those on the other side. As she put it: “it’s a big stereotype or a big generalization, but the people over there? We just...don’t associate with them, do you know what I mean?” (43).

As mentioned, the lived experience of this cohort was that of a shift from extensive cross-border mobility when they were younger to a situation of reduced crossing in the present, and some described their sense of positive difference from the U.S. side as something that had emerged more strongly as they got older. One young woman from a wealthier background in Chippawa suggested that while the two sides had seemed “blurred” during her childhood this was no longer the case and a wealthier male resident of Niagara Falls reported that the increased questioning at the border after 9/11 made the U.S. side seem more “foreign” than before.

Just as the regional elites were grappling with post-9/11 securitization that posed new challenges to the project of cooperation in trade, transportation and tourism, the everyday experience of reduced cross-border mobility combined with hierarchized and exclusionary social boundaries appeared to be linked to a heightened social distance from the American other side for these Canadian borderlanders.¹⁴

“American-Canadians” in the Canadian Borderland?

In his discussion of Mexican Americans living on the U.S. side of the border at El Paso, Vila notes that their (stigmatized) Mexican identity is both ethnic and national and affected by the fact that “the [Mexican] *source* of their difference is always present” (2003b:138). Several of the Niagara borderlanders with close ties to the other side also suggested that there were challenges associated with claiming an “American-Canadian” identity in the context of the Canadian borderland.

One dual citizen discussed earlier, for example, recounted how when he decided to attend university on the Canadian side after a period of study in Buffalo, he felt that this would require adopting a more exclusive (i.e., non-American) Canadian identity and told himself “I’m a Canadian. I was born in Canada. I have to lose this love I have for the States.” Despite this resolution he described a struggle to contain the “strong influences” of his “American blood” especially when faced with what he felt was “anti-American feeling” at the Canadian university (46).

A similar lack of ease with an American-Canadian identity was apparent in the commentary of another dual citizen from a working class background who had spent part of his childhood on the American side and continued to visit family there. On the one hand, this respondent suggested that the Niagara border region represented a mixture of Americanness and Canadianness and as a result, he noted that “if they were to say ‘we’re now claiming Niagara region international,’ it would not surprise me” (7). On the other hand, his experiences of being called “Yankee” on the Canadian side of the border, and “the Canadian” on the American side of the border challenged his attempt to understand himself in terms of a less exclusive binationalism. His inclination at the time of the interview was, in fact, to try to resolve a pervasive ambivalence about his national identity by moving back to the United States.

Not surprisingly, this latter respondent emphasized his particular enjoyment of an annual cross-border Fort Erie-Buffalo Friendship Festival (a product of official

cross-border regionalism) because, according to him, at this Festival Americans and Canadians could be seen “hand in hand, putting away citizenship and just wanting to have fun.” While for him the cross-border festival embodied a positive bi- or even post-national “togetherness,” he contrasted the mood of the festival with the rest of the year, when he claimed people on the Canadian side would make negative comments about “those damn Americans.”

These commentaries point to the ways in which Canadianness and Americanness could be experienced as being in tension with one another and even mutually exclusive by Canadian borderlanders with close links to the other side. The “awkward” even fraught positioning of these particular respondents reveals that Americanness was not constructed as an ethnicity in ways similar to other hyphenated Canadian identities (e.g., Italian-Canadian).¹⁵ The inability to ethnicize Americanness is linked to the larger project of Canadian nationalism in which, as Mackey points out, “the constant attempt to construct an authentic, differentiated, and bounded [Canadian] identity...is often shaped through comparison with, and demonization of, the United States” (1999:145).

At the local level, zero-sum constructions of national identity articulated with constructions of inferiorized class and race in ways that further discouraged cosmopolitan claims of hybridity. This was clear in the comments of one young woman from a working class family who discussed why she did not publicly disclose her kinship links to the other side of the river. While denial of her American grandmother made her “feel bad,” she explained that having heard her American relatives described as “hillbillies” she just couldn’t “bring herself” to admit her connections to this stigmatized identity (40). A dual citizen from a well off background meanwhile described his sensitivity to what he experienced as anti-Americanism in the Canadian borderland. His example of how those on the Canadian side would say things like “well I might not have a job, I might not be doing very well, but at least I’m not like the blacks in Buffalo” (11) suggests again how constructions of cross-border difference were classed and raced.

These accounts point to how nationalized, classed and racialized hierarchies were mutually constitutive and how exclusions of the border region worked against claims to a positive hybrid “American-Canadian” identity. Those most eligible to make such claims felt pressure to emphasize a more exclusively Canadian identity that could be distanced from the locally stigmatized identities of Americanness, poverty and blackness.

Conclusion

Turbeville and Bradbury suggest that “as free trade and increased economic integration reconceptualize North America into a continental amalgam, it is in the borderlands where the greatest changes are taking place and where the success or failure of such economic policies will ultimately be determined” (2005:268). While this may overstate the significance of border regions, a case can be made that the everyday experiences and identities of borderlanders are significant for political efforts aimed at facilitating (or resisting) official cross-border regionalism and a broader North American deep integration and securitization (see Gilbert 2005, 2007).¹⁶

The material gathered from young borderlanders on the Canadian side of the Canada-U.S. border at Niagara parallels the findings of scholars such as Vila and Durrschmidt insofar as there are clearly multiple narratives of the borderland that include official cross-border regionalism and varied everyday constructions of cross-border similarity and difference. Despite histories of ordinary transnationalism moreover, the interviews also revealed more exclusively (classed and racialized) national identity than cosmopolitan hybridity. The limited space available for a hybridized “American-Canadian” identity (beyond the problematized identity of Americanized Canadian) in particular, was paradoxically, made most clear in the accounts of some of those with the more significant cross-border social ties.

This article supports anthropological and other border studies that emphasize the ongoing salience of nationalized and other articulating identities at state boundaries thereby challenging simplistic claims of a “borderless” world. The continuing strength of Canadianness (as opposed to an incipient “North Americanness”) in a Canadian borderland which serves as a premiere tourist destination and major trade and transportation corridor for North America, raises important questions about the dynamics and limits of local engagement with official projects of cross-border regionalism and wider bi-and trilateral North American integration advocated by national and continental elites.

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Notes

- 1 This article is based on interviews gathered as part of a larger project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Standard Research Grant #410-2001-0894. I would like to thank research assistants

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- 2 A growing literature documents everyday practices and identities at the “paradigmatic” U.S.-Mexico border (e.g., Alvarez 1995:449) as well as border life in the context of both the territorial expansion and deepening integration of the European Union (e.g., Wilson and Donnan 1998; Donnan and Haller 2000; Meinhof 2003; Stuver 2005). Related scholarship documents changing border spaces in the context of the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union (e.g., Paasi 1999; Berdahl 1999; Pelkmans 2006) and there is growing work on borders and borderlands in Asia, Africa and South America (e.g., Cunningham and Heyman 2004).
- 3 Grinde notes that for the Iroquois, the Canada-U.S. border is an “unnatural notion” that impedes unity and “serves foremost as a symbol of their oppression by colonizing national governments that have sought to destroy and/or to ignore their existence” (2002:178). Aboriginal issues were highlighted in Peace Bridge protests and debates over its development (Native Group Seeks Role in Gateway, *Niagara Falls Review*, October 18, 1999: A5; Natives Plan Peaceful Blockade of Peace Bridge, *Niagara Falls Review*, February 3, 2000: A9). See also Williamson and MacDonald 1998.
- 4 A Continental One trade corridor linking Toronto to Miami through Niagara was promoted as a “vital link for the eastern seaboard in the free-trade era economy” (Pataki Pitches Federal Cooperation to Prop Up Border *Niagara Falls Review* June 27, 2001: A3) and politicians on the Canadian side have lobbied for a new mid-peninsula highway to facilitate this project (Linking of Trade Routes Beneficial to Canada, U.S. *Niagara Falls Review*, June 23, 2000: A6).
- 5 This process which involved the Bridge Commission, local, regional, state and provincial and national political leaders from both sides of the border, U.S. courts and various lobby groups, was being played out throughout the period that the interviews were conducted. For further background and an update regarding a new Peace Bridge project see http://www.peacebridgex.com/project_bg.html.
- 6 This paper is based on a larger project that interviewed people in Canadian Niagara about their childhood and teenage experiences of border life. Recruitment methods involved posting signs on a university campus and announcements in first and second year undergraduate courses. Signs posted in community libraries were less successful. Because the interviewees were self-selected they did not constitute a random sample. A total of 51 interviews were conducted from May 2001 to August 2004. Older interviewees were excluded to produce the sub-set of 42 interviews analyzed in this paper. The 42 interviews considered here were with 24 female and 18 male students who grew up on the Canadian side of the border. Eighteen had grown up in Niagara Falls, eight in Fort Erie, and eight in either Niagara-on-the-Lake, Queenston or Chippawa. The remaining eight were from communities a little further away from

- the border such as Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, Fenwick and St. Catharines. The interviews analyzed here are numbered as follows: 3, 5, 7-9, 11-13, 15-16, 18-19, 22-51.
- 7 Some described their class background (using phrases such as "low income," "working class," "blue collar," "low to middle" and "upper middle class") but for the rest I am relying on their responses to questions about parental education and occupation. My analysis suggests that approximately ten of 42 could be described as upper-middle class based on at least one parent described as having university education or an occupation that required such a credential; an additional 12 of 42 were from broadly lower middle class backgrounds (based on at least one parent reported as having some form of post-secondary education or training or occupation requiring such education or training); while the remaining 20 of 42 (reporting parents with partial college, high school or partial high school education or corresponding occupations) were from families that were broadly working class. Canadian Niagara is below the provincial and national averages in terms of university attainment (Niagara Economic Development Corporation 2005:18).
 - 8 I discuss childhood border crossings in more detail elsewhere (Helleiner 2007).
 - 9 Ongoing U.S. security alerts, SARS and "mad cow" scares combined with a stronger Canadian dollar, higher Canadian gas prices and uncertainty over border crossing document requirements to weaken the Canadian border tourist economy in the post-9/11 period.
 - 10 For more discussion of stratified border crossings at the Canada-U.S. border see Bhandar 2004; Pratt 2005; Sparke 2006; and Helleiner In press.
 - 11 Aboriginal status was significant to the experience of border crossing in other ways that I do not discuss here but see note 3.
 - 12 For a local press report on linguistic research on border speech, see American Words Checked at Border: Canadians Along Border Retain Linguistic Identity, *Niagara Falls Review* May 5, 2001: A5.
 - 13 The ways in which Aboriginal and "visible minority" borderlanders position themselves or are positioned within this construction of white-black racialized space requires attention as does the suggestion here of deeply gendered border experiences and identities.
 - 14 A wider context for these findings is offered by surveys which documented an increase in Canadian anti-Americanism in this period (Pew Research Center 2005:15).
 - 15 The challenge of American-Canadianness as lived experience in the border region was also apparent in accounts of border crossing itself. While dual Canadian-American citizenship was considered a potentially valuable economic resource, it was nonetheless described as a source of hassle at local border crossings.
 - 16 Counter hegemonic cross-border activities "from below" require separate discussion but would include cross-border labour organizing and the activities of some anti-globalization, refugee, peace and First Nations activists in the Niagara region. See Bandy and Smith (2005) for discussion of cross-border counter-hegemonic movements.

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Resisting Marginalization: Social Networks and “Communication Communities” of Urban Blackfoot Teenage Girls

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Abstract: In this article, I attempt to show the ways in which Native youth can play an essential part in the realization of community for urban First Nations people. I do this by focusing on the extensive social networks sustained by teenage girls, to explore the ways in which they serve as a means of communication linking adults and teens in physically dispersed households in the context of the city. Based on over 32 months of participant observation of an urban Blackfoot family in Lethbridge, Alberta, this case study shows how such interconnections serve to mitigate various forms of marginalization by creating and maintaining a sense of place in a community.

Keywords: urban First Nations, youth, social networks, community, identity

Résumé : Dans cet article, je tente d'illustrer la façon dont la jeunesse autochtone est en mesure de jouer un rôle essentiel dans le développement d'une communauté pour les populations des Premières Nations en milieu urbain. Ce faisant, je mets l'accent sur les vastes réseaux sociaux qu'entretiennent les adolescentes, afin d'explorer la manière dont elles servent de moyens de communication entre les adultes et les adolescents se trouvant dans des ménages dispersés physiquement dans un contexte citadin. Cette étude est fondée sur une période d'observation participative d'une durée de 32 mois au sein d'une famille pied noir de Lethbridge en Alberta. Elle démontre comment un tel réseautage sert à atténuer diverses formes de marginalisation en créant et en entretenant le sentiment d'avoir une place au sein d'une communauté.

Mots-clés : Premières Nations en milieu urbain, jeunesse, réseaux sociaux, communauté, identité

Introduction

In this article I attempt to illustrate the importance of communicative networks among teenage individuals in processes of building and maintaining an ethno-cultural community amongst an urban First Nations group in the context of physical dispersion in the city.¹ I focus on the extensive, fluid and constantly evolving networks sustained by urban and rural teenage girls in order to show how Native youth play an essential part in the realization of community for an urban indigenous group. These networks extend across the urban domain of Lethbridge, Alberta and that of the nearby Kainai (Blood) reserve. Such networks are based upon detailed information exchange by means of face-to-face interaction, telephone conversations and virtual communication. Lobo (2001) and Proulx (2003) have described the extensive personal knowledge that geographically dispersed urban Native adults possess about one another, and this case study illustrates how some of that knowledge is acquired by focusing on the role played by urban First Nations teens in contributing to a sense of community in the city.

In urban contexts, a pattern of widely dispersed residency is common among Aboriginal peoples (Lobo 2001, 2003; Norris and Clatworthy 2003; Proulx 2003). As Hill explains (Paddison 2001), networking and information exchange are therefore more relevant than geographical territory in creating a sense of community. The overlapping communities of Native teenage girls are viewed here as “arena[s] of social relations, where individuals seek and receive verification of their personalities, preferences, and prejudices” (Markowitz 1992:150). These are “discursive communities”—social networks animated with extensive sharing of personal information through dialogue (see Proulx 2003). Delanty refers to these as “communication communities” in which “community as belonging is constructed in communicative processes” (2003:187).

Adult urban Aboriginal community building and networking are most often contextualized in reference to

development of institutions, organizations and specific political movements (Lobo and Peters 2001; Culhane 2003; Howard-Bobiwash 2003; Proulx 2003). As is the case with many immigrant minorities, there are important socio-economic reasons for these strategies as they provide resources for employment and places to live while adjusting to life in a new city or country. Networking among Native teenage girls is situated within such processes, since both adults and adolescents are developing resources and constructing a sense of place and belonging in an urban environment often perceived as rather hostile. The teens' community-building strategies are presented here as informal resistance to the marginalization and stereotyping experienced by First Nations people in general. By having survived colonial processes and resisting neo-colonial forms of exclusion, urban Aboriginal people can claim membership in a distinct type of community based upon shared experiences (Proulx 2003).

Marginalization of Native peoples is primarily discussed in macro-sociological and historical contexts (Jacoud and Brassard 2003), including the wide-ranging social, economic and political effects of colonialism and postcolonialism (Adams 1989, 1999; Frideres 1998, 2000; Friesen and Friesen 2005) and persistent negative stereotyping (Ponting and Keely 1997). Centuries of political and economic dominance has caused disempowerment and exclusion, including the one-sided mainstream ability to establish sociocultural boundaries (Frideres 1998). This paper complements the above research by showing how, at a micro-social level, urban First Nations teenage girls assert their own agency in sustaining communities with ethno-culturally construed boundaries.

It is important to depict urban Native teens as more than just casualties of macroscopic processes in order to lend balance to a large body of politically motivated research focusing on at-risk Aboriginal youth, identity crises and various pathologies. These problems are often associated with an assumed loss of traditional cultural ways, but as Haig-Brown notes, the large body of literature describing "one way acculturation and eventual assimilation" is understood by many to be a mythical construct (1995:195). Further, Aboriginal youth labelled as *at-risk* may also possess many positive qualities and develop a resilience that can facilitate success in a variety of areas (Schissel and Wotherspoon 2003).

As Satzewich and Wotherspoon observe, "a chronicle of unemployment, poor housing conditions and overcrowded dwellings, lack of basic services, alcoholism, and ill health runs through portrayals of Native life off the reserve" (Todd 2001:99). Although research on social problems in this context is both necessary and relevant, it may

also contribute to stereotypes of powerless individuals (see Culhane 2003; Letkemann 2004) "afflicted with multiple pathological problems, in contrast to confident middle class whites" (Buchignani and Letkemann 1994:217). Urban First Nations people who find steady jobs and "some degree of social acceptance [tend to become] relatively invisible, while those with problems and difficulties retain high visibility" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1993:3). This paper contributes to a growing body of research emphasizing the many ways in which Native peoples demonstrate resilience by adapting in a positive manner to life in the city (Metcalf 1982; Davis-Jackson 2001; Lobo and Peters 2001; Culhane 2003; Dole and Csordas 2003; Howard-Bobiwash 2003; Lobo 2001, 2003). Much of this research is focused on understanding the role of urban Native women in urbanization processes in order to lend balance to a "male-privileged gender factor in the telling of urban American history" (Weibel-Orlando 2003:495). First Nations teenage girls make valuable but often similarly overlooked contributions, and this is an increasingly important area of study given that the number of Canadian First Nations youth is expected to increase by 400% in the next decade (Evans 2003).

First Nations Teenage Girls: Multiple Levels of Marginalization

Depictions of Native peoples are often androcentric (Albers 1983; Mihesuah 1998), portraying Native American women, if at all, in "one-dimensional, inaccurate and insulting terms, their roles in Native American society neglected and trivialized by an obsession with male warriors and chiefs" (Welch 1988:31; see Valaskakis 1999). Such dominant representations of Aboriginal women are deeply rooted in colonial history and culture and continue to be reinforced in urban settings (Culhane 2003). Similarly, although given the most attention by researchers, writers and the mass media, Native American men have been presented as stoic, mythical figures (Bird 1996)—stereotypical "noble [or ignoble] savages." Dehumanizing neo-shamanic (Wallis 1999) or neo-primitivist characterizations popularize "Indians as pre-Columbian and ancient by having them resemble pure common sense, devoid of any sophisticated rationality" (Wernitznig 2003:xxxiii).

First Nations teens belong to this culturally diverse, yet uniformly stigmatized (Frideres 1998) minority group of Native Canadians who are, in general, socially, economically and politically on the fringes of mainstream society (Frideres 1998; Harrison and Friesen 2004). Most urban Native youth are also marginalized due to their assumed membership in a culture of poverty, since many

people still think of cultural attributes as more salient than economic factors or historical circumstances in causing poverty (Cozzarelli et al. 2001). As well, many First Nations youth are placed in the highly restrictive category of “registered status Indians” by the Indian Act, which, through its paternalistic stance, continues to erode the role of First Nations women (Fraser 2002), and has “indelibly ordered how Native people think of things ‘Indian’” (Lawrence 2004:25). The Indian Act gives such all-encompassing powers to administrators that it creates a “dependency mindset [contributing to feelings of] despair and alienation which are disempowering” (Ponting 1997:118-119). Finally, since most of the teenage girls discussed here are between the ages of 13 and 16, they are negotiating identities in the liminal stage of their lives between child and adult, which is another important marginalizing factor.

Reflections on Roles, Methodology and Ethics

This article results from almost three years of auto-ethnographic experience, observations, gossip, stories and other information gained from living in a home with a Blackfoot family and their many friends and relatives. Such informal methodology is not systematically rigorous, but it can provide micro-social insights that break down gross categorizations and provide a more personalized view (see McCarthy and Hagan 1992; Lovell 1997; Letkemann 2004). Further, in some cases, a lack of structured interviewing or questioning has advantages with ethical implications. The teens prefer to tell me things on their own terms, in their own way and at times of their choosing. This degree of agency is very important, as Waterston and Rylko-Bauer (2006) found when gathering narratives from family members.

I have visited people on the Blood reserve for almost 30 years, and in the summer of 2004 I lived in two houses there, where I met Faith, a single mother who wanted to move to Lethbridge with her 13-year-old daughter, Tayla. Faith said “it is better for children to grow up on the reserve and learn the language and traditions, but sometimes we single mothers have to move into the city to have independent lifestyles.” Faith wanted to access higher education and employment, as is the case with many urbanizing First Nations women (Howard-Bobiwash 2003). As platonic roommates, Faith and I have been sharing a house and living as a sort of “family” since June 2004. Faith’s niece Wynter, who was 14 at the time, moved in with us a month later. When Wynter moved out her 13-year-old sister Nikko took her place, as Faith and I agreed that Tayla was happier with a cousin in the house. Faith,

the teens, their relatives and friends consider this to be a female-headed household as do I, since Faith is in charge of disciplining the teens and deciding who can live in the house—although she frequently consults with me.

My role in this house is complex and somewhat ambiguous. As a white male anthropologist living among teenage Blackfoot females, my research is inevitably, as Gordon makes clear, “ground[ed] in a masculine subjectivity” (Enslin 1994:538). Ethnography is not a neutral and objective discourse as it always proceeds from a gendered being (Mascia-Lees et al. 1989). Reflexivity in ethnographic encounters is best understood then as the interaction of a variety of subjectivities (Jacobs-Huey 2002).

The relative ages, material resources, ethnicities and educational backgrounds of members of this household (myself included) mirror colonial and postcolonial realities as well as the circumstances under which much ethnography is produced (McGrane 1989). These power-related factors have ethical implications, so I have chosen to focus on the positive aspects of the girls’ lives to avoid making the teens feel like research subjects. As Nikko explained to her friend, “Paul’s writing about us that we’re important.” Developing long-term, functional and satisfactory relationships with Faith and the girls required a constant sensitivity to such issues, since otherwise these issues would be detrimental to interaction in a general sense, aside from the research context. Close family-like relationships necessitate the empathy, identification and friendship that participant observation depends upon (Appell 1980). At the same time, this kind of “intimate ethnography” carries inherent ambiguities relating to methodology and ethics (Waterston and Rylko-Bauer 2006). Although the primary relationships may be familial, the anthropologist “is always present [and] there is an interplay of roles” (Waterston and Rylko-Bauer 2006:397). In this way, “distinctions between insider and outsider, researcher and researched may be seen as a continuum rather than [as] dichotomous categories” (Christman 1988:73).²

The Setting

Lethbridge is a city of 77,000 situated in Southern Alberta, about 100 km north of the Montana border. The Blood, or Kainai First Nations reserve, Canada’s largest in area at 1414 km², lies to the southwest of Lethbridge, its northeast border only a few kilometres from the city limits. The other Blackfoot reserve near Lethbridge is that of the Peigan or Piikani, approximately 90 km west of the city.

In May 2005, the most recent year for which I could find population statistics, the Kainai band had a registered

membership of 9,736, of whom 7,362 lived primarily on the reserve (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC] 2005a). The Piikani reserve is much smaller, with a population in 2005 of 3,407 with 2,285 living mainly on the reserve (INAC 2005b). In 2005 almost 3,500 registered Kainai and Piikani people reported their primary residence as off reserve. Although some live in Calgary and smaller urban centres, most of these people have taken up residence in the city of Lethbridge near their home reserves, where people reporting First Nations origin numbered between 3,200 (City of Lethbridge 2005) and 4,000 (Provost 2005:1) in 2005. It is reasonable to assume that about 2,700 to 3,000 Piikani and Kainai people had their primary residence in Lethbridge in 2006, constituting at least 3.7 or 4% of the population.³

The Fluid Household in a Fluid Community

The concept of household is a difficult one and household boundaries are best defined culturally rather than spatially (Berge 1989; Lobo 2003). Households provide important resources for urban and urbanizing Native peoples and Lobo describes “key households,” often female-headed, as “stopping points, the locations of stability for highly mobile individuals...situated within communities that are structurally very fluid” (2003:509). My experience suggests that many urban and rural First Nations homes serve as key households at various times—especially since sharing resources is highly culturally valued (see Braroe 1975). When one of the teens is unwilling to share, Faith will sometimes tell them “you’re acting white.” A brief description of the history and changing composition of this household illustrates the degree of fluidity referred to.

This house is 92 years old, with 800 square feet on the main floor, and two bedrooms and a bathroom in the basement. However, when I remarked that it seemed a little crowded when seven people lived here for several days, Faith replied “if this was a reserve house we could fit a lot more people in it.” I have come to realize that household living arrangements, like income, are largely meaningful relative to previous experience. Tayla once informed me that “we’re *not* poor—you are not poor unless there is no food in the house, not even a Kraft dinner.”

Faith’s daughter Tayla was 13 when she and her mother moved to this house. For six months, Faith’s niece Wynter, who was then 14, also lived with us. Later, Wynter’s sister Nikko lived in the house for eight months, she was 14 at the time. Nikko had an argument with Faith and felt “picked on” so she moved back to the reserve to live with her mother. Leanne, Faith’s 18-year-old niece

through marriage, lived in the house for a month on three occasions when she was feeling overwhelmed and needed a peaceful home. Leanne’s sister Joanna, who was 20, lived in the house for three weeks when she was having difficulties with her husband, and continued to visit sporadically with her young son when it suited everyone. Faith’s cousin Emily, who was 14, lived in the house for a few weeks when she was not getting along with her older sister. Tayla’s cousin Brianne, also 14, lived in the house for a few weeks when she was feeling “unappreciated” by her mother who works long hours. Emily’s 15-year-old friend Betty stayed with us for about a week when she was not getting along with her family. Later Betty became Tayla’s best friend and stayed over on many weekends. Eleven other teenage girls have stayed over for weekends, sometimes three at a time and all of them relatives or friends of Tayla, Wynter or Nikko. Nine of these teens are Blackfoot, eight being Kainai and one Piikani. Betty is “Cree from up north” as Tayla puts it, and one white girl or *náápiyáakii* has also stayed in the house. Almost all of Faith’s closest relatives have also visited the house, sometimes staying overnight, and on one occasion her nephew stayed so that he could work in the city for a month.

Such a fluid pattern of urban residence (see Howard-Bobiwash 2003; Lobo 2003) allows families to be interdependent and sometimes teens move for periods of time in relation to available resources. In other cases, this interdependence alleviates tension in households, so that if a teenage girl is “kicked out” for her behaviour she will quickly find a place to stay with a friend. Also, if teens feel that their parents are behaving badly, they may move to a friend’s house for a period of time. For many reasons, teens seem to have “multiple homes” (Lobo 2003:513) and their extensive social networking in so many households contributes to a strong sense of community among urban Blackfoot teens and parents. With so many teens living or visiting in this relatively small house, a great deal of information is shared in endless and highly animated storytelling. Once, when Tayla wanted to recount her adventures in Edmonton on the phone, Nikko stopped her, saying “tell me when you get home, so you can do the special effects.” I asked Faith whether teenage Blackfoot boys network as extensively as the girls, and she replied “no, but the girls tell them stuff.”

Indigenous Language, Identity and the Household

Faith, Nikko and Tayla are not fluent in Blackfoot, but they and most of their friends use and understand certain Blackfoot words, phrases and expressions. Some words commonly spoken in the household include *saa* (no),

áa (yes), *kiáí* (expression of disgust, used only by females), *kí* (come on, lets go), *ma'tsi* (take it), *aní'takit!* (hurry up!), *niistó* (me/I), *ama[ssk]* (pitiful), *isstoyíwa* ([it's] very cold), *hánnia!* (really!), *póinaa'pssiwa* (bothersome), *aistoot!* (come here!), *napayín* (bread), *iníkksiistapoot!* (go away!), *tsss* (expression of disapproval) and *ttaa* (disbelief).⁴ This is not an exhaustive list, but these are familiar words from childhood, and they continue to have symbolic importance in identifying them specifically as Blackfoot individuals. The words are spoken more frequently when other Blackfoot teens are visiting. Certain English words are also identified as "Indian ways of talking" as Tayla puts it. For example, the word *right* is often used instead of *very* or *really*, so the teens might say that something is taking "a *right* long time," or assert that "I *right* fooled her." Also, when hearing Tayla and Nikko describe someone as a real "savage," I asked whether another person was a "savage" too, and Tayla replied "you know, white people aren't supposed to use that word, only Indians can say it, it's like the 'N' word for black people."

Blackfoot words and "Indian" expressions complement certain important symbolically charged practices such as burning sweetgrass or smudging with sage. When Faith has a bad dream or there is conflict in her extended family, Tayla is instructed to burn sage in every room of the house and bury the ashes in four corners of the yard so that a sense of equilibrium with positive forces will be restored. As with the linguistic terms, these familiar practices and even the smells evoke culture-specific memories and a sense of cultural continuity. When Tayla's grandmother left after visiting, Tayla asked me "did you notice how she smelled? She always smells like sage, it's *her* smell." Smudging is part of public ceremonial occasions, and burning sage and sweetgrass symbolically links the house and its occupants to a larger community and to the reserve, where the sage is picked.

Indigenous language plays an essential role in the maintenance of ethno-cultural identities and communities in the face of multiple pressures towards assimilation (Friesen and Friesen 2005; Morgan 2005). Even the insertion of a few Native words into a predominantly English conversation invokes a symbolic association with cultural identity (Murray 2003; see Ahlers 2006). Moreover, Blackfoot words, expressions and practices symbolize membership in a bounded social network and lend a cultural identity to the teens' communications community.

Social Networking and the Communication Community

School

The Lethbridge Public School Division has over 500 Aboriginal students, the majority of whom are Blackfoot. The Holy Spirit Catholic School Division also has 500 predominantly Blackfoot Aboriginal students in their Lethbridge schools. Of the latter, about 300 are brought to Lethbridge from the reserve on the Blood Bus co-op, while the remaining 200 live in the city.⁵ The two largest high schools in Lethbridge (grades nine to 12) are located across the street from each other, with Catholic Central High School serving 900 students and Lethbridge Collegiate Institute serving about 1,600. These high schools provide an unparalleled setting for daily socializing for both Native and non-Native teens from the city and nearby rural areas, including the Blood reserve.

School-age Blackfoot children with large social and kin-based networks both on and off the reserves may move back and forth between urban and rural domains more than most adults do. On a daily basis, the Blood Band Tribal buses bring children from the reserve into Lethbridge to attend city schools. Smaller buses take students from the city to attend reserve schools. On weekends, many Blackfoot teens come into the city for social activities and entertainment while others travel from Lethbridge to the reserve to visit family and friends. The Blood Tribal buses may be used as a free taxi service by some of these urban teens, who ride a bus to the reserve on Fridays after school and come back on the bus again on Monday mornings. Other reserve-dwelling teens may stay at a friend's place in the city on Fridays after school and catch a bus back to the reserve the following Monday. Reserve and city, or rural and urban domains are not as dichotomous as research often portrays (Grantham-Chappell 1998), and these teens move between them with ease—with their identities likely strengthened rather than weakened by their abilities to act as intermediaries (see Szasz 1994).

As with most teens, for these Blackfoot girls school is as much a social as a learning experience. Faith recognizes the value in this, saying "I won't home-school Tayla because I want her to develop social skills and be able to interact with others." Tayla and Nikko feel more comfortable with other Blackfoot students, who can discuss issues involving people they are familiar with and often related to. Sometimes they feel excluded from the white world, in ways that are important to them. I mentioned to Faith that these teens and their friends all seemed to be very pretty and well-dressed so that they must be part

of the “in-crowd” at school. She replied “yes, they are the in-crowd with the Indian girls, but not with the white girls. White girls don’t like pretty Indian girls.” Nikko, 13 at the time, told me “well I think that I’m pretty, but at school I only seem to attract Indian boys.” Even the schools are assigned ethnic identities: I once asked Tayla why she mainly socialized with other Blackfoot teens, and she replied “I don’t, I go to a white school you know.” When helping Nikko choose words for a poem she rejected a suggestion, saying “I need a bigger word—this is a *white* school you know.” Tayla and Nikko come home each day and pass information on to Faith and myself so that events at school become knowledge for adults as well. Frequently, they recount ways in which they were “picked on” by other students or their teachers.

At school, racist comments directed towards them, or to First Nations peoples in general, make a distinct impression and are topics of lengthy discussion among the girls, their Native friends, myself and Faith. Nikko recalled how one of her friends referred to “those dumb Indians.” She explained to me:

I thought she was my friend. So I said to her “do you want to meet me in the alley?” And then when I saw her in the alley she backed down [from a fight] and I said “now let me hear you say that about Indians” and she apologized so I let it go—but I can’t trust her anymore.

Tayla recalled a similar incident, saying:

I heard that [a non-Native former friend] was calling me a squaw to other people, so then I accused her of it and she denied it. But I said I knew she did it, and then she apologized. But later she went to the teacher and said that I was threatening to beat her up and texting her [typing on a cell-phone] that I would beat her up. So the teacher called me in and I said “well I wasn’t texting her but I should have thought of that” and the teacher gave me a funny look.

I mentioned to Tayla that when I was in grade school, it was mostly boys who physically fought, not girls, and she informed me “boys fight really rank [violently] but now girls at school fight more than boys—you might see three boys’ fights in a school year, but you will see ten girls’ fights.” Weakness and fear are stereotypical character traits assigned to non-Native teenage girls by Nikko and Tayla. As I was driving Tayla and her friend home from a movie, she remarked to the non-Native girl “I don’t know why white girls are so afraid of fighting.” Her friend demurred, replying “well, I wouldn’t want to fight *you*.”

Interethnic relations at school are most often non-confrontational. However, the problematic incidents,

interpreted by Faith and the teens as racially motivated, make the strongest impression on the girls and are common topics of intense dialogue among members of their Native teen community. In this way, the girls’ daily networking, primarily with other Blackfoot teens at school, provides a micro-social example of membership in the distinct type of urban community that Proulx (2003) refers to as based upon shared experiences related to survival and resistance. Further, since most of these teens are very familiar with life on the reserve, the people there and geographical landmarks, this community incorporates a shared sense of place and reference points (see Lobo 2001). Nikko emphasized a fundamental difference between Native and non-Native teens, saying “Tayla and me had hard lives [growing up on the reserve] and that’s why we got so mature. But it’s not good to be *too* mature, or you can’t loosen up and have any fun.”

Racism, experienced by the teens at school, is also an ongoing theme for dialogue between Faith and other First Nations adults. Non-Native parenting is often brought into these discussions since, as Faith says “children get their racist attitudes from their parents.” At a macro-social level, colonialist and postcolonialist realities, including stereotyping, contribute to feelings of disempowerment and exclusion for many First Nations people. At school, the teens resist at a micro-social level achieving individual and collective strength and a measure of agency by surviving daily hardships, imposing their own stereotypes and establishing boundaries that most often exclude non-Native teens.

Movies, Hockey Games and Powwows

The girls in this household and most of their friends are enraptured by movies and hockey games. Almost every weekend I drive them to the theatres in the local mall to see the latest shows, where they meet with a group of other Blackfoot teens. If Tayla misses a movie or other event that she wished she could go to, she says things like “I have no life,” in a very hurt tone. These social events are very important, as the teens can share information, discuss issues relevant to them and dress in their finest outfits. Before and after the movies, they gather in the video game arcade in the mall to socialize further with relatives and friends, many of whom have come in from the reserve for the weekend. On several occasions their networking has been so important to them that they have not seen a movie at all. When I pick them up later to drive them home, a friend will often come back to the house to stay overnight or for a few days. Tayla will have called Faith for approval.

Socializing at the mall and going to the movies or arcade are perhaps common features of the lives of most urban teenage girls and boys. However, it becomes significant in terms of the urban Blackfoot community primarily because these girls interact almost exclusively with other Blackfoot teens. Intra-ethnic conflicts are generated as well as resolved at these social events and constantly shifting alliances create new reference groups. Also, as in the schools, Native and non-Native people interact there and conflicts may occur between them. Once again, conflicts in entertainment venues are often interpreted by Tayla and Nikko as racially motivated, so a sense of meaningful, distinct and bounded First Nations identity is fostered. Such problems are reported to Faith and I in detailed stories. Stories often involve ways that the Native girls resolved issues verbally and “stuck up for themselves” and each other without resorting to physical measures and yet being willing to if there were no other recourse. Recently, when driving Tayla and Nikko to a movie, Tayla announced her “retirement,” saying “I don’t fight anymore, not unless I have to.” Faith always tells the girls that they must “have each other’s backs [step into a fight if a second person does],” and not “ditch [leave]” each other. Backing down from inter- or intra-ethnic conflicts is unacceptable behaviour, indicating weakness and poor character, which are traits associated with white people.

Although the mass media undoubtedly have some negative effects on cultural identity retention, the symbolism, imagery and discourse of sources such as movies are not simply passively absorbed. Spitulnik (1997) demonstrates ways that, in the context of a specific socio-cultural group, phrases and discourse styles extracted from mass media are socially circulated and “recycled and reanimated” in everyday usage. She argues that this process creates “common linguistic reference points” for group members. Urban Blackfoot girls already have important shared linguistic reference points through their usage of certain Blackfoot words and phrases. English referents derived from popular culture are mediated, shared, accepted or rejected through discursive interaction in a social network comprised almost solely of Blackfoot teens. The mass-mediated content they receive vertically is shared laterally in a manner specific to their communications community. Such “interpersonal routines and framing devices [contribute to] creative reworkings” of language, symbolism and imagery (Spitulnik 1997:180).

Hockey games bring many more urban and rural Blackfoot teens together than movies do, and each time I pick up the girls and their friends, I count about 50 Native youth in the foyer of the arena. According to Tayla, there

are always about 50 Native teens of roughly the same age sitting together. After the games they gather to socialize, catch up with relevant news and decide what they will do later in the evening. These games are usually held on weekends when youth can attend parties and other events.

Nikko and Tayla are conscious of being visible minorities at hockey games, but they maintain this as a positive identity by disparaging the racist (or perceived as racist) comments of non-Native teens, who are then assigned undesirable characteristics such as rudeness and, particularly, cowardice. As with interaction at schools and movies, stories told after hockey games often emphasize their bravery in situations of conflict. After attending a recent minor league hockey game, Tayla and Nikko entered the truck very excited, and said “we almost got into a fight tonight.” Tayla stopped Nikko’s story, asserting “I want to tell it” and recalled the incident, saying:

Two of the players were fighting on the ice [a Native teen and a non-Native teen], and then Rob got kicked out, but he was standing near the ice, and whenever the other player went near him he taunted him, and then the two Dads got into it too, and there was a scuffle, and then the Dads got kicked out too. Then we heard screaming coming from the washroom, so we went in, and the two Moms were fighting, and there was a younger girl trying to get them apart, and she looked at us and said “what are you laughing at, bitches?” and we said “we’re laughing at *you*.” So we almost got into a fight—it was an awesome game and good thing we didn’t miss it.

When the girls return from a hockey game they bring much information with them, and once again, it is not about the event itself as much as the people they interacted with. Like the schools and movies, hockey games constitute face-to-face interaction of members of a closely-knit communications community, objectifying commonalities and providing new topics of discussion for subsequent days. By emphasizing situations of conflict, and discussing them extensively, the teens develop an immediate, daily sense of belonging to a discursive community based upon “distinctly Native” characteristics of survival, resistance and shared interests (see Proulx 2003).

There are a few important annual events that bring urban and reserve dwelling Blackfoot teens and adults together and similarly enlarge references of discourse to the extent that stories about these events will be discussed sporadically until the next event occurs. These are the Blood Indian Days powwow on the reserve in the town of Standoff, and several others held on various southern Alberta reserves. These events take place in the summer

months when teens are not in school (late July and early August). There is also an indoor powwow and rodeo held in Lethbridge in January.

Powwows are especially important in symbolizing Aboriginal identities and objectifying them in a public setting. At the last winter powwow, all the girls dressed in their best outfits, and Joanna and Faith went to a neighbourhood pub. I asked them why they had returned so quickly, well before the powwow began. Faith replied that they only had one drink each, and Joanna explained with the wry comment "we could only have one drink—tonight we have to be *Indians*." Faith and all the teens are very conscious of mainstream stereotypes of Natives as alcoholics, often resulting from impressions of a very visible minority of homeless or "street people" applied by default to all First Nations individuals (Culhane 2003; Letkemann 2004). Tayla says "those Indians downtown give us all a bad name." The teens think of "real Indians" as non-drinking individuals, in touch with spirituality and tradition. This is the image they want to present, especially at powwows, where the girls view themselves as representing not only the Blood tribe, but probably more importantly, their own families and close relatives, some of whom will also be in attendance.

Indian Days lasts for three days, and the girls have a large tent that they set up near relatives of about the same age. They come home with many stories after these events, having used this time to renew relationships and create new ones in a very personalized face-to-face manner. Tayla told me excitedly "Brienne kissed 13 boys at Indian Days, and some of them had girlfriends! Everyone is talking about it." Eight months later, Tayla is still impressed with this incident, and she recently teased Brienne, saying "I hear you swapped a lot of spit at Indian Days, are you going to do that again this summer?" They take pictures—not primarily of the colourful costumed dancers, but of themselves with their teenage relatives and friends.

As at schools, hockey games, rodeos and movies, but more extensively at the powwows, urban and reserve-dwelling Blackfoot people mingle and visit. To these teens, urban or reserve residence is not as important as with whom individuals live, which teens are "going out [exclusively dating]," breakups and political alignments, and problems or accomplishments deemed significant. At powwows, unlike the other events, the teens' stories tend to de-emphasize conflicts. I have never heard of any fighting at the three Indian Days events they have attended while living in the house. There is an understanding that they are all sharing a socially and symbolically significant event and demonstrating a common cultural heritage, so their behaviour should reflect pride and a related sense of community.

Faith tells the girls that the extended family will be judged by their behaviour at Indian Days and they "better not make the family look bad." They are well aware of the truth in Faith's statement that "I *will* hear about what you were up to there, from a mom, dad, a grandparent or other relative, so be good." When Tayla and Nikko travel to another geographical area, they do not really leave the communication community, as the sense of distance is greatly diminished by the effective information exchange of what Proulx (2003) and others term the "moccasin telegraph." These events provide a sense of shared Native history, tradition and symbolism that further distinguishes the teens' community as bounded from that of non-Native teens. At such events, the sense of exclusionary marginalization is reversed: I asked Nikko whether she wanted to take a non-Native friend to a powwow, and she replied "well I don't know, she's white and she might not fit in."

The Internet: Virtual Community

Hundreds of Blackfoot teens in Lethbridge, on the Blood reserve and throughout southern Alberta, are closely connected on a daily basis through the Internet, being particularly regular users of the MSN Network. Tayla currently has over 200 friends on her MSN contact list, and she "chats" with these people online every day. The number of people she simultaneously chats with varies from about 30 to over 100. Being younger and spending less time on the internet, Nikko has fewer MSN contacts, but when she is online she is usually chatting with about 20 of her friends. Teens without computers or internet access at home can still maintain a list of MSN contacts and activate these on friends' or school computers.

Tayla, Nikko and their friends share a great deal of personal information online, such as which girl has been found to be pregnant, who the father is or is thought to be, which teens are dating, who has cheated on their boyfriend or girlfriend, friendship alliances and animosities and all the pertinent details of constantly fluid and shifting relationships. Through endless stories Tayla and Nikko convey these details to Faith and me. Tayla once told me, "guess what? Remember Connie? You drove her skating with me once. Doug got her pregnant! He wanted to go out with me you know—good thing my Mom told me we were fifth cousins." Online, such information can be shared instantly with hundreds of members of their community, so that they are a very tightly knit group based on discourse, much of which also includes adults. Although most of the people Nikko and Tayla converse with online are also those with whom they socialize in face-to-face interaction in the household and at schools and events, the internet allows for a much broader spectrum of dialogue

that is not geographically confined to Lethbridge or the nearby reserves.

Most importantly, extensive internet activity, usually several hours each day, demonstrates a resistance to marginalization by giving the teens an opportunity to participate in mainstream mass media. Faith and the teens frequently lament the general absence of Native people in movies, television shows and so forth. They and their friends use the forum of the internet to create and maintain elaborate personal websites with pictures, likes and dislikes, poems, wishes and so forth—in effect reinserting themselves, along with their communications community, into a mainstream media venue. Tayla noted, “you know Paul, *thousands* of people can look at my webpage!”

Conclusion

The Blackfoot teens I interacted with demonstrated an active resistance to the exclusionary effects of marginalization. Within a macroscopic context of economic and political disadvantage and persistent stereotyping, at a micro-level they create a positive sense of belonging through membership in a communication community with distinct ethno-cultural boundaries. The constant sharing of information through virtual means, along with face-to-face interaction in the household, at schools and at various events, results in a real sense of urban Blackfoot community in Lethbridge that has little to do with residential location. The teens' community incorporates reserve and city domains, illustrating that an urban–rural contrast does not adequately describe the intricate lives of most urban Native youth as they move through the “multiple social worlds that constitute on- and off-reservation life” (Dole and Csordas 2003:357).

By sitting together as a group of individuals who share a common ethno-cultural background and communicating so closely and effectively on a daily basis, these teens at least partly reconstitute “non-Native” events such as movies or hockey games, and “white schools,” with a Native identity. This reconstitution may operate on a larger scale, as Lobo (2001) describes ways that, through a network of social relationships, urban Aboriginal people lend a Native identity to the city, particularly by the use of shared reference points. Being grounded by Blackfoot words and practices in such fluid households, their communication community is symbolically and literally relevant in multiple contexts. Their extensive participation on the internet allows them to enter the world of mass media, while once again meshing this expanded community with the household.

Youngstedt observes that ethnic groups may develop “fluid, overlapping face-to face, imagined and virtual com-

munities to mitigate their marginal position” (2004:39), and these appear to be central strategies for the teens living in the house. Tayla, Nikko and their teenage friends and relatives often emphasize social interaction and information sharing as more important than the formal content of schools and events. This indicates that their social networking and discursive community is of the highest priority. It is a community that “finds its focus in relationship dynamics and the more abstract realm of shared knowledge that informs and shapes action” (Lobo 2001:75-76). Tayla and Nikko belong to a true communications community shaped “not only by relations between insiders and outsiders, but by expansion in the community of reference and the construction of discourses of meaning” (Delanty 2003:130).

I follow Todd's (2001) assertion that the notion of being trapped in a void between two cultural worlds is untenable. Tayla, Nikko and their friends appear to act more as cultural brokers, with strong identities integrating elements of Native and non-Native society (see Szasz 1994). For these youth, living in the city may in fact throw into relief those things that are conspicuously not “Indian,” coinciding with a rise in cultural awareness (see Dickson-Gilmore 1999). Their complex social networks and communication communities allow these teens some agency in resisting the exclusionist forces of marginalization while integrating with an urban environment and retaining a strong sense of identity as First Nations people. Further, since Tayla and Nikko share most of their information with parents and relatives, the communication community includes adults and contributes to an inclusive sense of community for them as well.

It is impossible to generalize from one case study and further research is needed in order to examine the roles of First Nations teens in processes of urbanization, community-building and identity. Tayla, Nikko and their friends manage to sustain a positive Blackfoot identity in both rural and urban contexts, and in this way mitigate marginalization as part of a dynamic collectivity. Native identity is very important to them, along with their ability to place themselves in relation to an ethno-cultural community that is never completely open to non-Natives. Tayla once informed my parents that “Paul thinks he's Blackfoot, but he can never be one you know.” Recently when I used an expression identified by her as an “Indian way of talking” she chastised me, saying “Paul, you're *not* an Indian,” to which Faith replied “he can still *talk*.”

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Notes

- 1 This is a case study of an urban Canadian Blackfoot extended family comprised of Faith, a single mother, her teenage daughter Tayla, two of her nieces, Nikko and Wynter, as well as their many friends and relatives. For purposes of confidentiality, pseudonyms are used throughout.
- 2 To Faith and the teens my duties as a participating household member are far more important in situating me than my rather marginal status as researcher (see Wax 1980). Since I do all of the grocery shopping, and Faith and I take turns doing the dishes, cooking and organizing the kitchen, while the girls clean the rest of the house, to them I assume many traditionally "feminine" roles. Once when Tayla saw me preparing food, she chuckled and remarked "you look like a woman." She instructed me on the way her grandma made certain dishes, and my stew is now "almost like grandma's," according to her. My spending so much time on the computer is also associated with femininity. I carry out many duties they associate with masculinity like general repairs, yard work and taking out the garbage, which Faith informs me "is a man's job." Faith once told me "you are the only male role model in my daughter's life," and in order to be effective, I attempt to demonstrate some balance regarding gender associations in my household roles as well as my general demeanor.
When the idea of writing about these teens coalesced I explained my intended research to Faith and the girls and asked their permission. They consented and also told all the visitors that I was writing about them. All of the data presented here ultimately come from Faith, her daughter and nieces. I omit contextual ethnographic information that could embarrass or identify anyone mentioned here. Maintaining a concept of consent as a "negotiated and lengthy process" (Wax 1980:275), I also made Faith and the girls aware of what I included in the paper, giving them the power to veto it. Using Faith as a guide is appropriate, since she is very protective of teenage household members and visitors.
- 3 These statistics must be taken only as rough indicators for several reasons. Questions about ethnicity are commonly given to only a sample of the survey population (Norris and Clatworthy 2003). Also, many people do not take part in census and population survey counts. When reserves are located near an urban centre, the movement of people back and forth is very extensive and practically impossible to quantify (Frideres 1998).
- 4 Blackfoot spellings are taken from Frantz et al. 1995.
- 5 This information was provided by Mr. Ira Provost, Director of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Programming for the

Lethbridge School District #51, and Mr. Ray Viel, Director of Religious Programming for the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division in Lethbridge.

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Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Julia Harrison and Regna Darnell, eds., *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology*, Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2006, 338 pages.

Reviewer: *Harriet D. Lyons*
University of Waterloo

This book contains a wealth of information and many of its contributors ask important questions that have the potential to define a framework for an edifice that might reasonably be called “the history of Canadian anthropology.” That framework would still have some interstitial spaces for the application of the wallboard and plaster of “thick description,” if we may move from an architectural metaphor to Darnell’s comparison of anthropological history-writing and the ethnography of anthropology’s past.

As with any collection of essays which had their origin as conference papers, the articles in this book are written from somewhat diverse perspectives and discuss an assortment of topics, but those topics do group themselves into themes which enable the volume to tell several coherent (and sometimes provocative) stories. These narratives recount both the challenges and successes Canadian anthropologists have encountered. The former include the fact that the founding generations of Canadian anthropologists were not trained in Canada. Several departmental histories contained in this volume mention the U.S., British (and other Commonwealth) or French training of pivotal figures. Some authors, like the late Richard Pope, discuss their own attempts to bridge the gap between their Canadian careers and their ties elsewhere. Vered Amit describes Canadian anthropology’s problem as being both too close and too far from the U.S. Amit argues that Canadian scholars, scattered thinly over a large country, are at least as likely to seek professional contacts and inspiration in the U.S. as in Canada, particularly if they were trained there, but that their peripheral position across the border causes them to be marginalized by their American colleagues. Penny van Esterik writes about a problem many of us have encountered in teaching—the prevalence of textbooks written from a U.S. perspective, albeit such texts are now frequently “Canadianized” after the fact. A particularly compelling section of this article

is a fascinating account of the writing and publishing history of Kroeber’s famous textbook, though some may see an irony in the fact that a narrative about arguably the most famous of American textbooks competes for the reader’s attention with the Canadian concern which is the essay’s central subject. For this reader, one of the most interesting pieces in the volume is David Nock’s article, “The Erasure of Horatio Hale’s Contribution to Boasian Anthropology,” which argues, among other things, that Hale prefigured many ideas which have come to be associated with Boas. Many readers, within and outside Canada, will no doubt be led to this article more because of an interest in Boas than an interest in Hale, but either way the article offers insights into a formative phase in the history of Canadian and U.S. anthropology—projects which Darnell, in this volume and elsewhere, has argued are, in any case, parts of a larger whole.

One consistent theme in Canadian anthropology has been the engagement with First Nations peoples, and several informative and thought-provoking articles in this volume are given over to documenting that history. Articles by Noel Dyck, Colin Buchanan and Evie Plaice describe various aspects of the relationship between anthropologists, First Nations peoples and government bodies. This is a relationship in which anthropologists have sometimes been powerful advocates of First Nations, sometimes more complicit in the production of hegemony than we like to think, sometimes simply frustrated when knowledge and advice was overlooked by policy makers, and more recently engaged in a struggle to remain relevant in the face of First Nations’ resolve to speak for themselves. Nelson Graburn’s article reveals some of the impacts of Cold War politics on anthropological research in Canada, particularly in the far North. Museology and First Nations studies in Canada have always been closely intertwined, and this volume offers several accounts of that history, including two comparisons of Canadian and U.S. praxis, one by Cory Willmott and another by Kathy McCloskey and Kevin Manuel. An interesting piece by Michelle Hamilton describes the cultural context in which First Nations artifacts were collected, displayed and transferred in the Victorian era.

A particular feature of this volume is departmental history. Darnell’s article, “Departmental Networks in Canadian

Anthropology” suggests that studying the intellectual genealogies of individual anthropologists and the linkages within and between the places where anthropologists work is essential to constructing a historically grounded ethnography of Canadian departments. She stipulates that such a history should not be limited to the superstars, and, indeed, the volume as a whole is less given over to “famous names” than most histories of anthropology. Although leading figures, like McIlwraith and Jenness, have sections dedicated to them within discussions of the topical and institutional contexts within which they worked, only Marius Barbeau has a whole chapter to himself—a fascinating account of his fieldwork methods, written by Andrew Nurse. Two chapters, on the other hand, are dedicated to the histories of specific departments: Whittaker and Ames’s essay on the University of British Columbia and Tremblay’s on Université Laval. Parts of several other chapters are given over to departmental history. Josephine and Alan Smart take a cross-departmental look at Canadian-based anthropologists studying China. James Waldram and Pamela Downe’s chapter on anthropologists who work outside university departments reminds us that we must look at the broader politics of academia to get a full sense of the forces which have shaped the history of anthropology in Canada. This article, as well as the work of several of the other authors, discusses some of the consequences for Canadian anthropology of the dearth of funding for departmental expansion during the years immediately following the discipline’s most intense period of institutionalization. Pope notes that the failure to hire new anthropologists at the University of Regina for twenty years meant that feminist and postmodernist colleagues did not appear to challenge the established curriculum, something which probably happened elsewhere as well, though the strong applied tradition in Canadian anthropology, noted by many of the authors, may also be a factor. This reviewer notes that a number of the authors in the volume express a rather automatic, almost hiccup-like distrust of the various critiques of empiricism which are loosely labeled “postmodernism,” though others, like Darnell herself, express some sympathy with such trends; Howes’s piece, in which he compares the controlling imaginary of Canadian anthropology to that of the Canadian constitution, might fairly be said to be grounded within them.

Overall, this is a valuable volume, which most Canadian anthropologists, and one hopes many anthropologists elsewhere, will want to read. Canadian anthropology is still a young field, and many of the people who will doubtless be canonical figures in the next generation of histories-to-be-written are still alive, teaching and writing. That history will doubtless be more detailed in its critiques of leading figures than this volume can be and contain more of the kinds of insights into consequential disputes that are restricted here to the account of the safely dead Boas and Hale. One hopes that those who have helped shape or who have been shaped by the history discussed in this volume have followed Darnell’s advice and preserved records of their collaborations, arguments, conversations, letters (and, perhaps more importantly, their emails),

so that the ethnographic description of Canadian anthropology will grow ever thicker over time.

Louis-Jacques Dorais et Eric Richard, *Les Vietnamiens de Montréal*, Montréal: Les Presses Universitaires de Montréal, 2007, 235 pages.

Recenseuse : *Catherine Choron-Baix*
Ivry (France), CNRS

Plus de 25 000 Vietnamiens, principalement issus de la vague migratoire de la fin des années 1970 qui suivit les bouleversements politiques dans leur pays, vivent aujourd’hui à Montréal et dans ses environs. Sans en être la plus nombreuse, ils sont une importante composante du paysage multiculturel de la ville, en raison de leur dynamisme social, économique et culturel.

Louis-Jacques Dorais et Eric Richard enquêtent depuis plus de dix ans auprès de ces « Viéto-Montréalais », moins pour en brosser un tableau statistique exhaustif que pour en approcher les réalités internes. Ils livrent dans cet ouvrage les résultats d’une étude essentiellement qualitative, qui ne prétend à aucune représentativité, mais dévoile les logiques sociales favorisant l’intégration de ces immigrants au sein de la société québécoise et montréalaise.

Après un rappel des causes historiques et des différentes phases de cette immigration ainsi que de ses principaux lieux d’implantation à Montréal, le premier chapitre revient sur les concepts de « convergence culturelle » et d’« interculturelisme » au fondement de la politique locale et nationale dont les Vietnamiens tirent profit dès leur arrivée. Divers moyens incitatifs légaux et financiers encouragent en effet la préservation de leur langue et de leur culture tout en facilitant leur intégration économique, sociale et politique dans leur nouvel environnement. Ayant posé ces bases historiques et institutionnelles, les auteurs peuvent alors centrer leur analyse sur l’efficacité d’un capital social qui agit à la fois au niveau interne, au sein des groupes immigrés et notamment dans la famille, et à l’extérieur, à travers les relations de coopération établies avec la société globale.

Suit, au chapitre 2, une présentation de la situation socio-démographique des Viéto-Montréalais, qui se révèle globalement meilleure que celle de leurs compatriotes de l’Ontario ou de Colombie-Britannique et de l’ensemble du Canada plus largement. Les taux de scolarisation et les niveaux de qualification et de revenus sont supérieurs parmi les Viéto-Québécois et notamment à Montréal.

L’étude se concentre ensuite sur les structures familiales et le développement des réseaux sociaux et associatifs qui organisent la vie collective des Viéto-Montréalais. Elle montre la force des solidarités internes et l’importance des liens transnationaux. Les auteurs relèvent à cet égard de profondes divergences entre les classes d’âge, et consacrent un long dévelop-

pement aux jeunes générations, qui présentent des profils assez éloignés de ceux de leurs aînés, comme c'est à peu près toujours le cas parmi les migrants. Peu familiers du Vietnam, les jeunes nés ou élevés au Québec se trouvent plus activement engagés dans des relations avec la diaspora vietnamienne élargie, au Canada et ailleurs dans le monde. Inscrits par là dans une transnationalité presque exclusivement familiale, ils s'insèrent par ailleurs dans de nombreux réseaux de relations au sein de la société québécoise. Ils concilient de la sorte des aspirations et des comportements socio-économiques inspirés du modèle nord-américain et une sensibilité proprement vietnamienne.

Pôle de rassemblement essentiel pour tous les expatriés, la restauration des pratiques religieuses, traitée dans le chapitre suivant, participe évidemment de cette sensibilité. Elle reflète la diversité des rites et croyances des Vietnamiens. Culte des ancêtres, pratiques taoïstes, géomancie, astrologie et autres formes de divination se re-déplient à Montréal, avec ses temps forts, comme la célébration du Têt ou les rituels de possession. Coexistant avec les religions minoritaires, caodaïsme, catholicisme et protestantisme, le bouddhisme – à dominante Mahayana – demeure l'élément le plus visible de cette réorganisation du religieux, avec pas moins de huit pagodes et trois salles de méditation dans l'agglomération montréalaise.

Malgré certains freins à l'intégration – envisagés au chapitre 6 – qui tiennent à des difficultés individuelles des migrants eux-mêmes ou à des résistances de la part de la société globale, les Viéto-Montréalais s'adaptent ainsi remarquablement à leur nouvel espace social, constituant une « communauté », unie par une langue, des racines, une histoire et des intérêts communs, et cependant solidement ancrée dans la société québécoise et montréalaise. Outre son intérêt pour la compréhension de la situation québécoise, cet ouvrage ouvre des perspectives comparatives fécondes, à une échelle plus large, pour les communautés vietnamiennes expatriées de par le monde, comme pour d'autres diasporas en provenance d'Asie du Sud-est continentale. De nombreux traits communs les rapprochent en effet de leurs compatriotes installés en Europe ou aux États-Unis comme des communautés laotiennes et cambodgiennes qui ont émigré à la même période. Les mêmes dynamiques communautaires, la même quête de réussite sociale et la même compétitivité socio-économique s'observent parmi ces groupes en France et ailleurs, dans des contextes politiques et institutionnels pourtant différents. S'il est peu douteux, dès lors, que le multiculturalisme du Canada et l'interculturalisme du Québec ont été des facteurs favorables à l'adaptation des Vietnamiens sur leur sol, ces similitudes confirment la pertinence de l'analyse de Louis-Jacques Dorais et Eric Richard en termes de capital social. C'est bien en son sein, et en raison de son attachement à sa culture d'origine et à ses valeurs, que cette diaspora trouve les ressorts de son intégration et qu'elle parvient à s'ajuster à la société ambiante.

Un tel schéma ne doit toutefois pas gommer les différences d'intensité de l'adhésion au modèle ethnique, ni les clivages à

l'intérieur des communautés, comme le soulignent en conclusion les auteurs. L'ethnicité ne peut se décliner sur un mode unique, d'autant moins lorsque les liens se font transnationaux. Le va-et-vient est aujourd'hui constant entre le Vietnam et ses anciens ressortissants dispersés de par le monde, et la société locale vietnamienne elle-même est désormais ouverte sur l'extérieur. C'est dans cette circulation que se font aujourd'hui les transactions de groupe à groupe, et que se définissent et redéfinissent les affinités et les différences. Sans l'explorer véritablement, l'ouvrage de Louis-Jacques Dorais et Eric Richard nous suggère cette piste de réflexion et nous en donne quelques clés en nous plongeant au cœur d'une histoire migratoire exemplaire.

Daphne N. Winland, *We Are Now a Nation. Croats between "Home" and "Homeland,"* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 224 pages.

Reviewer: *Nick Harney*
University of Western Australia

The violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s had reverberations far beyond the geopolitics of southeastern Europe and the imaginations of some reactionary North American and Western European analysts who saw in it some millennial sign of the re-assertion of ancient ethnic hatreds. In cities throughout North and South America, Europe and Australia, settlements of Croats, Serbs, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Kosovars found themselves rethinking who they were and how they were connected to an emergent (or dissolving) homeland in the Balkans. In this book, Daphne Winland takes as her task to understand how Toronto Croats in the diaspora were changed by the war and eventual independence of Croatia and, importantly, how relations between the Croat homeland and its diaspora mutually constituted each other. The timely research for this book began in 1991 at the height of war in the former Yugoslavia when Winland observed newly energized and ethnicized, or nationalized, Croatian and Serbian heritage students at her university in Toronto, Canada forcefully engaging with the politics of the Balkans on campus. Advantageously for her and us, this permitted Winland to observe the rapidly changing relations, perceptions and engagements between Croats abroad and those in the recently formed independent state and thus follow the Croat diaspora as a historical formation.

Despite the innovative early uses of diaspora as a conceptual term in the work of Gilroy, Hall and others—with their mix of postcolonialism concerned with its anti-nationalist liberatory possibilities and hybrid identity formations and imaginaries—parallel work on contemporary diasporas suffered from pedantic attempts by some sociologists to insist on certain features to mark the boundaries of “true” diasporas from pretenders. Thankfully there has also emerged a more subtle

body of literature in the earlier tradition that has plumbed the depths of subjectivities and nuances of identification possible in this contemporary formation. Winland's work is situated in what Brah might call the diasporic space of dwelling between a "homing desire" and a "desire for homeland." Since Brah's influential and suggestive book, *Cartographies of Diaspora* (1996), there has been a flourishing of publications exploring the meaning, uses, dynamics, dimensions and limitations of the term as an analytic with purchase. Winland's work is an excellent example of a complex reading of transnational social relationships and diasporic imaginings emerging from and exceeding this literature by its extended consideration of the constantly changing interstices of diaspora-homeland identity formations.

Over the course of an introduction, five chapters and conclusion, Winland teases out the limitations of an analysis that presupposes ethnonational unity "here" and "there." Instead, this ethnography demonstrates the internal schisms within the identity formation "Croat" and "Croatness" in Croatia and Toronto. It reveals ambiguities and ambivalences embedded in the social relationships between and within Croats in Toronto and those in Croatia who are marked by all sorts of differences not the least of which are class and regions of origin. Here, one of the strengths of this ethnography is Winland's sensitivity in her analysis to the manipulation of historical narratives, symbols and events in the former Yugoslavia by all parties and how this politics of representation is central to the intra- and inter-ethnic biases at play in the post-independence era. Later we find that the governing Christian Democratic Party, the HDZ, engages in a cultural politics that revives concerns about Croatian connections to a suitable past, untainted by Nazi collaborators. This is redirected by the international geopolitics of "the war on terror," which allows for the HDZ to refashion itself as a Christian bulwark against a Muslim threat thus feeding into other problematic narratives. The author draws our attention to the way suffering, victimhood and trauma are key symbols in the historical representation of the Croatian "nation." As such, these symbols are highly emotive and manipulable leading to, in her felicitous phrase, a dynamic of desire and disdain on the part of both Croats in the diaspora and in Croatia about the unity of a Croatian nation. Although implicit in the chapters that follow its introduction (p. 19), at times I wanted a more explicit elaboration of this Zizekian conceptual stream dynamic throughout the book.

In chapter 2, Winland opens with the euphoria felt in the diaspora about the reality of an independent Republic of Croatia after the success in the "homeland" wars in the early 1990s and the establishment of the Tudman regime. Central to this discussion are the efforts of the ruling Christian Democratic Union to tap into nationalist sentiment in the diaspora, to mould a historic narrative about and for Croats at home and away. As Winland astutely points out, the central problem that emerges is one of difference of expectations between those in Croatia and those in the diaspora about the proper role each should play in the formation of a new Croatia. "Key

to understanding the relative lack of a rapprochement between Croats 'here' and 'there,' is that neither understands nor has the patience for the complexities inherent in the experiences and personal or political histories that have shaped the other's outlooks on the meanings of Croatia as a homeland or more importantly, of Croatness" (p. 27).

Chapter 3, "We Are Not Facists..." draws effectively on this dissonance. Winland discusses how diaspora Croats and, in particular, Toronto Croats supplied the financial backing to the independence movement lead by President Franjo Tudman's party, the HDZ, which was to rule the country after independence into the next millennium. To me, this chapter is intriguing ethnography because of the ambiguity about the actual role played by Toronto Croats in the success of an independent Croatia. Winland does not explore the actual empirical aspects of the matter—dollars contributed, number of people sent to fight or build schools, number of sinecures for Toronto Croats afterwards, et cetera—other than in an anecdotal sense, through the rumours spread by those disappointed, and in the self-proclamations of those community "leaders" in Toronto identified as wealthy right-leaning businessmen. I might have wanted such prosaic data yet Winland prepared the groundwork for this not to matter so much since what concerns us is the tensions over expectations about belonging (desire) and ultimately the disappointment of not having those expectations fulfilled (disdain).

As I write this review from Naples, Italy, Italian police in the last few weeks have swept through migrant neighbourhoods claiming to have arrested rings of Tamils and Algerians raising funds for "terrorist" groups overseas. At the same time, these police actions have left fear in their wake. The Croatian example should make us think about how ethnography can offer a fine-grained analysis of the experiences of migrant groups that should help to unsettle simplistic and deterministic narratives about diasporas and transnational forms of identification. Winland should be commended for a fine reading of the cultural politics of diaspora.

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Maryse Potvin, Paul Eid et Nancy Venel, dirs., *La 2^e génération issue de l'immigration. Une comparaison France-Québec*, Montréal: Athéna, 2007, 270 pages.

Recenseuse : *Josiane Le Gall*
CSSS de la Montagne, UQAM

L'ouvrage traite, comme le titre l'indique, des jeunes nés au Québec et en France de parents immigrants. Il vient pallier un manque dans la littérature scientifique, puisque l'intérêt des chercheurs pour les secondes générations dans ces deux

sociétés y est plutôt récent, comme le notent d'ailleurs Maryse Potvin, Paul Eid et Nancy Venel dans leur introduction.

Partant de thématiques et de méthodes diverses, cet ouvrage collectif se donne pour objectif de dégager le caractère pluriel et variable des modalités de participation et d'appartenance, mais aussi les stratégies de résistance, d'opposition et de négociation des jeunes de la seconde génération. L'intérêt du livre à cet égard est constant; au fil des contributions, il nous présente un tableau dynamique, diversifié et bien documenté de l'expérience de cette génération, tant en France qu'au Québec. Les différents textes font ressortir, à travers les données d'études sociodémographiques ou ethnographiques, différentes facettes des trajectoires scolaires, professionnelles, sociales et citoyennes de ces jeunes. Plus spécifiquement, les auteurs interrogent les causes ou les conséquences des spécificités de ces trajectoires en tentant de répondre à une série de questions : ces jeunes se distinguent-ils des autres jeunes natifs et en quoi? Comment se distinguent-ils de la génération de leurs parents? Quels sont les processus à l'œuvre dans leurs modes de négociation identitaire? Quels sont les déterminants de leur intégration socio-économique?

La 2^e génération issue de l'immigration regroupe les contributions de plusieurs auteurs, anthropologues, sociologues, psychologues et autres spécialistes, et travaillant sur des terrains éloignés. L'ouvrage en question comprend, en plus de sa préface signée par François Dubet, de son introduction et de sa conclusion, dix contributions groupées en deux parties. Dans la première partie intitulée *Mécanismes de participation, d'insertion et d'exclusion*, composée principalement de textes d'auteurs français, Patrick Simon s'intéresse aux positions des secondes générations turques, marocaines et portugaises dans l'école et le marché du travail en France. À partir d'une analyse des données tirées de l'Enquête Histoire Familiale de 1999, il amorce une réflexion sur les disparités socio-économiques en fonction de l'origine ethnique en France et sur les conditions qui produisent ces disparités. Suit le texte d'Olivier Noël qui éclaire les processus et les mécanismes sociologiques à l'œuvre dans la production des discriminations à l'endroit des jeunes de la deuxième génération issus des vagues coloniale et postcoloniale en France. Enfin, Emmanuelle Santelli et Myriam Simard traitent respectivement dans les chapitres trois et quatre des modalités d'insertion des jeunes maghrébins en France et des secondes générations en dehors de la métropole montréalaise. Emmanuelle Santelli fait ressortir les parcours différenciés au sein de la population qu'elle a étudiée, différences qu'elle explique notamment par les caractéristiques des jeunes, leur niveau de diplôme, la relation entretenue dans le quartier et la socialisation familiale. Quant à Myriam Simard, elle montre comment les jeunes d'origine immigrée qui grandissent en région sont des acteurs dynamiques qui s'inscrivent à la fois dans l'espace local et international. Les pratiques novatrices et les modalités d'insertion qu'elle met en évidence témoigneraient à son avis d'un rapport inédit à la culture d'origine et à la culture majoritaire. La deuxième partie

de l'ouvrage traite des appartenances et des identités. Nancy Venel aborde les manifestations d'inclusion et d'exclusion des jeunes français d'origine maghrébine, les ressorts de leurs identifications ainsi que les façons de concevoir leur engagement dans la sphère publique. Elle insiste sur la complexité des interrelations entre l'identité nationale et les potentialités d'affiliations sociales, culturelles, religieuses, supranationales et autres. Quant à Maryse Potvin, elle explique comment les différents pôles identitaires qu'elle révèle des jeunes de la deuxième génération d'origine haïtienne sont traversés par des logiques d'intégration normative, de stratégie sur des marchés et de subjectivation, en tension les unes avec les autres. Pour leur part, Deirdre Meintel et Emmanuel Kahn décrivent les projets élaborés par de jeunes couples québécois mixtes relativement à l'identité sociale de leurs enfants. Ces parents tentent de transmettre à leurs enfants un maximum de références associées à leur héritage culturel respectif. Le texte de Nacira Guénif-Souilamas fait ressortir les figures de descendants de migrants nord-africains en France et leurs résonances sociales et symboliques. À partir des résultats de questionnaires et d'entretiens semi-dirigés, Paul Eid explore dans quelle mesure et selon quelles modalités les jeunes issus de l'immigration arabe à Montréal recyclent en marqueurs identitaires ethnoculturels les modèles « traditionnels » de rapports de sexe. Selon cet auteur, il apparaît que le corps des femmes constitue un matériau identitaire de prédilection dans le processus de construction du « Nous » ethnoculturel auquel se réfèrent ces jeunes. Enfin, Marie-Hélène Chastenay et Michel Pagé se penchent sur les étudiants de secondes générations au Québec. Ils soulignent les particularités de l'expérience et de la représentation de la citoyenneté de ces étudiants et montrent comment ils se distinguent aussi bien des francophones et des anglophones que des étudiants qui ont immigré au Québec.

Pour tous ceux et celles qui s'intéressent aux questions des jeunes issus de l'immigration en France et au Québec, cet ouvrage est éclairant sur plusieurs aspects. Tout d'abord, pris dans leur ensemble, les textes réunis donnent à voir, chacun à sa façon, comment la catégorie « seconde génération issue de l'immigration » renvoie à une diversité de situations. En effet, alors que celle-ci est souvent présentée comme un tout uniforme, notamment dans les débats publics et politiques, les différentes études empiriques laissent apparaître, par exemple, des variations individuelles dans les parcours d'entrée dans la vie adulte (Santelli) et des différences dans les manières de concevoir la citoyenneté et d'envisager son inclusion dans la communauté politique (Venel) chez les jeunes maghrébins en France, ou encore plusieurs niveaux de citoyenneté chez les jeunes collégiens de deuxième génération au Québec (Chastenay et Pagé).

Ensuite, il faut souligner qu'une des forces du livre dirigé par Potvin, Eid et Venel est de croiser des regards du Québec et de France. Dans leur introduction, les éditeurs décrivent longuement les modèles d'insertion et de citoyenneté sociale adoptés par chacune de ces sociétés et montrent en quoi ces derniers expliquent l'absence de débats scientifiques sur le

concept de seconde génération. Cette mise en contexte permet de comprendre les différences dans les façons de traiter de la question en France et au Québec qui émergent dans les contributions qu'ils ont rassemblées dans cet ouvrage collectif, soit un emploi différent de la catégorie seconde génération, tout comme des types de problématisation distincts. Ce constat nous rappelle qu'il n'est pas toujours possible ou souhaitable d'utiliser le même angle d'analyse pour saisir ce qui se passe dans les deux sociétés.

L'intérêt de l'ouvrage réside également dans un parti pris éditorial qui pose comme objectif d'opposer modèle d'insertion et réalité sur le terrain. Il ressort de plusieurs contributions combien ces jeunes issus de l'immigration sont confrontés dans leur quotidien au racisme et à la discrimination. C'est d'ailleurs le mérite de chacun de ces articles de proposer une vision nouvelle, cherchant aux sources du vécu des explications à des difficultés longtemps attribuées aux jeunes eux-mêmes ou à leur groupe d'origine, ce qui occultait du même coup les rapports de pouvoir et de domination. En même temps que plusieurs des auteurs font ressortir le processus de racisation auquel les jeunes sont soumis, la plupart insistent à juste titre sur les espaces de résistances forgés par ces derniers. Cela dit, bien que les textes présentés fassent ressortir aussi la réalité des jeunes qui ne vivent pas nécessairement des difficultés, d'insertion ou autre, et qu'ils ne se penchent pas exclusivement sur les groupes racisés (même si plusieurs contributions portent sur les minorités visibles, comme les jeunes maghrébins dans le cas français), l'ouvrage a pour principal défaut de mettre l'accent sur les expériences vécues par ces derniers. Au-delà de l'intérêt de chacun des textes, on se prend alors à regretter qu'un plus grand nombre de groupes n'aient fait l'objet de contributions. Notons à ce propos qu'il aurait été pertinent de proposer un portrait général des secondes générations dans chaque société en introduction ou dans un chapitre à part, un peu comme Simon tente de le faire pour la France.

Annelin Eriksen, *Gender, Christianity and Change in Vanuatu: An Analysis of Social Movements in North Ambrym*, Hampshire (UK) and Burlington (VT): Ashgate, 2008, 191 pages.

John Barker, ed., *The Anthropology of Morality in Melanesia and Beyond*, Hampshire (UK) and Burlington (VT): Ashgate, 2007, 235 pages.

Reviewer: *Alexandra Widmer*
York University

Morality is a fascinating link between large and small scale changes of modernity and their impact on human experiences. These two books focus on the place of moral agency and ethical practice in historical processes in Melanesian contexts. Barker's is a rich edited collection of noted Pacific scholars

and Eriksen's is a perceptive full-length ethnography. Both books take a welcome approach to understanding moral life as a series of quandaries that people face and how processes of social change and modernity, in particular, compel new moral choices and dilemmas. Morality is thus contested, ever changing and simultaneously composed of belief and practice. For Melanesian contexts, this is especially relevant as people's moral dilemmas often appear to be framed in terms of choosing between indigeneity and modernity, and the perspectives in these books allow indigeneity to be seen as a modern ethical practice.

Eriksen's evocative photos and elegant writing style transport the reader to Vanuatu in the best tradition of ethnographic monographs. The book's analytical framework is inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's work, particularly by their notion of the arboreal and rhizomatic as kinds of social structures that chafe against each other even as they work together. She argues that in North Ambrym, the social activities that are gendered female are aimed at making relations within and between villages, forming the horizontal (rhizomatic) axis of social structure. Those activities which are gendered male encompass activities that emphasize personal achievements and form the vertical (arboreal) axis of social structure. Eriksen then applies this model to understanding the gendered dynamics of social change, writing that not only are social structures predicated on gender differences, but that structures transform themselves on gendered principles and gendered forms of agency. The social change engendered by the social forms of the Presbyterian Church, for example, emphasizes community and moral social relations, and thus the expansion of the Church has been driven by female agency and the participation of women. Eriksen highlights other aspects of women's agency in creating social change by analyzing women's movement between villages and town (Port Vila). Their movement makes new relations between settlements and new relations between families through marriage. The forms of social change shaped by men's capacities include their participation in social forms that emphasize personal achievements through political leadership, like the Nagriamel (an anti-colonial struggle that began in the 1960s based on the return of alienated land but not on achieving a nation-state), the levels of graded society on Ambrym that produce big men and the Local Government Council. All of which make her ethnography a fascinating and original analysis of how ni-Vanuatu forms of sociality and historical change depend on both women and men's capacities.

The authors in Barker's collection are concerned with similar questions as Eriksen; they are interested the ways that morality is implicated in changes to political organization, religiosity and forms of exchange because of the dilemmas posed by Christianity, state forms of governance and capitalism. The volume as a whole is organized as a contemporary dialogue with Kenneth Burridge's pioneering work on Christianity, missionary endeavour, personhood and social change. Christianity is the most dominant theme in Barker's book, with contributions

from Knauff, Barker, Lohmann, Jorgensen and Lutkehaus. Of particular significance are the gendered nuances and forms of agency that arise in Christian social forms. In contrast to the women on Ambrym who participate in Christian social forms, the better to facilitate and extend relationships in their social networks, Lutkehaus shows through the life history of an indigenous nun that taking vows allows women new opportunities to survive outside social networks of kin and village and achieve a semblance of social and physical mobility not possible otherwise. Jorgensen's intriguing chapter deals with female spirit mediums of a charismatic Christian movement, who through their possessions by the spirit of God, were able to change the minds of most people in their communities, leading to a rupture with previous kinds of moral practice.

Tensions in morality and political leadership are taken up in both books. Within this theme, Eriksen focuses on the gendered nature of opposing social forms that produce leaders (graded society and local government council) and communities (Christian church). Robbins writes that Melanesian big men hold their position in part because of their moral standing in their communities. He argues that this insight from Melanesia has much to contribute to political anthropology because this kind of Melanesian political leader, unlike those in the West, is expected to be a moral exemplar. Barker's chapter adapts Burridge's colonial triangle to assess how the "Post-colonial triangle" (kastom, the church and the government) shapes the options for Maisin political leadership and contemporary political institutions along with postcolonial moral identities.

Grappling with the (im)morality of sorcery in the configuration of ethical life has long been of interest to anthropologists working in the Pacific. In Barker's volume, Dalton, Barker and Knauff consider the modern moral predicaments that sorcery practices compel. Both sorcerers and big men, Dalton and Robbins argue respectively, engage with moral dilemmas of their communities more intensely than other members (though in different ways). In this way, both are successful to the extent that they can identify and resolve moral tensions and demonstrate themselves to be agents of change.

In addition to the predicaments of Christianity and new forms of political leadership, a few contributors to Barker's volume examine the moral dilemmas that capitalism compels with the introduction of wage labour and exchange based on cash. In particular, Errington and Gewertz examine how amity and relationships of mutual equivalence (Burridge's concepts), so central to Pacific sociality, are affected by the development of the nationalist company Ramu Sugar limited. Jorgensen thoughtfully discusses the social changes that arise with the influx of money as up to 40% of the Telefolmin male population in the region of his research began working in industries directly and indirectly related to the Ok Tedi mine. Both of these chapters expose the tensions that cash can cause as it creates new kinds of differences between people that, in turn, are impediments or new openings for people to participate in forms of sociality where exchange is so central to participating in social life.

I have only one critical comment of these books—that the analyses could be made stronger by discussing related literature beyond Melanesia. For example, what Eriksen refers to as social movements may be different from what certain anthropologists expect. On the one hand, she is referring to the new relations that women create by travelling and making new relations within Ambrym, between families and between Ambrym and the growing capital of Port Vila. On the other hand, she refers to the Presbyterian Church, the Nagriamel, the men's graded society and the local government council as social movements. Those forms gendered female emphasize movement and relation-making while the ones gendered male demand rootedness and personal distinction. Considering the nature of collective social action to promote social change through gendered forms of agency in a larger context beyond Melanesia, would have made her already wonderful analysis even stronger. Without doubt, social movements have taken a different form in Vanuatu than in other places and they do not compare in obvious ways to other gendered social movements. It could well be that Eriksen chose to avoid the literature on women's social movements because rural women's collective agency in Vanuatu takes a very different form than other movements called "feminist." Eriksen does write about the chagrin that urban women in ni-Vanuatu development organizations express with rural women's seeming lack of political awareness. Indeed, Eriksen provides an extremely discerning analysis of the reasons why rural women do not respond to the Vanuatu National Council of Women's (VNCW) missives to help them. She argues that the VNCW falls into the vertical kinds of social forms typically gendered male, relying on the personal power of a few charismatic women rather than on the relation building rural women do in the horizontal axis. I think such contrasts in how people articulate gendered forms of agency would have analytical resonance in other places.

On a related note, gaining access to land and the social injustice of landlessness have been primary aspects of indigenous social movements in Latin America and Africa, indeed the world over. Some small discussion of that context would further elucidate a significant element of Vanuatu's history and reveal even more about the symbolic and material basis of the ni-Vanuatu social forms she is analyzing. Eriksen does include relevant information about the significance of land in Vanuatu. She writes that most ni-Vanuatu have access to land owned by their kinship groups somewhere in Vanuatu—either in town or on their home island or both—as land was returned to kastom owners after independence, though access to land is decreasing and is not without its challenges or disputes. Yet, I believe that if contextualized in a short discussion of other social movements, her analysis would be even more striking. The social movements that Eriksen analyzes so clearly rely on women's capacity as well as their material necessity to move to make new settlements and new relations and on men's capacities to be rooted to place. Having land and continuing to have access to the land are central to these types of sociality. They are partly conceivable because ni-Vanuatu do have access to land.

In a similar vein, readers of Barker's collection who are more interested in morality beyond Melanesia (as the title indicates) could be disappointed. Barker's introduction is a wonderful overview of the anthropological literature on morality as well as the overarching theoretical perspective that spans all of the chapters. The book's theoretical orientation, Barker writes, has more of an Aristotelian emphasis on agency in moral practice than a Durkheimian analysis of collective experience in moral systems. However, the chapters themselves are uneven in the degree to which they reference material from other ethnographic and theoretical contexts, and the "beyond" Melanesia aspect of this volume remains largely for the reader to infer from the Papua New Guinea ethnographic material, rather than find in a sustained engagement with other anthropologists writing on morality besides Burridge. Though, to be sure, Burridge's work does provide ample room for dialogue and the way that the individual authors take up his thinking is very intellectually satisfying.

Eriksen's book is spectacularly well-grounded in her knowledge of contemporary ethnography and historical details of the lives of people from North Ambrym, the nation of Vanuatu and relevant parts of Melanesia. Similarly, all of the authors in Barker's book place great emphasis on rooting their analysis of Papua New Guinea in ethnographic contexts. Although I think these books will appeal to scholars of the Pacific Islands most of all, I would also wholeheartedly recommend them to any anthropologist interested in the centrality of moral agency in social change and historical processes, particularly in those parts of the world where Christianity is associated with modernity.

Adolphe Rahamefy, *Sectes et Crises Religieuses à Madagascar*, Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2007, 183 pages.

Recenseure : *Genese Marie Sodikoff*
Rutgers University

Dans son étude *Sectes et Crises Religieuses à Madagascar*, Adolphe Rahamefy délimite l'influence mutuelle du christianisme et de la religion traditionnelle malgache, connue comme le « culte des ancêtres » mais ici appelée « razanisme » (du terme malgache *razana*, ancêtre). L'usage du néologisme *razanisme* permet d'éviter un biais évolutionniste qui dénigre la complexité de la religion traditionnelle par rapport au christianisme. Rahamefy présente deux problèmes liés à la convention d'opposer le christianisme et le razanisme comme étant des orientations religieuses distinctes. Tout d'abord, l'opposition est simplement heuristique, mais suggère une correspondance à la réalité sociale. Pourtant, Madagascar possède un paysage religieux très syncrétique. En fonction de l'appartenance ethnique et de la situation géographique, les Malgaches ont assimilé les croyances et les pratiques chrétiennes à des degrés divers. Certains les ont rejetées purement et simplement. En

revanche, dans les hauts plateaux, territoires des Merina et des Betsileo, le christianisme a été fermement établi. Le deuxième problème d'opposer le christianisme et le razanisme fournit la base de l'analyse ethnohistorique de la transformation religieuse. Rahamefy affirme qu'aucun des deux systèmes de croyances n'est constant et unifié. À Madagascar, les deux ont évolué à cause de luttes internes et politiques. Rahamefy décrit ainsi la contestation interne aux deux systèmes religieux, en mettant l'accent sur le XIX^e siècle, lorsque les catholiques français et les missionnaires protestants britanniques ont rivalisé les uns avec les autres pour capturer les cœurs et les âmes de razanistes malgaches, jusqu'au présent. Il réussit à montrer le processus de la transformation religieuse en choisissant des moments historiques où les chefs populaires, les autorités étrangères, ou les souverains royaux négocient leurs croyances razanistes ou chrétiennes. Par exemple, il raconte l'histoire de Rainitsiandavana, un gardien des *sampy*, les fétiches (palladiums) de l'État Merina que les missionnaires chrétiens ont, de manière péjorative, appelé « les idoles » et qu'ils ont cherché à expulser. Les *sampy* royaux étaient consultés avant la tenue d'événements importants pour le royaume, et le gardien chargé de les protéger possédait un statut spécial. Néanmoins, Rainitsiandavana, après la mort de son épouse, avait embrassé la foi chrétienne en 1833 en maintenant son rôle comme gardien des *sampy*. Après sa conversion, il essaya un jour de prêcher l'Évangile parmi les Malgaches et fut tourné en dérision. Intrépide, il parla aux gens de l'arrivée des « fantômes des boeufs », croyance selon laquelle le bétail pourrait être ressuscité après la mort sous la forme d'esprits. Son interprétation de la croyance au sujet des fantômes des zébus a suggéré la possibilité de la résurrection des morts (humains), prêtant créance, de ce fait, à l'histoire de la renaissance du Christ. Rahamefy avance ainsi le fait que Rainitsiandava fut le premier à inventer une forme de syncrétisme chrétien-razaniste.

À partir de journaux de missionnaires, sources historiques secondaires, et d'ethnographies de rites funéraires, Rahamefy met en lumière les rencontres entre les chrétiens et les traditionalistes et analyse les décisions pragmatiques ou opportunistes prises pour se protéger soi-même ou par intérêt politique. La première section du livre présente une vaste ethnologie du razanisme à Madagascar. Elle décrit l'ampleur et la diversité de croyances qui définissent la religion traditionnelle, y compris les rites funéraires tels que le *famadihana*. Ce rituel d'exhumation des squelettes d'ancêtres, appelé « le retournement des Ancêtres », est devenu un important marqueur de l'identité culturelle malgache à l'extérieur. Pourtant, le *famadihana*, ainsi que les offrandes aux ancêtres, ne constituent qu'une petite partie des croyances spirituelles malgaches. Les divers Malgaches croient aussi au pouvoir des ancêtres d'affecter les affaires quotidiennes de la vie, aux esprits non ancestraux et aux palladiums royaux, à un dieu (*zanahary*) et au phénomène du *tromba*, quand un individu entre dans une relation avec un parent ou un souverain mort qui possède l'individu périodiquement, cette possession pouvant également être induite par une pratique rituelle.

Après son examen des manifestations hétérogènes de razanisme, Rahamefy porte son attention sur les premières tentatives des chrétiens européens de convertir les Malgaches au christianisme en comparant ce dernier avec la religion traditionnelle. Catholiques et protestants se sont intéressés au concept de dieu malgache (Zanahary), le voyant comme facilement transformable en concept de Dieu chrétien. L'auteur note également les limites de la traduction religieuse, comme l'idée du péché originel, qui a résisté à la « logique du razanisme ». Les détails de ce type montrent le processus de syncrétisme, ou la manière dont le pouvoir (comme le pouvoir des prêtres, des pasteurs, ou des guérisseurs traditionnels) a effectué le mélange des cosmologies malgaches et occidentales.

L'étude de Rahamefy est très importante pour sa concision et sa perspective comparative de la politique des missions, du colonialisme, de la transformation religieuse dès le XIX^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours. L'auteur note que l'émergence de nouvelles sectes chrétiennes reflète une tradition syncrétique de longue date dans la mesure où, aujourd'hui, un grand nombre de dirigeants de sectes ont eu auparavant des vies de guérisseurs traditionnels. Pour les chercheurs de Madagascar qui veulent comprendre l'histoire tendue et souvent violente des missions chrétiennes au sein du royaume merina et pendant l'État colonial français, Rahamefy peint des sources secondaires pour offrir une analyse perspicace. Les historiens et les anthropologues de la religion bénéficieront également des connaissances portant sur les processus de l'enculturation religieuse et sur la résistance à l'impérialisme religieux de l'occident. Enfin, le livre peut être lu aussi dans un cadre contemporain de la politique de l'identité. Il met en évidence les moments où les sujets, membres inférieurs des hiérarchies locales, recourent à la force surnaturelle du razanisme pour exprimer des positions politiques qu'ils n'osent pas exprimer à haute voix. En tant que pratique politique consciente, le razanisme devient un moyen de s'autodéterminer culturellement.

John Barker, *Ancestral Lines: The Maisin of Papua New Guinea and the Fate of the Rainforest*, Toronto: UTP Higher Education, 2007, 229 pages.

Reviewer: *Sandra Bamford*
University of Toronto Scarborough College

John Barker's work, *Ancestral Lines: The Maisin of Papua New Guinea and the Fate of the Rainforest*, represents a welcome addition to anthropological literature on several fronts. Based on over 25 years of ethnographic research, the book deals with the cultural and historic experiences of the Maisin peoples—an indigenous group inhabiting mainland Papua New Guinea. Using the production of tapa cloth as a metaphor for understanding broader cultural processes, Barker provides a rich account that elucidates why the Maisin came to reject commercial logging on their land, notwithstanding their intense

desire to participate in the growing cash economy of their country. Although their decision might be taken, at first glance, as evidence of the “conservatism” of indigenous cultures, Barker shows that it is but one event in a series of ongoing negotiations wherein the Maisin participate in the broader world order, but do so on their own terms. In its approach to social change, *Ancestral Lines* complicates any hard and fast distinction between tradition and modernity, cultural change and continuity, and resistance versus acquiescence to the forces of globalization.

Although *Ancestral Lines* is first and foremost a detailed portrait of Maisin social life, it is intended as more than a standard ethnographic account. Barker explains that the book was written with the intention of serving as a learning tool for beginning students in cultural anthropology. Most anthropological monographs are not designed to match up in any productive way with introductory textbooks. Standard ethnographies generally deal with only one or two of those topics that are normatively covered in introductory courses. This book, by contrast, was written in such a way that it illustrates the concepts and themes covered in most introductory textbooks. The topics covered include: the nature of anthropological fieldwork, economics, social organization, religion, political and legal structures and globalization. As required reading on a course syllabus, this book could be read either all at once as an extended case study, or stretched out as a series of illustrative chapters throughout the semester.

In keeping with its intended audience, the book has several notable features. *Ancestral Lines* contains little jargon and minimal referencing—it is written to be accessible to lower-level students in anthropology. The text is also liberally interspersed with lively personal anecdotes. We read about sorcery accusations, capsizing canoes and conflicts over the running of the community trade store. We also learn relatively early on about the difficulties Barker himself faced as a fledgling ethnographer adjusting to the tenor of reciprocity within the community. Accounts such as these do much not only to make the book a lively read, they also serve as particularly apt illustrations of what it is like to carry out fieldwork in a non-Western setting.

The book unfolds in a logical and well-organized manner. Following a short preface that sets out the general aims of the book, chapter 1 describes the context of research among the Maisin. Chapter 2 directs our attention to “Making a Living.” Here, we learn about the gendered basis of labour relations and perhaps most importantly that economic activities are about far more than mere survival—they are also socially and symbolically important. The focus of chapter 3 is on Maisin social organization—particularly, kinship, marriage and property relations. One of the most significant findings presented by Barker in this chapter concerns the fluidity of Maisin social configurations. Chapter 4 describes Maisin cosmology, including the relationship between indigenous beliefs and Christianity. Rather than framing their belief system in an evolutionary framework, Barker shows that Maisin draw upon both Christian and traditional beliefs in negotiating their day to

day lives. Chapter 5 is titled simply "Community." Here, we are introduced to the relationship between the three social pillars of contemporary Mainsin life—village, government and church. Mainsin sociality emerges as a hybrid consisting of intersecting networks of identity, both old and young.

The penultimate chapter, "Culture Change: Tapa and the Rainforest," is perhaps the most important in the book. This chapter provides detailed information concerning why it was that the Mainsin decided in the 1990s that commercial logging of the land was likely to cause more harm than good. In unpacking the various motivations that prompted local decision-making processes, Barker shows that contemporary campaigns to "save the rainforest" are more fraught and motivated by competing agendas than a superficial understanding of environmental politics would have us believe.

Ancestral Lines contains many gems. Professionals will appreciate the many challenges that Barker faced in writing this text. As anyone who has ever taught introductory courses knows only far too well, one of the challenges instructors face is to introduce core disciplinary concepts—such as "society" and "culture"—which can later be complicated and problematized in the years to come. Throughout *Ancestral Lines*, Barker sets out cogent definitions of key terms, while at the same time, laying the foundation for their subsequent critique. For example, in drawing upon tapa cloth as a metaphor for social life, he writes: "like a tapa cloth, a society is composed of basic elements that fit together to provide a whole" (p. 75). If this statement sounds like an objectification to trained ears, Barker is quick to qualify this position only a few pages later: "So far in this chapter, I've been describing kinship, descent and marriage as sets of rules that guide social behaviour. This is necessary, but also a bit misleading. The Mainsin are not given a rule book or script early in life for how to live" (p. 102). Cautionary words such as these beautifully pave the way for those students who will go on to take subsequent courses in cultural anthropology. Barker has anticipated and responded to the challenges anthropology course instructors face not only in the first year but throughout the undergraduate curriculum.

Ancestral Lines will be productively read not only by beginning students but by specialists as well. It will be of particular interest to scholars of the Pacific as well as anyone interested in art, aesthetics or political ecology. Perhaps most significantly, it serves as a powerful case study for theorizing social change. Globalization is presented as being neither ultimately "good" nor "evil"—it neither flattens cultural diversity nor leads to its creation. Similarly, we learn that transnational forces do not work to the detriment of local communities, but neither do they carry in their wake some kind of unqualified good. Finally, it is erroneous to see cultural change and continuity as opposed positions along a unidirectional time line. What Barker does best in *Ancestral Lines* is to reveal the many complexities involved in analyzing social life and history. The fact that he does so with such clarity and finesse makes this text all the more remarkable an achievement.

Richard Price, *Travels with Tooy: History, Memory, and the African American Imagination*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008, 448 pages.

Reviewer: *Allan C. Dawson*
Trent University

Maroon communities, formed by runaway and rebel slaves who fled the brutality and terror of whip and toil in the slave plantation, have become important symbolic reference points for Black communities throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. They represent both a militant and proactive response to the inhumanity of slavery and—for many Black movements—provide a connection with the idea of a past where African languages, cultures and traditions persisted. Richard Price's (1983) work on the Saramaka Maroons of Suriname helped to create the sub-field of Maroon studies in Afro-American anthropology. Further, working with Sydney Mintz (1976) in the 1970s, he also laid an important theoretical foundation for the ethnographic and historical study of plantation societies in the Caribbean with the introduction of the model of "rapid creolization" of the ethnically heterogeneous milieu that existed on most plantations, haciendas and fazendas.

After 35 years of working with the Saramaka in both Suriname and French Guiana and of exploring the role of Africa in forging the social imaginary of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean societies, Price encountered Tooy—a Saramaka magical specialist and community leader—in the shantytowns that ring Cayenne. *Travels with Tooy* documents Price's seven-year association with the charismatic Saramaka priest. However, it is an association that, according to Price, goes far beyond the standard ethnographer-informant relationship. Price credits Tooy as a full partner and collaborator in his exploration of how the Saramaka understand the place of Africa and African cosmologies in the creation of their own culture. Price asks "What is Africa for Tooy?" (p. 51). In many ways, this question summarizes the entire project of the book—to address, in the context of the debate between creole theorists and Africa-centric scholars, the role that Africa has played in making Black society in the Americas.

This volume, in many ways, represents Price's attempt to distil and rearticulate his approach to the magnificently rich and varied way that Afro-American communities, particularly Maroon communities like the Saramaka, have included the African, Amerindian and European to make vibrant and whole societies despite the horrors of the Middle Passage and life on the plantation. I use the word *distil* to emphasize the incredibly personal and intimate nature of Price's collaboration with Tooy. Through this mesmerizing character—who will likely join the ranks of other classic ethnographic informants such as Ongka of Kawelka fame, or Paiakan of the Kayapo—Price has deftly presented us with the very embodiment of creolization: an individual whose culture and worldview is eminently Saramaka but within whom we see the myriad ways in which

African culture has been recombined, reinterpreted and remade in the forests of South America.

It would be quite impossible to conduct a chapter-by-chapter summary of this volume in the space provided here, as the work contains over thirty short sections, many of which read like diary entries rather than chapters in a traditional ethnographic monograph. This is not to say that these sections are formed of raw, unfiltered fieldnotes. Indeed, quite the opposite—each section serves to peel back another portion of Tooy's life history or of Price's interaction with him to reveal a subtle exposition of how a creole past has served to make the Saramaka present.

The volume is written in a beautifully crafted and captivating narrative style that draws the reader into a world where magical sea spirits and African gods live a life as real to Tooy as anything on the earthly plane. Tooy communicates with these entities through possession ceremonies. However, Price does not interrogate the anthropology or psychology of possession in any way other than to accept that for Tooy, these events, entities and experiences are very real and so should be treated as such by the ethnographer. Richard and Sally Price have been working with the Saramaka for decades and consequently, the social realities of these people have been, for some time, part of their reality. The life of the Saramaka village; the sights, sounds and smells of the Suriname bush; the existence of refugee and exiled Saramaka living in Cayenne; all of these experiences have helped to inform the Prices' ethnography. It should come as no surprise then, that the author approaches Tooy's understanding of the magical world of "Wéntis" or sea gods (p. 9), spirits of life and death (p. 17) and other aspects of Saramaka cosmology with the same degree of credulity and acceptance as his canny interlocutor and alter-ego.

Recent scholarship that has contributed to perspectives on creolization in the slave plantation, such as Matory (2005) and Palmié (2002) and others, has sought to place Black agency and an ongoing dialogue between the Americas and Africa at the heart of the discussion about Afro-American religion, social movements and identity. However, Price argues that these works rarely take into account the world of Maroon societies (p. 302). Price's work on Maroons, and especially this volume, very much emphasize the importance of Black action and agency in making Afro-American culture. Throughout Price's documentation of his ongoing interaction with Tooy, the author exhorts his readers to pay attention to the convoluted politics of self-representation and identity. Although the Saramaka actively sought to isolate themselves from the "dialogue" wrought by the slave trade between the Suriname coast and West Africa, they are no less responsible for making their own society and Black social universe than are the populations of manumitted Blacks living in cities like Salvador in Brazil or Havana in Cuba.

Another of Price's goals with this work, although he is less explicit about it, is to relocate the study of creolization back to American, and more specifically, Caribbean space. Price rails

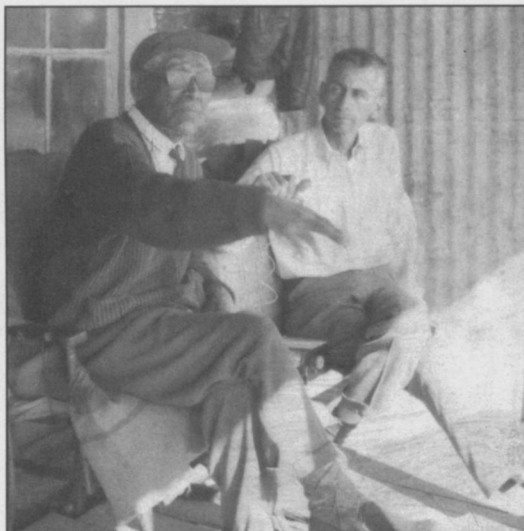
against the dilution and repurposing of the creolization concept to describe any form of cultural hybridity and in his presentation of Tooy's story, the author continually maintains the importance of understanding creole social processes in the very specific socio-historical context of the Caribbean.

Ultimately, I think that one of Price's real aims with this volume is to illustrate the futility and sterility of the rather tiresome and, at times, acrimonious debate that continues to waylay Afro-American anthropology. Maroon communities, such as those in Suriname, Brazil or Jamaica, are often held up by Black movements as the most "African" of Black American societies and represent the importance of resistance to racial oppression. In Tooy, Price provides us with an extremely personal and intimate portrait of a man and a community that have both maintained a potent and ever-present connection with Africa but that also represent the incredible creativity and innovation found in creolized societies.

Both this book and the personality of Tooy weave an enchanting spell over the reader. It is a marvellously written exploration of a unique Afro-American society, an enchanting character sketch of a singular individual and another important contribution to the ethnographic and theoretical exploration of how Africa has contributed to the social and cultural life of the Americas. To be sure, it is very densely written and one wonders at times where Tooy ends and Price begins. Though some might find these sorts of literary acrobatics disconcerting in a work of ethnography, I am not one of them.

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A Kindly Scrutiny of Human Nature

ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF RICHARD SLOBODIN

RICHARD J. PRESTON, editor

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A Kindly Scrutiny of Human Nature Essays in Honour of Richard Slobodin

Richard J. Preston, editor

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A *Kindly Scrutiny of Human Nature* is a collection of essays honouring Richard (Dick) Slobodin, one of the great anthropologists of the Canadian North. A short biography is followed by essays describing his formative thinking about human nature and human identities, his humanizing force in his example of living a moral, intellectual life, his discernment of people's ability to make informed choices and actions, his freedom from ideological fashions, his writings about the Mackenzie District Métis, his determination to take people's experience seriously, not metaphorically, and his thinking about social organization and kinship. An unpublished paper about a 1930s caribou hunt in which he participated finishes the collection, giving Dick the last word.

Richard J. Preston is nominally retired (Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, McMaster University) and hopes to continue his forty-plus-year span of sojourning and work with the people of the James Bay region, focusing on the cultural dimensions of globalization and tracing the emergence of the Cree concept of community. His publications include *Cree Narrative: Expressing the Personal Meanings of Events*, second edition (2002), and a great many papers.

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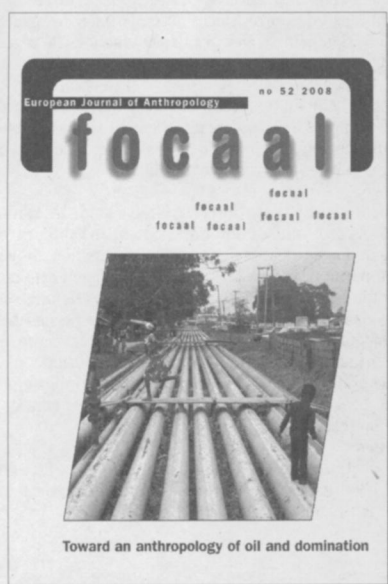
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