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**Changes of Place: Interrogating the Continuities and Disjunctures of Movement /
Les déplacements : questions de continuités et de ruptures dans le mouvement**

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Thematic Section
Changes of Place: Interrogating the Continuities and Disjunctures of Movement

Introduction

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Efforts to account for processes of continuity and change have long posed quintessential and perennial challenges for social and cultural anthropology as they have for its sister social sciences. Indeed the difficulties in meeting this challenge have been key factors in precipitating the succession of various more or less expansive theoretical paradigms. In this special issue, we approach this open-ended terrain from a focus on movement, a vantage point that is at once selective and yet still wide-ranging. It is probably not surprising that movement has often been construed as fundamentally inscribing change since it requires shifts through space and time. Yet from Marcel Mauss (1973) to Tim Ingold (2004), theorists have also noted that walking, one of the oldest and most fundamental forms of movement, marks out taken for granted cultural continuities even as it effects historical transformations:

> When the same paths are repeatedly trodden, especially by heavy boots, the consequences may be quite dramatic amounting in places to severe erosion. Surfaces are indeed transformed. But these are surfaces *in* the world, not the surface *of* the world. Indeed strictly speaking, the world has no surface. Human beings live in the world, not on it, and as beings in the world the historical transformations they effect are part and parcel of the world's transformation of itself. [Ingold 2004:333]

In his discussion of the evolution of walking, Ingold draws attention to the way in which forms of movement came to be distinguished from each other in terms of dimensions of social class, destination and technologies of transport. These kinds of social distinctions have also been echoed in the tendency to parcel out various forms of movement—local perambulations, tourism, migration, diplomatic, military, business or student travel—as the province of different fields of scholarly investigation. But this compartmentalization, while never entirely convincing,

has become blurred as the number of people moving long distances, the overlaps between different impetuses for, regimes and modalities of movement, as well as the far flung connections afforded by new forms of communication and transport technologies have all increased. At the same time, the distinctions Ingold, as well as many others, noted still have their contemporary socioeconomic referents. Our aim in compiling this diverse collection of studies is therefore neither to collapse the differences between different forms of movement, nor to allow them to overly determine the limits on how we encompass and comprehend spatial mobility. Mobility of one kind or another often focuses a more acute and self-conscious spotlight on disjunctures and persistences that are also experienced or insisted on both by more sedentary individuals as well as by people engaged in other forms of movement. Hence an examination of various forms of movement usefully throws open for interrogation broader processes and paradigms that extend well beyond the particular instance or type of journey.

The Life Course and Movements

Positing a relationship between age or life phase and mobility has been a longstanding feature of studies of movement. A noteworthy example of this has been the frequent observation by migration scholars that young adults are the most likely to be involved in long distance migration because they have the "least invested in terms of jobs and career at home" and the most time to recoup their "investment in migration" (Martin 2007:7). But this primary focus on one particular phase in the life course has changed as the construction of migration has shifted.

Earlier scholarship tended to represent migration as a singular movement between two stable places, with a consequent focus either on the factors mobilizing the *recruitment* of migrants in one locale or on those shaping their *reception* at another. Over the last 15 years, much greater attention has been paid to the transnational fields and ongoing social connections created as people move across space (Basch et al. 1994). One of the effects of this shift has been increasing recognition that migration is rarely singular but that it often involves a series of moves: from the countryside to the city, within geopolitical regions, across state and regional borders, visits back and forth across dispersed social networks, return migration and so on. The onus thus shifts away from a presumption of stable places from which migrants embark or disembark, towards ethnographic studies of moving people who construct and *reconstruct* places, social relations and social contexts in the course of and through their ongoing experiences of movement (Werbner 1999).

This fluidity of places and social relations is brought out in Marianne Holm Pedersen's analysis of Iraqi refugee women in Denmark. It shows how the women came to realize that their Iraqi family and country of origin, which they regarded as firm foundations of identification and belonging, are in fact changeable entities. The women became aware of this when, after years of being settled in Denmark, the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime allowed them at last to pay a return visit to their family and place of origin in Iraq. This experience elicited reassessments of the status and quality of personal networks in both Iraq and in Denmark as well as poignant questions about belonging. The Iraqi case underscores the close relationship between "being" and "belonging." While the two notions can be distinguished analytically (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004), it is easier to separate them when dealing with more abstract contexts of belonging than when considering the continuous reshaping of social relations and attachment to place that occurs in the course of everyday life.

The role of the home as a place of belonging and achievement is a central theme in Heather Horst's treatment of Jamaican return migration. For returnees, building a respectable home was a manifestation of their success in the migration destination as well as in the country of origin. Thus, construction of a home became a "rite of passage" whereby they sought to reconnect with their society of origin while maintaining a sense of continuity in relation to the lives they had built abroad. This became of critical importance as the returnees realized the difficulties of establishing the kind of life in Jamaica that they had dreamed of as migrants abroad and began to feel the loss of children and grandchildren left behind in the migration destination.

If migration has always involved moves across both space and time, one could then argue that an earlier literature privileged a focus on spatial aspects whereas more recent work has rebalanced our attention toward a more evenhanded treatment of temporal as well as spatial dimensions. It is therefore not surprising to find that recording life histories has become an increasingly prominent part of research on migration and has helped to extend our notion of how movement is positioned and repositioned over the life course (Olwig 2007). In this issue, Karen Fog Olwig's repeated encounters, over the course of 20 years, with the members of a family that had emigrated from the island of Nevis to the American Virgin Islands provide telling illustrations of the ways in which the stated motivations for migration "undergo constant revision and reassessment, as individuals take stock of their lives at various points in their lives and reconsider

the ambitions and goals that have guided their life as migrants."

But the dialectic between movement and the life course need not only involve an ongoing appraisal of mobility; it can also mould conceptions and experience of the life course itself. Certain forms of movement may be identified with particular life phases or transitions and plans for mobility or travel may shape the life course long before the actual move is made. As described by Noel Dyck in this issue, the hope of eventually winning an athletic scholarship to attend an American college or university is increasingly reshaping the childhoods of many young Canadian high performing amateur athletes. Eventual retirement to the sunny climes of Spain was a longstanding aspiration for many of the British migrants that Caroline Oliver encountered in the Costa del Sol. By contrast, Vered Amit reports that despite official discourses about travel as part of career formation, young Canadians taking up opportunities for temporary work or study abroad may simply be seeking a break before settling down to a form of adulthood that they seem to regard as otherwise inevitable. On the other hand, Nadia Giguère describes how what was initially intended to be a short term experience of volunteer work in Calcutta became a fundamental turning point in the life plans of some European visitors, leading to long term involvements in India, new careers, transnational connections and relationships. All of these cases feature a dedifferentiation between different forms of mobility with overlaps or convergences between tourism, migration and student travel: tourists dream of retiring to their vacation getaway; volunteer visitors find themselves settling in the country in which they expected to be only temporarily resident; youths seek work or study opportunities that will allow them to tour abroad.

But it is the much poorer and more marginalized women, with whom Hanne Mogensen conducted fieldwork in eastern Uganda, who are the most mobile of all the people featured in this issue. Over the course of their youths, adulthoods and even impending deaths, the daily routines of Catherine and her sisters were constituted around constant moves in search of the kind of support from relatives or the types of temporary jobs that would enable them to carry on and stay alive. As Mogensen points out, it is this constant movement that "ensures some kind of continuity in their lives and in their living standard." Here it is life itself and the hope of a future, which is at stake in the pursuit of an unceasing round of movement. Between the assurance of young Canadian travellers that they will be able to settle down when they choose, and Catherine's longing for a place to settle, lies a world of unequal motion.

Changes of Place and Improvisation

Catherine and her sisters were constantly improvising, opportunistically searching out support, contact and assistance that might provide them with a place to stay, a job, business capital, a lover, a friend. But smaller or greater improvisations feature in all the cases included here. Helena, Kevin and their children responded to the shifting circumstances of their settlement in the American Virgin Islands by revising again and again their hopes for improvement and the provision they made for jobs, homes and education. Alienated by the invasion of holiday homeowners to his village in the English countryside, John and his wife moved to a Spanish village where people still "help each other out." But like a number of their fellow British expatriate retirees, when they became older and more fragile, they decided to leave Spain. In their case, they elected not to return to the U.K. but to join their children who were living in New Zealand.

In all of these cases, therefore, people improvise as opportunities present themselves and change their strategies, plans and arrangements when circumstances change. This capacity for improvisation is hardly peculiar to people moving about and would surely have featured in the lives of all the people described in this volume, regardless of whether or not they had moved away from their natal homes or countries. But improvisation and change is thrown into sharper relief by the experience of movement. In part, this is because people move to effect change or in response to change. At the very least, movement holds open the possibility of enabling a *change of place* in the sense of a new locality or social position. It can hold open the chance for self-improvement, the promise of escape from the social norms and obligations of one locality in moving to another, or a chance to combine the elements of different contexts. Among the European expatriates, on whom Nadia Giguère focused, an initial experience of volunteering in Calcutta provoked fundamental reorientations in their outlooks and life plans. Yet these volunteers did not persist with the kind of humanitarian work that elicited this life-altering shift, instead they subsequently sought out new projects in India that they found more personally satisfying and hopeful. And while they came to feel alienated from their Western backgrounds, in various ways they were also all able to draw on the privileges that came from their status as expatriate Europeans in Calcutta, or from the transnational connections that provided financial support for their projects.

Even when movement may appear to lead to limited mobility, as gauged by standard social and economic

indicators, the broader spectrum of contexts made available through movement provides new opportunities for social positioning. The Nevisian family members were thus able to present themselves as successful by highlighting particular aspects of their achievements abroad, such as the building of a large house, generous remittances to family left behind or high moral standards. But movement is more than just a gateway to possible changes. Mobility is in itself necessarily improvisational and even when it is undertaken as part of familiar and well entrenched traditions, requires some inventiveness when the unexpected inevitably occurs. So a focus on movement draws our attention to the capacities, contexts and scope for improvisation.

Hanging onto Paradigms

But for all of the disjunctures and improvisations that are necessarily vested in changes of place, one of the most striking aspects of the cases included in this collection is the unwillingness expressed by many of the protagonists to abandon the key paradigms that framed their movements. This seems to be the case even when many of their experiences appear to contradict important aspects of the premises they continue to claim. The recruitment of middle-class Canadian students to American university athletic programs relies on the students' and their parents' willingness to overlook or ignore the controversies and contradictions that have dogged these kinds of programs for decades. In spite of the exhaustion of constant practice, the social and financial costs, the difficulties of and shortfalls entailed in reconciling competing athletic and academic demands, most of the students continued to insist that their American educational experience had "been worth it." The Jopadhola of Uganda continue to insist on their adherence to a patrilineal kinship system in which a woman completely transfers from her father's to her husband's clan even though an increasing number of women have been divorced or never married, had children out of wedlock, and continue moving from one relative to another. British retirees who have moved to Spain continue to assert that the move has involved a radical change in lifestyle even though they have helped to recreate an imported British lifestyle, English lingua franca and associated amenities on the Costa del Sol. Having sought a different and better way of life by moving, they are determined that their experience in Spain has been as radically transformative as they hoped.

Why, then, given evidence to the contrary, do people insist on the continued salience of particular paradigms of family, life course, education and self-improvement that framed their movement? It may be that in some instances,

people have few alternatives and little power to challenge prevailing tenets. The movements of Catherine and her sisters are a living testament to crucial changes in the Ugandan institutional and urban landscape but they have few resources or incentives to challenge an idealized version of clan solidarity on which they are drawing—albeit selectively—in claiming support from relatives. In other words, the improvisations of some people on the go may be, to use de Certeau's distinction (1984), a matter of tactics rather than strategic calculations. However creative or indomitable, these improvisations still may be tightly circumscribed within broader representations and value systems.

But in many of the cases described in this collection of articles, there is no overriding social pressure necessitating either the move itself or a particular tenet attached to it. Here the insistence on certain paradigms may be tied to the longer-term investment that the migrant or traveller has placed in a particular construction of movement. As Noel Dyck explains in his paper, the acceptance of an American athletic scholarship is often tied to a long held set of aspirations refracted through a particular regime of community sports, coaching and parenting. To admit, even to oneself, that the experience did not live up to these expectations is to call into question a whole childhood of personal and family investment in a particular ideal of accomplishment and coming of age. British retirees often dreamed of an eventual new chapter in the sun long before they were actually able to make the move to Spain. European visitors were drawn to volunteer in a humanitarian project in Calcutta because it seemed to provide an opportunity to actualize long held humanitarian or religious ideals. In other words, we cannot view the paradigmatic lens through which people account for their travels only in terms of the move and its immediate aftermath. Rather, these moves have to be contextualized within a much longer history of investment in a particular rationale or aspirations for movement. People's sense of themselves, of their past and future, and of their most intimate personal connections, can be as bound up with the way in which they locate their travels as the move itself. Hence, there is much more at stake for many travellers in reframing their moves than just acknowledging that things have not necessarily worked out as they had imagined.

But there may also be reasons for "hanging on" that are vested in the nature of the changes and improvisations exigent upon movement itself. It may be easier to move, to accept larger or smaller changes and separation from loved ones and familiar places if some key tenets and values are seen to be retained. The willingness of young Canadians to seek opportunities for study or work

abroad even when this may involve quitting a "good job" was likely buttressed by their seeming assurance that adulthood itself would not be affected by this mobility and that in due course they would be able to settle down to a stable job, family and home. Umm Ali and other refugee Iraqi women in Copenhagen held onto the continued importance of an idealized version of family relations and support for many years during which they could not visit their country of origin. It was therefore probably difficult to give up altogether on this construction of family even when a visit to Iraq brought home to Umm Ali how much she had come to depend on a network of friends in Denmark and how distant her sense of connection to close relatives in Iraq had become. Many Jamaican migrants had been sustained by a vision of their island of origin as the true home to which they would be able to return after many years of labour in a distant migration destination. If this vision could not be realized by the returnees, in the broader sense of experiencing a sense of belonging in Jamaican society as such, it could be fulfilled by building, furnishing and decorating a house where they felt at home.

In an account of Luo urban migration in East Africa during the 1970s, David Parkin (1978) argued that continued adherence to the perpetuation of key cultural institutions could gloss over the significant social changes that these concepts had come to encompass. In other words, continued adherence to certain indexical concepts may sometimes enable people to be more comfortable with a measure of improvisation and change than an open challenge to treasured principles. In some cases therefore, the basis for change may be the reassurance, even if somewhat contrived, of the continued solidity of key institutions and paradigms.

The ethnographic analyses presented in this issue point to no simple conclusions. They show that movement leads to junctures as well as disjunctures; entails well-planned strategies as well as improvised tactics; and involves ongoing, complexly interwoven, negotiations of being and belonging as well as personhood. Movement clearly cannot be accounted for in terms of well-structured chains of cause and effect, but must be approached as an integral part of social life and the varying life trajectories in time and space that it implicates.

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Section thématique
Les déplacements : questions de continuités et de ruptures
dans le mouvement

Introduction

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L es tentatives de description des processus de continuité et de changement posent depuis longtemps des défis fondamentaux et durables à l'anthropologie sociale et culturelle, comme elles l'ont fait pour les autres sciences sociales. En fait, les difficultés associées à ces défis ont constitué des facteurs clés dans l'accrétion d'une succession de divers paradigmes théoriques de portée plus ou moins étendue. Dans ce numéro spécial, nous approchons ce domaine ouvert en nous intéressant au le mouvement, une perspective à la fois sélective et pourtant à portée très large. Il n'est probablement pas surprenant que le mouvement ait été perçu comme une manifestation fondamentale du changement, puisqu'il exige des déplacements dans l'espace et le temps. Pourtant, de Marcel Mauss (1973) à Tim Ingold (2004), les théoriciens ont aussi remarqué que la marche, une des plus anciennes et fondamentales formes de mouvement, détermine des continuités culturelles tenues pour acquises, même dans la mesure où elle affecte des transformations culturelles :

> When the same paths are repeatedly trodden, especially by heavy boots, the consequences may be quite dramatic amounting in places to severe erosion. Surfaces are indeed transformed. But these are surfaces *in* the world, not the surface *of* the world. Indeed strictly speaking, the world has no surface. Human beings live in the world, not on it, and as beings in the world the historical transformations they effect are part and parcel of the world's transformation of itself. [Ingold 2004:333]

Dans sa réflexion sur l'évolution de la marche, Ingold attire l'attention sur la manière dont des formes de mouvement en sont venues à se distinguer les unes des autres en fonction de leurs dimensions de classe sociale, de destination et de technologies de transport. Des distinctions sociales de ce type ont aussi trouvé leur écho dans la tendance à découper diverses formes de mouvements – allées et venues locales, tourisme, migrations, voyages

diplomatiques, militaires, d'affaires ou d'études – comme des champs de recherche académique différents. Mais cette compartimentation, jamais entièrement convaincante, est devenue floue à mesure que le nombre des voyageurs au long cours et les chevauchements entre les diverses impulsions, modalités et régimes de déplacement augmentaient de même que les liens parfois très étendus rendus possibles par les nouvelles formes de communication et technologies de transport. Simultanément, les distinctions remarquées par Ingold et par plusieurs autres ont encore leurs référents socioéconomiques contemporains. Notre objectif, alors que nous compilons cette collection diversifiée d'études, n'est pas d'écraser les différences entre diverses formes de mouvements, non plus que de laisser celles-ci déterminer dans une trop large mesure des limites dans nos manières d'intégrer et de comprendre la mobilité spatiale. Sous une forme ou une autre, la mobilité éclaire souvent d'un faisceau plus étroit et plus conscient les persistances et les ruptures qui font aussi partie de l'expérience ou de la conscience de soi à la fois des individus plus sédentaires et des gens engagés dans d'autres formes de mouvement. En conséquence, un examen des diverses formes de mouvements ouvre une interrogation utile des processus et paradigmes plus larges dont la portée dépasse un type ou exemple particulier de voyage.

Le parcours de vie et les déplacements

Les études du mouvement ont formulé depuis longtemps l'hypothèse d'une relation entre l'âge ou les phases de la vie et la mobilité. Un exemple digne de mention de ce courant est l'observation souvent formulée par les chercheurs en matière de migration voulant que les jeunes adultes soient plus susceptibles de s'engager dans une migration au long cours parce qu'ils ont « least invested in terms of jobs and career at home » et parce qu'ils ont plus de temps pour tirer les fruits de leur « investissement dans la migration » (Martin 2007 :7). Mais cette insistance primaire sur une phase particulière du parcours de vie a changé à mesure que la construction de la migration s'est réorientée.

Les recherches plus anciennes tendaient à représenter la migration comme un mouvement singulier entre deux endroits stables, de sorte que leur intérêt portait avant tout sur les facteurs déterminant le *recrutement* des émigrants dans un lieu ou sur ceux façonnant leur *accueil* dans un autre. Au cours des quinze dernières années, on a davantage porté attention aux domaines transnationaux et aux liens sociaux permanents qui se créent lorsque des gens se déplacent dans l'espace (Basch et al. 1994). Un des effets de ce changement de foyer est

que l'on reconnaît de plus en plus que la migration est rarement un geste isolé et qu'elle est souvent la somme d'une série de mouvements : de la campagne à la ville, entre des régions géopolitiques, au travers des frontières régionales et nationales, sous forme de visites mutuelles au sein de réseaux sociaux dispersés, de migrations de retour, et ainsi de suite. Ainsi, l'effort de recherche s'éloigne de la prémisse de lieux stables où les migrants s'embarquent et débarquent en faveur d'études ethnographiques portant sur des gens en mouvement qui construisent et reconstruisent des lieux, des rapports et des contextes sociaux dans le cadre et dans l'exercice de leur expérience ininterrompue du mouvement (Werbner 1999).

Cette fluidité des endroits et des rapports sociaux ressort dans l'analyse de Marianne Holm Pedersen portant sur les réfugiées iraquiennes au Danemark. L'article montre comment ces femmes en sont venues à réaliser que leur famille iraquienne et leur pays d'origine, qu'elles considéraient comme de solides racines d'identification et d'appartenance, sont en fait des entités changeantes. Cette prise de conscience est survenue quand, après qu'elles aient vécu pendant des années au Danemark, la chute du régime de Saddam Hussein leur a enfin permis de rendre visite à leur famille et à leur lieu d'origine en Iraq. Cette expérience a engendré des réévaluations du statut et de la qualité des réseaux personnels aussi bien en Iraq qu'au Danemark, et a soulevé de poignantes questions sur l'appartenance. Le récit iraquien souligne les rapports intimes entre « être » et « appartenir ». S'il est possible de distinguer les deux notions de manière analytique (Levitt et Glick Schiller 2004), il est plus facile de les séparer lorsque l'on aborde des contextes d'appartenance plus abstraits que lorsqu'on considère la transformation continuelle des rapports sociaux et de l'attachement aux lieux qui a cours dans la vie quotidienne.

Le rôle de la maison comme lieu d'appartenance et de réalisation est un thème central de l'essai de Heather Horst sur l'immigration de retour en Jamaïque. Pour ceux qui reviennent, construire une maison respectable constituait une preuve de leur réussite au lieu de destination de leur migration comme dans le pays d'origine. Ainsi, la construction d'une maison devenait un « rite de passage » par lequel ils cherchaient à se rebrancher avec leur société d'origine, tout en gardant le sentiment d'une continuité avec la vie qu'ils s'étaient construite à l'étranger. Cela a acquis une importance critique lorsque les migrants de retour ont compris les difficultés à établir en Jamaïque le genre de vie dont ils avaient rêvé comme migrants à l'étranger et ont commencé à ressentir la perte de leurs enfants et petits-enfants laissés dans le pays d'émigration.

Si la migration a toujours impliqué des déplacements dans le temps et l'espace, on pourrait amener l'argument que les publications plus anciennes mettaient davantage l'accent sur la dimension spatiale, alors que les travaux plus récents nous invitent à accorder une attention plus équilibrée aux dimensions à la fois temporelles et spatiales. Il n'est donc pas étonnant de découvrir que l'enregistrement des récits de vie occupe de plus en plus de place dans la recherche sur les migrations et nous a permis d'élargir notre compréhension de la part que joue le mouvement à diverses étapes de notre vie (Olwig 2007). À cet égard, les rencontres répétées, sur une période de vingt ans, de Karen Fog Olwig avec les membres d'une famille qui avait émigré de l'île de Nevis vers les îles Vierges américaines procurent des illustrations convaincantes des manières dont les motivations affirmées pour l'émigration « font l'objet de révisions et de réévaluations constantes, à mesure que les individus font l'inventaire de leurs vies à diverses étapes et réinterprètent les ambitions et les objectifs qui ont guidé leur vie en tant que migrants ».

Mais la dialectique entre le mouvement et le parcours de vie n'implique pas seulement une appréciation continue de la mobilité; elle peut aussi façonner les conceptions et l'expérience du parcours de vie proprement dit. Certaines formes de mouvement peuvent être identifiées avec des phases ou transitions particulières de la vie, et des projets de mobilité ou de voyage peuvent façonner le cours de la vie bien avant que les déplacements soient effectivement accomplis. Comme le décrit Noel Dyck dans ce recueil, l'espoir de décrocher un jour une bourse d'athlétisme pour fréquenter une université aux États-Unis redessine l'enfance de plusieurs jeunes athlètes d'élite canadiens. Pour de nombreux migrants britanniques que Caroline Oliver a rencontrés sur la Costa del Sol, la possibilité de prendre un jour sa retraite sous le climat ensoleillé d'Espagne a fait l'objet d'une aspiration de longue date. Par contraste, Vered Amit rapporte qu'en dépit du discours officiel qui veut que les voyages fassent partie de la préparation à la carrière, les jeunes Canadiens qui profitent des occasions de travail temporaire ou d'étude à l'étranger pourraient chercher simplement à prendre une pause avant de s'établir dans une forme de vie adulte qu'ils semblent considérer comme inévitable autrement. De son côté, Nadia Giguère décrit comment ce qui était projeté comme une expérience de travail bénévole à court terme à Calcutta est devenu un tournant dans les projets de vie de certains visiteurs européens, les entraînant vers des engagements à long terme en Inde, de nouvelles carrières, des relations et liens internationaux. Tous ces sujets d'étude comportent une dédifférentiation entre différentes formes de mobilité, avec des chevauchements ou des convergences

entre le tourisme, la migration et le voyage étudiant : les touristes rêvent de prendre leur retraite dans leur lieu d'évasion de vacances; des visiteurs bénévoles se trouvent à s'établir dans le pays où ils ne s'attendaient à résider que de façon temporaire; des jeunes recherchent des occasions de travail ou d'étude qui leur permettront de faire du tourisme au long cours.

Mais ce sont les femmes les plus pauvres et les plus marginalisées, avec qui Hanne Mogensen a mené une recherche de terrain dans l'est de l'Ouganda, qui sont les personnes les plus mobiles de tous les gens présentés dans cette parution. Tout au long de leur jeunesse, de leur vie adulte et même à l'approche de leur mort, la routine quotidienne de Catherine et de ses sœurs consiste en déplacements constants à la recherche du soutien de parents ou des types d'emplois temporaires qui leur permettraient de continuer et de rester en vie. Comme le souligne Mogensen, c'est ce mouvement constant qui « assure une certaine continuité dans leur vie et dans leur niveau de vie ». Ici, c'est la vie même, et l'espoir d'un avenir, qui sont en jeu dans la poursuite d'une incessante ronde de déplacements. Entre la conviction des jeunes voyageurs canadiens qu'ils seront capables de s'établir quand ils le choisiront, et la quête de Catherine d'un endroit où s'établir, on trouve tout un monde d'inégalité dans le mouvement.

Changements de lieu et improvisation

Catherine et ses sœurs étaient continuellement en train d'improviser, cherchant de manière opportuniste du soutien, des contacts et de l'assistance qui leur fourniraient un endroit où rester, un emploi, du capital d'affaires, un amant, un ami. Mais l'improvisation à petite ou à grande échelle est présente dans tous les cas présentés ici. Helena, Kevin et leurs enfants ont réagi aux conditions changeantes de leur établissement dans les Îles Vierges américaines en ajustant encore et encore leurs espoirs d'améliorations et les arrangements qu'ils avaient pris en matière d'emploi, de logement et d'éducation. Rebutés par l'invasion des propriétaires de résidences secondaires dans leur village de la campagne anglaise, John et sa femme ont déménagé dans un village espagnol où les gens « s'entraident encore ». Mais comme nombre de leurs compatriotes retraités expatriés, lorsqu'ils se sont sentis plus fragiles en vieillissant, ils ont décidé de quitter l'Espagne. Dans leur cas, ils ont choisi non pas de regagner le Royaume-Uni mais de rejoindre leurs enfants qui vivent en Nouvelle-Zélande.

Dans tous ces cas, donc, les gens improvisent à mesure que des opportunités se présentent et changent leurs stratégies, projets et arrangements, quand les circonstances se modifient. Cette capacité d'improvisation

n'est pas particulière aux personnes qui se déplacent et pourrait être une caractéristique de toutes les personnes décrites dans cet ouvrage, sans égard au fait qu'elles aient quitté ou non leur pays ou maison d'origine. Mais l'expérience du mouvement souligne d'un relief plus prononcé l'improvisation et le changement. Cela est dû en partie au fait que les gens se déplacent pour provoquer un changement ou en réponse à un changement. À tout le moins, le mouvement comporte la possibilité de permettre un *changement de lieu* dans le sens d'une nouvelle localité ou d'une nouvelle position sociale. Il peut tenir la porte ouverte à une occasion de perfectionnement, à la promesse d'échapper aux normes et contraintes sociales d'une localité en se déplaçant vers une autre ou à la chance de combiner les éléments de différents contextes. Chez les expatriés européens qui ont fait l'objet de la recherche de Nadia Giguère, une expérience initiale de bénévolat à Calcutta a provoqué des réorientations fondamentales de leurs perspectives et de leurs projets de vie. Pour autant, ces bénévoles n'ont pas persisté dans le type de travail humanitaire qui avait permis cette réorientation des choix de vie, ils ont plutôt cherché de nouveaux projets en Inde susceptibles de leur apporter plus de satisfaction personnelle et d'espoir. Et en même temps qu'ils en venaient à se sentir en rupture avec leurs origines occidentales, de diverses manières ils trouvaient aussi les moyens de tirer profit des privilèges associés à leurs statuts d'Européens expatriés à Calcutta, ou des contacts transnationaux qui assuraient le soutien financier de leurs projets.

Même quand le mouvement peut sembler mener à une mobilité limitée, telle que mesurée par des indicateurs sociaux et économiques standards, l'élargissement du spectre des contextes rendu disponible par le mouvement fournit de nouvelles opportunités de positionnement social. Les membres de la famille émigrée de Nevis étaient ainsi capables de se présenter comme des personnes ayant réussi en mettant en lumière certains aspects de leurs réalisations à l'étranger, telle la construction d'une grande maison, des contributions généreuses à la famille laissée derrière ou des valeurs morales élevées. Mais le mouvement est davantage que la porte d'entrée à des possibilités de changement. La mobilité est en soi nécessairement un fait d'improvisation, et même quand on l'aborde dans le cadre de traditions familiales et bien enracinées, elle exige une certaine capacité d'invention quand l'inattendu, de manière inévitable, se produit. De sorte que notre intérêt pour le mouvement attire notre attention sur les capacités, les contextes et la portée de l'improvisation.

S'accrocher à ses paradigmes

Mais en dépit de toutes les ruptures et des improvisations qui sont nécessairement investies dans les changements de lieux, un des aspects les plus frappants des cas rassemblés dans la présente collection est l'objection exprimée par plusieurs des protagonistes envers l'abandon des paradigmes clés qui ont encadré leurs déplacements. Cela semble être le cas même quand plusieurs de leurs expériences semblent contredire des aspects importants des prémisses sur lesquelles ils continuent de s'appuyer. Le recrutement d'étudiants canadiens de classe moyenne par les programmes athlétiques des universités américaines repose sur l'empressement des étudiants et de leurs parents à ignorer ou à fermer les yeux sur les controverses et les contradictions qui ont caractérisé ces programmes depuis des décennies. En dépit de l'épuisement engendré par l'entraînement continuel, des coûts sociaux et financiers, des difficultés et des lacunes associées à la conciliation entre des exigences académiques et athlétiques concurrentes, la plupart des étudiants insistent pour affirmer que leur expérience scolaire américaine « a valu la peine ». Les Jopadhola d'Ouganda insistent pour persévérer dans leur adhésion à un système de parenté patrilinéaire dans lequel une femme subit un transfert complet du clan de son père à celui de son mari, même si un nombre croissant de femmes connaissent le divorce ou ne se marient jamais, ont des enfants hors du mariage ou continuent à se déplacer d'un parent à un autre. Les retraités britanniques qui ont déménagé en Espagne continuent d'affirmer que leur déplacement a entraîné un changement radical de mode de vie, même s'ils ont contribué à recréer un mode de vie britannique importé, avec l'anglais comme *Lingua franca* et des commodités associées sur la Costa Del Sol. Ayant cherché par leur migration à gagner un mode de vie différent et amélioré, ils sont convaincus que leur expérience en Espagne a donné lieu à une transformation aussi radicale qu'ils l'espéraient.

Pourquoi donc, lorsqu'on leur présente des preuves du contraire, les gens insistent-ils sur la prégnance persistante des paradigmes particuliers de famille, de parcours de vie, d'éducation et de perfectionnement qui ont constitué le cadre de leurs déplacements? Il se peut que dans certains cas, les gens aient peu d'autres choix et manquent de pouvoir pour affronter les opinions dominantes. Les déplacements de Catherine et de ses sœurs constituent un témoignage vivant de changements cruciaux dans le paysage urbain et institutionnel ougandais, mais elles ont peu de ressources ou d'encouragements à remettre en question une version idéalisée de la solidarité clanique sur laquelle elles s'appuient – encore que de manière sélec-

tive – lorsqu'elles demandent le soutien de certains parents. En d'autres mots, les improvisations de certaines personnes en mouvement pourraient s'avérer, pour utiliser une distinction proposée par de Certeau (1984) être davantage une question de tactique que de calculs stratégiques. Quoi qu'il en soit du caractère indomptable ou créatif de ces improvisations, elles peuvent encore être étroitement circonscrites dans des systèmes de valeur ou des représentations plus larges.

Mais pour beaucoup des cas décrits dans la présente collection d'articles, on ne trouve pas de pression sociale écrasante qui imposerait la nécessité du mouvement lui-même ou d'un principe particulier qui y serait attaché. Ici, l'insistance sur certains paradigmes peut être liée à l'investissement à plus long terme que le migrant ou le voyageur a consenti dans une construction particulière du mouvement. Comme l'explique Noel Dyck dans son article, le fait d'accepter une bourse américaine en athlétisme est souvent associé à un jeu d'aspirations de longue date répercuté dans un régime particulier de sport amateur et d'encadrement par les entraîneurs sportifs et les parents. Le fait d'admettre, même pour soi-même, que l'expérience n'a pas été à la hauteur des aspirations équivaut à remettre en question toute une enfance d'investissement personnel et familial dans un idéal particulier de réussite et d'émancipation. Les retraités britanniques ont souvent rêvé d'un possible nouveau chapitre sous le soleil longtemps avant d'avoir vraiment la capacité de déménager en Espagne. Les visiteurs européens ont été attirés à devenir bénévoles pour un projet humanitaire à Calcutta parce que ce projet semblait offrir l'occasion d'actualiser des idéaux philanthropiques ou religieux entretenus de longue date. En d'autres mots, nous ne pouvons considérer la lentille paradigmatique par laquelle les gens rendent compte de leurs voyages uniquement en termes du déplacement proprement dit et de ses prolongements immédiats. Au contraire, il faut mettre ces mouvements en contexte au sein d'une histoire beaucoup plus longue d'investissement dans une justification ou des aspirations particulières au mouvement. La perception que les gens ont d'eux-mêmes, de leur passé et de leur avenir, et de leurs interactions les plus intimes, peut être aussi étroitement liée à la manière dont ils situent leurs voyages que le déplacement lui-même. Conséquemment, l'enjeu lié au recadrage de leurs déplacements est considérablement plus grand pour nombre de voyageurs que celui de simplement reconnaître que les événements ne se sont pas forcément déroulés comme ils les avaient imaginés.

Mais il peut aussi exister des raisons pour « s'accrocher » qui tiennent à la nature des changements et improvisations faisant porter une exigence sur le mouvement lui-même. Il peut s'avérer plus facile de bouger, d'accepter des changements plus ou moins importants ou encore la séparation d'avec des êtres chers et des lieux familiers, si certains principes et valeurs-clés semblent être conservés. La disponibilité des jeunes Canadiens à rechercher des occasions de travail ou d'études à l'étranger, même si cela peut impliquer de quitter un « bon emploi » semblait s'appuyer sur leur assurance manifeste que leur vie adulte proprement dite n'aurait pas à souffrir de cette mobilité et qu'au moment opportun, ils pourraient s'établir avec un emploi, une famille et une résidence stables. Umm Ali et d'autres réfugiées iraquiennes à Copenhague se sont accrochées pendant des années à l'importance persistante d'une version idéalisée des relations et du soutien familial tout au long des années où elles n'avaient pas la possibilité de visiter leur pays d'origine. Il devenait alors probablement difficile d'abandonner d'un seul coup cette construction de la famille, même quand une visite en Iraq a révélé à Umm Ali dans quelle mesure elle en était venue à dépendre d'un réseau d'amis au Danemark et quelle distance marquait maintenant son sentiment d'interrelation avec ses parents proches en Iraq. De nombreux émigrants jamaïcains avaient été soutenus par une vision de leur île d'origine comme le vrai foyer où ils pourraient retourner après de longues années de travail dans une lointaine destination migratoire. Si les émigrants de retour ne parvenaient pas à accomplir cette vision, au sens plus large de ressentir une appartenance à la société jamaïcaine, ils pourraient du moins y parvenir en construisant, meublant et décorant une maison où ils se sentiraient chez eux.

Dans une description de la migration urbaine des Luo d'Afrique de l'Est dans les années 1970, David Parkin (1978) faisait valoir que la persistance dans la perpétuation d'institutions culturelles clés pouvait dissimuler les changements sociaux significatifs que ces concepts en étaient venus à recouvrir. En d'autres mots, l'adhésion persistante à certains concepts indexicaux peut parfois aider des gens à se sentir plus à l'aise face à une certaine mesure d'improvisation et de changement que face à une remise en question ouverte de principes précieusement protégés. En conséquence, il existe des cas où la base du changement peut prendre la forme d'une réaffirmation, même si elle est quelque peu artificielle, de la solidité continue d'institutions et de paradigmes clés.

Les analyses ethnographiques réunies dans le présent numéro ne pointent pas vers des conclusions simples. Elles montrent que le mouvement peut mener à des points de rapprochement comme d'éclatement; peut faire intervenir des stratégies bien planifiées comme des tactiques improvisées; et suppose des négociations continues, étroitement entrelacées, en matière d'être, d'appartenance

aussi bien que d'identité individuelle. On ne peut pas rendre clairement compte du mouvement en termes de chaines bien structurées de causes et d'effets; il faut plutôt l'approcher comme partie intégrante de la vie sociale et des diverses trajectoires de vie dans le temps et l'espace que cette vie implique.

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Revisiting Iraq: Change and Continuity in Familial Relations of Iraqi Refugees in Copenhagen

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Abstract: For refugees, their country of origin often provides a strong source of belonging and identity, yet many refugees can only maintain infrequent contacts with it. This article investigates how the sudden increase in relations with Iraq after Saddam Hussein's fall affected Iraqi refugee women and their families in Copenhagen, Denmark. It shows that, while renewed transnational practice in some ways allowed the women to re-create links to their relatives and their places of origin, thus affirming their Iraqi identity, it also raised questions about previous notions of relatedness and belonging and created a stronger sense of belonging in Denmark.

Keywords: refugees, place, belonging, relatedness

Résumé : pour les personnes réfugiées, leur pays d'origine constitue souvent une source importante d'appartenance et d'identité, alors que de nombreux exilés ont peine à maintenir des contacts fréquents avec leur milieu d'origine. Cet article s'intéresse à l'augmentation soudaine des relations avec l'Iraq consécutive à la chute de Saddam Hussein et à son impact sur des femmes iraquiennes réfugiées à Copenhague et sur leurs familles. On y montre que, par de nouveaux échanges internationaux, ces femmes ont pu dans une certaine mesure recréer des liens avec leur parenté et leur lieu d'origine, et par là affirmer leur identité iraquienne, mais que ce processus a aussi soulevé des questions quant aux notions antérieures d'appartenance et de liens familiaux, et a renforcé le sentiment d'appartenance au Danemark.

Mots-clés : réfugiés, lieux, appartenance, liens familiaux

Introduction

In the experience of mobility, the family constitutes a site in which notions of continuity and belonging are continuously negotiated in relation to processes of change. For Iraqi refugees living in Copenhagen, Denmark, their family background provided them with a history and a sense of identity that grounded them in their place of origin in Iraq. Yet, during most of their stay in Denmark, they could only maintain infrequent contacts with their relatives in Iraq and they were not able to visit their previous homes. When the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq removed Saddam Hussein's regime from power in April 2003, this political transformation immensely altered their possibilities to re-establish or maintain relations with family members in their places of origin. The new situation also opened up the question of whether Iraqis living abroad would eventually be able to move back to Iraq. Many families in Copenhagen tested the viability of moving back through return visits to Iraq. On these occasions, they saw their previous homes for the first time in many years and the return visit was, in many ways, a joyous occasion. However, during these visits they also realized the changes that had occurred while they were living abroad. This led them to consider seriously where they felt they belonged and where they wanted to spend their futures.

In this article, I will investigate how the increase in transnational practices among Iraqi women and their families in Copenhagen affected women's sense of belonging to their places of origin in Iraq and where they currently live, namely Denmark.[1] Several studies of postwar return have shown how refugees experience a number of difficulties when they come to visit a place that used to be home. Yet, how these experiences may simultaneously reshape conceptions of social relations in the migration destination is seldom explored. My analysis is based on the claim that migrants' attachments to places are closely tied with the social relations they maintain there (cf. Olwig 2005). Therefore I will explore women's

senses of belonging through an analysis of their notions of kinship and friendship as they discuss and practice these, both in their everyday lives in Copenhagen and on their visits to Iraq. The article particularly focuses on the case of Umm Ali, an Iraqi woman who returned to visit Baghdad after 28 years' absence. I argue that, whereas renewed transnational practice in some ways allowed women to re-create links to their relatives and their places of origin, at the same time the increased contact with relatives in Iraq called into question the women's own ideas of relatedness (Carsten 2000) and belonging. Furthermore, this argument raises questions about the usefulness of distinguishing between ways of being and ways of belonging (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) in transnational family relations.

Although the article focuses on Iraqi women, it is not primarily concerned with issues of gender. Rather, it discusses how the intersection of factors such as gender, social class, generation and religion affect notions of belonging. The analysis is based on 15 months of fieldwork (2004–05) among Arab Iraqi women and their families in Copenhagen. My interlocutors came from Baghdad and other urban areas in Iraq, and they had all completed at least a high school education. At the time of fieldwork they had lived in Denmark for between seven and 17 years and they were fairly well established there, despite the fact that many of them did not manage to find employment in Copenhagen. Instead they spent a great deal of their time taking care of the family, taking courses and re-educating themselves and participating in a number of social activities. The majority of my interlocutors were observant Shiites who took active part in Shi'a religious events in Copenhagen. Iraqi Shiites were persecuted by Saddam Hussein's regime in many ways and it is therefore not surprising that a large number of families in Copenhagen were initially very excited about the demise of the regime. My data thus reflect a period in time in which many Iraqis in Denmark were very optimistic about the future of Iraq. Saddam Hussein had just been removed, the first elections were taking place, and although there were definitely problems in Iraq, it seemed to many that the country might be on its way to a more positive future. Unfortunately, things mainly went in the opposite direction. The security situation became very unstable, living conditions deteriorated day by day and Iraqis in Copenhagen have become increasingly negative about the future of the country and the possibility of return. Their doubts about their return are, however, also influenced by the changed social relations they experienced during their visits to Iraq.

Being and Belonging in Transnational Migration

The longing of refugees for their place of origin is a classic theme in anthropological studies of migration (Anwar 1979; Clifford 1994). Until the end of the 1980s, most studies of refugee migration focused on the assimilation and integration of refugees into new societies or on the perceived uprootedness that such movement implies (Malkki 1995). During the 1990s, this predominant focus on the experience of exile was supplemented by two emerging trends. First, studies of postwar return argued that, while refugees might long for "home" while living abroad, the actual experience of return is usually very complicated. Rather than constituting the final homecoming after a long journey, postwar return is the beginning of a new and protracted process of reintegration (Hammond 1999; Rogge 1994). The material situation has changed, society has been restructured, and personal social relations may have suffered from the long absence (see for example, Hammond 1999; Hansen 2006; Warner 1994). Moreover, the migrants themselves have changed. Within the immigration setting, it is often not apparent how life in a new social context affects migrants' ways of living. However, when they return to their former places of residence, they may well realize that not only the organization of their daily lives, but also many practices and ways of interaction have changed, thus affecting their sense of belonging to their places of origin (Grünenberg 2006; Pedersen 2003; Stefansson 2003). These studies have therefore argued that new forms of home and belonging need to be created after the return: the return is not necessarily the final step in an ongoing journey.

The other significant trend was the "transnational turn" that directed attention towards how migrants "develop and maintain multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political—that span borders" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992:ix). Studies of transnational familial relations have illustrated how migrants' lives are grounded in familial networks of care and exchange, as well as relationships of obligation and expectation (see for example, Bryceson and Vuorela 2002a; Gardner 2002a; Gardner and Grillo 2002; Olwig 2007; Salih 2003). Physical absence is not necessarily the same as social absence. Some studies have even argued that transnational relations allow migrants to experience "simultaneity," that is, that their everyday lives may incorporate daily activities, routines and institutions located in both the migration destination and the place of origin (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004:1003). However, actually carrying out simultaneity across long distances can be

very difficult. It requires a lot of resources and it depends on the ability to move easily across borders. For refugees this may be nearly impossible. Finally, simultaneity can be emotionally draining (Gardner 2002a:17; Salih 2003:54). In the Iraqi case, it turned out that just as the lack of extended families abroad could be difficult, so renewing relations could question existing notions of relatedness. Rather than taking it for granted that increased transnational relations signify a corresponding increase in attachment, it is therefore necessary to investigate how more active transnational relations may affect migrants' notions of belonging to both their places of origin and places of residence.

In their frequently cited article on the transnational social field, Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller (2004) point out that maintaining transnational relations does not necessarily signify a sense of belonging to one's place of origin. They therefore argue for a distinction between transnational ways of being and transnational ways of belonging. Whereas the former refer to "the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than to the identities associated with their actions," ways of belonging denote "practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group" (2004:1010). They continue:

> If individuals engage in social relations and practices that cross borders as a regular feature of everyday life, then they exhibit a transnational way of being. When people explicitly recognize this and highlight the transnational elements of who they are, then they are also expressing a transnational way of belonging. [2004:1011]

Levitt and Glick Schiller's argument stresses that transnational relations have many different meanings. For instance, the maintenance of transnational relations within a family does not necessarily signify a broader sense of identification with a particular nation state or a diasporic ethnic community. However, by turning belonging into a question of conscious identification with a group, Levitt and Glick Schiller relate notions of belonging to identity and remove them from practice more generally. The question is whether social practice and belonging can be separated in this way. As the above mentioned studies of transnational family relations have shown, places are "relational" (Gardner 2002a:120), meaning that the social relations that migrants construct or maintain in a particular place will affect their sense of belonging and inclusion there. For instance, migrants' places of origin may remain important sites of belonging as long as they still maintain social relations with people living there, whereas they

may become more abstract places of identification if the centre of their social relations shifts elsewhere (Olwig 2005:189). Moreover, studies of relatedness have pointed out that notions of kin and family are continuously produced through statements and practice (Carsten 2000; Olwig 2007). The family as both a social unit and a form of identity is always in the making and close social relations thus do not exist by themselves; they require effort and reciprocity. Based on these analytical points, I suggest that Levitt and Glick Schiller's distinction is primarily applicable with reference to migrants' senses of belonging to abstract social collectivities such as nation states or diasporic communities. In contrast, on the level of families and interpersonal relations, ways of being *are* ways of belonging in the sense that social practices and ways of interaction affect individuals' notions of belonging to a family or other social groups. Notions of belonging are not just a matter of identity but are grounded in the social relations that migrants construct and maintain. This entails that a change in transnational ways of being may affect ways of belonging both positively and negatively. In the following, I will substantiate this argument by exploring the situation of Iraqi families in Denmark.

Transnational Relations between Denmark and Iraq

International migration from Iraq has always been linked to the country's violent history. Before 1990, Iraqi migration was primarily directed towards other countries in the Middle East, but after the first Gulf War (1990-91) it became global in scale (Chatelard 2009). At this stage, the flight and resettlement of Iraqis were also incorporated into the international refugee system to a greater degree than before. This is exemplified by Iraqi migration to Denmark because the vast majority of Iraqis arrived in the country as refugees or through family reunification. Their immigration began at the end of the 1980s and escalated during the 1990s, until by January 2010, approximately 29,000 Iraqi refugees and their descendants were living in Denmark (StatBank Denmark 2010). They thus constitute one of the largest groups of refugees in an immigrant population that makes up only 8% of the total Danish population of approximately five million people.

During Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraqi families in Denmark did not have much contact with their relatives in Iraq. Transnational social mechanisms need vectors such as globalized information systems, the ability to transfer money and transportation systems—the lack of which meant that transnational relations could not function well from the Iraqi side (Chatelard 2002:37). Instead, they were activated from Iraq's neighbouring countries.

Migration routes were established from Jordan, Syria or Turkey once the refugee managed to leave Iraq. The status of Iraqis in Denmark as asylum-seekers and refugees played a large role in the kinds of transnational relations they could maintain. In contrast to migrants who left Iraq as, for example, academics or businessmen, refugees could not visit Iraq. Instead they could travel to neighbouring countries and see their relatives, who would come to meet them there, an option that has turned the capitals of Jordan and Syria into hubs of Iraqi migration. However, the financial strain that such journeys place on both refugees and those who stayed behind meant that this was not a practice in which all families could engage. The security situation also had a large impact. While families might have been able to write letters or phone their relatives in Iraq, they were almost certain that somebody would censor letters or eavesdrop on their phone conversations, and such communication could therefore pose a threat to the family in Iraq. The internet and other forms of electronic communication did not become commonly available until after the demise of Saddam Hussein. Finally, the majority of Iraqi refugees in Denmark who lived off welfare benefits could (and can) spare only a little money to send to their relatives. Yet, the transnational relations that *did* exist became vital for the subsistence of families within Iraq, particularly during the 1990s, when the UN imposed heavy sanctions on Iraq. Relatives sent medicine, money and clothes from abroad, and the situation for families with a transnational support network was thus much better than for those families that lacked one (Al-Ali 2007).

When the demise of Saddam Hussein's regime made it possible for Iraqis to augment their transnational connections, the transnational family became a more integrated part of everyday life in Copenhagen. Transnational practices now involve frequent phone calls, e-mails and chatting to the extent that the relatives in Iraq have internet access and stable access to electricity, the sending of remittances if households can afford it, and the exchange of videos and presents sent with people travelling to Iraq. When I asked my interlocutors about the differences in transnational relations before and after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, many people mentioned that it had become easier to speak on the phone. They were now free to speak of any topic or utter any statement, in contrast to previous years when they were always cautious with communications that could easily be overheard by the security services. Not least, the new situation also allowed families to visit Iraq. Considerations about a potential return to the country were often tested through visits, sometimes only by male heads of households, while at other times, entire families would travel. On these visits, family members would see their relatives and their places of origin for the first time in many years.

The Iraqi case exemplifies the important point that transnational relations are not constant. Transnational processes and social relations change over time, and they may decrease, die out or, as in this case, acquire renewed vitality (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002b:8; Gardner 2002b: 199). In order to examine how this affected Iraqi women's notions of belonging to both Iraq and Denmark, I will present the case of Umm Ali's visit to Baghdad. The case exemplifies the very common experiences of return among Iraqi women in Copenhagen. It also illustrates how, in different contexts, the practice of actually visiting Iraq has led to a sense of both continuity and change.

Visiting Iraq: Umm Ali's Engagement Party

Umm Ali,[2] an Iraqi woman in her mid-50s, lived with her husband and her two youngest children in a housing estate in Copenhagen. Her family came to Denmark as asylum seekers in 1988 after several years of moving among different countries. Upon being granted refugee status, they lived some years in the provinces and then settled in Copenhagen, where their adult children were now living in close proximity to their parents. During their years in Denmark, the parents had maintained strong ties with Iraq. A large part of the extended family still lived there and three of the children were engaged or married to cousins from Iraq. Both Umm Ali and her husband were among the founders of different Iraqi ethnic and religious associations in Denmark, and due to her continued efforts in arranging numerous religious and social activities for Iraqi women throughout the year, Umm Ali had become a central person within the Iraqi Shi'a religious milieu in Copenhagen. Finally, the family was among the first to visit Iraq upon the demise of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. Abu Ali went for an extended period to take part in the political reconstruction of the country, while Umm Ali travelled to Baghdad for two weeks to visit relatives and celebrate the engagement of her son to one of his cousins (the daughter of Umm Ali's sister). This was Umm Ali's first visit to Iraq in 28 years. During this period, she only saw her relatives when they were able to meet in Syria or Iran.

When Umm Ali subsequently returned to Copenhagen from Iraq, some of her friends gathered in a women's club in order to celebrate her safe return. A group of women met there on a weekly basis in order to socialize and read the Qur'an together, but on this occasion it was primarily Umm Ali's acquaintances who had come to welcome her

back. To share her trip with the others, Umm Ali had brought video recordings of the engagement party in Baghdad. The party took place in the club of an "oil cultural centre," and the video showed the details of the celebrations. It showed the couple and how the bride-to-be wore several different outfits during the evening, it gave close-ups of the guests, and it documented the various events taking place: the dancing, the cutting of the cake and the offering of jewellery to the fiancée. As we were watching, women commented on the events. A woman who had been away from Iraq for 25 years summed up the general atmosphere when she sighed and said: "Look how beautifully they do it in Iraq!" At the very end of the video we saw the couple leave the building. During their brief walk from the building to the car, the video showed a glimpse of Baghdad in the background. At this point, Umm Ali rewound the film and showed the women the view of the city once more.

The screening of the video in Copenhagen shows how women perceived family relations and specific practices as linked to their place of origin. It also illustrates what Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) call a transnational way of belonging because the women clearly associate the cultural traditions in the film with their Iraqi background. The engagement celebrations in Iraq entailed aspects of life that were missing in Denmark, such as the extended family and the cultural space of particular traditions and practices. In fact, Umm Ali would not have been able to carry out the celebration in Copenhagen because the fiancée would not have obtained a visa to do so.[3] By celebrating the engagement in Baghdad instead of in Copenhagen, Umm Ali was thus able both to circumvent Danish immigration law and to carry out the celebration "the real way." This meant that, contrary to the way engagements happen in Denmark, where the immediate family has to rent a hall and cook all the food themselves, the party in Baghdad could be held in a public place such as the cultural centre where professional staff could organize the event and provide food. Moreover, many of the preparations and warm-up events for the engagement could take place in a large family home, whereas in Copenhagen nobody had enough room to invite that many guests to their apartment. Most importantly, "the real way" also meant that the majority of the guests were relatives. As we were watching the film, Umm Ali eagerly pointed out to us who the different guests were: "This is my sister who lives in Iran," "that's my sister in Baghdad," et cetera. More than being "Iraqi," to Umm Ali the event symbolized her being a part of the family. Celebrating together meant that ways of being family made up ways of belonging to the family and one's place of origin. In order to explore further why the presence of relatives was particularly important, it is necessary to investigate the meanings attributed to the extended family in women's daily lives in Copenhagen.

Notions of Relatedness: The Extended Family

Notions of relatedness may draw on perceptions of biology, shared blood and genes, but they may equally be constructed and maintained in practices such as mundane everyday interactions, shared housing and the fulfilling of obligations (Bodenhorn 1988:3; Carsten 2000:18,1995). Although Iraqi women associated family with both blood ties and genealogy, perhaps the most frequently mentioned aspect of relatedness in day-to-day life in Copenhagen was that involving expectations and obligations. In Iraq, as in other Middle Eastern societies, the lineage has historical importance as a form of social organization. Due to the lack of functioning state structures, kin relations have traditionally played a large role in securing livelihoods and gaining access to resources. Women's narratives of the family in Iraq often pointed out how close interrelations between family members were created through the social responsibility that was enacted in everyday social relations and practices within the extended family. In comparison, Iraqi families in Denmark consisted mainly of nuclear families. Although a significant share of immigration has taken place through family reunification, this has mainly been reunification between spouses. The majority of Iraqis in Denmark therefore have only a few relatives living nearby.

The Iraqi women felt the lack of relatives especially hard when it came to raising children. In Iraq, childcare provided a prominent sphere of life in which extended family relations gave special support. In the 1970s and 1980s, urban working mothers could draw on both state assistance such as maternity benefits, free childcare facilities and free public transport to work and school, and the support of the extended family for help with the cooking, shopping, cleaning and childcare (Al-Ali 2007:134f.).[4] Women who continued working after becoming mothers frequently left their children in the care of grandparents or other relatives if they did not attend a nursery (Al-Khayyat 1990:154). Relatives might also take care of children when parents had to flee the country. For instance, Nada raised her nephew for several years while her sister lived abroad, just as Maryam left her oldest son in the care of her parents when she had to flee from Iraq to Russia.

In Copenhagen, women often expressed loneliness in relation to parenthood and they had no doubt that an

extended family would have helped in bringing up the children. Although many of my interlocutors were unemployed and did not need the family to take care of children, they still missed their social support network. This became particularly obvious in relation to the experience of giving birth where women missed both the moral and practical support of relatives. For instance, 39-year-old Samira actually considered travelling to Iraq when she was due to give birth to her fourth child in 2003, despite the ongoing military invasion taking place at the time. While a birth in Denmark would have been better in terms of technical equipment and medical assistance at the hospital, she felt she needed the social support that would be given to her when she came out of hospital in Baghdad. Samira knew that in Copenhagen there would be only her husband to take care of their three other children, whereas in Iraq she would be able to rely on her mother, her sisters-in-law and even her neighbours. In the end, though, she chose to stay in Denmark due to the security risk of travelling.

Some women mentioned that in Copenhagen they felt freer to bring up their children as they wanted without the interference of relatives with more "traditional" mindsets. This hints at the fact that families not only provide care and support but may also restrict and control women's actions. Nevertheless, women's stories about the family did tend to idealize family relations. In comparison, female friends in Copenhagen were not acknowledged as particularly close. Many women saw each other frequently in the neighbourhood or at religious events, but on a number of levels, women stated that friendship relations in Copenhagen could not replace their family networks in Iraq. They frequently said to me that "friends are not like family," and they felt that they were not able to share the responsibilities and tasks of everyday life with their friends in the same way that they would have been able to with their family. When I asked them why, they told me that you cannot expect the same exchange of favours from friends that you can from family. They emphasized that you could not expect friends to help you with either everyday chores or the organization of special events such as weddings or other parties. Friends might offer their services, but they had no obligation to do so. This distinction between family and friends was also apparent in social interactions. For example, even though kinship terms in Arabic are often used as a polite way of addressing non-relatives,[5] friends were never idiomatically recategorized as kin.[6] Thus, ways of being with friends did not resemble ways of being with the family, and women suffered from the loss of their personal support networks (cf. Al-Ali 2002:86).

The descriptions above represent gendered perspectives on the family. In their narratives of migration, men and women tend to focus on different aspects of movement. Dominant male narratives of migration generally focus more on employment and economic success, whereas women dwell on the importance of the family (Gardner 2002a:22). Iraqi women's stories about the extended family were not just accounts of family relations, they were also part of how women constructed "the family" (cf. Olwig 2007:218). Being a part of the family entails certain responsibilities and expectations toward one another. While in an analytical sense, the family is continuously created, from the women's perspectives you can have certain expectations or obligations towards kin *because* they are family. This also means that the family may currently be absent, but you can still expect exchanges from relatives in the future. In comparison, friendships do not exist beforehand but arise on the basis of some forms of exchange having taken place, and this reciprocity needs to be developed and maintained before there can be future expectations. Women's perceptions of differences between family and friends thus relate to the kinds of reciprocity entailed in different relationships. The screening of Umm Ali's engagement celebration on video illustrates typical ways of talking about one's family and linking it with one's place of origin. However, as the continued investigation of Umm Ali's case will illustrate, the contradiction between idealized perceptions of the family and the more complex reality sometimes became clear to women when they engaged in the transnational practice of visiting Iraq. While doing so, women experienced the limitations in transnational relations and discovered that talking with somebody on the phone is different from actually being with them. In this regard, the practice of visiting Iraq led to both a sense of continuity and a sense of change.

When Family Is Not Like Friends

In the week following the screening of the engagement video, I went to visit Umm Ali in her home for the first time. Seated in one of the large leather couches in the family's living room, I noticed that the interior decoration of the apartment showed strong ties to Iraq and to the family's Shi'a religious background. The floor was covered with Iranian-style carpets, the windows were decorated with heavy drapes, and on the wall a replica of Imam Ali's sword hung next to a large image of the Ka'ba in Mecca. While Abu Ali was watching the latest developments in Iraq on Arabic satellite television, one of the sons translated the conversation between Umm Ali and me. As we were speaking, she told me that she was convinced that she no longer wanted to return to Iraq. She

would like to visit Iraq more frequently, but during her recent visit in Iraq she had realized that she knows her friends in Copenhagen better than her family in Baghdad. She is very close to her friends, whereas her sisters have become almost like strangers to her.

Umm Ali's visit to Baghdad put her friendships in Copenhagen into perspective and showed her that she was leading a very different life than the relatives she left 28 years ago. Her large social network in Copenhagen is based on the organization of religious activities. The friends with whom Umm Ali interacts in Copenhagen constitute a group of observant Shiites. They meet regularly, sometimes in private, but more often at semi-public events at the *Husseiniya*,[7] at religious holidays or for the celebration of life-cycle rites such as engagements, weddings and funerals. Although many events are organized according to the religious calendar,[8] they also become social gatherings. Here women can create a network and meet to exchange news from Iraq, discuss their everyday troubles, laugh and share food together. It is a social context in which women negotiate their sense of belonging in relation to their sociocultural backgrounds *and* their lives as part of an ethnic minority in Copenhagen. Umm Ali has gained a central position within the religious milieu because she is the organizer of many events.

When she visited her relatives in Baghdad, Umm Ali was confronted with the fact that they had not maintained the religious dedication that has become a framework of life for her and her husband in Copenhagen. She also found that her sisters had not brought up their children with the same moral standards as she had. Whereas Umm Ali thought that she had followed her mother's way of upbringing, her sisters had slackened their demands on their own children. The young ones no longer respected their elders in the same way as before and they did not carry out religious practices in daily life. In other words, Umm Ali had brought up her children much more strictly than her relatives in Baghdad and the siblings had thus passed on different notions of proper relations between genders and generations. While this experience highlighted her difference from her siblings, it also made her question her own practices. "Did I do the right thing?" she asked me, when we were discussing bringing up children in Copenhagen.

Umm Ali's experience of a social distance from her relatives was echoed in a comment by Maryam, a 48-year-old woman who has lived in Denmark since 1992. After spending a month visiting her relatives, she said:

> It's very funny. When I was in Iraq, I thought a lot about my friends here in Copenhagen. I felt like I didn't have anything in common … also with my siblings—I have four sisters—nothing to talk about. I felt like I didn't have anything private with them, nothing to tell about, for example, about my life. We talked more about society or economics or problems, the more general stuff, right? But I have a lot in common with my friends here. I don't know, maybe because our kids go to school, Danish schools, so we have the same … maybe I have more in common here, something personal [laughs].

Maryam's and Umm Ali's remarks emphasize a different kind of relatedness than the one referred to when talking about the family in Denmark. They underline the importance of sharing lived experiences, of knowing about each other's everyday lives and living under the same sociocultural conditions. In this way, the two women emphasize relations which take as their starting point shared experiences and practices. In women's narratives, these dimensions of life are associated with the family, but in practice they are now shared with other Iraqi women in Denmark. In the context of return, women's notions of relatedness also become associated with the experience of having lived abroad and sharing positions as immigrants in Danish society. Maryam specifically referred to the experience of having children attending Danish schools. All in all, other Iraqi women in Copenhagen came to assume a position that overrides the dichotomy between the categories of family and friends. The new awareness of friendship relations may, not surprisingly, impact on women's notions of belonging to Iraq and Denmark, or more precisely, Baghdad and Copenhagen. When moral ideas about relations become transferred from the place of origin to the place of residence, this creates a new moral universe in the local setting (cf. Werbner 1990:151ff.).

The description of Umm Ali's return experiences shows that Iraqi women's familial relations were affected by the experience of at least two kinds of change: one is life in the host society and the changes that the migrants themselves have gone through, while the other is the encounter with a changed society in the place of origin. Finally, factors such as gender, generation, social class and religion all played a role in women's social relations and notions of belonging. Below, I will discuss these different dimensions of women's return visits.

Distance in Time and Space: The Impact of Life Abroad

For many Iraqi families in Copenhagen, their initially strong desire to return and their sense of attachment to Iraq were closely related to their situation in Denmark. Although they came from urban middle-class backgrounds in Iraq, they found that they could not acquire the same

position in Danish society. Many well-educated Iraqis could not continue their studies or careers in Denmark, but became unemployed or had to return to school. This meant former engineers, journalists and teachers taking up positions as childcare assistants, nursing assistants or cleaning staff, or else living off welfare benefits. Moreover, many families lived in areas of Copenhagen where they experienced a lot of social problems which negatively affected their sense of belonging there. Finally, as Muslims they experienced social exclusion or discrimination in Copenhagen. As in many other European countries, the presence of Islam in Danish society is highly contested. This particularly affects women, as the veil is frequently interpreted in public debates as one of the most visible signs of a chosen "otherness." All in all, the intersection of social class, ethnicity, religion and gender gave the women and their families a lower social position in Danish society than the one they had in Iraq.

This downward social mobility led many families to orient themselves towards their Iraqi background (cf. Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001; Waters 1999), and some became involved in several Iraqi cultural, religious and political associations in Copenhagen. Many of my interlocutors found that the religious milieu was the place where they could best establish a social network upon their settlement. Religious associations, and the social activities they offered, served as means of inclusion into local society (Pedersen 2009). By participating in such activities, the Iraqi refugees not only found places to use their resources and gain social recognition, they also engaged in constructing notions of Iraq. They actively became involved in "Iraqi activities" and were very conscious about transmitting proper traditions to their children. In this way, they constructed local communities referring to collective identities such as those of Iraqi refugees or Shi'a Muslims, and the imagined Iraq was a large part of their everyday lives.

However, these more abstract ways of belonging to Iraq to some extent clashed with very concrete ways of being when Iraqi women and men went to visit Iraq. On these occasions, they were confronted with changes that had occurred in their own lives. Not only were they treated as wealthy returnees who often had to pay higher prices for groceries or other purchases than their relatives, but they also noticed that they had changed habits or become unfamiliar with local customs while living abroad. Routines and habits are central to the feeling of home (Rapport and Dawson 1998), and the sense of "displacement" was very disturbing to family members. The experience of difference, for example, concerned whether or not one was accustomed to certain levels of noise or unannounced

visits from relatives and friends. Likewise, several people spoke about the different perceptions of time in Denmark and Iraq. They claimed that in Denmark people usually come at the arranged hour, whereas in Iraq the exact time is of less importance. Whereas they phrased the loose perception of time as something "Iraqi," their experiences may not necessarily be related to actual differences, but rather to their own conditions. In Copenhagen, too, visitors did not always arrive exactly on time, but in their own homes the families had a place where time spent waiting was not so significant. In Iraq, they were themselves visitors and hence did not have a comfortable place in which to wait. They were also very conscious of the many things they wanted to do and the many people they wanted to see while they were there. In other words, the perceived differences between Denmark and Iraq revealed just as much about the state of the returnees as about the place they came to. Nevertheless, although these forms of practice may appear to be rather insignificant aspects of daily life, the continued confrontation with difference proved very strenuous for visiting families. These experiences also kept underlining the ways in which the refugees had become different from relatives to whom they used to be very close. In other words, different everyday habits came to symbolize distance in time and space. Furthermore, they highlighted that even close personal relations are sensitive to change and may be difficult to maintain across both geographical and time-related distances (cf. Amit 2002:24).

Encounters with a Changed Society

The changes in Iraqi society since the 1990s provided another important context for encounters between family members. Women's perceptions of family emphasized notions of continuity, but familial relations in Iraq had undergone some changes having been affected by living conditions under the dictatorship and UN sanctions against Iraq during the 1990s. There exists very little ethnographic literature from Iraq, but anthropologist Nadje Al-Ali (2007) has described the lives of women in Iraq from 1948 to the present. According to her, the sparse resources available during the sanctions period increasingly meant that nuclear families focused on their own survival and did not share resources with their extended families, as was previously common (Al-Ali 2007:199). Al-Ali also argues that the general sense of insecurity made women less willing to leave their children with relatives or neighbours (2007:189). Finally, during the period of sanctions (1990–2003), the state economy deteriorated. Government policies supporting women's participation in the labour market (mentioned above) were suspended,

and the state's discourse shifted towards the promotion of more conservative and traditional norms and policies (Al-Ali 2007:188; Rohde 2006:195). These social changes and the corresponding diffusion of more conservative social values in society made it increasingly common for women to become housewives and not to work outside the home, thereby leaving them less dependent on relatives for child care (Al-Ali 2007:189, 201ff.). In this way, the reciprocity involved in extended family relations also changed.

At the same time, as the extended family in Iraq seems to have lost importance during this period, transnational extended family relations became a vital source of support. The lack of resources in Iraq put heavy obligations on the shoulders of relatives abroad. It is probably a general feature of migration from the South to the North that, although migrant families often live without many resources in the host society, their relatives in the place of origin tend to assume that they live fairly luxurious lives. Such assumptions about migrants' wealth entail certain expectations being placed on migrants to provide for their family either through remittances to relatives in the place of origin or by taking care of relatives abroad. Neglecting to fulfil such obligations may have consequences for the migrants' position within the family (cf. Eastmond and Åkesson 2007). As a housewife and a retired worker, Umm Ali and her husband were not rich, but they were most likely considered wealthier than their relatives in Baghdad. Their son's engagement party allowed the family to display their resources and status as emigrants and seek symbolic reintegration into their community of origin (Salih 2002:223). Yet, it also provided an occasion in which sociocultural values, economic resources and personal prestige could be contested (cf. Olwig 2002:210). I was made aware of this during a research trip to Syria, where I visited Umm Ayman, the sister of Umm Ali's husband. Visiting from Iraq was also Umm Basim, the other sister of Abu Ali, whose daughter Ibtisam is married to one of Umm Ali's older sons. The two women showed me the best of Arab hospitality, but during the day it emerged from our conversations that Umm Basim was not satisfied with Umm Ali's treatment of her daughter. She accused Umm Ali of favouring her own daughters and another daughter-in-law, who was Umm Ali's own niece (i.e., a daughter of Umm Ali's sister). For instance, Umm Ali had brought her daughters to visit Iraq and Syria, but she did not bring Ibtisam, despite the fact that the young woman felt lonely in Copenhagen and missed her mother very much. Against this background, it is not unlikely that Umm Ali was confronted with obligations and the disappointed expectations of at least some of her relatives during her visit to Baghdad. Not only had

she not lived up to her gendered responsibility of being a good mother-in-law, she had not lived up to the general moral economy of kinship, according to which migrants are responsible for taking care of their kin (cf. Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). While such expectations may have seemed very reasonable from the perspective of those who had stayed behind, from the migrants' point of view it appeared as if their brothers, sisters, uncles or cousins were marked by their lives in a suffering society and were seen as "constantly focusing on money." Access to resources and their unequal distribution thus both united and divided families.

The social changes in Iraq not only involved family relations, but also the appearance of religion in public life. Women experienced these changes very differently. While Umm Ali felt that her sisters had abandoned their religious upbringing, Maryam and her friend Amina were shocked at the degree to which religion had become part of the public sphere in Iraqi society. They both came from a Shi'a family background, but neither of them practiced their religion. In fact, during their ten to 20 years of living in Denmark, both of them had engaged in associations with specifically non-religious frameworks. Amina's memories of Baghdad in particular were focused on the days when her communist friends and relatives used to move around in short skirts with loose hair. Now she found that her relatives and all her former friends had adopted the veil or were wearing an *abaya*. Both Maryam and Amina were certain that many women had done so because they could no longer afford to have stylish hairdos or buy fancy clothes. This interpretation may very well be true in some cases (see Al-Ali 2007:204), but in other cases the veil may also signify increased religious devotion. Finally, in a context in which extended family relations are reformulated, one might argue that the religious community could function as a replacement for the traditional family. While it may be difficult to demand reciprocity from relatives, it can be still asked from God.

The divergent interpretations of the situation in Iraq brought out by Umm Ali, Amina and Maryam show that women's experiences of return were closely related to the kinds of lives they had lived abroad. For Umm Ali, religion was an important part of family life, and therefore she was disappointed with her relatives. She focused less on developments in the public sphere. Maryam and Amina, on the other hand, were used to living in countries (both Denmark and former Iraq) where religion did not play a large role in public life, and they were shocked at its prominence in contemporary Iraqi society. The three women's reservations concerning Iraqi society also exemplify a general trend among refugees who have the

paradoxical experience of returning to a familiar, yet unknown, place (Grünenberg 2006:143ff.; Warner 1994). Although these experiences are closely related to changes in society after the period of economic sanctions and the 2003 invasion, among labour migrants it is also not uncommon for a sense of identification with their current places of residence to emerge when they visit their places of origin (Mandel 1990). As I will discuss in the following section, this may also be related to the gendered positions that migrants can occupy in different societies.

Gendered Notions of Home

During my fieldwork, Umm Ali several times emphasized what she had told me in our first interview: although she would like to visit Iraq again, she no longer wanted to return to live there. In comparison, her husband was more interested in returning to settle in Iraq. The couple's different attitudes exemplify the importance of gendered positions and possibilities in daily life. In other regional contexts too, it has been pointed out that women may have less desire to return to the place of origin than their male counterparts (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001:559; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994:98ff.). According to Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994:99), Mexican women expected that they and their children would have better opportunities in the U.S. than in Mexico, whereas the men focused on negative job situations and their poor social position abroad. A similar situation exists in Copenhagen. Although women and men experienced a similar loss of status upon their arrival in Denmark, the loss of social position and esteem was in some cases articulated more by men than by women. This may be related to the alternative positions available to women. Whereas men could no longer live up to the gendered ideal of the male breadwinner, women remained "culturally intelligible" as mothers and caregivers (Kleist 2007:238). In our conversations, Abu Ali stressed that he was tired of living as an immigrant in Denmark. Whereas Umm Ali had focused on the making of the family home, he was frustrated by his repeated and failed attempts to become part of the Danish public sphere. He also emphasized his political interests and wanted to engage actively in Iraqi politics. During a three month visit to Iraq, he had already been involved in different political activities and wanted to return to continue these.

In contrast, Umm Ali emphasized social relations. When I once asked her whether she felt that she belonged in Copenhagen, she answered with a wholehearted yes. She feels that she belongs, first of all because her children and grandchildren are there, but secondly because she has many friends there who come from all over Iraq:

Baghdad, Kerbala, Najaf and northern Iraq. If she were to live in Baghdad, she could only maintain friendships with those living in her specific area. In Copenhagen, her group of friends is much larger and more diverse. Umm Ali's attitude shows that her notions of belonging are tied to the close personal relations she maintains in Copenhagen: her children, grandchildren and friends. In addition, she has a high social standing within the circles of observing Shi'a Muslim Iraqis. Although she could be considered part of the lower class in Copenhagen, the status and recognition that she receives within the Iraqi milieu makes up for her low social position in society generally. In Iraq, she would not immediately be able to achieve the same social standing, even if her general position in society might be improved.

As Hondagneu-Sotelo points out, the respective desires to return or to stay remain "expressed preferences" (1994:100), and it is not possible to conclude whether families will eventually return on the basis of their current statements. However, several other women stated that they would not be able to return to Iraq because their children had been raised in Denmark and wanted to remain there. Whereas the adult generation had grown up in Iraq and found it "natural" to return, their children were very aware that their lives were rooted in Denmark. Nevertheless, it should not be taken for granted that the second generation was less attached to Iraq than their parents (Levitt 2009). Umm Ali's 21-year-old son, an engineering student, was highly affected by his visit to Iraq. Although he did not want to live there, he felt it was his duty to return for a limited period in order to apply his skills and contribute to the rebuilding of the Iraqi state. In contrast, his 27-year-old sister did not feel she had any ties to the country at all and just wanted to stay in Denmark. Whereas her brother was young, had no obligations and was ready to invest part of his future in Iraq, she was more concerned with creating a stable life for her family in Denmark. Generational background thus intersected with gender positions and affected attitudes towards return. All in all, the increased contact with relatives in Iraq provided family members with an opportunity to strengthen their ties with their family's place of origin, but it also questioned their sense of belonging there, just as it highlighted their attachment to Danish society. While never being a question of either–or, their notions of belonging to different places became practised and reiterated at different times and in different situations.

Conclusion

Umm Ali's experiences highlight the complex processes of identification and belonging that become visible for

family members alongside the increase in transnational relations. This case also shows how ways of being and ways of belonging (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) overlap within a transnational social field of family relations. Notions of identity and belonging come into being or disappear through the practices enacted in family and friendship relations. As illustrated by the engagement video, in the Danish setting the extended family represents a mode of relatedness defined by lineage and shared obligations that are absent in Denmark. As shown in Umm Ali's personal story, the importance of the place where she currently lives then becomes clear when she is visiting Iraq. Her experiences in Iraq actually point to the degree to which she has become "localized" in Denmark. She has engaged in the construction and maintenance of a religious identity and practices that have not had the same relevance for her sisters in Baghdad. In this way, Umm Ali's expression of belonging in Copenhagen elucidates the intertwining of ways of being and ways of belonging within family relations. It further highlights a problem in the public debate about the lives of immigrants in Denmark as well as in other European countries. Whereas immigrants or refugees are often represented in public discourses as maintaining foreign ways of living, in their own experiences, Iraqi women are living a life specifically related to the Danish context. Their social positions, cultural activities and daily habits are shaped by the contexts of their everyday lives.

While numerous studies have argued that migrants' returns or visits affect their social relations in the place of origin, how these may simultaneously reshape conceptions of social relations in the migration destination is seldom discussed. In this article I have shown that when changes occur in social relations within a transnational social field, migrants' relations to all places in that field are affected. Umm Ali's return visit had an impact on her personal networks in both her country of origin and her current place of living. She viewed her friendship relations in Copenhagen in a different light after her visit to Iraq and Copenhagen gained new meaning as the place in which she wished to spend her future. The case also shows that the renewal of transnational relations may serve to give the current place of living a more permanent status than it had when the possibility of return to Iraq was not present (cf. Koser 2002). The differences encountered between the imagined Iraq and the real society do, in some instances, lead families to give up the idea of return and replace it with an intention to visit frequently. This social dimension of post-war reconstruction plays a role in migrants' decisions to return, but this is difficult to resolve through policies. Yet, it seriously questions the policies of many European politicians who argue that refugees should return "home" once conflicts in the place of origin have ended. They imagine a static home to which the refugees are then assumed automatically to belong. This article has shown that home does not exist independently of the people who make it up. In other words, politicians might be able to send people out of the country of asylum, but they cannot send them "home." Indeed, Iraqi refugees may have become more attached to their place of residence than others will ever acknowledge.

Umm Ali's family relations have been redefined, but they have not become insignificant. To a certain extent, her friendship relations in Copenhagen have taken on the role that family relations used to have. While the ideology of family may imply that friends can never become family, in practice the two are not dichotomous. The categories of "friends" and "family" are two modes of relatedness that, in effect, overlap and in this way they appear as two ends of a continuum. Iraqi women in Copenhagen develop notions of relatedness that are rooted in shared activities and life experiences rather than kinship ties. What long-term implications this may have for the family as a mode of relatedness is a question that still has to be answered. It may be that friends will come to take over the role of relatives and that notions of what the family entails will be redefined. Or, it may be that, as Iraqi families in Denmark grow and add new generations, the extended family will re-emerge and regain its previous role as a network of support and belonging. Finally, it may also been that, if the situation in Iraq improves, transnational relations between relatives will become firmer and contact with them even more frequent. Such renewed interaction may make it possible to reconstruct relationships that draw on both notions of kinship and the sharing of everyday life experiences.

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Notes

1 The article focuses only on transnational relations with relatives in Iraq. I will not include relations with relatives or friends living in other European countries, although they may also play an important role in people's lives. However, they do not affect the interrelation between social relations and place that I wish to discuss here.

2 *Umm* is the colloquial Arabic word for mother, and *abu* is the word for father. When a couple have children, in many areas it is common that they are no longer called by their first names. Instead, they are referred to as "mother of" and "father of." *Umm Ali* thus means mother of Ali, (her oldest son). All the names used in this article are pseudonyms.

3 This is due to "the 24-year rule" in Danish legislation, which does not allow family reunification if one of the spouses in a marriage is younger than 24 years. The law has been implemented with the stated purpose of preventing forced marriages among immigrants who bring spouses from the family's place of origin.

4 During this period, the Iraqi state implemented policies on maternity benefits, free childcare and public transport in order to bring women into the labour force.

5 For example, a polite way of addressing an older person is to call her "aunt," while a person of the same age may be addressed "sister."

6 Werbner describes how this takes place among Pakistani migrants in Britain (1999:28).

7 A husseiniya is a religious school and place of meeting.

8 The popular Shi'a religious calendar contains more than 30 events that practicing Shi'a Muslims may choose to celebrate annually.

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Reclaiming Place: The Architecture of Home, Family and Migration

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Abstract: This article examines the significance of place, home and belonging among Jamaican return migrants. Drawing upon detailed case studies of return migrants who migrated to the United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s and moved back to Jamaica to retire over 25 years later, it explores how returnees design and use their homes to attain the dream and realities of return. Through an analysis of the structure and design of homes that returnees spend their lives imagining and building, I reveal that, for returnees, home is not just a place, but also becomes a site for imagining several key relationships in returnees' lives that are ultimately fundamental to the act of reclaiming place.

Keywords: domestic space, place, materiality, migration, West Indies

Résumé : Cet article s'intéresse à l'importance des lieux, de la maison et de l'appartenance chez les Jamaïcains en migration de retour. À partir d'études de cas détaillées portant sur des familles qui avaient émigré au Royaume-Uni dans les années 1950 et 1960, et dont certains membres sont revenus en Jamaïque pour prendre leur retraite 25 ans plus tard, l'article explore comment les migrants de retour conçoivent et utilisent leur maison pour accomplir le rêve et les réalités du retour. En analysant la structure et la conception des maisons que les migrants ont passé leur vie à imaginer et à construire, je dévoile comment, pour ceux qui reviennent, la maison n'est pas seulement un chez-soi, mais devient aussi un site où l'imagination des migrants s'exerce à l'égard des relations-clés de leurs vies qui sont finalement fondamentales dans l'acte de reconquérir un lieu de résidence.

Mots-clés : espace domestique, résidence, matérialité, migration, Antilles

From phenomenological discourses of home to diasporic imaginings of the homeland, the concept of "home" is fundamentally linked to place and a sense of continuity. Return migration, or returning to one's place of "origin," is often viewed as a "natural" process of reclaiming one's material and metaphorical place in the world (Gmelch 1980, 1992; Henry and Plaza 2006; King 2000; Potter et al. 2005). However, the act of return is also a very material act, one that hinges upon the movement of goods, objects and people across borders and spaces. Homes, particularly the purchase of land and the construction of housing in the homeland, represent one of the first visible signs of the intent to return (Gmelch 1980; King 2000). As Russell King observes, among migrants "there is also a consistent picture of an almost obsessive spending on housing. The new or enlarged house, a near-universal symbol of status, is the personal monument to the migrant's success and establishes, in the eyes of the local community, the fact that, at least materially, the migrant is on par with the local elite" (2000:26). While living abroad, migrants often invest considerable time and energy purchasing materials and sending money to build homes in the villages, towns and countries left behind (Bueno 1997; Chamberlain 1997; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Guarnizo 1997; Smith and Guarnizo 1998). It is often common for migrants to discuss and, in some cases, circulate photos of these homes constructed in the land of migrants' birth, the homes "stand[ing] as visible reminders of the rewards of emigration and of the migrants' continuing commitment to return 'home'" (Klimt 1989:47). Whether the construction of a home is motivated by status in the homeland, the recognition of an alternative status system for migrants who may be marginalized in the country and communities of migration, or a desire to embed themselves in the land and kinship systems of their birth, it is clear that homes are undeniably one of the key ways that migrants attempt to claim and reclaim their place in the world.

This paper examines the significance of place, home and belonging among Jamaican return migrants by exploring how returnees design and use their homes to attain the dream and reality of return and draws upon a broader study of 25 return migrants and their families who migrated to the United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s and moved back to Mandeville, Jamaica to retire 25 to 30 years later. My aim is to conceptualize returnees' everyday negotiations around their sense of place and belonging, once they have returned to the domestic structures they constructed or designed for their return, with particular attention to how they utilize the materiality of the house to home. As I outline in greater detail elsewhere (Horst 2005, 2006), the returnees represented in this study migrated from Jamaica to England as young adults. Like other West Indians of their generation, they thought they would be home from between three to five years later. Within the community I studied, the time span between their initial migration to England and their return to Jamaica averaged 38 years and, in many instances, corresponded with their children's settlement into their adult lives, the completion of secondary education, acquisition of a relatively stable job or the purchase of a home. Very few future returnees journeyed back to Jamaica for a visit for ten to 15 years after their original departure from Jamaica and, with a few notable exceptions, they visited Jamaica less than five times before making Jamaica their more permanent home, visits that often corresponded with the death of a parent. Participants were predominately in their mid-60s and married, a trend that corresponds with King's (2000) observation that most retirees move abroad as couples. In light of this broader context, I examine how the homes that returnees spend their lives imagining and building continue to mediate the process of returning and reclaiming home, arguing that home is not just a place, but becomes a site for imagining several key relationships in returnees' lives. These relationships may be closely associated with home, such as family, kin and community, or they may be more diffuse, as in returnees' relationships with values or ideals such as respectability and the attainment of success as well as fears of failure and loss. I demonstrate that in contrast to front rooms that are often about claims to status for returnees, the decoration and naming of bedrooms enables many returnees negotiate their relationship with return, kinship and social reproduction (and particularly a sense of loss). Through an analysis of the ways in which certain spaces become more or less material in returnees' lives, I argue that the home, and particularly the scale of returnees' homes, facilitates an understanding of multiple the processes underpinning return, home and the act of reclaiming place.

I begin by focusing upon the material culture of home among returnees and the importance of homes and property in articulating personhood and values such as respectability in the West Indies. Building upon work on house societies and the social reproduction of the household, I then turn to the ways in which children and family who may or may not be physically present in the home become embedded in the structure and design of the returnee home. In the concluding sections I focus upon the relationship between different spaces of the home as they emerge through the project of return, reflecting upon the ways in which these spaces signal success and failure as well as cohesion and loss.

West Indian Migration and the Material Culture of Home

Whereas a pattern of home-building is prevalent among migrants around the world (see Gmelch 1980), any analysis of contemporary practices around the material culture of home must take into account the particular relationship to homes and property in the West Indies. In the wake of plantation slavery, migration and property ownership have come to represent key ways through which Jamaicans and other West Indians attained status and personhood (Thomas-Hope 1995), a practice that continues today through the maintenance of "family land" that belongs to the collective unit of the family regardless of physical location of its members (Besson 1995, 2000; Maurer 1997; Olwig 1997). Karen Fog Olwig (1997) illustrates the strong connection between "travelling," land, homes and belonging among Nevisian migrants, for example, suggesting that while transnational migrants may only spend a week or two at the house or land each year, sending money or goods for the house materially and emotionally links them to the place they call home. As with family land (see Besson 2000, 2002; Besson and Momsen 2007), it is not the capital gained through the house that is of consequence, but rather the very notion that one owns a home on Nevis. In essence, ownership confers a sense of belonging as well as status and prestige, and represents an "emotional, cultural and social" site of identification (Olwig 1997:28).

Described as going "back a yard" (Brodber 1975; Chevannes 2001; Mintz 1974), many Jamaicans view return migration as the culmination of a life journey.[1] For this particular generation of post-Second World War migrants to the U.K., building a home in Jamaica represents an ongoing commitment to returning to Jamaica. Many returnees initiated their desire to return by saving money to purchase and build a home shortly after their arrival in the U.K. in the 1950s and 1960s. Even when

having children and raising a family, purchasing a home,[2] economic constraints, or other life circumstances derailed their original plan to return, many of the Jamaican migrants I interviewed described how the aspiration to return to Jamaica never dissipated.[3] Indeed, it was not uncommon for returnees to store items intended for return—curtains, furniture and other decorative objects— in closets, luggage or even in a separate room waiting months and years before they would be shipped in a container to Jamaica (Miller 2008).

Front Rooms, Respectability and Display

> Respectability at its material level, at its level of signification, is a show of luxury. It is a grand, well-furnished home, well equipped with modern appliances, fine furniture, china and linens, good stylish clothes, an expensive education, manners and deportment. [Wilson 1973:226]

As work on migration, return migration and transnationalism continues to reveal (Cohen 2008; Davison 1968; Gmelch 1980; James 1993; Louie 2008; Malkki 1995; Olwig and Hastrup 1997; Taylor 1976; Thomas-Hope 1999), the very notion of home as a site of belonging remains contested terrain (Fortier 2000; Olwig 1999, 2007; Pessar 1996; Rapport and Dawson 1998; Tsuda 1999). Because return and retirement coincides with geographic relocation and the purchase of a new home, return also signals the potential for a re-evaluation of self (King 2000; King et al. 2000). Designing and decorating enables returnees to reconstruct themselves through the aesthetic world of the home (Miller 2001). As Clarke observes:

> Home decoration, though tied to key life cycles and events, is the principal means by which members of the household attempt to invert, re-invert, or perpetuate their material worlds. The physical act of "decorating" requires the household to draw on (or negate) both traditional and contemporary cultural, social, aesthetic and technical knowledge to varying degrees. But crucially, it also requires a process of envisaging and imagining even at its most basic level. [2001:26]

As many visitors and local residents in Mandeville observe, large, spacious homes are the most visible evidence of returnees' presence in Jamaica. In contrast to their dwellings in the U.K.—at first bedrooms and bathrooms where they either accessed a shared kitchen or devised makeshift kitchens (Byron 1994; Horst 2006), and later, small flats and semi-detached homes in the major urban centres in England—most returnee homes were one to two storey dwellings and contained an average of eight rooms, including three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, living room and dining room. Many homes included additional spaces for laundry and sewing facilities, a bar, multiple verandas, garage or carport, storage and walk-in closets. Doorbells, electric gate openers and security systems as well as modern kitchens with refrigerators, stoves, ovens, microwaves and freezers represent just a few of the other amenities returnees integrated into their new homes. For most returnees, the home is a rite of passage that embodies the crowning achievement of a lifelong dream, the freshly painted white exteriors, neatly trimmed yards and gracious proportions which visually express "how far we come."

Trekking up the steep hill and some 30 steps to the front door of Thomas and Marilyn Mitchell's stately home, there is a sense that you have arrived. An energetic, fit couple in their early 60s, the Mitchells sustain a busy schedule, with early morning walks, community and church activities as well as entertaining friends and family. In fact, the only day one can reliably find Mrs. Mitchell at home is when her helper comes to clean. Mr. Mitchell is often busy about town looking for things for the house and taking care of household business as well as visiting with friends and family throughout greater Mandeville. The Mitchells returned to Jamaica in 1995 after almost 30 years working in the healthcare (nursing) and transport industries in south and north London. Their last home was a three-bedroom semi-detached house in north London. Although they never thought of themselves as people who pined for home, they returned with particular images of their future property. They wanted acres of land near nature and animals, tucked away from the rest of the world but in a place where they could still participate in cultural and social activities. When the couple started to consider their return, Mrs. Mitchell decided that she did not want a "pokey" house that was "shut off like a dark cavern." Rather, she wanted a large, open house that was light and spacious. When she started looking around and talking to developers in the area, she did not see anything appealing so she started designing her home on her own. Mrs. Mitchell initiated her design by thinking about her home in London and what was lacking. She sat down and sketched the dimensions and design with the help of her eldest son who lived in Jamaica and, in fact, spent most of his childhood in Jamaica being raised by his grandmother. For a time, Mrs. Mitchell literally dreamt about the house each night, waking up in the middle of the night to scrawl ideas down with the paper and pencil she kept habitually by her bed. She desired a large spiral staircase and a twelve-foot hallway for a grand entrance. Despite her initial aspirations, the space she visualized for a downstairs

bedroom was ultimately too small, a planned den never materialized and the twelve-foot hallway and large crystal chandelier leading to the front room diminished in size as did the home, from 7,000ft^2 square feet to 4,000 ft^2, in the process of paring down at the expense of "empty space." Even with the reduction in space, Mrs. Mitchell explained that when their container arrived from England, they were easily able to furnish the entire house by simply "spreading out" what they had in their London home.

In conversation with couples like the Mitchells and others, front rooms were particularly important spaces to communicate and cultivate the sense of having "arrived," literally and figuratively. Akin to the home itself, front rooms and living rooms often "act as the interface between the private and the public world" (Money 2007:358). Another couple, the Edwards, returned to Jamaica in 1995. More pragmatic in their retirement home aspirations than their middle-class English lives as public and private school teachers might have afforded, when they decided it was time to sell their home in the suburban outskirts of north London and return to Jamaica, they drove to a real estate agency in Brixton in south London and looked at brochures with pictures and drawings of home designs. The visit to Brixton also corresponded with two visits to Jamaica where the couple drove throughout the island deciding where they wanted to live, the options being relatively open as most of their families lived off the island. Mrs. Edwards stressed that the most important aspect of the house itself was that it have "decent sized rooms" that, once they returned, became filled with their entertainment centre and shelves exhibiting their collection of floral china plates and animal figurines, as well as cabinets displaying antique plates, cups and other place settings that Mrs. Edwards described as family heirlooms. Atop the cabinet sits a small floral display, candles, a lantern and pictures of their children and grandchildren, especially a granddaughter who visits almost every summer and shares an interest in family history and heirlooms.

The décor of many front rooms exhibits returnees' desire to achieve respectability. Among Jamaicans and other West Indians, enacting and asserting a lifestyle of respectability often entails the ability to control space (Abrahams 1983; Wilson 1973).[4] Families aspiring to and demonstrating respectability maintain homes that ideally include communal indoor space, such as a living room or a proper table at which to dine, as well as distinctive spaces for sleeping, bathing and eating. Women overseeing respectable homes also hire helpers to mop floors, handwash laundry and other activities associated with cleanliness (Austin 1984; Brodber 1975; Chevannes 2001; Douglass 1992; Olwig 1993; Wilson 1973). These values associated with respectability also travelled with Jamaican migrants and emerged in their domestic practices in England. In a study of Jamaicans in London in the 1970s, Nancy Foner (1978) observed that Jamaicans crafted a domestic space associated with white-collar workers in Jamaica that included carpets, coordinated furniture sets and stereos. Foner also notes that "quite a few owned encyclopedia sets and had books on display" (1978:97) in front rooms—a display that often signalled education and educational aspirations. Miller suggests that for many West Indians living in London, the front room often became a sacred space in the home because it signalled "precisely the form of respectability that they had been excluded from, and now aspired to, in this new London context" (2008:201). This form of respectability, he argues, reflects working class English aspirations rather than those of Jamaican middle and upper classes. Among Jamaican returnees in Mandeville, I found that front rooms embodied aspirational trajectories that often combined English working class and middle class Caribbean aesthetics, and I encountered a range of décor in front rooms, including (most notably) a large, 15 by 20 foot painting of Prince Charles and Princess Diana carefully preserved from the 1980s. Whereas the Mitchells articulated their desire to design a large, palatial home, the Edwards defined their aspirations as building a home with "decent sized rooms" where they could place on display their collections—china, movies, art and books—and thus evince their sense of taste and respectability. Such concerns with demonstrating status and success often dominate discussions of returnee homes. However, even in the case of the Mitchells who were explicitly status conscious, status and respectability do not fully capture the ways in which returnees value the ample size and numerous rooms that constitute their new homes. In the following section I focus upon how other spaces in the home, particularly the bedroom, reveal returnee's alternative desires and aspirations to reclaim place.

Bedrooms and the Materiality of Family

Anthropological analyses of architecture, homes and domestic space focus on drawing analogies between the home and the order and structure of society. Beginning with Levi-Strauss' (1983, 1987) seminal work on house societies as well as subsequent work by Bourdieu on the Kabyle house and the habitus[5] (Bourdieu 1977, 1984), research on domestic architecture has looked at the relationship between property, homes, kinship and the creation of continuity or lineage over time (Bloch 1996). As

Carsten and Hugh-Jones suggest in their critical introduction to Levi-Strauss' concept of house societies, the house is a key institution in society precisely because it "links the transitional quality of houses as a social form with the claim that they 'subvert' the language of kinship by using it to 'naturalize' rank differences and competitions over wealth and power" (1995:10). Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995) and the other contributors to the volume stress the dynamic relationship between homes and their inhabitants and, in turn, demonstrate the mutuality of the construction of homes and the construction of individual or collective identity. Moreover, social and structural changes in the house shift focus from ordered depictions of homes to the processes of change, particularly in relation to establishment of and transformations within the household—a concept intended to mediate the social and material meanings of the house (Moore 1986; Wilk and Netting 1984). In this section, I look at returnees' efforts to materialize their children's presence in their new homes in Jamaica.

Sister Mae, a former nurse, and her husband, George, moved back to Jamaica in 1998. George, who spent most of his 37 years in East London doing construction work, designed the house and collaborated with the developers and individuals who he later hired to build the five bedroom, four bathroom home in a neighborhood with other returnees. The master bedroom, occupied by Sister Mae and Brother George, had an attached bath and walk-in closet. Down the hallway, they placed three additional bedrooms and on the ground floor the final bedroom was built which included an attached bathroom with a shower. Brother George's vision was to create a comfortable living space for the couple as well as for each of their children when they came to visit. Indeed, after the basic structure was erected, children came one-by-one to help select and claim their room. Their son Dwayne was the first to arrive and selected a room with a view on the first floor. Their youngest daughter Victoria appeared next and selected a room on the also first floor directly adjacent to her older sister Marcia. This worked well because they could share the bath that is also equipped with a bidet. Their eldest son Henry turned up last and agreed to take the more substantial room located on the ground floor with the attached bath. This room, they reasoned, was large enough to be shared with their grandson, Mario, who spent most of his childhood living with his grandparents. When Dwayne's two children came to visit their grandparents, Dwayne's rather precocious pre-teen daughter decided that rather than using one of her auntie's beds she wanted "in" on this claim to space. Sister Mae reached a compromise with her granddaughter:

Michelle could have her own "bed" in the room that, in practice, doubled as a laundry room filled with piles of un-ironed shirts, jeans and sheets. Dwayne's room became the standing guest room when other relatives came to visit and the rooms of the two daughters, who tried to visit annually, stayed relatively untouched aside from the weekly dusting and cleaning carried out by their helper.

Henry's room was another story. Henry, whose income was less stable than his siblings, has not come to visit since first claiming his bedroom space and his room reflected his absence. In contrast to the rooms of Dwayne, Victoria and Marcia, which are fitted with full sized beds, dressing tables and finished closets, Henry's room was decidedly unfinished. His headboard rested against the wall as did the washbasin and shower tiles which had not been fully fitted, although Sister Mae decided to hang curtains on the windows to avoid prying eyes. Brother George often lamented this unfinished project, noting that he always intended to finish it with Henry; "finishing" Henry's room includes building a closet, affixing tile to the wall and putting together the bed. Henry's tenuous economic status has prohibited his visit and, in turn, his ability to materialize his presence in his parent's new family home.

For many returnees, there is status in being able to devote, and confer ownership of a space, to each member of the family. However, bedrooms are often the spaces where returnees are most aware of the lack of presence and loss of their family. For instance, on a warm spring afternoon, I decided to pay a visit to Sister D, a 67-year-old woman who returned to Jamaica with her husband in the mid-1990s after living 36 years in London. While living in London Sister D worked as a nurse's aide and Brother D worked as a supervisor at a retail store in east London. When I arrived at her house, all the signs of her presence appeared in order. The shutters on the four bedroom, three-bathroom home were open and Sister D's husband had unlocked the front gate. Like other returnees, Sister D's pace had slowed over the years, but on this particular occasion she took a little longer than usual answering the bell. Just as I was turning around to leave, Sister D called down from the upstairs veranda and requested that I open the gate and come in. After greeting each other, we went inside and sat on her settee in the front room to talk while she fanned herself with a folded up piece of paper. Apologizing for her haphazard appearance, she explained to me that she had been upstairs in "Peter's room" resting. "Peter" was Sister D's only son who, at the time, I had not met in person but recognized through the photos, diplomas and certificates Sister D and her husband proudly displayed on the tables and walls

of the front room. Over the course of our visits, I heard many reports of his achievements—a new job and promotion and his engagement to his long-time girlfriend—as well as stories about his childhood and the challenges of raising children in London. Sister D also made a point of introducing me to "Peter's room" when she took me on a tour of their new house. "Peter's room" was one of her favourite spaces in her new home in Jamaica, a place that she often returned to when she wanted to relax and reminisce about her life in London and feel close to her only son. As Sister D's home reveals, returnees insist upon their children's presence by etching it into the structure and organization of the home.

Yet, for many returnees it was clear that bedrooms were not necessarily envisioned as "containers" where an individual's possessions would be preserved. In her examination of nomadic Mongolians use of display cases to initiate and maintain social relations through the separation and containment of objects, Empson notes that objects are not significant because "these things 'stand for' people"; rather "objects, like humans, contain another dimension of the visible world and something of the essence of the person is thought to adhere to their belongings" (2007:114). George and Sister Mae reserve the inscription of presence in the bedrooms to the children themselves. Dwayne's room, for example, contained only an old book that he left behind on a trip and a radio that he liked to listen to, a radio, which stayed in the room largely because Sister Mae rarely set foot in it. Their other daughter Victoria left behind her Jamaican clothes and her sister Marcia left perfume and powder on the dressing table. Here then, and as we see through the failure to finish Henry's room, the physical presence of their children in these rooms is critical; returnee children must assume responsibility for making their presence more material by shifting, sorting and leaving behind objects in "their" bedroom space.

Materiality, Return and the Life Project

In his now famous article on refugee possessions, David Parkin (1999) examines the meaning of objects for individuals who have been forcefully displaced and, in turn, the key role that mementos play in the reconstruction of life and personhood post-exile. He argues that mementos and other such transitional objects are used in to help individuals tell stories about themselves that enable refugees to articulate a severed trajectory of personhood. Parkin further contends that, in the face of trauma and social exclusion, these portable objects often take the place of personal relationships; later, when those who have been displaced reach a point of settlement, individuals may use

these same objects to "reverse the process by which they have objectified themselves in their most private possessions, formulaic acts and dreams and re-enter social relations" (1999:318). Marcoux (2001) describes the divestment associated with moving house (the *casser maison* ritual) for negotiating one's sense of self as well as relationships with others through the process of sorting, giving away or choosing to bring particular possessions due to their ability to stand as mnemonic devices or hauntings (see also Miller 2001). In the cases I have presented, we see that in the formal, status-oriented spaces of the home, mementoes play an important role in helping returnees tell stories about themselves and their families to narrate achievement and success. Returnees decorate their homes as the expression and imagination of a particular type of lifestyle that can be realized through the structure and decorative order of the house. In particular, the idea of the home is one that expresses their status as successful returnees. This is exemplified by Mrs. Mitchell's statement of wanting a large non-"pokey" house, the original blueprint nearly twice the size of the fully finished home, as well as Mrs. Nelson's sensitivity about using the space of their large home. In addition to the large stove, refrigerator and other modern appliances in the kitchen, homes are furnished with settees and matching chairs as well as stereo systems and televisions. Dining tables play a prominent role in the house and are often accompanied by china cabinets filled with glassware of varying degrees of quality. Ornamented lighting, fixtures and artwork also exhibit returnees' material status, as does the fact that the master bedroom includes a walk-in closet. These tend to be less associated with the intimate relationships that constitute their family. Here designating spaces for family members—a practice that only becomes possible through the attainment of the home and the status conferred with it—literally and figuratively situates members of the family.

In living rooms, portraits of family members are part of the project of attaining a respectable return. Beds, decorations and other portable objects placed in the respective rooms were rarely used by the named "owner" of the particular room, and almost all of the pictures, cards, magnets and other objects associated with specific individuals were kept in the more visible spaces of the home, such as the living room, kitchen and dining room. In effect, kitchens and living rooms became the parent's space to display, remember and resituate their relationship to their children in a familial public. In such contexts, pictures and other objects possessed the potential to trigger memories, but their purpose was to stand for a person in the presentation and display of the family. Importantly, these

pictures and objects were also not possessions in the sense that they leave "traces" (Marcoux 2001). Rather, many of the objects located in the living room—pictures, china and glass trinkets—served as mnemonic devices. While such objects were familiar and, in some sense, signalled an intimate relationship, they did not foster the intimacy associated with trinkets and "clutter" in other contexts (Makovicky 2007).

Like the shifting and sorting in living rooms Garvey (2001) documented in Norway, very few returnees spent time rearranging the pictures and decorations in their home. Rather, returnees strived to get it "right" so the front room captured the look they imagined. Indeed, many returnees refused to become actively involved in church or returning resident associations before their house was, to their mind, finished.

Bedrooms in the returnee home play a dual role in mediating a sense of place and belonging for returnees. Looking at the relationship between architecture and memory, Bahloul observed that, "the remembered house is a small-scale cosmology symbolically restoring the integrity of a scattered geography" (1992:28) among members of the Algerian Diaspora. In her case, families were thus returning to a memory where a material space reflects, albeit in an idealized manner, a lived reality that had been transmitted over generations. But in contrast to Bahloul's depiction of homes and families which reflect a lived reality that was transmitted over time in a concrete space, the returnee project, remained tied to aspirations and ideals associated with the house and family, aims which were not feasible or ever "lived" in the same way during their time in England. The process of claiming and naming a bedroom is an attempt to create order and the image of an ideal house and nuclear family.

As becomes apparent, inscribing children and (in a few instances) grandchildren in the structure of the home presents an ideal image of the structure of the transnational family. The naming of rooms, such as that of the Edward's granddaughter, not only places the individual as a member of the household but also provides the person with a sense of ownership. Naming confers possession that, in turn, possesses the potential for a person to enliven the space and objects in the room through presence and, eventually, absence. Through possession, traces and essences can emerge and thus be contained in the space. Because Peter had claimed the room and left behind a magazine and a used phone card on "his" dresser, "Peter's room" became a haven where Sister D could relax and feel his presence. And although Peter had in fact only slept in the room the equivalent of three times since they had returned to Jamaica, his participation in the process

of enlivening the room made Sister D somehow feel closer to or more connected to him than sitting in the living room looking at photographs. Perhaps the most compelling example of this commitment to their (grown) children's possession, or materialization, of bedroom space was revealed in a discussion of Henry's room. When George's grandson came to visit and suggested that they set up the bed in Henry's room so it could at least be used, his grandfather made it clear that the room belonged to Henry and no one was to use it until Henry could finish it.

While the cultivation of the living room and bedroom to reclaim a sense of place represents a shared norm and expectation among returnees, the notion of "failure" and loss dominate many returnees' experiences and discourses of return. For example, Miss Thomas, a single woman in her 60s who worked as a housekeeper, returned to the Mandeville area in 1997 from a small English town in the middle of England. With her one child grown, married and living in the U.S., Miss Thomas was swept into the early 1990s euphoria of returning home to Jamaica, certain that Jamaica would feel like a real community with all of the other returnees from England. As a result, she decided to sell her council estate flat in England to come home to the island she left in her early 20s. She paid one of the Jamaican building societies from the profits from the sale of her English flat, purchased a plot of land in Mandeville and arranged for builders to construct her home. When Miss Thomas moved to Jamaica, the frame of the house was completed and some of the fixtures (doors, sinks, etc.) fitted, but much of the house remained incomplete. She paid extra money to have utilities connected on the street as the area was undeveloped, and she lived for a year without electricity and television. Because she did not have enough money left to advance a legal case against the construction company for bad workmanship and breach of contract (a common occurrence among returnees, particularly those who did not have a local family member in Jamaica supervising the project), she transformed two rooms into self-contained rental flats, which allowed her to earn additional income so that she might one day finish the landscaping of the front yard, dirt driveway and carport, now scattered with tools, cement blocks and other supplies. Due to the alterations, however, Miss Thomas' living space was significantly curtailed, her movements and possessions confined to a living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Miss Thomas' dining table with chairs and place settings for six sat only three to four feet from the front door and her many photographs, picture art, pieces of china and glass, and flowers were packed into these rooms, giving the interior a dark, closed-off feeling. She spent most of her days

confined to the house. Because she could not afford to employ a helper like most other returnees, she cleans and tends to the back vegetable garden most mornings. Her afternoons and evenings consist of resting and dozing on her cornflower blue sofa as she watches the evening news and the daytime soap opera, "The Young and the Restless." Miss Thomas' adult daughter helped her select the fluffy blue couch adorned with white, partially crocheted headrests and pillows. While Miss Thomas finds the couch aesthetically pleasing, she has also come to feel suffocated by it. She now feels she was too hasty in buying the couch and, if she had thought about it a little more, she might have realized it was too soft. Miss Thomas complains that when she sits down on it, she sinks into the cushions, which makes rising from the sofa somewhat difficult. This, she suspects, is also the reason that she spends so much time lying on the sofa watching television. It literally engulfs her body forcing her to struggle to make her way out of it; some days she just cannot muster the energy to move and ends up sleeping in the giant blue flytrap.

Because Miss Thomas is unhappy, she seems to be constantly talking about the merits of England and the possibility of returning there. But after a long conversation with her sister, she surmised that she could no longer afford to do so without ridding herself of her current Jamaican home. Not unlike her decision to purchase the sofa, Miss Thomas feels that she made the wrong decision and was misled by the hype surrounding return, epitomized in the many advertisements in U.K. edition of the Jamaica Gleaner encouraging Jamaicans to "come home" because "Jamaica is calling you." She is also disappointed because she "expected to enjoy my homecoming." Instead, she thinks that her return has been "worthless" and she is "bored of it." In effect, Miss Thomas believes that her "place" is in England where she feels she has family (a sister), friends, purpose and, importantly, the potential for economic stability even as a single, unmarried woman. Because the sense of place through return migration is so closely tied to the negotiation of self through the house, certain people come to feel less material, less of a person, due to their inability to attain this life project. If the expectation is that return involves the performance of respectability and status, Miss Thomas and others like her may lose out on their claim to place. The tyranny of an unfinished house comes to embody this unrealized potential or failure.

Conclusion

In this article, I demonstrate the ways in which homes define how and where returnees claim their sense of self and place in the world upon return. Very few returnees

move back to the island with children and they rarely relocate to land shared between family members (Besson 2000). While return represents the realization of a lifelong aspiration, return may also be felt as an experience of loss, both in terms of the Jamaica that they remember and the family—children, grandchildren and others— they left behind in England. Moreover, many returnee women, who were often less committed to the masculine dream of building a retirement home (Chamberlain 1997), confess ambivalence over their changing status upon return, particularly the loss of involvement in the everyday lives of their children and grandchildren and the related status as matriarch of the family (Goulbourne and Chamberlain 2001). Others, such as Brother George, are only reminded of their children's resentment of being left behind in England or other tension points through the unfinished rooms and projects that lay scattered behind closed doors. A number of returnees, particularly younger returnees in their 50s and in good health, try to accommodate by continuing to travel between the U.K. and Jamaica, becoming what Dwaine Plaza (2000) terms "transnational grannies." But the cost and distance often makes this untenable for many returnees. Others construct a sense of family in the physical structure of the home since, given the relative newness of the house, adult children are often not able to leave traces which could be contained or separated for preservation. Traces exist through photographs and other objects in the room, but these objects often belie returnees' ultimate desire for continuity and connectedness. While the house structure and front room may lead to the attainment of the aspiration to return to their homeland and live the life of a respectable returnee, it is also quite evident to many returnees that this comes at a cost—the loss of daily interaction with their children and grandchildren. Moreover, homes are built without any certainty of what will occur after their deaths, due to the fact that their offspring continue to live in England. Making evident the struggles to insert family and thus continuity and connectedness challenges the assumed relationship between size and status so widely acknowledged in Jamaican popular discourse as well as the academic literature on migration and transnationalism.

Viewing the home as a location, a house, social relations and as a particular cultural form and logic, my approach to understanding the everyday experience of migration and belonging is tied to the tension concerning the processes of rooting and movement. As Basu and Coleman have recently noted, "the materiality deployed [by migrants] can indicate the changing status of a given migrant over time—the transformation of their place

within the 'world' they have entered, willingly or not" (2008:324). Part of the process of asserting family through domestic forms of material culture revolves around the organization and naming of the home space. For many returnees, questions surrounding how many rooms to build, how each room should be decorated, where to store pictures and other objects present returnees with dilemmas over how to negotiate their changing relationship to their children and grandchildren. For individuals like Sister D, the loss of her son is clearly one of the unpleasant and unanticipated side effects of realizing a dream of return. "Peter's room" and the other spaces and objects I encountered in Jamaica that were named after return migrant's children and grandchildren residing in England signalled the importance of family in the process of returning and claiming (or more aptly reclaiming) a sense of place. Focusing upon the ways in which returnees place objects and inscribe these items and spaces their everyday lives in Jamaica, I examined how family continues to be valued among many returnees and what these practices suggest about the ways in which presence and absence are negotiated among the transnational family. Homes thus become important for return migrants because they are both the central product of and the spaces for reclaiming place.

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Notes

1 Given the extensive documentation of transnational practices and movement among return migrants, there remain debates surrounding the extent to which return migration should be analytically described as the end or culmination of a migration journey (see for example, Gmelch 1980; Pessar 1996). As Thompson and Bauer (2006) and Horst (2007) suggest, the length and experience of migration among migrants to the U.S., Canada and England distinctly shape the expectations around return and migrants' interpretation of return.

2 With the difficulty of paying high rent and accommodating their growing families, West Indians exemplified a high rate of home ownership relative to their status position. Through a combination of partner schemes, savings, bank loans and sublets, nearly half of all the West Indian households in Britain lived in owner-occupied accommodation by 1975. Other West Indian immigrants, around 25%, became council housing tenants in the 1970s; many West Indians took advantage of national schemes to purchase their council flats in the 1980s (Byron 1994).

3 Byron's (1999) study of the first generation of Caribbean migrants (who will have reached retirement age by 2001)

focuses on the decisions affecting their potential return to the region. Byron argues that potential returnees weigh economic factors, such as acquiring a home, managing the cost of living at home and negotiating sources of income, alongside socio-cultural issues, such as the (re-)establishment of social networks (local and transnational), care or welfare in their old age, obligations to extended family in Britain (a particular concern of women), and returnees potential reception at home.

4 Although the performance of respectability should always be understood as contested, respectability is associated with proper manners, education, church membership as well as the institution of marriage. The values associated with contemporary respectability emerged during the transition from plantation slavery to emancipation when the church took on a key role in cultivating individuals and families who would embody law, order and a moral system more broadly.

5 From a different theoretical lens, Bourdieu (1977) in his classic study of Kabyle homes makes the case that homes structure how individuals view and come to know the world. Implicit or explicit rules about who belongs in particular spaces of the home, what time of the day certain portions of the home are used, as well as how homes are used seasonally, are just a few of the examples Bourdieu employs to understand the relationship between the house, belonging and identity.

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The Social Construction of Improvement: Continuity and Change in Caribbean Migrants' Life Stories

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Abstract: Migrants' social mobility in migration destinations is often measured in terms of "objective" socio-economic indicators. These, however, generally say little about migrants' own hopes and aspirations. This analysis of Caribbean migrants' life stories argues that "improvement" offers a flexible notion of achievement that, as construed by migrants, may be understood according to a range of cultural rationales, thus enabling them to see themselves as worthy social actors. An ethnographic analysis of migrants' social construction of improvement therefore opens up a framework of analysis focusing on individuals' understanding of migration as a means of societal mobility and social recognition.

Keywords: mobility, life story, social construction of improvement, personhood, Caribbean

Résumé : On mesure souvent la mobilité sociale des émigrants au sein de la destination de leur migration en termes d'indicateurs socio-économiques « objectifs ». Ces indicateurs toutefois, nous disent peu de choses sur les propres espoirs et aspirations des migrants. Dans cette analyse d'histoires de vie de migrants antillais, on défend l'argument que des « améliorations » constituent une notion flexible de réussite qui, telle qu'interprétée par les migrants, peut être comprise selon divers raisonnements culturels, ce qui leur permet de se percevoir comme des acteurs sociaux respectables. Une analyse ethnographique de la construction sociale de « l'amélioration » chez les migrants ouvre alors un cadre d'analyse s'intéressant particulièrement à la compréhension individuelle de la migration en tant que moyen de mobilité sociétale et de reconnaissance sociale.

Mots-clés : mobilité, histoire de vie, construction sociale de l'amélioration, identité individuelle, Antillais

Much American migration research has focused on ascertaining the extent to which immigrants succeed at experiencing upward social and economic mobility in the receiving society as measured by "objective" national indicators such as occupation, income, housing and education. This research appears to be based on the implicit assumption that a primary goal for migrants is to settle in the U.S., pursue American goals of social mobility and become part of middle-class American society. This assumption may derive from the fact that immigration has played a central role in the development of the modern United States. American migration studies therefore have been concerned with investigating how foreign immigrants are transformed into good American citizens, and there has been less interest in exploring migrants' own ideas of migration and their relations with family and friends left behind. Indeed, Nancy Foner noted that in early migration research, "ties to the home society were often interpreted as 'evidence for, or against, Americanization' and, in many accounts, were seen as impeding the assimilation process" (2000:183).[1] This assimilation process has been conceptualized in terms of a model positing that immigrants become American through an intergenerational process of increasing adaptation to life in American society that is more or less complete with the third generation of immigrants, an important proof of their assimilation being that they have become solid members of the American mainstream society and have established their own middle class nuclear families (Gratton et al. 2007:204). The model thus operates with a basically optimistic perception of immigrants—they will become successful middle class citizens if only they work hard enough and adopt an American way of life. Thus, in their critical review of this research tradition, the sociologists Kasinitz, Mollenkopf and Waters (2004:4) note that American migration researchers "often wrote as if assimilation, acculturation, and upward mobility were virtually the same."

During the 1960s, when large numbers of non-white immigrants began to arrive from developing countries, this equation of assimilation with upward social and economic mobility began to be questioned by scholars who contended that assimilation "had historically been for 'whites only'" (Kasinitz et al. 2004:4).[2] Instead of becoming part of American middle-class society, non-white immigrants tended to become incorporated into a socially and economically marginal subculture characterized by poverty and sub-standard living and working conditions. As Kasinitz et al. have noted: "if assimilation means joining the street culture of the urban ghetto, 'becoming American' can be every immigrant parent's worst nightmare" (2004:7). This nightmare is particularly acute for the migrants who have middle- or upper-class backgrounds in their country of origin and who have little in common with people in the urban ghetto except for sharing the plight of being categorized as part of a marginalized urban minority. For these immigrants, it has been suggested, retaining immigrant status in the receiving country therefore may be more attractive than becoming a low status ethnic American (Waters 1999). Some scholars have gone even further, arguing that migrants may try to escape economic constraints in the sending society as well as the receiving country by developing transnational family networks that enable them to take advantage of the best opportunities in the global arena. In their 1994 book, *Nations Unbound*, Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc wrote that "transnational family relations allow the immigrants to resist their subjugation in host and home societies," because such relations enable "the migrants to move between host and home societies emotionally, culturally, and materially when conditions in either become intolerable" (1994:92). They add, however, that such moves may have a high personal cost in the form of prolonged separation from close family members and do not offer "long-term solutions to the structural inequality" confronting migrants (1994:83, 92, 170).

The studies outlined above represent two widely different understandings of continuity and change in migration processes. The early optimistic research tended to view migration as entailing a complete change in migrants' lives, as individuals left their problems behind in their place of origin in order to become citizens in a new country where they would assimilate culturally, enjoy social and economic mobility and end up as middle class citizens living in nuclear families. The later, more critical studies have pointed to the significance of continuity in the form of ongoing relations with family in the country of origin that can help migrants resist discrimination and downward social and economic mobility in the receiving coun-

try. They further criticize the tendency of the early migration researchers to regard the receiving society as the "natural" framework of analysis and call for studies that can move beyond the "methodological nationalism" prevalent in research on international migration, for example by examining migrants' wider transnational field of relations (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2003).

During the past 30 years, I have carried out interviews with people in Caribbean families that had become dispersed in Britain, the United States, Canada as well as various destinations in the Caribbean (Olwig 2007). As individuals told me about their early life in their place of origin, their departure for a foreign place, and their subsequent life in a new society, it became apparent that they were not primarily concerned with talking about their attempts to become good middle class citizens in a new country and the various changes in their lives that this might have involved. Rather they were accounting for, and making sense of, the lives they had lived and the accomplishments to which they could lay claim. They did so by describing their movements through life (geographical as well as social, economic or cultural), in such a way that they generated a sense of coherence and purpose reflective of their sense of self.[3] In my analysis of these life stories I have found that migrants often refer to the notion of "improvement," or "betterment," when accounting for the lives they have lived. The notion of improvement proffers a general rationale for leaving one place for another at the same time as it enables the migrant to determine the specifics of the desired improvement. The social construction of improvement, that takes place in migrants' narratives, therefore provides a flexible space of interpretation that enables migrants to (re)assess their lives and achievements in the light of the different conditions of life in which they find themselves. At a basic level, however, it allows migrants to claim a sense of social worth, as recognized in a community of people relevant to the migrants. Thus, migrants may assess their migration experiences according to a range of cultural rationales that enable them to gain social recognition and sustain visions of themselves as successful social actors. These notions of improvement therefore cannot be measured through predefined indicators of societal status in the receiving society.

This article[4] argues that by examining the varying ways in which migrants describe and understand their lives in terms of various pursuits of improvement, it is possible to generate a new framework of analysis that can help move migration research beyond methodological nationalism, as well as its counterpoint, methodological

transnationalism. This conceptual framework, however, requires that migration scholars' traditional topic of investigation—population movements between different places, usually countries, and the processes of integration that they set in motion—be redefined to focus on migrants' life trajectories through time and space and the ways in which migrants give meaning and purpose to their lives in light of varying circumstances of existence. I suggest that life story interviews offer valuable data on such migration processes, because they generate not just rich ethnographic data on migrants' experiences in different times and places, but important insights into how individuals, through their self-narratives, understand and assess these experiences.

In this paper, I will analyze three life stories related to me by members of an immigrant family from the Caribbean that I have called the Smith family. Though the family I shall here describe and analyze is formally a nuclear family that fulfils several of the criteria of social mobility as defined by "objective" American standards, I will argue that individual family members' descriptions and interpretations of their life trajectories, social relations and personal achievements differ markedly from dominant assumptions of middle-class family life grounded in mainstream American society. I shall argue that family members told their life story in relation to different frames of reference involving varying value sets and social norms that gave meaning and purpose to their particular lives. In this way, they could see themselves as respectable persons, whether or not their life trajectories conformed to established notions of success in the receiving society (cf. Chamberlain 1995:267). These life stories therefore point to the importance of questioning the social norms underlying migration research and of exploring the migrants' own notions of "betterment" and personhood as they stake out a life for themselves in a new society.

The Smith Family

The Smith family originates in a village of small farmers and fishermen on the West Indian island of Nevis.[5] Nevis was colonized in 1628 by the British, who established large-scale sugar plantations on the 36mi² island using African slave labour. When slavery was abolished in 1834, those freed engaged in a range of economic activities as labourers on the sugar estates, share croppers cultivating cotton, and peasants growing "ground food" on tiny plots of land. The plantation economy underwent a long period of decline beginning with the mid-19th century, and when it finally collapsed during the middle of the 20th century, Nevisians were left to rely on their impoverished subsistence economy. Throughout this period, migration for

wage employment in more economically developed areas played a major role, as it did throughout most of the Caribbean (Richardson 1983; Thomas-Hope 1978, 1992, 1998). When Nevis attained independence in 1983 as part of the twin-island state of St. Kitts-Nevis, most of the population was living and working abroad.

The Smith family's emigration was part of the migration that took place after the Second World War. Beginning with the 1960s, nine out of the ten siblings moved to Britain, the American and the British Virgin Islands, the Dutch Antilles and neighbouring St. Kitts. I have interviewed members of the Smith family about their migration experiences over a 20-year period, beginning in the 1970s. It is therefore possible to explore the ways in which members of this family view their lives as migrants at different points in time and what kinds of ambitions and achievements they see as guiding their lives. I shall here focus on my interviews with Helena and their two oldest children, Cynthia and Emmanuel, who migrated to the American Virgin Islands during the 1960s. This American territory was then a popular migration destination because it offered migrants temporary work permits and employment at relatively high wages in order to attract the labour needed in the rapidly growing tourist industry. Helena migrated as an adult married woman whereas Cynthia and Emmanuel migrated as children. While they all are technically first generation migrants, the children spent a good part of their childhood in the migration destination and these family members therefore can be seen to represent two different generations in the process of adapting to life in the American Virgin Islands.

The Late 1970s

I first met Helena in 1974, when I did my doctoral research on the development of African-Caribbean culture in the American Virgin Islands. Helena was then working in a small restaurant known for its excellent West Indian food. While a local Virgin Islander owned the restaurant, it was apparent that the cooking, as well as most of the other work in the restaurant, was done by Helena, one of the many immigrants from the Eastern Caribbean who had sought work here. When I returned three years later to study immigration in the Virgin Islands, I interviewed Helena in her home. She was living with her husband and four children in a small wooden house, rented from a Virgin Islander and located in the backyard of the landlord's house. As the whole family sat in the tiny living room, Helena explained that on Nevis they had worked the land, planting cotton, pumpkin and other ground vegetables and raising animals. This was hard work, and when the rains failed, it was very difficult

to make a living. When it became possible to travel to the Virgin Islands on a labour certification scheme, they therefore decided to go—to make money and "better" their life. Kevin left first, Helena followed after two years, and the children, who were left behind with Helena's mother, came five years later when a place had been secured for them in the local schools.

During my interview with the family in the late 1970s, it was apparent that things had not quite worked out the way they had hoped. A major problem, Helena stated, was their temporary visas. After more than 15 years, they still needed labour certification from an employer to stay in the Virgin Islands. They were therefore forced to work at minimum wages for local employers who thought that they ought to be grateful for such employment, since wages were much lower in Nevis. They did not mind the work but felt that they would earn much more money if they were allowed to have a business of their own. Instead of cooking for somebody else, Helena might run her own restaurant; instead of just pumping gas for other people, Kevin might have his own gas station. Another problem emphasized by Helena was that she missed living close to her family as she was accustomed to on Nevis. She said that she did not like to visit "strangers" because if you told them anything, they would gossip with others about it. For this reason, the only place she went, apart from work, was the local Baptist Church. Most of the time when she was not working, however, she stayed at home with her children as her only company. But the sort of home "that suited their pocket" in the Virgin Islands was not as nice as the home they had Nevis. On Nevis, she explained, she would have a bigger and better house to live in, and it would be her own. She would have more freedom and more land around to use as she liked. Helena summed it all up by saying, "I only work in the Virgin Islands, I don't live here."

Despite this hardship, Helena felt that their move to the Virgin Islands had allowed them to improve their life in several respects. She was pleased that they were able to send boxes with food and clothing as well as money to their family in Nevis. Furthermore, they had succeeded in making some improvements on their house in Nevis, and the family enjoyed staying in this house every two to three years when they could afford to travel to Nevis during their paid two-week vacations. Another important improvement in the family's life, Helena added, was that they had managed to give their children an education. Their oldest daughter, Cynthia, was attending the College of the Virgin Islands (at an exorbitant price, because as temporary residents they had to pay out-of-state tuition) and their son, Emmanuel, was doing very well at

school and heading for college. Helena showed me with great pride his report card with only As and Bs.

When I went back to St. John for a follow-up study two years later, the situation of the family had not changed much, and Helena asserted again: "Nevis is home to me. The Virgin Islands is largely a place to work, not to live." This was no empty statement because the family was building a new modern house on Nevis to replace the older, modest home that they had left behind when they emigrated. The conviction that Nevis was the true home of the family had been passed on to the children. Thus, when I interviewed the son, Emmanuel, who was then 18 and finishing high school, he emphasized that he would like to study medicine, so that he might return to Nevis to practice medicine, or, as he said, "go back there and help someone." He felt that Nevis was his home even though he had left the island at seven years of age.

The Mid-1990s

When I interviewed members of the Smith family in the Virgin Islands almost 20 years later, in 1996, their situation appeared to have changed dramatically. They had just finished building a large two-story concrete house located in an up-scale area of primarily well-to-do residents from the continental U.S. Helena was beaming with pride, as she showed me the huge house with many different rooms, wooden panelling and a built-in fountain with fish. She explained that acquiring this house was a great achievement: "It has been a struggle to finish the home. We must make sacrifice. We have not been glamour and fun time people." The struggle involved a great deal of hard work, Helena continuing her job as a cook in the restaurant and Kevin purchasing his own taxi as soon as the family obtained resident visas in the early 1980s. It also meant making gradual investments in property—first in the little wooden house they had been renting, then in a plot of land in an attractive neighbourhood, and, finally, in the new home they built on the land.

Helena and Kevin's two youngest children had married and established their own homes, when I visited the family in 1996, but Cynthia and Emmanuel were still living at home. When I interviewed Cynthia, she told me that she had dropped out of college after three years of study and had been working in various stores. She liked shopping and purchased all the daily necessities for the home, including food, and had bought "the curtains and everything else" for the new house. She also did a lot of shopping for relatives in Nevis whom she visited every year. Emmanuel had graduated from the local college and was working as a science teacher at an elementary school. He had spent a great deal of time helping to build the new

house and was active in the local Baptist church. He had dropped his plans to become a medical doctor, but still hoped that he might further his education in the U.S. and would like to work in research.

The Cultural Construction of Mobility and Personhood

From a very general perspective it is possible to analyze the Smith family's migration to the Virgin Islands in terms of, on the one hand, local processes of adaptation (and change) to life in the migration destination of the American Virgin Islands and, on the other, continued ties to the place of origin, Nevis. Furthermore, the interplay between local and transnational relations can be correlated with the family's access to social and economic mobility in the migration destination. During the early years, when the family's ambitions for improvement were severely constrained by their insecure legal status in the Virgin Islands, Nevis seemed to remain a primary frame of reference. During the 1980s, when the family obtained green cards and more opportunities opened up in the migration destination, their frame of reference appeared to orient increasingly toward the Virgin Islands until, finally, they were able to build a substantial home that was a firm basis for the local nuclear family.

This analysis in terms of a model of an overall process of linear assimilation taking place as individuals enjoy socio-economic mobility in the society of the migration destination does not match the way in which the individuals presented themselves as individual persons and members of the family. From individual migrants' perspective, migration will always be an uncertain business. Thus, while they may decide to migrate in order to achieve certain desired changes, the actual outcome of migration will always be unknown. Referring to the work of Johnson-Hanks, it may be useful to view migration as a "vital life event" (2002:865) that takes place at a "vital conjuncture" in individuals' lives. This means that the decision to migrate is taken within the context of "a socially structured zone of possibility that emerges around specific periods of potential transformation" where "seemingly established futures are called into question." Vital conjunctures are therefore "rarely coherent, clear in direction, or fixed in outcome," but rather "negotiable and contested, fraught with uncertainty, innovation, and ambivalence" (Johnson-Hanks 2002:871, 878). The notions of improvement that narrators point to in their life stories as important motivating factors behind their migratory moves are thus not stable, but undergo constant revision and reassessment, as individuals take stock of their lives at various points in time and reconsider the ambitions and

goals that have guided their life as migrants. This suggests that migration attains significance not just because of the opportunities it offers for individuals to enjoy social and economic mobility in the receiving country, but also because of the broader spectrum of varying contexts it provides individuals for asserting and sustaining their visions of themselves as persons in society.

A central theme in my interviews with Helena was the importance of acquiring a home of one's own. Indeed, it seemed Helena and Kevin's lives had revolved around fulfilling this ambition, and that this had been realized with the building of the dream house in the American Virgin Islands. The home had become the centre of family life. Helena was no longer employed but stayed at home most of the time, surrounded by children and grandchildren who lived nearby or visited on a daily basis if they did not live in the home. She kept busy helping care for the grandchildren and tending the little vegetable garden at the house that she said she had made "in memory of" her parents who had died a few years before on Nevis. Helena had not been back to Nevis since their death, and she had no immediate plans to go. She had not even attended her brother's wedding, held in Nevis a few months prior to our encounter, even though virtually all her siblings had participated in the family celebration, travelling from as far away as England (Olwig 2002, 2007).

It is tempting to conclude that with the construction of the house, and the establishment of an environment of close family relations in the Virgin Islands, Helena's ties to Nevis had more or less lost their import. This conclusion ignores the fact that Helena's achievements in the Virgin Islands attained significance primarily within a Nevisian context of relations (cf. Chamberlain 1995:267).[6] This is particularly apparent with regard to the house, regarded by Helena as the family's major achievement. When I interviewed Helena in the 1970s, she emphasized that a major problem of being a temporary, poorly paid immigrant in the Virgin Islands revolved around having to live in a small, rented house in somebody else's backyard. This was, she explained, because ownership of a house was a primary mode of asserting oneself as a person of respect in the Nevisian community. "In my country," she explained, "a woman isn't a woman, and a man isn't a man, unless they own their own house." For Helena and Kevin, building a substantial house was of particular importance because of Kevin's particular family circumstances, as Helena explained:

> Kevin is an *outside* child [i.e. born out of wedlock], and his mother is blind. His father paid less attention to him. A way was made for him to go out and seek a job

and better his condition. To be a man you must do for yourself. Coming to the Virgin Islands was a way of bettering the style of living. If you have no roof over your head, you are a nobody. But if you own a house, you are on your own. It makes you a man or a woman.[7]

Having a nice home in the Virgin Islands not only gave family members more space and comfort, it enabled them to constitute themselves as persons. Thus, if Helena had settled in the Virgin Islands, her understanding of herself as a person remained very much tied to a Nevisian framework of thinking.[8]

I also suggest that Helena's prolonged absence from Nevis should not be interpreted as due to any disinterest in Nevis or her family there, but rather reflected the continued importance of her Nevisian relations. Thus when I asked her why she did not attend her brother's wedding, she explained that she was afraid that she might get involved in a dispute among her siblings concerning the inheritance of property left by the parents.[9] She also added that with her retirement from work she did not have the money to purchase the sort of gifts that would be expected of her: "I do not work now, and I don't feel good to have nothing to give them when I go there. I like to give a couple of dollars, or to carry a shirt or something. I don't have a lot, but I share whatever I have." Helena's absence from Nevis therefore should not be read as an abandonment of Nevis and the family there, but as a way of dealing with powerful emotional issues rooted both in her continued strong attachment to her childhood home on Nevis and in her desire to see herself as a generous member of the family who had been doing well abroad. Indeed, Helena's shifting focus from Nevis to the Virgin Islands can be described as being a result of her wish to maintain amicable family relations and a position of respect as a successful migrant in the Nevisian community.

The interviews with Emmanuel and Cynthia in 1996 also showed unexpected continuities in the face of apparent changes in their way of life. Both were in their 30s when I interviewed them in the mid 1990s, yet they were still living in their parents' home. When I asked Cynthia whether she had thought of getting her own place, she replied, that she could not afford it, and added that as long as she stayed in her parents' house, she would be able to "save money for other things." Cynthia's appraisal of her economic situation was probably realistic, given the relatively low wages she earned as a shop assistant. This might lead to the conclusion that she had become "a nobody" in the sense that she did not have her own home. However, if one takes into consideration the great contribution Cynthia made to the family home, it is possible

to make a different interpretation of her continued stay in this home. As noted, Cynthia did all the shopping for the family and purchased most of the items to decorate the newly built house. It therefore could be argued that the home in the Virgin Islands was Cynthia's, as well as her parents' achievement, and that she therefore had already proved her worthiness as a woman. It was obvious, however, that Cynthia did not constitute herself as a person primarily through the home, but rather through her shopping. Thus, she not only made purchases for herself and the immediate family in the home, but also for family members in Nevis who needed anything from abroad. She had become so well known as a good shopper that her uncle, who was working in the Virgin Islands, had commissioned her to make all the purchases for the wedding celebrations held the previous summer when he married a young woman from the family's village of origin on Nevis:

> I bought the bride's dress—I got a catalogue, checked some dresses that I thought were possibilities and sent the catalogue to her. She picked one of the dresses that I had marked as a "check plus," and then I ordered the dress for her. I also bought shoes for the bride, and stockings and gloves for the members of the wedding party. I gave my opinion on the colour scheme, and I even chose the invitation and sent it to Nevis for her approval and then I ordered it. [My uncle] gave me money for all this. I chose the mint green for the women's outfits and the peach for the girls. The material they got locally, and they had a seamstress sew it for them. I enjoyed doing this. Anything with decorating I enjoy. I enjoy shopping on the whole.

Cynthia clearly relished both the shopping as such and the recognition she received from the family as a person with good taste and a flair for modern fashions. She developed this image further by presenting herself as a well-dressed person and by bringing generous gifts when she visited Nevis:

> If I go to Nevis, I take gifts along. I buy for everybody, all my cousins, aunts. It is very expensive; still I do it. I budget $1000 to take with me; I send food on the boat going to Nevis worth about $400; I bring clothing for my own use worth about $1000; and then I buy gifts for them worth $1000-2000. I have to save between $4000-5000 to go there. I try to save as much as I can.[10]

Despite the enormous expense involved in going to Nevis, Cynthia managed to spend every summer holiday in Nevis. This meant that as soon as the Christmas season was over, she began to save up for the trip. When I asked her why she used so much on gifts she simply said,

Because it is my family. If I could give them something once a year it makes me feel good. I don't know why. I don't want to see them look worse than anybody else.

When she emphasized that she did not want her family to "look worse than anybody else" Cynthia was referring to the understanding, prevalent on Nevis until the 1990s,[11] that the material welfare of families on Nevis depended on the receipt of remittances from family members abroad. Thus, if a family with relatives abroad was poverty stricken, this reflected badly on the migrants. On the other hand, if a family was able to display some material wealth, this would signify that relatives abroad were successful and loyal to the family left behind (Olwig 1993, 2007).[12] By showering her family on Nevis with gifts, wearing new clothes and spending considerable amounts of money on Nevis, Cynthia thus asserted her status as a successful migrant within the context of Nevisian society.

Cynthia was the only one in her immediate family to go to Nevis every summer. She emphasized that, for her, Nevis was still home. "I had no interest in going to St. John," she stated and added, "I still refer to Nevis as home, though I have lived here longer." This does not mean that she was unhappy about being in the Virgin Islands. On the contrary, she liked living in close proximity to her parents and siblings, going out with friends and shopping in the malls. It rather means that Nevis played a central role in her understanding of herself as a person, because she was born and raised there surrounded by relatives who still were important to her. Furthermore, this family provided a social context where she was able to assert herself as a generous person who could do something for others—something that made her "feel good."

Like Cynthia, Emmanuel had contributed a great deal to the family home, among other things by helping to finance and build the new house in the Virgin Islands. He saw this as part of his duty to be there for the family, when he was needed. Unlike Cynthia, however, he devoted little attention to the family in Nevis, largely because with the death of his grandmother, who had cared for him before his parents in the Virgin Islands were able to send for him, he felt that he had lost his most important tie to Nevis. He noted that he must show respect to Nevis— "that is where my mom saw fit to bring me forth"—but that he preferred the Virgin Islands where he had lived most of his life. He was not happy about his life in the Virgin Islands, however, and felt it had been marred by Virgin Islanders' resentment of his educational ambitions. He described how local people had attempted to prevent him from being chosen as valedictorian for his class, when he graduated from the local junior high school and how he was denied a scholarship for college, even though he graduated fifth out of a high school class of 200. When others protested at this unfairness, he was, at the last minute, given a miserly sum of $250—hardly enough to pay for books. He therefore was forced to study at the local university: "I wanted to go to the States to study, but I couldn't. So I was denied citizens' privileges—even going to college because I had to pay the high fee. All that played a role."

Emmanuel eventually managed to obtain his B.A. at the local university, studying part time so that he might work his way through college. When he got a job at the local school, however, he received no respect from the Virgin Islands parents who complained when he disciplined the students, making comments such as, "who is he to think that he can do that?" Emmanuel's greatest ambition was to go to the U.S. in order to continue his education: "I wanted to get my M.A. in science. I haven't completed it, but it is still part of my desire. I went to New York to study to obtain my M.A. But financially I was not able to, so I went back to St. John." Whereas he expressed an interest in studying medicine and returning to Nevis to help the people there when I interviewed him in the late 1970s, this was no longer a goal: "If I was going into medicine it would have been research. If I do something, I like to do it myself and work alone in the lab, though I would not mind working with colleagues."

Emmanuel's educational ambitions would seem to have taken him far from his roots in the little Nevisian village of small farmers and fishermen, but this was not how he saw it. He traced his interest in education back to his early childhood when he grew up with his older siblings and aunts in his grandmother's home. He recalled with fondness his eagerness to go to school as he watched the older children leave for school in the morning, the joy experienced when it was his turn to leave too, and the privileged position he had in his grandmother's home as the youngest child who could concentrate on school and did not have to do much work around the home. Furthering his education, therefore, was a way of cultivating his Nevisian roots.

Emmanuel also described his strong involvement in the local Baptist Church in terms of his Nevisian background. He spent most of his free time in this church and had developed a position of respect and leadership in the church as president of the Young People's Group, as a Sunday School teacher, and as a member of the Day School Board. He noted, "God is the most important person in my life," and saw his life as being centred primarily on "pleasing God." This devotion to God, he felt, stemmed from the strong tradition for attending church that he experienced

as a child on Nevis, especially through his grandmother. He therefore did not see himself as a new and different person, but rather as someone who had maintained the value of religiosity as emphasized in his early childhood in his grandmother's home on Nevis.

Mobility and Family Relations

The Smith family's migration to the American Virgin Islands can plausibly be viewed as an example of the sort of social and economic mobility that can ideally be enjoyed by settling in another country. In this view, poor migrants arrive with nothing but the clothes on their back and a strong desire for a better life and a willingness to work hard. The father leaves first, then the mother and finally the children join him and they settle as a family in the migration destination. Through a determined effort they improve their economic situation, manage to offer their children a college education and, finally, acquire a nice family home of their own in a good neighbourhood, thus establishing themselves as good middle class members of society. The question arises, however, what did this mobility mean to those involved and what kind of family life did it entail?

My analysis suggests that there is no easy correlation between social and economic mobility in society, as measured through objective parameters, and assimilation—nor is it possible to measure the quest for improvement by objective parameters. The Smith family's building of a grand home thus did not really reflect great social and economic mobility in the migration destination. Rather, it was a demonstration of migrant success as understood within the Nevisian community, largely made possible through hard work, a modest life style and great family loyalty. Emmanuel did experience social mobility through his educational achievements in the Virgin Islands, but this won him little respect in the local Virgin Islands community and instead made him feel humiliated. This may have contributed to his eagerness to assert himself as a person of moral integrity and religious leadership within a Baptist congregation that was dominated by people of immigrant background. Cynthia enjoyed limited social mobility in the Virgin Islands, but she constituted herself as a successful migrant through generous gift-giving in relation to the family on Nevis. The life stories therefore suggest that migration attains significance not just because of the new opportunities it offers for individuals to enjoy social and economic mobility in the receiving country, but also because of the broader spectrum of social and economic contexts it provides individuals for asserting and sustaining their understanding of themselves as persons in society.

These life stories also raise questions about the nature of the family relations among this small group of immigrants. The interviewed family members would probably be listed as living in a nuclear family in the quantitative studies examining indicators of social and economic mobility among migrants. Indeed, family members could be described as belonging to a standard nuclear family in the sense that the family consisted of father, mother, one daughter and one son. What could be more middle class? It is apparent, however, that this nuclear residential unit was closely interwoven with other family units. The two other daughters, who were living in their own homes with husbands and children, visited on a daily basis. I was told that Helena's youngest daughter often slept in Helena's home because her work place was closer to Helena's than to her own home, and she was staying there when I visited because her husband was away on a trip. Furthermore, her son spent every day with Helena who had given up work so that she could care for this child. Helena explained her engagement in this childcare by saying merely, "it is my grandchild." She added that the family and home were the most important to her:

> I have lived on St. John for over 30 years and I don't go out to people's places. People may invite me, but I still have to go home to cook and care for the family, so why go? I live here and I don't know of many places. I stay where I belong.

The close-knit character of relations between Helena and her children and grandchildren became apparent in the interview with Emmanuel, when he referred to this group of people as "the nucleus" of the family. When I asked what this "nucleus" meant to him, he said:

> Whatever is there to be done, I will do in whatever area I am able to. I am there for my parents and sisters. I try my best to help them. It is not the same with my aunts and uncles.
> KFO: Could you give an example of the kind of help you give?
> I worked in construction [of the house] and have helped in that area. I help financially if I can. When they were in school I helped within the areas that I could. Or I just sit and talk with them. I even do babysitting, though I don't like it. I am hesitant, but if there is no other way I will do it.

When he talked about the "nucleus of the family," it was clear that he was not operating with an idea of a nuclear family in the sense of a residential family unit expected to manage on its own. For him, the individual residential family units where his parents, sisters, nephews and nieces

were located were submerged in a network of relations extending help of various kinds, and it was this closely interwoven network that he saw as constituting the nucleus.

Cynthia also emphasized the close relations that she had to her sisters whom she saw every day, but she did not regard the immediate family as the most important nucleus of relatives. When I asked what family meant to her, she replied:

> To me it is like a group that is set together to be like one. My mother, father, brother, sisters, aunts, uncle and cousins. I think of all that when I think about family.
> KFO: What does it mean to be like one?
> If one needs a favour that person can come to you. We share.

Cynthia's more inclusive notion of family must, of course, be related to her frequent visits to Nevis and her image as a knowledgeable and generous shopper for the wider family. This is in contrast to Emmanuel's image of himself as a dutiful son and brother who offered whatever assistance was needed to his parents and sisters whether or not he enjoyed it. Because of its embeddedness in a tight web of social and economic exchanges of great importance to members, the nuclear family of Helena, Kevin, Cynthia and Emmanuel therefore deviated at a practical social level from the Western ideal of the nuclear family as a self-contained, independent socio-economic unit.

Another way in which this family differed from Western notions of the family concerns age structure. Nuclear families in Western society are primarily families of procreation and therefore associated with couples and their young children. A nuclear family where the children are in their 30s would be fairly unusual, because young people would be expected to move out of their parents' home into a place of their own where they could establish a more independent life and form relationships that could lead to marriage and the formation of a new nuclear family. From this Western point of view, the nuclear family of Helena, Kevin, Cynthia and Emmauel should not exist at all because Cynthia and Emmanuel ought to have left their parents' home and acquired places of their own. When I asked Cynthia whether she had considered getting her own place, she replied, as noted, that she could not really afford to do so and preferred to spend her money on other things than expensive rent. This seems like a straightforward, rational economic answer. There is also a cultural rationale behind this answer, however, because in an African-Caribbean context, it is very common for single persons to stay with their parents regardless of their age. Indeed, within the traditional order of things in

African-Caribbean societies young people are not expected to leave their parents' home before they marry.

An important precondition of marriage in the Caribbean has been the acquisition of a house of one's own. Since it is often difficult for the economically disadvantaged segments of society to obtain the economic means to build or buy a house, it has been common for young couples to start a family—in the sense of forming sexual relationships that result in the birth of children—while they are still living at home. The partners usually continue to stay with their respective parents, and their children usually live with the mother in the maternal grandmother's home. Many relationships dissolve, but some become permanent and the couple will then, when they have obtained the resources to acquire a house, marry and establish a family together in their own home. In this Caribbean order of things, the establishment of a nuclear family therefore is a sign of social maturity and a certain level of prosperity. The nuclear family based on marriage and living in a separate home, in other words, is a family form associated with high social status and prestige (see for example, Douglass 1992; Rubenstein 1980; Smith 1956, 1973, 1996).

The social significance of the nuclear family is well exemplified by the Smith family. Thus, Helena and Kevin had their first three children before they were married while they were still living in their parents' homes. Helena and Kevin married after the third child and moved into a house that Helena had inherited from her grandparents. Helena and Kevin did not really have an economic basis for sustaining a family of their own, nor did Kevin have the funds to make improvements on the modest house or to build a house of his own. He therefore decided to migrate to the American Virgin Islands where he was joined by the rest of the nuclear family. As soon as he had earned the necessary funds, he built his own house. Since he had uncertain immigrant status in the American Virgin Islands and limited funds, he constructed the house on Nevis, on the land that Helena had inherited with her grandparents' house. About 15 years later he finished building a substantial house in the American Virgin Islands where the family had settled by then more permanently. This house-building was particularly important for Kevin, Helena explained, because he was an "outside" child, meaning that he was not just born out of wedlock, but that his parents never married. He therefore felt extra pressure to assert his status as a responsible father and successful migrant.

The close connection between nuclear family, a proper home, marriage and social recognition suggests that the nuclear family, in African-Caribbean thinking and social practice, is not so much a practical family arrangement as

an ideal that the socially ambitious aspire to realize later in life. This notion of the nuclear family seemed to be changing as the second generation of immigrants grew up in a society with better income possibilities where it was socially acceptable to live as a family in rented accommodations, and where such accommodations were available. Indeed, neither of Helena's two married daughters owned their own home. Still, it is interesting that neither Cynthia nor Emmanuel had any plans to marry, nor to move out of their parents' home, both of them being satisfied with regarding the family's new house in the American Virgin Islands as theirs as well as their parents' achievement. By identifying this home as theirs, they had fulfilled their obligations as good members of society and they were then free to pursue their varying interests, whether in shopping and decorating or in religious activities. This analysis shows that behind the nuclear family form that is registered in various population censuses or social surveys, there may be many different social practices, cultural ideals and personal life stories. These three life stories thus point to the importance of questioning American middle class social norms and cultural assumptions that tend to underlie research on family relations in an immigrant context.

Conclusion

This analysis leads to the conclusion that migration entails complex processes of continuity and change, as migrants both reassert and revise ways of constituting themselves as persons within new fields of opportunity and restraint. Thus, the maintenance of transnational ties may not necessarily be a question of disappointment with not attaining "objective" goals of improvement in the receiving society. Rather, it may be an expression of the migrants' desire to achieve personhood within the framework of their lived experiences from their early years in their place of origin to later lives in the migration destination. From this point of view, change and continuity in relation to migration, and the mobility for "improvement" that it may entail, should be investigated in relation to the shifting contexts of life where individuals may construct their personhood, as well as in relation to social and economic achievements within national and regional frameworks of living.

At a wider level of analysis, this study suggests that the notion of improvement constitutes a central concern in migrants' narratives that should be subject to further investigation. Improvement thus refers to the general motive of leaving for better social and economic opportunities in another place, at the same time as it provides a flexible space of interpretation allowing migrants to find meaning and purpose in their lives in light of the varying circumstances of life they have encountered in the migration destination. The analysis of the social construction of improvement that takes place in migrants' narratives therefore offers a methodological and conceptual approach that is valuable because it goes beyond methodological nationalism by focusing on the experiences and perceptions of the people who move rather than the success or failure of national agendas of integrating new citizens.

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Notes

1 In the words of the historian Walter Nugent: "To leave again implied that the migrant came only for money; was too crass to appreciate America as a noble experiment in democracy; and spurned American good will and helping hands" (Foner 2000:183; see also Gmelch 1980). Return migration therefore was regarded as a breach of loyalty toward the United States and it was, for many years, deemed a topic unworthy of study.

2 The American civil rights movement also created a public awareness of the continued poor social and economic conditions of Black Americans, one of the oldest "immigrant" groups in the country.

3 For discussions of the anatomy of life stories, see Bruner 1987; Langness and Frank 1981; Linde 1993; Ochs and Capps 1996; and Peacock and Holland 1993.

4 This article has benefitted from constructive comments from colleagues and the two anonymous reviewers at *Anthropologica*. This is gratefully acknowledged. I would also like to thank the "Smith family" for their generous help and friendship over many years. The data upon which this article is based were generated as part of a larger research project funded by The Danish Council for Development Research.

5 I have described the social and economic development of Nevis in greater detail in Olwig 1993 and 2007.

6 For a further elaboration of this, see Olwig 2005 and 2007.

7 Some of the quotes from these life stories have been presented in other publications (Olwig 2005, 2007).

8 A similar association of adulthood and house ownership could be found in traditional Virgin Islands culture, however, it has changed as the Virgin Islands have become "Americanized" and subjected to a highly inflated tourist economy that has made ownership of land and a house beyond the economic means of many people. See, for example, Olwig 1994.

9 For a further discussion of this dispute, see Olwig 2002.

10 She is referring to U.S. dollars.

11 This was especially the case before the 1990s when there were very few wage employment opportunities on Nevis and the local population depended, to a large extent, on subsistence farming. The situation changed in 1991 when the large International Four Seasons Resort opened on Nevis.

12 See also Philpott's (1968) early analysis of the role of remittances in family relations.

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In Pursuit of the "Full Ride": American Athletic Scholarships and Mobility, Sport and Childhood in Canada

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Abstract: This paper examines the pursuit by Canadian youths of athletic scholarships offered by American colleges and universities, situating their individual efforts within longstanding family projects of child rearing as well as the operations of local sport organizations. Asking why and how the prestige attached in Canada to American athletic scholarships continues to be upheld despite ample evidence of problems associated with this means of obtaining an undergraduate education, the analysis focuses upon the ways in which Canadian youth athletes in the U.S., parents, coaches and college officials play their respective parts in sustaining a distinctive form of coming of age.

Keywords: athletic scholarships, youths, parents, movement, Canada, United States

Résumé : Cet article s'intéresse à de jeunes Canadiens qui cherchent à obtenir des bourses d'athlétisme offertes par des universités et collèges américains, inscrivant leurs efforts individuels dans un projet familial d'éducation à long terme, de même que dans la gestion des organisations sportives locales. Lorsqu'on pose la question de savoir pourquoi les bourses d'athlétisme américaines continuent de jouir d'un tel prestige au Canada, en dépit des multiples preuves des problèmes liés à cette manière d'obtenir une éducation universitaire de premier cycle, l'analyse fait le foyer sur les manières qu'ont les jeunes athlètes canadiens aux É.-U., leurs parents, leurs entraîneurs, et les administrateurs de collèges de jouer leurs rôles respectifs en faisant perdurer un type distinctif de passage à l'âge adulte.

Mots-clés : bourses athlétiques, jeunes, parents, mouvement, Canada, États-Unis.

Introduction

In Canada, sports are broadly viewed as "natural" and "wholesome" pastimes for children that are expected to furnish healthy exercise and companionable leisure. The practices that make up children's games and athletic competitions may vary substantially from one sport setting to another, not least in conjunction with prevailing levels of inattention or, conversely, of active support and involvement that these activities may attract from adults. Whether child and youth sports remain in the purview of boys and girls or become objects of familial, community or even state attention looms large in determining the shape and conditions of children's athletic play. The entry of adults and formal organizations into such sporting spheres tends to be accompanied by more or less intrusive premises and purposes that hinge upon socially defined differences between children and adults, not to mention underlying beliefs about the responsibilities that the latter should exercise on behalf of the former. The ways in which resulting rationales and regimes for child and youth sports actually play out often differ markedly from one social or national setting to another (see for example, Anderson 2008; Brownell 1995; Dyck 2000b). But in addition to being intrinsically labile in form, such games, competitive practices and athletes sometimes experience remarkable levels of mobility. What is more, their movement from one locale to another may serve, in unexpected ways, to trigger change or to buttress continuity upon fields of play as well as within other contiguous realms of social and political life.

This article examines how the prospect of Canadian youths winning athletic scholarships offered by American universities and colleges has served to capture the attention and marshal the ambitions of countless Canadian boys and girls, parents, and sport officials in ways that function not only to reshape domestic sporting practices but also to sustain other social undertakings that have been hitched to these. American college athletic directors

have long endeavoured to attract elite athletes from across and beyond the U.S.A. to join their programs. Canadians have traditionally comprised one of the largest sources of non-American students participating in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sports (Bale 1991). My concern here is to elucidate how a set of prosaic organizational measures devised for use within one national sports setting can inadvertently, but nonetheless deeply, inflect the organization of child and youth sports in another country. What also requires explanation is why youths, parents and athletic organizations have been drawn to re-envision their respective interests and activities through the prism of sport practices and opportunities enacted elsewhere. To trace the paradoxical impact[1] in Canada of the offering of athletic scholarships by American universities and colleges, it is necessary to take note of both the individual experiences of athletes who take up such awards and move to the U.S. as well as the implications of their choices and mobility upon those who remain north of the 49th parallel. How, indeed, has such a specific version of "coming of age" that revolves around the objective of preparing young athletes to move to the U.S. been articulated in Canada and why is it maintained?

The first section of this article identifies certain salient features of the intercollegiate athletics system in the U.S. and some longstanding, highly publicized controversies it has precipitated in American higher education. The second provides an ethnographically based delineation of how and why American athletic scholarships are spoken of and pursued with such diligence in Canada. The third examines the athletic, academic and social experiences of individual Canadian athletes who take up athletic scholarships in the U.S. and reviews their accounts of the personal and familial objectives that prompted them to pursue this option. The final section brings together questions developed in the previous three to ask why so many Canadian parents and coaches persist in portraying American athletic scholarships in such approving terms, thereby encouraging Canadian boys and girls to devote themselves to pursue these despite cautions and warnings provided in abundance by American critics of intercollegiate athletics. Coming to grips with the implausible naïveté mounted by some Canadian adults about the workings of American college athletics leads the analysis back to the ways in which the continued relocation of young Canadian athletes to the U.S. may, in practice, serve purposes and objectives beyond those declared by award winners.

Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States

Sport has traditionally been a prominent aspect of student life in universities and four-year degree-granting colleges in the United States, reflecting distinctively modernist notions about its presumed capacities to build character. From the commencement of intercollegiate athletic competitions in the mid-19th century between what would subsequently become the "Ivy League" universities,[2] college sports were promoted as contributing to the creation of well rounded undergraduates who were to be encouraged to seek excellence not merely in academic studies but within a broader range of social endeavours (Smith 1988:vii). While college sports were steadfastly designated as amateur pastimes, thereby precluding the remuneration of players and competitors, more mundane institutional interests, nonetheless, also stood behind the rapid expansion of intercollegiate athletics programs. Within a context of ever fiercer competition among a multitude of varied post-secondary educational institutions to enroll fee-paying undergraduate students and to attract generous donations, the prospect of achieving institutional recognition through victories achieved by varsity teams on the fields of play became irresistible. By the early 20th century, sport had become a prominent feature of college life in the U.S. and was more and more viewed as a competitive "necessity" for college and university administrators charged with building their institutions and garnering bequests from alumni and other benefactors.

But the inherent predicaments of relying upon the popularity of intercollegiate athletics as a means of enhancing the visibility and prestige of post-secondary institutions surfaced before long. Intercollegiate athletics may have remained nominally amateur in status, but the most reliable route to realizing athletic success at the institutional level was then, as now, to attract and retain top athletes, even if this required easing academic standards of admission and overlooking the illicit compensation of star varsity athletes through under-the-table payments provided by local "boosters" of college sports. In 1906, an explosion of these and other problems led to the creation of the institutional precursor of the NCAA, a voluntary organization charged with reforming and regulating college and intercollegiate athletics. The subsequent evolution of the NCAA into the largest collegiate athletics association in the world and the body that governs intercollegiate athletics at many universities and colleges in the United States was accompanied by a stream of controversies that flowed through its operations from the outset. In striving to secure the favoured place of ath-

letics within its member institutions, the NCAA has historically focused on responding "judiciously" to declared problems with and challenges to the collegiate athletics system by perennially revising an ever more complicated and extensive set of rules enacted to guard against all manner of abuses.

Over the years, the NCAA has addressed and re-addressed a range of issues, reaching from endless forms of recruiting violations to abusive coaching practices applied to maximize athletes' on-field performances. Nevertheless, critics of American college sports generally concur that, despite these efforts, enshrined patterns of "cheating to win" have, over the years, taken hold as "a serious illness, a persistent pathology" (Bailey and Littleton 1991:ix-x). A former President of Harvard University labelled athletics as the oldest form of commercialization in American higher education, noting that "American universities, despite their lofty ideals, are not above sacrificing academic values—even values as basic as admissions standards and the integrity of their courses—in order to make money. Nor will they shrink from exploiting their own students, where necessary, to succeed on the playing field" (Bok, 2003:54). A former Executive Director of the NCAA was moved to observe, "college athletics reform movements ... have been remarkably consistent. They never reformed much of anything" (Byers 1995:337). At the base of these appraisals is what has been referred to somewhat abstractly as a "collision between the prevailing value systems of sports, on the one hand, and the values of the university, on the other" (Bailey and Littleton 1991:7).

At the heart of American intercollegiate athletics, underpinning not only the extraordinary levels of participation and popular acclaim these receive but also the seemingly intractable difficulties and dissension they engender, lies the vital matter of how college athletes are actually recompensed for their services as varsity team players and competitors. The adoption by many universities and colleges in the post-Second World War era of a formal system of granting athletic scholarships opened the doors to widespread expansion and professionalization of athletics programs, particularly in football and men's basketball. Recipients of "full" athletic scholarships were initially guaranteed the cost of tuition fees, books, and room and board for a period of four years, no matter how well or how poorly they might perform as athletes. To ensure that incoming athletes would be able to adjust to the demands of their studies, first year athletes were initially barred from competing on varsity teams. Both of these provisions were discarded in the early 1970s when television broadcasting of top-ranked football and bas-

ketball competitions injected massive new revenues *and* expenditures into what came to be referred to as "big-time" college sports programs. Thereafter, athletic scholarships would be offered for only one year at a time, with provision for renewal at the discretion of coaches and athletic officials; moreover, athletes became eligible to play for varsity teams from the time of their first enrolment. In consequence, the annual allocation of athletic scholarships became even more directly responsive to the sorts of pressures to win encountered by ever more highly paid yet "untenured" coaches and athletic officials. In practice, the acceptance of a "full ride," partial, or even rather nominal athletic scholarship obliged the recipient to make athletics his or her first priority if such aid was to be renewed. The escalating competition between colleges and universities to recruit elite athletes led not only to the creation of what amounts to a college "market" for athletic talent but also substantial but seldom discussed disparities in the amounts of athletic scholarships and other official and unofficial "considerations" extended to some but not all members of a given team. The myth of amateurism in "big-time" college sports (Bailey and Littleton 1991; Byers 1995; Funk 1991; Gerdy 2006; Sack 2008; Sack and Staurowsky 1998; Shulman and Bowen 2001) became an open secret shored up by the improvising of more "athlete-friendly" courses, flexible academic standards, and a host of other measures devised to afford a fig leaf of legitimacy for the notion of the "student athlete."[3]

Had these and other problems had been confined to "big-time" college sports, which have traditionally served as development programs for some major professional sports leagues in the U.S., the impact of the mounting contradictions unleashed within American higher education by intercollegiate athletics might have been roughly quarantined within football and men's basketball programs at the larger public and private universities and colleges. The enactment in 1972 of Title IX of the Educational Amendments to the Civil Rights Act, however, fundamentally altered the terrain of college sports by extending the awarding of athletic scholarships far beyond this sector.[4] In ruling that no person could, on the basis of their sex, be denied benefits or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, Title IX put an end to college sports programs and practices that had overwhelmingly revolved around male athletes in "big-time" sports. From this point on, resources provided for men's and women's athletics would have to be distributed in approximate proportion to the percentage of male and female students in a given institution. Nor could colleges restrict

athletic scholarships to moneymaking sports and still comply with the law (Bok 2003:126). In 1973, women's athletics were incorporated into the NCAA and unprecedented opportunities for women to win athletic scholarships opened up.[5] Although the first wave of women awarded athletic scholarships in the 1970s tended to be more academically accomplished students than their contemporary male counterparts (Shulman and Bowen 2001:262-263), by the late 1980s, this differential had largely disappeared.

Strictly speaking, the awarding of athletic scholarships by NCAA member institutions remains limited by the existence of separate divisions and sub-divisions of athletic competition, each of which is governed by different rules. Institutions with Division I and Division II programs are permitted to offer athletic scholarships, while Division III athletic programs are prohibited from doing so. Regardless, athletes entering institutions with Division III programs—as well as Division I Ivy League institutions that do not offer athletic scholarships—are eligible to receive general forms of student aid and frequently do so with higher rates of success than do other applicants, raising the question of whether the ostensible lack of explicit compensation for athletes at this level might not be more a matter of terminology than of actual practice.[6] Athletes may receive material considerations—for example, scholarships—for their on-field performances. But just as significant as these forms of material reward is the frequency with which proficient athletes are admitted to otherwise academically selective and prestigious institutions with significantly lower academic scores than those required of other applicants. The common practice of coaches and athletic directors being permitted to nominate and support the applications of a specified number of athletes for admission as well as for annually renewable forms of financial assistance underlines the extent of an athlete's obligations to these figures and the priority that must accordingly be placed upon sport performance throughout their college years.

A painstaking study by Shulman and Bowen, *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values* (2001), furnishes a well-documented basis for assessing some abiding beliefs about the nature and benefits of college athletics. Focusing on 30 academically selective and prestigious institutions,[7] Shulman and Bowen collected and analyzed extensive and detailed data on some 90,000 undergraduate students, athletes and others, who enrolled in these institutions at three points in time: the fall of 1951, the fall of 1976 and the fall of 1989. With the schools' cooperation, data were gleaned from individual admissions records, transcripts and detailed demographic infor-

mation, as well as extensive survey findings that tracked subsequent graduate education, career choices and earnings, family circumstances and other factors, for both athletes and non-athletes who entered these institutions as undergraduates at selected junctures over a period of nearly four decades (Shulman and Bowen, 2001:xxx). The authors employed all of these sources to address a set of beliefs that "powerfully capture ... the [American] imagination and may or may not be rooted in fact," including claims that: college sports make money; schools worry about their sports programs for the sake of the alumni; gender equity is giving women new opportunities; and, today's athletes are like those of the past (Shulman and Bowen 2001:xxvi).

Among the key empirical findings of this study was the fact that male and female athletes who are recruited "and who end up on the carefully winnowed lists of desired candidates submitted by coaches to the admissions office, now enjoy a very substantial statistical "advantage" in the admissions process," an advantage that had grown steadily since the 1970s (Shulman and Bowen 2001:259-260). Yet, athletes recruited by these 30 colleges and universities tended to enter post-secondary studies with considerably lower Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores than their classmates. Although the athletes included in this study graduated at reasonably high rates, over time they had become increasingly likely to receive grades that ranked them in the bottom third of their classes. Only part of this decline in the academic performance of athletes, noted the authors, could, however, be attributed to lower levels of aptitude or preparation when they began college. In contrast, students "who were active in other time-intensive extracurricular activities overperformed academically, relative to their SAT scores and other predictors" (Shulman and Bowen 2001:262). These and other findings led the authors to suggest that athletes tend to enter into a "culture of athletes" that seems to account for why they tend to band together disproportionately in certain majors and fields of study. The study further noted that although college athletes from earlier decades had tended to achieve relatively good grades, to major in a broad range of disciplines and professions, and to fit readily into the broader undergraduate profile of these institutions, these patterns were changing. The concerns raised by this shift were not only that the narrowly focused athletic and career interests of many athletes could be causing them "to neglect the broader educational opportunities offered by schools that describe themselves as liberal arts colleges and universities" (Shulman and Bowen 2001:274), but also that of the longer-term impact of increased levels of athletic recruitment on the mix and

overall academic quality of undergraduate students in these schools.

Shulman and Bowen (2001) observed that while revenues from athletics programs could sometimes cover most and, occasionally, even all of the costs of certain "big-time" sports in given schools, this happened only if they were consistently successful on the field of play. Most schools lost money, the authors reported: "it is unlikely that any school comes close to covering its full costs if proper allowances are made for the capital-intensive nature of athletics" (Shulman and Bowen 2001:267). In the end, the authors advised that "athletic budgets, seen on a "net" basis, should be regarded as expenditures by the institution that must be justified in terms of the contribution that they do or do not make to the core educational mission of the school" (Shulman and Bowen 2001: 267). A similar admonition might no less appropriately be directed to young Canadian athletes, along with their parents and coaches, enticed by the lure of athletic scholarships that would lead them to the U.S. at the end of high school and childhood. What, indeed, are the particular attractions that fuel the ongoing quest in Canada for American athletic scholarships?

Making Sports Pay

Given the absence of "full ride" athletic scholarships in Canada, promising young Canadian athletes have long been targetted by recruiters from U.S. colleges and universities. Young Canadians who do opt to "head south" are locally celebrated as recipients of athletic scholarships that, it is said, will permit them not only to get a "free education" at a "big" (and presumably "prestigious") American university, but also to move up to much higher levels of sport competition than are thought to be available in Canada. Not surprisingly, the prospect of winning such scholarships has become strongly associated with high achievement in child and youth sports in Canada both in schools and in more extensive community sports clubs and leagues. Indeed, a common means of recognizing individual achievements by young Canadian athletes is to proclaim them as possible or even highly likely candidates to receive an athletic scholarship from an American university. To be spoken of in these terms, whether or not one has an actual interest in seeking or accepting such possibilities, is to be acknowledged as a superior athlete.

It is important to situate the temporal and relational co-ordinates within which the discursive construction of athletic scholarships occurs. Since the legal age of majority in Canada is 18 or 19 years (depending on the province), entry into intercollegiate athletics coincides with the socially demarcated transition from childhood to the world of adults. In the years preceding this juncture, children and youths exist as minors under the care and protection of parents or guardians. But from the perspective of parents, another way of framing this period is to regard it as the time when they are, or were, mostly actively involved in raising and nurturing their children. It is within this peak period, when the roles and responsibilities of parents are performed either with commitment and effectiveness or sloughed off and neglected, that the domestic "careers" of parents *as* parents take form and are played out.

Because sons and daughters depend upon their parents for financial and other forms of support required for participation in community sports (Dyck 2002:108-113), the athletic "careers" of boys and girls unfold and intersect more or less inconspicuously with the domestic ones of mothers and fathers. Child rearing entails the practice of highly intimate activities and relationships within often glaringly public settings. Indications from time to time of the apparent success—or worrisome lack of it—registered by sons and daughters as they move towards adulthood and (hopefully) begin to demonstrate an inclination and capacity to support themselves offer one sign of the possible wisdom and efficacy of any given parent's efforts (Dyck 2000b). But any certainty about how a son or daughter will "turn out" in the end is not, of course, available until long after the most active and visible phases of parenting have ended. In the absence of any such conclusive evidence of likely outcomes during those hectic years when children grow to become teenagers, the attractions to parents of a son or daughter who is being or might yet be counted among those who are said to be in the running to win an athletic scholarship become obvious. Although mothers and fathers freely admit that a parent's assessment of a son or daughter's accomplishments might not be entirely impartial, the awarding of athletic scholarships by college officials carries with it the imprimatur of objective assessment. Accordingly, learning and talking about athletic scholarships and speculating about whose son or daughter might win one can become absorbing pastimes for many parents.

Discourses about athletic scholarships are constructed and consumed primarily by those who are engaged in or connected to child and youth sport in one capacity or another, making up a list that includes child and youth athletes, parents, coaches and trainers, community, provincial and national sport organizers and directors, media personnel who cover youth sports, and individuals and agencies involved voluntarily or professionally in the recruitment of Canadian athletes to American intercollegiate athletic programs. It is, therefore, necessary to

take account of varying ways through which discourses about athletic scholarships are shaped and shared.

An item that appeared in the sports pages of one of Vancouver's daily newspapers provides an instructive example of how athletic scholarships tend to be treated in media accounts. It reported the situation of a young local sprinter who was, according to the title of the piece, "Weighing her track options." Briefly, "the race to recruit" the young woman, who had been a triple gold medalist at the provincial track and field championships the previous year, was said to be "coming up to the finish line." Although the girl had "talked to dozens of NCAA schools," she had short-listed Hawaii, Illinois, Arizona and Notre Dame and had already made official visits to each campus. Scheduled to compete in a major track meet in California the following weekend, she expected that all of her prospective coaches would be on hand, thus enabling her to meet with each of them again before reaching a final decision.

What this report contained were the key ingredients of most media discourse about athletic scholarships: a local athlete who had registered first-rate athletic results and one or more American colleges and universities that were said to be eagerly recruiting her to join their athletics programs. Reports such as these often list the names and accomplishments of other high school athletes who have received athletic scholarships. What is also stated explicitly or strongly implied in such a summary of an athlete's career-to-date is evidence of the "talent," "hard work" and "maturity" that the athlete in question has exhibited, claims that are frequently corroborated by a coach or teammate. While exact dollar amounts and terms of athletic scholarships tend not to be reported, readers are left with the impression that the recipient will have her or his post-secondary education paid for entirely.

Moving beyond media reports of athletic scholarships and into the ethnography of the extensive and varied realm of child and youth sports, roughly similar sorts of accounts and claims are frequently encountered. Driving his 12-year-old daughter and one of her classmates to a track and field practice for the first time, a father who himself never attended university casually explained to the two girls what their participation in this sport might earn them: "That will be your ticket to get your way paid through university, to have fun attending track meets all over the country, maybe even to travel around the world." Similarly, an assistant coach of an elite provincial team met with 13-year-old soccer players following one of their games in order to invite them to try out for the provincial squad. He explained that to be selected as a member of this team would afford them the opportunity to travel and participate in top-notch tournaments against American competition. Tournaments such as these, he noteed, bring out scouts from American universities who might offer good players a "full ride" scholarship when they complete high school.

Discussion of athletic scholarships can also serve to reveal the knowledge and sophistication of the speaker about these matters. Thus, Nigel,[8] a youth football coach, advised parents who might wish that their son would one day win an athletic scholarship to consider enrolling them in lacrosse. Ivy League teams are now, he reported, heavily scouting British Columbia for skilled lacrosse players. Conversely, Lorraine, a young ringette coach felt it necessary to advise prospective players from the outset that this sport is a lot of fun for girls, even though there are no athletic scholarships offered to its graduates because it is not a sport that has been adopted in American universities and colleges. Invoking the likelihood of athletic scholarships being won by athletes in "our" sport or club can also be a means for declaring the relative social distinction of "us" compared to "them." Thus, Clint, a sprints coach spoke with a group made up of parents and other coaches about the superior qualities of track and field athletes: "With these kids it's not a matter of them asking each other, 'Are you going to university?' Instead they're asking, 'which university will you be going to?'"

Nevertheless, familiarity with popular discourses about athletic scholarships does not necessarily render one a captive or adherent of them. Frank, the father of a highly accomplished runner, did not concur with the view of his daughter's coach that she would suffer by opting to attend a local university and continue living at home. While allowing that his daughter could be turning down an offer that might take her to an Ivy League institution, Frank stated simply that his daughter was not yet ready to be that far away from home. Inga, a dental hygienist, related the sobering experience of her best friend's son, who after receiving an athletic scholarship to attend Stanford dropped out a short while later due to the incredible demands made upon his time by the coach of his sport: "They were just *too* serious for him!"

The point is, however, that athletic scholarships remain a prominent feature of the rhetorical and organizational landscape of child and youth sports in Canada. Fieldwork evidence that more than a few of the Canadian athletes who "head South" are not actually in receipt of "full ride" scholarships for all or for any of their years in college, indicates that more than a few Canadian parents are quietly making up the difference. In view of the generally much higher costs of post-secondary education in the U.S., the supplementary support required to permit

a son or daughter to take up a partial scholarship can easily amount to more than the total cost that would otherwise be incurred in attending an academically comparable Canadian university. This practice poses intriguing questions about the factors and motivations that shape certain contemporary Canadian middle-class approaches to child rearing. It also raises the possibility that sport organizations, educational institutions and parents may be inconspicuously working together to harness the growth, development and training of children and youth to a set of disparate yet conditionally reconcilable interests, all of which revolve around sharing in reflected forms of prestige[9] attached to and derived from the pursuit of American athletic scholarships.

Canadian "Student Athletes" in the U.S.A.

The particular circumstances that lead some young Canadian men and women to take up athletic scholarships in the United States and the ensuing academic, athletic, and social experiences they report during or following their college years vary in many respects, reflecting the specificities of individual lives and differing educational institutions and sports. Nonetheless, ethnographic interviews conducted both in the U.S. with Canadian "student athletes" and intercollegiate athletics officials, as well as those conducted in Canada with former athletic scholarship holders and the parents of current and past "student athletes," also reveal certain striking similarities in the paths and processes by which athletes move to and through the role of varsity athletes in the U.S.

Although electing to leave family, friends and country behind constitutes a vital change in young lives, in another sense, the receipt of an athletic scholarship continues and extends types of activities and relationships within which these young Canadians have been ensconced since childhood. Athletes of the calibre recruited by American intercollegiate athletics programs typically have extensive sport histories. What is more, the parents of these Canadian athletes tend to have been involved at least as strong supporters and sometimes as guiding figures in their children's sporting endeavours. Garth, the captain of his varsity team, began to play hockey at an early age:

> I started skating when I was four and I played hockey when I was five ... It was my dad who got me into it. Like most parents, probably, it's usually the father that gets them into hockey. And my dad coached me growing up until I was maybe, you know, 13. Then once you get to kind of the higher levels, you know, your dad doesn't really keep coaching you.

Paige, a volleyball player, reports having sampled a broad range of sports with the unceasing support of her parents:

> I started out doing gymnastics, I did like, artistic gymnastics and didn't really like that. And then I did rhythmic gymnastics for a while and didn't really like that. I did track [and field], I did baseball ... a lot of sports. [My parents] were like, very supportive all the way along, always willing ... to drive wherever. And like, they never, never complained, always very supportive.

The parents of Pete, a college baseball player, consistently attended his games and accompanied him during his many years of youth competition:

> I started playing sports in elementary school and high school, [and my parents] were always there. Especially, you know, [when] playing for [the provincial baseball team], there's a lot of travelling involved. So they were always there with me, travelling around to all the different ballparks and everything.

These levels of parental involvement in community sports for children and youth are by no means unusual in Canada. Indeed, parental provision of financial and logistical support has become a mandatory requirement of most community sports organizations as well as many extra-mural school athletics programs, eliciting concern in some quarters about the impact of arrangements such as these on sport participation by children from low income families. Within this social realm, determining the extent to which children autonomously chart their own courses through sports activities or instead may be led to, encouraged, and guided within these activities by fathers and mothers remains a complicated matter. When the parents of a seven-year-old girl publicly speculate about the possibilities of their daughter one day receiving an athletic scholarship to a "big" American university and when, a decade later, that comes to pass (Dyck 2003:56), it can be tempting to allocate "ultimate" agency in this field to adults and to regard girls and boys as relatively "acted upon" figures. But the intimacy, intensity and continuity that can come to characterize relationships between parents and children through their joint involvement in sports—not to mention those between young athletes and coaches—can also combine in ways that defy convenient categorical assumptions. This becomes acutely evident when one seeks to determine whether decisions made by teenaged sons and daughters to pursue an athletic scholarship are essentially their own undertakings or whether these might represent a logical and prefigured step within and validation of larger family "projects"

rooted in shared domestic sporting histories in which the athletic predilections and accomplishments of children become inextricable components of the child-rearing performances of mothers and fathers.

Fran, a varsity basketball player, appreciates the unstinting parental encouragement and support provided for her youthful ventures into hockey, volleyball and basketball. Her father, a doctor, was "very excited" about the process that led to her winning an athletic scholarship. Her high school coaches had also been integrally involved in this process:

> They contacted schools and stuff, um, would talk to [American college] coaches, would during games say, "you know, this school is here to watch you, Fran," just little things like that. They were good coaches, they recruited, like, good players to come play for them. So we always had a very strong team.

Lane, a member of a national youth sports team during his high school years, decided at age 17 to drop out of that sport and to fly to the U.S. where he hoped to focus on another sport that he had played casually since childhood. Growing up in a small community where "everybody knows what time you go to the bathroom and stuff like that," Lane had been desperate to leave his home town after high school graduation and "to get far, far away." Staying with relatives, he spent a year elevating his game, participating in amateur tournaments and preparing videos of his performances to send to athletics departments across the U.S.A. To aid his efforts, his mother drove Lane's car down more than a thousand miles from Canada so that he would have the use of it during this preparatory year. Daley, a hockey player, also benefitted from his mother's assistance during this period, albeit in another capacity: "Luckily, my mom helped me out a lot with it. She did most of the paperwork. I guess I was kind of a baby on that one [laughing], she kinda did most of it." When asked whether his parents had been supportive of his decision to come to the U.S., Daley observed: "Yeah, they're very supportive and, you know, they don't make my decisions or anything, but they help me out a lot and give their opinions and also I take them into account. So, they helped me out a lot." In contrast, his older brother, identified by Daley as "the smart one," had chosen to remain in Canada and attend a local university.

Naomi received her athletic scholarship as a result of an impromptu venture launched by another father who, wanting to ensure that his own daughter would be seen and considered by American college coaches and recruiters, had organized a special "pick up" team to travel to and compete in a major American tournament. Naomi's parents agreed to finance her travel and accommodation on this trip, and she and several teammates subsequently received offers of athletic scholarships. The circumstances that led Elise to be admitted to an Ivy League university with sufficient financial aid to permit her to attend were hardly a spur of the moment matter. She had been enrolled since Grade 9 in a specialized fee-charging sport academy attached to a local public high school. Through this arrangement, she and her classmates received on-ice coaching sessions four times a week as part of the school curriculum, as well as a weekly life skills training class within which students were shown how to prepare university applications as well as personal résumés and videos of their sport performances to be addressed to athletics directors and coaches at American colleges and universities. Yet notwithstanding the more or less elaborate measures taken to increase the likelihood of young Canadian athletes being noticed by American college recruiters and coaches, the making of final decisions about which scholarship offers to seek and which to accept is often a somewhat haphazard affair (Dyck 2006:73-75). While Elise had little difficulty in choosing an offer from an internationally known East Coast university over that of a non-descript state university in the Midwest, when doing so she put particular weight upon the lower ranking of the women's hockey program at the latter school. In other cases, Canadian athletes found it quite difficult to assess and balance the relative merits of the academic and athletic programs at different schools. The personal attention that they received or did not receive from prospective coaches and athletics officials often played a critical role in their final selections.

The college experiences reported by Canadian students who take up athletic scholarships in the U.S. take the form of detailed and highly personal accounts that serve to illuminate the challenges and complexities that arise when a young person moves away from home to another country, enters into higher education and strives to find his or her place in a demanding athletics program. They generally report having been warmly welcomed by their coaches and teammates and of settling into a packed daily round of classes, training sessions, practices, games or competitions. While the calibre of coaching that they encounter may not always be better or even necessarily as good as that which they had received previously, almost invariably the levels of competition facing them both within their teams as well as in intercollegiate competition is much, much higher than these young athletes had expected it to be. The importance placed upon not just winning games but on working as hard as possible at every practice session, lest an athlete become the object of a

coach's wrath, emerges again and again in students' narratives. Although fully appreciative of the "state of the art" athletic facilities, equipment, physical training and therapy services made available to college athletes in the U.S., nonetheless, they must cope with recurring levels of physical fatigue that soon visit most of them. At the same time, the sheer thrill of being suddenly at the centre of sports programs and events that typically receive levels of attendance and fan adulation virtually inconceivable within Canadian university sports can be seductive.

In the classroom, Canadian athletes frequently discover to their relief that they have, in fact, been reasonably well prepared by high schools at home to meet the academic demands made of undergraduates even at Ivy League institutions. A certain number of athletes engaged in sports programs such as football, basketball, baseball and ice hockey—sports that might well lead to subsequent professional sport careers—appear to decide at a relatively early stage to give their "academics" only as much time and attention as is necessary to remain eligible in terms of NCAA, university and team requirements to continue to compete athletically. Others strive to observe, at least in some manner, parents', coaches', and administrators' repeated injunctions that they must take care to "balance their academics and athletics." In many schools varsity athletes are required, during their first year of university, to attend study hall sessions to ensure that they do not fall behind in class assignments. Athletics departments also frequently arrange and pay for the services of tutors who assist individual athletes who encounter difficulties with particular courses. Academically more able athletes are released from mandatory study hall attendance as soon as grades are reported at the end of their first semester of studies. A few of these young Canadians set their academic sights considerably higher than do most of their teammates, enrolling in demanding programs such as engineering or pre-medicine studies. But to do so may complicate their college lives in ways that may not initially be apparent. Since athletic scholarship holders are obliged to take part in daily practice and training sessions, they are sometimes unable to enroll in essential pre-requisite courses due to academic and athletic scheduling conflicts. In this respect, a somewhat more convenient means of "balancing academics and athletics" may be to enroll in whichever program fits well with an athlete's schedule. One or another assistant coach is likely to be well-versed about programs of study that readily suit team practice schedules as well as about instructors on campus who are known to be "friends of the athletics program."

When asked about the athletic and academic challenges that she encountered during her college years, Naomi recalled:

Freshman year was rough. I cried every day ... Well, you're so far away from home and you're young. Like I'd just turned 18 when I went. And you go from living with your parents and practicing twice a week or whatever ... to [university] where you study all day. We had classes from 8 [am] to about 1 [pm]. And then we had a break. From 2 to 3 we had [physiotherapy] treatments, 3-6 [team] practice, 6-7.30 was dinner and a shower. And then 7.30-9.30 we had to go to study hall and tutors. And that was every day, like six days a week. We had one day off and they [coaches] usually used it for travel. So there was a rule that you can only practice 20 hours a week and then you have to have a day off. But, like, it can be on the road, so ...

Like if you have a bad practice, you're not going to start [the next game]. Like even if you're the best player on the team, it doesn't matter. Like you have to prove yourself every practice. And like, they don't tell you the starting line-up until an hour and half before the game. So like all week—and it gets really catty and competitive on the field. 'Cause even though you're a team, you're trying to be better than your teammates 'cause you want to start. So, yeah, they make it hard, like in drills. It's always a competition. Like you're not just dribbling through cones: you're racing ... and if you lose, then you have to sprint a lap of the field. Like you get punished for everything. Not punished, but you know ... the motto of our team was "it pays to be a winner." So everything we did was either a race or a competition. And if you lost, you had to pay...And that was like, that was the roughest thing I think [during] freshman year. And the coaches are mean. Our head coach ... was like super tough. And we had like two assistant coaches ... and they were super harsh. And we got yelled at. But that was freshman year, and when you're not used to it, obviously it's very hard. And then, you know, the older you get, you don't learn to ignore it, but you ... you don't let it affect you. And then, like the older you are, then you're responsible for the freshmen. So like you, even if you're unhappy, you have to pretend to be happy and to agree with the coaches, 'cause you can't give a bad impression to the freshmen. So ... [whispering] it's very psychological. Like it's a, it's a head game. Like everything is mental. And that's like what, yeah, that's what I hated. 'Cause they screw around with your head. And even if you think you have had a good practice, they'll bench you on purpose just to see yow you're gonna react and if you're gonna let it bring you down or if you're gonna fight and, you know, try and be better. They just, yeah, they play with your head.[10]

Persuaded by her parents to stick with the program at least until Christmas of her first year, Naomi managed to complete her career as a varsity athlete and to earn a degree. As demanding as her experience had been, she judged it to have been preferable to that of a younger relative who had followed her example, taken an athletic scholarship at a smaller university with a Division I sport program, suffered a major injury and had subsequently been forced to forego a second year of competition. Turning to her academic experiences, Naomi recounted:

> Freshman year, I was like a "no-preference" major. So I just sort of took whatever random classes you have to, like math and whatever. And I didn't try. So I got a 2.5 [grade point average] ... And I never went to class, and if I did, I was sleeping. 'Cause I was so tired. I was sooo tired. Like I rolled out of bed every morning, threw on my sweatpants, and went to class and took a nap. And then sophomore year, I decided I wanted to be a Kin[esiology] major. So I was that for one semester, and then I decided it was too hard and I couldn't handle it. And then, yeah, I changed it to Merchandising Management. And that was easy. [laughs]

Ironically, Naomi had selected this university in part because of the balance between academics and athletics that she had been told it offered. Indeed, when the university had brought her to campus for one of her permitted recruiting "visits,"[11] she had spent an afternoon meeting with academic counsellors to verify that this would be the case. When asked whether her coaches had wanted her to do well in her studies for herself or primarily because they wanted her to remain eligible to compete for the team, Naomi replied:

> I don't know, it's hard to say. I think both. Like for sure—it's really hard to fuck up and not be—like I think you need to have like a 1.6 [GPA] in order to not be able to play. And like honestly, you'd have to be pretty dumb to get a 1.6. [laughs] ... So, like they knew we'd be able to play. I think they actually cared. And like you know our team always had awards for [high] GPAs and stuff like that. So I think they cared. But yeah, they wanted us to play. But I think they just take so much pride, like in everything in the [United] States. There's so much pride, like yeah, I'm an athlete and, you know, it looks good when you can put in your media guide that, you know, ten of your athletes are academic [high achievers]—like it's a selling feature.

Although ethnographers of American college life (Moffatt 1989; Nathan 2005) have confirmed the enthusiasm and dedication with which undergraduates away from home and the watchful eyes of parents throw themselves into partying and other forms of socializing, athletes like Naomi are restricted in the time and opportunities they have to do so:

> We were friends with other athletes, just 'cause, like it's really easy, right? You just meet at study hall and ... athletic functions ... But really I didn't have that many friends. [laughs] Mostly the team. The girls on the team. Yeah, and other athletes ... So, like I tried to make friends in my classes, but I really didn't have time to have friends. And I didn't care ... And like I knew I was leaving there anyways, so ... it sounds kind of snobby, but I was like, well I'm never going to see these people again. So yeah, like the athletes just hang out with each other and we go to parties. You know, there's like the hockey house, football house, soccer house, like we were just hanging out.

Other Canadian athletes related similar sorts of experiences, although some of them struggled to maintain friendships with a few non-athlete students whom they met in classes or in their dormitories. Some athletes found it particularly important for them to foster social outlets and relationships beyond this circle of teammates and other athletes, but again their unyielding schedules often frustrated their attempts to do so. Many universities extend varsity athletes special privileges in recognition of their packed schedules. Thus, one line at the campus bookstore may be reserved for athletes to deliver them from the otherwise lengthy waits endured by other students at the beginning of a semester. Athletes are also entitled to wear sweaters, "hoodies," and sweatpants with team insignia that identify them as varsity athletes and which are not available to outsiders. But being set apart from other students can prove problematic in other respects. Garth's membership in a team effectively determined the scope and nature of his social life:

> We kind of tend to stay within our group 'cause that's all we know. Like I don't have any friends outside of the hockey team ... That's a big thing, being part of, like, a family of 27 guys and you go out together in big groups ... Other guys don't like us, and we're intimidating being in such a big group, so it's really hard to meet people ... I haven't really met a lot of people over four years compared to what most people probably do.

Canadian athletes sometimes experienced their identity and distinctiveness *as* athletes as a social liability. Jane, a swimmer at an Ivy League school, doubted that she would have been accepted as a student there or granted as much student assistance as she received had she not been an athlete. She would certainly not have been able to afford

to be there without that assistance. But her grades, she believed, were lower than they might otherwise have been because she was so exhausted most of the time: "I feel like a lot of the students—well not a lot but some of the students—look down on you and think you're stupid just because you are an athlete."

Keeping in touch with family and sometimes friends "back home" became an essential yet costly matter for most athletes or, more commonly, for their parents. Many mothers and fathers visited their sons and daughters in the U.S. at least once and often more frequently. Trips home over Christmas or during the summer are not covered by scholarships or student aid, and athletes, who are encouraged by coaches to take summer courses in order to lighten their class loads during the playing season, often do not have the time to take a summer job, unless one is arranged on campus where athletes can also readily satisfy team requirements for off-season physical conditioning. While varsity athletes travel extensively by airplane and bus to "away" games and competitions across the U.S., they seldom have time to see much more of these places than the airport, hotel and stadium. A number of Canadian student athletes enrolled at universities and colleges in and around a major East Coast city felt that they had really not gotten to walk around it and to know it nearly as well as they would have liked to have done.

When an athlete's undergraduate years come to an end, advises a guide marketed to Canadian high school students and their parents, "life in the real world begins." Some college athletes may catch the attention of professional sports scouts and be invited to attend a professional training camp:

> In the majority of cases, however, graduates must enter the work force after graduation. By combining athletics with a college degree, the individual has kept all of his options open. Many employers are eagerly willing to hire an individual who has successfully combined academics and the tough competitive athletics. [Lahey 1993:157]

A few of the athletes interviewed for this study hoped to pursue professional sports careers or to extend their post-college amateur athletic careers for a few years more. But most of them were prepared to move on from sports and to discover whether former holders of athletic scholarships do, in fact, "have it made for life." A few had formed contacts with local boosters of campus athletics and hoped to land jobs through these ties in the U.S. Several others planned to pursue graduate studies or professional degrees either in Canada or in the States. A couple of athletes married Americans, while several others

returned to Canada to long-term relationships that had started before and somehow continued throughout their college years. A substantial proportion of them were not certain that, if given the opportunity to choose again, they would necessarily have done exactly the same thing and enrolled in this or that particular school. Yet almost to a man and a woman, they depicted their college years as "having been worth it," a time when they left home, became somewhat independent and grew up. The years they spent as varsity athletes had not only coincided with, but had actually constituted, their particular coming of age.

Conclusions

Canadian athletes who obtain athletic scholarships or equivalent forms of aid and consideration that enable them to attend colleges and universities in the United States become, in a sense, inadvertent transnationals. Only one of the athletes interviewed indicated that the possibility of using an athletic scholarship as a possible means to move permanently to the U.S. had been a conscious part of her "pursuit of the full ride" from the beginning. Yet a number of them had made local American contacts that might, they hoped, lead to jobs. None of these athletes would have been unable to afford a university education had they not received an athletic scholarship. Most of them had identified "fall back" options to enroll in Canadian universities and to continue playing their sports if American scholarships not been forthcoming. In many cases, parents declared that they were not prepared to provide any more in the way of financial assistance to underwrite the supplementary costs of a vastly more expensive American college education than they would otherwise have offered to subsidize the costs of post-secondary education in Canada. Yet some parents, nonetheless, discretely pay more than this would entail in order to permit a son or daughter to accept a partial scholarship or to complete a degree when scholarship funding has run out. Although Canadian athletes often manage to complete college more or less free of financial debt, it is not certain that the same can always be said of their parents. Parents who announce with pride that their daughter or son has won an athletic scholarship may be less forthcoming in explaining which part of the costs incurred by this option for post-secondary education will be financed by the college and which by mom or dad. In truth, the complete costs of taking up an athletic scholarship in the U.S. may not become entirely apparent until, so to speak, all of the bills are submitted.

Returning to the concerns identified at the beginning of this article, why and how has the pursuit of athletic

scholarships that lead young athletes to the U.S. been so successful in capturing the attention and enlisting the involvement of countless boys and girls, parents and sports officials in Canada? The desire of American athletic directors and varsity coaches to recruit elite athletes—be they from Des Moines, Toronto or Nairobi—to join their programs is easy enough to understand. Moreover, some college athletes—including Canadians—who compete in sports such as football, basketball, baseball and hockey, do ultimately pursue longer or shorter careers as professional athletes, even though it is widely known that the overwhelming majority of varsity athletes in these sports will not do so. Canadian athletes who play one or another "non-professional" sport in U.S. schools might improve their level of performance to Olympic qualifying standards, although in some sports moving outside of Canada may effectively serve to prevent them from being selected for Canadian national teams that compete at the world level.

When so few of the Canadians who accept American athletic scholarships end up with professional or elite amateur careers as competitive athletes beyond the one, two, three or four years that they spend as varsity athletes, why do so many coaches and sports officials in Canada tailor their programs and focus their efforts on encouraging athletically accomplished young Canadians to head off to the U.S.? Why do youths and parents become so caught up in the excitement that surrounds the annual pursuit of "full ride" scholarships when anyone who lingers for a short while around even the outermost edges of Canadian sporting circles can scarcely avoid hearing sotto voce recitations about one or another athlete's discovery of the "downsides" of American athletic scholarships? Moving beyond the specificities of individual cases and circumstances to account for the general features and outcomes of this fascination with American athletic scholarships obliges us to take note of the ways in which the prestige that steadfastly continues to be attributed to these awards rewards not only the young men and women who are said to "win" but also the adults who have more or less conspicuously helped them to do so.

For a Canadian teenager who has devoted so much of her or his young life to sport, the acclaim that accompanies competitive success erupts when one becomes the object of open speculation and then actual negotiations leading to the awarding of an athletic scholarship by an American college or university.[12] Individuals accepting these awards report being thrilled by the prospect of being able to continue their sporting exploits by moving up to what is taken to be a higher calibre and more celebrated level of competition. Many later acknowledge that their desire to keep playing sport after high school initially overshadowed their interest in the particular courses of study into which they would be entering. Although facing, along with the rest of their classmates, the uncertainties, excitement and dislocation that come with the conclusion of one's high school years, those "heading south" to take up athletic scholarships assume that their college years will revolve, in substantial measure, around practices, activities and relationships with which they have long been familiar. Although soon to be separated from family and friends, they look forward, as many of them put it, to being "paid" to play sports and getting their education for "free." Why would a young athlete second-guess the appropriateness of choosing to accept such an offer, given the pride and excitement so often exuded by their coaches and parents?

For coaches and local sport officials, the accomplishments registered by young athletes whom they mentored for longer or shorter periods of time reflect well upon their sporting expertise and burnish the status of their organizations. For mothers and fathers who have not only underwritten the costs of many years of child and youth sport activities but also devoted thousands of hours to driving their son or daughter to sports practices and competitions and to watching them perform, an athletic scholarship may validate a distinctive form of child rearing that might otherwise be deemed somewhat obsessive. While there is relatively little or, in most cases, no chance of athletic scholarships leading to the fame and fortune of a professional sports career, they do offer those who receive them the prospect of obtaining a college education. And for those who have been responsible for raising these boys and girls, even just informal local discussion of a son or daughter as being the sort of athlete who *might* be considered for an athletic scholarship stands as recognition of not only the talents and dedication of the child but also of the care, attention and wisdom of their parents.

Ironically the movement of some young Canadian athletes away from their homes and country offers not only a reassuring form of continuity in their own lives but also an impartial endorsement and sealing of given family projects that children and parents may have been engaged in for a decade or more. The college years that young Canadian athletes spend in the U.S. do, indeed, stretch the spatial bounds of family. Determining the eventual outcome of an athletic scholarship on the future life of a given award holder necessarily remains a matter for the future. In the meantime, young Canadian athletes, their parents, youth sport coaches, and American college athletics officials continue to play their respective parts in sustaining the premises and prestige of a distinctive sort of coming of age that

continues to thrive as long as all involved continue to overlook certain incongruent and, thus, less spoken of facets of the "full ride."

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Notes

1 As has been widely noted in the emerging literature on the anthropology of sport, paradoxes of various types abound within sport. Viewed as a genre of performance that seeks to reproduce society according to one or another selected model (MacAloon 1984; Mentore 2000), sport may be framed in terms of its constitutive and procedural rules and strategies (Shore 1996:105-6). Yet as a deeply improvisational genre of performance, sporting events frequently yield unanticipated outcomes that frustrate the reproduction of preferred values. A more detailed consideration of sport as cultural performance is considered in Dyck 2000a, along with a number of other theoretical approaches to the anthropology of sport.

2 The term *Ivy League* refers to an intercollegiate athletic conference made up of eight private institutions of higher education (including Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth College, Harvard, Princeton, Pennsylvania and Yale). The terms *Ivy League* or *Ivies* are also synonymous with notions of academic prestige, social exclusivity and selectivity of admissions.

3 The NCAA's use of the term *student-athlete* to refer to athletic scholarship holders is one that has increasingly attracted comment. Schulman and Bowen (2001:xxxi), for instance, note that "we do not use this term, since everyone who is enrolled at a college or university is a student."

4 See Mitchell and Ennis (2007) and Hogshead-Makar and Zimbalist (2007) for treatments of the varied impacts of Title IX on intercollegiate athletics and post-secondary education in the U.S.

5 See Festle (1996) for an account of the not altogether "friendly" take-over of the fledgling Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) by the NCAA.

6 For illustrations of this, see Bowen and Levin 2003:108, 308, 330.

7 These were drawn from the ranks of NCAA Division IA private and public universities, Division IAA Ivy League universities, Division III universities and co-ed liberal arts colleges, as well as Division III women's colleges. Included amongst the 30 institutions were Duke University, Stanford, Rice, Notre Dame, Yale, Princeton, University of Michigan, Emory, Tufts, Oberlin College, Swarthmore, Barnard and Bryn Mawr (Shulman and Bowen 2001:xxviii).

8 Pseudonyms are used throughout the paper to protect the confidentiality of research subjects.

9 Ethnographic encounters with various situated forms of prestige sometimes elicited a well-intended collegial suggestion that it would probably be "well worth it" to consider the operational workings of these arrangements in terms of Bourdieu's (1984) study of distinction and his notion of cultural capital. Although Bourdieu mentioned sport in this work (1984:209-225), his insights into the oppositions between "popular" and "bourgeois" sports in France in the 1960s cannot be readily or usefully transposed on the organization of child and youth sports in contemporary North America. Briefly, Bourdieu explained cultural distinctions in sport practices in terms of clearly delineated class oppositions; in contrast, child and youth sports in Canada tend to blur class distinctions, with middle-class youth athletes becoming increasingly focused upon pursuing athletic scholarships that have traditionally been identified as a means by which boys and girls of more modest means might be enable to obtain a university education.

10 Adler and Adler (1991:81) also discuss coaches' tactical shaming of varsity athletes including acts such as threatening them with "benching," suspension, and non-renewal of scholarships. These and other forms of "status degradation" become part of what the Adlers identify as a "rite of passage" to reshape high school stars into more compliant college players.

11 The NCAA strictly regulates the number, duration and nature of officially permitted and subsidized visits that each prospective athlete can make to universities and colleges prior to committing to attend a particular institution.

12 There are, of course, other paths to athletic acclaim than being awarded an American athletic scholarship. For boys, the prospect of being drafted and signed by a Canadian Hockey League (major junior, Tier 1) team by age 16 is a highly recognized accomplishment. Appearances by teenaged gymnasts and ice skaters, for instance, in national and international competitions tend to receive somewhat less attention at the neighbourhood level than do other more "mainstream" sports.

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Pastures New or Old? Migration, Narrative and Change

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Abstract: The paper explores how motifs of continuity and change are used to narrate the migration process and in so doing, help construct ageing identities. Based on research with international retired migrants in Spain, the article shows how older travellers emphasize the transformational aspects associated with movement. However, the research reveals how underneath this narrative of change, there is widespread evidence of continuity with former ways of life. This simultaneous emphasis on change and continuity must be understood as related to the life course of migrants and the wider paradoxes in contemporary cultural expectations of ageing. Narratives of change and continuity become a convenient shorthand through which the complex emotional adjustments wrought by ageing can be expressed. They allow for retired migrants to claim "new" identities, yet still have at hand the familiar and necessary resources required to manage the challenges presented by growing older away from "home."

Keywords: ageing, international retirement, migration, narrative

Résumé : L'article explore comment l'utilisation de motifs de continuité et de changement permet de raconter le processus de migration et par là, d'aider à construire des identités dans le vieillissement. À partir de recherches menées auprès de migrants vivant leur retraite en Espagne, l'article montre comment des voyageurs âgés insistent sur les aspects transformationnels associés avec le mouvement. Par contre, la recherche révèle comment, sous ce récit de changement, on trouve un témoignage répandu de continuité avec d'anciens modes de vie. On doit comprendre cette insistance simultanée sur le changement et la continuité dans sa relation avec le parcours de vie des migrants et avec les paradoxes plus larges dans les attentes culturelles contemporaines à l'égard du vieillissement. Les récits de changement et de continuité deviennent une sténographie pratique pour exprimer les ajustements émotionnels complexes demandés par le vieillissement. Ils permettent aux retraités émigrés de revendiquer de « nouvelles » identités, tout en conservant sous la main les ressources familières et nécessaires pour gérer les défis associés au fait de vieillir loin de « la maison ».

Mots-clés : vieillissement, retraite à l'étranger, migration, récit

Introduction

One of the most basic conceptual metaphors in relation to ageing is "life as a journey," which associates the passing of time with spatial movement. It depicts:

> a correspondence between a traveller and a person living the life, the road travelled and the "course" of a lifetime, a starting point and the time of birth, and so on. [Lakoff and Turner 1989:60-61]

This metaphor is undoubtedly reinforced by the many examples of actual relocation at varying stages of age-transition. Rites of passage around the world often involve the ritual relocation of initiands to a temporary sequestered zone, demonstrating the taken for granted ways in which aged identities can be signified by spatial movement. In this article, I want to pay attention to the way that meanings attached to geographical movement become important means by which individuals express their adaptation to, and comprehension of, corresponding periods of personal, social and physical change. This understanding helps explain the persistence of the trope of change and the associated downplaying of continuity in migration. Despite evidence of significant continuity, the motif of change through movement provides a metaphorical shorthand by which other, less easily socially articulated, aspects of identity, such as ageing, are negotiated.

International Retirement Migration

The discussion is addressed here in relation to the age-transitions and adjustments of retirement. This is a domain which shows much evidence of the metaphorical structuring of the life course as a journey, particularly as it is culturally constructed in contemporary Western society as a junction galvanizing people to reflect, plan for and ultimately act upon choices about which roads they should take.[1] Regardless of whether old age has been

interpreted from a policy perspective as a period of social redundancy (Phillipson 1982), or as in more recent seizures upon notions of the third age as a period of opportunity and fulfilment (Blaikie 1999), retirement is constituted as a time of adjustment in the life course, a "different" period, when all manner of things in an individual's life changes. One choice emerging to retirees in the contemporary era is that of international retirement migration (see King et al. 1998, 2000). There are increasing possibilities of spending "retirement years" in leisure pursuits due to the expansion of affordable global travel (see for example Counts and Counts 1996 on the growing popularity in the U.S. of recreational vehicles for retirees and Gustafson 2001 on Swedish seasonal migrants in Spain). The lure of experiencing a "new" lifestyle in the warmth and comfortable surroundings of a traditional tourist destination as a permanent or semi-permanent aspect of life is easy to understand (see Oliver 2007a).

International retirement migration is an expanding field of study and part of an often overlooked domain of "lifestyle migration" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a). In this phenomenon, migrants are typically more privileged, affluent and motivated to relocate for lifestyle reasons (Amit 2007; Benson and O'Reilly 2009a, 2009b). International retirement migrants share with many other lifestyle migrants a desire for a "better way of life" perceived in the destination, which contrasts to disappointments and decline narrated "at home" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a). Much of the literature on international retirement migration has a policy focus (Casado-Diaz 2006; Rodriguez et al. 2005; Schriewer and Rodes 2006) but some also explores how the migration process intersects with individual experiences of ageing (Gustafson 2001; Oliver 2007a). This is crucial as the cultural gerontologist Stephen Katz (2005: 202) observes, "place" of retirement becomes "an increasingly vital dimension of later life because … issues of mobility, residence and community are linked to gerontologic ideals of independence and successful aging." Permanent or semi-permanent mobility to a "new" and arguably "better" lifestyle in traditional tourist destinations offers particular advantages at this stage of life for older people. The opportunity for international retirement migration to allow the revamping of self is particularly evident in Howard's (2008) study of Western retirees in Thailand, for example, where there are increased chances for retirees to exercise their sexuality in old age.

Indeed, the combination of both the change-inspiring moment in the life course of retirement and physical relocation means international retirement migration provides a clear example of anthropology's conceptualizations of movement as "change." Retired migrants' narratives pro-

vide no end of evidence of how migration is experienced as a catalyst for a new way of living (Oliver 2007a), reinforcing the wider trend noted among lifestyle migrants of their use of a meta-narrative of escape (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a). Emerging from the cultural shift in which traditional age-based expectations have been transformed, the tethering of retirement with travel in Northern European and North American cultures draws deeply on the mythologized transformative possibilities of spatial relocation (Blaikie 1999; Rojek 1993; see also Hoey 2005). As such, the correlation of geographical movement with the identity transition of retirement offers a powerful space to articulate a reconceptualization of self, particularly symbolized by physical departure from the homeland and one's "past" self.

However, the extent of such radical change is, in reality, debatable. Amit (2007 and this volume) observes that although movement offers the possibility for change, sometimes it "encapsulates this potential within a structural bubble of people in similar circumstances" (2007:7; see also Oliver 2007b and Harrison 2003). Lifestyle migrants' retrospective and often romanticized accounts may reflect a desire for transformation more than any objective reality (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a). Ethnographic work confirms, instead, the rather limited novelty exercised when migrants recreate old homes and habits in new destinations. A theme well rehearsed in studies of transnational migration for example is the continued pull of familial or communal ties over national boundaries, evident in the imagined communities of resurgent nationalisms (Danforth 1995).

My ethnography of British international retirement migrants in Southern Spain also shows that essential changes in lifestyles, temporal structures and social activities wrought through migration are regularly tempered by the reintroduction of the familiar (Oliver 2007a). The lifestyle of migrants is far removed from the popular stereotype of this area as "Little Britain" (O'Reilly 2000), yet there is nevertheless much evidence of continuity with former ways of life. Whether one looks in simple material terms—evidenced by the widespread English-speaking infrastructure catering to tourists and foreign residents—or the more personal tendencies of migrants to succumb to old comforts, social forms and habits such as social class distinctions (Oliver and O'Reilly 2010), it is easy to see how international retirement migration can be interpreted as offering a circumscribed encounter within relatively safe parameters of difference when inhabiting another country. This is further complicated by the consideration that, as Gustafson (2001) argues, international retirement migrants exhibit a range of

transnational strategies, reflecting different positions on cultural difference, the importance of mobility and place-attachments. Yet this presents an interesting conundrum: given the widespread evidence of continuity, why do many of the migrants stress difference, to past lifestyles?

To answer this question, I propose attention to the differential meanings associated with change and continuity in migrant narratives. In addition to extensive participant observation, my research involved lengthy semi-structured interviews with 67 individuals, during which they often recounted long, uninterrupted stories of their previous lives, migration process and current experiences (for full details of the study see Oliver 2007a). Locating myself in the "narrative turn" in the social sciences, which emphasizes the importance of narrative as emerging out of, but also structuring, daily experience (Ochs and Capps 1996), I focus on the role that stories play in identity-formation. Particularly important are the ways they destabilize, challenge and subvert other dominant tropes of contemporary society (Andrews 2002). Using a narrative lens and focusing on the structures of stories told, it became evident in my research that motifs of both continuity and change are useful structuring vehicles by which individuals express and frame emotions (particularly, in this case, those around ageing). However, as the article goes on to show, this does not occur in a straightforward linear manner. It is more complex, as the metaphors and associations of change and continuity found in migrants' narratives are malleably reinterpreted (and even inverted) to express the turmoil of feelings associated with decision-making provoked during this stage of life. As such, my approach suggests a careful reading of narrative as experiential and embodied. It requires sensitivity to the emotions implicit and seeping through the words, even when those emotions may not have been immediately obvious to myself as researcher, or even to the individuals themselves (see Gubrium 1993 on the importance of this "research debris").

The approach I adopt is particularly inspired by the sociologist Mike Hepworth's work on emotions in ageing (1998). He suggests emotions of ageing are subjective states which are communicated to the outside world through the use of particular culturally prescribed images and modes of expression. Emotions are commonly managed through a "social shorthand" of images, whereby terms or clichés such as "I don't feel old" readily convey an easily understandable reality to others (1998:173). Hepworth warns that this use of cultural shorthand is ultimately problematic in relation to age. First, the available vocabulary of social imagery may be too limited to convey fully the range, depth and changing nature of feelings.

Second, he points out how, "private individuals may wish to conceal their personal feelings from public view and concentrate their energies on producing passable performances of the emotions they have come to believe to be socially acceptable" (1998:174). Building on these insights, I contend that stories depicting other life events might feed into this shorthand, or more specifically, that the migration process and journey stories provide useful materials which can encapsulate emotions and feelings around the process of change that is ageing. This technique is also noted by Hoey among North American "corporate refugees" relocating to the American Midwest, who, through moral narratives, utilize places as "personally therapeutic landscapes" (2009:34) or anchors for identity in a world where identity-making through work has been radically altered by postindustrial economic change.

In this light, the recurrence of dominant narratives of change and continuity found after the migration episode can also be interpreted as attempts to frame, capture and structure emotions—in this case about growing older. Tales about carving out different lifestyles and adapting to the physical and mental changes of life abroad are revealing of the individuals' hopes, fears and experiences of retirement that they simultaneously negotiate. In line with Hepworth's argument, tropes of change and continuity may prove particularly powerful and more socially acceptable vehicles for retirees to condense and enable the expression of other emotions around growing older. And perhaps most importantly, not only do they enable individuals to experience and articulate desired images of ageing through the narration of change, they do so in an environment where individuals still have at hand the necessary resources and familiarity required to manage the challenges presented by growing older away from "home."

Research Contexts

The article is based on data from an ethnographic study undertaken between 1998 and 2002 and follow-on research until 2005 in a town and a village on the Costa del Sol in Spain. The research was conducted in an attractive holiday destination: a town with several beaches, a variety of shops and numerous hotels and apartments catering to the many thousands of holidaymakers drawn annually to the area. I lived as a foreign resident in a smaller village a few kilometres inland, which was home to a little over 2000 inhabitants. The village is perched high on a hillside and its stunning location provides the subject for many photographs and paintings of an archetypal Andalucían white Moorish village. Both town and village have attracted many Northern European tourists and residents over the

last 40 years. Correspondingly, a vibrant expatriate community network has built up, with a well-developed social infrastructure for new migrants and foreign residents originating mostly from Northern Europe and some from the U.S. My study was undertaken to specifically explore the experiences of incoming, mainly British, older migrants who had retired to the area. During my 15 months in the field, I forged acquaintances with foreign (although mainly British) residents and spent time at the numerous social clubs, associations and interest groups run by and for foreign residents in the locality (see Oliver 2007a).

I. Change: Pastures New?

It was initially striking, when I talked with retired people in the field, how, in one sense, they simply reproduced dominant narratives about the changes they experienced through movement. International retirement migration is a process embedded in consumer culture and as such is awash with loaded imagery about the possibilities of pursuing ideal, "new" lifestyles. Television programmes (such as the U.K. Channel 4 series *No Going Back* and *A Place in the Sun*), accompanying manuals (including Elsey and Coombes' (2004) *How to Get a New Life*), and wider media coverage seduce and entice more people than ever to buy property abroad. "Good life abroad" novels also relay the often humorous and exciting experiences of the protagonists' adventures in moving to an unfamiliar and exotic country, perpetuating tantalizing myths about escaping the rat-race, returning to more traditional models of sociability and living a more comfortable life at a fraction of the cost at home. Attention to narrative gives purchase on individual perspectives, yet in this case, it was striking how far migrant narratives reproduced shared, common myths about migration.

The reproduction of familiar clichés about the dramatic changes experienced through lifestyle migration is also observed by other scholars. O'Reilly's work on British residents in Spain (2000) for instance reveals how the migrants employed a "bad Britain" discourse, whereby they juxtaposed their happy lives in Spain with an exaggerated vision of the downsides of their former homeland. They tended to emphasize the unappealing weather, high crime rates and hectic pace of life in the U.K. Distinctively for migrants, they shared a "myth of (no) return" (O'Reilly 2000:96). Her findings are reinforced in other studies of lifestyle migration and are equally pertinent to international retirement migration (see Sunil et al. 2007). For example, Cribier notes that retirees returning from Paris to the rural provinces where they were born were attracted by the simple and friendlier relationships in the country, in contrast to the city, which they described as "unbearable, infernal, impossible … insane and murderous" (1982:119).

In my research, retired migrants in Spain likewise painted their new home as a "different world" entirely to the U.K. Some even seemed to equate the migration as a movement towards happiness itself. For instance, Jenny related the different environment and the effects of the weather to a change in the pervasive mood of all around, when she said, "But the first thing I notice when I go back to England is that nobody smiles there. Everyone smiles here. They never smile there because it rains all the time." She discussed her migration in terms of "escape" to a happy nirvana, a theme common in others' depictions:

> I've found it, my utopia. [Willie, former businessman]

And,

> I just wake up here and say, here we are, another boring day in paradise. [Lilian, retired nurse]

Here, migration was narrated not only as a physical move away from one country to another, but also, through loading Spain with qualities of perfection, was almost a "lifesaving" process that took migrants away from general negative health, burdens and emotions (see Hoey 2009). Jim, a former builder for the Dental Council in London suggested, for example, that migrating,

> gave me an escape from the nonsense. I came for a simpler life. I don't get bored because I could see that my job [in London] was a killer.

In these narratives, moving to Spain was cast as a complete change and contrast to the pressures, problems and "overload" left behind. Barbara, a retired headteacher also described the prevailing sensation of liberation she felt after moving:

> The mountains and the sea, it's so very special. You get this overwhelming feeling of not having a relentless timetable … It was a luxury, great, so long-lasting the feeling of not having social problems, the pressures of government, the internal struggles, the overload of work. It is the most amazing luxury.

However, interrogating these narratives further, it is clear that the negative associations were more about experiences they had been subject to in the place they had moved from. In this sense, the U.K. was conflated with an experience of "work," politics and the "real" world, whilst Spain was a place of non-work, rest and leisure (see O'Reilly 2000). These stories about movement therefore emphasized a corresponding shift in their life course tran-

sitions into a retirement experience. Thus, even though very few people retired and moved to Spain at the exact point of retirement, geographical movement was nevertheless used as shorthand to denote the equally significant change in personal circumstances wrought by giving up work.

In their narratives, migrants also invested life-giving qualities in the destination, particularly drawing on the positive impact of the weather and lifestyle on migrants' longevity. Doreen, for example, said "I think that it keeps you alive out here [in Spain], it keeps you younger." Molly, a former teacher explained that her peers in Britain had died, yet for her, moving to Spain had, she felt, prolonged her life:

> But then all my relatives and in-laws have died, and the whole crowd who I used to work with all died ….It is definitely true that living out here makes you live longer. Some close friends from England came to visit … they looked at property, but then he had a heart attack and they didn't want to deal with different doctors and languages. Now, since I've left, they've all died.

Regardless of other important factors such as the effects of genes and lifestyle, Molly felt that simply living in Spain affected the length and quality of people's lives. This echoes findings in Cribier's study of retired migrants who moved from Paris; she found that some people, "went as far as saying that to stay in Paris would have meant death and that leaving has prolonged their life" (1982:119).

In these narratives, it is clear that movement facilitated an imaginative spatial relocation of different social constructions of ageing. Spain was associated with possibilities for experiencing an active and interesting old age in comparison to a putative structured and monotonous experience of old age at home (Oliver 2007a). For example, Tony, a former businessman held a great affection for the U.K., kept his home there and "would always keep [his] roots there." Nevertheless, he explained that he did not want to spend all his retirement time in the U.K. because, "they're all a bunch of fuddy-duddies." This is also clear when attention is paid to the traits of boredom and security projected on other ostensible "Brits" (tourists or residents) who inhabited the area. For example, Sharon referred to an English woman opening a café selling English food in the typical Spanish village and pondered angrily, "why do they do it? Out of security I suppose." In these interpretations, continuity with the homeland became therefore synonymous with convention, stagnation and monotony, traits which were best avoided at this precious time of life. This can also be seen in Annie and Peter's discussion about the imagined characteristics of the people who frequented the clubs in town, where Britishness itself was conflated with oldness and boredom:

> Peter: But they're all so *old* aren't they when they're about 40? And they're British.
> Annie: They're all Brits. British, ankle socks and cardigans and sandals.
> Brian: No we don't use British bars.
> A: They're so 'king boring, British bars here they really are. Everyone has almost the same stool every day.
> P: And they're double the price.
> B: And you get the same old questions, how long have you lived here, how long have you been here, do you like it?

The same theme was demonstrated in a lengthy exchange at a social event at the American Club. Meeting for lunch in the regular venue of the Chinese restaurant, Belle, the American Chairwoman, favourably compared retiring in Spain to Florida in the U.S. to an American prospective new resident. She explained,

> I go to America to see my son, and he says to me, "don't you think you've had enough now Mum? Why don't you come back?" "And do what?" I answer. I get so bored after a couple of days, and I'd be so bored there.

The visitor agreed wholeheartedly with Belle's opinion. He explained to those of us at the lunch meeting that he had been looking into some purpose-built condominiums available for older people to move to in the U.S. These were planned with assisted living facilities for older people and he continued, "they have plans laid out so that it is the gym one day and bingo the next." At this, Belle tutted disapprovingly, "it's so boring" and the visitor concurred, "There's no cultural interest at all." Belle added,

> Yes, my son wants me to go [back to the U.S.] but I can't wait to get back here. I say, "what do I want to go there for? Just to sit in my rocking chair and wait to die." No, "here," I say, "I'm coming back to my paradise." This is my Shangri-La, I call it.

As in Tony's example, Belle's contrast of destination and home provides a useful bracketing for good and bad experiences of old age. Undoubtedly this is reinforced and given power by genuine experiences of physical liberation when people moved to the warmer climate of Spain. The weather eased many of the bodily aches and pains experienced in the home country. The leisure orientation of the region also meant there were many opportunities for outdoor sporting activities such as tennis, swimming, yoga, aqua-fit, going to the gym or simply walking in the surrounding countryside. For example, one Irish woman

who lived in the village slowly walked to the peak of the surrounding foothills of the Sierra Nevada every day. Another conversation I had with Annie, Brian and Peter went as follows:

> Peter: Yes, I mean I've always loved mountains and most of my working life I spent in the Midlands in Birmingham, there's no sea, no mountains. But here you can be on a 13,000 foot mountain with snow and two hours later you can be swimming on the Med and you can't get that anywhere in Europe. We're so fortunate here.
> Brian: But then again, I think that's a thing of living here a long time, I think you appreciate the area you live in.
> Annie: The "feel good factor" that makes you want to go off and find things out.

As this account demonstrates, the undiscovered surroundings offered through migration were felt to provoke a re-energizing effect. There was a strong link between moving to unfamiliar surroundings and engaging in new activities, whereas the familiarity of growing old in the homeland was linked to stasis, stagnation and even death. This association is subtly referred to, for example, in Jim's description of his former job being a "killer," but also in Will's description of the "deterioration" in the way of life in the U.K., "where everything is falling apart." These images correspond with Belle's vision of her limited activity in the U.S., of "sitting in a rocking chair," a futile and time-wasting movement that leads nowhere other than to death.

Such themes were also repeated in the way migration put newcomers in the position of having to try out new experiences. The ease in which new social relationships were formed was striking, and this was particularly important at this time in life where, as Molly had explained, many people had lost their partners and close friends. For instance, one woman told me excitedly about a silent retreat she had just been on with the local ecumenical centre. Participants were mainly widows but she pointed out the irony that she had never talked so much in her life.

For other people, moving itself was underpinned by the conviction that at this time of life, there was no time to waste (see Oliver 2007a:chapter 4). Molly for example, told me her move to Spain was instigated by the day she walked on impulse into a property developers' fair in her home town. Hitherto, she had not considered moving at all and at the event felt serious reservations at the expense. However, she explained, "when I saw this advertisement for inspection flights I thought, why not? I'd never flown before!" The desire for new experiences was also met in

the cultural differences retirees encountered in Spain, which became a language appropriate to narrate other aspects of character change associated with their parallel move into retirement. For instance, the visitor at the American Club lunch asked how people adapted culturally to living there and the Chair talked of adjusting to a slower pace of life in cultural—rather than life course—terms:

> Well, there were things that took some getting used to. Shopping, for instance. In New York, you go in a shop and you stand in a queue and wait to get served. Here they serve someone, and then stand around chatting about the family and all that sort of thing. In New York, you'd get the sack for that. But that's the thing. There, time is money. Here, it doesn't seem to count … you know in the hours they work too, its half socializing. These things you have to get used to. Now, I tend to think, well it doesn't matter, I'm not going anywhere.

Not only was moving to Spain presented as offering immunity from the everyday struggles plaguing migrants' former lives, it was narrated as making possible interesting "new" experiences and sociabilities. The particular issues emphasized in the difference, novelty and change of lifestyle in Spain fitted well with their own desired identities at this time of life.

II. Continuity: Looking for Pastures Old?

However, the "novelty" presented in moving to Spain is only one aspect of the tale. Certainly some observers would find migrants' assertions of radical change in lifestyle a dubious claim. Even in simple material terms, continuity with migrants' former ways of life is visible to any visitor. A glance around the town shows a number of familiar sights. There are British bars sporting names such as "Pirates" and "The Market Tavern," which are run by British staff and which sell traditional food and drinks to tourists and residents alike. Supermarkets sell a vast number of specialist branded products popular with many of the Northern Europeans visiting the area. There is also a vast array of clubs and associations such as the British Legion, International Club and American Club, and other interest groups, including a bridge club and art classes. Club membership is almost exclusively made up of foreign residents.

For any onlooker, the Spain of British migrants is less the completely different world often narrated than a "home-plus sunshine" (Hannerz 1990:241). It combines the advantages of the destination—such as the weather and the relatively cheaper cost of living—with familiar aspects of migrants' lifestyles at home. Viv, for example, lived in an urbanization[2] in the town and spoke no Spanish

whatsoever. She spent her time at the expatriate societies and volunteered in a local charity shop, which was staffed and managed by the Anglican Church. Similarly, although Molly felt she had changed as a result of her move to Spain, she nevertheless still lived in a flat equipped with all her comfortable home furnishings which included a rug on the floor, stately armchairs, desk and desk lamp. Retirees still had strong attachments to material possessions which they could not bear to leave behind. For example, Doreen explained how her late husband had insisted on bringing an electric fire out from the U.K. to Spain: "he said, 'when we go to Spain, that fire comes and goes with me.'"

Perhaps the clearest indication of the continuity in former ways of life is the persistent use of the English language. English is the lingua franca of the social clubs, there are many English language newspapers and magazines produced locally in the area and there is a regular supply of imported national publications. In the town, there is an English bookshop and a second hand bookshop with a film rental area, renting mainly English-language titles. A number of local expatriate radio programs also offer English speaking commentary and music throughout the day. Although newcomers attempted to learn Spanish, many still had considerable difficulty reaching a level that enabled them to adequately hold basic conversations. This language barrier meant that inevitably many foreign residents kept to their own social "circles" of friends and had only superficial relations with local Spaniards. This was reflected in the views of Juan, for instance, an older Spanish man who expressed his desire to become part of the international fine art society,

> Well, that is a very interesting organization. Obviously it's a bit like a closed circle from my point of view, because of exactly the fact that the meetings are in English, no? And they go to speak, to speak in English and if you only know a little of the language ...

The persistence of the English language is interesting given that some migrants, despite embracing a new way of life, did not even attempt to learn Spanish. Their justification for this most obvious continuity with former lifestyles was put down to their life course stage; they considered themselves "too old." Bill, a retired expatriate professional, reasoned for example, "at my age, do I want to start learning a language again?" Another common response was that of John, who explained he did not really speak Spanish as "I'm too old, but I have enough to get by." However, there were genuine reasons why the effort expended in learning the language thoroughly was

not considered a good use of time, or that it was, in some senses, now "too late to start." For example, Annie explained,

> Annie: If anyone asked me what I regretted about living here it is that I didn't continue studying, I wish I'd gone on until I was 100% fluent so that I could have an in-depth conversation with a Spaniard.
> Caroline: What level would you say you were?
> A: Oh I'm only halfway there really and as you get older, the trouble is your memory gets very bad, you get older, it's not easy to retain 4000 new words you know.

With such evidence of continuities of language and lifestyle between the home and migrant society, it is important to consider why people felt so much "difference" when living in Spain. Probing this question exposed a remarkable irony as the differences highlighted in Spain reflected nostalgic desires for *continuity* in a way of life migrants felt had been destroyed forever in their homeland. Spain was mythologized as offering a less stressful way of life and a more integrated community (O'Reilly 2000; Oliver 2007a), whereas an important push factor was the negative impacts of capitalist development witnessed at home. It was, as Belle described, the change between the sociability of Spanish life and the rushed encounters in New York where "time is money." Therefore, when John, an artist, moved to the Spanish village many years ago, his motivation had been his sense of alienation in his home, a village in the Abingdon countryside in England. It had become an attractive destination for second or holiday home-owners due to its commutable distance to London. As such, the difference he felt in moving to Spain actually related more the aspiration to return to a *different type of sameness*. He complained of his home village,

> We'd walk, and yet not see a soul. Yet here, people help each other out. A friend fixed up the guttering. It's how things used to be when I was a boy ... for example, the Spanish get dressed up in their Sunday best for a *paseo* (walk).

These narrations emphasized the comfort and security to be had from living in an apparently "unchanging" community. However, this was more likely a "fictional cohesion and unity" (Cribier 1982:128) which provoked migrants to protect the "different sameness" of their paradise against the homogenizing effects of change (see Oliver 2002). It was extremely common to hear complaints about how things had changed equally in the region and how they were not as they used to be. Change here, from this angle, was less interpreted positively than linked with

contrasting and uncomfortable feelings of transience, lone-liness and insecurity that retirees had hoped to avoid. For instance, Mary was a widow who had lived alone in her large house in the hillsides. She had lived in the area for about 40 years and complained,

> It's changed so much here you see … we were the first ones here. Now its so different … I don't know anyone. Before, I knew everyone … they always used to just call in as they were passing through, always drop by the gate. Now people ask me if I've been here long [she laughs sadly]. I'm glad my husband died too before we had to lock the door.

The construction boom and expanding population meant that rather than inhabiting a comfortable "different same-ness" as they grew older, people felt caught up in the relent-less pace of change they had hoped to escape. Elizabeth, the first foreign migrant to move into the village over 40 years ago complained of the same trouble. She went for a walk around the streets every day despite significant problems with her mobility and she could rarely get more than a few metres without someone stopping to ask after her health. Nevertheless, she expressed how she "doesn't know the village anymore" because most of her friends had moved on or had died. This isolation was compounded by a very bad experience when she had temporary amnesia and found herself staring out, bewildered, asking for help with no idea of how she'd got into this position or how long she had been there. Rather than feeling secure and familiar, the changes she witnessed in the village exacerbated her feel-ings of isolation and vulnerability.

Elizabeth's example shows that the unfamiliar and "different" aspects of Spain, once narrated as exciting, could easily become alienating at this time of life. This was powerfully displayed by Jean's account of the impact of a stroke. She explained,

> With the stroke I lost all the Spanish that I had learned, which was the hardest to bear. I felt English living here anyway, but the fact that I didn't understand every-thing didn't bother me before. It does now, when I walk down the street, I feel isolated and angry that I can't understand the people talking in the streets.

Jean planned to move to be near her sons and to find a comfort in her homeland that was eluding her in Spain. She had been hospitalized for ten days when she suffered the stroke and explained that although she could not fault her treatment,

> there was something missing that I can't explain. There was no aftercare, and no, I don't really have

any Spanish friends. I'd say the people in the village are very friendly, but I don't have special friends … But I'm not leaving because of that, its not because peo-ple don't come that I'm leaving, but I just want to be near my boys, I want to be near home now.

Although retirement migrants in Spain can often access health services using interpreters (La Parra and Mateo 2008), Hardill et al. (2005) show the impact that severe health problems play in international retirement migrants falling out of love with their "paradises." In Jean's expe-rience, the familiarity of home—once maligned—was rein-terpreted as offering comfort and security in a more pos-itive sense. John's wife similarly moved on because she needed regular dialysis, but in this case to New Zealand where her children lived. John was due to follow her shortly, as he reasoned,

> We're moving on because we're getting old now. The place is too big … Here it's very expensive to get dial-ysis and to be honest we'd prefer to put her in the hands of people who can speak English. It's better to have members of our family around in our older years.

Both examples show how continuity through moving back to be with family was desired when the bodily experience of illness or physical and mental discomfort became insur-mountable. Ultimately, the security associated with the homeland or family, once distanced from or even mocked, was reinterpreted as attractive and comfortable and instead Spain was interpreted as the alienating, "cold" place. Kate and Bill for instance moved back to the U.K. when Bill's health deteriorated. However, on a visit back to Spain, Kate expressed nothing less than relief at return-ing to the U.K.:

> I am thoroughly enjoying it, it's so much better. You think when you're in Spain about the weather being good for your health, but our health [in the UK] has improved so much. When I'm in bed, I can leave my hands hanging out without waking up with crippling pains from where they've frozen … you have the cen-tral heating on you see. There's carpet on the floors so you don't get these drafts.

In these cases, the comforts and securities of the home-land, such as central heating, nearby family or even Eng-lish-speaking healthcare staff, became reinterpreted as more attractive rather than as indicative of a restricted and dull way of life.

Conclusion

A question was posed at the beginning of the paper: Why is it that British retired migrants in Spain capitalize on

change offered through migration in their narratives, whilst there is considerable evidence that they also recreate a life that goes on in a similar fashion as before? I contend that the evidence presented around change and similitude is only fully understandable in the context of migrants' life course. The migrants, like all of us, are caught up in what is metaphorically referred to as a "journey" from birth to an unforeseen death. Yet, the latter part of that life journey is a particularly loaded time, which raises conflicting expectations about how best to spend that unknown period (Oliver 2010). These tensions are poignantly exemplified in the words of Lynn, a retired migrant living in the village, who said:

> I've started a death list since I've been here, there has just been number 31, all are people I've known very well and they're not all old. So, it's a reminder, in the next 12 years, my active life'll be over. And I'm planning for that, because now I'm in my future and I think aren't I lucky? I live on my old age pension and there are so many things to do and you live life to its full extent because you know that time is running out.

Lynn's account strikes at the heart of the conundrum posed in this article. The pressure to "live life to the full" and try out a different or "new" existence is created by the finitude of time. Yet this same progression to the end of people's life-journeys which exerts that pressure, also increasingly demands familiarity, continuity and security as people grow older.

I have shown how narratives of migration and particularly the themes of continuity and change become important means by which the feelings associated with this wider dilemma are condensed and expressed. Meanings attached to the migration process become socially acceptable metaphors, or a social shorthand, by which people adapt and understand corresponding times of personal, social and physical change. Narrating "newness" and change in moving to a mythical, unchanging, traditional community enables the tale of the life journey to continue a theme of progress and liberation into retirement, even though much may stay the same. This narrative also supports the decision to migrate as it compares favourably with narrations of stasis, monotony and modern alienation projected onto experiences of ageing in the homeland. Furthermore, changes in practices prompted by ageing, such as "slowing down" and "taking it easy" are explained in terms of different cultural practices in Spain rather than through the personal life course. Retirees hope to find comfort in nostalgic readings of life in a Spanish community offering the exciting, yet comforting, blend of a different type of sameness, in contrast

to increasing alienation feared in connection with growing older in the U.K.

Finally, there are also important methodological implications of these findings. The argument presented here shows the importance of combining a narrative approach with long term ethnography, as it shows how people revisit their positions over time as they age, using the same shorthand to express alternative feelings. Narratives of mobility and the motifs of continuity and change give migrants a rich and highly malleable vocabulary through which to understand their parallel experience of physical ageing. Continuity with the U.K. was rejected when migrants wished to embrace novelty and change in their retirement projects. Ultimately however, the U.K.'s perceived qualities of comfort and familiarity were reinterpreted more favourably when health difficulties emerged. In a similar vein, the once positively interpreted difference of Spain was reconsidered by some people as alienating and uncomfortable at these times. Using a contextual narrative approach with long-term ethnography does not shy away from conflicting messages arising within the data or attempt to iron out inconsistencies. Instead, this method positions these contradictions as fundamental and as part of the rich and shifting narrative people use, which is coherent over time as events and people themselves change. This is an approach that more fully reflects the complexity of existential issues of identity that emerge in later stages of life.

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Acknowledgments

Notes

1 In particular, the creation of retirement as a determined legal cut-off point (Myerhoff 1984) forces a separation between working identities and identities in the life beyond.
2 An urbanization is a private housing development with its own community services.

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"Before I Settle Down": Youth Travel and Enduring Life Course Paradigms

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Abstract: Young Canadians taking up opportunities for extended stays abroad on work or study programs often represent this form of travel as something that you do before you "settle down." In doing so, they are implicitly constructing a version of the life course, also espoused by many contemporary scholars, which allows the phase of youth to be redefined and extended, even while continuing to fix adulthood as the attainment of particular roles and statuses. The more that the definition of youth is reworked to accommodate changing roles and transitions, the less pressure there is to redefine the nature of adulthood.

Keywords: youth travel, emergent mobilities, life course, adulthood

Résumé : Les jeunes Canadiens qui profitent d'occasions de séjourner longtemps à l'étranger dans le cadre de programmes d'étude ou de travail décrivent souvent ce type de voyage comme quelque chose qu'on accomplit avant de « s'établir ». En ce faisant, ils construisent implicitement une version du parcours de vie, aussi adopté par de nombreux universitaires contemporains, qui permet de redéfinir et d'élargir la phase de la jeunesse, tout en continuant à définir l'âge adulte en fonction de l'atteinte de certains rôles et statuts particuliers. Plus on retravaille la définition de la jeunesse pour accommoder des rôles et des transitions en transformation, moins il y a de pression pour redéfinir la nature de l'âge adulte.

Mots-clés : voyages de jeunesse, mobilités émergentes, parcours de vie, âge adulte

Um, I've always wanted to travel, and that's kinda, I just decided to do it now, 'cause I wasn't attached to a job or anything. And at the time that I made the decision to travel, I wasn't attached to um, any guy either, but that changed before I came. So I just thought, I'm young, I can do it, and before I settle down and get, you know, started in life, I'll come over and travel.

Maureen's[1] explanation of why she embarked on a working holiday in Edinburgh at the age of 24 invokes a theme that recurs in the literature on youth travel, as well as among other interviews conducted in a study of young Canadians on extended sojourns abroad which I recently conducted in collaboration with Noel Dyck and several graduate research assistants. But what does such an expectation of "settling down" imply for broader perceptions of life course phases?

The designations of certain forms of travel as configured around youth, that is as "youth travel," implicitly entail particular conceptions of the life course. Thus, emergent forms of contemporary youth mobility have often been identified with more general developments involving a supposed extension of youth and delayed transitions into adulthood in affluent Western countries. In many respects, therefore, the ways in which these young travellers experience and account for their voyages could serve as a textbook illustration for some of the key shifts in the roles associated with, and the duration of, youth noted by many social scientists over the last three decades. And yet, running through these young travellers' renderings of "settling down" is an implicitly conservative set of expectations about the nature of adulthood that seems fairly impervious to the possible implications of their own experiences of travel, work and study abroad.

The insistence by many of these youthful travellers that an extended sojourn abroad is only possible when one is young and unfettered can be juxtaposed against a range of studies in which people actively seek out opportunities for travel and extended stays abroad at many

ages and points of their life course. The young travellers' expectations that in due course they will return home and take up stable long term work and family commitments can also be set against scholarly and institutional renderings of uncertainty and mobility as an inescapable entailment of the entire life course in a "post-traditional cosmopolitan world" (Beck 2000:211). But at the same time, Maureen's expectation that sooner or later, she will settle down and "start life" by establishing a home, family and a stable career can also be viewed as converging with another kind of scholarly and institutional discourse that emphasizes the extended duration of youth in affluent Western contexts, without redefining the goal posts of adulthood.

In this paper I contrive a dialogue between recent scholarly considerations of the reconfigurations of youth, or the life course more generally, on the one hand, and recent studies of contemporary forms of travel on the other as a framework for considering the expectations for "settling down" voiced by Maureen and her fellow sojourners. I argue that the apparent willingness of these young travellers to seek out adventure in an extended sojourn abroad may arise not from an embrace of uncertainty and mobility but from a persisting belief in a modernist, linear life course.

Changing Life Course or Changing Youth?

In their review of sociological and anthropological perspectives on the life course, Hockey and James contrast "classical" social science notions of the life cycle as a "series of fixed stages and roles through which every individual moved as they aged" with the perspective of such contemporary theorists as Jenkins "who are more likely to highlight a diversity and fragmentation of paths, rather than a commonality and continuity of experience, as the outcome of life's turning points" (2003:11). Drawing on theorists such as Beck and Giddens, one version of this dedifferentiation of the life course places the emphasis on a loosening of normative structuring and a concomitant "individualization" of the life course (Beck et al. 1994; Bynner 2005:368; Hockey and James 2003:107). Here, the emphasis is on the increasing importance of individual agency and self-reflexivity in the construction of the self. Nothing can be taken for granted, it is a state of being that encompasses an augmentation of both individual freedom and risk. Thus Beck argues that in the shift from the understanding of modernity rooted in the European Enlightenment to the "cognitive insecurity" and the "risk regimes" of what he calls the "second modernity," "people are expected to make their own life-plans, to be mobile and to provide for themselves in various

ways. The new centre is becoming the precarious centre" (Beck 2000:70).

For Beck, an integral feature of this paradigmatic shift has been a move away from the standardization of Fordism toward notions of flexible work. And as both Richard Sennett (1998) and Beck have noted, the archetype of the flexible worker presumes a mobile person who changes employment frequently and, if necessary, residence as well, going "where the jobs are" (Beck 2000:30). This version of contemporary modernity, hence, intrinsically links the individualization of the life course with the ongoing normalization of uncertainty and associated pressures for mobility.

However as Hockey and James note, in spite of more fluid contemporary processes of age classification and life course transitions, there are many ways in which "the more rigid pattern of the modern Western life course which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century" continues to claim a powerful hold on Western imaginations (2003:57). Bridging the contradiction between the conception of a linear progression through demarcated life course phases and the actual experience of highly unstable and contingent age categories, is the assertion of dualities such as child–adult or adult–elderly. Here, child- or elderhood is defined as the lack of fit with adulthood, while adulthood itself remains largely tacit, an unexpressed set of presumptions about the normal state of being (Hockey and James 2003:80-81). At the heart then of these dualities is a crucial essentialization of adulthood, which stands in marked opposition to the problematization of its oppositional categories.

> Compared with the essentiality of adulthood, childhood studies has provided ample evidence of the problematic, unresolved status "child" when compared with the "essentiality" of its "unremarked" oppositional half—adult. [Hockey and James 2003:81]

A very similar kind of treatment, relying on a tacit set of assumptions about adulthood, also operates in a swathe of contemporary scholarship that has probed the apparent extension of youth. Here, the oppositional half to a prolonged youth is a largely "unremarked" concept of adulthood identified through a set of goal posts. *When* the goal posts are passed may change but the nature of the goal posts themselves is left largely unquestioned.

Thus across a number of scholarly disciplines, there appears to be a wide consensus that in affluent, postindustrial societies there has been a general shift in the ages at which key transitions to adulthood are being enacted. According to a *Canadian Social Trends* report produced by Statistics Canada:

In recent years, social scientists have found that the transition to adulthood is taking longer to complete. Young people are living with their parents longer, are more highly educated and attend school for more years than their parents did. The age at marriage has been rising, fertility rates have been falling and the age at which women have their first child has been increasing. [Clark 2007:13]

At first glance, Jeffrey Arnett's conception of "emerging adulthood" seems to draw away from the kind of social science consensus on an extended youth that Clark cites above in favour of an emphasis on exploration and uncertainty more reminiscent of Beck's (1994) notion of reflexive modernization. But a second glance quickly makes clear that far from dedifferentiating the life course, Arnett is simply adding another phase to it. Thus, Arnett has argued that in Western industrialized countries, demographic changes have made the years between 18-25 a distinct period of the life course and he proposed the term "emerging adulthood" for this phase, which he characterizes as a period both of greater instability and possibility:

> It is in many respects the age of possibilities, a period in which many different potential futures remain possible and personal freedom and exploration are higher for most people than at any other time. [Arnett 2000:479]

In this period it is not demographic transitions such as establishing stable residences, finishing school, settling into a career or marrying which matter to one's subjective sense of adulthood but "individualistic *qualities* of character" (2000:472-473). Nonetheless, it is to these kinds of demographic transitions that Arnett turns in explaining why his conception of "emerging adulthood" cannot simply be folded into a general phase of "young adulthood":

> The period from ages 18 to 25 could hardly be more distinct from the thirties. The majority of young people ages 18-25 do not believe that they have reached full adulthood, whereas the majority of people in their thirties believe that they have (Arnett, in press). The majority of people ages 18-25 are still in the process of obtaining education and training for a long-term adult occupation, whereas the majority of people in their thirties have settled into a more stable occupational path. The majority of people ages 18-25 are unmarried, whereas the majority of people in their thirties are married. The majority of people ages 18-25 are childless, whereas the majority of people in their thirties have had at least one child. The list could go on. The point should be clear. Emerging adulthood and young adult-

hood should be distinguished as separate developmental periods. [Arnett 2000:477]

In other words, what most distinguishes "emerging adulthood" is that it is *not* adulthood and adulthood is defined in terms of the same goal posts identified by Clark as marking out the extension of youth. Where people between the ages of 25-29 fit into this paradigm is unclear but what Arnett's distinction between "emerging" and "young" accomplishes is that it leaves the criteria of adulthood unchanged even while a larger number of people are defined as outside of it.

While Arnett's theory of "emerging adulthood" has attracted a good deal of interest, its emphases on "individualistic qualities" and developmental schemas have also elicited criticism from a number of other scholars in youth studies (Bynner 2005; Côté and Bynner 2008; Molgat 2007). Bynner (2005) has argued that the psychological orientation of "emerging adulthood," like other normative paradigms of human development, tends to downplay the importance of structural factors in shaping and stratifying roles and identities. Drawing on British surveys, Bynner (2005) contended that more privileged youths are responding to the increasing emphasis on formal qualifications through extended participation in postsecondary education and the postponement of family commitments while their less advantaged counterparts are pursuing a more "traditional" route to adulthood with rapid and early transitions from secondary school to work. In a later comparison between Canadian and British survey material, Côté and Bynner (2008) contended that while Arnett had correctly identified young people's tendencies toward individualization and destandardization, his emphasis on *choice* and the emergence of a new development stage to frame these trends was misplaced. Instead, Côté and Bynner viewed these orientations as *reactions* to structural processes of globalization and technological transformation that have undermined the social supports available to young people as well as increasing the uncertainties and ambiguities of trajectories toward adulthood. Rather than viewing young people as freely choosing to prolong their transitions toward adulthood while experimenting with identities, Côté and Bynner argued that young people have been forced to respond to a set of historical processes of economic exclusion and marginalization, which have made financial independence harder to achieve. Rather than entering a new stage of development, young people are, in this perspective, simply trying to cope with a particular set of institutional changes.

However, while Côté and Bynner (2008) criticized Arnett's emphasis on volition and were doubtful about

the utility of introducing a new developmental phase, they, nonetheless, strongly agreed with his characterization of the delayed transition to adulthood:

> One of the least contested issues in contemporary youth studies is that the transition to adulthood is now taking longer on average than in the past, delayed until the mid-twenties to late-twenties for a significant proportion of youth cohorts in many developed societies. [Côté and Bynner 2008:253]

In short, in this treatment, youth may be extended, may or may not be divided into subphases, or may be attributed new characteristics and roles, while the definition of adulthood remains fixed since anything that does not fit this prevailing designation of entry points into adulthood is relegated either to an extended youth or defined away as the peculiarities of a small minority.

Emergent Mobilities

Côté and Bynner's (2008) emphases on the interaction between structural shifts, uncertainty and individualization also appear in some of the literature on contemporary forms of travel and mobility. But in contrast to those scholars in youth studies who insist on associating these features with an extension of youth, many recent studies of travel and movement are likely to associate it with a wide range of ages and periods in the life course.

Thus Bianchi (2000) noted that economic restructuring in North America and Europe, combined with the globalization of labour markets, has precipitated emergent patterns of mobility including new flows of migration into Southern European countries. Amongst the tourists, migrant workers and retirees who have flocked to Mediterranean resorts, Bianchi also observed the presence of a new set of unregistered resort workers whose mobility blurs the boundary between tourist and worker. Originating, for the most part, from northern European Union countries, they are legally entitled to work and reside in other parts of the EU. But they are mostly seeking unregistered, casual employment, moving seasonally between different resort areas:

> Although the specific content or nature of work is not of paramount importance for migrant tourist-workers it is not purely a means of securing their material subsistence, but undertaken as part of a broader recreational experience in which they can indulge in certain social, artistic and sensual pleasures among similar groups of like-minded individuals. [Bianchi 2000:124]

In spite of the voluntarism and hedonism that distinguishes this class of migrants from more classic forms of labour migration, Bianchi suggested that the deterioration of living standards and declining job prospects in many occupational sectors of Northern Europe may have provided an incentive to look for better prospects further afield.

This is a heterogenous migrant tourist workforce, which can include people who have previously been in secure employment as well as graduates who have just entered the labour market (Bianchi 2000:123). Hence, it comprises a workforce that displays some of the aspects of liminality, self-exploration and individualism that have been associated with the extension of youth, even though its members may not all be of the same age or at the same phase in their lives.

The notion that some of the tendencies that Arnett used to define "emerging adulthood" could also be associated with other phases of life is echoed in other studies of what Caroline Oliver (2007) has called "aspirational movements." Oliver used this term to describe English retirees who have migrated to Spain "as a better way of living on pensions" (2007:127). Like the migrant tourist-workers with whom Bianchi is concerned, these older travellers invested their mobility with aspects of self-growth, transformation and individualism. A similar set of aspirations can be found among the working "volunteers" that Rodman (2007) encountered at Kalani, a Hawaii oceanside spiritual retreat, who ranged in age from recent college graduates to retirees in their 60s. Some left behind no career or permanent work but others left or sold their businesses to free up cash and time to take up their temporary residence at Kalani. Resident volunteers were expected to stay at least three months but many stayed longer or returned regularly to the retreat. In exchange for working 30 hours a week, they paid reduced fees for their stays in Kalani. Once more, we encounter a dedifferentiation between migration and tourism and here again, there is an emphasis on self-transformation, liminality and an exploration of alternative lifestyles that resonates with both Bianchi's case study and Arnett's characterization of "emerging adulthood."

Benson and O'Reilly (2009) are even more explicit about associating a search for an alternative lifestyle, often represented by its protagonists as an individualist quest for self realization and exploration, with a wide range of ages and circumstances. Benson and O'Reilly argue that the kinds of sojourns described by Oliver and Rodman can be viewed as part of a larger category of "lifestyle migrants":

> As we perceive it, lifestyle migrants are relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or

full-time to places that, for various reasons, signify, for the migrant, a better quality of life ... The fundamental features of the different lifestyles sought thus include the re-negotiation of the work-life balance, quality of life, and freedom from prior constraints. Through these strategies of reorientation, the migrants seek the greater good in life, however that might be perceived. [2009:609-610]

Thus while these forms of mobility appear to facilitate some of the qualities of exploration and possibility that Arnett attributed to "emerging adulthood," they challenge his attribution of these orientations to a specific life phase. In terms of some contemporary forms of mobility, there seems to be at the very least some basis for suggesting the broader loosening of normative parameters around the life course rather than just in terms of one extended phase. And while these cases do not express the same tones of economic exclusion and marginalization emphasized by Côté and Bynner, they do signal the ways in which broader structural shifts are implicated even in the most personalized quests for alternative lifestyles: the opportunities for cross-border movement made possible by the EU; the possibilities for new retirement lifestyles and settlements afforded by regional economic differentials; and, the extended travel that can be enabled by a blurring of the boundaries between leisure and work.

Given such possible overlaps between shifts in the duration and experience of youth, the life course more generally, economic restructuring and spatial mobility, what are the implications and conclusions that young Canadians on an extended period of travel abroad draw from this experience?

Student–Youth Travel

In this paper, I draw on material collected as part of a larger project,[2] which involved collaboration with Noel Dyck and the assistance of several graduate students, particularly Heather Barnick, Kathleen Rice and Meghan Gilgunn. The project was a multi-locale study (Canada, Australia, U.S. and the U.K.), which focused on three forms of Canadian student and youth travel and sojourns abroad including university exchanges, working holidays and athletic scholarships. Some students and youths were interviewed in Canada as they prepared to embark on, or more commonly after they had returned from, one or more of these kinds of opportunities for travel abroad. Others were interviewed while they temporarily spent time abroad respectively on a "working holiday" in Britain, on a university exchange or on a more extended period of study in Australia, or completing a program of study in an American university supported by an athletic

scholarship. Altogether we interviewed 99 Canadian students and youth travellers. Each of our graduate research assistants also completed an ethnographic study of 4-6 months duration with Canadian working holidaymakers in Edinburgh (Kathleen Rice), exchange and international students in Melbourne (Heather Barnick) and university athletes in Boston (Meghan Gilgunn). In addition to our encounters and exchanges with student and youth travellers, we also interviewed 43 government, university and NGO officials who were involved in developing, administering or promoting programs for student and youth mobility in Canada, Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. In this paper, however, I will be concentrating primarily on the young people in our study that participated in working holidays and university exchanges.

University student exchanges, which have been a feature of the postsecondary educational landscape since the Second World War, have more recently received a new discursive wrapping as part of general calls for "internationalization." But the ubiquitous mention of internationalization in the mission statements of universities in many countries does not necessarily connote either agreement about its definition or indicate what kind of priority it is actually accorded in practice (Welch and Denman 1997). Nevertheless, if there is not much clarity about "internationalization," it is still reasonably clear that its most substantial aspect involves the mobility of students. While much of the institutional (i.e., universities, government, academic advocacy groups etc.) interest in student mobility has usually concerned international students seeking to complete a full degree in their host university, there has also been talk of, and in some cases more or less concerted effort expended at, increasing the numbers of students who participate in short term international exchanges of a semester or two. The students participating in such exchanges are still, however, very much in the minority; in Canada, probably around 2% of postsecondary students participate in these forms of extended stays abroad.

One of the most common rationales in the field of "international education" for encouraging students to participate in these kinds of exchanges is offered by Daly and Barber:

It is widely acknowledged that in the globalizing marketplace, organizations are seeking employees with skills and characteristics that enable them to be more competitive in the international arena ... One of the most effective means for graduates to develop "international skills" and communication competencies is through international academic programs such as study abroad and student exchange. [2005:26-27]

Echoes of such arguments can also be heard with respect to work abroad opportunities. Thus, according to a Canadian official with whom I spoke whose work involves the development of bilateral exchanges enabling students and youths to temporarily work abroad, young people taking up these possibilities:

> gain experience in the workforce and once you return to Canada you become more attractive to Canadian employers as part of a knowledge-based economy because the employer looks at the participant and sees an individual who is open-minded, who has seen other things, who is actually also open to new ways of doing things and is willing to accept changes, which is very important for an employer these days.

Another Canadian official administering a work abroad program argued that it is important to convince young participants:

> that nowadays fields of study tend to vary over one's career, right? A lot of people are in two, three careers even in this day and age and it's probably going to stay that way for some time. But more importantly, we try to get across to them that, look, it doesn't matter what the overseas work experience is, it's the fact that you've done it.

In short, official discourses tend to emphasize that one of the benefits of extended stays abroad for young Canadians is the training it can provide for future work in a globalized marketplace that often demands versatility in work practices, roles and occupational choices.

But as noted elsewhere (Amit 2007a), this kind of official rationale for extended stays abroad does not necessarily conform to the motivations enunciated by young people for such mobility. I and others have reported that more than training for future professional or occupational roles, young travellers are likely to represent their journeys as an interregnum before they move to take on—or in some cases resume—the commitments they associate with adulthood or, in Maureen's words, "get my life started" (Amit 2007a, 2010; Sørensen 2003). While this "time out" may have resonances with the period of liminality that both van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969) associated with rites of passage, it does not necessarily effect either the socially recognized shift in status van Gennep associated with this period or the more radical personal and social transformations that Turner thought could be generated by this experience of between-ness (Amit 2010). Instead, for many of the young Canadians we spoke with, who had taken up opportunities for work or study abroad, their journey was noteworthy for the "temporary reprieve

it seemed to offer from social expectations of a predictable progression through educational and career commitments" (Amit 2010:64). A stay abroad did not so much facilitate a passage to other statuses and phases as stave them off a little longer.

In sharp distinction to Côté and Bynner's construction of extended youth as an effort to cope with processes of economic marginalization and exclusion, our study included examples of young people who had left what they considered to be "good" jobs in order to take up opportunities for an extended stay abroad. Rhonda was 24 years old, had already completed an undergraduate degree in journalism and had worked in her chosen field of media relations and event coordination when, after visiting some friends in Europe, she decided to spend a period of time abroad on a working holiday in Edinburgh.

> I just absolutely fell in love with the city, and the travelling, so, um, I had a really good job back home, and I just decided last year that it wasn't the time for me to have that nine-to-five job and sign the government contract, you know, so I just decided to take up the working holiday visa, and come to Europe and work.

She had, she explained, just put her career "on hold." Rosanne was 28 years old and had left a job she had occupied for three and a half years as an assistant bank manager of a large branch in order to take up, like Rhonda, a working holiday in Edinburgh. After being repeatedly promoted in her job at the bank, she had arrived at a point

> where it was time to take the management courses and move up again. And [I] was definitely feeling the pressure from my big bosses. I don't really feel that's where I want to go with my career, so I was thinking of a career change anyway when I came here.

Rosanne's primary aspiration for her stay in the U.K. was to "have a good time and relax" but she also felt that "professionally, it's obviously not that great of a career move. It's not really fabulous on your resumé to sort of work your way up, and then leave and come back and so, it's not a career move, it's just to get experience. Life experience, I guess." So rather than the "resumé enhancer" that a student travel official used to characterize working holidays, for Rosanne at least, this journey was a resumé interruption that in due course she felt she would probably need to justify to future employers.

Similarly in his study of backpackers, Sørensen noted that while many of these young people were embarking on these travels at a crossroad in their lives, in most cases, this transitional period was "self-inflicted, brought about by a desire to travel" (2003:853). They had quit a job,

broken up with a partner or effected some other break to facilitate the backpacking journey they were planning.

But if elsewhere I have been concerned with exploring the limitations of the liminality associated with youth and with forms of youth-oriented travel, in this paper I want to focus more particularly on the constructions of adulthood implicated in the rationales often crafted for youth travel. In other words, what light do the constructions of particular forms of youth travel shed on the ways in which young travellers comprehend the life course and articulate their expectations of adulthood? One might be forgiven for assuming that like some of the emergent mobilities I described earlier, the willingness of young people to interrupt "good" jobs or careers for an extended period abroad indicates a shift toward non-linear and individualized representations of the life course. But in fact one of the most consistent subtexts of youth travel representations reasserts a very conventional and conservative notion of the life course.

Like Maureen, whose comments opened this paper, in one form or another many of the young travellers we interviewed or encountered represented their stay abroad as something they could only do before they "settled down." Rosanne who had interrupted a job as a bank manager to work temporarily in an Edinburgh youth hostel did not think it was likely that she would go on this kind of extended travel again because

> you eventually at some point have to get into your job, and get married, and have kids, and do all of that. And once you have kids to do extended travel would be difficult. So it may be in retirement, it's a possibility, but not in the next twenty years.

Rhonda who had put her career on hold to travel to Europe similarly felt that

> I know I have to settle down for a bit and do my Master's. But I tell myself, I give myself until at least the age of 28 or 29, 30 and then really like, settle down and really like, you know, maybe think about buying a house and the job and everything. But until then I don't think I'm ready.

John had embarked on a university exchange at an Australian university in spite of the likelihood that it would extend the duration of his undergraduate studies. But in his view, a certain kind of travelling definitely had a "best before" date:

> Yeah, basically what I'm trying to do right now is stay single and travel while I can. You know what I mean—cause like when you're 35, you can't really go around

and travel in hostels and stuff like that so … I kinda want everything out of life. So I want to be young and have fun now, travel, you know go do the hostelling thing, do all that, and then still have the education and what not to get back to Vancouver and, you know, work an office job and earn however much money and settle down with a family and kids and stuff like that.

At 24, Melissa was working in Montreal after several longer journeys abroad, first on a backpacking trip through Europe, then on a university exchange in Paris and finally, when she had completed her B.A., to teach English as a second language in Japan. She was enjoying her job in Montreal but had applied to go back to university for a second qualification and was also thinking of eventually spending a further year on a working holiday before she reached the age of 30. She did not feel ready to settle down yet, but "if I fall in love with someone …" Meanwhile, her parents who had encouraged her travels also reminded her that "yes, I want you to go and explore and you're young and go, but at the same time, remember at some point, you will have to make a decision to be able to solidify a good salary and secure yourself some equity or something."

The notion that an extended sojourn abroad is something that you do when you are young, before you settle down is a theme that also resonates in other studies of youth travel. Sørensen quotes Mark from Britain who explained the urgency to travel "before it is too late":

> It's a question of now or never. Since graduating from University a couple of years ago, I've made good money, so I can afford to travel. I thought that if ever then now, because ten years from now I may be tied up with wife, kids, mortgage and all the rest of it. [2003:853]

Similarly, Desforges quotes Jenny, one of the young travellers in his own study of "long-haul" travellers:

> [p]eople want more from their lives and something for themselves first, to go and see the world while they're young and stuff, I guess. I know I do. There's a lot to see and a lot to do … I think everyone I've spoken to has wanted to go away again and is not ready to settle down into a life, because they want to see the world, and there's more important things in life than commuting up to London every day. [1998:190]

Fixing Adulthood

The flip side of the insistence on travelling when you are young is the presumption that it will not be possible to do so when you are older and have "settled down." This

determined construction of adulthood as immobile and fixed is all the more striking when it is set against contemporary adulthoods that are integrally organized around ongoing movement. Harrison's (2003) study of 33 Canadian travel enthusiasts included individuals ranging in age from 30 to over 75 years old. One third were retired and about half were married, some divorced. Their incomes ranged from about $20,000 to well over $180,000 per year and almost all were working or had worked at a professional or managerial job in occupations ranging from business to engineering. The forms of their travel varied considerably from package tours to independent travel, with different ranges of frequency and duration of trips. But their travels were central to their identity while not excluding a commitment to other important pursuits and connections.

My own study (Amit 2006, 2007b) of transnational consultants included people whose work involved repeated travel to a variety of destinations. They too ranged in age from people in their 30s to those in their 60s. While for the most part they maintained a principal residence in Canada, their work might keep them abroad for months in any given year. Most had deliberately sought out this kind of peripatetic career, working hard to establish their profile and competence in this kind of transnational workscape.

Notwithstanding these kinds of mobile leisure and occupational practices, while a few of the younger travellers we encountered in our study expressed an interest in developing a career that allowed for travel, most viewed their journeys as a function of youth. In effect, they were defining a transition to adulthood, at least in part, in terms of bringing their participation in extended travel to a close. But as we can see from the comments by the youthful travellers I cited earlier, this insistence on what Hockey and James have called a "chronologised, modernist life course project" is not restricted to travel (2003:115-116) but also takes shape around presumptions regarding certain key elements of home, family and work. As Kenyon notes in her study of student housing:

> students therefore stated that close family groupings would eventually form the social units of "real" future homes. As Mark told me, "I'll get a job, hopefully, and then I will settle down, you know, probably get married at some point, have a few kids. That's what we all really expect isn't it?" [Hockey and James 2003:114]

But this version of the life course revolves around a particular tautology of adulthood, which appears to be shared by many people including youths, their parents (see Melissa's earlier comment), educational authorities,

scholars and so on. What these perspectives share is a fairly pervasive notion of "settling down" as entailing certain key transitions around work, marriage, setting up an independent household, curtailing travel and so on. When these kinds of transitions do not happen at all or else happen at a different age, then the goal posts of adulthood are pushed back through the extension of youth. What this means is that while the definition of youth is being repeatedly revised in terms of age range, duration, appropriate activities and so on, adulthood remains socially and conceptually fixed as the attainment of certain key roles and statuses. Thus the extension of youth allows a concomitant arresting of adulthood as particular versions of "settling down." The more you change the definition of youth to reflect changing patterns of work, residence, education or travel, the less you have to change the definition of adulthood.

Accordingly, as I noted earlier in this paper, Arnett justified the distinction he is positing between "emerging adulthood" and "young adulthood" as revolving around the relative proportions of people between 18-25 who are still obtaining education and training, have not yet married and are childless, as opposed to the ratios of people in their 30s who have settled into a more stable occupational path, married, had at least one child and so on (2000:477). This rendering of adulthood stands in marked contrast to the late capitalist rhetoric of flexibility described by Sennett (1998) and Beck (2000) in which mobility, insecurity, reinvention and re-education are treated as lifelong necessities. Yet, as I also noted earlier, scholars such as Côté and Bynner (2008) who are trying to explain the extension of youth often account for this moratorium in terms of the same factors of economic restructuring and globalization that are used to buttress the rhetoric of economic flexibility. And likewise, as I noted earlier in this paper, the emphasis on versatility often cited by officials promoting or administering programs for youth travel would appear to be oriented toward a similar notion of the impact of globalization and economic restructuring. That is to say, this kind of "international experience" is seen as instilling a capacity for flexibility necessary in globalized economies.

There is thus a fundamental contradiction vested in certain scholarly and official notions of an extended youth. They at once stress the impact of postindustrial economic restructuring in reshaping the nature of youth even as they reaffirm a longstanding modernist chronology of the life course. It is, however, a contradiction that seems to be accepted, even asserted by many of the young travellers that participated in our research project. Why? I suspect that this is a version of youth and of the life course that

offers a more reassuring notion of what is at stake in being young and mobile.

Elsewhere I have suggested that what is most attractive about international university exchanges and working holidays is that, however exploratory, they put very little at risk (Amit, 2010). If you do not like your job on a working holiday, you can just go home. Many of the university exchanges in which Canadian students participate stipulate minimal pass/fail requirements and in any case usually last for little more than a semester. Youths embarking on these kinds of extended stays abroad are overwhelmingly from middle class family backgrounds, in fact, providing evidence of a certain level of parental or personal financial resources is usually a visa requirement. Parents often, in one way or another, provide financial backing for these journeys, either directly funding them as is usually the case for academic exchanges or providing a measure of back-up support. Thus most of the young people participating in working holidays do not expect to return to their countries of origin with much, if anything, in the way of accumulated savings. But they know that in most cases, their parents will likely provide them with temporary accommodation or support while they work out their subsequent plans for work, education or residence. If it is an adventure, it is a fairly safe one.

However, if this travel was to be viewed as not just an interlude but also the shape of things to come, it might well take on very different connotations. Quitting a "good" job to embark on a temporary sojourn abroad or extending the duration of one's studies to enjoy a semester or two abroad is not a risky proposition if you believe that when you return to Canada, you will easily be able to find another job or finish your degree and then begin an attractive career or, in short, "settle down." Some scholars appear to assume that an extension of youth reflects perceived difficulties in attaining particular signposts of adulthood. But is it possible that one of the factors encouraging these kinds of interludes is precisely a continued faith in a "chronologised, modernist" life course? Very few of the young travellers we talked to expressed any doubt or uncertainty that when they were ready, they would be able to settle down. It is this confidence in the eventual prospect of a certain kind of adulthood that imparts to their travels the volitional aspect noted by Arnett. An extended but still contained youthhood can present a much more reassuring prospect than an adulthood in which jobs, residence, family and marriage continue to be constituted as uncertain, insecure and fluctuating processes over the course of your whole life. They can be youths for a while longer because they are still confident that in due course they will be able to become a certain kind of adult. And this

confidence is bolstered by a range of official discourses, scholarly constructions, media images and parental reminders. What will they think or do if it turns out not to be altogether true?

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Notes

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L'appel de Calcutta : continuités, ruptures et réappropriations chez les expatriés humanitaires en Inde

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Alors que les anciens récits de voyages décrivaient et racontaient le monde aux multitudes qui n'avaient jamais l'occasion de voyager, les récits modernes renvoient à des lieux connus, à la poursuite d'émotions de plus en plus profondes.
— Bernard Arcand 1993

Résumé : À travers les récits de travailleurs humanitaires qui ont choisi de s'expatrier en Inde, nous verrons comment se transforment les représentations de l'autre (et de soi) au fil du temps, et ce, en puisant autant à l'histoire qu'à la fiction. Si des mythes classiques datant de l'époque coloniale ainsi que la naissance du tourisme humanitaire modèlent l'expérience d'expatriation, on remarque aussi que des expériences concrètes d'émancipation et d'appartenance favorisent le maintien du projet, et que des pratiques transnationales renforcent le sentiment d'aliénation par rapport à l'Occident. L'article suggère que le statut liminal des expatriés permet autant la disjonction sociale que la reproduction historique du rapport à l'autre.

Mots-clés : Inde, humanitaire, représentations, expérience, réflexivité, liminalité

Abstract: Through the accounts of humanitarian workers in Calcutta who chose expatriation, we shall explore how representations of the self and of the other are transformed through the experience of volunteering and by borrowing from history and fantasy. While classical representations dating back to the colonial period and the development of volunteer tourism keep modeling the Western experience, we also note that experiences of emancipation and a new sense of belonging support together the expatriation project. Meanwhile, transnational practices reinforce feelings of alienation towards Western lifestyles. The article suggests that the expatriates' liminal status allows social disjuncture as well as historical reproduction of the relationship to the other.

Keywords: India, humanitarianism, representations, experiences, reflexivity, liminality

Envie de liberté ou de dépaysement, volonté d'émancipation ou sentiment de perte de signification qui pousse à chercher du sens dans une culture autre, le désir d'ailleurs est un thème récurrent dans l'anthropologie du tourisme, du voyage et du mouvement[1]. Cependant, comme l'énonçait déjà au siècle dernier Victor Segalen (1908), la connaissance annule d'emblée l'exotisme. Qu'advient-il, en effet, de ce désir de l'autre, de ce désir d'ailleurs, ou de ce désir de se débarrasser de soi pour renaître autre et ailleurs (Affergan 1987 ; Baudrillard et Guillaume 1992) lorsque l'ailleurs devient chez-soi? À partir de récits d'expatriation collectés en Inde en 2006, nous verrons comment se transforme et se construit la représentation de l'autre (et de soi) chez des Occidentaux vivant à Calcutta (Kolkata) depuis en moyenne dix ans, dans le contexte particulier de migrations de type humanitaire.

Nous tenterons d'abord de comprendre sur quoi se base le choix de l'Inde comme lieu de prédilection pour un projet humanitaire, et de cerner les modalités d'insertion dans des espaces sociaux particuliers à Calcutta, répondant parfaitement au projet de départ. Nous verrons ensuite comment des projets ponctuels de bénévolat se transforment en engagement durable, et le rôle que jouent les réseaux sociaux, le sentiment d'émancipation et le sentiment d'aliénation à l'Occident dans la décision de s'expatrier. Finalement, nous nous pencherons sur le statut liminal des expatriés pour comprendre les continuités, les transformations et les ruptures liées à ce type de mouvement migratoire. Nous nous attarderons, en filigrane, à la réappropriation des archétypes de l'Inde une fois mis à l'épreuve de l'expérience, mais interrogerons

aussi la possibilité de mettre en place de nouvelles formes de rencontre avec l'autre dans un monde globalisé qui promet un élargissement des possibilités et une diversification des trajectoires individuelles (Appadurai 2005). Des exemples illustrant notre propos seront tirés de la cinquantaine de récits de vie constituant le matériel de base de cette recherche (dont une quinzaine recueillis à Calcutta), et dans lesquels on peut déceler une certaine norme discursive[2].

L'Inde pauvre comme point de départ

La littérature émergente sur le tourisme résidentiel, la migration dans le but d'améliorer son style de vie (*lifestyle migration*), le néonomadisme ainsi que l'expatriation font état de deux caractéristiques du monde contemporain favorisant ces types de mouvement : (1) la globalisation et ses conséquences culturelles, qui rendent « l'ailleurs » plus accessible; et (2) le tournant subjectiviste moderne et la culture du bien-être, qui poussent des individus à tout mettre en œuvre pour s'accomplir, se développer ou s'assurer une meilleure qualité de vie (Amit 2007; D'Andrea 2007; Fechter 2007; Franklin 2003; Hannerz 1996; Korpela 2009; O'Reilly et Benson 2009; Williams et Hall 2000). L'expatriation de type humanitaire n'est pas étrangère à ces deux phénomènes.

Nous appelons ici « humanitaire » ces expériences diverses de volontariat à l'étranger de gens n'appartenant pas nécessairement à une organisation (certains finançant eux-mêmes leur projet en mettant à contribution leurs réseaux personnels). À noter que, contrairement à d'autres études portant sur le discours des agents de développement[3], le discours des expatriés humanitaires rencontrés à Calcutta est beaucoup moins empreint de cette volonté de changement social, et dépourvu du vocabulaire souvent utilisé dans ces milieux (notions d'*empowerment*, d'inégalités, de droits, par exemple). Le fait que les informateurs n'étaient pas des professionnels du développement, mais s'étaient plutôt improvisés travailleurs humanitaires à la suite d'une expérience touristique de bénévolat doit être considéré pour expliquer cette forme de dépolitisation[4]. Ce type de migration découlant d'une première expérience touristique (*tourism-informed mobility*) peut être défini comme le fait des migrants visitant d'abord les lieux en tant que touristes, et choisissant après-coup de s'y établir de façon permanente (O'Reilly 2007).

Or, l'engouement contemporain pour le voyage humanitaire peut s'expliquer par le développement d'une niche commerciale qui joue sur le plan de l'unicité de l'expérience offerte par ce type de tourisme solidaire, en s'affairant à vendre des expériences de rencontre « authentiques » et autrement non accessibles. En plus de répondre à cette envie de découverte culturelle hors de l'ordinaire et d'agir comme outil de déculpabilisation individuelle[5], le tourisme humanitaire est aussi présenté comme une façon, pour le voyageur, de s'enrichir personnellement (reprenant l'idée de la mobilité comme outil de développement personnel)[6].

Ces traits généraux du tourisme humanitaire ne suffisent cependant pas à expliquer l'attrait spécifique pour l'Inde dans le but de mener à bien ce type de projet, ni ce qui pousse certains à passer de l'expérience touristique à l'expatriation. Afin de comprendre les projets de mobilité des expatriés humanitaires à Calcutta, et ce qu'ils comportent en termes de continuité et de ruptures avec les modes de vie précédant l'expatriation, il faut en effet tenir compte, non seulement des caractéristiques de la modernité qui peuvent pousser à partir – les *push factors* tels que l'industrie touristique, le sentiment de culpabilité postcolonial ou encore l'impératif de « l'expérience internationale » pour acquérir du capital culturel (Amit 2007) –, mais aussi de l'attrait particulier pour l'Inde – les *pull factors*. Or, pour comprendre cet intérêt pour le sous-continent indien, il faut d'abord le situer historiquement.

Plusieurs penseurs postcoloniaux et théoriciens des notions de représentation ou d'intersubjectivité ont mis en évidence le fait que des procédés permettent de maintenir en place des archétypes classiques à travers l'histoire – qu'on pense, entre autres, à des procédés tels que la fétichisation et l'enfermement dans un cercle interprétatif grâce à une chaîne continue et répétitive de stéréotypes qui nie la variabilité (Bhabha 1983), ou encore la division historique et la distanciation temporelle, qui rendent l'autre désirable puisque vivant « dans un autre temps » (Fabian 1983; Singer 1972; Weinberger-Thomas 1988). La littérature sur les représentations occidentales de l'Inde met pour sa part en évidence deux archétypes classiques qui traversent les rapports historiques de l'Occident avec l'Inde, dans un mouvement souvent oscillatoire : 1) l'Inde spirituelle et rédemptrice, mise en évidence dans le romantisme allemand du XIXe siècle et plus tard dans le mouvement transcendantaliste américain et le mouvement *New Age*; et 2) l'Inde pauvre à sauver, l'Inde souffrante et misérable, qui retient surtout notre attention ici, et qui s'inscrit en continuité avec l'idée de l'Inde comme fardeau pour l'homme blanc (*the White Man's Burden*), popularisé, entre autres, dans le roman anglo-indien d'inspiration coloniale[7].

Nous appelons ici ces archétypes des mythes-modèles, selon le concept d'Obeyesekere (1997), lequel est défini comme un paradigme qui sert de modèle à la construction d'autres mythes. Plus précisément, le mythe-modèle

fait référence à un ensemble d'idées et de structures historiquement présentes et reliées à différentes formes narratives. La conjoncture historique joue un rôle dans la réémergence d'un mythe, tout comme les conditions sociales et politiques peuvent soit : (1) encourager la prédominance d'un mythe-modèle en particulier; ou (2) contribuer à l'invention d'un nouveau mythe-modèle construit sur le socle de modèles précédents plus ou moins appropriés à l'époque actuelle. Le concept de mythe-modèle nous sera utile afin de tenir compte à la fois de l'historicité des mythes contemporains de l'Inde, et de la relation entre les représentations occidentales de l'Inde et l'*expérience* des expatriés. Les expatriés occidentaux se trouvent en effet imprégnés de représentations collectives qui ont été profondément marquées par l'histoire coloniale, qui conservent jusqu'à aujourd'hui leur pertinence, qui précèdent et donnent forme au projet de départ et qui s'actualisent dans les expériences contemporaines des expatriés rencontrés en Inde[8]. De nouvelles représentations et de nouveaux modèles émergent cependant à l'époque postcoloniale, les mythes-modèles de l'Inde étant appropriés, transformés et recréés par l'expatrié qui fait l'expérience de la rencontre, et servent ainsi de modèles « *of and for reality* » [de et pour la réalité], pour reprendre les termes d'Obeyesekere (1997), dans l'élaboration d'un projet humanitaire[9].

Le marché de l'humanitaire

Calcutta est l'un des lieux souvent choisis pour une expérience de tourisme humanitaire. Capitale culturelle et intellectuelle, quartier général de la mission Ramakrishna, ville d'appartenance de Rabindranath Tagore, de Satyajit Ray ainsi que de nombreux héros indépendantistes, Calcutta revêt cependant surtout, aux yeux des voyageurs, l'image par excellence de la souffrance humaine. Dans son ouvrage portant sur « la rumeur de Calcutta », Hutnyk (1996) tente de comprendre la reproduction discursive de cette image[10]. Il constate que Calcutta est dépeinte principalement comme une ville pauvre, en déclin, surpeuplée, intense. Cette facette de l'Inde comme terre des déshérités de la planète attire de nombreux travailleurs humanitaires étrangers, la rumeur de misère et de nécessité qui l'entoure circulant tant et si bien que le web regorge de groupes de discussions entre volontaires ayant vécu une expérience de bénévolat à Calcutta – la majorité d'entre eux ayant travaillé à l'Ordre des missionnaires de la charité fondé en 1950 par Mère Teresa[11]. La réputation et le travail de Mère Teresa servent en effet souvent de motivation pour une première expérience de bénévolat en Inde (souvent également la première expérience de ce type).

Ce récit d'un expatrié irlandais rencontré à Calcutta[12] illustre bien comment cette « rumeur de l'Inde » a compté dans la mise sur pied de son premier voyage sur le sous-continent :

> Tout ce que je connaissais c'était Mère Teresa. [...] Je ne connaissais pas l'étendue du système d'éducation et de la culture indienne. Tout ce que je connaissais, c'était la surpopulation et la pauvreté. Mais il faut dire que c'est réellement de cette façon que l'Inde était représentée. [...] Et à ce moment, quand je suis venu à Kolkata, je voulais faire un travail demandant. Bien sûr, Mère Teresa était une remarquable inspiration, parce qu'on la voyait beaucoup, qu'on lisait à son sujet, et que j'avais toujours voulu faire quelque chose de difficile. Et c'était le premier et le seul endroit aussi difficile et demandant que je connaisse à l'époque, donc j'avais vraiment Kolkata en tête.

D'autres informateurs confirment que l'Inde est choisie au départ pour le travail humanitaire parce que c'est un endroit où les gens souffrent beaucoup, où il y a de grands défis, et où règne une très grande pauvreté. De surcroît, la présence d'une institution telle que l'Ordre des missionnaires de la charité, qui n'exige pas des bénévoles une expérience ou des compétences particulières, facilite la mise sur pied du projet[13]. Le récit d'une expatriée allemande d'une trentaine d'années est éloquent à cet égard.

La jeune femme, qui travaillait auparavant dans le milieu des affaires, se décrit comme une personne sociable, désirant aider les gens dans le besoin, mais étant malencontreusement née dans un pays qui ne comprend pas ses valeurs humanistes. Elle relate avec amertume le refus des institutions médicales de l'accueillir comme bénévole, sous prétexte qu'elle n'avait pas la formation appropriée. Dans un moment d'énervement face aux autorités compétentes, elle raconte avoir soudainement pensé à Mère Teresa, dans un moment qu'elle décrit comme un appel, un signe : alors qu'elle ne croyait plus en rien, elle se souvient, à ce moment précis, de Calcutta et du mouroir de Kalighat (qu'elle avait vu dans un documentaire à la télévision), et planifie immédiatement son premier voyage en Inde.

Comme pour plusieurs autres expatriés rencontrés à Calcutta, c'est cette figure mythique de Mère Teresa qui donne l'élan au projet humanitaire, et ce, même si leurs connaissances du pays sont rudimentaires. Dans le cas de cette expatriée allemande, Calcutta était *la* destination, même si elle ne savait pas situer la ville sur une carte du monde :

Calcutta aurait été en Afrique, que je ne serais jamais venue en Inde : je serais allée en Afrique! Peu importe où était ce mouroir, je devais y aller. Quand je suis arrivée, j'ai appris plus au sujet de Mère Teresa, au sujet des institutions qu'elle avait dans différents pays (dont une dans ma ville natale), mais c'était trop tard. Ma décision était prise.

La découverte de ce marché humanitaire se fait ainsi via un contact personnalisé (un récit d'expérience) ou médiatisé (une publicité, Internet, les images télévisées de Mère Teresa); donc par l'intermédiaire d'un réseau social transnational ou d'une culture publique transnationale alimentant l'aura de misère de Calcutta, exposant les opportunités de bénévolat, et incitant à mettre sur pied le projet de s'y rendre soi-même pour y faire une première expérience humanitaire. Des infrastructures déjà en place à Calcutta favorisent aussi l'insertion des expatriés dans des espaces sociaux spécifiques, répondant parfaitement au projet de départ.

Les repères culturels

Plusieurs travailleurs humanitaires s'établissent dans les environs de Sudder Street – la rue la plus recommandée dans les guides de voyages pour les hôtels bon marché – située à quelques pas de l'Ordre des missionnaires de la charité[14]. C'est souvent là leur premier point de chute, en raison des infrastructures déjà en place pour les travailleurs humanitaires étrangers, et plusieurs, une fois prise leur décision de s'engager à long terme, n'ont pas quitté le quartier. Or, le fait de vivre sur Sudder Street, ou de choisir consciemment de s'en éloigner, nous donne des indications sur le désir de rupture ou de continuité des expatriés humanitaires en Inde, sur leur désir de s'éloigner d'une certaine culture occidentale, ou au contraire de garder un accès privilégié à celle-ci.

Sudder Street et le quartier des bénévoles sont décrits comme un point de repère (où l'on connaît ou reconnaît les mendiants, les commerçants et les chauffeurs de *rickshaws*), comme un endroit sécuritaire (particulièrement pour les femmes le soir), confortable, avec toutes les infrastructures nécessaires (Internet, boutiques, nourriture familière, etc.) et où l'on peut partager son expérience avec d'autres bénévoles, aller chercher chez eux soutien ou inspiration, où l'on peut être « soi-même » puisque les gens du quartier sont habitués aux étrangers. Le quartier est décrit comme nécessaire à leur vie en Inde, de façon d'ailleurs éloquente par cette informatrice : « J'ai besoin du contact avec les étrangers. Je mourrais de vivre seulement avec des Indiens, vraiment ».

Par opposition, ceux qui choisissent de s'éloigner de Sudder Street et de la communauté des bénévoles disent justement le faire pour échapper à ces gens qui leur ressemblent et pour se donner la possibilité de découvrir une autre culture. À titre d'exemple, le récit de cet expatrié d'origine suisse, dans la mi-soixantaine, qui a été naturalisé Indien et qui vit en Inde depuis une trentaine d'années, soit la moitié de sa vie partagée avec « les plus pauvres des pauvres » (selon l'expression consacrée de Mère Teresa). Son projet d'expatriation humanitaire est pour lui une façon de rétablir l'équilibre après les exactions du colonialisme. Il explique aussi avoir voulu participer pleinement à une *autre* culture. Il vit ainsi depuis près de vingt ans dans les bidonvilles de Calcutta, dans la même précarité que les Indiens, puis il décide de s'installer en milieu rural. Il fait sien le mode de vie des plus pauvres, partage leur milieu de vie et leurs coutumes, parle couramment les dialectes locaux.

Cet expatrié est donc, par choix, très peu en contact avec les autres travailleurs humanitaires occidentaux, loin de Sudder Street et de sa sous-culture, car selon lui, pour lutter contre la pauvreté absolue, il faut quitter la ville et s'établir là où l'on trouve la misère à sa source :

> Quitter Kolkata, pour moi, c'était refuser d'accepter la fausse représentation véhiculée par les médias autant occidentaux qu'indiens. Car la racine de la misère des villes est dans l'extrême misère et l'insécurité des villages. Quitter la première pour rejoindre l'autre, c'est se démarquer de ma première démarche superficielle. [...] C'est une décision contre-culturelle.

Cet expatrié suisse décide aussi de changer son nom pour un nom indien, afin de montrer qu'il ne s'accroche pas à son passé. Son changement de nom, tout comme sa naturalisation et son choix de lieu de résidence, lui permettent de signifier sa présence, de prouver aux gens qu'il ne retournera pas dans son pays à la première occasion.

D'autres expatriés font le choix, moins radical, de demeurer à Calcutta, mais en s'éloignant un peu de Sudder Street, comme ce Français qui a trouvé l'équilibre entre la vie « à l'indienne » et la vie de Sudder Street en louant un appartement à une distance de marche raisonnable du quartier des bénévoles :

> Je ne cherche pas à faire le pauvre parmi les pauvres, mais seulement à être plus proche d'eux. J'ai un désir de me dépasser, mais aussi de les connaître, leur culture, leur façon de vivre, même si la différence de mentalité n'est pas toujours facile. [...] Pour connaître la vie indienne, ce n'est pas en restant à Sudder Street, c'est sûr. [...] Mais la tentation est forte de venir ici [sur Sudder Street] manger, voir des gens, des Français. J'ai du mal à couper. Je fais un effort d'intégration tout le temps, alors des fois...

Ces exemples montrent bien que Sudder Street représente pour les expatriés humanitaires « le même », alors que le reste de la ville ou ses banlieues représentent « le radicalement différent ». Chacun, dans son choix de lieu de résidence, trouve donc l'équilibre dont il a besoin entre ce même et ce différent, entre son besoin de repères culturels et son désir de décentrement.

L'épreuve de l'expérience

La plupart des expatriés humanitaires rencontrés à Calcutta ne travaillaient pas à l'Ordre des missionnaires de la charité, mais l'institution avait tout de même été la première porte d'entrée pour sept d'entre eux, soit la moitié des informateurs[15]. Or, ce changement d'organisation n'est pas anodin. Le récit d'une expatriée française illustre bien ce qui sous-tend ces changements.

Cette femme d'une quarantaine d'années dépeint sa première expérience de bénévolat chez Mère Teresa comme une expérience qui la laisse avec une vision d'une Inde triste et malheureuse. Elle décrit comme insupportable son impuissance à soulager cette souffrance humaine qu'elle côtoie quotidiennement, d'autant plus que le travail à l'Ordre des missionnaires de la charité est très exigeant, physiquement et moralement : « Il fallait vraiment avoir le cœur accroché », raconte-t-elle. C'est au fil de ses séjours à Calcutta qu'elle découvre une organisation non gouvernementale qui héberge les enfants de la rue et travaille à les scolariser et à préparer leur insertion sociale et professionnelle. Ce faisant, elle délaisse peu à peu l'organisation de Mère Teresa et son rapport au travail humanitaire se transforme complètement, passant du soulagement de la souffrance humaine au plaisir de côtoyer les enfants de la rue : « Je prends un méga plaisir dans ce travail, je me fais plaisir, je ne souffre pas. Ce n'est pas de l'humanitaire. [...] Je n'appelle pas ça du travail : je passe du temps avec les enfants ».

Non seulement ce nouveau projet est selon elle moins pénible et plus constructif, mais il lui procure aussi un sentiment d'accomplissement personnel par le fait qu'elle juge son travail utile (plus que l'accompagnement des mourants, une des principales activités des bénévoles à l'Ordre des missionnaires de la charité). Ce nouveau projet est donc décrit comme émancipateur, et ce, tant pour elle que pour les bénéficiaires des programmes d'aide.

D'autres récits de ces changements organisationnels confirment que des transformations dans les façons de concevoir le travail humanitaire y sont associées, les organismes de développement (comparativement à l'Ordre des missionnaires de la charité), permettant mieux, selon les informateurs, de soutenir le changement social. Mais surtout, ce type de travail était plus facile à envisager à long terme : voir des enfants de la rue s'en sortir et grimper les échelons sociaux devenait un objectif à atteindre pour les travailleurs humanitaires, et qui leur donnait plus d'élan pour continuer que ne le permettait la valorisation tirée des prières quotidiennes avec les mourants[16].

Or, ce travail « centré sur le futur » a un pouvoir transformatif sur l'autre, mais aussi sur soi : l'autre ne représente plus le mourant, le souffrant ou le misérable dépendant de la générosité de « l'homme blanc », mais devient, dès lors, l'enfant qui a un avenir, l'enfant qui sourit et s'amuse malgré ses conditions de vie, l'enfant désireux d'apprendre, mais qui donne aussi des leçons de vie précieuses à l'expatrié.

Le récit d'un expatrié irlandais témoigne bien de ce contre-don du travail humanitaire et de la transformation du fantasme de « sauveur de l'humanité » en un projet plus humble :

> L'Inde nous fait descendre de notre piédestal : tu réalises que tu n'es pas si formidable que tu pensais l'être. Et ce n'est pas seulement la culture indienne; pour moi, ce sont les pauvres. Les gens qui vivent avec une certaine dignité dans la rue et dans un abri de fortune et qui ne se plaignent pas, ils m'enseignent tellement de choses, alors que moi je me plains quand je n'ai pas d'eau chaude l'hiver. [...] Ils nous font oublier nos douleurs physiques, mais ils nous rappellent aussi nos faiblesses [psychologiques]. Parfois ils sont tellement résignés et placides quant à leur situation que je réalise combien je peux être anxieux au sujet de choses anodines.

Au fil du temps et des contacts prolongés, une fois immergé dans « la chaleur et la poussière »[17], l'autre devient donc, pour l'expatrié, celui qui permet le travail sur soi : il demeure dans le besoin, mais il devient humanisant; il devient quelqu'un avec qui et par qui l'expatrié grandit, apprend, se développe. L'expérience humanitaire favorise ainsi le passage d'un projet ponctuel d'aide (à un autre misérable qu'il faut soulager) à un projet humanitaire durable (avec un autre qui sert de modèle de bonheur dans la simplicité).

Le passage à un engagement durable nécessite donc, pour les expatriés, de lier, en un seul projet, l'aide à autrui et le développement personnel. Ce constat semble faire écho à l'hypothèse des rétributions du militantisme de Gaxie, définies comme « des satisfactions, des avantages, des plaisirs, des joies, des bonheurs, des profits, des bénéfices, des gratifications, des incitations, ou des récompenses du militantisme » (Gaxie 2005:160). Selon Gaxie, ces rétributions favorisent l'engagement, et ce, même dans un contexte contemporain de régression de l'enga-

gement collectif. Ainsi, l'attachement à une cause ne serait pas nécessairement l'élément déterminant de l'engagement : le sentiment d'apaisement ou de satisfaction que procure le don de soi serait tout aussi déterminant.

Un constat dont on ne s'étonne guère considérant l'idéal de développement de soi typique du tournant subjectiviste moderne. La modernité – caractérisée entre autres par le choix individuel, l'autoconstruction de soi et la responsabilité entière de l'individu pour son succès personnel – implique effectivement une privatisation des responsabilités et un accroissement de la réflexivité (Bauman 2000), ce qui peut expliquer l'émergence de ce type de projet humanitaire apolitique sous-tendu par un désir d'émancipation personnelle. L'expérience concrète d'aide humanitaire, définie par les expatriés comme émancipatrice pour les deux parties (et même, parfois, comme une expérience spirituelle), les inscrit donc en faux par rapport aux critiques de l'entreprise humanitaire, qui ont une vision pessimiste et systémique des politiques d'aide[18].

Cette conjoncture historique peut donc expliquer la construction – sur la base du paradigme de l'Inde pauvre à sauver – du nouveau modèle de la pauvreté rédemptrice chez les travailleurs humanitaires. En fait, ce sont les deux archétypes classiques de l'Inde qui semblent amalgamés ici : l'Inde spirituelle et rédemptrice et l'Inde pauvre à sauver sont réunies et réappropriées pour prendre la forme d'une Inde pauvre et rédemptrice, que l'Occidental peut aider, tout en s'aidant lui-même.

Sociabilité et compatibilité

Si les expatriés rencontrés à Calcutta ont chacun leur histoire particulière, tous ont néanmoins choisi de s'engager durablement avec l'Inde et de rompre avec le mode de vie précédant leur expérience humanitaire. Cet engagement, s'il est soutenu par des infrastructures facilitant leur travail et par l'appropriation d'un projet qui résonne avec leurs aspirations particulières, est aussi consolidé par un sentiment d'attachement aux Indiens à qui ils viennent en aide, de même que par une identification aux autres bénévoles ou expatriés humanitaires, qui ont fait les mêmes choix de vie et qui les soutiennent dans leur travail. Ces nouvelles rencontres, au sein de sous-cultures dans lesquelles les expatriés sont impliqués, ou cette sociabilité humanitaire, jouent aussi un rôle dans la transformation d'un projet de mobilité plus ponctuel en projet d'expatriation.

Ce sont en effet les liens créés sur place qui scellent la pérennité de l'engagement et qui expliquent, par exemple, qu'une expatriée ait envie de continuer le travail à Calcutta pour voir s'épanouir graduellement les enfants de la rue, ou qu'une autre ne puisse pas imaginer faire du

travail humanitaire ailleurs qu'à Calcutta, à cause de ces visages connus et reconnus qui lui servent de point de repère. Peu importe le statut des gens avec lesquels les liens sont créés (les autres volontaires étrangers ou encore les Indiens), on peut néanmoins dire, à l'instar de McGehee (2002), que la création de liens sociaux est un catalyseur de l'engagement durable[19]. Outre la présence de ces relations sociales qui encouragent le maintien des activités humanitaires à Calcutta, l'attachement local peut aussi s'exprimer par les efforts faits pour s'intégrer (et qui limitent les possibilités de se projeter dans un autre lieu).

Le choix d'expatriation est aussi expliqué par l'envie de décentrement culturel et par le sentiment de compatibilité culturelle avec l'Inde (versus le sentiment d'aliénation à l'Occident). En effet, alors que Gaxie (2005) constate que c'est l'investissement dans la cause qui justifie les rétributions du militantisme, les récits des expatriés humanitaires rencontrés à Calcutta suggèrent que les avantages de la vie en Inde sont non négligeables lorsqu'il est question d'expliquer leur sentiment de satisfaction face à leur nouveau mode de vie (et donc de justifier leur expatriation). Les expatriés s'imaginent ainsi difficilement s'investir dans une cause sociale dans leur pays d'origine, et ils envisagent avec difficulté leur retour en Occident.

Le récit de cette expatriée française montre bien comment ce processus de décentrement culturel est à l'œuvre – un décalage qui est chez elle recherché et apprécié :

> C'est un pays complètement bouleversant et complètement attachant, complètement hallucinant, et ça, aussi, c'est quelque chose qu'on n'a pas chez nous. On est un peu dans des trucs tout aseptisés, tout cadrés, et quand tu arrives ici, c'est une autre vie, c'est une autre planète. [...] Tu as toujours des histoires supplémentaires, des images que tu n'avais pas vues les fois d'avant, toujours quelque chose de nouveau, toujours des rencontres nouvelles, des expériences nouvelles aussi, et en permanence.

Ce décentrement culturel permanent donne donc un souffle à son projet. Or, cette appréciation ou cet engouement pour la culture indienne se situe, dans le discours des informateurs, en miroir avec une critique aiguë du mode de vie occidental, encore plus évidente dans le récit de cette expatriée allemande, qui décrit son sentiment de compatibilité culturelle avec l'Inde par opposition à son perpétuel sentiment d'aliénation à l'Occident :

> J'ai trouvé ma deuxième partie du casse-tête. Je suis allemande, je suis née en Allemagne, et il semble que l'Allemagne et moi on devrait être assorties comme un

casse-tête. Mais des fois, tu joues avec un casse-tête et tu as une pièce et tu penses que ça devrait aller exactement là, mais ça n'entre pas. Et tu pousses avec tes doigts pour que ça entre. Et ça, c'était moi en Allemagne. Et je suis venue ici et ça cadrait parfaitement. [...] J'ai trouvé une maison [...] J'ai trouvé mon casse-tête. J'ai trouvé ma place dans le casse-tête.

Cette expatriée explique donc son engagement à vie envers Calcutta par sa difficulté à cadrer dans la société allemande. Si dans son cas la découverte d'un autre mode de vie vient donner du sens à un sentiment d'aliénation ressenti de longue date par rapport à sa culture d'origine, dans d'autres cas ce sentiment d'étrangeté à soi se construit au fil de l'expérience humanitaire en pays étranger.

L'aliénation à l'Occident (ou le double mouvement de Todorov)

L'expérience transformative et la conscience aiguë de soi qui se développe lors d'une expérience de bénévolat crée un effet de distanciation face au mode de vie précédent qui peut pousser les travailleurs humanitaires à réévaluer des liens sociaux bien établis, et voire, dans certains cas, à les rompre (McGehee et Santos 2005). Dans le cas des expatriés rencontrés à Calcutta, on constate par ailleurs que leurs pratiques transnationales renforcent cette réflexivité, non seulement par rapport à eux ou à leurs réseaux sociaux, mais aussi par rapport à leur culture d'origine[20].

La plupart de ces expatriés maintiennent à distance des liens avec leurs proches (qui souvent les soutiennent et financent leurs organisations respectives) et font aussi régulièrement des voyages dans leur pays d'origine pour organiser des levées de fonds. Or, ces allers-retours viennent exacerber leur sentiment d'aliénation face au mode de vie qu'ils ont quitté, comme en témoigne cet expatrié irlandais :

C'est beaucoup plus difficile pour moi maintenant de retourner à la maison pour des visites. Ça demande beaucoup de préparation psychologique pour se dire qu'on va cesser de travailler et ne rien faire. [...] J'ai oublié leurs façons de faire et les gens attendent de moi de la socialisation constante. Dans ce pays [en Inde], on a besoin de moi constamment, ce qui donne un sentiment d'accomplissement. Ici, tous les jours, j'aide quelqu'un, dans certains cas je leur sauve la vie. Je les sauve de la faim, je les sauve d'une autre nuit passée dans le dénuement, ou à avoir froid. Et ça procure un sentiment extatique. Donc il faut être préparé à retourner quand la vie là-bas, c'est sauter dans une voiture pour aller au supermarché ou pour visiter des amis qui vous financent ou pour d'autres événements sociaux.

Si d'autres expatriés racontent s'être plus ou moins habitués à ces allers-retours, ils disent privilégier des visites de courte durée afin de gérer leur sentiment d'aliénation; d'autres encore, comme cet expatrié français, qui de retour chez lui pleure tous les jours de ne pas pouvoir se sentir utile à quelqu'un et de ne pas se faire solliciter dans la rue, perdent complètement de vue le sens de leur existence lors de ces séjours au pays d'origine. Ce sentiment renforcé, par les pratiques transnationales, que la culture dont ils sont issus est ennuyante, irresponsable, consumériste, voire vide de sens[21] devient donc un des moteurs de leur engagement humanitaire à long terme dans une société élective; il consacre leur transition à un mode de vie considéré comme plus altruiste et ressenti comme émancipateur.

Il semble donc qu'on assiste ici à une variante du modèle du double mouvement d'éloignement/rapprochement de Todorov (1989). En effet, un premier décalage avec le mode de vie occidental est à la source du premier rapprochement, ou de l'attrait pour l'expérience indienne. À ce stade, l'expérience des expatriés n'est pas très différente de l'attrait ponctuel des touristes humanitaires à la recherche de décentrement culturel ou à la poursuite du mythe de l'Inde pauvre à sauver (pour palier le sentiment de culpabilité postcolonial). Plusieurs expatriés expriment ce premier sentiment d'aliénation en montrant le décalage entre leurs valeurs humanistes (présentes depuis l'enfance) et les valeurs centrales de leur société d'origine. Cela leur permet en outre de tracer une continuité biographique dans leur récit, et ce, malgré la mobilité et le changement radical de mode de vie qu'elle induit.

Un deuxième éloignement consiste à effectuer un mouvement de retour vers soi, que celui-ci soit physique ou mental. Cependant, le « chez-soi » est plus lointain qu'auparavant. C'est cette aliénation à soi qui permet de jeter un regard étranger sur sa propre société, comparable à celui jeté sur la société étrangère. Chez les expatriés, c'est cette distance à soi, ou cette réflexivité née de l'expérience humanitaire et des pratiques transnationales, qui les dispose à revoir leur système de valeurs; à critiquer leur société d'origine; à transformer leur projet ponctuel en engagement durable; en définitive, à s'expatrier.

Finalement, dans le deuxième rapprochement de Todorov, le sujet est en mesure d'avoir un sentiment d'étrangeté face aux deux sociétés : la société d'origine *et* la société d'accueil. Or, dans le cas des expatriés humanitaires, si ce sentiment de double aliénation est présent – puisqu'ils ne font pas non plus pleinement partie de la société indienne, parfois volontairement, parfois à regret – l'aliénation à celle-ci semble malgré tout mieux vécue que l'aliénation à l'Occident.

En somme, les récits montrent que si les expatriés ne vivent, au départ, qu'un léger décalage avec leur société d'origine, leur expérience humanitaire à l'étranger crée un déphasage plus profond, qui les pousse non pas à réintégrer leur société d'origine en amenant avec eux de nouvelles valeurs ou une nouvelle image de soi[22], mais à quitter cette société afin de préserver, voire d'accentuer ce décalage et de s'établir dans une société autre, dans une position médiane et émancipatrice.

Entre rupture et continuité, une liminalité permanente

Avant de se pencher sur le rôle du statut liminal des expatriés dans le maintien de leur projet d'expatriation, il importe toutefois de bien comprendre les limites imposées à un mouvement total vers l'autre. Les expatriés ne peuvent en effet faire fi de l'histoire des relations de l'Occident avec l'Inde lorsqu'il s'agit de se redéfinir « autre, ailleurs ».

À titre d'exemple, retrouvons cet expatrié d'origine suisse qui a fait le pas d'aller vivre dans une banlieue de Calcutta pour partager pleinement la vie des pauvres et participer à une autre culture. Son désir d'immersion totale s'accompagne néanmoins de quelques regrets à l'idée de ne pas avoir complètement réussi à être des leurs. Ce travailleur humanitaire se voit accorder, malgré lui, un statut distinct et une position de pouvoir au sein de l'organisation pour laquelle il travaille :

> Je bénéficie d'une façon extraordinaire d'un préjugé favorable, parce que si je n'avais pas cette couleur, ce serait beaucoup plus difficile. Il faudrait se battre beaucoup plus, mais ce serait plus vrai. [...] C'est très pénible, parce que je sais que jamais je n'ai pu vraiment partager la vie des gens à cause de ça, et jamais je ne la partagerai vraiment.

Cet expatrié regrette ainsi que des considérations sociohistoriques extérieures à son histoire personnelle (dans ce cas-ci sa blanchitude et le pouvoir qui y est associé) empêchent sa pleine expérience d'indianité. Cependant, son statut particulier lui permet de mieux servir la cause pour laquelle il travaille.

S'il est atypique, ce cas montre de manière éloquente que même en étant volontairement coupé de la communauté occidentale, même en embrassant, du mieux qu'il peut, la culture indienne, même en effectuant un changement de nom et de citoyenneté, à l'image des transfuges dont parle Belorgey (2000), au nom d'un engagement profond et solidaire qui l'aide à s'acquitter de sa responsabilité sociale, il demeure à jamais un expatrié occidental en Inde, avec tous les avantages et les inconvénients que cela implique.

Les relations sociohistoriques entre l'Inde et l'Occident empêchent ainsi les expatriés de se redéfinir complètement, et ce, malgré leur profond désir d'émancipation et de rupture avec le mode de vie précédent. Le plus souvent, cependant, cette liminalité, ou cet entre-deux entre cultures indienne et occidentale, est pleinement assumée. C'est cette position privilégiée qui permet à la fois l'affranchissement de la société d'origine et la concrétisation de la mission humanitaire, comme l'exprime cette expatriée allemande :

> Quelque part, c'est clair maintenant, j'ai grandi dans le mauvais pays. Mais peut-être aussi que je suis née dans le mauvais pays pour une raison. Peut-être que c'était le chemin obligé. Si j'étais née en Inde, je ne pourrais certainement pas faire ce que je fais maintenant. En fait, quelque part, il fallait que je naisse dans le mauvais pays pour devenir ce que je suis maintenant.

Le statut privilégié de ces travailleurs humanitaires expatriés leur confère donc des avantages, en particulier le luxe de pouvoir intégrer à leur vie quotidienne des pratiques transnationales, grâce au passeport, au visa de tourisme renouvelable et aux moyens de télécommunications qui permettent de maintenir des liens à distance. Il leur permet aussi de mobiliser facilement des réseaux de financement transnationaux, qui grâce au faible coût de la vie en Inde sont suffisants pour assurer leur autonomie organisationnelle. Leur statut leur permet également d'échapper à certaines règles locales, qui ne s'appliquent pas à eux au vu de leur « étrangeté ».

La liminalité dans laquelle se retrouvent les expatriés occidentaux en Inde les place donc dans une position à mi-chemin entre la rupture et la continuité. Rupture ou disjonction sociale d'une part, car les expatriés choisissent de quitter leur pays d'origine pour prendre part à une sous-culture qu'ils ont eux-mêmes choisie et qui transforme radicalement leur mode de vie; mais une sous-culture qui est choisie sur la base de mythes-modèles bien ancrés historiquement et qui représente la continuité de leurs aspirations personnelles pour l'humanitaire. En outre, non seulement ce projet humanitaire est sous-tendu par un désir d'accomplissement personnel typique de la modernité occidentale, mais il est aussi rendu possible grâce à la présence et au soutien d'une communauté de pairs (en Inde) qui partage ces mêmes aspirations, et grâce au support moral et financier des proches au pays d'origine.

Chez les expatriés humanitaires rencontrés à Calcutta, l'Occident n'est donc pas rejeté en bloc comme chez les tiers-mondistes dont parle Bruckner (1983), ni même fui comme chez les transfuges de Belorgey (2000); au contraire, l'Occident est mis à profit à travers leurs

réseaux transnationaux. Leur représentation d'un Occident « aliénant » est ainsi nuancée par celle d'un Occident « généreux », avec lequel ils préservent des liens affectifs et financiers. Leur rôle d'expatrié humanitaire est donc en quelque sorte de servir de courroie de transmission, d'aider ici et de mobiliser et sensibiliser là-bas, de demeurer dans l'entre-deux d'une tierce culture en émergence (la sous-culture humanitaire) qui allie leurs privilèges occidentaux et leur attrait pour la culture indienne, tout en évitant les écueils de la marginalisation[23].

Cette position liminale, ou cette vie dans la sous-culture des travailleurs humanitaires, ils choisissent néanmoins de la situer principalement en Inde, et non pas dans une communauté alternative en Occident. Cette liminalité particulière leur sert de preuve qu'ils se sont un peu « débarrassé de soi », mais elle les inscrit aussi dans une certaine continuité : elle sert de point de fuite autant que de point de contact. Le choix, pour plusieurs, du lieu de résidence dans les environs de Sudder Street n'est donc pas anodin : il matérialise leur liminalité dans une zone frontière où le contact avec le même est quotidien, où les repères culturels sont présents, mais où le mode de vie est tout de même différent de la vie au pays d'origine, où l'accès au radialement différent est aussi possible (il suffit de s'éloigner minimalement de cette zone frontière), et où le sens de leur vie, leur rôle social d'aidant, est chaque jour réitéré. Les expatriés font donc le choix d'une liminalité dans une société autre, et qui, faute d'abolir leur sentiment d'aliénation, le met en valeur.

L'Histoire et la fiction

Les travailleurs humanitaires rencontrés à Calcutta ont donc choisi de quitter leur pays d'origine et le mode de vie qui y est associé, leur expérience humanitaire les ayant amenés à faire des choix de vie qui les éloignent de façon significative de leur vie « d'avant Calcutta ». Est-ce par amour de la cause, par amour de l'Inde, par aversion de l'Occident ou par affection de la liminalité? Si les expatriés occidentaux retrouvent à Calcutta un sentiment d'accomplissement grâce au fait qu'ils endossent complètement leur rôle social d'aidant, et s'ils y découvrent l'exaltation d'une société humanisante, avec laquelle ils se sentent en communion, ils échappent aussi à une société décrite comme morne, et non compatible avec leurs inclinations humanitaires. Une certaine norme discursive s'installe en effet dans les récits des expatriés : ceux-ci n'ont plus d'intérêt pour la vie en Occident, ils prennent conscience de la plus-value de la vie en Inde, ou de la vie dans une communauté spécifique en Inde, pour leur bien-être personnel (incluant, dans leur cas, le fait de pouvoir endosser pleinement leurs valeurs humanistes).

S'il ne faut pas minimiser l'impératif ressenti par plusieurs expatriés de changer radicalement leur mode de vie, il est cependant impossible d'appréhender le contexte contemporain de ces déplacements sans tenir compte de l'histoire, de la géopolitique et du contexte économique, social et culturel qui précèdent l'expérience des expatriés humanitaires et qui leur confèrent certains avantages en Inde. Ce sont en effet les conditions socioéconomiques des Occidentaux en Inde qui leur permettent de s'insérer dans les espaces sociaux de leur choix, sans avoir à s'insérer professionnellement, sans non plus avoir à apprendre la langue locale, et sans être en contact avec la classe indienne moyenne ou aisée[24]. Ils s'insèrent par conséquent dans des communautés répondant parfaitement à leur fantasme de l'ailleurs (les mettant en contact quasi exclusivement avec les plus pauvres).

Leur statut liminal n'est donc pas étranger et à cette transformation, mais surtout, à ce maintien des mythes-modèles : leur liminalité leur permet de vivre à proximité des Indiens (et donc de mettre à l'épreuve les mythes-modèles bâtis sur le socle du misérabilisme), tout en les gardant à distance (et donc leur permettant de préserver leur sentiment d'étrangeté face au radicalement différent). En outre, si la figure de l'autre n'est plus misérable, mais humanisante, voire rédemptrice, le désir d'aider « les plus pauvres d'entre les pauvres » demeure toutefois au cœur du projet d'expatriation. Ce témoignage d'un expatrié vivant en Inde depuis plus de dix ans montre bien la très forte empreinte de ces mythes-modèles, même après toutes ces années :

> Je voyage dans d'autres parties de l'Inde. Mais on ne peut pas aller dans d'autres parties de l'Inde sans les voir à travers les yeux de Kolkata. Peu importe où je suis en Inde, quand je voyage par train, je ne peux retenir ce regard. Les autres volontaires vont te dire la même chose. Tu ne peux pas ne pas voir le pauvre, peu importe où tu es. Tu amènes Kolkata avec toi, peu importe où tu te promènes en Inde. Non pas que Kolkata est la ville la plus pauvre où la plus empreinte de pauvreté, mais c'est tout de même plus gros qu'ailleurs.

Ainsi, on remarque que la continuité de ces mythes-modèles remet en question la possibilité de faire émerger une nouvelle forme de rencontre. Si la circulation des rumeurs voyageuses alimente le désir d'ailleurs et contribue à l'émergence de communautés occidentales alternatives en Inde, elle ne contribue donc pas nécessairement à l'émergence de nouvelles connexions sociales avec l'autre (l'Indien), celui-ci étant souvent, même dans la proximité géographique, appréhendé à travers la figure de l'exotisme.

On constate donc que les récits des expatriés emprun-
tent autant à l'histoire qu'à la fiction. Dans les mots
d'Obeyesekere (1990), on dira que le fantasme et la réa-
lité sont interreliés et se renforcent les uns les autres,
limitant ainsi l'étendue des scénarios possibles. Dans les
mots d'Appadurai (2005), on dira que la mondialisation
permet au fantasme de devenir une pratique sociale, per-
met à un mythe de l'ailleurs de devenir une pratique quo-
tidienne, davantage de gens, dans notre monde globalisé,
pouvant en effet se projeter dans un éventail de vies qui
servent de « prélude au désir de mouvement ».

Les récits de vie recueillis mettent cependant en évi-
dence la difficulté à dépasser les archétypes classiques,
même dans une ère où l'imagination possède « a wider
set of possible » [une gamme plus large de possibles]
(Appadurai 1991). Car si une mobilité de plus en plus
grande des individus et un développement des télécom-
munications et des médias transnationaux et sociaux per-
mettent une disponibilité de plus en plus grande d'une
variété de représentations de l'Inde, il y a, d'autre part,
des archétypes qui perdurent et qui frappent l'imaginaire,
qui sont largement véhiculés, diffusés et popularisés. Ces
représentations dominantes donnent forme à des projets
de mobilité, et orientent vers des zones frontières où l'ex-
périence qui y est vécue contribue à faire circuler de nou-
veau ces mêmes archétypes, quoique légèrement trans-
formés : l'Inde pauvre, qui par l'expatriation devient
palpable, permet dorénavant aussi, avec le tournant sub-
jectiviste moderne, le travail sur soi – ou permet, comme
l'écrivait judicieusement Arcand (1993), de rejoindre nos
émotions les plus profondes.

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Notes

1   Badone et Roseman (2004); Belorgey (2000); Cohen (1979);
Kaplan (1996); Lanfant, Allcock et Bruner (1995); Leed
(1991); Nash (1996); Noy (2004); O'Reilly (2007); Urry (1990).

2   Le présent article s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une recherche
plus large sur l'expatriation occidentale en Inde, dans
laquelle je m'intéresse aussi à deux autres formes d'expa-
triation, soit l'expatriation spirituelle à Rishikesh et l'ex-
patriation de type hédoniste-esthétique à Goa (Giguère
2009). Ces trois lieux présentaient l'avantage d'accueillir
nombre d'expatriés occidentaux, et d'incarner, chacun à leur
façon, un archétype classique de l'Inde, soit respectivement
l'Inde misérable, l'Inde spirituelle et l'Inde idyllique. Ces dif-
férents projets, associés à des zones frontière spécifiques en
Inde, ont permis de bien mettre en évidence les liens entre
les représentations et l'expérience. À noter que le regrou-
pement des informateurs sous le vocable « expatriés occi-

dentaux » est justifié en tant que catégorie émique (ils se
définissent eux-mêmes comme *Western expats*) et en rai-
son du fait qu'ils se regroupent entre Occidentaux plutôt
qu'entre expatriés issus d'une même entité politique. L'âge
des expatriés variait entre trente et soixante-dix ans, et la
grande majorité d'entre eux vivaient en Inde avec un visa
de tourisme. Certains réorientaient leur carrière en Inde
(pour devenir travailleur humanitaire ou choisir un métier
qui leur permette de vivre du tourisme), d'autres vivaient
de leurs rentes.

3   Voir entre autres Grillo et Stirrat (1997).

4   Pour une perspective plus historique du passage de l'idéal
chrétien du don (gratuit et désintéressé) au concept de l'hu-
manitaire contemporain comme nouveau paradigme des
rapports Nord-Sud, et nécessairement politisé, voir Sli-
winski (2004).

5   L'essayiste Pascal Bruckner (1983) rend bien cette idée de
moralité individuelle dans son portrait des tiers-mondistes,
qui souhaitent s'engager pour racheter le crime colonial de
leurs ancêtres dans une forme de militantisme expiatoire.
Plus qu'un souci de l'autre, le voyage humanitaire serait
donc une réponse au malaise occidental face à l'autre.

6   Plusieurs organismes mettent l'accent sur le potentiel de
ces expériences humanitaires à agir comme outil de déve-
loppement personnel, voire de développement de carrière.
À titre d'exemple, voir le site de *Projects Abroad*, consulté
sur internet (www.parenthese-utile.org), le 12 juin 2010.

7   À noter aussi l'idée de l'Inde idyllique, décrite comme un
lieu enchanteur, terre du bon sauvage ou, plus récemment,
de l'utopie hippie; de l'Inde radicalement différente (une
idée massivement reprise dans les guides de voyage); ou
encore de l'Inde pittoresque et moralement supérieure,
reprise abondamment dans le courant cinématographique
récent qui présente des Indiens en diaspora en lutte pour
préserver leur supériorité morale dans un Occident déca-
dent. Voir, entre autres, Altglas (2001); Assayag (1999);
Bevir (1994); Bhattacharyya (1997); Champion (1983);
Gokhale (1992); Inden (1990); Kaur (2002); King (1999);
Murr (1983); Murti (2001); Prakash (1995); Sen (1997);
Singer (1972); Singh (1988); Turner (1994); Weinberger-
Thomas (1988); Van Woerkens (2002).

8   Le regard préconçu que l'on porte sur « l'autre différent »
est aussi théorisé en anthropologie du tourisme, entre autres
par John Urry (1990), qui montre comment les endroits que
nous choisissons de visiter sont sélectionnés en fonction
d'une sémiologie déjà construite. Le touriste cherchera donc
à expérimenter dans la réalité ce qu'il a déjà expérimenté
de façon imaginaire.

9   Sur la possibilité, pour les voyageurs, de négocier et de contes-
ter des représentations dominantes, voir aussi O'Hara (2001).

10 Une image qu'il nommera plus tard « la pauvreté photogé-
nique ». Hutnyk (2004) nous met alors en garde contre le
danger d'exotieciser et d'infantiliser l'autre et de faire l'éco-
nomie d'un questionnement sur les conditions d'émergence
des inégalités mondiales. Sur la médiatisation et le specta-
cle de la souffrance, voir aussi Saillant (2007).

11 Lors de la période estivale, l'organisation peut accueillir
jusqu'à huit cents bénévoles étrangers (Zunigo 2000), et
c'est sans compter les travailleurs humanitaires œuvrant
au sein d'autres organisations religieuses ou laïques.

12 Pour des raisons de confidentialité, le moins de détails possible permettant d'identifier les informateurs sont donnés dans le texte.

13 Une motivation supplémentaire constatée aussi par Zunigo : « L'ordre religieux n'applique aucun droit d'entrée au volontariat : tout touriste peut ainsi du jour au lendemain devenir volontaire » (Zunigo 2007:103). Voir aussi Zunigo (2003).

14 Sur les quatorze expatriés rencontrés à Calcutta, huit habitaient dans les environs de Sudder Street, au milieu des touristes et bénévoles de passage.

15 Lorsque je les ai rencontrés, deux seulement travaillaient chez Mère Teresa; deux travaillaient bénévolement pour des institutions religieuses autres; cinq travaillaient bénévolement pour des O.N.G. locales laïques; et cinq avaient créé leur propre organisme de développement.

16 McGehee (2002) souligne elle aussi cet aspect primordial de l'engagement durable : afin d'être engagé et impliqué, l'activiste doit avoir une vision optimiste de sa participation dans la création d'un nouvel espace social.

17 En référence au roman *Heat and Dust*, de Jhabwala (1975).

18 Les travaux de Heuzé (1998), Hours (1998) et Manale (1998) sont un bon indicateur de l'ampleur des critiques de l'entreprise humanitaire : leurs critiques portent sur l'idéologie et les politiques de l'humanitaire basées sur l'interventionnisme, le désengagement politique, la rationalité économique, l'histoire coloniale, et la reproduction discursive de la pauvreté. Pour une discussion de cette dichotomie entre les critiques de l'humanitaire et les points de vue des acteurs, ou « l'humanitaire vu d'en bas et de près », voir aussi Saillant (2007).

19 Dans son étude sur le tourisme alternatif, McGehee (2002) tente de comprendre ce qui motive des voyageurs humanitaires à s'engager dans des mouvements sociaux à la suite de leur expérience à l'étranger. Elle constate que le fait d'avoir développé des réseaux sociaux avec d'autres volontaires partageant les mêmes idées augmente les chances d'implication sociale au retour. Ces réseaux agiraient comme source d'information, voire d'inspiration, et donc comme moteur de l'implication. Nous bonifions ici l'argument de McGehee pour inclure les bénéficiaires dans cette théorie du réseau.

20 Voir aussi l'étude de Wearing et Neil (2000), qui montre qu'à travers l'expérience humanitaire, les voyageurs cultivent leur conscience de soi et leur ouverture d'esprit, améliorent leur bien-être individuel de même que leur capacité à se distancier pour être plus critiques face à leur culture.

21 À noter que la façon dont est décrit l'Occident chez les expatriés correspond aux malaises de la modernité tels que décrits par Charles Taylor (1994, 1998), qui s'inscrivent ainsi dans la continuité historique de l'expressivisme romantique qui met l'accent sur une société moderne instrumentale et en perte de profondeur, à l'image de la « cage de fer » ou du « désenchantement du monde » de Max Weber. Pour plus de détails sur le lien entre l'expatriation et le sentiment d'aliénation face à la modernité et aux modes de vie qu'elle propose, voir Giguère (2009).

22 Pour une étude des « voyageurs professionnels », qui malgré le travail sur soi que suscite le voyage, réussissent à réintégrer leur vie quotidienne, voir Harrison (2006).

23 Dans son ouvrage *Le malaise de la modernité*, Taylor (1994) expose comment l'absence d'horizon commun typique de la société moderne a pour effet de renvoyer les gens à eux-mêmes. Il constate qu'en réponse aux malaises de la modernité, notre société favorise des alternatives telles que l'exil intérieur et la marginalisation. Cependant, à la lumière des récits d'expatriation des travailleurs humanitaires récoltés en Inde, on note qu'il s'agit pour eux d'une réponse individuelle, mais non égocentrique, à la crise de la signifiance. Se sentant aliénés au mode de vie occidental, ils choisissent de mettre leur moralité individuelle au service d'un autre lointain qui renforce positivement leur individualité, plutôt qu'en se repliant sur soi. En outre, ces projets d'expatriation ne se font pas dans le désengagement, comme le suggère Bauman (2000). Au contraire, les cas décrits ici montrent que l'engagement est durable, et que les réseaux sociaux ne sont pas tant révocables que transnationaux, inscrits dans plusieurs lieux à la fois.

24 Pour plus de détails sur le refus des expatriés humanitaires d'entrer en relation avec d'autres classes d'Indiens que les pauvres, voir Giguère (2009).

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Ugandan Women on the Move to Stay Connected: The Concurrency of Fixation and Liberation

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Abstract: Many Ugandan women are constantly moving around as part of their everyday efforts to make life continue. Based on fieldwork in southeastern Uganda in the past 15 years, examples are given of how women moving between relatives and temporary jobs obtain continuity in their lives while also attempting to break with previous relationships and contexts to embrace new situations and possibilities. It is suggested that we need to approach connection and disjunction, fixation and liberation as concurrent principles in the ongoing struggle for their own and their children's survival, in order to catch sight of the different kinds of networks and relationships that are at stake in people's lives.

Keywords: Uganda, women, mobility, collective identities, change, continuity

Résumé : De nombreuses femmes ougandaises sont en déplacement continuel, dans le cadre de leurs efforts quotidiens pour assurer leur survie. À partir de travail de terrain mené dans le sud-est de l'Ouganda au cours des 15 dernières années, l'auteure montre comment des femmes qui se déplacent entre les domiciles de parents et des emplois temporaires s'organisent pour obtenir une continuité dans leur vie, tout en essayant de s'affranchir de relations et de contextes antérieurs pour accueillir des situations et des possibilités nouvelles. L'auteure suggère que nous devons approcher la connection et la disjonction, la fixation et la libération comme des principes concurrents dans la lutte qu'elles mènent en continu pour leur propre survie et celle de leurs enfants, de manière à pouvoir nous donner un aperçu des différents types de réseaux et de relations qui sont en jeu dans la vie de ces gens.

Mots-clés : Ouganda, femme, mobilité, identités collectives, changement, continuité.

Introduction

The postmodern turn in anthropology resulted in a growing willingness to separate place and culture, and a shift in focus to transnational cultural flows (Olwig and Hastrup 1997). Nevertheless, as Amit and Rapport (2002) have noted, anthropologists continue to struggle to deal with fragmentation, dislocation and destabilization. In what follows, I will describe the movements of a Ugandan woman, Anna, and her adult daughters, and discuss how they can help us challenge the association of place with continuity and of movement with rupture and change. Many Ugandan women are constantly moving around as part of their everyday effort to make life continue. Their movements are part of an ongoing process where the maintenance of connections goes hand in hand with continued attempts to distance themselves from these connections. Their lives show us that we need to approach fixation and liberation as concurrent principles in order to catch sight of the different kinds of imagined and actual collectivities that are at stake in people's lives.

Place, Ethnicity and Kinship: From Categories to Life Trajectories

A mosaic of Bantu and Nilotic speaking groups inhabits the eastern part of Uganda. The area is known as an ancient migration corridor through which many people have passed. In 1995-96, I lived among the Jopadhola, one of the four ethnic groups, which at that time were part of Tororo district in the southeastern region of Uganda. In the years that followed, I did fieldwork regularly both in the same area and in other parts of Uganda and I have followed up on the lives of a number of members of the family that hosted me during the initial fieldwork.

All of the ethnic groups refer to themselves as distinct "tribes," and they each occupy a well demarcated physical area. The Jopadhola are surrounded by three Bantu and one other Nilotic group, all speaking distinctive languages. Historians, as well as the Jopadhola themselves,

consider that they originally migrated from the north, like other Nilotic speaking groups, following the Nile south. Their oral history of migration has been described by Ogot (1967a, 1967b) but is also readily narrated by anybody presently living in the area. As has often been suggested, much tribal—or ethnic—identity in Africa is largely a 20th century creation and colonial construction, and the ethnic groups of eastern Uganda are no exception (see for example, Southall 1970). Hansen (1977) describes how ethnicity has changed form and importance over the years as events unfolded in Uganda's politically turbulent post-independence history. Ethnic and regional identification in Uganda has been heavily influenced by the particular role of the Buganda kingdom in Central Uganda. The colonial power and the protestant mission made Buganda into the administrative and economic centre and with time, other Bantu kingdoms in the western part of the country also obtained special agreements with the colonial power (Hansen 1977:38). The northern and eastern parts of the country were inhabited by lineage-based groups with no centralized political system, who were forced to orient themselves towards the centre. Their relations with neighbouring groups eventually became less important to the emergence of their ethnic consciousness than their relations with the centre (Buganda) (Hansen 1977:37). An opposition developed between the privileged Westerners and the disadvantaged Easterners (and later also increasingly between the North and the South), and though the Jopadhola do recognize themselves as a distinctive "tribe" of Nilotic origin and speak a language closely related to the other groups in the North, their position as "Easterners" (as opposed to "Westerners") has long played a much larger role in everyday interactions and struggles for survival.

Milton Obote, who was the dominant political figure from independence in 1962 to the military coup of Idi Amin in 1971, proclaimed that his goal was to fight the problem of people putting the tribe above national consciousness. However, his attempts to struggle against the privileges of the Baganda and other Bantu kingdoms in the west, and his reliance on the support of the army, which had become identified with the northern Nilotic groups, signified a shift in power to the northern region in the course of his political reign (Hansen 1977:63). A conflict between North and South was taking shape and in many respects still exists. Idi Amin, who seized power in 1971 through a military coup, represented, on the one hand, the West Nile (the northwestern part of the country) and, on the other hand, Muslims all over the country (including Muslims in Baganda). He played on ethnic conflicts among the various—mostly Nilotic—groups in his

infamous and badly disciplined army, which brought terror to the country in the 1970s (Hansen 1977:93-111). Despite some initial popularity across the country, Amin found no more support among the Nilotic Jophadhola than he did among their Bantu neighbours in the east. In a sense, Southall (1988) argues, Amin's violent onslaught on Ugandan society simplified matters at the time. Many of the conflicting issues and fractions that plagued Obote's first civilian regime were temporarily expelled or obliterated. Complex issues were reduced to the stark question of life or death (Southall 1988:60). The same may be said of Obote's second term (1980-85, known as Obote II) when the population had been impoverished and a civil war was developing that ended up killing even more people than had died under Amin.

Various regional, political and economic factors feed into Jopadhola ethnic identity. At times, their Nilotic identity, as opposed to Bantu identity, is brought up in discussions of marriage rules, customs, language issues, et cetera, and Jopadhola women are proud of the strength and endurance of Nilotic women as compared to Bantu women. At the same time, however, I did not get the impression that they were eager to boast about this outside of Padholaland. I commonly heard them say that when outside of Tororo district they would downplay their Padhola origin, if their knowledge of Luganda (the language of the Baganda and the most commonly spoken Bantu language in the country) allowed them to do so. They had little interest in being seen as a backward "Easterner," or as a "Nilotic relative" of the even more backward and war-torn North, the origin of the majority of the soldiers, who brought terror and insecurity to the country in 1970s and much of the 1980s. People in the east, including the Jopadhola, were, in the 1990s, overwhelmingly grateful to Yoweri Museveni for restoring peace and order in the country, in spite of his Western and Bantu origin.

In recent years, there has been a growing nationwide dissatisfaction with Musevini and his reluctance to step back after 24 years in power. Desire for change and hopes for other presidential candidates among the Jopadhola have at times had ethnic (Nilotic) undertones. In addition, the process of decentralization presently being carried out in Uganda has contributed to a renewed focus on ethnicity. New districts are formed along ethnic lines. An ethnic association of the Jopadhola appeared in the 1990s and the first ever king of the Jopadhola was installed in 1999.[1] I will argue, however, that this ethnic association does not yet play any role in the life of the women I describe here. When they migrate to town, there is a tendency for them to develop personal networks along what

may seem like ethnic lines, but which could also be explained in terms of language and of kinship.

Like other Nilotic language groups, the Jopadhola are said to have a patrilineal and patrilocal segmentary lineage system. This became known to anthropologists through Evans-Pritchard's (1940) description of the Nuer segmentary lineage system, and the Jopadhola themselves, women as well as men, are happy to outline it for anybody inquiring about it. Territorial affiliation is expressed in a lineage idiom, and lineage affiliation is expressed in terms of territorial attachment. As Amit and Rapport (2002) point out, it can be tempting to converge informants' use of place, culture and community with the anthropologist's quest for people's ways of conceiving and constructing collectivity. It is thus necessary to pause for a moment and consider the role of descent theory in anthropology and in Ugandan lives.

Descent theory is conventionally traced to, among other things, Evans-Pritchard's published work on the Nilotic Nuer and discussions about descent and lineages dominated the study of social structure in British social anthropology for many years (Kuper 1982:71). Descent theory has been challenged from many sides and for various reasons over the years, in particular for its search for its emphasis on ideal types rather than actual social relations (Kuper 1982:82). Kuper cites Evans-Pritchard himself noting that: "the underlying agnatic principle is ... in glaring contrast to social actualities" (1982:83). In his attempt to outline the segmentary lineage system, Evans-Pritchard notes that, "they [the Nuer] see it primarily as actual relations between groups of kinsmen within local communities rather than as a tree of descent" (Evans-Pritchard 1940:202-203). Still it was the enduring principle that interested him, not the changing actualities.

The central issues in the debate over lineage theory have remained remarkably constant over the years. On the one hand, there is the question of the relationship between kinship (or descent) and territory, and on the other hand, there is the relationship between the "family" and the "clan" (Kuper 1982:72-73). This translates into the question: can we talk about descent groups as actual corporate groups or simply as an idiom for expressing common residence? Based on his work in the New Guinea Highlands, Strathern suggests that the question should not be whether descent groups exist, but to which levels of group structure "descent dogmas" are applied (Strathern 1968:37). Even if descent dogmas are regarded merely as an expression of common residence, the choice of this particular expression rather than alternative paradigms is still noteworthy (Strathern 1968:38).

Uganda is one of those places where descent dogmas are often drawn upon in attempts to express, explain and negotiate collectivity and solidarity, and are also often drawn upon as expressions of common residence. During my first year among the Jopadhola, I stayed in a place closely associated with one particular descent group. However, my observations of various kinds of relatives' movements in and out of this place made me increasingly interested in following these people's life trajectories over time and space. In the years that followed, I did so through life story interviews, regular but relatively short stays in Uganda, as well as through the exchange of letters and later also emails. As I will show below, this changed my focus from a place in Padholaland inhabited by a particular patrilineal clan, to kinship relations as coordinates in different locations among which people move. It also made me increasingly aware of the importance of not only patrilineal, but also matrilateral relations for understanding mobility.

Amit and Olwig note in the introduction of this volume, that in spite of all disjunctures and improvisations that are necessarily vested in changes of place, there is often a striking unwillingness to abandon the key paradigms that frame movements (for example, ethnicity and kinship). This seems to be the case even when many people's experiences appear to contradict important aspects of the premises they continue to claim. Amit and Olwig suggest that this may, at times, be due to the lack of power to challenge these prevailing tenets and to the investment that the migrant has placed in a particular construction of movement. In addition, continued adherence to certain indexical concepts may sometimes enable people to be more comfortable with a measure of improvisation and change than an open challenge to treasured principles would permit. They conclude that the basis for change may be the reassurance of the continued solidity of key institutions and paradigms. In what follows, I wish to take this point further by suggesting that local identities, ethnicity and kinship continue to constitute important elements in Ugandan women's lives, not only as reassurance, and not despite, but as a result of mobility.

Mobility and Continuity in Women's Lives and in Kinship Relations

Southern Uganda is overwhelming rural (85%) and densely populated. It is a region characterized by fairly good soils and reasonable rainfall twice a year. Even in pre-colonial times, rural population densities were high. In contrast to much of Central Africa, peasant-produced agricultural exports (cotton and coffee) encouraged Ugandans to remain in rural areas as producers (Whyte 1990;

Whyte and Whyte 2000). Whyte and Whyte (2000) suggest that the rural-urban contrast is not useful at all when trying to comprehend the larger field of social relations in which Ugandans move. An educated rural elite had existed in southeastern Uganda long before the 1970s and urban experiences and urban values are meaningfully expressed in rural areas. Even back in the 1960s when Whyte and Whyte started doing fieldwork in Uganda, it was not uncommon to move back and forth between town and village. However, married women then, as now, always expressed an attachment to their husband's country home, seeing their stay in town as temporary and having as their ultimate goal to establish themselves on their husband's land. Women without a husband are in a radically different situation. Their movements may be continuous and without a clear direction, as I will show in this analysis of Anna and her daughters.

During my initial fieldwork among the Jopadhola (1995-96), I lived in a homestead with the families of three brothers, which was surrounded by the homesteads of their "cousin-brothers" (i.e., paternal cousins). I shared a house with Anna, the sister of the brothers, and her two youngest daughters, then three and five years old. Anna was divorced and had returned to live on her father's land. The differences between the Nilotic marriage model and that of the inter-lacustrine Bantu groups in East Africa have often been discussed. Among Nilotic people, the woman is, in theory, transferred to her husband's group when she marries, bridewealth is relatively high and divorce practically

Figure 1: Map of Uganda. Reproduced by permission of the author.

impossible. A woman acquires her primary social identity from her roles as a wife and a mother, rather than as a sister and a daughter (Håkansson 1994; Obbo 1980; Southall 1960). As Anna said, when explaining it to me,

> For us Jopadhola, it is only something very serious, like murder in the family, that can make us divorce. Our women, they really endure marriages even if they are suffering. Bantu women, on the contrary, marry temporarily, and they just want to "eat" as much as possible of the man while they have him. We, the Jopadhola women, we want to build permanent homes in the [husband's] village. We know that we are going to stay for life.

In reality, divorce is also very common among the Jopahdola these days. More often than not, brideprice is not even paid and women move in and out of marriages without much interference from their relatives. Still, the ideal persists and is often used as a marker of ethnicity when comparisons are made between Nilotic and Bantu groups in the country.

There had been no murder in Anna's family. Still, she had decided back in the mid-1970s that she could not endure the suffering she encountered in her marriage and she left her husband. Prior to the divorce, she had given birth to three daughters and in the years that followed, had another four children with different fathers. The first week that I was staying with the family, Jane, her then 16-year-old daughter, turned up, asked for school fees and disappeared again. Later, Nelly, her first-born, arrived, stayed for a while, left her five-year-old daughter with Anna and disappeared again. At some stage, I realized that Anna's second-born, Catherine, now in her early 20s, had settled in our house with her four-month-old son. I first assumed she would disappear again to the—for me yet unknown—place that she and her sisters had come from and all returned to. But she did not. She remained in the village for as long as I did.

Six months after completing my fieldwork, I received a letter from Catherine in which she wrote:

> When all the food and money got finished, what I did was to take my son to my grandmother in Jinja and go looking for a way to help myself and the others in the village ... I got a job with Indians, but the salary was very little so I only stayed four months. Then my son got some problems with the stomach, and I went to uncle's place to ask him for money in order to take him to the hospital. I stayed with uncle for some few weeks, but then I got a job with an African family. Now I am back in the village with my mother but I don't think I can manage to stay for long since there is nothing for me to do here. [1997]
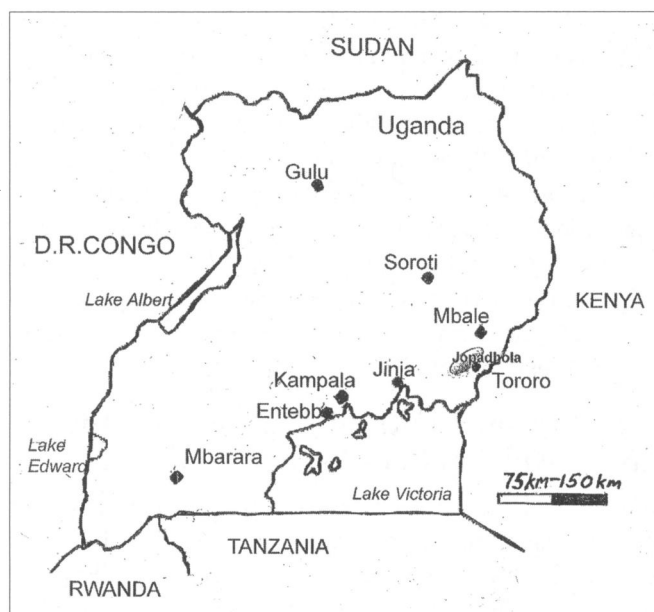
Catherine's journey between relatives and workplaces began at the time of her parents' divorce in the mid 1970s. She had stayed for almost a year in her maternal uncle's village while I was there, but as I could read in her letter, the journey recommenced after my departure. I had come to see Cathering as part of the place I studied, but thanks to her letters and the opportunity I got to keep in touch with the family network in the years that followed, I came to realize that the period she had spent in her maternal uncle's village was but one stop in an on-going journey.

When I decided to explore further the life trajectories of some of these mobile women, it struck me that their accounts were largely structured around their continuous movements among relatives. Significant events and turning points in their lives all took as their starting point "which relatives" they had lived with at the time and they made very little reference to the turbulent past decades of Ugandan history. Whyte and Whyte (2000) had a similar experience when they interviewed Banyole (the neighbouring group of the Jopadhola) about life during the 1970s and 1980s. With few exceptions (all of which concerned educated men living in town), they did not try to explain what happened and how things developed in those years. They did not see their lives as framed by political history or the divide between rural and urban lives. Political history was their own personal history of danger and loss and, in the case of women, it was usually described in terms of movements from home to husband's home. If disruptions or tragedies happened on the way, they were recounted as turning points in their personal space, not as examples of urban danger or political history (Whyte and Whyte 2000:8-9).

The following description of the movements of Anna and her daughters is based on the women's personal stories of moving between relatives, as well as what I learned and observed from living with, and staying in touch with, their relatives over the years.

The Mother

When Anna left her husband in the mid 1970s, she first went to stay with her mother who had divorced her husband when Anna was still a young girl. Her mother was now married to another man. Anna soon moved on and started staying with her mother's sister who had more land than she could manage to cultivate herself. Eventually Anna got a job as a schoolteacher in the nearby military barracks. When asked what it was like to work for Amin's soldiers, Anna replied:

> I know that they were not always polite to other people, but the good thing was that they were polite to

people working with them, and there in the barracks things were so cheap. Outside, things were scarce, but there they were plenty and cheap. So I could buy things from my salary, sell them outside the barracks and bring the money to my mother and my brother in the village who looked after my children.

Amin's regime was overthrown by a combination of Tanzanian and Ugandan forces in 1979. Anna had to flee from the barracks with the two children she had given birth to there. Their father, a soldier from the barracks, was killed by Tanzanian soldiers, "but in any case I had no plans of marrying him and he already had at least one wife back home," she said. "I was still enjoying being a free woman and I had already tasted life in a marriage with two wives." Anna began staying with another brother in the town of Tororo who worked for Ugandan railways. During the Oboto II years, she used her brother's house in Tororo as a base while "moving up and down the country buying and selling millet and sorghum," (i.e., trading on the black market). When asked about the insecurity of those years she said:

> When I was still in Tororo, thieves would attack me every now and then. They would come and steal my things. Afterwards, I heard rumours that my former husband was the one who brought those thieves to me, to make my life hard. But the good thing was that they never found me at home. I think they came three times in one year. That is when I decided to stop business and go to Jinja.

When peace and order was restored in the late 1980s, Anna lost her luck in business. When asked to explain why it became harder and whether conditions for doing business changed in those years, she returned to the story of her husband looting her things and making her lose a lot of money. Again and again, political and economic history was recounted as personal history.

Anna joined her mother in Jinja, a major town in the central part of the country. Her mother had been widowed and left with nothing and her husband's children from a previous marriage refused to care for their stepmother. She therefore had decided to try her luck in Jinja, where she made a living from cultivating a small piece of borrowed land when her daughter joined her. Brewing and selling millet beer eventually supplemented their income. The late 1980s and early 1990s are often described as a period of optimism, economic growth, political stability and openness (see for example, Parkhurst and Lush 2004) and this was indeed the case for many of Anna's relatives. But for Anna they were hard years. She had another two children with different fathers. They all lived

on the verge of starvation. Anna and her mother became increasingly dependent on the intake from their millet beer, and lived in what they later all described as total misery. "I even went mad due to hardship," she told me, and her brother in Kampala confirmed that in the end he picked up his sister, took her to Kampala where she took turns staying with him and one of her cousin-brothers (her mother's sister's son). When her condition started improving, her brother sent her back to their father's land in the village in eastern Uganda and she was still there when I arrived in 1995. "But I am only here temporarily," she often reminded me, "because a woman cannot die on her father's land. I have to move on." So she did. After I left she spent the next five to six years going back and forth between the urban and village houses of her three brothers in Kampala and Tororo respectively, as well as the homes of various matrilateral relatives around the country.

The Daughter

Catherine (the second born) was about three years old when Anna left her husband in the mid-1970s. Catherine and her two sisters at first remained with their father and his second wife since children belong to the father's clan. They say that they were so young that they hardly realized their mother was gone and they had no contact with her while she worked in the barracks. As they were getting older they realized that their stepmother was not their real mother and that she treated them differently than her own children. Catherine ran away together with Nelly, her older sister, and joined her mother, Anna, in Tororo where she was trading on the black market, which prospered during the years of political instability and civil war. For some time, the two sisters went back and forth between their father in the village and their mother's place (actually their mother's brother's place) in Tororo. According to Catherine, their father was accused of being a rebel and sent to prison for some time. She told me about the day the soldiers came to arrest her father:

> When we [Catherine and her two sisters] were at school, somebody told us that they had burnt our father. We were afraid that they would also burn us if we came close, but one of the teachers escorted us and we found that those who had burnt the house had already gone and taken our father with them ... Neighbours had seen them coming, very many, with bunkers, axes, digging sticks. They started beating our stepmother seriously, even our grandmother and aunt and the small children who were at home. They beat them very much. They poured petrol on our grass-thatched houses. They burnt the houses, caught the chickens and set them on

fire, caught the cows, set them on fire, the goats, everything. Cutting the mango fruits from the trees and leaving them all on the ground. Breaking all our plates. The village people gathered with the soldiers and took what they liked.

Catherine has no clear memory of the differences between the Amin and Obote years and she does not remember exactly when the incident took place or who was actually involved. She later told me that she had heard people in the family say that the arrest of her father and the destruction of his home had been organized by some of his cousin-brothers with whom he had a disagreement about land, and who had allied themselves with the soldiers. Catherine, like her mother, recounts the political story of Uganda as her personal story of loss and danger.

When the father got out of prison, he moved his family to the central part of the country. Once more, Catherine and Nelly ran away and joined their mother in Tororo. From then on they remained with their mother's family and lost contact with their father's family for many years. Anna had a cousin in Kampala with whom Catherine stayed for seven years:

> I was very happy to go to Kampala. I even thought I was going by airplane and that my uncle was very rich. I thought that now I would have a very happy life. People told me there were many nice things in Kampala like traffic lights and machines that make food. I even thought that God would be in Kampala and I wanted very much to be eating well and sleeping well. I also thought that soldiers, they were in the village, but in Kampala we would be safe—when actually it was worse there. At least in the village you can run, but in Kampala you just see the bullets flying in the air at night. And you have nowhere to go. And sometimes the soldiers came to uncle's house and looted his things. But he was never in prison for more than one day ... And I was happy there. They treated me like their own child. Uncle was a businessman and he used to go to London now and then. There were so many nice things in his house.

What Catherine mostly remembers from those years was that she had enough to eat and enough clothes to wear— and that she was still full of hope for a happy life. She was doing housework for the family and hoping that her uncle (her mother's cousin) would one day tell her that he could now afford to send her back to school. Or, that one day she would meet a rich man in his house who would want to marry her. Instead, one day after 1986—she remembers that it was after the takeover of Museveni—Catherine was asked to move on and she went to stay with her maternal grandmother and mother in Jinja. Catherine became

pregnant before she turned 20, which was the beginning of her trouble. She gave birth, was abandoned by the father, left her son with the grandmother, found housework in Kampala, got pregnant again, gave birth at her maternal uncle's place in Kampala, disappeared from there, turned up at a different uncle's place, went to the village of her mother's father's clan to stay in the house of the anthropologist for some time, and then, as her letter indicated, went back to town to search for new possibilities for housework and trading.

The Interconnectedness of Kinship and Mobility

Susan Whyte writes about life in Uganda that "people's social topographies are rich with coordinates in many different locations. Nor are these coordinates themselves necessarily stable" (In press). Daughters do not inherit land, but move to their husband's land—or search for other possibilities in town. Meanwhile, they retain close links to their natal family and often seek refuge there in times of need. Children may stay for shorter or longer periods with the father's or mother's family. Divorce and separation are common and the woman may go and stay with her parents or siblings elsewhere or remarry. Because of virilocality, sisters are dispersed. Men may have a home in the village as well as in town and move back and forth between these. A widow may leave her husband's family or decide to remain on his land. A divorced woman may return to her husband's land after his death. Young people go to school or work in town. In addition, Uganda has a fertility rate of 6.3 children per woman (Unicef 2010) and one man may have more than one wife. Hence, each person has many siblings and cousins to go to in times of need. Catherine and her sisters also had a social topography with many coordinates, and though they had found life to be difficult, they did not—as they themselves phrased it—end up as beggars in the streets:

> After giving birth to my son I was saying to myself that I would just be walking in the streets of Kampala. If I see a European then I tell him all my problems, then maybe he can help me. Again, I thought, if I walk carelessly, then a car can knock me and the driver will have to give me some money, which can help me with the children. And again, I thought of wearing bad, bad clothes like someone who is just very poor and then start begging. All those thoughts were there ... But then I thought that if one of the uncles would find me there, I would be very ashamed. Also, the uncles are good and they have helped me a lot. But still I have found life difficult.

Catherine and her sisters were the third generation of women who were not properly married and they were indeed particularly vulnerable. But they were not the only ones in that situation and were not even the worst off. Most families have women who have failed to settle in marriages and Catherine and her sisters were at least fortunate to have several fairly prosperous mother's brothers. They had all been to school for somewhere between five and ten years. They had places to go to when food got too scarce, when a job finished, when a child needed to be taken care of so that the mother could take a new job, et cetera. They had people to inherit clothes from and who had access to land where food was grown. They had maternal uncles with occasional access to cash and thus to health services. They were not formally entitled to the resources of their father's or their mother's father's clan, but their relatives were still, to some extent, morally obliged to help them out. By moving around and taking turns staying with different relatives, they were entering into concrete everyday interactions with these relatives, reminding them of their existence and situation, and hence of their relatives' moral obligation to assist them. They could not settle with their fathers, brothers or maternal uncles permanently. They could not even stay for very long at one time or conflicts would arise and complaints would be made about their inability to find a way to settle down. They had to be on the move and on the search for a more permanent solution. But as long as they had not come up with such a solution, moving between relatives ensured some kind of continuity in their lives and in their living standards—and made it possible to keep alive their hope that one day it would be different.

Anna's brothers were constantly referring to the marginal position of Anna and her daughters, but they also made many references to the fact that "we are one. We are there for each other," as one of the most commonly heard clan songs goes. On the last night of my year-long fieldwork in the village, a celebration was held for Catherine's 12-month-old son. His upper teeth had appeared before the lower teeth, which is *juok* (extraordinary) and hence dangerous for the child as well as his relatives unless it is commemorated and sacrifices are made to the ancestors (see Mogensen 2002). The paternal and maternal grandmothers had to join hands in carrying out this ritual. The paternal grandmother, however, was nowhere to be found. The father had run off to Kenya without introducing Catherine to his family. But by playing around with kin relations, Catherine's aunt became the paternal grandmother of her son. Catherine's cousin was named after their common grandfather, and since you can jokingly call your grandfather "husband," this cousin could—for the

sake of the ritual—be said to be Catherine's husband, hence this cousin's mother would be the paternal grandmother of Catherine's son. I became the maternal grandmother. I had been adopted into the clan as her mother's sister, and was thus a classificatory mother of Catherine and hence grandmother of her son. After completing the meal, we all sang "we are one, one family. We are there for each other." I left Uganda the next day. A couple of months later Catherine had moved on, first to her grandmother's place in Jinja, later to a job with Indians, and then to her uncle's place in Kampala.

The celebration of the little boy's upper teeth is but one example of a common tendency for family gatherings, discussions, and celebrations to involve those members of the family who are not part of the patrilineal clan, but whose lives are brought to the centre of attention and responsibility and call for the need to sing the song about "being one, being there for each other." "Dogmas of descent" are drawn upon in creative ways to express solidarity and to activate kinship relations. Thus, through their movements, women like Catherine and her sisters create continuities in their lives as well as contribute to a sense of cohesion within the family. One may say that in this context, kinship is that which makes mobility possible and mobility is that which makes kinship come alive.

Moving Away—Towards New Possibilities

Anna divorced her husband back in the 1970s because, as she related,

> He was abusing me and beating me. When he heard things about me, which he didn't like he could just grab anything, a table, a chair, anything and start beating me. He was not a patient person. Also he refused to let me continue my work as a teacher, saying that I was running around with other men when I was supposed to be at work. So I decided to leave him.

Now, 40 years later, it continues to be common that men beat their wives. Men as well as women accept men's need to discipline their wives. Women can even refer to beating as an expression of men's love for them. In spite of this, Anna clearly shows us that there is a limit as to how much beating is acceptable. Her husband's beating was too much. And he stopped her from working and having her own income. So she left him.

As Amit says, many movements are not undertaken with the intention of carrying along relationships formed in one context into a new situation, but with the intention of emphasizing separation, and reconfiguration (2002:35). Anna's movement away from her husband is definitely one of these, and when I left the house in the village and

started following the paths of Anna and her daughters, I increasingly caught sight of their attempts to move away, not just out of need or because they had been thrown out, but in a conscious attempt to effect distance, cause a rupture and seek new possibilities in life. Their movements were not just attempts to maintain family connections but at times (and sometimes simultaneously) attempts to break with previous relationships and contexts and embrace new situations and possibilities.

"Those were good years," Anna said when describing the early 1980s when she "moved up and down the country" buying and selling millet, sesame and cassava and never stayed more than a night or two in one place. During that period, the three oldest of her daughters were still with their father (her ex-husband) and the two who were born in the barracks were looked after by Anna's mother. Eventually three of her children ended up with maternal uncles in Kampala:

> I was a free woman. Nobody could tell me what to do. Not my husband. Not my brothers. I didn't even have a steady lover. I didn't want to depend on anybody. And I was doing well. I could provide for my children. Buy them clothes and school books. Those were the years of war. But for me they were good years.

While the country as a whole suffered from total economic breakdown, the black market prospered in Tororo, well situated near the Kenyan border. In addition Tororo District was not directly caught in the conflicts and fights of the 1980s. Anna managed to take advantage of this situation and to enjoy her position as a "free woman."

Catherine and her sisters were painfully aware of their vulnerability due to their lack of fathers and husbands, but they had no intention of moving back to the village on a more permanent basis, nor of marrying a village man. As Catherine explained, "men in the village cannot be trusted. They say they love you. Then they beat you up and marry a second wife. And all you can do is to work in the field and see your skin go dry and your clothes get worn out." Getting settled in marriage and thereby obtaining access to land was their mother's and uncles' hope for them, not their own. They saw the town as a place of hardship but also of opportunity. They hoped that maybe next month or next year they could start saving money to pay for a tailoring or secretarial course that would enable them to get a job where they could earn even more money. They wanted to move ahead, achieve different and better lives, and if possible, get far away.

In the 1970s, Christine Obbo (1980) studied single, unattached, migrant women in Uganda and the stereotypes attached to them. Ethnographies had, until then,

mostly contained information on women as mothers, daughters, sisters and wives, and men were portrayed as building up power bases by using women to weave kinship, friendship and marriage networks (Obbo 1980:1). In addition, public opinion in the Uganda of the early 1970s tended to maintain that the good woman should stay at home in the village and that any attempt at self-reliance and economic independence was a challenge to male supremacy. There was a tendency to regard all urban women as sexually loose (Obbo 1980:9). It is now far more common and accepted for women to have a job in town but women are still under pressure from male relatives to settle in marriages, or if unmarried, to settle with relatives in rural areas rather than becoming "loose women" in town. But as Obbo shows, even prior to the 1970s, whether married or single, Ugandan women have always had strategies for achieving economic autonomy and improving their social and economic conditions. Economic autonomy was the prevailing concern of women everywhere in town when Obbo carried out her study in the 1970s and many of them questioned male supremacy as well as the associated myths of the inevitability of marriage and the undesirability of illegitimate children (1980:5).

In Uganda, physical movement is considered a change in one's social position for men as well as for women, and is a crucial part of one's development toward adulthood. Some young men just move to a different hut on their father's land and some women move to their husband's place. But others move even further away to go to school or work and hence change their social position (Meinert 2005). In addition to being a crucial step toward adulthood, migration is and has for long been a way to escape obstacles and for women to create more options for themselves (Obbo 1980:5). And it seems that women, now even more than men, seek to move ahead by moving to town. As mentioned above, the rural-urban contrast is not useful in southern Uganda and urban experiences were meaningfully expressed in rural places even back in the 1960s (Whyte and Whyte 2000). Reliable population censuses were non-existent in the 1970s and 1980s, but there seems to be a general agreement among scholars that urban migration declined in those years, and possibly even changed direction for some years, due to the insecurity in town and the fact that the relative value of salaries declined as a result of the economic downturn (Whyte 1990:134). In the 1990s, urban migration began growing again, and according to Wallman (1996), increases in the female population in Kampala had been significantly higher than in the male population even during the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, when censuses were again carried out, there was an excess of girls and young women over

boys and young men. In the city as a whole, the difference persisted up to ages 20-24, and in the market areas it persisted into mature adult age groups (Wallman 1996:49-50). Wallman suggests several reasons for this. Girls and young women, sometimes as young as 8 or 9 (like Catherine), are sent to town to do housework in the homes of their kin or other families (Wallman 1996:70). Orphan girls are therefore more readily assimilated into town homes where they are more useful than boys. Young girls who drop out of village schools are more likely to go to town to trade than boys, who are more likely to remain or be sent back to their father's village. But some girls also go to town to attend school. School fees in town are higher but girls are often in a better position than boys to make a little money on the side (for example, trading, prostitution or in sugar daddy relationships) (Wallman 1996:70-71). In addition, women simply tend to do better in the informal urban economy. There is more work that women are expected to do, or are prepared to do, in the local informal economy governing life in Kampala suburbs (Wallman 1996:229, 235). In Kamwokya, the suburb studied by Wallman (and where Catherine and her sisters lived on and off for years), 25% of all households had no male adults. Formal marriage was rare though it remained the ideal for some, but others preferred single mother status because few men could or would take economic responsibility for children. Control over resources was greater for any women living alone than residing with a partner. Better off women living with a partner often had less personal autonomy than even poorer, single women (Wallman 1996:228-229), which is the situation also described by Obbo (1980). Neither Obbo, nor Wallmann have specific numbers concerning the Jopadhola, but the migration patterns described by the women I followed seem to reflect the general tendencies described by these authors.

Catherine and her sisters are, thus, not the only women constantly attempting to "move away" to seek economic independence. They hope to find a job that would allow them to save up money which could be used to take a course which could give them an even better job, and ultimately, if in any way possible, a ticket out of the country—a whole new life. Catherine had hoped to marry the father of her second child and move to Kenya with him, but he disappeared before she told him she was pregnant. She added, after having described her desire to get far away from everything she knew and her sadness about the disappearance of her Kenyan lover,

> Anyway, to leave the country, you need a passport. And in order to have a passport you need a birth certificate,

and I do not think my mother kept mine. She says, she thinks, the white ants ate it many years ago.

A ticket out of the country was out of reach for Catherine as it is for most women, and obstacles of various kinds often interrupt the search for opportunities and force the women to turn once more to relatives for assistance.

In 2001, I spent a couple of months in Uganda and during this stay, Catherine asked me to help her get tested for HIV. After testing positive, she told me to inform one of her maternal uncles of her HIV status, hoping this would ensure his support in the time she had left to live. A few weeks later, she was told to leave his home. The explosive spread of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s has added to the struggles and suffering of Ugandans. Uganda is, however, at the same time often described as an HIV success story and as one of the first countries in Africa where prevalence seems to have declined (Parkhurst and Lush 2004:1916). It was also one of the first countries in the developing world to face the challenges of antiretroviral treatment.

At the time of Catherine's HIV test in 2001, antiretroviral treatment at very high prices had started becoming available in Uganda. The prices had, however, begun to decline dramatically and become almost realistic for some people with regular incomes, like Catherine's uncle. But he could not afford to purchase medicine for everybody in the family network.[2] As her uncle said to me: "I could not help her, or even let you or my brothers help her, because imagine how many of her sisters and others like them that would be knocking on the door the next day with an AIDS diagnosis, asking me to help them, or to make you help them." Around 2004, antiretroviral treatment started becoming widely available for free. Presently, however, it is expected that there will be a flat-lining of donor contributions. Consequently, those already on treatment may be able to continue accessing drugs, while others will not be able to enter treatment programs, Hence, the challenges faced by Catherine's family in 2001 are likely to once again become part of many people's lives.

Catherine's problems no longer made her relatives sing the song of "being one and being there for each other." She had become a threat to the family's collective identity and she had threatened continuity in her own life by demanding too much of her relatives. Catherine had often tried to "move away" from her kin relations in search of possibilities. But she had not anticipated the ruptures caused by her sickness. My involvement in the situation and the ethical dilemmas arising from it made me follow her and her sisters closely in the coming years and this

cast a new light on what I had previously learned about their lives. I started paying more attention to the many kinds of collectivities—other than those drawing on descent and kinship—that they tried out in their attempt to move on and to stay alive.

Moving Beyond Kinship: The Search for Other Kinds of Connections

When I started visiting Catherine and her sisters in the dark, muddy alley behind one of Kampala's major market places, I realized that in between their stays with various relatives, they attempted to cope without these relatives through other kinds of collectivities. They built up their own personal networks in urban settings through which they found housing, jobs as maids, ideas for businesses, capital to start such business, lovers, friendship, et cetera. Often such networks took their starting point in kin relationships, for example, siblings and cousins from both the mother's and father's side, or in common ethnic affiliation, but they stretched beyond these to neighbors, business partners, friends, fellow churchgoers, et cetera, from all kinds of ethnic backgrounds. As discussed by Amit, such networks are, especially in complex urban settings, likely to extend across many different categories and situations and this form of social connection is highly sensitive to the vagaries and life cycles of interpersonal relationships. They require intensive, self-conscious and constant efforts to be maintained (Amit 2002:23). It is also my impression, from following the lives of these sisters, that their personal networks were constantly fluctuating and highly ephemeral—except for those relationships that overlapped with the more enduring kin groups. Still, for much of their lives these personal relationships played a much larger role in terms of concrete interactions than did their kinship relations.

Some of the most important but also highly ephemeral relationships in the lives of Anna and her daughters grew out of their involvement with the "born again," or "Balokole" movement, which has experienced phenomenal growth since the late 1980s. There is no precise data on the number of members in these congregations nor on the ethnic composition of the Balokole movement (Gusman 2009:69, 80).[3] This East African Christian revival movement requests of its members that they reject all kinds of "traditional beliefs" and any involvement in rituals having to do with spirits and ancestors (Cattell 1992). In practice this means rejecting involvement in most family events. On the last day in the village, when we were celebrating Catherine's son's upper teeth, we did so secretly. Anna was not informed that we were celebrating the juok of her grandchild, but when she nonetheless realized that

this was the case, she walked furiously into the midst of our gathering and pulled her two small daughters out of there. She lived on the land of her brothers but she did not participate in the family celebration. She had major conflicts with her sisters-in-law who did not feel respected by her and, in addition, years of experience had taught her that her relatives were not there for her the way she would have liked them to be. After having been brought to the village by her brothers, she increasingly turned towards the Balokole movement and established a personal, but highly ephemeral, network through the various churches in the movement, which she attended, lived in or even helped organize over the years. Her brothers eventually bought her a small piece of land, too far from their homestead for her to have daily fights with their wives, but close enough for them to keep an eye on her well-being. In 2001, Nelly, Anna's oldest daughter, died of what everybody talked about as AIDS. Her body was brought to her mother's place in the village to be buried and it was people from the church who helped her:

> I could not do anything. My friend [from the church] hired a *boda boda* [bicycle taxi] even though she wasn't even related to me. Then another one came to sweep my house. I had nothing to wear and she took her very nice *gomas* [traditional women's wear] from the suitcase and gave it to me. She dressed me. She gave me her handkerchief. I didn't sleep for days. I was just like a mad person but they made sure that my daughter was buried properly.

The church came to play an immense role in Anna's life and supported her in crucial moments of hunger and suffering. But each time I returned to the country she seemed to be part of a new congregation or be attached to a new group of people in the church.

After testing HIV positive, Catherine joined TASO (The AIDS Support Organization) an internationally accredited non-governmental organization that since the late 1980s has provided support to HIV-infected Ugandans (Kaleeba 2004). It has been suggested that programs like TASO, which work for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, create a sense of belonging to a national or international polity in which citizens have health entitlements (Nguyen 2005). While this may be true for some very active members of such programs, it was not the case for Catherine. TASO became a place where, at times, she spent long days waiting in lines and, if lucky, ended up with treatment for some of her opportunistic infections. She appreciated the medicine she got by the end of the day, but she never felt like a member of a larger network or like a citizen with health entitlements. Now that anti-

retroviral treatment has become widely available, people who are HIV positive increasingly become members or "clients" of treatment programs. Like many other connections in the women's lives, relationships with health workers and other members of the same treatment program are of crucial importance at certain moments, but are also highly ephemeral.

Catherine died of AIDS in 2004. I visited her sister, Jane, a few months later. She worked in Kampala as a maid in the house of a pastor in one of the Balokole churches. Jane handed over some letters to me that Catherine had written but never managed to send. In one of them Catherine wrote:

> I thank God for my uncles and their wives. They have helped me a lot and tried so hard to help me get the medicine. Only that because of money they are failing. But they make sure that I eat and they take very good care of me. I am so happy that I have them. I don't know what I would have done without them. [2004]

"I don't know why she writes that," Jane said. "It isn't true. Everybody refused to help. They just dumped her in front of my house whenever she had been to see them for assistance." There had also been a lot of confusion about the money I sent earlier that year in order to start Catherine on antiretroviral treatment. Somehow it never appeared or did not appear where Catherine and her sisters expected it to appear. Jane felt betrayed and was determined to cut off all contact with her maternal uncles.

The following year, things had changed yet again. Jane had met a man through the church and convinced him that he had to pay bridewealth for her, but that it should be paid to her maternal uncles since she never knew her father who had been a soldier in the military barracks where her mother taught in the 1970s. She also persuaded one of the more prosperous uncles to pay for her wedding. The uncle proudly wrote to me that finally one of his sister's daughters was getting properly married and that he had paid for her wedding. He included a CD of photos he had taken of the—so it seemed to me—rather extravagant wedding. Clearly, they were trying to reestablish a sense of "being there for each other" in spite of the disruption in their relationship caused by the death of Jane's two sisters, Nelly and Catherine. Soon after the wedding, with the help of the pastor in their church, Jane and her husband took out passports and started touring Africa by visiting churches of the same congregation in other countries. "To do what?" I asked her in an email. "Just to go travelling," she replied, and thereby Jane underlined for me again a repeated pattern in which her own life and that of her family members took shape

Concurrency of Fixation and Liberation

The lives of Anna and her daughters suggest that mobility does not a priori entail either fragmentation or collectivity. Rather, these are two sides of the same coin. Georg Simmel's dialectic approach, his stress upon both connections and tensions between individual and society, and his recognition that human relations are characterized by ambivalence, can, I suggest, help us move beyond the association of place with continuity and movement with change, and to conceptualize fragmentation and collectivity, fixation and liberation as concurrent principles (1950:402-408).

Before being tested for HIV, Catherine had asked me to accompany her to a diviner whom she wished to consult about her lack of luck in life. She needed to find out who in her family had bewitched her: prevented her from getting properly married and obtaining a good job, caused her to become sick all the time, et cetera. The responsibility was placed on her father's family, but she left the consultation without feeling convinced she had been given the right answer. When we were walking back together, she suddenly started laughing. "While we were there, the diviner even wanted to make me believe that somebody had done something to you. Like cursed you or bewitched you. Isn't that funny?" "Why is it so funny?" I asked. "Witchcraft does not work on white people, you know that," she answered. My repeated attempts to make her explain in further detail why that is so resulted in a slightly offended Catherine, who thought I kept asking because I did not agree with what seemed evident to her: even though I had been given a clan name, it was not a real clan name and I could not use it to curse or bewitch anybody, nor could I be affected by other people trying do so to me. I was in Simmel's terms a "stranger" and of a very different kind than other family members: the kind who is too different to be a threat, but who often is met with the most surprising openness about things (such as the fear of being HIV positive) that would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person (1950:402-408). I was somebody with whom Catherine tried to establish a different kind of connection in her attempt to deal with the uncertainties of life, and as she would later learn, her impending death.

Simmel uses "the social form of the stranger" to discuss the concurrency of closeness and distance, and of fixation and liberation. By stranger, Simmel does not mean the one who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. The stranger is the potential wanderer: although she (or he) has not moved on, she has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. The inhabitants of Sirius, he says, are not really strangers. They are beyond far and near. The stranger, on the contrary, is an element of the group itself and his (or her) position as a full-fledged member involves both being outside the group and confronting it. And, as Simmel continues, if wandering is the liberation from every given point in space, and thus the conceptual opposite to fixation at such a point, the sociological form of the "stranger" presents the unity, as it were, of these two characteristics (1950:402)—of fixation and liberation. Simmel's notion of the stranger as a social form casts light on the constellation of closeness and distance which characterizes the role of the anthropologist in the field and thus my relationship with Catherine. We may, however, take his point about the concurrency of fixation and liberation even further by looking at other kinds of ambivalence and strangeness.

Wives in a patrilineage have often been discussed as an element of the group confronting the group. Fortes (1969:235-236) and Lindholm (1982:60) describe how incoming wives confront the men of the group in a continuous struggle for power in order to gain a position of dominance in their new homes, while maintaining their ties with their natal lineage. Anna and her daughters may be said to confront their natal lineages due to their lack of status as wives. More generally speaking, Catherine showed me—through her fear of having been bewitched by someone in her family—that it is often the people with whom you are closest, that you fear the most. It is those with whom you are connected, on whom you depend, that can hurt you the most. And at times, you need to separate yourself (or protect yourself) from their impact on you. The ambivalence inherent in kinship relations is expressed through the idiom of witchcraft in most African contexts. As Fortes further noted in "Kinship and the Social Order," it is as if marriage and warfare are thought of as a single constellation. Quarrelling is inevitable among kin and especially among members of the same family, as the many instances of witchcraft suspicions show (1969:234-235).

As discussed earlier, we should, however, not reduce women's lives to their kinship status or the absence of their status as wives. They try to create lives for themselves by distancing themselves from their status as sisters, daughters and wives. But in the dark alleys behind Kampala's markets, and in the ever changing congregations of the Balokole movement, they are also potential

wanderers who have not yet moved on. Their relationships in these contexts are intense and, at times, are a matter of life and death, but they are usually short-lived.

Anna lived on her brothers' land while trying to separate herself from them through her involvement in the Balokole movement. Her daughters were dependent on their relatives in their father's and mother's clans and they were given assistance by these as long as they kept a proper distance. If they got too close to their relatives, for example by attempting to settle permanently among them, or by demanding too much from them, they risked damaging their relationship with them. They had to effect a partial separation from these relatives in order to be able to maintain their connection with them. And they had to make use of their connection to them in their ongoing attempts to distance themselves, move away, and create whole new lives for themselves. Life was an ongoing attempt to maintain connections while also distancing oneself from these—to have a fixed point but also to try to move on.

Conclusion

In this article, I have described the movements that Anna and her daughters made use of in their struggle for survival. They attempted to stay connected and simultaneously separate themselves from relatives and others in order to establish other kinds of connectedness. They were on the move in order to obtain and maintain unity with their relatives as well as with other members of their networks, while at the same time they used these movements to obtain distance, individuality, change and a different life. Kinship is an important—but not the only—kind of connectedness at stake in these women's lives. When it comes to concrete social interactions and actual collectivity, it is not just the patrilineal, but also the extended bilateral family network which is drawn upon, as well as more personal networks arising from individuals' efforts to move on in life. Still, paradigms of collectivity, such as kinship, continue to constitute an important and real element in Ugandan women's lives, not despite, but as a result of mobility.

I suggest that once we approach place and mobility, continuation and change, not as contradictions but as concurrent principles, we can begin catching sight of the complex interweaving of the many different kinds of connectedness that are at stake in people's lives.

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Acknowledgments

Notes

1　See flagspot.net/flags/ug-pad.html for further information on the ethnic association of the Jopadhola.
2　See Mogensen 2009 for a discussion of the dilemmas faced by Ugandan families due to antiretroviral treatment.
3　According to widespread opinion in the Ugandan media, Pentecostal Charismatic Churches attract about 15 % of the Christian part of the population, the Roman Catholic Church about 45%, and the Anglican Church about 30%. However, the Christian circle composed by born-again Christians is wider than these data indicate because one can find born again Christians (Balokole) in the Church of Uganda too (Gusman 2009:80-81).

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Ethnography and *An* Ethnography in the Human Conversation

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Abstract: What transforms the process of ethnography endowing it with its thing-like, modal character as an ethnography? This article examines how ethnography becomes an ethnography on the one hand, through the manipulation of descriptive and analytical diversity and, on the other, by way of the ambiguation (and disambiguation) of authorial agency. The purification of ethnography as an ethnography mimics some of the effects of the scientific laboratory while introducing new complications.

Keywords: ethnography, an ethnography, diversity, ambiguating authorship

Résumé : Qu'est-ce qui transforme le processus de l'ethnographie pour lui conférer un caractère modal, objectal, en tant qu'une ethnographie. Cet article examine comment l'ethnographie devient une ethnographie d'un côté, par la manipulation de la diversité descriptive et analytique et de l'autre, en passant par l'ambiguïsation (et la désambiguïsation) du rôle de l'auteur. La purification de l'ethnographie en une ethnographie imite certains des effets du laboratoire scientifique tout en introduisant de nouvelles complications.

Mots-clés : ethnographie, une ethnographie, diversité, ambiguïsation du rôle de l'auteur

In the 20th century, the ethnography introduced a mode of showing characteristics of sociocultural difference comparable to Boyle's success in making visible properties of a vacuum with his air pump in the 17th (Schaffer and Shapin 1985; Latour 1993). If the last 50 years of debate have taught us not to confuse the imaginative and analytical world of an ethnography with a concrete entity, "society," we are still learning how to build conceptual frames for other modes of human possibility. As Overing (1985) puts it, the most difficult intellectual terrain lies between relegating the others' knowledge to nonsense or elevating it to poetry. Indeed, we are still catching up with many of the constructional features of how the ethnography itself works as a form of knowledge.

Central to the 1980s reappraisal of ethnography was the task of making apparent ethnography's novelistic-literary-rhetorical scaffolding (Thornton 1992). However, the *Writing Culture* intervention opened the door to other intellectual concerns too, particularly regarding the "complexity and scale" of ethnography as a form of knowledge (Strathern 1995). And recognition of the force of these distinct critiques is gathering pace as we debate what an ethnography is not. As we argue here, an ethnography is not, for instance, simply the empirical-holistic analysis of how individuals constitute parts of a specified social whole (Strathern 1992). Nor is it merely another kind of novelistic or fictional representation (Gay y Blasco and Wardle 2007, Narayan 2008). At the same time, Marcus has recently suggested that we should

> take the emphasis off the monograph as we have known it. Monographs are more interesting as symptoms or indices of transformation and change. The form is bound to change further, perhaps even go out of existence, given the present contexts of publishing and new information technologies. [in Rabinow et al. 2008:97]

Hence, current ideas about what ethnography is, what *an* ethnography is, have departed from the image of

ethnography as a book to be read. But there clearly remains an expectation that, as Rabinow argues, the ethnography should continue to be understood as an "exemplar"; an instance or "case" to which "casuistic" reasoning can be applied (Rabinow et al. 2008:102).

When we wrote *How to Read Ethnography* (2007) we did not explicitly distinguish between ethnography and *an* ethnography. Our aim here, by contrast, is precisely to draw attention to that distinction. We consider that recent debates and revisions entitle (and should encourage) anthropologists to ask the question anew: what is *an* ethnography? What transforms the process of ethnography endowing it with its thing-like, modal character as *an* ethnography? What is the ethnographic case expected to achieve when distinguished from the practices out of which it emerges? And how do we, as anthropologists, and others outside the field, recognize and evaluate the effects and achievements of *an* ethnography as opposed to ethnography-as-process? Rather than limiting ourselves to particular sub-genres of ethnography or recent examples, we deliberately explore instances that span the history of ethnographic reportage.

Aspects of the Scale and Coordination of An Ethnography Versus Ethnography

Given that our primary concern is to explore the point of transition between ethnography and *an* ethnography, it is immediately necessary to acknowledge the great divergence, particularly in terms of scale, concerning what may be considered an ethnography. An ethnography can be a small, rough-hewn conversationally framed instance, or it can be a 400 page, finely tuned elaboration. Likewise, an ethnography, as developed by anthropologists, has powers of condensation and expansion that are rather striking, to say the least, when compared to the standards of representativeness expected elsewhere in social science. And, if you read many ethnographies, then one ethnography can appear initially to have little more than a vague family resemblance to another. We argue otherwise though; there exist common intellectual problems to forming an ethnography that are relatively independent of the overtly diverging styles of ethnography (Gay y Blasco and Wardle 2007).

Our contention is that ethnographies are considered successful, and indeed are able to dent anthropological and interdisciplinary consciousnesses, when they manage to create convincing thought experiments—self-sustaining reticulated imagined time-spaces in which alternative human possibilities are explored analytically. This is not to say that ethnographies do not depend on and establish true knowledge, evidence, fact; rather, that ethnography

is premised on a characteristic mode of reasoning. This mode, built from comparative and relational patterning gives ethnography its distinctiveness and its power—the power to provoke and to liberate our conversation about human possibilities from routinized common knowledge. In order to be acknowledged as ethnographic, however, this comparative and relational reasoning has to be moulded by certain recognizable organizational techniques, particularly by well-established conventions of spatio-temporal abstraction and presentation that run across distinctions of school and style within our discipline. The conventions deployed by ethnographers have been intensified over time by distinction to other social science approaches and many features have achieved a taken-for-granted or implicit status. These parameters are accepted by readers because of assumptions they hold about the answerability of the ethnographer for her knowledge.

The idea that ethnography has conventionalized spatio-temporal limits should hardly come as a surprise—every undergraduate is taught about the synchronic move that initiated modern socio-cultural anthropology as a way of analyzing social life. More recently we have recognized the importance of the island analogy—society is like an island—as having had profound significance in how ethnography acquired its distinctiveness as a mode of reasoning (Kuklick 1996). At its loosest, ethnography is the analysis of the social and cultural life of an aggregate of people as if their interactions and communications were coordinated along logical, or at least quasi-logical, lines (Firth 1951:2). By setting "self-imposed" boundaries around, or localizing the space and time of, the social arena, ethnography achieves a certain degree of separation or abstraction from the outflow of human relations (Candea 2007). The metaphors used by two radically different thinkers, Gellner and Strathern, come together on this point: Gellner talks of ethnography in terms of a "balance sheet," Strathern uses the analogy of ethnography as a "hologram" (Gellner 1987:125; Strathern 1991). Of course there are very trenchant differences of emphasis here but in both cases the suggestion is of a reticulated form that has both spatial and temporal coherence; specifically, a hologram is a process of assessment combined as a single moment, as is a balance-sheet.

Concern about how ethnography confuses its intellectual constraints with the social reality it studies runs right through the relatively short history of the discipline. Probably the first significant statement of the problem comes in Gregory Bateson's 1936 ethnography *Naven* (anti-ethnography might be a better term). Bateson's overriding concern is to make apparent—borrowing Whitehead's phrase—the "fallacy of misplaced concrete-

ness" involved in conflating ethnography as an intellectual apparatus with society understood as a functioning entity (Bateson 1958:263; Wardle 1999). It is significant in this regard that Firth (surely one of the strongest functionalist contributors to the image of society as analogous to an island) came quite rapidly to assert the purely heuristic character of "society":

> Social scientists are usually said to study a society, a community, a culture. This is not what they observe. The material for their observation is human activity. They do not even observe social relationships; they infer them from physical acts. The anthropologist as observer is a moving point in a flow of activity. [1951:22]

Leach picks up this critique (largely without acknowledging Bateson's contribution) in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954). Closer to the present, Strathern's jettisoning of the term "society" draws explicitly on Leach (Strathern 1990).

What we have learnt, then, is that we do not need a concrete doppelganger, "society" or "culture," to exist for ethnography to do its work conceptually. And, by and large, the story we can tell in this regard is one of increasing de-concretization and sophistication: when constructing ethnographies anthropologists are no longer dependent on measuring up to the image of a "small-scale" society (whatever that is). They can work within the schematic constraints of an ethnography without having to claim that wider fields of relations do not exist or are irrelevant. Significantly, an ethnography can be expanded or contracted, in terms of detail and analysis, without it ceasing to be the same object.

Again, it is noteworthy that one strand of the postmodern critique involved contrasting the fact of global movement with the "sedentarist metaphysics" that underpinned ethnographic knowledge (Clifford 1998; Malkki 1992). In the long term, it transpires that "movement" and "the global" do not necessarily pose the kind of threat to ethnography that these arguments presupposed (Cook et al. 2009; Mintz 1998; Tsing 2005). Having unlocked ethnography from its concern with the small-scale we are able, for instance, to envisage what might have seemed paradoxical not long ago, namely, "ethnographies of cosmopolitanism" (Wardle 2000, 2010).

A further step is to recognize that the insights ethnography creates correspond to the limits which define it. Take Evans-Pritchard's famous aperçu that Nuer are "fortunate" because they have no concept equivalent to "time" as we understand it (1940:103). Or Kwon's recognition that Vietnamese villagers, in their treatment of victims of massacre, are caught between two ways of under-

standing death and the dead (2006). Or Barth's point that the "netboss" status on a Norwegian fishing boat is a facet of the hierarchical interaction of skipper and crew (1966:8-9). In all these cases, the important central insight cannot take form without the holographic or balance-sheet reticulation within which it is, so to speak, trapped. In the case of the Nuer, the absence of "time" takes on positive meaning in so far as it intersects with the cattle ideal, the agnatic principle, territorial politics and generational differences. Geertz has commented on the "Euclidean look" (1988:67)—the use of geometric devices and other features—that makes the Nuer exemplary. But, with hindsight, the issues of style he emphasizes are significant but not sufficient: other ethnographies with quite radically distinct stylistics and understandings of evidence and truth do their intellectual work in a fundamentally similar way to *The Nuer*. We may, perhaps, have to accept, instead, that *The Nuer* looks Euclidean because there are Euclidean assumptions behind it.

In sum we argue that, however it is conceptualized, as a hologram or a balance sheet, the ethnographic end-product depends for its achievement on the deployment of a definable range of tools. We explored the conventions of ethnography extensively in our previous intervention (Gay y Blasco and Wardle 2007). However, in this article, in the light of our central concern, we focus attention on two techniques in particular. We examine how the transposition of experiential open-ness into argumentative closure becomes recognizably ethnographic, on the one hand, through the manipulation of diversity in description and analysis and, on the other, by way of the ambiguation (and disambiguation) of authorial agency. These two intellectual operations are essential in moulding and in directing the comparative and relational thrust of an ethnographic text: they do not reduce its value as true knowledge, but they give ethnographic knowledge a rather particular shape. And, as we suggest later, these features can only become more salient as the blurring of boundaries and speeding up of communication between field and academy intensifies.

The Status of Diversity in the Pattern of an Ethnography

One point of view from which to grasp how ethnography acquires its pattern as a knowledge-form is in terms of the treatment of diversity in an ethnography: certain materials are counted as integral, others constitute diversity within the world of the ethnography. It is important to emphasize that we are not referring here to the characteristically mid-20th-century focus on establishing social norms—shared rules of the group. Many latterday

anthropologists would reject the notion that there are concrete social norms on the same grounds that they would deny the concreteness of society. However, this still leaves a question concerning the intellectual treatment of ethnographic diversity. Ethnography is built on fieldwork and the experience of fieldwork is, of course, inherently diverse in its potential.

Given that the decision to "end" fieldwork is to varying degrees an arbitrary one, the experience of diversity during fieldwork is characteristically open-ended. Arguably, it is only the construction of an ethnography that carries the experience of diversity toward closure and gives it a revised meaning. That is to say, the many human encounters the ethnographer is exposed to during fieldwork, with their unlimited variety and subtlety of tone of voice, verbal imagery, behaviour and gesture, emotional interest and aversion, could lead to a Babel of different kinds of contextualization and analysis. That they do not is because ethnographers tend to apply a relatively limited set of questions and concepts to their material—questions and concepts that have emerged during the development of the discipline and which have enduring significance. This does not solve the problem that any integration of ethnographic material throws up forms of diversity corresponding to the questions being asked. Instead, that which is acknowledged as diverse comes to have integral significance in the construction of the self-contained world of the ethnography vis-à-vis the theoretical questions directed at it.

In an ethnography (as opposed to this open-ended diversity of fieldwork experience), diversity takes on its meaning in a balance with processes of intellectual integration created by the need for a clear framing of anthropological questions. Take the following example from Monica Hunter's analysis of relationships between Bantu farmworkers and white farmers in South Africa:

> Relations between servants and employers vary considerably. On some farms the personal relationship is very friendly, servants and employers having known each other for long, and getting on well together. Sometimes the farmer takes an interest in his people's school, attending concerts, and occasionally contributing to the teacher's salary. Some farmer's wives make wedding cakes when a son or daughter of the farm marries; some are brought gifts of green maize and other fresh produce grown by their servants' wives. On other farms there is mutual irritation and fear. One employer told the writer that he never went near the servants' huts without a revolver; another said: "I think sometimes that we are cutting our own throats by stopping beer drinks. If they (Bantu servants) had them they

> would kill each other. As it is now they are increasing, and will come and kill us." [Hunter 1937:397]

The cautiousness with which Hunter approaches her analysis ("some ... sometimes ... some ... On other farms") goes with the fact that she is approaching a new kind of subject matter. While by the late 1930s, a substantial amount had been written on "traditional" Bantu social life, relatively little had yet been published on the lives of people, displaced by colonialism, who were working on European-owned farms. Hunter is careful not to assume that there is a common cultural framework that all farms share. On the contrary, the farm situation holds the potential for profound mutual misunderstanding and violence. This does not stop her from drawing her essay to a close with a generalizing statement: "in spite of extreme poverty and severe restrictions upon his liberty, the African farmhand yet manages to preserve his self-respect and to enjoy the company of his neighbours" (1937:404). The emphasis on diversity here indirectly serves the purpose of demonstrating the totalizing context of poverty and loss of liberty for Bantu workers.

By contrast, we can explore the balancing of diversity and context by looking at a recent investigation by Latour (1996) of French technology and technologists. Latour's ethnography, *Aramis, or the Love of Technology*, is focused not on a single culture but on a project, the unfulfilled attempt during the 1980s to bring into being a new automated transport system, "Aramis," for Paris. Latour examines Aramis by moving between the perspectives of the interested parties—technicians, politicians economists and others—each with their own priorities and imaginings of the future. He also includes Aramis' perspective as a fictional counter-voice, destabilizing the truth claims of the others. The style of presentation is playful and jerky with radically divergent perspectives shown by the use of distinct type-faces and other visual and authorial tricks. Each group, though focused on an apparently shared project, vaunts its own framing of reality, at certain points attempting to displace the reality assertions of the others, at others, making compromises in order to sustain its own vision as the project moves toward realization.

> Was I obliged to leave reality behind in order to inject a bit of emotion and poetry into austere subjects? On the contrary, I wanted to come close enough to reality so that scientific worlds could become once again what they had been: possible worlds in conflict that move and shape one another. Did I have to take certain liberties with reality? None whatsoever. But I had to restore freedom to all the realities involved before any

of them could succeed in unifying the others. [Latour 1996:ix]

Latour wishes to show intermingling realities and partial solutions. He describes diverse possible worlds converging within a single unrealized project. But perhaps the distinctness of approach from Hunter's is not as great as it seems. In Latour's work, the diversities of these "scientific worlds" with their differently combined elements—including ideas about the future—are best understood once framed within the totality of the project that brings them together. Latour asks the reader to relativize the claims made by the occupants of one or other "world," to avoid giving validity to one worldview, to pay attention to the competition between realities that brings these worlds together. In other words, here are standard ethnographic techniques answering a new question. Latour argues that the world versions of the different actors are malleable and emergent—poor performance will lead to failure in the everyday.

Two points are worth emphasizing here. The first is that, with hindsight, Latour's deployment of diversity as a signifier may be considered more sophisticated than Hunter's because it is not dependent on a normative idea of "society." But, nonetheless, "diversity" works in a fundamentally similar way in his text in terms of what it contributes to the construction of the ethnography. The second point may be more contentious: a logical consequence of recognizing diversity as one signifier amongst others is to expose the fallacy that by increasing the amount of analysis given over to acknowledging "diversity" in the ethnography we are increasing the "realism" of the ethnographic account (ethnographic knowledge is not "realistic" in that sense). A comment of Gellner's is relevant here:

> If we invent rapidly changing concepts to cope with changing societies, or contradictory concepts to cope with societies in conflict, we may find ourselves with an unmanageable language, but we shall still not be able to be sure that the concepts change or internally conflict in just the way that the society is changing or conflicting. [Gellner 1987:97]

Leaving aside the meaning of "societies" in this quote, Gellner's comment concerning the potential unmanageability of language is apropos in the following sense: as is the case when we recognize the "complexity" of a situation, the assignment of a value to diversity is essentially a stage in the process of comprehension, not a property of what is observed in itself.

The result then is that the expression of diversity—those elements which are acknowledged as diverse as opposed to congruent—has particular work to do in the formation of the ethnography. What we need to recognize is that particular organizations of diversity make specific positive contributions to the relative closure of ethnography as it emerges into the form that we recognize as an ethnographic world, an ethnography. Having said this, suspicions we may have about highly formalized ethnography—ethnography that minimizes the relevance of acknowledging diversity—are probably well-founded. The more that divergent conceptions, alternative levels of logical analysis, or inconvenient types of information are excluded from the world of an ethnography, the more we may feel, as its audience, that we are witnessing a doctrine in the making, rather than a contribution to anthropological dialogue and critical debate (Gellner 1987:43).

Can there be a generalizable rule of adequacy for how diversity is treated in an ethnography? It seems unlikely that any rule of this kind will hold because of the way ethnographies are characteristically positioned as interjections in anthropological or social scientific debates. Below, Mahmoud analyzes how her female Egyptian informants situate themselves in the current Islamic revival. A primary purpose of her ethnography is to destabilize a widespread reductionist view of Islamist women as reactionary and self-subjugating. She explores the concept of *sabr*, the Islamic virtue of patience: for women like Nadia in this excerpt the practice of sabr is liberatory in a way that "poststructuralist feminist theory" is ill-equipped to recognize (Mahmoud 2001:208). Mahmoud enriches her interpretation of this Egyptian setting by exploring the views not only of Nadia but of another informant, Sana, picking out their disparate viewpoints concerning the negative connotations of remaining single for Egyptian women:

> Although Nadia and Sana share their recognition of the painful situation single women face, they differ markedly in their respective engagements with this suffering, each enacting a different modality of agency in the face of it … Just as the practice of self-esteem structured the possibilities of action that were open to Sana, so did the realization of sabr for Nadia: enabling certain ways of being and foreclosing others. It is clear that certain virtues have lost their value in the liberal imagination (like humility, modesty, and shyness) … What Nadia's and Sana's discussions reveal are two different modes of engaging with social injustices, one grounded in a tradition that we have come to value, and another in a nonliberal tradition that is being resuscitated by the movement I worked with. [2001:221-222]

In this example, as in the others above, "diversity" plays its part in triangulating evidence in relation to social scientific dialogues. Ethnographic insights in this case are explicitly organized vis-à-vis a teleologically framed debate about women's empowerment (notice the ambivalent use of "we" in the paragraph). Given this vis-à-vis in the comparative framing of ethnography, it is not likely that any stable principle for how diversity should be regulated in an ethnography will be able to outguess the changing roles that the ethnography plays within broader social scientific conversations.

What is at issue, then, is how the deployment of diversity in an ethnography acts as an index or signifier of the "closure" of an ethnographic world. However, this necessarily points us to something else: how the status or personhood of the ethnographer necessarily changes in tandem. In building up a picture of the transformation of ethnography into *an* ethnography we need to take account of how the agency of the ethnographer, acting in different fields of knowledge and action, is necessarily ambiguated in order to "close" the ethnography as the authorial utterance of one person—the anthropologist.

Ambiguating the Agency of the Ethnographer

If we accept that there is a necessary tipping point from the open-ended diversity of fieldwork into the relatively closed world of an ethnography, then we may note corresponding changes in the status of the ethnographer. Ethnographic knowledge is always relational, the product of multiple cross-cutting conversations across diverse contexts, not only between anthropologist and informants but also between anthropologist and others in the academy and more broadly "at home." In this sense, we agree with James Clifford when he says that the activity of ethnography is always "plural and beyond the control of any individual" (1983:139).

And yet, conversations involve exchanges and hence not only depend upon but perpetuate the existence of distinct conversationalists. Although ethnographic knowledge is conversational, authority over an ethnography stays firmly in the hands of its anthropologist author. Indeed we would go further and argue that ethnography, as a particular mode of knowing, depends on the creation of a singular or individual authorial self. And so indeed it should be, we suggest, because the ethnographer is answerable not only intellectually but also ethically for what they have to say. Paradoxically, then, it is precisely out of a multiplicity of relationships in the field and "at home" that ethnographic authorship emerges as individual and authoritative, rather than as shared and precar-

ious. In ethnographic writing, it is relationships between informants and anthropologist and among anthropologists that are seen to lend validity to an author's experiences, accounts and conclusions. These relationships, in other words, are understood to endow an individual with a particular kind of agency: agency to know, to represent and to argue—to present an ethnography.

One of the most complex aspects of ethnographic presentation concerns, then, how assertions of agency as an author of an ethnography are ascribed and disclaimed, made visible and invisible in ethnographic presentation, and the effects that this has both on the construction of a text and on the creation of anthropological knowledge. Our concern here, in other words, regards how, in the making of an ethnography,

> the notion of agency is invoked or ascribed, concealed or obfuscated, more or less strategically ... how agency is attached or detached in social practice, how it is owned or disowned, to whom or to what agency is referred, and what motivates agency to go around, come around, and otherwise slip around. [Battaglia 1997:506]

From the classics of the early 20th century to more recent postmodernist ethnographies, at the core of the anthropological enterprise lies the construction of an authorial self through encounters with others. And, although this self retains ultimate control over the text, it is nonetheless variously presented as able and not able to make claims to various kinds of knowledge. A tipping point of ethnographic exposition, we argue, is achieved when the (often autobiographically charted) loss of agency entailed in fieldwork, has become evidence for the author having acquired sufficient agency to create an ethnography.

A common feature of the opening pages of ethnographies is a look back at the fieldwork process in which the ethnographer recapitulates feelings of displacement or estrangement as they were thrown into the field situation. These opening frames of ethnographies which describe meetings between anthropologist and informants have received considerable attention in terms of their literary values (Marcus 2007). In these descriptions, anthropologists explain having to relinquish control over their lives to others, either through ignorance of the language and social norms or out of the need to fit in and be accepted and trusted. Writers often describe a diminished or altered sense of self and a lack of agency extending to feelings of personal disintegration—of "being sent slowly mad" (Busby 2000:xv)—or of childlike dependency.

In these narratives ethnographers stress their incompetence, their dependence, and their ensuing peripheral-

ity to the world of properly functioning adults. And so, writers of ethnography describe being treated as children and even spending time with them rather than with others, being burdens on the community, and slowly learning how to function as adults. As children the agency of ethnographers is incomplete. And this agency that they lose is gained by their informants, who are presented as the ones in control. This first stage of fieldwork and loss of agency is followed in these stories by a period of enlightenment and recovery of agency which repeatedly involves transformations of the self.

Eventually in fieldwork stories "them" becomes, even if only transitorily, "us." Moments of heightened emotional discomfort lead in these narratives to particularly important insights, and sometimes there is a single event that catapults the writer from the margins to the centre of the community. This event allows informants to see the anthropologist in a new light, no longer as an outsider but as an adopted member of the group or at least as "our outsider." In Abu-Lughod's description of fieldwork among Egyptian Bedouins, it is sharing the pain of an old woman over her brother's death that makes her "fully human" in her hosts' eyes (1986:21). This is how she describes her sense of belonging:

> On entering the tent crowded with women, I knew exactly which cluster to join—the group of "our" relatives. They welcomed me naturally and proceeded to gossip conspiratorially with me about the others present. This sense of "us versus them," so central to their social interactions, had become central to me too, and I felt pleased that I belonged to an "us" ... Later, when we sat around the kerosene lantern, talking about the celebration we had attended, swapping bits of information we had gathered, and feeling happy because we had eaten meat, I became aware how comfortable I felt, knowing every one being discussed, offering my own tidbits and interpretations, and bearing easily the weight of a child who had fallen sleep on my lap as I sat cross-legged on the ground. It was only that night, when I dated the page in my journal, that I realized it was only a few days until Christmas. My American life seemed very far away. [Abu-Lughod 1986:20-21]

Here agency appears and disappears from sight, is lost and regained, and moves around between persons: the Bedouins have granted Abu-Lughod agency by accepting her, but she herself had to elicit this acceptance by her appropriate behaviour. And, significantly, this movement of agency from ethnographer to informant and back again goes hand in hand with a transfer of knowledge. Richard Fardon has described how

> the ethnographic and anthropological processes (from research to writing) can be seen as a succession of states of play in the allocation of different types of ignorance and knowledge; often the trajectories of informant and ethnographer intersect. Beginning in ignorance the ethnographer acquires knowledge; but as the informant divulges information so the ethnographer begins to see him as ignorant of his own society. [1990:9]

Thus, in these stories the process of becoming during fieldwork is not indefinite but has a culmination: after a personal and often traumatic journey of transformation, a new self comes into view, endowed with the capacity to talk about others. In other words, through the ambiguation of agency that we have described, the ethnographer eventually emerges as able to represent. Often, as Fardon explains, the ensuing representations are presented as superior to those of our informants. Then, ethnographers not only claim the insight of an insider but also the neutrality and analytical ability of an outsider, as well as the capacity to deploy specialist knowledge. Alternatively, a personal transformation is described but it is not said to yield any kind of absolute knowledge about the Other. Instead, the focus of the ethnography is on exploring, from a deliberately emphasized position, the relationship between informant and ethnographer.

Given the changing conditions in which anthropologists undertake their fieldwork, as well as the varied forms of collaboration and institutional compromise involved in latterday research settings, might not our picture of authorial agency represent more a nostalgic ideal than a current actuality? Our response is that, though it is in many ways remarkable, the form of relationship between ethnography and author described here remains strikingly resilient. And in certain respects, this is quite predictable once we take the reticulated, and casuistic-gestalt qualities of an ethnography into account: the fact that an ethnography is attached to its anthropologist corresponds to the fact that the agency of the anthropologist requires an ethnography.

We can evidence what is prized in this respect by—quite literally—examining the ethnographies that are awarded prizes. Take, for example, Scheper-Hughes' *Death Without Weeping* (1993, J.I. Staley Prize *inter alia*), or Tsing's *Friction* (2005, American Ethnological Society Senior Book Prize), or Chernoff's *Hustling is Not Stealing* (2003, Victor Turner Prize)—we could extend this list—in each case, while the argument of the work undoubtedly challenges familiar expectations regarding ethnography, as *an* ethnography, these works nonetheless deploy techniques, and have been received according to expectations, that we have explored here. Originating in the ambiguity

of fieldwork, the ethnography has become, with decreasing ambiguity, authored. The briefest of indications from Tsing's monograph will hopefully suffice: "I originally entered the Meratus forests with the eyes of a naturalist … It was only by walking and working with the Meratus Dayaks that I learned to see the forest differently" (2005:vi).

In making these transitions visible—this should be underlined—we have not aimed to bring to light a deception or sleight of hand by anthropologists; the experiences they describe are surely true enough. Instead, we argue that these are necessary but largely unrecognized components in the architectonics of an ethnography. Discussions and analyses of personal transformation provide a shorthand, and attempt to account, for a dubiously measurable transition. They bridge the open-endedness of the fieldwork experience with the authorial closure of the ethnography. They evidence and authorize, schematically and in retrospect, expectations concerning social relationships that the ethnographer has reacted to during fieldwork—tried to learn and to adopt, consciously or unconsciously resisted and experimented with. As a result, the ambiguation and mediation of agency involved will be re-encountered throughout an ethnography.

Finally, it is worth noting that a number of influential ethnographers of the 1980s emphasized "fragmentation" as a virtue in ethnographic writing because it would remind the reader that the culture in question remained open and the text did not represent a "single point of view" (Atkinson 1992:41). In retrospect the limits of this argument now become visible in so far as (a) it assumes that there exists a realistic measurement of how "fragmented" an interpretation should ideally be (what can be said about "diversity" can be said of "fragmentation"), and (b) it may well obscure rather than enhance the ethical answerability of the ethnographer for her contribution to a dialogue. In contrast, the postmodern emphasis on a dialogic or conversational anthropology points in a different direction: if we take the ethical significance of dialogue seriously then we should be equally serious in our treatment of an ethnography as the unique utterance of an—ethically and intellectually situated—conversationalist (Bakhtin 1994:67-85).

Concluding Remarks

As Schaffer and Shapin (1985) show, with his vacuum pump, Boyle succeeded in inventing the laboratory as the purified space where the laws of nature are localized and laid bare for a community of scientific experimenters. Latour adds that, in so far as Boyle's laboratory and its descendents have become things-in-themselves devoid of human fabrication, they have also become the lynch-pin for maintaining the division between the laws of nature and the laws of society (1993:31). The purification of ethnography as *an* ethnography mimics some of these effects but is also part of their complication because the ethnography characteristically pluralizes nature, community and knowledge (Latour 2009). As any professional anthropologist comes to know when they apply for money from a foundation supporting social science, ethnographic aims can be well-nigh incomprehensible to those social scientists who take the metaphor "positive knowledge is laboratory knowledge" to be a concrete truth.

The artefactual quality of the Malinowskian ethnography vis-à-vis social reality as lived was recognized very early in the development of social anthropology. Bateson published *Naven* as a critique of Malinowskian assumptions only 14 years after *Argonauts* was published. Half a century later, the recognition that ethnographic monographs relied on literary tropes for their consistency shook confidence in the validity of ethnography as a kind of knowledge. But the narrow focus on writing broadens again once we accept that, while perhaps still more legitimately a written form, an ethnography is most frequently presented orally—the lecture, the seminar example, the student discussion. So, by shaking naïve empiricism out of its comfortable basket, the postmodern turn succeeded in laying the ground for much closer attention to the institutional settings, and kinds of dialogue, in which an ethnography becomes relevant as knowledge.

Alongside providing the fundamental pattern for the ethnography, Malinowski also familiarized social scientists with the idea of a "long ethnographic conversation" with and between informants where not only words may be exchanged but "from time to time also things, animals, people, gestures and blows" (Bloch 1977:278). However, it is necessary to reiterate with Ingold that, within the intellectual division of labour, "anthropology is not ethnography": the plural ethnographic accounts derived from ethnographic conversations are, in certain ways, at odds with the unifying aim of anthropology to seek a "critical understanding of human being and knowing in the one world we all inhabit" (2008:11). To this we would add that, in this larger anthropological conversation about what humans hold in common, the ethnographic interjection has a particular value. This value derives from how the coordination of an ethnography acts to disrupt the tendency for dialogue about human-ness to turn into an experientially evacuated set of theoretical monologues. On this point we would concur with the answer that Feyerabend provides to his own rhetorical question:

how can we possibly examine something we are using all the time? How can we analyse the terms in which we habitually express our most simple and straightforward observations, and reveal their presuppositions?... The first step in our criticism of familiar concepts and procedures ... must ... be an attempt to break the circle. We must invent a new conceptual system that ... confounds the most plausible theoretical principles and introduces perceptions that cannot form part of the existing perceptual world. [1975:32]

We would simply add that the ethnography, at its best, already exists as a means to introduce systematic conceptual plurality of the challenging sort that Feyerabend prescribes (Holbraad 2008).

Over the last century, ethnography as an imaginative-analytical vehicle produced true knowledge about a great range of patterns of human relationship. Whatever questions we have about his epistemological or paradigmatic assumptions, need we doubt, for example, that Fortes (1959) contributed facts about the relations between the living and their ancestors in West Africa? The factuality of this knowledge depended, and continues to depend, on the apparatus of the ethnography—the ability of an ethnography to capture social particularities as significant within a reticulated network of insights. It is curious to note in this regard that the ethnography has proved far less fragile historically than the anthropological theories it often purports to test out or the paradigms it seeks to confirm. Theories turn out, in the long run, to be those anticipations of knowledge that are characteristically discarded as ethnography establishes its own integration. It is only because it can turn the process of ethnography into the modality of an ethnography that a fundamentally important anthropological task can be achieved; that of showing that there are "many radically different modes of inhabiting the world" (Latour 2009:2).

The two aspects isolated in this article, regarding how the ethnographer brings the ethnographic process to a moment of culmination, can equally be understood in terms of the institutional positioning of ethnographic practice vis-à-vis anthropology as a theoretical or thought-centred activity. As Hart observes, the radicalism of ethnography consists historically in how

> a segment of the intellectual class crossed the divide between themselves and the rest of society as a means of finding out how people live. This meant that they had to join their social objects as individual subjects, thereby muddling the conventional separation of subjects ("thinkers" working for those who take the decisions that matter) from objects ("doers" or those who

perform the routine work of society). [Gay y Blasco and Wardle 2007:179]

As much as we can recognize it as the product of a particular author, we can equally comprehend an ethnography as taking holistic shape at the tense intersection of ethnographic conversations and social scientific debates involving many differently placed voices. And, in this regard, we have seen above the process of authorial ambiguation that this meeting of life and ideas instigates. As the means for global communication multiply and increase in speed, the questions surrounding what distinguishes ethnography from *an* ethnography are bound to intensify; as will the debates concerning the agency of the ethnographer raised here. Nonetheless, we argue that the "muddling" effect of an ethnography will remain its greatest strength so long as it continues to impede the ideological separation that Hart describes. We are only taking our first steps toward recognizing this dialogical character of an ethnography—what Malinowski might have called its "sociological, ritual and dogmatic context" (1935:99, fn1).

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Fears of Illness Progression and the Production of Risk: Two Ethnographic Case Studies in Northeast Thailand

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Abstract: This article considers common themes emerging from two ethnographic research projects in Northeast Thailand: one on women's reproductive health concerns, and another on children's fevers. Both projects revealed that illness experiences were substantially shaped by particular perceptions of risk—especially fears that a mild illness would progress to a fatal one—exacerbated by feelings of social vulnerability in clinical encounters. The analysis examines how experiences of risk were constructed in the context of multiple, intersecting forces, ranging from "ethnomedical" perceptions to the impact of health education and prevention programs, pharmaceutical marketing, and social inequalities between patients and health providers.

Keywords: health services, Thailand, women, children, cervical cancer, fruit fever

Résumé : Cet article étudie des thématiques communes ayant surgi de deux projets de recherche ethnographique dans le nord-est de la Thaïlande : un sur des enjeux de santé de la reproduction chez des femmes et un autre sur les fièvres chez les enfants. Les deux projets ont révélé que l'expérience de la maladie était significativement déterminée par des perceptions particulières du risque – en particulier par des craintes qu'une maladie bénigne n'évolue vers une maladie fatale – exacerbées par des sentiments de vulnérabilité sociale lors de rencontres cliniques. L'analyse examine comment les expériences du risque ont été construites dans le contexte de multiples forces croisées, allant de perceptions « ethnomédicales » jusqu'à l'impact des programmes de prévention et d'éducation à la santé, du marketing pharmaceutique et des inégalités sociales entre les patients et les intervenants en matière de santé.

Mots-clés : services de santé, Thaïlande, femmes, enfants, cancer du col de l'utérus, fièvres des fruits

Introduction

Medical anthropologists, especially those working on applied public health projects, are commonly charged with investigating the cultural determinants of health behaviours. One problem with the idea of "cultural" or "ethnomedical" explanations for people's responses to illness is that it reifies "culture" as explanatory in and of itself (Fassin 2001; Janes 2006). Another problem is that the idea of "cultural determinants" still evokes images of purely "local," "indigenous," or "traditional" ideas—despite the progression in anthropology over the past three decades toward more complex understandings of how local experience is historically-situated and globally-influenced (Wolf 1982) and how cultural meanings are in a constant state of construction and transformation within the context of historical and global change (Ortner 1999). "Cultural" perceptions of illness may indeed be derived in part from indigenous ideas that have deep-seated roots. But these cannot be extracted from the broader global influences of (1) changing international public health agendas and their national and local manifestations in disease prevention programs and public health education, (2) the interactions of local people with health care providers trained in global biomedicine, and (3) the influences of other producers of medical knowledge, including the media as well as profit-oriented pharmaceutical companies and medicine vendors who produce both knowledge and medicinal products consumed at the local level.

Anthropologists working in public health have also been criticized for over-emphasizing static, apolitical cultural explanations at the expense of considering political-economic forces that impact and constrain people's health behaviour, such as the availability of affordable health care and transportation, and oppressive power relations in clinical settings (Farmer 1999; Fassin 2001). These critiques are important; it is equally important to avoid a false dichotomy between "culture" and "political-economy," and endeavour to engage in micro-level analyses

that deconstruct the complex interrelations of forces that affect health behaviour and patient-provider interactions. Similarly, experiences of risk and feelings of vulnerability to illness, and their consequences for health behaviour and psychological well-being, are constructed through the interactions of diverse influences that cannot be neatly distinguished as either cultural or political-economic. Rather, they are formed through the constant interaction of citizens, biomedical health providers, community-based healers, health education materials and prevention campaigns, media accounts and other exposures to representations of risk, medicine vendors and marketing strategies, and the social inequalities and political-economic contexts that frame these interactions. An analysis of risk perceptions and experiences, therefore, requires attention to a nuanced understanding of how these are formed and reformed through the interactions of these various factors, while resisting tidy distinctions between the cultural and the political-economic, the local and the global, the traditional and the modern. Although this article is about experiences of risk to illness, the lessons of such a nuanced understanding of the ways ideas are socially constructed under diverse influences are applicable to anthropology as a whole.

In this article, I provide two empirical examples of the ways perceptions of risk and people's responses to them were constructed in the context of such multiple, complex and interacting influences. I argue that a synthetic approach that takes into account local ideas about risk, the influence of health education programs and pharmaceutical companies on those perceptions, and the impact of social inequalities on clinical interactions is necessary to understand people's responses to illness and fears about risk. The first project discussed here, conducted in 1997, was a team ethnographic research project used to guide subsequent clinical interventions to improve women's reproductive health services in Northeast Thailand. Our research revealed that women feared that a broad range of reproductively-associated health problems, if left untreated, would inevitably transform into cervical cancer (*maleng pak mot luk*). Yet these fears were not derived from purely "ethnomedical" perceptions of illness transformation; rather, they were reinforced and perpetuated by a health education campaign that emphasized cervical cancer prevalence and changed women's perceptions of reproductive symptoms, and by the marketing campaign of a pharmaceutical company that targeted drug advertising at popular concerns. Social inequalities in health care settings led to a sense of social vulnerability for patients and clinical miscommunication reinforced, rather than alleviated, concerns about cervical cancer risk.

The second project, conducted in 2000-01, was an ethnography of children's acute infectious diseases, carried out in the same region of Thailand. Community members were found to be particularly concerned about an illness known locally as "fruit fever" (*khai mak mai*), typically characterized by fever and rash. People feared using formal health services to treat fevers suspected to be khai mak mai, since common biomedical treatments were believed to dramatically increase the risk of death. Because khai mak mai was not a biomedically recognized disease, patients felt their concerns were ignored by health providers and felt powerless in clinical encounters, exacerbating their sense of vulnerability and fear that biomedical treatment was a risky proposition. People therefore avoided biomedical care and employed both traditional, herbal medicine and commercial herbal products that targetted laypeople's concerns about fever and rash. A recent public health campaign emphasizing the dangers of dengue fever—an illness believed to have very similar symptoms to khai mak mai—further exacerbated people's sense of vulnerability, since the two illnesses were considered difficult to distinguish, yet surviving them required opposing treatment strategies. Dengue was perceived to carry a high risk of death without biomedical care, while for khai mak mai, biomedical care was associated with treatment risks that would likely prove fatal.

Experiences of Risk and Social Vulnerability

Past research on risk perceptions has drawn on the insights of economics, psychology, sociology and anthropology. Economic theory has encouraged rational choice models that examine how people apply a cost-benefit approach to assessing and responding to risk (see Janz and Becker 1984), while psychometric approaches emphasize the individual and subjective nature of risk perceptions as influenced by factors such as knowledge, familiarity, attitudes and emotions (see Sjoberg 2000; Slovic 2000). Sociologists have examined changing notions of risk, specifically within the context of modernity (see Beck 1992; Giddens 1999), while anthropologists have used cultural theory models to posit a shared cultural construction of risk perceptions (see Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Wildavsky and Dake 1990). While the cultural construction of risk is clearly an area relevant for anthropological investigation, Boholm (2003) argues that in most risk research, "culture" has been treated as comprising a taken-for-granted set of culture-specific perceptions that are assumed to be unproblematically deterministic of perceived risk, without dissecting the nature of the relationship between culture and experiences of risk.

More recently, social scientists have become interested in "risk subjectivities" (Lupton 1999), that is, how risk knowledges are constructed in the context of daily life. Boholm (2003) asserts that anthropology's principal contribution to risk research should be to employ our ethnographic sensibilities in order to place experiences of risk in the context of how they are understood in social settings—what she refers to as "situated risk." She emphasizes that ideas about risk are co-constructed through the interface of "experience-near" and "experience-far" (Geertz 1983) modes of risk knowledge, the former encompassing everyday personal experience as well as knowledge disseminated through local small talk, while the latter includes risk discourse produced by scientists as well as collective narratives about events (for example, disasters and epidemics), both of which are predominantly communicated to the public via the media (Briggs 2003; Clarke and Everest 2006; Eichelberger 2007). With regard to health risks, I would add that they are also communicated through various means of public health education—from educational programs in schools, to widespread community-based health education and disease prevention campaigns.

In the category of experience-near modes of health risk knowledge, we might include historically-embedded ethnomedical ideas about body functioning, illness processes and progression, and vulnerability, as they are experienced locally through the bodies of self, friends and family. For example, Nichter (2008) discusses culturally-specific notions of vulnerability in which people may feel susceptible to illness because of cultural concerns that may include ideas about the effects of bodily states such as pregnancy or overwork, cumulative impurities or germs, or exposure to dangerous spaces (for example, where spirits live) and environments (for example, hospitals). While it is tempting for anthropologists working in non-Western, developing-country settings to focus on the significance of such cultural dimensions of risk knowledge, these must also be placed in the context of how they interact with, and are informed by, experience-far risk discourse. At the intersection of experience-near and experience-far sources of risk knowledge are lay evaluations and interpretations of expert knowledge (itself culturally constructed) as filtered through the media, health education, drug marketing campaigns and interactions with health providers, which are assessed in light of local experience and talk about illness.

Media accounts may emphasize risk for its audience impact, contributing to an expanded sense of risk (Woloshin and Schwartz 2006); public health education also contributes to perceptions of risk and feelings of vul-

nerability since it often overtly aims to cultivate fear of risk through health warnings aimed at instituting behaviour change or encouraging health surveillance and health care seeking. This fear-inducing strategy can, however, have unintended and iatrogenic effects (Guttman and Salmon 2004). Medical surveillance, diagnostic tests, and screening programs can also induce a state of feeling at risk, creating a sense of personal vulnerability for the patient rather than alleviating fears (Gifford 1986; Hunt and de Voogd 2003; Scott et al. 2005). People's sense of vulnerability is also influenced by interactions with health care providers and the ways they communicate risk, as well as the actions of pharmaceutical companies that use fear to encourage people to see themselves as potentially ill and to "ask their doctor" about a particular drug, or that encourage associations between particular medications and laypeople's anxieties or even the normal range of everyday experiences (Conrad 2007; Moynihan and Cassels 2005). While researchers have indeed considered how "macro" level forces such as the media and pharmaceutical advertising are implicated in producing and reproducing health-related risk perceptions, the focus of such studies tends to be on urban, industrial, Western societies. Most health risk perception studies take place in the developed world (Hawkes and Rowe 2008), with perhaps the exception of studies of perceptions of risk to HIV/AIDS (Smith 2003). Those that look at rural, developing country settings often emphasize indigenous, cultural risk perceptions (Chapman 2003) rather than how these are impacted by experience-far discourses on risk. Especially absent from studies in such settings is a consideration of the role of pharmaceutical companies and medicine vendors as producers of risk knowledge (Radyowijati and Haak 2003).

Response to perceived risk, that is, how people "manage" risk (including the use of medical care), must also be placed in social and political-economic contexts. Individuals must balance health risks with other concerns such as the financial or opportunity costs of seeking health care, risks associated with treatment, or fulfilling other life priorities and needs (Kaufert and O'Neil 1993). Others have written about how social risk (risk of social stigma, risk to identity or risk of damaging social relations) may impede health care seeking or prevention behaviours—such as when people resist a stigmatized illness label and associated treatment, or refrain from condom use with spouses for fear of damaging marital relations (Bujra 2000; Nichter 2008). Clinical encounters themselves expose people to social vulnerabilities that may influence the ways they manage health risks. Within medical anthropology, focus has been placed on cultural competency

among biomedical practitioners and the importance of promoting negotiation models of patient-provider interactions (Berlin and Fowkes 1998; Kleinman 1979), while others have considered the role of the degree of trust in those responsible for managing a risk (in this case, health providers) and its impact on how people perceive and respond to risk (Boholm 2003). In settings where the patient population is marginalized on the basis of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, it is also important to consider their social vulnerability and how this vulnerability compounds risk to illness or impedes use of medical care (Berry 2008). Social inequalities between patients and health providers can render the former powerless to voice their health concerns for fear that providers will not understand or will dismiss their fears. In such cases, clinical encounters carry both a social risk of exacerbating feelings of marginality and an associated physical risk that one's illness will be inadequately treated, or even, iatrogenically mistreated. Social vulnerability may be a contributor to heightened risk of illness progression or complications in and of itself, in some cases resulting in patient risk reduction strategies that explicitly involve avoiding biomedical treatment as we shall see in the second case study.

In each of the two case studies that follow, I begin by examining what might be described as a local, "cultural" risk concept that guides people's thinking about the risk associated with a particular illness. While there is no single translation of the English term *risk* in the regional Lao dialect (or in Thai) and people did not speak in terms of a broad notion of risk, they did speak about risk in terms of particular local concepts relevant to the health concerns in question. In the case of women's reproductive health concerns, the key risk concept was the idea of illness transformation (into cervical cancer); in the case of "fruit fever," the key concern was the concept of incompatibility (*phit*) of certain substances with the illness which could render a mild illness episode fatal. After considering the significance of these local risk concepts, I move beyond a purely ethnomedical assessment to examine how ideas about risk are reinforced, transformed, and evaluated in light of the interaction of experience-near and experience-far modes of risk knowledge, including knowledge produced or disseminated by health education campaigns, drug companies and vendors, and health providers. Finally, I consider how social vulnerability in clinical settings affects risk perceptions and management, and revisit the roles of cultural competency and trust as they affect the successes or failures of the health care system in helping people manage perceived risk.

Setting and Methods

Both research projects were carried out in Northeast Thailand, a region of 21 million people comprised primarily of ethnic Lao (*Isan*) people with strong historical ties to the people of neighbouring lowland Laos. The Northeast is the poorest region in Thailand with the highest rates of child malnutrition; the region's relatively poor health indicators are exacerbated by having the nation's lowest per capita number of doctors, nurses and hospital beds. Rural-urban disparities in wealth and health care provision make such problems more pronounced in rural areas (UNICEF 2005). Rural Isan villagers subsist on rice farming, fishing and foraging, animal husbandry, some limited cash cropping, women's cottage industries such as weaving cloth or baskets, and sporadic wage labour as well as out-migration to Central and Southern Thailand for work. Given inadequate local income-earning opportunities, remittances from out-migrating family members have become increasingly important to the local economy, although the degree of out-migration varies from village to village; some villages are populated largely by the elderly and their grandchildren with young people off working in Bangkok or other provinces year-round, while in other villages out-migration is less prominent or more seasonal.

The government public health service provides the largest proportion of formal health services in Thailand. Health services accessibility is aided by a national health card system that provides free or low-cost care at government facilities. At the time of the majority of the research discussed here, only 70% of the Thai population was covered under the existing health card schemes; however, in 2001 (during the latter half of the second project) the government introduced a new universal health card program which provides treatment at government facilities for a co-payment of 30 baht (US$0.90) per illness episode (Suraratdecha et al. 2005; Tangcharoensathien et al. 2004; Towse et al. 2004). Most rural people have access to transportation by bus or motor scooter for travel to government health facilities.

Government health services include subdistrict-level health posts run by nurses, midwives, and community health workers that each serve a cluster of nearby villages (with one post within a few kilometres of each village), one community hospital in each district centre, and provincial and regional hospitals in large cities. Health posts are conveniently located but have no physicians, and limited medications and hours of operation, such that for serious concerns people commonly bypass them in favour of the district hospital. The latter is better

equipped, although wait times are long; in the location of the second study described here, the district hospital employed only three physicians for a population of over 70,000. Private clinics supplement government services and are sometimes preferred due to their speed of service, reputation for quality medications, and extended hours of service. Use of government services has, however, been high despite competition from private providers and the lack of universality of the government health card schemes prior to 2001. In our women's health project (1997), we found that 73% of women surveyed (n=1028) had visited a government facility at least once in the preceding year. Although these services are used frequently, the sense of marginality experienced by rural, Lao-speaking, Isan people is nevertheless reflected in uneasy relations with higher-status, and sometimes ethnically Central Thai, health providers.

Formal health services are complemented by various sources of medications and other community-level resources. Small village shops and travelling medicine vendors sell medications ranging from herbal medicines to antibiotics. Like village shops, pharmacies in the district centres (within 20 kilometres of most villages) sell many prescription medications without demanding a physician's prescription and pharmacy attendants (who may be untrained relatives of the pharmacist-owners) are commonly consulted for treatment advice. Self-medication with pharmaceuticals, such as antibiotics, is commonplace. Although diminishing in importance over time, traditional healers also provide village-level services at very low cost and fill the need for treatment rooted in non-biomedical illness models. These practitioners include spirit experts (*mo phi* or *mo tham*) who diagnose and treat sorcery and spirit-related afflictions, blowing experts (*mo pao*) who treat aches and pains, animal bites, stings and broken bones, and herbalists (*mo ya phuen ban*), who use teas made from roots, herbs, bones and shells to treat various conditions (including "fruit fever"). Elders also self-treat their families with herbal medicines and informal village injectionists may administer injections within the community. Finally, formal village health volunteers serve as liaisons between the health care system and rural villages; their roles include health and growth monitoring of children, assistance in vaccination programs, dissemination of health information and disease prevention activities.

In the women's health project, our team of Thai and North American researchers conducted ethnographic research on reproductive health concerns over six months in 1997 (with ongoing health interventions beginning in 1998), across three districts of Khon Kaen Province. The study focused on women's experiences of symptoms they associated with the uterus (*mot luk*) and related health concerns and health care seeking. At the community level, we conducted a quantitative survey of 1028 women of reproductive age on self-reported prevalence of health problems, self-medication and health services use. Qualitative research included intensive ethnographic research with over 100 women using structured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant-observation, focusing on health concerns, ethnogynecology, the language of illness, theories of illness causation and self-care practices, including detailed case histories of 50 women self-reporting chronic or recurrent "uterus problems." Research in ten village stores and ten pharmacies revealed what medications were available, recommended by merchants and used in self-medication. At the level of health services, we consulted staff at 15 health posts, as well as six private practitioners and 20 village health volunteers, and conducted patient flow analysis and exit interviews with 25 women at three district hospitals and three urban clinics and hospitals to learn about their health concerns and service expectations (see also Boonmongkon et al. 1999, 2001, 2002).

The second project aimed to examine how families made sense of ambiguous symptoms accompanying children's acute febrile illnesses and their associated prevention and health care seeking behaviours. Ethnographic research took place over a 13-month period in 2000-01, focusing on three rural villages in one district of Ubon Ratchathani Province. Following a survey of household demographics, subsistence and health (45 households across 3 villages), I conducted over 200 in-depth, open-ended interviews in the local Isan dialect, primarily with mothers of young children. Interview topics included illness histories, ideas about specific infectious diseases and local illness categories (malaria, dengue fever, diarrheal disease, acute respiratory infections and "fruit fever"), health care seeking for children's illnesses, the nature of fever and the seasonality of illness, and a comparison of the severity and prevalence of different illnesses. Of particular relevance to the current discussion were 97 interviews with community members, traditional healers and health services staff that involved substantial discussion of the local illness category khai mak mai ("fruit fever"). These included 49 interviews that focused exclusively on khai mak mai, including five with village herbalists who treated the illness and 44 with other community members. Six village shops were surveyed to determine what medicines were available and requested in communities without a prescription, and ten interviews were conducted with community health workers, nurses and physicians at health posts, private clinics and the district hospital.

During the ten months in which I resided in one of the rural study villages, participant-observation as well as consultation with village health volunteers and community-level health providers served as important complements to formal data collection (see also Pylypa 2004, 2007).

"Uterus Problems" and the Risk of Illness Transformation

In our women's health project, we examined women's conceptions of both reproductive tract infections and other symptoms locally associated with the uterus (mot luk). Women described "uterus problems" as encompassing a variety of symptoms such as vaginal discharge, itching, odour and rash, as well abdominal and lower back pain associated with the labour of rice farming and the repetitive movements of weaving cloth on large looms. Causes women linked to uterus problems included hard work, poor hygiene or dirt from the environment, and sexually transmitted infections. Additionally, women felt vulnerable to developing a uterus problem if they had experienced a predisposing event earlier in life, such as a childhood injury, a problem during a past pregnancy or abortion, pushing too hard during childbirth, sterilization, or failing to follow the traditional practice of "staying by the fire" for several days following childbirth. Other factors that might make one vulnerable included such things as contraceptive use, heredity, consuming certain foods, stress or strong emotions.

Given the broad range of symptoms and causes women associated with uterus problems, it was not surprising that they were reported to be common, with 70% of women of reproductive age (20-59) surveyed (n=1028) reporting experiencing one or more such problems in the past two years, in many cases on a chronic or recurrent basis (Boonmongkon et al. 1999). In-depth interviews with 50 women who had chronic or recurrent symptoms revealed that while immediate symptoms caused discomfort, their overwhelming concern was that their problems would ultimately "change into" (kai pen) cervical cancer (maleng pak mot luk), even if symptoms were mild. Thus, the key risk concept which dominated the minds of those suffering symptoms was the risk of illness transformation from an annoying condition to a deadly disease that was viewed as incurable, invariably fatal and highly stigmatized. When asked how their uterus problems affected their lives, many women spontaneously mentioned a fear of cancer and death. Their comments indicated a substantial psychological burden resulting from fear of cancer, which manifested as insomnia, worry about chronic illness and death, and concern over who would take care of

children or grandchildren when chronic illness prevented women from fulfilling family obligations.

To understand this overwhelming fear of illness transformation and death, even in the face of relatively mild symptoms, we need to examine local ideas about the nature of "uterus problems." Problems with various causes were perceived to cause a large ulcer, fungus or collection of pus inside the uterus; as untreated problems became more severe, they could progress to cervical cancer, envisioned as the most advanced, life-threatening stage in the development of this uterine anomaly. Thus, hard work might lead to an infected uterus that would become a tumour that would become cancer; a sexually transmitted infection might develop into a uterine ulcer that would become cancer. Whereas biomedicine recognizes infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV) as a risk factor for developing cervical cancer, women perceived a much broader range of causes and conditions that might transform into cervical cancer, including various infections as well as abdominal pain, a "bad uterus" caused by an earlier life event (for example, sterilization or injury), vaginal discharge, poor hygiene, hard work or use of contraceptives. Thus, women with recurrent symptoms identified a combination of wide-ranging types of vulnerabilities and physical insults that put them at risk to a common type of uterine injury that would ultimately advance to cervical cancer.

Health Education and the Reinforcement of Risk

Fears of cervical cancer among women with a broad range of pains and other symptoms cannot, however, be explained by "cultural" conceptions of risk and illness transformation in isolation. These concerns must be placed in the context of various macro-level forces and their local manifestations that have influenced local experiences of risk to cervical cancer. One of the experience-far sources of risk knowledge has been the introduction of cervical cancer education and screening. Conducting Papanicolaou (Pap) smears at regular intervals on adult women has become the global gold standard for the early detection of cervical dysplasia, which may develop into cervical cancer. Beginning in the 1980s, Khon Kaen Province initiated one of the most aggressive cervical cancer screening campaigns in Thailand and women were encouraged to get a Pap smear once a year. The campaign emphasized the danger of cervical cancer with little information provided on actual incidence, the meaning of Pap smear results or what conditions actually lead to cervical cancer. The latter is particularly important given the concerns about illness transformation described above. We observed large educational posters displayed at health posts that graphically depicted a magnified image of

advanced cervical cancer but without any explanation provided. This image—easily interpreted as a macroscopic photo of the inside of the uterus rather than a microscopic image—was remarkably consistent with local perceptions of advanced uterus problems, imagined as a large ulcer, fungus or collection of pus in the uterus, thus helping to reinforce local ideas that linked uterus problems and cervical cancer. Such images helped to fuse the experience-near (ethnomedical) and experience-far (health education) sources of risk knowledge into a coherent whole.

In-depth interviews with women experiencing recurrent symptoms revealed the impact of the education campaign and the extent of its consequences for women's embodied sense of risk. One woman commented that while her symptoms were minor, she still worried about them turning into cancer "because they did a health education campaign." Another said that from the health education messages dispersed over the village loudspeaker, she learned how common cervical cancer is and it made her so afraid of cancer that she suffered from insomnia and had requested sleeping pills from the health post. The shift over time in perceived risk experienced by women as a result of changing public health agendas was particularly evident in the statement of one woman who explained, "Years ago people did not know about cervical cancer. Women had [vaginal] discharge and thought they had syphilis or gonorrhoea. Now, we think cancer."

Twenty focused interviews on perceived risk revealed that women expected 9-16% of women over age 25 in their communities to develop cervical cancer, a number higher than the 6-11% expected to develop AIDS (which has also received extensive health education attention in Thailand), and in stark contrast to the estimated, national annual incidence of 28 cases per 100,000 women. Although it is difficult for laypeople to estimate disease rates and their specific estimates are not expected to be accurate, these findings—when combined with our qualitative interviews—indicate that women perceived a level of risk to cervical cancer that was disproportionate to epidemiological estimates of risk. Thus, in addition to experience-near concerns about vulnerabilities relating to one's own medical history, current health problems and life circumstances, exposure to health education and risk information created a sense of collective risk among the adult female population, resulting in an epidemic of fear surrounding cervical cancer.

Drug Marketing and the (Re)Production of Risk

Public health education was not, however, the only source of experience-far knowledge that affected local perceptions of uterus problems and cervical cancer. Pharma-

ceutical companies played a role in the production of medical knowledge as well. Forty of the 50 women interviewed who experienced recurrent symptoms reported self-medicating the last time they experienced symptoms and 34 of these women bought antibiotics, most often from village shops. Two popular brands of tetracycline (Kano and Hero®) were widely believed to be good for uterus problems in general (see also Whittaker 2000), despite the fact that tetracycline is medically inappropriate for many problems locally classified as uterus-related such as muscle pain; fungal infections can be made worse by antibiotics.

Yet, as with health education campaigns, broader forces influenced the "ethnomedical" perception that tetracycline was good for the uterus: poster and radio advertising by pharmaceutical companies explicitly encouraged this association. One poster advertisement for Kano featured linked male and female icons (implying STI treatment) and a picture of a uterus with an arrow pointing to it containing the word "uterus," with no other explanation provided. In an unregulated drug advertising and purchasing environment, this pharmaceutical company's direct-to-consumer advertising of tetracycline as a drug to be associated with the uterus and sexuality served to medicalize a particular organ as defective and in need of treatment, reinforce local ethnomedical perceptions of the uterus as an organ at risk to disease, and employ ambiguity (in the absence of an explanation for the images provided) specifically to (re)produce a sense of risk associated with the uterus.

This experience-far production of risk knowledge by drug companies is brought closer to the experience-near context of village life by the marketing strategies of informal medicine vendors. During the children's febrile illness project, conducted in a different province of Northeast Thailand, I observed travelling medicine vendors who visited villages, attracted a crowd by showing movies outdoors in large public spaces, and then sold medicines during intermission. One vendor marketed an herbal tonic to women as a medicine to treat various uterus problems; he stated that among other things, it would treat vaginal discharge, and "prevent it from becoming cervical cancer, because if white discharge doesn't go away you can get cervical cancer and then the doctor can't cure you." Thus, associations between uterus problems, cervical cancer, and unregulated, widely-available medications ranging from herbal tonics to antibiotics were encouraged by both formal and informal marketers of medicines. The explicit association of "uterus medicines" and cervical cancer prevention made by informal medicine vendors further reinforced a similar association between tetracycline—also marketed as a "uterus medicine" through visual imagery

in the poster described previously—and the prevention of cervical cancer.

Health Services Failures and the Effects of Social Vulnerability

In addition to health education and drug marketing, it is important to consider the impact of women's interactions with the health care system as a source of knowledge production and experiences of risk. Of the 50 women with chronic or recurrent symptoms interviewed, 23 had visited a district hospital the last time they experienced symptoms. During observations at two district hospitals, we found that women presenting with symptoms commonly requested an "internal exam" and were then redirected to the hospital's health promotion clinic for a Pap smear. This was problematic, however, because women conceived of a Pap smear as a diagnostic procedure for all uterus problems (the worst manifestation of which was cancer), rather than as a screening procedure specifically for precursors of cervical cancer. Survey data (n=1028) confirmed this perception, revealing that 42% of those who had received a Pap smear within the past two years sought out the service because they were experiencing abnormal symptoms (with most others recruited by health personnel), while 50% of those who had not had a Pap smear in the past two years gave "no abnormal symptoms" as their primary reason for not doing so. The fact that symptomatic women seeking treatment for uterus problems were redirected to the Pap smear clinic for cervical cancer screening further reinforced the association women made between all uterus problems and cancer; health staff thus inadvertently helped to (re)produce this "ethnomedical" risk knowledge.

Symptomatic women who were sent to the hospital's Pap smear clinic expected treatment for their symptoms in addition to cancer screening; in contrast, hospital staff were commonly unaware that they were symptomatic and only conducted routine screening without treating symptoms unless they were obvious and severe. Since women conceived of advanced uterus problems and cervical cancer as a large ulcer, fungus or accumulation of pus in the uterus, they expected these to be diagnosed upon visual inspection during an internal exam. Women who were not treated assumed that the exam failed to reveal their problem or that the hospital was ineffective. Communication between patients and staff was minimal; patients did not volunteer much information about their symptoms and staff did not invite questions. Patients experienced a sense of social vulnerability in clinical encounters, where they felt they lacked a voice to express their concerns and feared reproach. Exit interviews at the district hospitals

revealed that women wished to ask questions about their symptoms but dared not for fear of angering busy staff (see Whittaker 1996). Furthermore, the sensitive nature of reproductive tract symptoms and the sense of exposure associated with a pelvic exam only increased the sense of social vulnerability in these clinical interactions. The result of these encounters was that symptomatic women's perception of embodied risk to cancer was left unchanged, while expectations for diagnosis and treatment were not met, resulting in worry, dissatisfaction and a lack of effective treatment.

In sum, the women we interviewed—especially those with ongoing or recurrent symptoms—experienced an embodied sense of risk that a wide range of abdominal and reproductive tract ailments would damage their uterus and, ultimately, advance to cervical cancer. Yet their perceptions were not purely "local" or "cultural" in origin; rather, they were encouraged by both a well-meaning cervical cancer screening campaign that heightened awareness but also women's sense of risk to cervical cancer, and more ominous drug marketing practices that encouraged associations between tetracycline or other medicines, the uterus, sexually-transmitted infections, symptoms commonly experienced by women and cervical cancer. When combined, these forces created a semantic network (Good 1977) in which there was a strong association linking cervical cancer with a wide range of causes, various abdominal and reproductive tract symptoms, the uterus, tetracycline, and Pap smear clinics, as well as images of decay, stigma and death. These associations led women not only to self-medicate with antibiotics, but also to seek care from a health care system where lack of communication—encouraged by the social vulnerability experienced by marginalized people in face of intimidating clinical encounters—reinforced local risk perceptions of the relationship between uterus problems and cancer and led to a substitution of cervical cancer screening for treatment of symptoms. This led, ultimately, to treatment failure, health care dissatisfaction, and ongoing patient anxiety that their milder health problems would advance to a fatal disease.

"Fruit Fever" and the Risk of Incompatibility

The second study focused on children's acute febrile illnesses, examining how families made sense of ambiguous symptoms (for example, fever, rash and respiratory symptoms) and chose a particular course of treatment given a variety of traditional and biomedical health care resources from which to choose. It was in this context that the local illness category khai mak mai ("fruit fever") emerged as

a significant concern. In a household survey of lifetime family illness histories (n=44), 20 mothers (45%) self-reported at least one case of khai mak mai in their families. Khai mak mai was considered to affect all age groups, and was commonly raised as a concern during interviews on a variety of illness topics.

Khai mak mai was described as a non-contagious disease of unknown origin, characterized by fever and rash as well as an uncomfortable internal sensation referred to as "internal heat" (*hon nai*) and associated thirst. A wide variety of other possible symptoms were suggested by different informants (for example, lethargy, body pains, respiratory symptoms, etc.) such that the illness was potentially highly variable in symptom presentation. People acknowledged that a khai mak mai diagnosis could be difficult to determine, especially given that the defining rash could vary widely in appearance, take several days to emerge following the onset of illness, or be hidden or "trapped" inside the body. Diagnosis was sometimes posthumous, with an illness assumed to have been khai mak mai if the rash "came out" of the body after death in the form of skin discolorations. Diagnosis was also complicated by the fact that many people viewed khai mak mai as an illness complex that could have multiple subtypes each with different symptoms, and some more severe than others. For some people, khai mak mai (or one of its subtypes) was the same thing as a biomedically-recognized disease (variously described by different people as chicken pox, typhoid fever, measles, German measles or dengue fever), while for others khai mak mai was an illness different from all of these. Khai mak mai was not recognized by biomedical practitioners and the great diversity of symptoms, subcategories, and circumstances described by different informants made it possible for many biomedically-recognized diseases—such as pneumonia, malaria, dengue fever, chicken pox and measles—to potentially be classified as khai mak mai by laypeople (see Pylypa 2007).

Khai mak mai carried a high risk of death, not because of the severity of the illness itself, but because consumption of certain foods and medicines while sick could cause an otherwise mild or moderate illness to suddenly progress to a fatal one. The key local risk concept of relevance was the idea of phit (wrong, incompatible) substances. This ethnomedical concept translates across different illness and bodily states; for example, certain foods are considered phit for a woman following childbirth (Whittaker 2000). Substances universally perceived as incompatible with khai mak mai included all fruits, injectable medications and intravenous (IV) solutions. Injections were said to be so invariably and rapidly fatal

that the patient would die "before the needle even came out." Illness narratives were replete with references to people who had undiagnosed (or misdiagnosed) fevers and consumed fruit or injected medications without knowing that the illness was khai mak mai, then subsequently became gravely ill or died. Common stories of khai mak mai deaths—especially following the administration of IV solution by hospital staff—included known cases among relatives of informants as well as vague rumours and cautionary tales about cases of fatal illness mismanagement. Fears about the risk of consuming incompatible substances and its fatal consequences were important considerations in how all fevers of unknown origin were managed.

Herbal Medicine and Targetted Commercial Herbal Products

Herbal medicine was considered the only appropriate treatment for khai mak mai, often administered by elders or by traditional herbalists who could also diagnose the illness. However, difficulties distinguishing one type of fever from another made actual treatment patterns far more complex in practice. Home diagnosis was often situational; a fever might be tentatively diagnosed as khai mak mai if it occurred during "fruit season" (when khai mak mai was perceived to be more common), if it did not respond to biomedical treatment, or if the patient's condition deteriorated following consumption of fruit. Diagnoses could change over time as symptoms emerged and as various treatments—both herbal and biomedical—were tried and tested. Resort to herbalists might encourage a khai mak mai diagnosis given their expertise in this area as well as their ability to identify a variety of khai mak mai subtypes even in the absence of a visible rash. The ambiguity surrounding diagnosis informed risk management strategies: some families consulted a herbalist as a first resort for febrile illness in general, to check "just in case" it was khai mak mai before resorting to health services where IV and injection use risked exacerbating the illness; others waited several days to see if a rash would emerge before seeking medical care.

Commercial herbal medications—most notably the brand Ya Khiao Tra Bai Pho®—were also available in village shops, and, as with tetracycline in the previous case study, appeared to be carefully marketed at local illness concerns. Although the medication packaging did not mention khai mak mai explicitly, the indications listed on the package were those strongly associated with khai mak mai, and included fever, "internal heat," and thirst, as well as German measles and chicken pox, both common diseases characterized by fever and rash that were often

equated with particular subtypes of khai mak mai. As in the previous case study, medicine manufacturers targetted commercial products at local concerns in a way that reinforced a semantic network of associations that included herbal medicine, fever, "internal heat," thirst, biomedically recognized febrile illnesses characterized by rash, and by extension, khai mak mai—a local illness complex linked to all of these. Thus, despite a lack of acknowledgement of khai mak mai as a legitimate disease category within biomedicine, an authority beyond the community level—in the form of a commercial medication manufacturer—reinforced the association between herbal treatment and symptoms characteristic of khai mak mai. In so doing, this company helped to link the experience-far knowledge associated with commercial research and production with experience-near conceptions of fever, as well as local risk management—since herbal treatment as a first resort for unknown fevers, especially those with rash, was an important harm reduction strategy designed to mitigate the risk of fatal mismanagement of khai mak mai in hospitals.

Health Services and Social Vulnerability in Clinical Settings

Because injections and IV solution were commonly given in hospitals where health providers were almost universally perceived to be ignorant of khai mak mai, people reported that they "didn't dare go to the doctor" if khai mak mai was suspected. However, given diagnostic difficulties, many cases later concluded to be khai mak mai were, nevertheless, at some point treated by biomedical health providers. These encounters were almost always described in negative terms. As with the previous case study, people's fears about the risk of fatal mismanagement of khai mak mai in hospitals need to be understood in the context of the quality and nature of their interactions within the public health care system—in particular their social vulnerability in hospital settings—as well as the ways in which they balanced multiple types of perceived risk, and how notions of risk were affected by health education messages.

Informants reported that when patients were treated in the hospital with injections or IV solution and died, the hospital staff failed to recognize that incompatibility of these substances with khai mak mai was the cause of death. They also told stories of cases where patients resisted biomedical treatment when incompatibility with IV solution was suspected, sometimes by surreptitiously closing off IV tubes or removing them and fleeing the hospital when staff were not looking. People reported that when they raised concerns about the risks of fruit,

injections or IV solution with health providers, their concerns were not taken seriously; they were told "You can eat anything!" or "IV solution isn't incompatible with any illness," responses they found to be dismissive. More broadly, people complained of maltreatment at the hands of an unsympathetic health care system, and exhibited a guarded and shaky trust in the competence and motivations of health providers. They commonly condemned the rudeness of nurses and the poor service in hospitals, and felt powerless to question physicians. Interestingly, people tended not to place blame on physicians for mistreating khai mak mai, forgiving them because they lacked knowledge of the illness; rather, they were more concerned with health providers' moral failings—that is, their condescending or dismissive attitudes. As rural, less-educated, Isan people faced with higher class, urban, and sometimes ethnically Central Thai health providers, their broader sense of social marginalization framed these interactions.

By speaking not only of health providers' ignorance about khai mak mai, but also their dismissive attitudes and maltreatment of patients, people explicitly acknowledged the role of social vulnerability as a "risk factor" for illness progression. Patients commonly experience a lack of agency as non-experts to challenge expert notions of risk (Lupton 1999). This lack of agency leads to powerlessness to control the outcome of the clinical encounter, which in the case of *khai mak mai*, carried the risk of fatal mistreatment of the illness. Informants lamented that medical staff would not acknowledge the role of injections and IVs in causing khai mak mai deaths in the hospital, and spoke of being blamed for treatment delay when, in fact, a death was caused by hospital administration of IVs. Socially vulnerable and unable to assert their own conceptions of risk, patients and their families balanced different risk expertises available to them: biomedical expertise, the expertise of herbalists and the expertise derived from their own experiences with symptoms, illness and death. People frequently spoke of how "Isan people know" about khai mak mai, but health providers "don't understand," and suggested the need to rely on traditional expertise in balance with the benefits of biomedicine—in which people expressed great confidence for the treatment of many other illnesses. Encounters with health providers thus not only left intact existing perceptions of risk, but failed to engage patient fears that common biomedical treatments carried the risk of death, given the powerlessness of patients to challenge expert interpretations of risk.

Managing Competing Risks: Fruit Fever, Dengue Fever and the Role of Health Education

Despite the risks of biomedical care, people often felt they could not avoid the hospital entirely, even when khai mak mai was a possibility, because of the difficulty of diagnosing fevers of uncertain origin. While they challenged biomedical notions of risk in cases of khai mak mai, they also had to make difficult decisions about which experts to trust for a particular illness episode. One mother, whose son died following administration of an IV, had consulted a herbalist before taking her son to the hospital, but despite this precaution blamed herself for not consulting a second, more experienced herbalist first—believing this would have prevented her son's death. Yet most people trusted that biomedical care was essential for the treatment of other fevers that resembled khai mak mai, and given diagnostic uncertainty, thus faced a dilemma in deciding whether to seek biomedical care. Of particular concern was dengue fever (*khai lueat ok*), which was believed to be invariably fatal without hospitalization and the administration of intravenous solution. Informants frequently commented that the symptoms of dengue and khai mak mai were so similar that it was often difficult to tell them apart. Thus, patients faced with diagnostic uncertainty were confronted with a dilemma—should they risk going to the hospital (and dying of hospital mismanagement of khai mak mai) or should they risk staying home (and dying of untreated dengue)? They were faced with the need to balance competing risks.

As with the previous case study, it is important to place the dilemma over the treatment of khai mak mai versus dengue in the context of the impact of health education messages about risk. While there was no visible health education on fever in general nor any that addressed local concerns about fever and rash, dengue fever was widely targetted by prevention campaigns aimed at convincing communities to engage in source reduction of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito population that spreads the disease (see Pylypa 2009). Throughout Northeast Thailand, large banners and posters warn of the dangers of dengue transmission, and schoolchildren and village health volunteers are mobilized to lead community source reduction activities. These campaigns focus on mosquito control messages, and provide no information on dengue symptoms, prevalence or mortality rates. Importantly, they make no distinction between mild dengue fever—which makes up the vast majority of dengue cases—and potentially fatal dengue hemorrhagic fever, which is rare but more dangerous. Rather, they emphasize the risk of death from dengue, using fear to mobilize par-

ticipation in mosquito control; one large banner encouraging prevention measures stated that "if *Aedes* mosquitoes (*nyung lai*) bite you, you could die," and instructed people with fevers to "hurry to the doctor quickly!"

This portrayal of dengue risk is reflected in community risk perceptions. While health researchers in Thailand used the term *khai dengki* to refer to the milder and vastly more common form of the disease, community members were only aware of the term khai lueat ok ("bleeding fever") used in health education, which suggests the more severe form by referencing its often-fatal haemorrhaging. They had no conception of a mild form of dengue and considered all dengue cases to be fatal without hospital treatment. The experience-far knowledge of the risk of death from dengue, as promoted in health education, was then translated to the experience-near level through particular cases in the community in which children had been hospitalized and reportedly nearly died of dengue haemorrhagic fever. Since milder dengue cases went unrecognized as dengue (and were locally classified as other types of fever), these severe cases became the prototypes of the disease that informed perceptions of risk at the community level.

As with cervical cancer, the local conception of dengue risk cannot be separated from the notions of risk embedded in health education messages and how these are acted upon in light of other, community-based perceptions of risk. In the case of dengue fever, the fear of death from dengue—if not treated in the hospital with IV solution—was compounded by the opposing risk that khai mak mai would be mistaken for dengue and fatally mismanaged with an IV in the hospital. Risk perceptions associated with one illness do not exist in isolation from the concerns about risk to related illnesses, nor from the social vulnerability that prevents people from voicing their concerns about diagnostic uncertainty and fears of illness mismanagement. As noted by Chapman (2000:23), the management of risk necessarily involves the use of individual agency to assess competing risks, as people "weigh up the risks about which they are deluged with information against other risks present in their day-to-day lives which may receive much less publicity."

In sum, khai mak mai emerged as an important community concern—a common disease that biomedical practitioners were incapable of treating, but for which effective herbal treatment was available from elders or in the form of commercial herbal products that targetted local concerns. Yet the risk of this otherwise mild to moderate illness advancing to a fatal condition was perceived to be very real, given diagnostic difficulties which could lead to the consumption of an incompatible substance before a

correct diagnosis was made. Since government health providers were generally believed to be ignorant of khai mak mai and were reputed to resort quickly to injections and especially intravenous solution, people avoided health services when khai mak mai was suspected as a risk-reduction strategy. The approach of avoiding health services—rather than discussing their concerns about injections and IVs with health staff—reflected social vulnerability in clinical settings where patients believed that their concerns would be ignored. This social vulnerability was understood as a risk factor that could result in iatrogenic illness mismanagement and death. However, diagnostic ambiguity and the perceived importance of biomedical care for other illnesses with similar symptoms (especially dengue fever, which health education encouraged people to believe carried a high risk of death) created a dilemma for families who had to balance multiple perceived risks which required different approaches to treatment. Since this dilemma ultimately resulted in many potential khai mak mai cases being treated at some point by formal health providers, families were faced with substantial anxieties that were not alleviated by medical staff who dismissed their concerns as unfounded.

Discussion

It is clear that in both case studies, community perceptions of risk and illness progression conflicted with biomedical ideas about risk, and this played a role in contributing to patient fears and inadequate communication at the clinical level. However, the "ethnomedical" explanatory models of illness and associated risk perceptions that patients brought to clinical encounters did not exist in timeless isolation from other "macro" influences that shaped them, including the impact of emerging health education and prevention campaigns, the effects of marketing by pharmaceutical companies and drug sellers, and social inequalities between patients and health providers trained in evidence-based biomedicine but with little training in social medicine.

The approaches taken in health education played a significant role in moulding the situation that led to patient fears and treatment failures in both case studies. During the febrile illness project, health education posters were visible in communities providing information on various infectious diseases (most prominently, dengue), but with no mention of local concerns about fevers and rash. Similarly, in the case of cervical cancer, the widespread health education campaign did not address local concerns about illness transformation. By building health education campaigns around "top-down" concerns with biomedically recognized diseases, rather than "bottom-up" community

risk perceptions and concerns with particular symptom complexes, substantial local health concerns were left unaddressed in public health communication efforts. Furthermore, overzealous health education campaigns that attempted to use fear and risk discourse as a motivator contributed to worries about fatal illness transformation (in the case of cervical cancer) and the risk of fatal illness mismanagement (in the case of khai mak mai and dengue). The production of medical knowledge through health education thus co-constructed local perceptions of risk in combination with "ethnomedical" ideas about risk of illness progression, in ways that contributed to substantial patient anxieties about their health conditions as well as dilemmas surrounding risk management and treatment.

It is important to note that local concerns—even when they conflict with biomedical care as in the case of khai mak mai—may not necessarily prevent health services use, as people are pragmatic in their health care seeking behaviours and willing to experiment with different options. Rather, these concerns may have a greater impact when they are left unaddressed in the clinical space where patients feel marginalized, socially vulnerable and without a voice. Medical anthropologists have advocated for cultural competency training and negotiation approaches to clinical interaction, whereby health providers elicit, acknowledge and work with patient explanatory models of illness (Berlin and Fowkes 1998; Kleinman 1979). In the risk literature—which tends to focus on Western settings and places less emphasis on cultural difference—greater attention has been given to the role of trust and its impact on people's approach to risk management. Boholm (2003:171-172) asserts that "one way of coping is by means of high trust in those responsible for the management of the risk object or having strong faith in some other governing force or principle. But if trust is low or there is only weak faith, the remaining options are precaution or avoidance." In the case of khai mak mai, precaution (trying out herbal medicine for a few days before risking a trip to the hospital) and avoidance (of the hospital entirely) were common responses to risk, given the lack of trust in health providers.

In the febrile illness project, informants commonly expressed distrust of an alienating health care system, complained of poor communication skills and rudeness on the part of practitioners, and felt that health providers ignored their concerns about incompatible substances and khai mak mai. Yet, there was evidence that where efforts were made to overcome social inequalities between providers and patients and engender trust, conflicts between ethnomedical concerns and biomedical conceptions of risk could be overcome. One district hospital nurse

who ran a very successful private after-hours clinic was described by community members as "the only health provider who knows about khai mak mai." An interview with her revealed that she possessed a thorough understanding of patient concerns about khai mak mai. Perhaps more importantly, she began the interview by emphasizing her egalitarian ethos, respect for patients, and willingness to engage their concerns in a way they found credible. She achieved this credibility by acknowledging concerns about fruit and supporting reasonable dietary restrictions, by acknowledging the potential dangers of IVs (for example, infection due to lack of sterility), and by discussing precautions she took to ensure their safe use—a response that was sufficient to satisfy patients (Pylypa 2007). Cultural competency and knowledge of patient concerns was a necessary but insufficient condition for her success; respect for patients across a power imbalance and social divide and the ability to engender trust, were equally essential.

Finally, it is noteworthy that in both of these case studies, drug companies and medicine vendors promoted medications in ways that specifically catered to and reinforced local ideas about illness and risk. In the West, researchers have discussed how drug companies produce knowledge that contributes to the medicalization of social problems and everyday embodied states. One means by which they do so is through direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising (legal to varying degrees in different countries), whereby people are encouraged to self-diagnose and then "ask their doctor" if a particular drug is right for them. DTC advertising serves to expand the number of people who see themselves as at risk or in need of treatment, often by reframing common human characteristics and experiences as pathological (for example, shyness or occasional erectile dysfunction), and frequently employing clinical ambiguity to encourage people to self-categorize as ill based on vague and commonly experienced "symptoms." In this way, pharmaceutical companies market not only drugs, but also diseases themselves (Conrad 2007).

Yet, in the West, where prescription medications are regulated, the need for a prescription imposes some control on this process as physicians remain the gatekeepers to prescription drugs. In countries such as Thailand, DTC advertising is less regulated as are prescription medicines, which are commonly available from any village shop or pharmacy without resort to a physician for a prescription. In these highly unregulated contexts, little has been written about the ways in which DTC advertising and other medicine marketing strategies produce knowledge of risk and illness, medicalize common experiences,

and lead to self-medication with powerful prescription medicines. The case of tetracycline marketing for "uterus problems" provides some preliminary insights into how this can occur. In this case, a drug company employed clinical ambiguity to link an antibiotic with a particular organ that is locally associated with a wide range of symptoms and conditions; in other words, the pharmaceutical company explicitly used local illness perceptions to their marketing advantage. While advocates of DTC advertising describe its role as promoting the development of an "educated consumer" who can engage in dialogue with his or her physician, DTC advertising takes on new meaning where physicians can be bypassed altogether as people seek "prescription" medications directly from pharmacies and provision shops.

These two case studies have illustrated how experience-near and experience-far sources of risk knowledge can combine and interact to impact perceptions of risk and risk management. The interplay between these levels is clear. For example, experience-far, global risk knowledge is translated to the local level via local experience that transforms an abstract idea into a concrete experience (Boholm 2003). The idea of dengue as a universally deadly condition, promoted by health education, becomes embodied in the particular village child who was treated in the hospital for its most extreme manifestation— dengue haemorrhagic fever—reinforcing the perception that all dengue carries a high risk of death. Local, experience-near "ethnomedical" risk knowledge is also translated "upward" and applied to the global realm of biomedicine. Concerns about incompatible (phit) substances are part of "traditional" medical knowledge in Northeast Thailand, where the concept is used to impose food restrictions during vulnerable states, such as during pregnancy or the postpartum period. The idea of phit substances has been extended to universal biomedical treatments in the form of injections and intravenous solution, applying a local risk concept to interpret and manage the risks of global biomedicine. The ways that local, "cultural" risk concepts are applied and the resulting risk management strategies people employ can only be understood by examining the complex interactions of the local and global, the cultural and political-economic, and the traditional and modern forces that inform them.

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Acknowledgments

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"Intimacy Is the Name of the Game": Media and the Praxis of Sexual Knowledge in Nairobi

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Abstract: In the 1990s, new debates about sexuality emerged in the Kenyan media. These debates are embedded in a larger framework of personal aspirations and social transformations regarding gender, sexuality and culture that are characteristic of postcolonial Kenya. One group that embodies these transformations in a particular way is young middle-class adults in Nairobi. The focus of this article is on the presentation of sexuality and intimacy in print media, on the way people appropriate this knowledge, and how this interaction dovetails with the way sexuality has become symbolic of being a contemporary, or modern, person. The convergence between media and middle-class formation shows how modern subjectivities are created, embodied and naturalized.

Keywords: print media, sexuality, social transformations, embodiment, middle class

Résumé : Dans les années 1990, de nouveaux débats sur la sexualité sont apparus dans les médias kényans. Ces débats font partie d'un cadre plus large d'aspirations personnelles et de transformations sociales relatives à l'identité sexuelle, aux pratiques sexuelles et à la culture, qui sont caractéristiques du Kenya postcolonial. Un groupe qui incarne particulièrement bien ces transformations est celui des jeunes adultes de classe moyenne de Nairobi. Cet article s'intéresse à la représentation de la sexualité et de l'intimité dans les médias imprimés, à la manière dont les gens s'approprient cette connaissance et à comment cette interaction s'articule avec la manière dont la sexualité est devenue symbolique de l'incarnation d'une personne contemporaine, moderne. La convergence entre les médias et la formation d'une classe moyenne montre comment sont créées les subjectivités modernes, comment elles s'incarnent et acquièrent un statut naturel.

Mots-clés : médias imprimés, sexualité, transformations sociales, incarnation, classe moyenne

"Better sex makes happier couples" is a remarkable claim made in a widely respected local magazine in a society that generally shuns explicit references to sexual practices. In their November 2001 issue, *Parents* magazine offered suggestions for various sexual positions, claiming that sex is "a couple's primary way to show love." At the beginning of this century, *Parents* magazine's weekly column on sexuality became a major source of information for people about sexual issues, from female and male sexuality to the meaning of sex and eroticism and practices of love and affection. More concretely, it dealt with topics such as sexual pleasure, foreplay, erotic dress and speech, the female orgasm, male impotence, female lack of desire, sexual practices and positions, and much more. Currently, this column is the most explicit medium concerning sexual matters that is accessible to Nairobians from all walks of life, as the magazine is for sale on the street and is reasonably priced. For Kenya, the unambiguous descriptions of sexual practices are remarkable. The magazine is quietly present in a society that generally shuns explicit verbalizations of sex. Whereas references to sex are often critiqued as "immoral," the matter-of-fact descriptions in *Parents* are condoned. Significantly, this column is targetted at married couples and, in this way, legitimizes writing about sexual practices.

The publication and wide circulation of *Parents'* (in)famous column does not stand by itself. Beginning in the early 1990s, the intimate has emerged as a public discourse. On the one hand, AIDS brought the topic of sexuality into the public agenda. AIDS-related stigma has given rise to its own discourse, a language of human relationships that relates self to other, normal to abnormal, health to sickness, and sex to death. Soon enough, AIDS became discussed in relation to "immorality" and the "loss of cultural or African roots," which supposedly led to the current "sexual chaos" of which AIDS was seen to be the result (Nzioka 1996). On the other hand, as described

above, a much less volatile discourse became quietly discernable in a particular niche in the media. The way sexuality became addressed from this point of view was fundamentally different as compared to the dominant ways of conceptualizing sexuality in demarcations of right and wrong. Here, AIDS was not denied; instead, discourse led to broadened perspectives on sexuality by incorporating other subjects like love, trust and distrust and passion, and included the effects of the senses such as attraction, arousal and satisfaction in the experience of sexuality. Sexuality was understood as a natural element of a person that could bring pleasure, happiness or trouble. The focus was on how to increase the positive elements of sex and circumvent or solve difficulties.

This emergence of the intimate is part of a larger process in which a reconfiguration of gender and sexuality takes place as a result of decades-long labour migration, urbanization and education (Mutongi 2007; Robertson 1997; White 1990). For decades, a desire for a more personal approach to partner choice, based on growing values of companionship, egalitarianism, the couple's relative autonomy and, increasingly, the sexual satisfaction of women rather than reproduction and ethnic compatibility has been articulated (Mutongi 2000; Odhiambo 2003; Thomas 2006). The consequences of the shifts implicated by such transformations are epitomized in the media. The current debates about sexuality are therefore embedded in this larger framework of personal aspiration and social transformation regarding gender, sexuality and culture that are characteristic of postcolonial Kenya. One group that embodies these transformations in a particular way is young middle-class adults in Nairobi. It is difficult to speak of social classes in Nairobi, as it is not uncommon to find large differences in socio-economic positioning within families.[1] Therefore, I use the term *middle class* as a descriptive label for looking at cultural processes and as a place where a cultural middle ground is being pioneered by particular groups such as by those I label *young professionals*. In my study, I focus on young professionals between the ages of 20 and 30 and who see themselves as explorers of what they perceive to be a modern or "sophisticated" lifestyle in Nairobi.

Although young Africans have used various forms of media to reflect on their intimate relationships for generations (Behrend 1998; Fugelsang 1994; Larkin 1997), an important shift has occurred in the last two decades— at least in Nairobi. What is new in contemporary Kenya is not only the sheer volume of representations and debates about sexuality in the public domain, but also the introduction of a therapeutic ethos into those discussions (Spronk 2009b). Therapeutic discourse, with its emphasis

on reflexivity and self-understanding, offers young professionals a new way to understand the very foundation of their relationships. They engage a therapeutic ethos to reflect on their personal aspirations and decisions, and to gain skills necessary to enact lives that they hope will be different from their parents. The majority of (the few) studies on media and love in Africa have analyzed intimacy in relation to the ideology and practices of (romantic) love, thereby focusing on the way people experience the intensity of love, its endurance and how it strengthens lovers (Cole and Thomas 2009). In this article, I focus on the presentation of sexuality and intimacy in print media, on the way people appropriate this knowledge, and how this interaction dovetails with the way sexuality has become symbolic for being a contemporary, or modern, person. Whereas I agree with Parikh's observation about the "commercialization of sexual advice in the media" in East Africa (2005:148), I do not agree that (all) media separate notions of sexual risk and pleasure. I show how the popularity of columns such as the one found in *Parents* can be explained by the way they address people's concerns and aspirations. The mutually constitutive intersection between media and middle-class practice is crucial for understanding the creation, embodiment and naturalization of subjectivities.

Sexuality and Sensation

In scholarly debates about intimacy, corporeal experiences are often neglected, which is notable as intimacy and sexuality are mainly experienced through the body. The study of sexuality in anthropology has a tendency to ignore the sensorial pleasures of sexuality in favour of studying how sexuality relates to gender, identity, kinship or reproduction (but see Lyons and Lyons 2004). The study of sexuality in past decades can be divided into two main streams. The first stream, feminist anthropology, has a long history of addressing how the normative order structures gender roles and gender identities, and consequently sexuality (Moore 1994; Ortner 1997). These studies of sexuality focus on the *politics* of sexuality and how power relations frame gender and sexuality. The second stream concerns the study of transgender, same-sex relations, sex work, sex tourism or heterosexuality, which can be characterized as the study of *diversity*. Frequently such studies on sexuality conclude that minority groups— such as transgender persons, or transnational relations characterizing sex tourism, or concepts such as masculinity—can no longer be conceptualized as singular but must be understood in their plurality, as heterogeneity is dominant (Boellstorff 2007; Constable 2009; Gutmann 1997). Yet, the politicizing of sexuality and the celebra-

tion of diversity tend to ignore subjective erotic experience as the focus of ethnographic inquiry. When subjective sexual practices are the focus of inquiry, the tendency is to favour the relation between gender and identity (Kulick 1997; Rubin 2002; Valentine 2007), while it is less common to take up the study of erotic practices (see, for example, Parker 1991; Wekker 2006).

While there is no denying the enormous contribution these studies have made to the anthropology of sexuality, the focus on power relations and how these frame gender and sexuality removes us from studying the sensorial and emotional qualities of sex and sexuality. The neglect of the embodied experience of sexuality is largely due to the current constructionist paradigm in the study of sexuality (Vance 1991), which tends to overlook a more phenomenological approach to sex as a result of its epistemological position. By looking at the praxis—the process by which a theory, lesson or skill is enacted—of sexual knowledge among young professional adults in Nairobi, I argue for a more inclusive approach to sexuality. In this article, I incorporate the corporeal experience of sex in the analysis of culture.

Young professionals' explanations about the importance of sex relates to how sex is an intense corporeal experience, one which augments a gendered sense of self that is, in turn, related to particular notions of being young, modern and African. Sexuality is thus central not only to self-expression but also self-understanding, whereby "being modern" informs particular aspirations and practices. I focus on the appropriation from print media of knowledge about sexuality by centring the discussion on young adults' experiences and aspirations of sexual pleasure. I show how the meanings of social transformations and sexual sensations converge in the corporeal experience of intimacy among young professionals, in other words, how young professionals *embody* changes in intimacy.[2]

Sex and Sensibility in Nairobi

Kenya has become a society inflamed by sexual desire.
—Marjorie Oludhe-Magoye (1996:1)

Phrases such as this, about a society overwhelmed by lust and suggesting sexual chaos through invocation of images of rampant sex, are not uncommon in Nairobi. Such comments exemplify the almost palpable sentiments that have come to characterize the "AIDS era." Sexuality is a hot issue that provokes discussions about sexual ideology, practice and agency among (self-acclaimed) moral guardians such as elders, religious leaders, or politicians. Although sexuality has always caused explosive reactions

in Nairobi (Nelson 1987), the course that current debates take originates from specific responses to the AIDS epidemic. The presence and impact of AIDS have worked like catalysts on discussions about sexuality by linking sex and death (Nzioka 2000). AIDS discourses involve all those exclusionary and dichotomous contradictions that allow people to draw safe boundaries around the acceptable, the permissible and the desirable so as to contain fears and phobias about sickness, death and decay, and sexuality.

The fear of AIDS reveals a fear of the disease as well as a fear of even more inflammatory desire and the loss of control over youth by elders; as Nelson (1987) suggests, often when something is criticized as morally wrong in Kenya, the point is not so much that it is considered "immoral," but rather that it threatens gerontocratic and moral authority. The manner in which sex figures in public debates centralizes the issue of social control over individuals and their desires (Odhiambo 2007). For parents and religious and political leaders, the increase in the number of sexually mature young people outside the bounds of marriage is not only contrary to chastity norms but has become an issue needing public regulation. Sex, for the conventional order, is a permanently lurking menace as well as a necessity (in terms of procreation): the need to control it—as well as the fear of it—underlies social processes of communication and social construction in the Kenyan public sphere. Public debates decry societal disorder, with AIDS seen as a sign of the times and with sexual permissiveness, the breakdown of the family and shifting gender roles as its consequences. Public debates about sexuality in contemporary Nairobi are therefore mostly moral in nature; when they do deal with factual matters, information about health in relation to risky or safe behaviour are the focus.

All media have recognized that AIDS and sexuality are issues that need to be constantly addressed. AIDS is discussed as disease, as a social hazard for the individual as well as the family and community, and as something to avoid, though once infected, it is discussed as a way of life in which compassion and responsibility on the part of others should take precedence. Compared to the 1990s, when sexual behaviour was only discussed as the problematic activity causing AIDS, current debates about sexuality have been opened up to include the possibility of being infected and still having sex (in a couple relationship), and safe sex is taken for granted as much as possible. At the same time, or perhaps in reaction to it, another development can be discerned wherein the debate about sexuality is deliberately not linked to AIDS. In the turmoil described above, where public debates are mainly

instigated by actors who are predominantly older men in public gatherings, a new discourse articulated in the media has provided different ways of comprehending and signifying sexuality. This newly constituted public realm is made and eagerly adopted by young middle-class people. Young professionals in Nairobi form a social group of women and men who seek to forge intimate relations rooted in romantic and progressive ideals (Spronk 2009b). They actively engage with the media in their search for different ways of being and knowing.

A small group of young female and male professionals in Nairobi, including information and communication technology (ICT) professionals, accountants and junior NGO staff, represent an emerging social group that is not clearly defined but is nonetheless still recognizable. Born and raised in Nairobi, they have garnered the higher education necessary to take advantage of postcolonial opportunities and to pursue professional careers and middle-class lifestyles. Their lifestyles manifest a new cosmopolitanism that unites the cultural, financial and political flows within and between non-Western and Western societies (Appadurai 1996; Ferguson 1999). Their taste in music, fashion, humour and social concerns signals their appreciation of multiple modes of being (Nyairo 2005). They are cosmopolitans not because of a cultural orientation to the West, but because of their self-conscious interweaving of global and local perspectives (Spronk 2009a).

A characteristic pattern in these young people's background is that their grandfathers were among the first migrant labourers to Nairobi or to settler farms, while their grandmothers stayed behind at rural homesteads. Male labour migration considerably affected marriages, sexual patterns, family life and community participation. This grandparent generation was eager to educate at least a few of their children, and many sent children to mission schools in rural areas. These mission school-educated children, the parents of the young professionals in this study, were among the first group of Kenyans to receive formal education, which allowed them to work in the administration of the newly independent nation-state. Many of them migrated to Nairobi to work. Within this parent generation, the pattern of the nuclear family was introduced as they became more and more involved in life in the city while their bond with their rural "homes" weakened. For the children of this second generation, the young professionals, bonds with rural homes became even weaker. Their parents' efforts to incorporate them into activities at "home" diminished as the focus on city life grew. Urbanization, education and professionalization marked these families' lives. These young professionals were therefore

the products of particularly favourable circumstances that were only applicable to a small emerging middle class in postcolonial Kenya. As a result, they represent postcolonial transformations (Kanogo 2005; Mutongi 2007; Robertson 1997; Thomas 2003; White 1990), and in their ensuing lifestyles, constructions of gender, sexuality and culture continue to shift, engendering different modes of being (Spronk 2005a, 2005b). As such, they can be seen as being in the vanguard in terms of reconfigurations of gender, sexuality and culture.

During my research in 2001-02 and 2004, many young professionals explained their choices regarding courtship and marriage in relation, and sometimes in opposition, to the lives of their parents. Many described their parents' marriages as old-fashioned. Both female and male young professionals emphasized how they desired more egalitarian and companionate relationships. For example, Dorcas (aged 30 in 2001) explained that "We all have to accept that my generation of women is not like our mothers' generation." She had just ended a difficult relationship with a boyfriend who had urged her to accept domestic subservience by invoking her obligation to "African womanhood." Her ex-boyfriend's behaviour reminded her of her father's domineering presence and her mother's subdued manner. His insistence that sex was "her marital duty" especially infuriated her: it not only signified the "lousy lover" he was as he did not know "how to make love to a woman," it also showed his "backward" position as a man. Men expressed similar desires to craft relationships differently than their parents. I met Maurice (then aged 27) at a moment when he had just been approached by a woman who offered to be his second girlfriend, outside of his committed relationship. Some of his male friends encouraged him to take this opportunity. He, however, explained he could not start an affair with another woman because of his love for his girlfriend, Nyambura:

> We, the men of these days, have to make choices. We cannot live any more like our fathers; I believe it's not right to be polygamous. I am a modern man. I love Nyambura and I respect her, our sex life is like ... a mystical thing, not just release ... the way you make love expresses ... makes me feel manly of course, it makes you feel alive, but also ... is crucial to what kind of man you are.

In other words, sexuality is crucial in the development of contemporary notions of selfhood among young adults such as Dorcas and Maurice.

Young urban adults consider the notion of companionate relationship to be the panacea for the tensions and struggles they face in their relations, which result from the

shifting relations between men and women. Their aspirations are in line with other young women and men around the world who take up the ideal of companionate marriage as a way to demonstrate their modern individuality (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006). More particularly, intimacy, monogamy and sexual pleasure come to be seen as values and life goals (Jankowiak 2008). A fundamental element in the crafting of modern relationships and personhood is the perception that intimacy is both a means to self-realization as well as an important criterion for a successful relationship. The shift in the postcolonial era from "arranged marriages" organized by families to "love marriages," as well as other concerns typical for young professionals, are epitomized in the media. Media respond to young adults' questions and, at the same time, enable new understandings of being and knowing, what Liechty has called "new epistemic understandings" (2003:181). In Nairobi one can observe the mutually constitutive intersection between middle class and media.

By focusing on the practices of the former group, the convergence between media and middle-class formation shows how modern subjectivities are created, embodied and naturalized. One the one hand, media constitute the representation of desire in webs of cross-referencing mutual publicity. On the other hand, I will show that this articulation of desire *always* occurs in response to people's aspirations. The point is to focus on this dialectic in order to understand how new forms of social identification emerge from these processes.

Media, Sex and Sensibility

The development of mass media took off in Kenya during the 1990s as a result of the introduction of freedom of the press in 1991. The advent of a multiparty political system in 1992 led the government to liberalize press laws and, at the same time, liberalize the economy through privatization and fewer market restrictions. In time, more and more companies entered the market, and by 2001, there was a variety of different TV channels and print media alongside government controlled media. Furthermore, the widespread adoption of media technologies such as audiotape, telephone, television, VHS videotape, mobile phones, satellite television dishes and the Internet have increased communication locally and internationally. Their use and reception have greatly expanded the private, personal and family spheres.

From a commercial perspective, young professionals are an important market and much attention is directed toward this particular group. For many other Nairobians, young professionals also embody a certain ideal, and by way of local magazines and pullouts in newspapers fea-

turing young professionals, they are able to get a taste of their lifestyle. In other words, young professionals and their representation are the driving force behind a middle-class popular culture. According to Mark Kihenja, a Nairobi-based journalist, the media and "the trendy and hip [people] of Nairobi" are mutually dependent on each other: they follow each other as to what is "hot."[3] Young professionals—and other youth for that matter—are conscientious about style for aesthetic reasons and as a way to distinguish themselves (Nyairo 2005). At the same time, the media, via its style (see Meyer 2002), have become major providers of information covering a wide range of issues.

With the liberalization of the media in the 1990s, there was an explosion in locally produced magazines. Magazines are very popular and play an important role in the articulation of notions of "sophistication" or modern identity. The circulations of international magazines like *Elle*, *Marie-Claire* and *Men's Health* have increased steadily, while more locally published magazines have been created. *Eve*, for example, the first Kenyan woman's glossy, was launched in 2001.[4] The South African edition of *Ebony* has been available for a few years, but according to street vendors, sales have significantly increased over the past decade. The increasing number of glossies is biased toward women, though "male" glossies covering topics such as cars and computers have also proliferated, although to a lesser degree.[5] Less gendered, in fact gender balanced, are the popular pullouts from daily newspapers as well as the popular magazine *Parents* and a variety of Christian magazines.

The oldest and most popular magazine is *Saturday Magazine*, the Saturday pullout of the *Daily Nation*, one of the two largest dailies in Kenya.[6] It employs a format utilizing recurring topics that typify the importance of an up-to-date lifestyle. Every edition shows a local female beauty as the cover model, with her name, surname, interests and hobbies. The "Saturday Regulars" is a column about travel in Kenya or East Africa, while another column, called "Cosy Home," concerns "modern living" and advises on home furnishings. Other regular columns are the "Lonely Hearts Club" for dating advertisements, "Eating Out," "Medical Notes," "Image Matters," "Relationships" and letters to the editor. Every edition has several longer articles on various topics including fashion or one of the numerous beauty pageants; gender issues like women in higher positions; family matters such as the sexuality of teenagers; social concerns like poverty, AIDS or death from disease, the many car accidents and murders; fitness and features on gyms in Nairobi; and many articles about relationships and marriages that have

broken up, are stalled, or remain happy after 50 years. Moreover, there is also a conscious attempt to discuss sensitive issues like bridewealth, multi-partner sexual relations, sexual abuse, depression, financial disputes, abortion, alcoholism and all kinds of problems couples might face. These items are mostly preceded by personal confessions or revelations.[7] Discussions address topics and events from "modern," "sophisticated," or "common sense" perspectives that are weighed against "customs," "old beliefs," or "unrealistic" perspectives, while never losing sight of the "African perspective."

For example, at the time of my study, the 19 January 2001 issue of *Saturday Magazine* scrutinized two "thorny" issues that needed to be discussed "sensibly," without "condemning" them right away, as that "would not help any of the women implicated in these situations": bridewealth and men marrying a second wife. They were described as "thorny" because they could "cause major personal distress and unhappiness." Both topics were introduced through personal accounts from women living in these situations. The topic of polygamy was discussed as a practice victimizing women, while the practice of bridewealth was more or less taken for granted. However, it was recognized that bridewealth could cause unbearable suffering to a young couple when "families are asking for too much." Sometimes, people were prevented from marrying and "it [was] saddening that the world is turning commercial." Bridewealth was described as an institution or custom that should be seen as in the light it was "meant for": it is "a parents' blessing [that is] necessary for any marriage, when differences arrive, the couple does not stand alone but will be helped by their relatives to resolve the conflict." The "African" perspective was that bridewealth is part of the African heritage; it should be seen as a "token of appreciation." However, the contemporary or "modern" perspective criticized the practice when families demanded excessive amounts of money. This perspective emphasized how a young couple should start building their own family life instead of providing for the extended family. Such debates exemplified the type of conflicts many people were facing.

Similarly, in the 26 January 2002 issue of *Saturday Magazine*, the difficulties of "popping the big question" were discussed: "It is fairly easy for a new couple to agree on the use of a condom without insisting on knowing one another's' HIV status, but what happens when things get serious and the condom has to go? When do you pop the HIV question?" The article begins with how an imaginary couple starts dating: "For many, until recently, the custom went like this: The couple exchanged addresses. They went on a date. Soon it was romance, passion, sleepless

nights and finally—sex!" Several couples were interviewed about how they went about this "complicated" and "inevitable" issue "we all face." Whereas the couples interviewed in the *Saturday Magazine* article were all HIV negative, in *Parents* issue 173 of December 2000, couples that had one infected partner were interviewed. These interviews were of a more serious nature and both the women and the men were invited to elaborate on the complications of desiring sex as "usual" (without a condom) as opposed to "safe sex." The need for safe sex was underscored by emphasizing how "love" means "taking care of each other, of the children, even after death" and in this case "love" means "making love protected." According to Rhoda Orengo, the editor of *Saturday Magazine*, local magazines were meeting the demand for information on delicate and complicated issues that people face in reality (Interview on 20 January 2004). Couched as "lifestyle" articles, they invited ongoing debate about contentious issues.

When I interviewed Ms. Orengo, she explained that the *Daily Nation* used to have a pullout that was more like an entertainment magazine for the family. According to their market research, women read more than men, so from a commercial perspective they decided to produce a magazine mainly geared towards women aged between 25-35 years and who were married and unmarried professionals. They anticipated that they would reach men through the women: either that men would read the magazine after their girlfriends or wives read it, or because the women would discuss what they had read. In contrast, the goal of *Saturday Magazine* was and is to be "inspirational":

> We intend to be inspirational by, on the one hand, providing information about all kinds of life situations like relationships, health and so on. On the other hand, we want to break up silences about, for example, divorce, single motherhood and so on. In fact, women have come to be pro-active when it comes to changes in society and we want to reflect that. You can say that society is male-centred and we are female-centred. Also ... we want to play into people's, women's, desires like travelling, a fashionable house, you know, things that are not so common in Kenya but that are becoming part of our lives. [Rhoda Orengo, editor, interview on 20 January 2004]

Moreover, writing about relationships was "of great importance":

> Rhoda Orengo: We *have to* [her emphasis] write about relationships between men and women because that is what preoccupies women most. I believe we play an important role because people don't talk about the prob-

lems in relationships, but they are there so we write about it. We make people face their own situations, like ... sometimes people don't realize they are in an abusive relationship and when we have an article about it, we always receive letters from women who say we helped them to understand their situations.

Rachel: How many letters do you receive on a weekly basis?

RO: Well ... too many, I don't count them anymore; we have one secretary who stores them, I guess tens every week. Sometimes people come to the office to ask whether they can talk with an author; we have to send them to Amani then [a well-known counselling centre]. Like the other day a man came to see me because I wrote an article about women who became extremely religious and he told me his wife was like that and she was even neglecting their children. [Interview on 20 January 2004]

In other words, the print media are sites par excellence for the dissemination of information about relationships and sexuality.

Magazines occupy a special position with regard to the interactive character of media as they have become a major source of practical information regarding the intricacies of relationships. This is not a new phenomenon. From the 1960s on, but notably from the 1970s onward, popular magazines have included information on marriage and relationships, particularly for the elites. According to Mutongi (2000), the male staff of, for example, *Drum*, who have authored the magazine's "Dear Dolly" advice column since the 1960s, offered off-the-cuff advice that aimed to be both didactic and witty. In contrast, however, today's editors problematize love and sexuality and rather than offering clear-cut advice or condemning practices such as premarital sex, they encourage self-reflexivity and greater communication within relationships. Whereas previously, advice—whether from elders or the media—was directive (Njau 1993; Nzioka 1994), nowadays media experts encourage self-reflection as the most important first step to solving relationship problems.

As a result of the format, personal narratives in the form of confessional stories or real life events have become a common way to read and learn about the world. These publicized narratives of love, death, sex and happiness are extremely popular in Nairobi. Numerous testimonies of love enduring in the face of opposition—coupled with discussions about trust and cheating—elicit much debate and reflection. These magazines often provided a starting point for my interviews because people referred to what they had read in the latest issue and said they discussed topics from the latest issue on Mondays in the office.

The popularity of such narratives points to what Pels calls the confessional or testimonial ethic: these "modern confessions, from Rousseau to Oprah Winfrey, expect a moment of authenticity, of laying bare the facts about oneself" (2002:92). The attention to personal narratives implies a shift away from conventional narratives about relationships as familial unions. The new interpretation of love emphasizes a more personal approach to partner choice, based on growing values of companionship, egalitarianism, a couple's relative autonomy and the sexual satisfaction of women. Rather than accepting didactic and moralizing advice from others, the therapeutic ethos that marks these media debates insists that the solution to relationship problems lies in reflexivity and self-knowledge. This involves a dual relationship of simultaneous self-distancing and self-recognition; by reading other people's inner lives or columns, people become engaged in reflecting about their own expectations, desires, experiences and justifications.

The media, thus, subtly work at personal and interpersonal levels by popularizing a distinctive configuration of narrative, emotion and subjectivity. They advise on psychological well-being and interpersonal relationships through a discourse of love, which presumes a durable emotional tie that can be established with another person on the basis of qualities intrinsic to that tie itself. When love is essential in the definition of sexuality, sexual intimacy becomes a matter of the self, of the sexual subject, in a symbolic interaction with another subject. Romantic understanding of and sexual intimacy in relationships, then, become fundamental to self-identification as a contemporary person. The print media in Nairobi are both reacting to a particular need for information, and engendering new modes of subjectivity and new discourses of personhood. Media might be understood as technologies for the production of new kinds of selves (Abu-Lughod 2002:116). However, their popularity and, as a result, their influence, remain dependent on their ability to respond to the fact that people are seeking inspiration and advice.

A titillating observation is that a discourse has come into being praising the vitalizing force and bonding of love and intimacy that comes from sex in relationships. Young professionals consciously seek such lessons about love, sexuality and relationships from magazines.

"Intimacy Is the Name of the Game"

While most media address issues of "love" incorporating the whole range of matters of sexuality, some media are more explicit about matters of sexual practice and experience. The magazine *Parents*, for example, is a "magazine that cares for you and your family." The title suggests a

broad spectrum of significant topics for the contemporary family, which is indeed what the magazine features. Every front cover portrays young parents with one or two children. The couple portrayed is typically middle or lower middle class, implying an ordinary couple from next door. The articles focus on family matters, religion, finance, work, and so on. The focus on relationship issues is primarily on marital issues such as "How to Remain Faithful" (June 2001), "Whose Money Is It? Shillings and Relationships" (October 2001) and "The Cycle of Divorce" (May 2001).

However, *Parents* is known particularly among married and unmarried people for its weekly column called "Sex" or "Sexuality." It addresses sexual issues such as "Sex in Marriage: The Wife's Role" (May 2001), "Sexual Fantasy: The Games Couples Play" (September 2001) and "Vitality and Virility: A Man's Secret to Happiness" (June 2001). Sexual practices and principles are dealt with in explicit terms. Sexual positions and the type of gratification that can be expected are described, while the topics of foreplay, fantasy and sexual variation to enhance female pleasure are written about regularly. In one issue, for example, the writer explained how fantasies were "especially helpful to women who find it difficult to achieve orgasm" (May 2001). In another issue, men's attitudes were scrutinized by writing in the third person: "He sees a woman as being there to provide him with sexual satisfaction rather than having needs of her own." In this case, techniques on "bettering your foreplay" were discussed and explained as "enriching" for "him and her" (September 2001). Every week, another aspect of sexual relationships was discussed from a psychological, physical or emotional point of view. In these discussions, AIDS is mentioned as a reality from which people have to protect themselves by using condoms and being faithful. Contraceptives are portrayed as a useful tool in having a happy sexual life by avoiding HIV and planning the birth of children. The bottom line is that "sex does not come automatically, which might sound against common sense," but that "couples have to take their relationship as a project to work on" (March 2002).

The editorial rationale of *Parents* is reflected in the statements that "better sex makes happier couples" and sex is "a couple's primary way to show love" (November 2001). *Parents'* message is very clear: sex is "natural" and sex is positive. The articles only address sexuality within marriages and although they advocate for understanding teenage sexuality, they remain within the confines of the conventional discourse that emphasizes marriage as the only site for sex. Nevertheless, while remaining within this conventional boundary, which is defined by Christ-

ian morals,[8] their articles are rather liberal and outspoken; they hint at the message that sex is a God-given practice, but never explicitly claim to advocate Christian morals.[9] *Parents* has created a unique position. The magazine is protected from accusations of immorality by the fact that it counts married couples among its readers, and it is thereby able to fulfil an important need for information. As the magazine states, "intimacy is the name of the game" (March 2002), and many young professionals recognize this and seek out the knowledge and skills to bring this to bear in their relationships.

Parents' message that sex is "natural" positively connects with young professionals' desire to have a fulfilling sex life. Many of the people I spoke with said they read *Parents* as a teenager and learned much from it. For many women, the magazine was an "eye opener" at the time when they started exploring their sexual desire. Tayiani, for example, aged 28 in 2001-02, was married during our collaboration. She considered herself a staunch Christian, and she embodied the ideal of middle-class married wifehood, which would soon be followed, ideally, by motherhood. A few months after her marriage she said she was learning a "new kind of life, new feelings, I have never got to know a man so intimately and although I really have to adjust, I never thought it [sex] could be so great." She said that during these months "I have learned a lot about myself, I am too shy for no reason, I am also ashamed for no reason, I am learning that making love is okay, that I can express what I like." While she had always ignored articles in magazines about sexual matters before, she was actively seeking information. "I am illiterate about myself," she once said jokingly. She read *Parents'* columns as well as books she purchased through the Internet. In the Religious Bookshop in Nairobi she bought the booklet *The Wonders and Beauty of Sex* (Tabifor 1998), which describes sex as a religious "plight" and "pleasure" for "the younger generation." Sex had always been understood as a plight, but in relation to reproduction. By explicitly connecting it to pleasure, the plight comes to be understood in a different, and somewhat unexpected, according to mainstream Christian discourse, light. In this book, couples are "enlightened about the mystery of love and sex because they hold the fabric of society, as well as, a blessed marriage." Couples are also encouraged to "discover the spiritual purpose of sex" and to "enjoy this delight" (1998: 15, 27, 97). Tayiani found encouragement for exploring her sexual desire in such literature. It consolidated her sense of self as a woman and as a sexually active woman.

The period of being a newly married woman was a time when Tayiani began to appreciate that her sexual activity and reproductive capacities were an important

source of power. Although generally speaking, sex is considered a marital duty for a wife, Tayiani never spoke of it this way but instead formulated it as a self-discovered treasure. Since Kinyua, her husband, was not a man to reinforce gender roles, he did not insist on conventional female characteristics, such as that women have to show sexual neutrality or innocence. According to Tayiani, Kinyua encouraged her to feel free and would tease her by giving her sexy lingerie. Moreover, the Nairobi Chapel (a Baptist church that mainly draws from the middle class) encourages couples to work on their sex life; sex is portrayed as the key to a good emotional and supportive relationship. After being married Tayiani expressed a more relaxed attitude; she was less aloof and spoke more easily about intimate matters, although she continued to exhibit shame when speaking openly about her sexual life with Kinyua.

Other women were less concerned with their sexual reputation. Njeri was one of the few women who did not have to overcome a barrier or moral conflict to come to terms with her sexual feelings when engaging in sexual intercourse. She could not remember when she had had sex for the first time because it did not "impress" her. She said laughingly, "must have been one of the guys from next door." Virginity never meant anything to her, but as a teenager she had soon discovered that she should not get pregnant. Since then, she has always used contraceptives: condoms, the pill or the IUD. For Njeri, sex was pleasure and to find pleasure was a continuous exploration. During her teenage years, she had had "mechanical sex, you know, the sex that happens to you and if you're lucky you can enjoy it as well." She "discovered" her own body and one lover in particular taught her the "tricks" of "real sex." They would watch pornographic movies and then try out what they saw.

> I don't think I have not tried out any act, we did it all, and you discover your preferences. I don't like anal sex so much but men just love it. Apparently you guys [whites] like this bondage thing but I never developed a taste for it. I don't need complicated acts, I like it when a man makes an effort and is creative; I want to be spoilt, kissed all over, treated like a queen.

Watching porn movies inspired her to search for more information and since then, she regularly reads about female sexuality: "Porn movies showed me variety, but not always how I can increase my own pleasure, as in … you know, the importance of your clitoris." Reading about female physical facts strengthened her to "have sex for my pleasure." In a drawer in her bedroom she keeps a pile of books and magazines she has acquired over the years.

Several men told me that if there was something they would like to discuss with their girlfriend but did not dare, they dealt with the issue by suggesting that their partner read a particular column from *Parents*. For example, Eric, aged 24 in 2001-02, used these columns in his relationship with Mary, his girlfriend. He was a tall, well-dressed and fairly unremarkable man, with a slightly nervous manner. I met him when he had finished his first degree in social engineering with honours and was trying to secure a scholarship to continue with his master's degree. In the meantime, he was employed as a salesman, a job that frustrated him so much that he soon left, hoping to find a better one. He came from a less affluent background relative to the other men interviewed, and this was the driving force to "study hard and take every opportunity" that came his way. He always insisted on knowing my opinion about situations he encountered and wanted me to "explain women." He was relatively insecure about love and sexual relationships and, without explicitly telling me so, came to confide his uncertainties by asking my opinion. Eric explained how he tried to persuade his girlfriend to be less constrained when having sex:

> Eric: Ok … She [Mary] was a little passive; I thought she could not enjoy sex as much because she was passive. So then I decided to get a few copies from *Parents* for her to read.… I couldn't talk to her about it, so one day I gave her the copies and asked her to read it. Then I left.
> Rachel: And … What happened?
> E: Yaah, she eased up a bit, slowly … I think you were right the other day about women needing to know their own bodies … to orgasm, I think she did not know quite how to enjoy sex and maybe she got to know it, maybe through *Parents*, or maybe she got the hint and talked with her girlfriends.
> R: So …? Did you discuss it more in-depth together?
> E: Naah … I can't, I do sex, I don't talk about it [laughs]. But, I need to know how to be a good lover and I read a lot about it and … it helps me, to know … what to do.

Men especially are eager to read about women's sexuality, so they can apply the knowledge in their sexual relations, though increasingly the Internet also becomes a major source of information about sexual practices and experiences. Tom (aged 26 in 2001) claimed to read everything he could find about sexuality. He took pride in sexually satisfying a woman, and he made many efforts to "learn about women's bodies and their orgasms." He measured the quality of a sexual encounter by his ability to sexually satisfy the woman in question. If a woman would get up within one minute after the climax to "do

her hair or make a cup of tea, I know she either faked [an orgasm] or I didn't manage to find the right spot." He liked to satisfy women orally, especially so because for certain women oral sex is somewhat of a taboo. "I love to see a woman grappling a cushion or the sheet because they are so, so hot, trying not to scream out loud." Having oral sex with a woman meant being unconventional to Tom, as it is generally perceived to be "filthy." He remembers clearly the first time he read about oral sex and it was such a discovery that he decided to "take studying sex as serious business … not like you do [laughed], I want to practice it!"

In general, young professionals are searching for information about sex to improve their sexual lives. They want to avoid taking sex as an obvious act and want to give a positive meaning to sex in their premarital sexual relationships. Pamela, for example, said, "How can something be wrong when it makes me feel good?" Conventional discourse, however, insists that it *is* immoral; here, Christian morality and other patriarchal ideologies overlap. The normative social biography for a Kenyan woman mandates marriage, sexual activity and childbearing. Bearing and rearing children are considered central to a woman's well-being, and sexual activity and consequent reproduction serve to solidify the bond with her spouse, which improves her status. In popular definitions of sexuality, sex is linked to love instead of to reproduction, ethnic compatibility or marriage. What is most notable is that women, in contrast to conventional discourse, also recognize sex as natural, as an embodied element of growing into adulthood. They thus recognize sexual desire as crucial to their identity as women, instead of understanding sexual desire in relation to (married) motherhood. For men, sexual desire has always been understood as self-evident and "natural" in conventional discourse; sex is normatively understood as individual achievement. But there is now more to sex for men because their sexual potential is also connected to their partner's sexual pleasure.

The popularity of *Parents'* column is consistent with the "therapeutic" discourse on relationships (Illouz 1997:198). This reflective discourse plays a major role in the way romantic love and sexuality become central to self-expression. The discourse praising the vitalizing force and bonding intimacy that comes from sex in relationships is eagerly reflected upon and (selectively) appropriated by individuals. As such, media engender a process of acquiring self-knowledge, which leads to the development of particular skills in intimate encounters. To have a fulfilling sex life has become a symbol for a truly contemporary person. This does not necessarily imply that it

is perceived as a green light to sexual permissiveness. Depending on the person's morals, a sexual life is developed only in marriage, while for others it is possible in premarital relationships as well.

"Intimacy," therefore, is the name of the game. It has become a fashionable word in all popular self-help columns in Nairobian magazines advising on the art of good relationships. For young women and men, notions of intimacy are increasingly important criteria for selecting a lover or spouse. In this definition of sexuality, then, sexual intimacy becomes a matter of the self as a sexual subject; intimacy becomes an intersubjective experience. In contrast to the popular idea that "sex is a marital duty," which is interpreted among many young female professionals as enforcing the sexual subordination of women, the "modern" duty is the fulfilment of a mutual orgasm. It is remarkable how often *Parents* insists on female sexual pleasure and how mutual orgasm is mentioned in almost every column. I believe it has played a major role in the diffusion of the notion of mutual orgasm as a kind of norm; not simply because it has put it on people's intimate agenda, but because it responded to a desire among couples.[10]

Sexuality and the Sensuous Body

The emphasis on mutual orgasm is more than a titillating observation; it brings us to the debate about sex in anthropology. As mentioned above, in the scholarly debates about sexuality—and intimacy for that matter—corporeal experiences are often neglected. In recent years, the anthropology of the body has gained new impetus (Lock and Farquhar 2007). Embodiment has become an important analytical tool for looking at human participation in a cultural world. There are roughly two perspectives: the semiotic–textual view of the body as representation and the phenomenological view of the body as being-in-the-world (Csordas 1993). The first perspective is dominant in the anthropology of sexuality, as it provides a good starting point for the critical study of power relations and of representation. I am concerned with the second here.

According to Csordas, "embodiment as a paradigm or methodological orientation requires that the body be understood as the existential ground of culture; the body's role is to transform ideas into things; it realizes existence and is its actuality" (1993:135). In other words, the body mediates culture in order to make it real. This is in contrast to seeing bodies as objects that come into being as effects of social processes or structures (such as colonialism, globalization or media influences). The body is not a barrel that can be filled with social meanings but,

instead, the body is needed to bring those meanings into the world. This logic of embodiment is that people exist through their acts, affects, emotions and speech, and that embodiment is the moment of giving meaning, of signifying (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1958). Therefore, the focus of analysis should be on the process, the moment of acting. As such, embodiment draws attention to the self as an embodied and contextual process, highlighting the "essentially intersubjective and social nature of bodily experience" (Csordas 1994:14).

The body, then, is the productive starting point for analysing culture and self. The self, then, is an indeterminate process to engage or become oriented in the world; it appears through the interaction (embodiment) between bodily experience, cultural milieu or world, and habitus. This notion of the self relates to self-esteem, to a sense of belonging to a group or society, to how a person identifies herself or himself as "woman" or "man," and it indicates the experiential dimension of personhood. The meaning of subjectivity I employ, therefore, is not the description of the "lived experience" of individuals (Zigon 2009). Instead, I wish to bring out the dialectic between cultural milieu and personal experience that constitutes subjectivity. Using embodiment as an analytical tool to elaborate on the process of how people constitute and define their personhood has helped me to grasp the experience of intimacy and sex in relation to people's place in society. It has also directed my focus to how a gendered sense of self affects sexual desire and pleasure, as well as to how sex is constitutive of a gendered sense of self.

In other words, the corporeal experience of intimacy brings into perspective the significance of companionate relationships for young professionals. For instance, mutual orgasm as proof of success or intimacy in sexual relations has become an indicator among certain young Nairobian professionals:

> Listen, I have had enough lovers to know what you can get in life. So when I meet a man who is only out for his own pleasure, or if a man does not know how to satisfy a woman, he can leave. I am not willing to accept such behaviour anymore; in the past I used to fake an orgasm in order to get rid of the man as soon as possible, but not anymore … These days, we want our part of pleasure. I mean … We women know what to buy in this world and there is no way I could make love with a man and be left unsatisfied. It sometimes happened [that a man did not know how to satisfy a woman properly], men are not yet [as] up to date as women, and then I was so, so disappointed. I mean, I don't even consider explaining [to] him what to do with a woman. Imagine! Some don't even realise! [Interview with Dana, aged 29]

> OK, as a modern man you have to know how to satisfy a woman, there is no way to … when you have sex, that only you get satisfied. You have to know what she likes, to postpone her coming, to tease her so that she begs you. Sometimes it's disturbing when you cannot make it, when you cannot satisfy a woman. I once had a girlfriend and she never had an orgasm, it disturbed me to have mine whereas she was left … nothing. Also, good sex is just … once you have had good sex you know what you want in life, sex is not just release. [Interview with Ruben, aged 28]

It can be concluded that orgasm becomes an indication of a healthy individual, in two ways. First, experiencing orgasm was often explained to me as the primal urge to feel alive, to achieve the ultimate moment of self-awareness while simultaneously getting lost in the pleasure of orgasm. Second, as sexuality is an important realm for self-actualization as a modern individual, good sex became symbolic for being an up-to-date person. The importance attributed to mutual orgasm, moreover, signified young adults' sense of empowerment. In their definition of sexuality, female sexuality became redefined as pleasure and not necessarily as procreation, and male sexuality became partly redefined in relation to female pleasure. This approach is new, exciting and more engaging for both women and men compared to conventional perspectives on sexuality.

By connecting intimacy, sexuality and pleasure, the notion of sexual pleasure was appropriated by individuals in interactions between lovers. Public discourse is right in a way; this kind of sexuality *is* anti-social. In the non-conventional discourse on sexuality, the couple reigns. This is not to say that in the past people did not have sex for pleasure. What has changed is that the meaning of sexuality as the motor of social well being has been redirected. The importance of mutual satisfaction as emphasized by magazines such as *Parents*—sex as love, intimacy and pleasure—is indicative of people's desire to have a particular kind of relationship. Personal and mutual sexual happiness became an asset of individuals, as well as a symbol for a successful relationship. Media like local magazines played into these desires.

Conclusion

The 1990s saw love and sex becoming an important media topic in Nairobi. Media attention encouraged discussions about sexuality and opened new ways for reflection. Sexual conduct used to be, and still is, problematized in religious and AIDS discourses, while in the dominant religious discourses, sex is discussed only in relation to marriage. In contrast, talk shows on TV and radio have

begun to air views on various topics ranging from teenage sexuality to condom use. Soap operas have created opportunities to observe the ins and outs of people's love lives, and popular magazines have provided forums to learn about the blessings and burdens of love and sex. This non-conventional way of defining sexuality is not openly challenging conventional perspectives but instead subtly creating a niche in the media and in young adults' life-worlds. A discourse has come into being praising the vitalizing force and bonding of love and intimacy that comes from sex in relationships.

Over the last decades, changes in patterns of courtship, the growing importance of Christian wedding ceremonies, and trends toward establishing urban residences with nuclear household organization are reinforcing an emerging model of marriage that emphasizes the personal relationship between wife and husband. The emergence of practices of romantic love, defined as passionate, personal and erotic, as criteria for selection of a lover, implies the increasing importance of conjugality; the couple's personal relationship to each other becomes central, and is enthusiastically encouraged by the media. *Parents* magazine's philosophy that "better sex makes happier couples" is a reflection of this discourse in Nairobi. Both women and men are advised and encouraged to "work" on their sex life, as it "enriches" their personal sexual experiences as well as their partners'. Such media engagements dovetail with young adults' aspirations to develop mutually fulfilling sexual relationships. The media's engagement with people's intimate life is effective exactly because it addresses social realities and personal experiences. Young professionals actively seek knowledge about reliable relationships, the art of emotional openness and sexual intimacy, and how to manage their relationships. The media offer advice, knowledge and skills to build a sensible intimate life.

The development of a personal sexual life for young professionals always involves reflection about oneself, as a woman or man, as a Kenyan, an African and as a modern person. In other words, the way in which young professionals embody decades-long shifts in gender, sexuality and culture is reflected in their intimate lives. Their lifestyles manifest a new cosmopolitanism that unites the cultural, financial and political flows within and between non-Western and Western societies, and sexuality plays a particular role therein. The dual definition of intimacy—both as a close personal relationship between people and as a sexual relationship—points exactly at what is at stake: as modern individuals, they aspire to a companionate relationship in which sexual pleasure is symbolic for a successful relationship. From an analytical perspective, it is interesting to consider the embodied nature of mutual orgasm and how it informs subjective experiences. The corporeal experience of intimacy epitomizes how the meaning of social transformations and sensations converge. Experiencing intimacy is the productive moment: in this experience the social meanings of shifts in gender and sexuality—being modern Africans—and their translation into bodily sensations—mutual pleasure as symbolic for a progressive relationship—converge. Viewing intimacy as embodied practice directs us to how sexuality is a sensory experience, how this experience is informed by social meanings, and hence how it mediates and constitutes cultural categories.

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Notes

1 Very often it seems that "vertical" links across apparent class boundaries impede the formation of horizontal linkages between those sharing the same "objective" economic situation. Links of kinship, religion, regional affiliation or ethnicity have all tended to be more powerful (Berman and Lonsdale 1992; Ferguson 1999; Geschiere and Gugler 1998), than links of class in Nairobi or throughout Kenya.

2 In this article, I will only focus on persons for whom sex and sexual pleasure have become or are positive experiences. It goes without saying that others, more women than men, are reluctant to engage in sex or cannot enjoy sexual intercourse for various personal, psychological or religious reasons. Elsewhere, I argue how the importance of new forms of sexuality for young professionals is ambiguous; it is both pleasurable and anxiety provoking (2009a).

3 Interview on 3 October 2001.

4 *Eve* is a glossy magazine for upper middle class, professional women aged 28-45 years that appeared for the first time February 2002. According to Carole Mandi, its editor, there was a "need" for a local glossy. *Eve* makes great efforts to publicize "African role models, such as career women, successful mothers, single or married, and dedicated professionals." *Eve* is aimed at a group that is "new, new in the sense that they are women who are not typical dedicated wives in the traditional sense. After society always favoured men, these women choose to fight and have a part of the cake. These women are ahead of what we can expect in the future, we want to be their voice" (Interview with Carole Mandi on 3 February 2004).

5 Aside from these, there all kinds of erotica and (soft) pornographic magazines sold in street stalls. They are more expensive and therefore sell in lower numbers. They are very popular though, and according to street vendors, bought mainly by young men.

6 See http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/nmgmagazine .asp?categoryid=32&todaysdate=9/3/2005 for the *Satur-*

day Magazine. Saturday Magazine was the only of its kind in 2001-02 and 2004. Many newspapers followed its example because of its success. As a result, every newspaper produces a variety of pullout magazines focusing on a range of topics like sports, fashion, education, youth, et cetera. In 2003, the *East African Standard* introduced a similar pullout on Saturdays, which was clearly inspired by the success of *Saturday Magazine*.

7   An important contribution is the column by the Amani Centre, a centre for counselling and psychological help. Every week, they publish an anonymous letter along with their reply. The letters address a variety of issues from childlessness, to rape, to psychological illness. During a visit to the centre, I was shown the huge number of letters they receive every week as well as their archives; according to the director they meet a great demand for counselling and the demand is growing as they become better known. The letters as well as the centre itself are worth further study.

8   As Lonsdale states, the culture of contemporary Kenya is "soaked in Christianity" (Berman and Lonsdale 1992:217).

9   Besides *Parents*, there are a few Christian books on sexuality provided by the Family Life Counselling Association of Kenya, a collaborative Christian organization.

10   The term *mutual orgasm* means reciprocal sexual gratification, whether that is through intercourse or manual stimulation (and much less often through oral stimulation), and is mostly not simultaneous. Among my informants women expected men to wait with their orgasm until the woman was having hers.

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Subcultural Masculine Moral Identity Work among Rural Missouri Noodlers: "A Special Breed of Men"

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Abstract: This paper analyzes how male Missouri "noodlers" (hand fishers) account for the persistence of illegal catfish catching across generations. Noodling is central to the way men construct a subculturally worthy identity based on trust, respect, sharing, reciprocity and recognition of interdependence with members of their group, community and the local natural environment. The noodling subculture rejects the definition of noodling as poaching and constructs a group definition of noodling as a worthy masculine community-building tradition.

Keywords: gender, identity, masculinity, fishing, poaching, subcultures

Résumé : Cet article analyse comment se transmet de génération en génération la tradition des « noodlers » mâles du Missouri, qui pratiquent une pêche illégale où ils attrapent des poissons-chats, ou silures, à la main. Cette pêche, le « noodling », est un élément central de la construction, au sein d'une sous-culture, d'une identité reconnue fondée sur le respect, le partage, la réciprocité et la reconnaissance de l'interdépendance avec les membres de leur groupe, la communauté et l'environnement naturel local. La sous-culture locale du noodling n'associe pas cette pratique à du braconnage et construit une définition collective de la pêche comme une tradition masculine de valeur pour la construction de la communauté.

Mots-clés : identité sexuelle, masculinité, pêche, braconnage, sous-cultures

This research examines the ways that Missouri men noodlers account for their persistence in illegal noodling and analyzes the cultural patterns that are consistent in their descriptions to show that the reason illegal noodling persists, and that some noodlers are lobbying for legalization, is because the practice is central in their sense of who they are as worthy men and as a people. The role of noodling in the subcultural masculine moral identity work of rural working-class Missouri men between the ages of 18 and 90 is outlined.

Noodling, or hand fishing,[1] is a practice that involves submerging in the water and feeling under the banks of rivers and lakes to find large catfish. The fingers are used to lure the fish to bite and the fish are caught with the hands. Noodling can be physically challenging and dangerous. It often involves struggling with the fish underwater. Outlawed in Missouri in 1919, noodling has continued to be practiced and taught to the young.

A movement to legalize hand fishing in Missouri resulted in a trial legal season in three Missouri rivers, running from 1 June to 15 July in 2005 and 2006. In the spring of 2007, the Missouri Department of Conservation announced the discontinuation of a legal season. Media accounts reported that studies conducted by the Missouri Department of Conservation showed that the catfish population of the state was under duress and it was decided that adding another form of harvest was not desirable. Members of an organization formed in 2000 to lobby for legalization say that they will continue to press for legalization. Noodling is legal in 17 states.[2] Some Missouri noodlers visit other states to hand fish legally but most active noodlers studied also fish illegally in Missouri.

The Concept of Identity and Subcultural Moral Identity Work

George Herbert Mead (1967) outlined an approach to the study of social life that is ontologically based on the understanding that social reality is always in the process of

being created by human beings through the symbolic meanings they attach to things in interaction with each other within the environment. The approach to identity taken in this research follows in this tradition and holds that identities are constructed through this ongoing process that is done with others, rather than being done by individuals alone, and that takes place within cultural and structural contexts (Grigsby 2004). Here, I focus on the subcultural identity work of noodlers and the cultural and structural contexts shaping the process through careful examination of the meaning-making of the noodlers themselves.

Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock maintain that subcultural identity work is "the work people do together to create the signs, codes, and rites of affirmation that become shared resources for identity-making" (1996:121). Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock maintain that the use of the term *subculture* implies that members of the group are creating or redefining an identity that all claim. This process may involve creating "special social representations—moral identities—that can serve as universal indexes of virtuous selfhood." Group members engage in creating meanings, signs and signifying practices that are distinct while also having a relational connection to the larger culture (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996: 119, 121).

Masculinity

The concepts of "gender regime," (Connell 2000:29), "hegemonic, subordinated, and complicit masculinities" and "marginalization" (Connell 1995:76-81) help to provide understanding of the nature of noodling identity work within the structure of gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men (Connell 1995:78). This theoretical approach views masculinity as socially constituted in different ways in different places and times. The processes of constructing masculinity and femininity within institutional and cultural structures are described by Connell as "gender projects" (2000:28). The patterning of relations within an institution constitutes a gender regime (Connell 2000:29). Subordination refers to "specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (Connell 2000:78). Of particular importance for this analysis is Connell's concept of marginalization (1995:80-81) that refers to relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups. Connell maintains that "marginalization is always relative to the *authorization* of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group" (Connell 1995:81).

Social Class and Gender

The worldviews of working class men showing the ways moral criteria shaped intergroup boundaries, described by Lamont (2000), provide an understanding of the importance of the boundaries established by groups in their identity work as gender, class and place-based. As Bryant and Pini point out, of "the numerous studies of class and rurality, few have theorized gender" and even fewer have examined gender in ethnographic studies of rurality and class: "Rural social science, studies of gender and class have typically operated in parallel rather than in unison" (2009:48, 56). They suggest that class may not be invoked by working-class people because their status is considered lower; middle-class status is normalized as the hegemonic category and does not need to be named. They note that in the rural context the centrality of communitarianism and localism are dominant and require discourses of equality and inclusivity. Also, the hegemony of traditional gender discourses in rural environments forms the local backdrop for the masculine identity work of many rural men, including noodlers. Nonetheless, Bryant and Pini maintain that class is a central structuring element that needs to be considered in unison with gender.

Poaching

Several recent sociological and anthropological studies have created typologies of the motivations of poachers (Brymer 1991; Eliason 2004; Forsyth et al. 1998; Muth and Bowe 1998). Muth and Bowe (1998) conducted content analysis of relevant literature to compile a comprehensive typology of motivations for poaching. Their typology includes ten primary motivations: commercial gain, household consumption, recreational satisfactions, trophy poaching, thrill killing, protection of self and property, poaching as rebellion, poaching as a traditional right, disagreement with specific regulations and gamesmanship.

Brymer's (1991) research, based on a case study of hunting poaching, outlined four types of hunting poaching subculture. The types theorized were market hunters, trophy hunters and guides, tourists who are unaware of the game laws, and local rural hunters. He focused on the "local rural hunters" subculture noting that it is

> based in rural families still retaining rural lands which serve as the centre of their hunting territories. Even though they may work in town, the members of such groups commute home, and pursue an essentially rural lifestyle ... Such groups are tightly knit, and outsiders are likely to be distrusted and treated with a friendly but formal distancing. [1991:180-181]

Brymer noted a value for sharing game within networks, especially for reasons of age or physical infirmity (1991: 181). Brymer concluded that the subculture is "based in an extension of values and hunting practices originating … in the early 1800s in a pre-industrial agrarian era" (1991:192). He maintains that values and practices have remained the same over two centuries but practices have been redefined by the dominant culture as deviant, requiring subculture members to respond in ways that allow their subculture to persist. The need to maintain secrecy from enforcement officials and informers has tightened the boundaries of these groups and he suggests it is possible that the tensions with the legal system may cause the eventual demise of these subcultures. A key point made by Brymer is that this and other subcultures of poaching must be placed in historical context to be fully understood.

Several studies emphasize how people are socialized into poaching by significant others in their lives and thus develop values and attitudes in interaction with others. These studies offer insights into how poaching behaviour is learned (Curcione 1992; Forsyth 1993; Forsyth and Marckese 1993a, 1993b; Grigsby 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Some studies focus on how poachers rationalize and employ "neutralization techniques" in order to temporarily justify or excuse their poaching in the face of "dominant normative standards" that define the activity as illegal and wrong (Eliason 1999:31). This approach seeks to show how poachers justify their illegal behaviour while maintaining a sense of belonging in the dominant culture. Eliason and Dodder (1999) outlined four types of neutralizations most often used by poachers. These included "denial of responsibility," claiming it was an accident; the "metaphor of the ledger," claiming their good qualities made up for the poaching; "defense of necessity," claiming they poached from need; and, "condemnation of the condemners" in which they tried to shift the focus onto the illegal or hypocritical behaviour of game wardens. This literature was used to compare with Missouri noodlers' reasons for their persistence in illegal noodling.

Noodling

Morgan (2006) provided demographic data about Missouri noodlers useful as background for this research. He did a quantitative analysis of a survey of 103 Missouri noodlers. Hand fishing or noodling was determined to be "male-dominated" and primarily practiced by men living in rural areas who worked in blue collar professions. Women made up only 6% of the sample (Morgan 2006:322).

Grigsby (2008, 2009b) explored the tensions and struggles within noodling groups to reproduce or alter the degree to which certain elements of the noodling version

of masculinity are highlighted. Differences in the ways the men made meaning of noodling in their identity work were linked to age cohort based identity needs and structural factors. Grigsby (2009a) drew from interviews conducted with women noodlers to examine their relational gender identity work. Though most noodling groups do not include women, a few groups were identified that did and these were the focus of that research. Women constructed feminine gender identities and improved their relative standing in the group through their participation.

This research shifts the focus to an analysis of why illegal noodling in Missouri has persisted and shows it to be a folk tradition that is central as a cultural practice used in maintaining a rural subculture. It provides the men who participate with masculine moral identity through which they define themselves as a worthy kind of men, asserting the value of the local noodling version of masculinity in contrast to that of dominant culture hegemonic masculinity.

The key questions I started with were how noodlers make meaning out of their persistence in noodling and why they have continued to pass this folk tradition from generation to generation despite the potential physical danger and its long term illegality in Missouri. Illegality presents the risk of being fined or jailed. Noodlers also risk being bitten by snakes, turtles, otters and other wildlife while hand fishing. In fact the scars revealed to me during interviews were numerous. And, when a fish is caught, the fisher is always bitten by the catfish which creates "river rash," an abraded and irritated area on the arms or hands. There is also some degree of social stigma attached to hand fishing (Morgan 2006, 2008).

The construction of the generalized culture of noodling and the masculine subcultural moral identity work of noodlers takes place, for the most part, in a space that is defined as male space. This research focuses on how men noodlers construct worthy masculinity in interaction with the men in their group and in comparison to other men.

Missouri noodlers interviewed did not centre their discussion of why they persist in noodling on rationalizing or justifying their participation in an illegal poaching activity, nor did they try to distance themselves from other noodlers as has been documented for some other poachers who distance themselves from the activity defined as deviant by the dominant culture (Eliason 1999, 2004; Filteau 2009; Forsyth et al. 1998; Forsyth and Marckese 1993a, 1993b; Muth and Bowe 1998). Instead noodlers consistently described a set of norms and values present in noodling that exemplified for them a subcultural "way of life" (Halperin 1990) and type of masculine rural identity that they embraced and wanted to pass on to their younger kin.

This research identifies key elements from the "cultural tool kit" (Swidler 1986) used by men in their noodling group identity work. Through analysis of how the men make meaning of their commitment to noodling, the key features of the masculine subculture of noodling, the types of identities men noodlers collaborate in constructing through noodling, the noodling version of masculinity and the role of social class in the culture of noodling are described.

Theory and Methods

"Grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss 1967), based on building theoretical understandings inductively from the data gathered in the field, was employed. The social constructionist variant of grounded theory advocated by Charmaz (2005, 2006) informs the analysis. This approach emphasizes flexible guidelines in data analysis, the role of the researcher in constructing knowledge and the central importance of understanding networks, situations and relationships as they help to reveal hierarchies of power. Emphasis is also placed on norms, beliefs, values, emotions and worldviews.

Qualitative methods were used in this research. In-depth interviews with 18 men ranging in age from 18 to 90 were conducted between 2005 and 2008 and combined with participant observation of over 100 noodlers fishing together, interacting at fish fries, and at the July 2007 Okie Noodling Tournament (held annually since 2000 in Pauls Valley, OK). Noodlers from all over the United States attended the Okie Noodling Tournament.

I used snowball sampling with multiple points of entry. In 2005, I attended the opening day of the Missouri trial legal season. While walking the river knee-to-waist deep, I met two key informants. One was actively involved in efforts to legalize noodling in Missouri and knew noodlers across the state. He provided me with contacts for interviewees. That same day I met another man who was noodling while we were walking in the river between fishing holes. He also eventually became active in efforts to legalize noodling. He introduced me to noodlers including several family members. A faculty member and two students at the university where I work who heard of my research put me in touch with noodlers they knew. A friend who knew a family of noodlers helped me gain entry into their network. I could have interviewed more men but after the tenth interview, I began to note repetitive themes in the data and by the 18th interview was confident that the sampling and data were adequate for the analysis at hand.

Each person interviewed signed a written consent form and completed a data sheet providing basic demo-graphic data including age, occupation(s), income, educational level, marital status, and place of residence. Twenty-two questions were included on the interview schedule. Most were questions aimed at learning how the noodlers themselves made meaning of the practice. Many noodlers are story tellers and sometimes responses to questions took the interviews in unanticipated directions that were very informative. I made sure I had ample time for each interview so that the men could take as much time as they wanted to expand on themes important to them. Interviews were generally between one and three hours long. Analysis began after the first interview and continued throughout and beyond the interviewing, transcribing and coding processes.

Transcriptions were read multiple times and open-coded into categories. Axial coding of open-coding categories determined to be central for this analysis was used to examine causes, strategies, contextual factors influencing the strategies and consequences of the strategies in the masculine moral identity work of noodlers. As I did observation and analysis, I realized there were key sociological works that helped in understanding and clarifying some of the observations and I began to draw upon them in analysis. Memoing, involving making connections between categories and linkages to literature that helped clarify the phenomenon under study, was also part of the process. Selective coding linking the central phenomenon of masculine moral identity work and the cultural tools (categories) used by noodlers in their subcultural identity work revealed a story of the interrelationship of the categories in constructing masculine moral identities within the specific local and broad societal contexts that shape them. The themes that emerged as the core of the generalized culture were mentioned by virtually all of the men interviewed.

Noodling as a Symbol for a Way of Life

Recent media diffusion of knowledge about noodling through documentaries (Beasley 2001, 2008), numerous newspaper articles, television coverage and YouTube clips have given those who noodle as part of a long-standing rural tradition a view of themselves through the lens of the dominant culture that both idealizes and denigrates them. They are pictured as men who are tough, fearless, skilled at using their bare hands as predators to catch huge catfish, close to nature, respected by other men in their group and looked up to by their wives, daughters and girlfriends. At the same time, they are often depicted as lower class, unsophisticated, uneducated and even crazy by mainstream media. The reasons those who noodle gave for their commitment to the activity reveal the deep gen-

dered, class and rural place-based cultural meanings of the practice that have contributed to it being passed from generation to generation.

The men describe having a special camaraderie with other noodlers based on their shared experiences and the norms and values of a shared way of life that they associate with noodling. This way of defining their group identity as a type of men consistently includes claiming toughness, interdependence, and strong bonds of trust and respect among the men; the importance of understanding, belonging, and conforming to the norms of the pecking order; a sense of camaraderie and unity; and, communitarianism, anti-consumerist frugality, and a special elemental relationship with nature. Noodlers maintain that this combination of qualities makes them a "special breed" of men. Each of these elements is described below.

"Born and Bred" to Noodle

Noodlers quickly establish that they and other men who noodle are a unique breed of men, signalling the subcultural identity work they are engaged in and the importance of the boundaries noodling groups maintain in the moral identities they are constructing. Bruce, wearing jeans and no shirt, sits on a concrete block, beer in hand. Bruce is 28 years old and works in construction. He has a couple of friends helping him repair his home in the aftermath of a kitchen fire. They are taking a break, sitting on a porch that looks out over a gentle valley with rolling hills in the distance, green as far as the eye can see in the summer sun. When asked how important noodling is to him he responds:

> Oh, I love it. I mean, it's somethin' I won't quit, you know, no matter, somethin' that I was born and raised to do, and like I say, it just, I won't quit, I'll teach my kids and hopefully they'll teach theirs and just on down the road. [That] way it's never, never lost, like I say, I feel fortunate that I had somebody to teach me 'cause I enjoy it. I mean, have you ever done it? Most people haven't. I just feel fortunate that I've been able to do it. Some people get to go on cruises, and I probably could. I could afford it. I don't want to. I'd rather stick around here and enjoy my family ... I mean it's kind of a dying sport, not everybody does it and knows how to do it. [I'm] just fortunate to know ... You work outside all day, it's hot. Get off, get to go swimming. I don't care to swim, but it gives a little purpose to it and you get to eat a little fish ... it's just companionship and ... it don't cost nothin' to go do it. It's free. It's just a good time, it's something that they all look forward to. It's just something we was born and bred to do.

Note how Bruce shifts from the use of "I" to "we" during his discussion of how important noodling is for him, claiming that it is something "we was born and bred to do." For Bruce, like many of the men, noodling is viewed as a central and distinctive part of his family's way of life that he wants to pass on to his children and to see passed on to their children. Many of the men brought up the idea that they are unique in comparison to the average man because they noodle and most people do not. Bruce engages in group identity work that constructs those who carry the knowledge of how to noodle and pass it on as among a fortunate few who are "born and bred" or "born and raised to noodle." Bruce contrasts noodlers with "most people" who might like going on cruises. He makes clear that he prefers noodling to cruises, reinforcing the assertion that those who noodle are different from those in the dominant culture by upbringing and by choice.

In describing why he likes noodling, Bruce expresses a value for purposeful leisure activity that links cooling off in the water after a day of physical labour outside, social companionship, frugality and getting some fish to eat together. Bruce's comment that he does not like swimming is consistent with the noodlers' value for leisure activity with a purposeful goal beyond just relaxing.

Toughness, Interdependence and Kinship Ties

When asked about the catfish tattoo on his arm, Bruce describes the experience that led him to get it. As he does so, he touches on several key themes used in defining values among noodlers, acknowledging indirectly some of the rules (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996:123) linked to signifying the moral identity of noodlers. He establishes his toughness, courage, skill and knowledge gained from experience as a noodler. He makes clear that he recognizes his interdependence with others in the group and values teamwork. He reinforces the norm of noodling with a group of trusted "kin" rather than alone and he establishes that he is devoted to his kinship group and takes his roles as brother, cousin, husband and father seriously:

> I drowned in 2000. My little brother gave me CPR and mouth-to-mouth and brought me back. Six months later I got the fish on my arm that I'll never catch, never know if I did catch ... Me and my brother and my cousins [were] workin' on a house, somewhat by the river. [We knew] of a good fish hole and we went and anyway there's fish in it. And the fish hole was probably twelve foot back. And I went in, and my cousin Ronny and my brother [were] there and a couple other co-workers that worked for me at the time. I went in. The fish came out and bit me on the hands and I missed

him. [pause] There's a air pocket in there ... I breathed the air in that air pocket and told 'em, they could hear me, I said, "I'm alright." So they went out. And anyway, I knew the air wasn't right. I took a deep breath and it knocked me out. It was carbon monoxide. I laid back in there and the fish bit me two or three times while I was layin' in the hole. And they got nervous about me so my cousin come in and he done the same thing, he felt my head [and said] "oh, what the hell's he doin'?" My cousin Ronny felt my head down in the mud. And my cousin come in and got the same air and fortunately he floated out of the hole, and was face down and my brother seen him ... And my brother brought him to the bank and resuscitated him and then come in ... So anyway, my brother said I was probably under three to four minutes before he got me out and back to the bank and brought me back. I have no recollection of it, but anyway went to the hospital and had pneumonia and carbon monoxide poisoning. I was in for three or four days. And Ronny, he was in for a couple, which was a eye opener ... If my little brother wouldn't have been there we wouldn't be here. So it's kind of a common rule you go with three guys ... I know the date because my oldest daughter was three days old [pause] and my wife won't let me forget about it. It's [the tattoo] a sign of the fish I will never catch or know if I did catch him. And just to remind me, you know, I got kids, when I go [noodling] just a little reminder of what can happen ... They're more important than anything.

Most often hand fishing is done in a group with assistants blocking the hole to keep the catfish from escaping, monitoring the noodlers' situation to make sure they do not get trapped or injured while under water, and assisting in dragging the fish from the water once the catch is made. Most noodlers maintain that to noodle safely it must be done with others, not alone. This reinforces the idea that group belonging and support is necessary to the activity and in life. Note that Bruce does not claim mastery over nature in his account. Instead he acknowledges his lack of complete knowledge, and the agency of the fish.

Trust and Respect

Bruce, like most noodlers, describes having a relationship of trust and respect with the men with whom he noodles. His discussion shows the focus on interdependence with other men to succeed in the catch and with nature to provide the fish. These themes play a role in defining noodling masculine moral identity and enacting them through noodling affirms that identity:

When I go in and catch a fish, I'll get the fish, and then I'll wrap my legs around his tail. Now what am I gonna do? There ain't anything I can do, I've got the fish and I'm floatin' underwater downstream. Now would you rather have somebody there that don't know what's goin' on ... or would you rather have my little brother, my cousin, or [Gil] somebody that's been with me a hundred times, knew exactly what I was doin', had their foot on my back the whole time, knowin' and, can tell when they put their foot on my back when my muscles tighten up in my back there, I've got a fish. I mean they know, it's experience, it's camaraderie, they know, they know when I come up they've got to get me and the fish to the bank. Now, I wouldn't go with just everybody. That's just, like I say, it's trust. I'm trustin' my life with their hands.

Most noodlers discussed trusting the people they noodled with in terms of safety and judgment in a potentially dangerous situation. Noodling encourages the men to develop sensitive systems of nonverbal physical, as well as verbal, communication with each other. The use of these communication techniques reinforces the sense of connection and trust between noodlers as it enables them to successfully catch large catfish. Trust that the people you noodle with will not share the information with others, who cannot be trusted not to talk about it, is also important to noodlers because of the illegality of the practice.

Mutual respect is another norm that noodlers associate with the practice. In describing the type of relationship he shares with his cousin Ronny, who is his peer in the "clan," Bruce touches on the type of mutual respect that noodlers often discuss as important for them:

Ok, Ronny's my cousin, me and him been thousands of places and we've caught a lot of fish. And I'll tell him, I'll say, "Don't let this guy in, I don't trust him. I don't want him (around)." And that's it ... He'll go along with that ... And he's the same way with me, it's like, you know "I really don't want him around." And it's like well I'd rather you go than bring this guy, so that's just the way it is, I mean usually everybody pretty well trusts everybody else's decision and say, "Ok, you know, if he don't want him around we don't wanna cause no (problem), we'd rather have him go, that's already in, than take this guy."

The Pecking Order: "Everybody's Got Their Number"

Respect for elders who are skilled noodlers and teach others is mentioned frequently. A pecking order is clearly understood to exist and plays a significant role in affirming or validating identity claims and in policing (Schwalbe

and Mason-Schrock 1996:123) the behaviours that signify the noodling moral identity. Bruce describes his place in the pecking order of noodling:

> [Everybody] knows me because of it [noodling] … I mean everybody's got their number, [Gil] being number one in ours. I mean you know, everybody's got their number. Oh there's some old timers that used to go with [Gil] a lot, they're still good fisherman and I ain't passed them, probably won't ever. So, you know, you gotta die to lose your number.

Ongoing, negotiated bonds of respect combined with a clear sense of location in the pecking order creates a sense of solidarity and mutual understanding among group members (Whyte 1955). This does not mean that there are no tensions, but that the rules of redefining one's location in the pecking order are linked to patriarchal relations understood and enforced within the collective kinship or community group. Men gain entry to the group only if they are judged to understand and respect the pecking order and are trustworthy. Being brought into the group is not automatic and signals status to insiders and local outsiders familiar with the group norms of noodling.

Gil, who is 62 years old, describes the pecking order and his changing location in it more directly, touching on the importance of respecting skilled elders. He uses the example of the importance of teaching the younger men the norm of not going to a "fish hole" that someone showed you without them being along or being told. Only trusted people are shown where a good fishing hole is. Gil quoted Jessie, a noodling friend, to make this point. "This is really Jessie's quote but I've used it many times. 'I go fishing in the water right beside my favourite mushroom patch.'" Gil is referring to the location where the much coveted morel mushrooms hunted in the spring are known to grow. These locations are kept secret by those who have discovered a good patch:

> Used to be when we'd go to the river for [pause] 40 years, I was always the lead. Me and my brother was always in the lead. Now then, I gotta admit, I'm getting a little older. A lot of young men that I still go [with], if they don't stop and pick me up, or if they catch a fish and they don't come tell me the fish story, they know they are gonna have to answer to somebody [laughter] if I don't get to hear about that catch. And then, there's kind of a progression there. We had some young men that went [and] fished our fish holes while we was busy farming, and [Jessie] went and had a visit with them about the pecking order. You don't go check somebody else's hole unless you tell 'em you're goin'. It's just an unwritten law that you don't do things like that.

Friendship and kinship ties were reported to have been broken because of a breach of the norm described by Gil. As with many tightly knit groups with fairly strong boundaries, there are constraints placed on individuals to conform to the norms of the group. Longterm illegality reinforces these tightly bounded social networks. Gil continues:

> I was talking about the pecking order. We try and make sure that everybody gets a chance at at least one fish in the year. If we know where a hole is or if we're going down the river, somebody that hasn't got a fish, whoever finds a fish has got the option of, he can either try and catch it, or pass it on to somebody else. And then different holes are made different ways, some holes are made for a big ol' boy like me because I can block the hole and I can stand the cold a lot better, than some skinny guy, he can't stay in the water so long because his metabolism is different, but yet whenever you find a hole that's little and skinny, he's the perfect person to send into that particular hole.

In Gil's group, the rule is that the person who finds the fish has the first right of catch but can pass it on to somebody else. Gil notes their group tries to let everyone in the group catch at least one fish a year.

A Special Camaraderie

The bonds established through noodling are highly valued. Being taught to noodle by elders like Gil is prized by young men in the community. Learning to noodle is a "coming of age" (Mead 2001) experience for the men, giving tangible evidence of their courage, skill and place in the heterosexual male "pecking order." Each time the men noodle, have a fish fry, talk about their noodling exploits with each other, remain silent and secretive with outsiders about the practice, roll down their sleeves to cover river rash in public, hang a fish head on a fencepost for passersby to see, take fish to an older couple in the community, or think of spring and the first noodling expedition, they affirm their masculine subcultural moral identity. Gil, who taught Bruce, along with a number of others, to noodle, describes the unique sense of camaraderie that he believes characterizes noodlers:

> The main thing is there is a camaraderie there and there is a trust, a bond amongst the fishermen … No matter where you come from, when you get together they have been through that experience, they've been through fish bitin' 'em, that thrill when you talk about what's happening, they can relate to you and the person that hasn't been there, it's hard for them to do that.

Gil's description highlights the sense of collective identity constructed and shared by noodlers.

Relating to the Natural Environment: "You Ain't Fishin' 'Til You're Bleedin'!"

All of the men interviewed emphasized the significance and satisfaction of going into the element of the fish without protective gear, engaging physically with the fish and taking the punishment the struggle entails. Most also described having respect for the fish and a love of nature, particularly the water. Noodlers eat a large proportion of their catch (Morgan 2006) and many said that they never take more than they need. Little Leap, a man of 60, who wears jeans, tennis shoes and a t-shirt, leans back in his chair and reflects before he speaks. He too sports a catfish tattoo on his arm.

> Well, I guess it's the thrill of the unknown [pause] because you're in the water, and you're feeling along a dirt bank or a root wad or [pause] whatever, tractor tire, old water heater and you're feeling mud all the way every time you're workin' the bank you're just feeling mud and then all of the sudden you feel sand and you know it's a fish hole. But you don't know what's in there. What kind of fish. You don't know how big a fish. You don't know how many fish and you don't know whether you're gonna be able to catch him or not and you don't know how bad you're gonna get hurt when you do catch him. But you know you are gonna get hurt, because you can't catch one without getting hurt but I guess that's the thrill of it is the unknown, because once you touch that pile of sand your heart starts pumpin' ... Oh, it's a rush, it's a big rush. As soon as I find a hole my breathing doubles, my heart starts pounding [pause] knowing that you're about to interact with a big catfish. Probably the biggest part of it is the challenge that you're facing as soon as you feel that pile of sand. Well I have the utmost respect for flatheads. We've put the fish back in the hole hundreds of times. Once in a while we're gonna have a fish fry next Saturday and we need fish. But most hand fishermen don't just stockpile fish.

The underlying theme is one of recognition of the reliance of human beings on the natural environment for their survival and the need to take only what one needs. Little Leap's rich description of his feelings about enjoying noodling gives insight into a profound sense of connection with the natural environment through noodling. Some even maintain, as does Little Leap, that "you ain't fishin' 'til you're bleedin'!" The willingness to bleed and the act of bleeding affirm the masculine moral identities of the men in the group. They emphasize the centrality of the willingness to endure physical challenge to accomplish a goal but they also emphasize interdependence and an elemental relationship with nature more than they do mastery or control.

Communitarianism, Sharing and Reciprocity

Darrell, who is 83 years old and came of age during the Great Depression, describes his early hand fishing days, revealing the delight he takes in being out in nature, the importance he places on sharing part of his catch as a contribution to the community, and his early upbringing regarding not taking more fish than one can use. On his first noodling expedition with Roy, the man who taught Darrell to noodle, he recalls being cautioned about not taking more fish than was needed. Darrell was catching a fish and there was another in the same hole.

> Oh man I was grittin' my teeth. I had a hold of the roots and then, imagine that about nine or ten years old you know, and I was all excited. And I said "[Roy], what about the other one? What about the other one?" "No," he said, "[Darrell]," he said, "Leave 'em alone, leave 'em alone," he said, "We ain't got no 'frigeration," and said, "that's enough for your daddy and your momma and you and me and my family," and said, "we'll come back next Saturday and get him," and we did that, we did that. That was the beginning of my fishing.

The themes of taking only what you need so that there are fish for the future, sustainability and local self-sufficiency are intertwined in the accounts of noodlers. Darrell, who became recognized in his community as an expert noodler, recalled being relied upon by the community to provide fish for fish fries and also remembered giving extra fish to the older people in the community who needed them:

> That was a time when it was almost a phase of sustainability. People look to me to get the fish for a neighbourhood fish fry, they looked to me. On top of that, I always took any extra fish to the older people in the community ... They needed 'em, they needed.

The themes of sharing with others in the community and group ties based on reciprocity are central among noodlers. Darrell goes on to describe how his sharing of fish, fowl, rabbits and squirrels with people in his community during the depression resulted in his being "paid off" later in life:

> As I look back now, it paid off, way late in life it paid off. One day a young fellow came ... and stepped up here

and talked [at] length, and finally said, "I wanna sell you a welder." I said, "My god boy, I can't buy a welder, 'cause I got a family and everything, I can't buy one." He said, "You can buy this one because you ain't gonna have to pay for it." I said, "[Jared], I don't know what you're talkin' about." He said, "Do you remember when you used to bring us fish? And then rabbits and then squirrels and stuff like that way back?" "Well yes, I do [Jared] but." He said, "You don't know what that meant." ... And he said, "it just was, it was like a banquet. That kind of stuff that you brought to us." And said, "I'm gonna try to pay you." ... Well, [at the time] I didn't think too much [about it], but I look back now, they were a poor family, boy I remember it yet. I didn't realize it meant that much to them.

Darrell reinforces the centrality of the norm of reciprocity in which the sharing of fish is common and longterm reciprocal sharing of things that are useful is practiced. While obtaining the fish to eat may not be as central as it once was, it is still a part of the activity and symbolizes the ability of the men to provide for others through noodling in local waters.

Anti-consumerist Frugality: "The River Is Our Mall"

Bruce, like several of the noodlers interviewed, contrasts himself and other noodlers to the "suit and tie" white collar men and people who go to the "mall" for entertainment, pointing to the frugality and simple pleasures enjoyed by noodlers in comparison to the consumerist values of the dominant culture. He also alludes to the stigma he believes "suit and tie" men place on noodlers. "Yeah, them guys in suits and ties tell us it [noodling] ain't sporting, they just ain't done it. 'Cause it'd be sporting if I stuck their asses in there. That'd be one good sport" (laughter from everyone). One of his friends comments: "Good reality show." And Bruce responds "Wouldn't [that] make a sport out of it?" Of the mall Bruce notes:

Out here it's like what do you do? Let's got to the mall? [laughter] I mean, there ain't no mall. You know, let's go to the movie theater, it just, uh ain't. I wouldn't go anyway, I'd go hand fishin'. [laughter from everyone] I'd go buy some new boxer shorts and go hand fishin'. [everyone is still laughing] My attire might be a little better when I go.

The noodling identity is often constructed in contrast to white collar "guys in suits and ties" and "doctors and lawyers" who prefer "golfing" and "keeping their hands clean." A contrast is being made by noodlers between the noodling version of masculinity and the noodling "gender regime" and the "gender regimes" of corporate employees, and the medical and legal professions associated with the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant culture (Connell 1995:77). The mention of new boxer shorts has mildly ribald connotations since some noodlers are known to noodle in the buff at times. On a more serious note, his comments make clear that any shopping he might do would be aimed at supporting the noodling lifestyle, not in conforming to consumerist values. Working-class buying power and the frugality often necessitated by it is constructed as a choice based in the moral identity of noodlers who enjoy the rural lifestyle and closeness to nature rather than city life, fancy clothes and the mall. Male noodlers identify with frugality and anti-consumerist ways of living, and contrast themselves to city folk who love to go to the mall and buy things, do not enjoy the simple pleasures of life, and cannot survive on the land. One man even said "The river is our mall." These men are constructing masculine subcultural moral identities as providers from the natural environment in a way that is distinct from the breadwinner role associated with the capitalist labour market. They make clear that they value meeting needs locally and outside of the formal economy when possible.

Bruce sums up why he noodles by saying:

[We've had] hundreds of great noodling experiences and some of 'em I've never come home with a fish. Oh yeah, I'd like to catch the hundred pounder but hundreds of times, [we've] fished, had a good time, and come home not caught nothing. You know, you catch a fish and that's just a bonus ... Basically the easiest way to put it for me, it's a way to get through life, it's somethin' to look forward too. I mean you know, come spring it's like, alright, we, we know hand fishin's comin' up, let's get some work done, you know, get caught up so we'll be able to go.

Bruce's friend George interjects, "to me it's a challenge." Bruce affirms his comment:

yeah, [anybody] can go out and catch one with a rod and reel, anybody can, you know, but who is gonna go do it the other way? I mean it takes a special breed you know. It, it's a lot harder. Yeah, it is.

Bruce and his friends make clear that noodling is linked to a way of life that is one chosen by a "special breed" of men, it is a "way to get through life," something to look forward to and enjoy, but it is not the easy path or the path chosen by most men.

Conclusion

This analysis gives insight into the ways the men in noodling groups establish a sense of masculine dignity and worth as a group and how this process reproduces, to some extent, a distinctive noodling version of masculinity and a local gender regime (Connell 1987, 1995; Connell 2000). Noodling persists because it is a cultural practice that is used in constructing a subcultural masculine rural working-class moral identity that supports the men in maintaining group solidarity and a sense of worth. The subculture they are part of and are constructing through noodling participates in the dominant culture in that there is an understanding that noodling is illegal, but the noodling subculture groups reject the negative definition of noodling as poaching and construct it as a worthy activity. It is linked to a historic version of a communitarian rural gender regime in which worthy men are providers from nature rather than from the capitalist market. The breadwinner role, linked to the capitalist labour and consumer market, has not supplanted the provider role, linked to the local natural resources and community-based provision of necessities, as the ideal of noodling masculinity.

Noodlers see themselves as "a special breed" of men who are carrying and passing on a unique rural way of life that is based in close community ties of reciprocity, trust, respect, an understood patriarchal pecking order, and a relationship of interdependence and struggle with nature. The way of life they want to pass to the next generation is, at heart, embedded in private sphere patriarchal kinship relations. Noodlers do not embrace the dominant culture that privileges high occupational status, educational attainment or a consumerist suburban or urban cosmopolitan lifestyle as gauges of worthy masculinity. Frequently the men say that their paid work is just a way to make money for the noodling lifestyle they enjoy.

Noodling moral identity and the noodling gender regime are linked to a form of masculine moral identity that was historically hegemonic but that has been supplanted by the contemporary version of hegemonic masculinity. Noodlers do embrace some features consistent with hegemonic masculinity, for instance, a taken-for-granted heterosexual norm and essentialist view of gender, and so in some ways are complicit with the hegemonic pattern (Connell 1995:79). Noodling masculinity is also constructed in relation to women who are excluded from many groups and, in those where they are included, are located outside the noodling pecking order and status system of the men noodlers except through their connection as kin or friend-kin to one of the men in the group.

The practice of noodling itself, the relatively tight boundaries for belonging, and the cultural norms of the group are centred within the local kin and friendship network similar to the local rural hunter poacher subculture described by Brymer (1991). The centrality of family ties, land and community found by Halperin (1990) among the Appalachian kinship networks she studied, emerged as similarly central during interviews with rural Missouri noodlers, in particular the high value placed on home-place ties, loyalty and generosity to kin, group self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

The relationship of noodling masculinity with dominant culture hegemonic masculinity is consistent with what Connell (1995) describes as the relationship between masculinities in dominant and subordinate classes and the marginalization experienced by the subordinate group(s). Noodlers are aware of their marginalization and use the strategy of tight cultural boundaries at the local level in an effort to protect the local pecking order status system from the incursion of the dominant culture hegemonic form of masculinity. At the same time, some noodlers lobbying for legalization are, in one way, not just seeking to legalize the practice but are contesting the marginalization of the noodling version of masculine moral identity and the noodling way of life.

The tight boundaries of noodling groups in which young men join only if senior men in the pecking order invite them to do so creates an ingroup in which socialization into a way of life takes place. The illegality of noodling in Missouri promotes group solidarity and shared identity which might be weakened if noodling were legalized (Douglas 1970; Goffman 1963). Noodling is defined as a worthy masculine activity for those in the subculture and is not defined by the group as poaching. The repetitive discursive themes that construct noodlers as tough, skilled men who are following a distinct, communitarian rural way of life are constructed in contrast to the lifestyle of the white-collar "suit and tie" men. The "suit and tie" men are symbols of hegemonic masculinity, they are not physically tough or courageous enough to noodle, are not rural-identified or closely connected to the local environment, are not communitarian, and are instead consumerists who rely on the market for their survival.

Noodlers invited to describe why they persist in noodling despite its illegality did not generally focus on rationalization or neutralization of it as a poaching activity. None indicated it was an accident. A few mentioned that it had been done out of necessity historically, particularly during the Great Depression but most indicated that although the fish was used for fish fries and shared with elderly in the community who no longer fished, it

was not a practice motivated by need since they could use legal means during the same season to catch fish. None approached noodling as something that needed to be rationalized, justified or distanced. Far from claiming that their other good qualities made up for noodling, they defined themselves as worthy through their participation in the practice. One noodler interviewed did engage in what might be considered a version of the "condemnation of the condemners" in which, when pressed regarding the issue of noodling being defined as poaching in Missouri, he shifted the focus to the unfair behaviours of an informant, a conservation agent and a judge in a case where he was caught noodling and fined. Noodlers advocating legalization, however, when pressed on the issue of noodling being illegal, deflected the label of poacher by arguing that the law was no longer reasonable and should be changed. This seemed less a technique of neutralization than a form of collective resistance to change the laws that define noodling as deviant and to redefine it as legal and as a valuable cultural tradition and skill.

Noodlers mentioned being motivated by many things such as having a fish fry, recreational enjoyment and the thrill of the catch. A few indicated they enjoy outwitting conservation agents and integrating gamesmanship as a form of rebellion against authority. But in their accounts, no single motivation prevailed. All motivations discussed were subordinated to and integrated into a construction of noodling as a practice that is part of a "way of life" and that helps to maintain and reproduce it.

Gamesmanship in catching the fish was also described as an important aspect because it linked with deeply held values and norms of the subculture. The deeper motivation was that it helped to socialize the young to subculture values and to reinforce them for group members as outlined above. Commercial gain and protection of self and property were not mentioned as motivations. One man pointed out a trophy mount on the wall and several mentioned an interest in getting larger and larger fish. Traditional rights of use, in the sense of historic precedence in the local region, were sometimes mentioned. Preserving and passing on the folk tradition were key and these other motivations were integrated into discussion of how they supported these goals. Overall, the motivations identified in Muth and Bowe (1998) in their compilation cannot be isolated as primary motivations for noodlers. Some are mentioned but they are part of an integrated deeper cultural meaning that noodling holds for these men. The men are ultimately motivated to noodle because it represents and helps them reproduce a way of life that they value. In addition, the typologies do not specifically address issues of gender identity or social class which are important underlying factors in the persistence of this subculture.

To understand the persistence of illegal noodling in Missouri, it is not only important to understand the historical context of noodling in the state, it is also necessary to consider the deeper cultural meanings and integration of a constellation of motivations that are used by the men in identity work to define themselves collectively as worthy rural men. Noodling is considered a worthy activity rather than one the men want to distance themselves from. This is largely because of the role noodling serves in their subculture. This also may, in part, stem from the fact that noodling, unlike some other poaching activities that have been studied, is not illegal consistently across states or regions and media coverage has made Missouri noodlers aware of this. Media and members of the public have demonstrated interest in noodling and Missouri noodlers have garnered media attention in their efforts to lobby for legalization.

Noodlers construct identities that are based on carrying forward a way of life that values frugality, taking what is needed from nature but not exploiting it, integration of recreation, entertainment, and practical aims that are tied to place, family and community. They do not describe not being able to afford the dominant culture lifestyle, but say that they do not like going to the mall, do not want to spend a lot of time away from home and prefer going noodling to just about any other activity that they can think of. Bryant and Pini (2009) point out that many working class people avoid claiming a class identity that they may see as undervalued. Still, they do describe identities inscribed with class and class tension in interacting with the dominant culture. The moral identity work of noodlers is linked to their efforts to defend their dignity and gain respect (Lamont 2000) as working class rural people whose identities are marginalized by the dominant culture. The noodling way of life defines the self as a part of a web of relationships that entail interdependence, responsibility, belonging and privilege within the hierarchal patriarchal "pecking order" and the natural environment. The two are experienced as intertwined as a foundational pattern for understanding the natural order of the world. Thus, the experience of noodling for these men reinforces a sense of power, worth and their central place in the web of life.

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Notes

1 The terms used to describe noodling vary from region to region. The list below includes the terms, thus far identified, by state:
Alabama: grappling (Salazar 2002)
Arkansas: hogging (Bilger 2000)
Georgia: cooning (Salazar 2002)
Illinois: hogging, logging (Salazar 2002)
Kansas: noodling (Salazar 2002)
Kentucky: dogging (Bilger 2000), handgrabbing, rock fishing, tickling (Salazar 2002)
Mississippi: grabbling (Bilger 2000; Salazar 2002), handgrabbing (Salazar 2002)
Missouri: hand fishing, noodling (Morgan 2006), rock fishing (Grigsby 2007)
Nebraska: stumping (Salazar 2002)
North Carolina: grabbling (Salazar 2002)
Ohio: noodling (Salazar 2002)
Oklahoma: noodling (Bilger 2000; Salazar 2002)
South Carolina: grabbing, noodling, snatching, yanking (Salazar 2002)
Tennessee: snatching (Salazar 2002)
Texas: noodling (Bilger 2000; Salazar 2002)
Virginia: noodling (Salazar 2002).

2 An e-mail and telephone survey of conservation departments in the United States found that noodling is legal in the following 17 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia. In two other states, there is no law against hand-fishing for catfish but laws against entering the waters of the state make it illegal.

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Anthropological Reflections / Réflexions Anthropologiques

Anastasia, Paní Viera and Manong Lito: Reflections on Anthropological Friendships

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An exceptionally bright and motivated student recently took part in a directed studies course in Eastern Europe, and after spending several weeks in a Romani ghetto and an isolated Ukrainian village, she wrote an excellent paper describing the experience of her first mini-fieldwork. In these days of YouTube and Wikipedia scholarship, I have become grateful for students willing to engage in old-fashioned ethnography, and this competent research report seemed to confirm my expectation that its author was ready for advanced training in the discipline. But then, in the last paragraph, the student reflected on her future and thanked me for this unusual opportunity which helped her decide *against* pursuing a career in anthropology. "What?" I cried in disbelief! I had read correctly; my star student disengaged herself from the subject she had embraced for several years as a result of her first field experience. What she objected to were not the hardships of having to communicate with people who understood no English or coping with uncomfortable living arrangements. No, she disliked what she called the "intrusiveness" of fieldwork, the "false intimacy" and the "asymmetrical relationship" between the anthropologist and the informant. But it was the last sentence of the essay that provoked me. Here, my student drew what I believe is a false dichotomy between informants and friends, concluding that she "would rather be friends" with the many interesting people she had met.

Much has been written about the relationships anthropologists form in the field, but, as the verdict passed by this student-researcher shows, perhaps not enough has been said about their multidimensionality and complexity. While some of the people we rely on in our professional pursuits remain the non-descript "cultural resource persons" of soulless scholarship, others become "dialogical partners" and even friends. What follows here are my musings about the trials, tribulations, and rewards that I have experienced as a result of three friendships formed during fieldwork.

Anastasia

"Little Russia," Canada's only community of Russian Old Believers, located halfway between Edmonton and Fort McMurray, was the site of my first extended anthropological fieldwork. When I arrived there in the spring of 1981, the colony had been in existence for fewer than ten years, and tensions between the newcomers and their neighbours were running high. The "White Russians," as the Old Believers had introduced themselves in order to quell any suspicion of communist sympathies, were accused of separatism and religious bigotry. Their women, hidden under ankle-long *sarafans* and colourful *babushkas,* were pitied by their Canadian counterparts for what was perceived as domestic slavery that included the prohibition of any form of contraceptives. Their children were suspected of enduring child labour and discrimination on account of the elders' refusal to let them attend school beyond the legal minimum. The Russians, in turn, were disillusioned after realizing that their community, whose isolation they wished to perpetuate, had attracted unwanted attention from all kinds of state officials, ranging from social workers to police officers.

The arrival of a greenhorn anthropologist deepened the Old Believers' suspicion that their community was being infiltrated by yet another outsider hostile to their way of life. Centuries-old taboos against all but absolutely essential contact with "pagans" were revived, and my search for a family who might take me in for the duration of the planned fieldwork proved futile. On the verge of losing hope, I made one more attempt and knocked on the door of a homestead built at some distance from the core of the community. The setting immediately appealed to me. Several structures erected on the bank of a small river (local Old Believers at that time still clung to the conviction that rivers were blessed and purified by angels every morning) enclosed a pasture for horses and cows and a small field planted with wheat and flax. Clusters of mature spruce trees had escaped the builder's axe and provided shade for brightly painted benches, suggesting a degree of aesthetic sensibility rarely encountered in rural Alberta. Flocks of domesticated ducks and geese complemented the idyllic picture. I sensed peace and tranquility.

The middle-aged woman who opened the door introduced herself as Anastasia. My first impression was that she was heavily pregnant with a bulging belly that protruded out of her *sarafan.* She was in her mid-40s, and this could have been her last pregnancy, I thought. Later I realized that her body posture was the result of ten pregnancies, the last of which had occurred several years ear-

Figure 1: The author with Anastasia's extended family. Reprinted with permission of the author.

lier. After Anastasia listened to my garbled explanations about who I was and what I wanted—all in my limited Russian, for most Old Believer women were incapable of communicating in English—she invited me into the house, offered me a chair and a few slices of homemade bread and a cup of fresh milk. That was more hospitality than I had encountered anywhere else in the preceding weeks and I was moved to tears.

What developed between us during the ensuing year of my fieldwork was an unconventional friendship. Anastasia and her husband Efim explained that they could not accommodate me in their home as the mere presence of a *pogany* (unbeliever) meant defilement for the entire household. But they welcomed my interest in their ways and consented to having me around whenever it did not interfere with their activities. Eventually, I struck similar agreements with other Old Believers, and the fieldwork yielded useful results. But throughout the duration of my stay on the margins of "Little Russia," it was Anastasia and her family who were most tolerant of my presence and who taught me the most. I think that Anastasia took a genuine liking to me, within the strict limits of a xenophobic community governed by a fundamentalist religion. Although we kept addressing each other with the Slavic pronoun of formality—*Vy*—and although the cleavages of age, gender, culture and language made even minor expressions of closeness, such as a hug, a tête-à-tête over a cup of coffee or tea or a private joke, unthinkable, I sensed that Anastasia was concerned about my welfare and tried to be helpful in an unobtrusive way. Unlike other households where my pogany status was always emphasized by serving me food at a separate table so that I was excluded from the commonality of the Old Believers' col-

lective meals, Anastasia placed me at the family table. There, only a trained observer's eye could detect the narrow line of segregation constituted by a separate table cloth that was not allowed to touch that of my hosts. Of course, I ate my meals from special, pogany, dishes that could not be used by anybody else. But even that sine qua non of Russian Old Orthodoxy was bent occasionally, especially during festive occasions when the potent home-made wine flowed freely and my hosts wanted to demonstrate affection for their outsider–guest.

With time, as I learned more about my host family, I came to regard its female head as something of a crypto-cultural relativist. On the one hand, Anastasia was second to none in her determination to teach her children and grandchildren the principles of her faith. Every day, she would gather the younger members of the extended family, seat them at a large table and instruct them in the proper pronunciation of Old Slavonic sacred texts. She was fastidious in following the ritual dietary calendar and she attended church on as many feast days as possible. Yet, her checkered life—she was born into Manchurian exile where she experienced the Japanese occupation and postwar communist régime, then moved to Brazil, and subsequently to Oregon, before ending up in Alberta—had taught Anastasia the necessity of adopting a pragmatic attitude even in matters pertaining to her fundamentalist faith. Raising ten children is a formidable task in its own right, but doing so in a foreign environment that poses serious challenges to virtually every inherited value is almost beyond imagination for most of us. And Anastasia certainly had more than her fair share of family problems. Her eldest daughter had defected with a pogany Canadian before my arrival and she led an uncertain life somewhere in British Columbia. Another daughter, a pretty and unruly 16-year-old, kept disappearing at night for illicit dates with a French-Canadian neighbour, a relationship that eventually led to her pregnancy and marriage outside the fold. One of Anastasia's older sons had suffered a broken spine while felling trees in the bush and ended up in a wheelchair. Desperate and miserable, the man turned to drugs which prompted his wife to take their two children and leave—an unheard of act in Old Believer circles. Anastasia and her husband never complained about these misfortunes—at least not in front of me. But they did not try to hide them either. Instead, they learned to veer uneasily between the two extremes of their social existence: an inherited fundamentalist culture that threatened to alienate the young generation on the one hand, and an excessively permissive host society on the other. The compromise they struck was a precarious modus vivendi. Television was officially banned but the family kept a set in the closet for evening entertainment of the adolescent children. The aberrant daughter and her French-Canadian husband were officially excommunicated, yet they kept being invited to every family celebration. When the National Film Board tried to make a documentary about the elusive community, it was Anastasia and her family who made it possible—and she paid a heavy price for that.

Anastasia and I kept in touch after the completion of my fieldwork. We exchanged letters with news about our respective families and we talked on the phone from time to time. But our contact diminished with time, largely thanks to my preoccupation with other things. After several years of complete silence, I finally managed to organize a brief visit in the summer of 2004. By then, I had heard that Anastasia had been quite ill for a long time, but I had not grasped her condition until I saw her. She was lying in bed, crippled by a nervous disorder that nobody seemed to understand, her emaciated body kept alive by a battery of tubes. She had been told about my visit, and she had been prepared for it by having had her hair braided and covered with a kerchief. I held her translucent hand, longer than ever before, and she opened her eyes and moved her lips without managing to make a sound. The visit was brief and awkward, but it meant a lot to me and I like to think that Anastasia derived some pleasure from it too. That was the last time I saw her.

Paní Viera

My friendship with Viera grew out of my involvement in an impoverished Romani settlement in Slovakia. What had begun as a CIDA-funded (Canadian International Development Agency) community development project continued as longterm research of contemporary "Gypsydom," and Viera has been instrumental in helping with both types of activities. Although we have known each other for some 12 years, I keep addressing her with the honorific *Paní* (Mrs.), and she calls me *Pán* (Mr.) David. We could have switched to more intimate forms of address, but that would have undermined our type of friendship which entails patronage. We both understand and accept that I am the more powerful and richer member of the dyad who has to keep cementing the relationship with displays of generosity. As such, I would be entitled to dropping the honorific Paní, but I have not done so out of respect for Viera whom I consider a friend—albeit not an intimate one. Viera, who is in her late 40s, has told me several times that she regards me as something of an older brother or even father, and I believe that there is more to this declaration of affection than self-serving flattery used by a needy client.

Viera has experienced more than the usual share of hardship. As a child, she endured not only the racism meted out by ethnic Slovak neighbours and teachers but also a badly dysfunctional family life. Her father was a brutish alcoholic who terrorized his wife and children—to the point where his eldest son attempted to kill him, unsuccessfully, with a pitchfork. Viera tried to escape the unhappy family environment, but the ghetto-like nature of her home community provided few ways out. The most obvious one, marriage into another Romani settlement, was blocked by Viera's lesbian inclinations. And so, she chose another frequent "exit strategy"—prison. I do not know whether Viera really committed the petty theft that earned her a disproportionately long prison term in order to find a way out of her unhappy milieu, but there she was, incarcerated in a women's prison where the young lesbian was passed from one prisoner to another. On and off, Viera spent close to ten years in jail, and when she returned to her settlement, she found her family scattered, leaving no place that she could call home. She reacted in a brave and resourceful way. Instead of seeking shelter with one of her married siblings, Viera built her own hut and found herself a young single mother who moved in as her partner. This openly lesbian household, the only one in a community of 1000 people, is structured along traditional gender roles: Viera, the "husband," looks for work, repairs the hut and protects the family. Her young "wife" raises the child, shops, cooks and cleans. Viera's male role is accentuated by her musical skills. She plays the guitar and performs publicly in a setting where only men possess and use instruments.

Very quickly after my arrival in her settlement, Viera became my chief informant. I had discovered that her marginality had taught her to look at the surrounding society in a detached and inquisitive way, and I began to court her as someone who could answer all kinds of questions I had about her fellow Roma. The special bond that developed between us elevated her lowly status in the community and it gave her access to material rewards, such as interest-free loans, in a setting dominated by ruthless loan sharks. Of course, the loans were never paid back, and soon the requests for "loans" changed to expectations of monetary gifts. I have been handing out these gifts for many years now. Given the grinding poverty of the local Roma, it is next to impossible to visit the settlement without giving some cash. In the early years of my involvement, I used to quote the moralistic adage about a fishing rod being more useful than a fish, but as I grew wiser and realized the dearth of fishing rods in certain settings, my reluctance to hand out money diminished. This shift in thinking was expedited by Viera's willing-
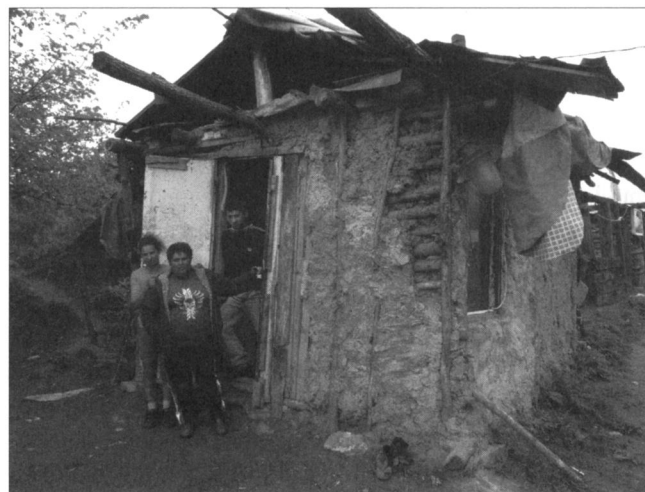

Figure 2: Viera, her wife and child in front of their hut. Reprinted with permission of the author.

ness to share the money she received from me with needy members of her extensive kin group. I have come to think of her as the distributor of my—in Canadian terms fairly modest—private charity.

Over the years, there have been many other Roma seeking my patronage. Some of them I have helped in tangible ways, such as assistance with the purchase and financing of homes outside the settlement. But the combination of clientage with friendship is the strongest in my relationship with Viera. Two factors play a role here. The first one applies to our ability to communicate when I am in Canada—which is most of the year. The obvious way to bridge the distance is by telephone, and to this end I bought a mobile telephone for her several years ago. I had purchased cell phones for other people over the course of many years, but none lasted more than a few weeks before ending up in a pawnshop. Viera, in spite of her poverty, has resisted that temptation. I suspect that I am the only person who calls her and I do so only once or twice per month, but whenever I dial her number, she answers. This has allowed us to stay in touch throughout the year to share news and to strengthen our relationship. The second factor is Viera's sense of justice and fairness. The community she lives in is as acephalous as the classical examples of this condition in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Quarrels are endemic, and there are no ways of settling them short of physical confrontation. Unlike the situation in Papua New Guinea and other acephalous settings where the parties in conflict can avoid each other, the tightly-packed, ghettoized settlements of rural Roma provide no such remedy. They are rife with strife, violence and oppressive stress. The recent emergence of a powerful class of indigenous loan sharks, who

charge *monthly* interest rates of 100% and terrorize clients unable to settle scores, has made matters even worse. Instead of exercising much-needed leadership, this proto-mafia has turned against the people, feeding drugs to ten-year-olds and selling young women and men into prostitution.

This has filled Viera with outrage. And it is not just the crassly exploitative machinations of the local nouveau riche that she objects to. Memories of her unhappy childhood, mixed with the experience of prison life and the injustices of Slovakia's racialized society, and her own marginality as a solitary lesbian have made her into an astute social critic. But where can she turn in her quest for justice? Unfortunately, under the conditions of her unenviable existence, the only person who listens to her with empathy and regularity is the foreign anthropologist. And so, during our lengthy telephone conversations, I become privy to a panoply of real and perceived wrongs. Viera tells me about the men who violate their daughters, the husbands who beat their wives, the wives who cheat their husbands, the adolescent girls who (she thinks) justify their illicit pregnancies with accusations of rape, and, most recently, the naive youngsters who had been lured to England with promises of milk and honey only to end up in bondage.

As the problems in her home community magnify, and as she grows more and more impatient with the people that surround her, Viera has hatched a plan that flatters and scares me simultaneously. She has decided to gather those members of her extended family who have retained a degree of decency and normalcy—this includes only two of her 12 siblings—and place them under my authority in some far away location where they may flourish unhindered by the corrupting environment of the settlement.

Figure 3: The author in a Romani settlement in Slovakia. Reproduced with permission of the author.

At moments like that, I am immensely grateful for the vast distance between us.

Manong Lito

My wife, a Filipina from a small island in the Western Visayas, has always been a source of exceptional anthropological inspiration and insight. Early on in our marriage, I used to argue with her about the plausibility of some of the events she described—the mutation of a man from her home village into a giant snake that was subsequently kept and nourished by the transformed man's brother stands out in my memory—but, as time passed, I learned to curb my positivist tendencies. I have come to nod in agreement when my wife tells me that her uncle's crippling disease has been caused by witchcraft or that a man has lost his potency after peeing at a tree guarded by the White Lady. Among the unusual beings described by my wife was a group of dark, little and semi-nude people who hunted monkeys with bows and arrows and lived in the forested hills above her seaside village. At first, I classified them as a Tasadayesque invention of the local imagination, but eventually some cursory research led to the surprising discovery that my wife's small island harboured a number of bands of aboriginal foragers classified in traditional anthropological literature as "Negritos." Of course, it is well known that pockets of this somewhat enigmatic population (its origins and early history remain shrouded in mystery) are found in several parts of Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. It was there that the modern pioneer of Negrito research, the German Jesuit anthropologist Paul Schebesta, collected most of his ethnographic material—before moving to the Ituri Forest in search of comparative data among the "Pygmies." But the bulk of the classical works devoted to the Negritos of the Philippines describes their northern communities in Luzon and creates the impression that they have been obliterated in the rest of the country.

The lead provided by my wife had fateful consequences for our vacations on her home island. What had been low-key family events have turned into my frantic search for surviving Ati—as the local "Negritos" call themselves—on three adjacent islands, including Boracay, the country's foremost tourist destination, where a small band of Ati faces imminent displacement. It was in the course of these erratic expeditions that my wife and I located the monkey-hunting band that she remembered from her childhood, and that is where I befriended *manang* Lito.

Lito, a diminutive but muscular man with a perpetual smile and friendly eyes, is the spokesman of the smallest of the seven Ati bands found on my wife's island. I liked

him right away when we first met in the summer of 2007. Back then, Lito had just learned that the owners of the land that his band had used as a home base for some 20 years were going to evict the Ati and the mood in the small gathering of primitive huts was sombre. Although the Ati are recognized by the national government as indigenous people entitled to state protection, government assistance is minimal, and Ati squatting on private land have no recourse whatsoever against the will of the landlord. By a strange coincidence, my wife had just been approached by a distant relative who was selling a few acres of hilly land above her village, which we purchased and offered Lito and his people as their new base. In a collective effort, dwellings were constructed for the eight nuclear families that constitute the band, an outdoor latrine—used only by visitors—was positioned at the edge of the settlement, and an old pump was reactivated in order to supply fresh drinking water. The land was turned over to the Ati with only two strings attached: it was to be used only by the eight families already present, and there was to be no cutting of trees for *oling*, which is a destructive way of making charcoal by cash-strapped people that has proven fateful to large tracts of forest throughout the country.

So far, the experiment has worked well. Lito acts as the caretaker of the settlement, and that entitles him to a monthly stipend of 500 pesos—slightly over $10—which I transmit through my brother-in-law. Lito also received a mobile phone which he periodically recharges in the house of my brother-in-law. The stipend and the telephone are symbols of Lito's special relationship with me—*Sir* David as he insists on calling me—which fortify his fragile authority in the band's egalitarian social environment. Although the phone was intended as a direct link to us, the Canadian landlords, we have never been able to reach Lito. Perhaps the signal is too weak or perhaps he chooses not to answer when he sees our number displayed.

As with my other key informants, I feel that Lito sees me as more than a foolish foreigner who can be exploited in one way or another. He was genuinely amazed to realize my interest in his people's history and culture and he was overjoyed to learn that his new "landlord" respected and encouraged the foraging lifestyle that the surrounding society tries to extinguish. It did not take me long to discover that Lito and his fellow Ati suffer from depression and that their smiling faces and seemingly carefree day-to-day existence conceal deep worries about the future. They know that sooner or later, the hunting and gathering way of life that has shaped every detail of their being will come to an end. Lito is painfully aware of the Epic of the Ten Bornean Datus, a nationally celebrated legend that commemorates the arrival of the ancestors

of present-day Filipinos some 800 years ago on a beach not far from Lito's band's territory. There, the leader of a group of exiles from Borneo is said to have made a deal with the "chief" of the aboriginal Ati, Marikudo. In exchange for a golden *salakot*—a princely diadem— Marikudo and his people allowed the newcomers to settle on the island and retreated into the forested interior. As Lito put it, the Ati have been retreating ever since, but now there is nowhere to go. He compares his people to birds bunching together at the very end of a branch which is about to break off. The Visayans, the local population of the majority Malay-Filipinos, have taken all of the hunters' land. And, as if to mock them, they have created huge annual festivals—such as the Ati-Atihan of Kaliban or the Dinagyang of Iloilo City—where thousands of people blacken and paint their bodies, divide themselves into Ati "tribes" and re-enact the "Purchase of Panay" in front of tourist cameras.

Lito's life story exemplifies the challenges the Ati have encountered in recent decades. He was born probably in the late 1950s—he has no birth certificate or any other personal document—into the largest local band at a time when it was still fully nomadic. Appropriately, Lito recalls his grandfather still wearing the *ubag*, or loincloth, a badge of traditional Ati identity eventually abandoned by Lito's father under pressure from Roman Catholic missionaries. This must have been in the early 1980s when local Ati began to settle down in permanent communities encouraged by the government. Missionaries set up schools and sought to replace the hunting economy with cash-generating pursuits, such as the manufacture of "native products" consisting of wood carvings and purses woven out of natural fibres. Lito was too old to enrol in school—which is why he never learned to read and write— but he followed the call of the new patrons and took up work as a carpenter in a convent. It was at this time that all adult Ati, including Lito and his father, were baptized. When we first met, Lito presented himself as a Catholic, and he dismissed my queries about the animistic universe of the Ati with assurances that those were all things of the past. Step by step, however, the Christian façade began to peel off and I came to understand how much of the traditional animistic world view still influences Lito and his people. Remarkably, I learned that Lito's father was a *babaylan*, or "fire-walker," which is the local designation for a shaman. He practiced his craft well past his baptism, perhaps because he was the last Ati babaylan in the entire region, and there was much demand for his services.

Like the loss of the ubog, the disappearance of shamanism is regarded as a marker along the inevitable

Figure 4: Lito with his hunting sling. Reproduced with permission of the author.

march of the Ati towards full sedentism and integration into Visayan society. But Lito insists that there is one trait that true Ati cannot lose, and that is their love of hunting. The *pangayam* way of life is in their blood, Lito claims, and they cannot forsake it. It was this "ancestral urge" that compelled him some ten years ago to leave the nuns and to join the smallest but most traditional of the seven local bands. Like the rest of the Ati, his people have a permanent base with durable huts, but unlike their kin elsewhere, they have no electricity, no church and no school. As often as possible, the men go on hunting expeditions of several days' duration while the women and children stay behind gathering wild plants and fruits. The traditional bows and arrows have been abandoned due to their conspicuous size—both were the length of the user—which made the Ati stand out too much when they traversed densely populated territories. Nowadays they use less visible slings that are, Lito claims, as effective as their former weapons.

The small hilly acreage that I have placed at the disposal of Lito and his people gives them a measure of independence unknown in neighbouring Ati communities.

Centuries of asymmetrical contact with the surrounding Visayans have taught the Ati how to structure relations with their neighbours. On the surface, all is well, and bonds of ritual kinship—cooperating men address each other as *manong*—link Ati settlements with Visayan villages. Yet Lito confided that the disease-causing witches whom the Ati seek to protect themselves against through a formidable barrage of "native medicine" are always Visayans, and that, for this reason alone, they prefer living at some distance from Malay Filipinos.

But perhaps my meddling in their affairs has merely led to the replacement of one form of dependence by another? That seems to have been the verdict of a group of Canadian students who accompanied me on a research trip in the summer of 2009. They did not think much of "my" Ati. After much huffing and puffing, the students reached the hilly outpost, lowered their chunky bodies onto delicate bamboo structures built for the small and lanky Ati (some of them collapsed after the unusual impact), pulled out their cameras, and proceeded to document the seemingly odd combination of old and new: hand-made knives used to open beer bottles, store-purchased rice eaten with wild meat, Lito's cell phone lying next to his sling. They filled the normally quiet place with their shrill laughter and complained later that their hosts had given them the slip just before a much-anticipated hunting expedition. The alpha male of the small group, a mature student who had been to every "neat" place on earth, described my relationship with the Ati as an example of romantic neocolonialism. Perhaps it is. But what is the alternative in the local context? Most dispossessed Ati end up in a nearby metropolis where they barely survive as poverty-stricken scrappers.

Conclusions

The three relationships that I have described here are embedded in a much larger web of contacts that I have made as a result of ethnographic work in several settings. Due to the anthropological preference for marginal groups, the places I have chosen to explore are, for the most part, poor—a Romani ghetto, a Ukrainian village, an Ati settlement—and their inhabitants have sought to enlist me as a generous patron. But, in spite of the inevitably structural asymmetry that marks these relationships, some of them have flourished into friendships. As such, they entail emotional closeness, generosity, respect and durability. I would argue that anthropologists make good friends not only because of their indisputable ability to reward informants with valuable goods and services but also because of the sympathy and empathy they show to "marginals" in the widest sense of the word. I know—

though she never talked about it—that Anastasia valued my understanding of the challenges she faced as a moderate religious fundamentalist in a secular and foreign society. I know that Viera appreciates my willingness to listen to her frustrated diatribes against her own community. And, I know that Lito is delighted to have found in me someone who seems to grasp the anxiety he feels at pondering the future of his people. And what is in it for me, beside the access to exceptional ethnographic data that a cynic might point out? Like Lito, I also feel anxiety about the future of my people. Glancing over the shoulders of my children as they construct and maintain their virtual friendships on Facebook, I wonder how long it might take

before my "anthropological" friends remain the last friends I have.

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Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Marc-Anthony Falzon (ed.), *Multisited Ethnography. Theory, Praxis, and Locality in Contemporary Research,* Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009, 304 pages.

Recenseure : *Ariane Bélanger-Vincent*
Université Laval

Multisited Ethnography. Theory, Praxis, and Locality in Contemporary Research est présenté comme marquant le début d'une seconde génération de recherches menées en privilégiant le multisite comme approche méthodologique. Riche en contributions, il contient quatorze chapitres concis, en plus d'une introduction rédigée par le directeur, Mark-Anthony Falzon, et d'un épilogue, signé Ulf Hannerz. L'intérêt de l'ouvrage n'est pas à trouver dans sa cohésion, mais plutôt dans la multiplicité des thèmes et enjeux abordés par les contributeurs. Chacun peut y trouver son compte, au prix d'un manque de cohérence et de ligne directrice. Falzon souligne d'ailleurs que le choix d'ordonner les chapitres en ordre alphabétique d'auteurs est dû à un entrecoupement trop important des thématiques soulevées. Le résultat global fait perdre de l'intérêt à l'ouvrage et le projet intellectuel sous-jacent à son projet, pourtant souligné dans l'introduction, en devient difficilement saisissable. Nonobstant cet écueil, plusieurs chapitres sont très intéressants et l'introduction fait bien le point sur l'importance et la pertinence du multisite.

De fait, Falzon expose les objectifs explicites du volume dans le chapitre d'introduction. L'ouvrage vise en premier lieu à présenter les éléments théoriques et pratiques de l'ethnographie multisituée ainsi que leurs développements; deuxièmement, il projette de montrer la portée du multisite par le biais de la présentation d'études de cas empiriques; en troisième lieu, l'ouvrage tente d'identifier les directions que l'ethnographie multisituée doit emprunter, identifiant la collaboration dans la recherche comme une voie à privilégier; et en dernier lieu, il tente d'exposer un programme pour une seconde génération d'ethnographie multisite.

Une thématique récurrente dans plusieurs chapitres, et développée dans l'introduction de Falzon, est celle de la question du temps et de l'espace. L'auteur pose des jalons pour une réflexion à ce propos en identifiant les raisons qui expliquent l'émergence, mais surtout la croissance de la pratique de l'ethnographie multisituée. Celle-ci serait la conséquence, dit-il, de la prise de conscience que l'espace est socialement construit. Ce faisant, la production d'un espace ethnographique est cohérente. « In sum, contemporary research has to come to terms with the idea that, logically, if space is produced, there is no reason why the space of ethnography should be exempt. Which puts the processes of this production, and the possibility of alternatives, on the agenda » (p. 4). Ce regard sur la question de l'espace permet au directeur de répondre à une critique souvent exprimée à l'endroit du multisite, c'est-à-dire le manque de densité et de profondeur des données. Il rappelle que cette densité des données n'est estimée possible qu'avec le temps passé sur le terrain. Falzon avance que le temps et l'espace sont méthodologiquement interchangeables. « If our object is mobile and/or spatially dispersed, being likewise surely becomes a form of participant observation » (p. 9).

Le chapitre 6 est entièrement dédié à cette critique du manque de profondeur des données. Cindy Horst prend appui, entre autres, sur son expérience de terrain, pour avoir mené une recherche multisituée dans un camp avec des réfugiés somaliens et dans des communautés somaliennes au Minnesota et en Norvège (ces dernières étant tenues d'envoyer de l'argent à leur famille dans les camps). L'argument principal de Horst est le suivant: « Thus, multisited research might not be able to provide "thick" description of the individual nodes, but it does guarantee "thick" description of the network, its dynamics and the interplay of relations between people, things, activities and meanings » (p. 126). Afin de raffermir son argumentaire, l'auteure opère une distinction fondamentale entre l'approche comparée et le multisite en raison de la confusion qui existe toujours entre les deux. Le multisite, affirme Horst, n'est pas qu'une simple multiplication du nombre de sites étudiés au cours d'une recherche; il doit mettre l'accent sur des phénomènes transnationaux et les réseaux qui lient les sites entre eux.

Il importe de souligner la contribution de George Marcus, anthropologue qui a posé le premier jalon de l'émergence progressive de pratiques méthodologiques multisituées dans un article paru dans *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Marcus 1995). Après avoir montré comment le multisite a ébranlé le

terrain malinowskien, et après avoir répondu aux questionnements qui en résultaient, l'auteur discute dans le chapitre 10 d'une manière plus radicale de faire du multisite, c'est-à-dire une nouvelle forme d'ethnographie multisituée basée sur la collaboration. Il conçoit l'ethnographie comme émergeant de collaborations stratégiques, une « Ethnography as/of Collaboration » (Marcus 2009:187 n. 3). L'idée de la collaboration a d'ailleurs été explorée dans quelques-uns des chapitres de l'ouvrage et Hannerz fait pragmatiquement remarquer dans son épilogue que « [c]learly, [...], the possibility of putting together a research team of members with different linguistic and cultural competences, matching the diversity of sites, should greatly expand the range of potential multisite projects » (p. 278).

De son côté, Kim Fortun propose dans le chapitre 3 une métaphore fort intéressante qui fournit un nouvel imaginaire du multisite, lequel se base généralement sur l'imagerie des réseaux. Elle dit visualiser ses sites comme des couches superposées (*scales*), métaphore qu'elle emprunte à la géologie. Elle envisage ces couches comme des « systems that are continually being reconstituted through the interaction of many scales, variables and forces » (p. 74). Fortun illustre son propos à l'aide de la recherche qu'elle a menée à Bhopal après le désastre de 1984. « Analytically, I find it useful to differentiate [the scales], imagining the multicolored layers of complex geologic formations, some layers thicker than others, some with fissures, all subject to change, even if slowly » (p. 81). Cette métaphore est cohérente avec le multisite, puisque tout comme lui elle « pieces together a picture of an "object" with material from many (sometimes unexpected) places » (p. 82).

Il faudrait aborder en dernier le premier chapitre de l'ouvrage. Il a été rédigé par Matei Candea et constitue une version écourtée, ponctuée d'une postface, d'un article d'abord paru dans le *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (Candea 2007). Article critique du multisite qui livre un plaidoyer pour le terrain balisé (*bounded field-site*), l'auteur pose la question de la « *value of self-limitation* »[1] en ce qui concerne la pratique du terrain. Candea fonde sa critique de l'imaginaire du multisite sur deux principaux éléments. Il dénonce en premier lieu le postulat selon lequel la réalité est intégrée (*seamless reality*), sur l'idée que « any "global" entity is – must be, can only be – local in all its points » (p. 29). Il pose en second lieu la question sensible à laquelle tout ethnographe qui emprunte la stratégie multisite a fait face, c'est-à-dire celle de savoir comment délimiter le terrain multisitué, « how to make the cut » (p. 29). Bien que cette critique soit bien articulée et intéressante, elle semble avoir été insérée de manière un peu artificielle et aucun dialogue (ou très peu) n'est entrepris. Ce fait, en somme, s'avère cohérent avec le reste de l'ouvrage, qui souffre d'un manque décevant de ligne directrice.

Note

1 Candea fait une intéressante analogie avec le monde du cinéma. Il compare les limites imposées par le terrain unique au mouvement cinématographique danois Dogme 95, initié par Lars

Von Trier et Thomas Vinterberg, ces derniers s'étant imposé des limites extrêmement contraignantes, alors qu'il associe l'ethnographie multisituée et ses limites presque inexistantes au *Lord of the Ring*. Le réalisateur de la trilogie, Peter Jackson, a repoussé les limites techniques pour mettre à l'écran tout ce dont il pouvait rêver. « This is where I would like to open my account, in this space between *Lord of the Ring* and Dogme, between sensibilities based on limitless narrative possibilities and sensibilities based on self-imposed restriction » (p. 25).

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Winnie Lem and Pauline Gardiner Barber (eds.), *Class, Contention, and a World in Motion,* New York: Berghahn Books, 2010, 224 pages.

Reviewer: *Nelson Ferguson*
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"Class, Contention, and a World in Motion" revolves around the central premise that class and migration are intrinsically entwined. Migration, globalization and configurations of class intersect and are mutually constitutive; migration is a product of, while also a part of, ongoing processes of globalization. Opening with these arguments, the volume's editors, Winnie Lem and Pauline Gardiner Barber, present a persuasive challenge for an alternative approach to migration and globalization studies in which class becomes a fundamental and central aspect of analysis.

This challenge is deftly taken up by the volume's contributors. Through primarily ethnographic foci, the contributors examine themes of human movement and class addressed from a variety of perspectives and regional concentrations. The classed experiences of immigrants, temporary foreign workers, transnational and trans-regional labour migrants and refugees emerge, while these ethnographies show that the lines that divide these various categories of mobility are often blurred and often mutable. With a shared focus on migrant agency (and the limits thereof), the contributors present a commitment to move beyond traditional and public representations which pose migrants as passive subjects enmeshed in global economic forces beyond their understanding, or as objects of policies to be regulated, disciplined and defended against. Instead, they focus on such mobile bodies as political, gendered subjects with the potential to recognize and mobilize against their conditions, even if this potential is not always realized.

The theme of political mobilization and collective action among mobile subjects runs through the bulk of the chapters in this volume. Davide Però examines the development of two grassroots, London-based Latin American groups and their differing strategies in interacting with and creating space for themselves within British sociopolitical structures. Elisabetta Zontini's chapter shows female Moroccan and Filipina immigrants in Bologna and Barcelona as social actors developing a variety of methods to mobilize individually and collectively, finding creative methods to negotiate degrees of citizenship rights for themselves and their families in the process. Susana Narotzky explores varying levels of political activism in her discussion of two women's life-histories of mobility in and around Spain, presenting narratives based around the separate life-organizing goals of collective organizing for aims of class struggle and of personal sacrifice to ensure the survival of one's family.

Narotzky's ethnography underlines an additional key theme that many of the other contributors also grapple with: that while certain subjects do organize, mobilize and resist the exploitive structures in which they find themselves, many others do not. Belinda Leach's contribution examines themes such as acquiescence, discussing how collective class action in a Canadian auto plant was stymied by tensions between El Salvadoran immigrants and resident white Canadians emerging from their distinctive yet entwined classed histories. Corporate and state policies additionally serve to highlight perceptions of ethnocultural difference and diminish those of shared positions in the labour process. Adding to this discussion is Barber's chapter which examines how technologies such as cellphones become a double-edged sword in transforming migration experiences for migrant Filipina caregivers. Constant access to communication technology allows workers new avenues of contact in what is otherwise a socially isolating and solitary workplace. Yet these same opportunities for contact can allow family members to put additional pressures on such workers by highlighting their financial commitments to back "home" while producing a disincentive to employment-risking activism.

The contributors also focus on exposing the view of migrants as passive subjects or objects of policy as often not an *a priori* assessment but rather as the result of state and corporate strategies to disempower otherwise potentially political subjects. This is a point emphasized by the majority of contributors in this volume, yet particularly articulated in Marie France Labrecque's chapter on the developments of maquiladoras in various regions of Mexico. As Labrecque argues, maquiladoras were historically organized and situated with the aims of variably exploiting migrant and indigenous labour to prevent and weaken labour organization. A connecting point is that migratory processes often allow for the proletarization of new populations, as emphasized by Frances Abrahamer Rothstein in her examination of the recent and rapid inclusion of female workers from a rural Mexican community into increasingly gendered internal and transnational labour markets.

The ability or disability to mobilize is thus directly tied to relations that migrants attempt to forge, are denied, or have thrust upon them by the state. Such negotiations of citizenship constitute another major thread tying the chapters of this volume together. Wenona Giles, in her intriguing look at Afghan refugees in Iran, examines how a group is simultaneously defined both through their initial movements to escape persecution and through their immobility within their host state. Somewhat ironically, their mobility has left them immobile where they come to occupy a particularly vulnerable position as exploitable workers at the bottom of the labour market. Meanwhile, Lem's chapter on Chinese immigrants in France describes intersections of kinship networks and peculiar relations of citizenship in which such immigrants are posed as "ideal migrants" and "model citizens" but denied a sense of belonging in wider French society. This perpetuates senses of exclusion and an acquiescent stance towards neoliberal governance, precluding such immigrants from class mobilization currently cutting across ethnic lines in France. Josiah Heyman further augments this ongoing discussion linking citizenship, class and migration through his chapter examining conditions of illegality and precarious citizenship among undocumented Mexican workers. Using an innovative framework of "trust" and "risk," his ethnography examines how mobile subjects become constituted as a threat to the state and in need of regulation in a U.S. border region.

Linking configurations of class to migration, as the editors of this volume point out, is neither a novel nor an overly contentious undertaking. Yet, it is the positioning of class as a fundamental aspect of migration and as a vital part of the analysis of mobility which makes this volume a crucial intervention in migration studies. In arguing for geographic mobilities as products of classed relations while showing these same mobilities as simultaneously transforming configurations of class, the contributors have shown how ethnography can go beyond the immediate to examine the larger processes at play. Overall, this volume operates as both a political project in calling for sustained focus on the centrality of class, and as an illustration of the various forms such an approach may take. Those looking for grounded accounts of migration, neoliberalization and the changing faces of citizenship in a globalizing world of movements would be well-served by *Class, Contention, and a World in Motion*.

Francine Saillant (dir.), *Réinventer l'anthropologie? Les sciences de la culture à l'épreuve des globalisations*, Montréal: Liber, 2009, 252 pages.

Recenseure : *Sophie Houdart*
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Issu du colloque « Anthropologie des cultures globalisées. Terrains complexes et enjeux disciplinaires » qui s'est tenu à

Québec en novembre 2007, cet ouvrage collectif opère un balancement singulier : considérer tout autant la manière dont l'anthropologie peut aborder, théoriquement et pratiquement, des cultures qui sont soumises à (ou participent de) la globalisation, que la façon dont les formes de globalisation elles-mêmes, dans leur extrême diversité, constituent bel et bien des *mises à l'épreuve* de l'anthropologie. La tonalité est donc pour une part réflexive : il s'agit, d'une part, d'envisager les globalisations comme des scènes où s'expérimentent – discipline oblige – de nouvelles manières de faire du terrain, d'entrer en relation avec les gens, d'écrire, de penser, de travailler; et d'autre part, de garder en toile de fond critique la mort des cultures qu'induirait le « village global », et à laquelle ferait écho ladite crise de l'anthropologie, promise pour le moins à un destin incertain allant du flottement identitaire à la noyade interdisciplinaire.

Ce qui ressort de cette tension, c'est d'abord que le monde change, ce qui ne date ni d'aujourd'hui, ni même d'hier. Au cours de l'histoire de l'humanité, des mouvements de mondialisation ont régulièrement modifié la donne culturelle et il a fallu à chaque fois nuancer. André Mary distingue ainsi « trois procès historiques : la mondialisation vernaculaire, la globalisation hybride et la transnationalisation indigène » (p. 92), qui ne peuvent se résoudre dans le stock des « bricolage et métissage, créolisation et hybridation » (p. 91). Et des « trois mondialisations », dont l'anthropologie aurait été témoin (Jean Copans), celle qui est en gestation depuis une dizaine d'années attendant encore d'être mieux qualifiée. Selon Francine Saillant, c'est « l'échelle des transformations des sociétés et des cultures [qui] nous place devant une série de redimensionnements quantitatifs et qualitatifs touchant l'espace et le temps, la nature, les ontologies, les identités et les subjectivités » (p. 11). Ces redimensionnements font émerger de nouvelles épistémologies et de nouvelles pratiques (« qu'est-ce qu'observer le monde actuel? », p. 17), et invitent également à des *repositionnements* (« quelle anthropologie, quelle éthique et quelle politique pour un monde à la fois juste et pluriel? », p. 19).

Du point de vue des épistémologies et des pratiques, plusieurs auteurs défendent, chacun à sa façon, l'idée que l'anthropologie gagnerait à aborder de manière décomplexée les grandes unités qui composent la mouvance globale. Penser le *grand* ou le « terriblement *big* » suivant l'expression d'Ellen Hertz, c'est ce que fait Michael Singleton, qui offre une sorte de modélisation des rapports croisés entre l'Orient et l'Occident, l'Homme et la Nature, le Soi et l'Autre dans les figures de Saint-Georges et du Dragon. C'est encore ce à quoi invite Vintila Mihailescu qui, au terme d'une enquête auprès de gens d'affaires de l'Est et de l'Ouest travaillant ensemble dans la grande Europe, regrette que l'anthropologie ait « trop souvent tendance à se limiter aujourd'hui à des terrains de plus en plus restreints et précis de peur de se voir piéger de nouveau par des " grands récits" ou autres "politiques" [et] se refuse à parler de l'Homme et de l'humanité » (p. 184). C'est ce qu'entreprend également Mondher Kilani en enquêtant sur les violences extrêmes, « extraordinaires », dans le contexte actuel de globalisation : faisant valoir à propos des violences

extrêmes la capacité d'un objet social à *résister* aux schèmes interprétatifs classiques, c'est à l'échelle de la nature humaine–inhumaine, et de la culture, construite–déconstruite, qu'il situe son propos. L'entrée par le *grand* ou la grande échelle n'équivaut pas à rentrer par le global – c'est précisément ce qui la rend intéressante. Mais elle voisine souvent avec une autre, *l'universel*, qui s'apprête plus difficilement à une pragmatique. Ainsi en est-il de la beauté humaine, et de sa « domestication sociale » dans les rapports de parenté et d'alliance (Pierre-Joseph Laurent), ou du corps et du « sentiment de soi » (André Le Breton).

Du point de vue des repositionnements éthiques et politiques, le problème se décline suivant plusieurs axes. L'un concerne le principe d'autorité ethnographique et son total remaniement sur les scènes globalisées. Si les conditions de terrain et d'écriture changent, c'est que parmi les gens que rencontrent aujourd'hui les anthropologues, nombreux sont ceux qui sont eux-mêmes « devenus experts dans les champs de la globalisation ». Ainsi en est-il des « autochtones » qui viennent défendre leurs droits auprès des commissions internationales, et dont Irène Bellier montre bien comment ils acquièrent un savoir-faire onusien au fur et à mesure des dialogues noués avec les représentants de la scène internationale. Il est également des gens qui manient les catégories sémantiques de la globalisation et proposent même, dans leurs pratiques et discours, de nouvelles manières de les articuler. Comme par exemple les traders chinois qui, selon Ellen Hertz, transforment les « champs de force sémantique des pôles du local et du global », (p. 212). Il est encore des gens qui ne tiennent pas nécessairement à se faire entendre : par exemple les jeunes de gangs de rue ou les adolescents anorexiques, suicidaires ou obèses auprès desquels a travaillé Gilles Bibeau, et qui usent du silence « comme un voile déposé là, sur les épaules, à la manière d'un abri » (p. 239).

Selon un autre axe, lié au premier, il s'agit de comprendre comment rééquilibrer la relation de l'enquêté et de l'enquêteur, de mettre en place « une équivalence des regards et des altérités » (Jean Copans, p. 67), d'« associer à la production du savoir ceux que l'on ethnographie » (Irène Bellier, p. 63). C'est la problématique qui traverse le propos de Kabengele Munanga, qui offre une réflexion critique sur les relations entre l'anthropologie brésilienne et les militants noirs du Brésil et cherche à décrire « les lignes de force qui soutiennent ce dialogue » (p. 192). Participent de ce rééquilibrage des formes d'engagement nouvelles, qui consistent tout autant à « entrer dans le flot des événements » (Gilles Bibeau, p. 238) et à passer à l'action, qu'à se laisser la possibilité, du point de vue de l'écriture, de « re-scénariser », opération qui « consiste à opter (au détriment d'autres scénarisations possibles), ce qui restitue au chercheur-expérimentateur sa responsabilité d'auteur » (François Laplantine, p. 232).

Chercher à comprendre ce que les globalisations *font* à l'anthropologie ouvre ainsi des perspectives qui vont bien au-delà de la seule question de savoir ce qu'il advient du fond de commerce de l'anthropologie (la culture, l'identité, les diffé-

rences ...) dans un monde qui joue de l'accordéon. Malgré ce qui les sépare, les auteurs réunis dans cet ouvrage semblent s'accorder sur une chose : les mouvements de globalisation et de mondialisation ne se font pas au détriment des expressions singulières, renouvelées, dynamiques, des cultures. Sur une autre encore : l'anthropologie est inventive et l'avenir est devant elle ... Si l'on conçoit l'anthropologie comme une science de « la pluralité des formes de l'humanité » (Gilles Bibeau, p. 242), et l'expérience de terrain comme « une expérience collective du partage du sensible » (François Laplantine, p. 221), il est évident que la discipline n'est pas en péril.

L'univers que dessinent les auteurs de ce livre en est un dans lequel tout se dit au pluriel : les cultures, mais aussi les globalisations ou les mondialisations, les modernités, les épistémologies, les ontologies. Les approches et perspectives déployées dans cet ouvrage ne font pas exception. Il n'est visiblement pas question de faire école. Plutôt qu'une logique d'homogénéisation ou de théorisation, c'est une logique de *réconciliation* qui articule l'ensemble des contributions. On aurait aimé cependant percevoir les échos de cohabitations qui s'annoncent parfois périlleuses...

Pnina Werbner (ed.), *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism,* New York: Berg, 2008, 396 pages.

Reviewer: *Daniel Yon*
York University and University of Cape Town

The recent "cosmopolitan turn" in anthropology and the social sciences has been marked by international conferences and a burgeoning scholarship that distances a "new" cosmopolitanism from the charges of elitism and Eurocentrism of the Kantian-inspired post-Enlightenment cosmopolitanism that preceded it. The contemporary turn, in the context of globalization, insists upon the plurality of "cosmopolitanisms" to stress the expanded reach of the concept—hence the range of adjectives such as "vernacular," "rooted," "discrepant," "banal," "abject," "demotic" and others, to qualify the "type" of cosmopolitanism that is addressed. Pnina Werbner's edited collection, *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism,* is a rich and well-organized collection of papers that makes an important contribution to this growing body of scholarship. The papers in this collection were initially presented at the diamond jubilee conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) at Keele University, U.K. The volume has several strengths but I particularly appreciated its efforts to guard against what Werbner describes as "an over-promiscuous tendency to label cosmopolitan, anyone or anything that is no longer purely local or parochial" (p. 60). Thus, this ethnographically grounded collection of papers goes a long way toward bringing a disciplinary focus to cosmopolitan talk.

This book aims to "reposition" the discipline of social anthropology "in relation to an evolving new cosmopolitanism,

theorized in political philosophy, sociology of globalization and postcolonial cultural studies" (p. 1). This emphasis is significant because it seeks a conversation with the large and growing body of literature in political philosophy and social theory rather than simply appraising or critiquing that literature with examples "from the field." It is, as Werbner suggests, not the fieldwork encounter that makes the anthropologist but rather the kinds of "creative, collective and cross-cultural conversations" that make for a "dialogical cosmopolitanism" of which the anthropologist is a part (p. 25). This repositioning also opens up an interesting set of questions about the history of the discipline and those who practice it, past and present— for example, were those who gathered to form the ASA 60 years ago themselves "cosmopolitan" in terms of their diverse origins and the degree of "openness to strangers" they displayed? And, what of the cosmopolitan sensibilities of those studied who also had to display some "hospitality and openness" to the stranger-anthropologist among them? The jubilee collection is thus useful for reflection and for contextualizing the present interest in cosmopolitanism in relation to the discipline's past practices and conventions. In this regard, Elizabeth Colson's commentary and "ethnography" (as she describes it) of the founding moments of the association, drawn from her own memory of participating in the initial meetings, is a particularly interesting first-hand history of the association. Reflecting on the significance of those early works and encounters, she reminds us of how the "echoes" of what these pioneers said and wrote are present in the scholarship on popular culture today and have been absorbed into the culture of the globalized cosmopolitan world of the 21st century (p. 45). Colson's bibliographic search confirms her claim. Chris Hann's paper, "Anthropology as a Cosmopolitan Discipline," is a lively engagement with the cosmopolitan nature of some of the established figures in the discipline as he elaborates the idea of a Herderian cosmopolitanism and the East European influences subsumed in the scholarship of Malinowski and Gellner respectively.

The thematic structure of this book usefully sharpens the focus of the collection. Importantly, the theme of cosmopolitanism often comes after the fact—as a concept that is deployed to reflect upon the research (even when the concept itself does not appear in the ethnographic accounts). In other words, cosmopolitanism, whatever its nature, is not taken to the field and deployed as a concept through which the ethnographic details are filtered but is taken as an idea that can be discerned from the practices that are observed and described. Indeed, it would seem that contributors to this collection revisited their respective works with the theme of the conference in mind.

The second section, "Feminism and Non-Violent Cosmopolitan Movements," is especially important with regard to discerning cosmopolitanism. Maila Stivens thus points out how the "c" word (as in cosmopolitanism) tends to be absent or is not readily discernable in scholarly works on feminism. Accordingly, the three papers in this section flesh out in interesting

ways the cosmopolitanism inherent in feminism and feminist practices in diverse settings. Three papers, by Maila Stivens, Kathryn Robinson and Kalpana Ram, elaborate their research with religious-based women's groups in Malaysia and Indonesia and with caste-based women in the south of India, respectively, to show how "historically contingent [and] intimate domestic practices and organizations" run by and for women enable a reconfiguring of cosmopolitan spaces and practices. These works also highlight two features of new cosmopolitanism: The first has to do with how the concept has been detached from the privileged and class-based meaning that has historically defined it and how it can be re-articulated to capture the possibilities for engaging subaltern cosmopolitanisms. The second is the principle that cosmopolitanism can best be discerned from studying what people do and the kinds of relationships that are forged and imagined in the doing. In this regard, cosmopolitanism emerges not as foreclosed but as a more open category that captures what people do and what they are becoming, as opposed to what they are.

Section 3, "Rooted Cosmopolitanism, Public Cosmopolitans," puts greater focus on individuals in cosmopolitan-inducing settings. Aref Abu-Rabia, a native Palestinian anthropologist and self-identified "rooted cosmopolitan" living and working in Israel, gives a fascinating personal account of having to navigate the borders, literal and figurative, that have been established to render Palestinians manageable within the state of Israel. The result is that Palestinians quickly developed "that sense of cosmopolitanism"; at all times they feel "the suspicions and stranger-hood inflicted by the Israeli authorities and the majority society" that have, in turn, produced (as in himself) "rooted [Palestinian] cosmopolitans that are weak politically and marginalized socially" (p. 168). Abu-Rabia thus invokes the estrangement that has historically been attached to European cosmopolitanism. Estrangement, in this sense, is not pathological and is a concept that is equally applicable to Richard Mannathoko, the subject of Richard Werbner's paper. Werbner describes his personal friendship with Mannathoko built over years of fieldwork in Botswana and shows how, through his work and public criticism of colonialism, Mannathoko came to be a "free-thinking" example of a "rooted public cosmopolitanism." Dorothy Hodgson, on the other hand, discusses the "cosmopolitics" of the Indigenous Rights Movements in Africa, focusing specifically on the Massai activists of Tanzania. Eric Hirsch highlights the "paradoxes of cosmopolitanism" among educated Melanesians who utilize explicit metropolitan literary forms in order to render themselves or their culture intelligible, thereby contributing to the predicament of re-making their cultural representations through the influences they seek to transcend (p. 210). The paradoxes he elaborates are multilayered.

While the vernacular status of new cosmopolitanism is a theme throughout this collection, it is given prominence in Section 4 where, in his analysis of the circumstances of Chamba communities in Nigeria and the Cameroon, Fardon cautions against the prospects of cosmopolitanism coming to serve as a defining trope of anthropology, arguing that it is no less loaded in the present century as ethnicity was in the last (p. 239). Despite efforts to stress the vernacular, discussions of cosmopolitanism, he insists, remain indebted to their roots in European assumptions about cultural homogeneity with respect to the nation. Such assumptions cannot be sustained in the context of the highly heterogeneous Nigerian nation. Joel Kahn's paper, on the other hand, makes the case for acknowledging multiple and competing universalisms as a counter to Kantian assumptions about a universalism that, he suggests, end up being exclusionary. Kahn focuses on "myriad of spaces," "language games" and "hybrid Malayness" that variously govern social interaction in Malaysia. He argues that these spaces and hybrids may already pre-figure alternative cosmopolitan futures.

The final section of this book considers "demotic" and "working-class" cosmopolitanism. Owen Sichone provides a fascinating account of the "cosmopolitan" multilayered relationships of Somali migrants in Cape Town against a background of xenophobic attacks on them. Sichone singles out women in the townships of Cape Town as particularly disposed to showing hospitality to male Somali migrants, concluding that it is in these often surprising local places that cosmopolitanism flourishes in contrast to the unfulfilled promises of the global cosmopolitan promises embodied, for example, in the United Nations Charter. Similarly, Jonathan Perry's study of an Indian Steel Town in Bhilai, the final ethnographic paper in the collection, returns us to the relationships between nationalism and cosmopolitanism as he demonstrates how, notwithstanding potential ethnic backlashes and local chauvinism, these two concepts are not necessarily antithetical attitudes. This conclusion is borne out by the kinds of social relations that are forged through this state-owned steel industry, itself a nationalist project, between migrant workers from the Indian Ocean basin and natives alike. An interview by Phina Werbner with Britain's leading cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, concludes the collection.

There is much to commend in this book, not least the ethnographically grounded quality of the papers; the multiple, and even critical, ways cosmopolitanism is taken up; the kinds of cautious reflexivity towards the "turn" to cosmopolitanism in anthropology that it reveals; and, the resultant openness to debating the merits and de-merits of the "turn." Scholars interested in cosmopolitanisms in contemporary times will find this a valuable text and it has already proved its value for an advanced undergraduate course I taught.

Sophie Blanchy, *Maisons des femmes, cités des hommes : filiation, âge et pouvoir à Ngazidja (Comores)*, Nanterre : Société d'Ethnologie, 2010, 320 pages.

Recenseur : *Michael Lambek*
Université de Toronto

Voici un livre vraiment important : il s'agit de la première analyse complète de la structure sociale de Ngazidja, c'est-à-dire la Grande Comore, qui est à la fois l'île la plus grande de l'archipel des Comores et le site de la capitale, Moroni. Les Comores sont connues pour le nombre extraordinaire de coups d'État qui ont eu lieu depuis leur prise d'indépendance par rapport à la France et leur soumission au pouvoir des mercenaires commandés par l'infâme Bob Denard. Mais malgré cette histoire bouleversante, qui n'est d'ailleurs presque pas mentionnée par Sophie Blanchy, et à l'exception de la période dite maoïste d'Ali Soilihi, la Grande Comore a connu une continuité extraordinaire pour ce qui est de sa structure sociale. Cette structure comprend et réunit, comme le montre si bien S. Blanchy, la parenté, la stratification et l'organisation et la gouvernance de ce qu'elle appelle les « cités », c'est-à-dire, suivant l'ordre traditionnel, les communautés, y compris les villages ruraux et les villes, jusqu'à Moroni. L'étude de S. Blanchy comprend toute l'île et elle conduit sa description en procédant par généralités, opérant parfois des distinctions entre les régions ou les cités particulières, et entre la situation à Moroni et celle qui règne dans ses banlieues composées d'habitants des basses classes. Elle fait également une distinction entre les gens de la terre et les pêcheurs, qui ne sont pas considérés comme complémentaires à l'instar de ce qui se passe à Madagascar ou, plus largement, dans l'aire austronésienne : leur statut reste strictement défini par la forte stratification traditionnelle.

En effet, la stratification sociale est le fait le plus remarquable qui caractérise la Grande Comore. Elle constitue même la raison la plus importante pour laquelle la population de Mayotte, méfiante, a fortement préféré appartenir à la France plutôt qu'à la République indépendante des Comores. S. Blanchy montre l'importance de la stratification dans presque chaque domaine : entre les cités; entre les matrilignages qui composent celles-ci; entre les branches des matrilignages; entre les classes d'âge; entre les aînés et les cadets; et enfin, entre ceux qui ont déjà franchi les étapes importantes de la vie et ceux qui ne les ont pas encore vécues. Ces moments consistent principalement à se marier dans le cadre de ce qu'on appelle le Grand mariage, et de marier (dans le sens transitif) leurs propres filles et neveux par de Grands mariages. Le Grand mariage constitue la clé de la structure sociale, ainsi que le projet de vie et le symbole le plus important pour les Grands Comoriens. Il s'agit du mariage d'une femme vierge, aînée et de haut rang, avec un homme de haut rang. C'est donc une alliance entre maisons et entre matrilignages, dont le but principal est la reproduction de la position sociale de chacun. Les deux parties ont besoin de beaucoup d'argent pour organiser un Grand

mariage : les dépenses sont énormes, que ce soit pour construire ou aménager la maison, ou encore pour les festivités et les multiples échanges de cadeaux. Ainsi, il est courant qu'un homme âgé se marie avec une jeune femme. Souvent, cet homme est déjà marié depuis longtemps dans un mariage simple (ou Petit mariage) avec une autre femme (une cadette); cette dernière assiste alors son mari dans la préparation de son Grand mariage. Parfois, c'est un couple avec enfants marié depuis longtemps qui réussit à organiser sa propre cérémonie. S. Blanchy montre par ailleurs l'importance de la migration (un tiers de la population), surtout vers la France, dans le but d'acquérir les sommes nécessaires. Les migrants peuvent aussi envoyer des fonds ou donner des ressources à ceux qui restent à la Grande Comore. Il est remarquable que l'accomplissement du Grand mariage reste si important pour les Comoriens qui résident en France. Ils restent tournés vers leurs « cités » à Ngazidja, et y rentrent pour célébrer leur propre Grand mariage ainsi que celui de leurs proches, et ce, même s'ils ne résident plus dans les Grandes maisons.

Malheureusement, S. Blanchy ne précise ni les dépenses, ni combien de viande et d'autres ressources sont redistribuées au cours des mariages. Elle ne suit pas non plus de cas d'un bout à l'autre du processus. Mais elle montre toutefois l'importance, la complexité et la variation des distributions. Le fait d'avoir conclu un Grand mariage donne accès à des privilèges politiques, sociaux et économiques, y compris à des dons alloués au cours de Grands mariages et d'autres fêtes subséquentes dans la cité.

S. Blanchy commence son analyse en explicitant l'importance du principe matrilinéaire et ses raisons, et en montrant comment, à la Grande Comore, le « *matrilineal puzzle* » s'exprime et se résout. La prévalence de la matrilinéarité demeure, un fait remarquable lorsqu'on sait que la société est profondément islamique. Une des raisons est étroitement liée au fait que Ngazidja constitue ce que Lévi-Strauss a appelé une *société à maison* : ce sont les maisons elles-mêmes qui sont en jeu pour leur le maintien de leur rang. Une maison devient « grande » une fois qu'elle a été le site d'un Grand mariage et qu'elle peut recevoir les hommes importants de la cité. Si les femmes n'entrent pas explicitement dans la vie politique et publique des cités, elles sont néanmoins les vraies propriétaires des maisons (avec résidence uxorilocale). À l'occasion d'un deuxième Grand mariage, la maison passe de la mère à sa fille aînée et peut ainsi être renouvelée. Une fille cadette n'est pas habilitée à faire son propre Grand mariage, mais elle espère que sa fille aînée pourra en faire un.

S. Blanchy conduit une analyse systématique du système de filiation et de parenté, d'alliance et de résidence, ainsi que de l'organisation de la cité en classes d'âge; puis elle décrit les carrières de vie respectives des hommes et des femmes « accomplis ». Elle réfléchit par ailleurs aux changements du système, qui sont surtout liés aux migrations et à la croissance de la ville de Moroni. Parmi ses observations subtiles, on remarque comment les jeunes hommes peuvent pousser leurs aînées à se marier dans l'espoir de prendre leur place.

On pourrait dire que la Grande Comore reste une société maussienne : une société où le don est tout, et où il renforce la stratification plutôt que l'égalité. Le Grand mariage est un fait social total, et constitue à la fois l'alliance, l'initiation, le potlatch, le lieu de transfert des Grandes maisons et de reproduction sociale, ainsi que le moyen de faire des « Grands hommes ». S. Blanchy nous offre avec cet ouvrage un portrait détaillé, précis et précieux d'une société captivante.

Natacha Gagné et Laurent Jérôme (dirs.), *Jeunesses autochtones. Affirmation, innovation et résistance dans les mondes contemporains*, Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009, 193 pages.

Recenseure : *Catherine Laurent Sédillot*
Université de Montréal

Natacha Gagné et Laurent Jérôme se proposent dans ce solide ouvrage collectif d'explorer « les univers complexes et diversifiés des jeunes autochtones » (p. 15) dans le monde contemporain. Ils s'intéressent aux problématiques et aux récents changements socioculturels qui affectent l'existence de ces « jeunes », mais surtout à leurs expériences, ainsi qu'aux représentations qu'ils entretiennent et aux stratégies qu'ils mettent en œuvre pour participer aux mondes. Les « jeunesses autochtones » sont ici envisagées en tant que catégories sociales, fruits de contingences historiques, aux formes plurielles, mais aussi dans leurs spécificités par rapport aux jeunesses non autochtones (Poirier; Melenotte). Elles sont posées comme des ensembles aux contours fluctuants, formés d'agents hétérogènes. C'est dans cette optique que N. Gagné et L. Jérôme réaffirment la pertinence heuristique de la notion linguistique d'« embrayeur » (*shifter*) introduite par Jackobson et appliquée au concept de « jeunes ». Un embrayeur est un référent dont le sens est en grande partie tributaire du contexte où il est utilisé. Saisir la notion de « jeunes » comme telle permettrait, d'une part, de considérer l'aspect relationnel de la jeunesse (avec d'autres moments de la vie, d'autres identités, d'autres catégories sociales) et, d'autre part, de reconnaître l'agencéité de ces individus (p. 17). Les approches des auteurs de ce livre se distinguent ainsi à la fois des approches classiques de la jeunesse (posant celle-ci comme une étape du développement de la personne) et de l'anthropologie de la jeunesse (abordant les « cultures jeunes » hors de leurs dynamiques sociales d'ancrage) (Bucholtz 2002).

Ce cadre conceptuel est essentiellement discuté par les directeurs du livre dans la préface ainsi que par Sylvie Poirier dans l'introduction. Cette dernière resitue d'abord l'émergence de la notion de jeunesse autochtone dans le contexte du (post)colonialisme et du néolibéralisme. Elle aborde ensuite les espaces et dynamiques relationnels négociés par les jeunes à partir de ses propres recherches ainsi que de celles des sept auteurs des chapitres suivants, recherches réalisées sur différents terrains en Océanie et dans les Amériques.

C'est dans cette optique que Marie-Pierre Girard montre comment les enfants quechuas en situation de rue à Quito négocient leur enfance par rapport à la représentation moderne et occidentale de l'enfant véhiculée par les diverses instances internationales. À partir de leurs propres représentations de l'enfance (comme site de responsabilisation et d'apprentissage) et du travail (comme activité positive), ces jeunes pourtant marginalisés développent des compétences et stratégies singulières qui remettent en question cette vision de l'enfance idéale.

Les représentations se retrouvent également au coeur du chapitre de Sophie Barnèche. Celle-ci aborde en effet les processus de construction identitaire de jeunes Mélanésiens urbains de Nouméa à partir de l'analyse de leurs représentations linguistiques, mais aussi de leurs représentations des différents espaces. Elle montre qu'en réponse à leur double insécurité linguistique, provenant du sentiment d'une perte du vernaculaire et d'une mauvaise connaissance du français, ces jeunes développent une forte appartenance à leur quartier urbain.

Marie Salaün traite également de la question des insécurités linguistiques, ici vécues par de jeunes parents kanak de Nouvelle-Calédonie. L'auteure montre qu'en contexte de politisation des générations sur fond d'opposition entre « tradition » et « modernité », ces jeunes parents font l'objet de discours stigmatisants tant de la part de leurs aînés que des agents des dispositifs d'insertion. Ces discours ne sont pas sans effet sur les jeunes Kanak, qui se tournent vers l'école pour pallier leur sentiment d'incompétence quant à la transmission de la langue vernaculaire.

Le chapitre de N. Gagné (qui, comme celui de L. Jérôme, constitue une version revisitée d'un article paru en 2005 dans *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*) montre que l'école, espace ambivalent, peut également représenter un lieu « d'affirmation, de résistance et de coexistence » (p. 98) où se négocient les rapports aux autres (Maaori et non-Maaori) pour de jeunes universitaires maaori. L'auteure montre que certains espaces de l'université, investis de sens par les jeunes, constituent des lieux d'engagement à la fois par rapport à leur communauté d'origine et au reste du monde.

L. Jérôme expose aussi l'importance que prend le rapport à l'autre dans le processus d'affirmation identitaire autochtone. L'auteur montre que l'adaptation créative de la pratique du tambour par de jeunes Atikamekws est le fruit d'une collaboration intergénérationnelle (non exempte de tensions), mais aussi de rencontres faites au sein de différents espaces relationnels. La persistance culturelle est à comprendre davantage en termes d'ouverture et de partage, car elle confère une dimension créative à la « résistance » (p. 137).

De son côté, Marie-France Labrecque replace l'émergence de la jeunesse rurale comme catégorie sociale dans le contexte des changements socioéconomiques et des clivages générationnels générés par l'arrivée des *Maquilladoras* au Yucàtan au cours des années 1970. Elle montre que l'intégration des jeunes de 15 à 24 ans dans ces espaces de travail transnatio-

naux est à l'origine d'une nouvelle catégorie de population « subalterne » (p. 156 et 161) au confluent des cultures hégémonique (délocalisée), parentale et générationnelle, partageant des valeurs urbaines dont les effets sur l'identité ethnique de la population locale restent à mesurer.

La construction de la jeunesse au sein d'espaces transnationaux est également abordée par Sabrina Melenotte qui interroge la rencontre des jeunesses indigène et européenne (altermondialiste) au sein des communautés zapatistes. L'auteure montre que ces rencontres s'établissent souvent à partir de représentations essentialisées de l'autochtonie, en décalage avec la réalité économique et politique de la jeunesse zapatiste. Du fait que ces jeunes proviennent de mondes très différents, leur réunion ne donne pas lieu au pacte social souhaité, mais plutôt à d'autres configurations, animées par un imaginaire transnational.

À travers ces chapitres se dégage une approche théorique générale qui permet de penser conjointement les transformations et les continuités socioculturelles autochtones en contexte de mondialisation économique et de « globalisation » culturelle. Considérant les jeunesses autochtones en relation avec leur environnement, plusieurs auteurs (particulièrement Girard, Jérôme, Labrecque et Melenotte) abordent les conditions, pratiques et représentations (générationnelles) de ces jeunes comme les fruits d'une « articulation » (Comaroff 1985) des systèmes globaux (hégémoniques) et locaux (parentaux) sur fond de rapports de pouvoir (post)coloniaux, mais aussi intergénérationnels. Ainsi, ces auteurs rendent compte à la fois du potentiel transformateur des actions des jeunes et du rôle des « structures » sociales comme prédisposition et contrainte, balisant les conditions d'expression de la jeunesse. L'analyse des représentations sociales entretenues par ces jeunes en lien avec leurs pratiques (Girard, Barnèche, Salaün, Melenotte), va également dans ce sens.

Les réalités autochtones ne se pensent effectivement plus sans référence aux dynamismes mondiaux, ce dont témoignent les nouvelles solidarités pan-autochtones. Ces réseaux se tissent par le biais de voyages (Jérôme), mais surtout des nouvelles technologies de communication (mentionné par Poirier, p. 35) dont l'accès se démocratise progressivement. Malheureusement, aucun chapitre ne porte de près ou de loin sur le rapport des jeunes autochtones aux nouveaux médias. On se demande pourquoi ces lieux d'affirmation, de négociation et de résistance autochtone, de production d'images contemporaines de l'autochtonie dans laquelle les jeunes sont engagés, ont été laissés pour compte.

Il aurait également été intéressant qu'une plus grande attention ait été accordée par les auteurs (tous anthropologues ou ethnolinguistes, mis à part Mona Belleau, qui signe la préface) aux différences de genre dans l'expérience de la « jeunesse » (à l'instar de Labrecque, souligne Poirier). La construction sociale de la jeunesse s'est-elle accompagnée d'un changement dans la construction sociale des genres? Par ailleurs, si l'on note une absence de contributions couvrant l'Australie ou l'Amérique du Sud, on ne saurait critiquer ce choix.

Les directeurs du livre visaient moins à couvrir l'ensemble des régions où vivent les jeunesses autochtones que d'explorer ce que signifie être jeunes et autochtones dans divers contextes. Jeunesse urbaine et rurale, jeunes étudiants et travailleurs, jeunes musiciens, enfants et jeunes parents : les chapitres du livre offrent bien un portrait de la pluralité des jeunesses autochtones.

Au plan théorique, la notion de résistance qui figure pourtant dans le sous-titre du livre ne reste discutée que par Jérôme. Les pratiques des jeunes autochtones sont-elles vraiment à comprendre en termes de « résistance »? Le danger de parler d'opposition à travers cette notion est de théoriser les identités des jeunes comme étant plus dichotomiques qu'elles ne le sont réellement (Bucholtz 2002:540). Celles-ci, oppositionnelles si l'on se fie à leur discours, sont, rappelle Gagné, finalement beaucoup plus flexibles dans les faits. Le plus souvent, leurs pratiques ne sont d'ailleurs pas à resituer sur un plan d'action collectif, mais plutôt à aborder en termes de stratégies d'adaptation individuelle, ce que met en lumière Labrecque. Ainsi, sans invalider la pertinence heuristique du concept de résistance, les analyses des auteurs de ce volume auraient pu servir à discuter ce concept polysémique.

En somme, ce livre inspirant offre un portrait réaliste et nuancé des jeunesses autochtones et des défis qui leur sont propres. Il met en lumière toute l'importance de s'intéresser à la jeunesse pour suivre les projets de sociétés dans lesquelles les collectivités autochtones s'engagent aujourd'hui afin de se tailler une place dans le monde.

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Lindsay Hale, *Hearing the Mermaid's Song: The Umbanda Religion in Rio de Janeiro*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009, 208 pages.

Reviewer: *Natasha Pravaz*
Wilfrid Laurier University

Rio de Janeiro's Umbanda religion is rooted in the coming together of diverse spiritual traditions at the turn of the 20th century, including Afro-Brazilian, Spiritist (Kardecist), and Catholic practices and beliefs. The aesthetic and symbolic complexity of its rituals, as well as their personal significance for local practitioners, comes beautifully alive in Lindsay Hale's ethnographic feast of the senses. As he clearly states at the end of the book, while attempting to understand both the ideological and biographic reasons why people may choose to

engage with the religion, "far more important to me has been the task of conveying something of the richness of Umbanda as lived experience" (p. 161).

Using a phenomenologically informed approach that prioritizes gut feelings over analytical detachment, the work nevertheless sheds light on the specific dynamics at the core of a controversial and contested spiritual path. While his embrace of radical empiricism pushes the author to wear his personal likes, dislikes and personality traits on his sleeve, Hale is also keen on placing Umbanda's beliefs and practice within the broader context of Brazilian racist history. He asks questions about the links between Brazilian myths of national identity and Umbanda's spirits, bringing to life a colourful description both of the personal journeys leading practitioners to the religion, and of what the latter offers them in return for worshipping a complex array of divine entities, including *orixás*, *pretos-velhos*, child spirits (*crianças* or *erês*), *exus*, and *pomba-giras*.

Umbanda draws considerably from Afro-Brazilian traditions, including the belief in orixás (West African deities). Yet, while in the more "traditional" Candomblé, these deities are engaged with and worshipped on a regular basis through ecstatic rituals of incorporation accompanied by the percussive polyrhythms of drums, Hale argues that Umbanda's practitioners tend to relate to the orixás through the mediation of divine entities of lesser rank: the *caboclos*. Because they are highly evolved spirits, they can be emissaries of the orixás, occasionally serving as their stand-ins.

In an insightful discussion, Hale argues that caboclos can alternatively be seen "as mediators and symbols of nature; as vehicles for representing and mediating the orixás; as representations of a mythic Brazilian identity; and finally, as signs of and for the embattled self" (p. 97). Caboclo spirits come to earth through their mediums in order to help Umbandistas with spiritual, emotional and physical problems. As they give advice and perform curative rituals, they are also metaphors through which the powerful yet dangerous vibrations of the orixás can be experienced. According to Hale, caboclos can personify orixás because as Indian spirits they are symbolically rooted in the national myth of the noble savage, who confidently defied slavery and remained free. The native who refuses to die in captivity and who inhabits wild, untamed natural spaces is a fitting vehicle for the orixás, also known as "forces of nature."

Pretos velhos ("old slaves"), on the other hand, while occasionally offering tales of resistance, embody defeat and subjugation for the most part as they forgive the brutality of slavery by turning the other cheek. Hale argues that old slaves come to earth to give realistic, not revolutionary advice. "Caution, cunning and compromise are critical to the survival strategies of the powerless" (p. 92). The author offers interesting remarks regarding "old slaves'" role in reformulating African religious traditions on Brazilian soil. As the brutality of displacement and slavery hindered the continuity of ancestor worship practices, Hale suggests that pretos velhos came to

symbolically represent generalized Afro-Brazilian ancestors. Moreover, in their roles as grandparents, they occupy an affectively charged landscape, fulfilling deep emotional needs for extended kinship ties. Their presences actualize the suffering of ancestors, producing compelling metaphorical connections.

While thoughtful and beautifully written, Lindsay Hale's ethnography is nonetheless uneven and at times problematic. To begin with, it must be noted that poor copyediting and proofreading are detrimental to the end product. These include deficient indexing, unnecessary repetitions and minor spelling mistakes. Beyond such technical matters, however, the text lacks any serious engagement with contemporary scholarship be it anthropological, religious or otherwise. The author's sparse theoretical framework limits itself to unqualified references to now highly debated ideas such as Levi-Strauss's "effectiveness of symbols" and "sorcerer's magic," and Geertz's "culture as text" and "religion as cultural system." While the author has unmistakably read all of the relevant Brazilianist literature, this only becomes evident in the footnotes. Lastly, as the book draws heavily on Diana Brown's pioneering research on Rio's Umbanda, it is often less than clear what constitutes Hale's original contribution to our understanding of the practice.

On a different note, while Hale curiously embraces Brazil's trope of exceptionalism when discussing the importance of *mistura* (mixture) in Umbanda's racialized dynamics, this in fact helps the author to both grasp the pigmentocratic mentality from within, and show that mixing constitutes a strategy of social mobility in a highly divided society. In fact, I believe this is one of the work's major strengths: a deep understanding of and lively ethnographic engagement with Renato Ortiz's insights about the ostracism historically suffered by Umbanda practitioners, a "stigmatization that comes from association with blackness and poverty within a racist and classist society" (p. 62).

Lindsay Hale's methodological strategy is sound. The author chose to attend different Umbanda houses, not to provide a "thorough sampling," but rather to have some insight into the religion's ritual and aesthetic diversity: a diversity, as he clearly shows, that reflects profound schisms in ideologies of race. While in the houses of Afro-Brazilian Umbanda drumming and animal sacrifice are central, these are non-existent practices in white Umbanda centres. Hale argues that these and other differences (such as which orixás are and are not worshipped) reflect a deeply embedded yet unacknowledged white bigotry that privileges "pure" and "civilized" celebrations over "primitive" and "barbaric" ones: such epithets evidence the embeddedness of racism in all spheres of Brazilian social life. Despite its limitations, Hale's book is a valuable addition to our knowledge of Afro-Brazilian religions, and as such is recommended reading for students and scholars alike.

Martine Roberge, *De la rumeur à la légende urbaine*, Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009, 150 pages.

Recenseur : *Philippe Aldrin*
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Vingt années après sa première publication sous le titre *La rumeur* (Roberge 1989), les Presses de l'Université Laval ont réédité en 2009 le mémoire de maîtrise en ethnologie de Martine Roberge consacré à ce phénomène social. Dans cette version remaniée, l'ethnologue entend explorer davantage les relations du phénomène avec celui, toujours en vogue, des légendes dites urbaines. Ce projet, qu'il soit envisagé sous son aspect éditorial ou dans sa dimension plus strictement scientifique, mérite à plusieurs titres qu'on s'y arrête. D'abord, parce qu'il offre l'occasion d'interroger l'aptitude d'un travail universitaire à confronter l'épreuve du temps. En effet, entre les deux éditions, le champ de connaissance où l'ouvrage prend cadre a connu des évolutions notables; d'une part, parce que le phénomène étudié a subi – avec l'essor de l'Internet mais aussi avec l'accélération et l'internationalisation des systèmes d'information – des transformations à la fois dans ses thèmes narratifs et dans ses modalités de diffusion; d'autre part, parce que les publications scientifiques, particulièrement nombreuses sur la problématique des rumeurs et des légendes urbaines, ont produit, sinon une révolution théorique, pour le moins un renouvellement paradigmatique. Dans le mouvement nécessairement rétrospectif d'un tel projet, quelle place l'auteure accorde-t-elle donc aux changements qui ont affecté et le phénomène étudié et l'appareillage intellectuel pour l'appréhender? Ce projet mérite ensuite qu'on s'y arrête parce qu'il peut livrer des éléments pour comprendre la spécificité de l'approche ethnologique concernant l'analyse des imaginaires urbains contemporains. Car si l'étude *ethnologique* des croyances et plus largement du folklore des sociétés modernes passe classiquement par la recherche des invariants anthropologiques à l'œuvre dans la structure narrative de ces fragments de culture que sont les rumeurs et légendes urbaines, elle suppose tout aussi classiquement une enquête destinée à éclairer empiriquement les conditionnalités culturelles, sociales et les pratiques qui président à l'échange de ce type de récits (Gluckman 1963, 1968; Bonhomme 2009). Que nous apporte donc le regard ethnologique de M. Roberge pour élucider le sens de ce geste social qui consiste à colporter une nouvelle non vérifiée ou raconter une historiette effrayante?

Dès l'introduction, l'auteure donne pour principaux objectifs à son propos de « distinguer la rumeur de la légende urbaine » et de « réhabiliter son véritable usage [celui de la rumeur] en déterminant ses fonctions narratives et sociales » (p. 1). Pour ce faire, elle consacre le premier des trois chapitres de ce livre plutôt court (103 pages, hors bibliographie et annexes) à définir la rumeur. Elle s'attelle à cette tâche en comparant la rumeur à d'autres « genres » approchants tels que le conte, le mythe, la légende traditionnelle ou contemporaine. L'auteure évacue rapidement la question de la véracité

comme principe définitoire distinctif de la rumeur (p. 7) et entreprend d'isoler les invariants propres au phénomène à partir « de sa nature (ou forme), de son fonctionnement et de sa fonction sociale ». Colportage d'informations non vérifiées, la rumeur s'apparente dans sa forme au commérage ou au ragot mais porte sur des faits socialement importants, alors que commérage et ragot portent exclusivement sur des personnes (p. 11). Comme le mythe, la rumeur se construit autour d'archétypes et de thèmes universels mais « le mythe s'adapte peu; il résiste aux manipulations de la modernité » (p. 13). Dans ce jeu de mise en regard de genres narratifs voisins, il ressort également que la rumeur, volontiers anecdotique, ne possède pas toujours la visée morale ou édifiante de l'*exemplum* ou du conte. L'auteure resserre donc son analyse sur le couple rumeur–légende. Récit de l'oralité, la rumeur est instable, éphémère, inscrite dans l'actualité immédiate quand le récit de la légende apparaît solidifié, durable et racontant une histoire du passé. Un tableau comparatif (p. 20) résume les oppositions entre les deux genres mais l'auteure conclut, à la suite de J.-B. Renard (2006), à la « transgénéricité », autrement dit à la propension d'un récit à glisser d'un genre à l'autre selon les moments et les énonciateurs. Finalement, la rumeur se distinguerait surtout par son « fonctionnement » – c'est-à-dire son mode de transmission (« horizontal », entre membres d'un groupe de sociabilité) et ses effets (« cohésifs » pour le groupe où elle s'échange) – et par sa « fonction sociale » (désigner une menace pour le groupe). « L'hypothèse soutenue ici, écrit M. Roberge au terme de ce premier chapitre, est que les rumeurs sont un instrument permettant aux individus d'objectiver leurs angoisses face à l'inconnu. Pour les groupes, la rumeur fixe les peurs et en en déterminant la cause, les coupables assumant dès lors la fonction de bouc émissaire » (p. 35). Et c'est à la validation de cette hypothèse que sont consacrés les deux derniers chapitres de l'ouvrage.

Dans le deuxième chapitre (« Répertoire des rumeurs et des légendes urbaines »), M. Roberge présente les dix-sept « lieux de la peur » (automobile, alimentation, maniaques, etc.) servant de thèmes aux rumeurs qu'elle a recueillies par enquête en 1986[1] et entreprend de les comparer aux dix thèmes de légendes urbaines (maniaques, insectes, alimentation, etc.) recueillies en 2005, principalement sur Internet pour une série télévisée[2]. Destiné à mettre à l'épreuve son classement thématique de 1986, l'exercice comparatif est jugé probant puisque « sept thèmes sont semblables d'un corpus à l'autre et les trois qui semblent différents se regroupent autour de thématiques plus générales » (p. 63). Citant M.-L. Rouquette, la récurrence et la permanence des thématiques lui permettent de voir dans la rumeur la « présence d'une forme culturelle stable qui plonge ses racines dans la mémoire collective » (Rouquette 1994:64). L'auteure propose alors sa propre classification, selon la tradition taxinomique initiée par les folkloristes A. Aarne et S. Thompson. Partant du constat que « le discours de la rumeur est essentiellement un outil du désir qui, entre tous les objets qui s'offrent à lui, doit effectuer des choix » (p. 66), elle repère ainsi sept catégories de rumeurs : d'identi-

fication ou nominatives; médiatrices; polémiques; ludiques; d'interprétation; dramatiques ou performantielles et, enfin, oniriques. Grâce à cette catégorisation, l'auteure prétend pouvoir « systématiser le vaste univers mental de la rumeur » en montrant que cette dernière met toujours aux prises l'« ici » et l'« ailleurs », le « monde domestique » et le « monde sauvage », le « sécurisant » et le « menaçant ».

Du coup, on peut logiquement être surpris par le contenu du dernier chapitre (« analyser et interpréter les rumeurs et les légendes urbaines »). Au moins pour deux raisons. D'abord, parce que M. Roberge y réduit brutalement et drastiquement le spectre thématique qu'elle vient de proposer. Tous les récits étudiés, dit-elle, « se répartissent selon deux grands axes : celui de la sexualité et celui de l'alimentation, soit les besoins fondamentaux qui constituent deux pôles où se regroupent les peurs » (p. 73). Ensuite, parce qu'elle se lance alors dans une traque du « sens caché » de la rumeur en opposant une vision archétypale, dramatisée de la société moderne (« La ville, lieu par excellence de l'individualisme et du mutisme institutionnalisés ») à une vision tout aussi archétypale de la société traditionnelle : « Dans un contexte technologique, dans un monde de vitesse et de stress, il n'est pas étonnant que les peurs concernent toujours des préoccupations quotidiennes et des besoins des individus et des groupes » (p. 97). Le long détour par la linguistique et la psychanalyse qui s'ensuit (p. 84 à 96) conduit l'auteure dans une exégèse sémantique des récits de rumeurs, au détriment d'une analyse approfondie des contextes urbains ou d'une observation *in situ* des conditions d'interactions et de l'intentionnalité immédiate de l'échange de rumeurs. À partir de sa subjectivité propre, l'auteure sonde l'inconscient (exclusivement sur le versant de la peur) des masses citadines sans entrevoir ni le sociocentrisme ni l'écrasement des expériences et des représentations de la réalité contemporaine inhérents à une telle démarche. À ce compte-là, la rumeur peut lui apparaître comme « un discours poétique et magique » dont la fonction sociale est « indéniable » : « la rumeur-légende est un outil de contrôle social » car « l'homme, si puissant soit-il, ne maîtrise en réalité que bien peu son environnement, mais, par l'activité langagière, il se donne l'illusion de tout contrôler, même ce qui le fait trembler » (p. 96).

Au bout du compte, l'ouvrage de M. Roberge peut se lire comme une sémiologie des récits désormais classiques des rumeurs et légendes urbaines, récits qu'elle livre et qu'on lit avec une délectation maligne tout au long du livre. L'ensemble reste très fidèle à la première édition; tout d'abord parce que la question des effets d'Internet n'est pas vraiment analysée, pas plus d'ailleurs que celle de la globalisation ou de l'instantanéité de l'information; ensuite par l'approche générale développée par l'auteure, qui continue de défendre une vision anomique du phénomène, le réduisant au symptôme collectif des angoisses sociétales modernes. Si elle cite des auteurs comme M.-L. Rouquette (1990, 1994) ou P. Froissart (2002), elle ne partage pas, loin s'en faut, leur volonté de sortir l'analyse du phénomène de l'ornière psychopathologique. De manière étonnante, elle va d'ailleurs jusqu'à délaisser les principaux ensei-

gnements de ce qu'elle appelle sa première enquête de terrain pour mieux camper sur le seul registre de la peur. À rebours de sa démonstration générale, elle conclut à partir des réponses de ses enquêtes de 1986 : « Il ne semble pas y avoir de corrélation directe entre la retransmission et le degré de croyance puisqu'il y a autant, sinon plus d'occurrences où la rumeur a été transmise sans que l'informateur y croit [sic]. La retransmission est donc surtout provoquée par un besoin ludique, par un besoin purement phatique (sans but précis) de remplir les vides, rarement par conviction » (p. 40). La peur ne serait donc pas la seule matrice et motrice sociale de la rumeur. Et l'on en vient à regretter que M. Roberge n'ait pas davantage exploré dans son matériau d'enquête l'existence de plusieurs régimes de croyance à ces récits imaginaires, à la façon de P. Veyne (1983), J. Pouillon (1979) ou G. Lenclud (1996).

Notes

1 On peut s'étonner que ce que l'auteure désigne comme sa « démarche de terrain » ait consisté à réaliser un questionnaire ouvert auprès de vingt-huit personnes comptant parmi ses proches ou des amis d'amis. Voir p. 38, et p. 105 (note 1, annexe A).

2 Il s'agit d'une série de dix émissions intitulée « Les légendes urbaines » (produite par Point Virgule Communication) pour laquelle l'auteure a officié en qualité de conseillère scientifique. Rien n'est dit de la méthodologie de cueillette et de classement desdites légendes.

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Debra L. Klein, *Yorùbá Bàtá Goes Global: Artists, Culture Brokers, and Fans,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 220 pages.

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Debra Klein's ethnography *Yorùbá Bàtá Goes Global* chronicles the emergence of a "Yoruba cultural movement," a culture industry centered on bata, a drumming and dancing masquerade tradition. At its core, Yoruba bata is about collaboration and innovation. Once influenced by Islam, bata is now shaped by the collaborations among local drummers, the Nigerian state, as well as foreign and local "cultural brokers." The author focuses on Lamidi Ayankunle, a well respected master bata drummer with whom she lived, to illustrate how Yoruba culture is locally managed. Drawing from several accounts of the European presence in the southwestern Nigerian town of Erin-Osun, Klein reveals that, despite foreigners' hopeful vision for Africa, collaborations between foreign "interlocutors" and Nigerian artists tend to perpetuate colonial power dynamics. The author's amusing and engaging ethnographic descriptions of an Austrian artist-turned-Yoruba-priestess, a German scholar who initiates his own son into the "Yoruba cultural movement," and a German ethno-fusion jazz-rock band called Embryo, demonstrates that "world music" is often inspired and motivated by Western projections of Africa as a "traditional," and spiritually charged land. Despite the her gentle insistence that "world music" in principle, has an "impetus for social change," readers are left with a disturbing picture of white people attempting to teach Africans how to discover and perform their "African-ness."

As an entree, Klein situates bata historically, and describes how bata artists have come to "represent and promote themselves locally and globally" (p. 6). She follows this with a discussion of the role of culture in Nigeria's nation building. Specifically, she describes ways in which Nigeria's oil boom in the 1970s facilitated state sponsored cultural heritage projects in efforts to unify the country through cultural diversity. Bata artists were especially well paid during this era of prosperity, but by the mid-1990s, the state began to favour college-educated musicians and artists, marginalizing others who were not as proficient in English. Chapter 3 parallels the state's involvement in Nigeria's artistic industry with the way in which African art is dictated by international taste. Artists who do not adhere to externally determined definitions of what constitutes "African art" (usually art which symbolically depicts traditional life) are marginalized for not being "authentic" or "traditional" enough.

Chapter 4 considers the context of Nigeria's devaluation crisis during the late 1990s, and the growing pressure on local artists to support extensive families. Klein points to the way in which the Yoruba worldview has converged with global capitalism in so far as that "big man" status has become linked to financial wellbeing and displays of material wealth (p. 97). In response to economic pressures and the desire to achieve status within society, artists are motivated to strategically collaborate with the state and foreigners. She then goes on to discuss how collaborations with foreigners can often cause moments of friction among family members. For instance, family hierarchies are disrupted when junior male family members acquire wealth or travel overseas, as it prompts resentment from their seniors.

Chapter 5 addresses ways in which younger generations have fused traditional bata with new popular musical genres like fuji, a pastiche of pop music and dance styles. Bata Fuji, or "pop tradition," is a palimpsest of old and new which reflects bata's own synthesis of Islamic and Yoruba influences, a cultural mixing that eventually gave way to the creation of a pan-Yoruban identity (p. 113). In this way, Klein cleverly illustrates that tradition is in a constant state of evolution. In her discussions of Bata Fuji, she explores the concept of "worldliness" or cosmopolitanism as a form of symbolic capital—a quality that is rooted in Yoruba cosmology. It is clear that new generations of artists are eager to express their knowledge of the world as well as their place within it. She alludes to her own involvement as a dancer in the bata ensemble as improving the "worldliness" of the group. What remains intentionally ambiguous is the extent in which cosmopolitanism can be conflated with capitalism. While Yoruba tradition may have always been open to engaging with the "other," there is a real sense that the very economic and social survival of the artist relies on strategic collaborations.

A brief discussion about Klein's own involvement as a dancer in a Yoruba bata ensemble in chapter 6 raises important questions about gender that are unfortunately thinly dealt with. She acknowledges that gender and sexuality are reflected in Yoruba performance (p. 125), but it is unclear to what extent women are permitted to participate. Given the gendered nature of bata culture, an analysis of changing gender dynamics (if any) might have added an interesting dimension. In particular, I was left to wonder about female involvement in hybrid musical genres such as Bata Fuji.

Through an examination of the shifting contexts where Yoruba bata drumming is performed, Klein reveals several dichotomies within the global context of artistic production: celebration–marginalization, sustainability–oppression, and authenticity–manipulation. There exists a "gap" within these tensions wherein local artists, like Lamidi, manage local and international demand for bata while maintaining the integrity of their artistic tradition.

Klein's reflective examination of bata encompasses a broad analysis of music, history, politics, and cosmopolitanism, providing readers with a deeper understanding of the vicissitudes

of the global economy in which local artists operate. By priv-
ileging the individual voices of people involved in Yoruba bata
culture, the author succeeds in revealing the possibility of
agency within the global market. This is an important contri-
bution to readers in African studies, anthropology, ethnomu-
sicology and cultural studies.

Frédéric B. Laugrand et Jarich G. Oosten (dirs.), *Inuit
Shamanism and Christianity, Transitions and Transfor-
mations in the Twentieth Century,* Montreal and Kingston:
McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010, 467 pages.

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L'enquête *Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic* (SLiCA
2007) indique que 80% des Iñupiat (Inuit) du nord de l'Alaska,
ainsi que 100% des Inuit du Groenland se déclarent chrétiens.
Un Groenlandais sur deux considère que les représentations
préchrétiennes font partie intégrante de sa vie, la proportion
étant de 3 sur 4 en Alaska. Certains estiment que l'entreprise
de conversion au christianisme a produit des effets dévasta-
teurs; d'autres soulignent le rôle apaisant de l'Église en cas
de conflit intérieur ou de tensions familiales et sociales. Cette
enquête ne fournissant aucune donnée sur le fait religieux chez
les Inuit de l'Arctique canadien, l'ouvrage *Inuit Shamanism
and Christianity, Transitions and Transformations in the
Twentieth Century* arrive à point nommé. Loin des sondages
d'opinion, cette publication de 467 pages s'appuie sur des entre-
tiens menés à un rythme annuel ou bisannuel de 1998 à 2008,
soit avec des initiés au chamanisme, devenus par la suite chré-
tiens, soit avec des témoins de rituels avant leur interdiction
par les missionnaires anglicans ou catholiques. Ces entretiens
ont donné lieu à des reconstitutions de séances de guérison et
de divination ainsi qu'à des performances accompagnées au
tambour. Les données proviennent des régions Qikiqtaaluk
(Terre de Baffin) et Kivalliq (Keewatin).

Les auteurs interrogent le destin du chamanisme en
concentrant leur réflexion sur les interactions entre chama-
nisme et christianisme, entre chamanes et missionnaires, ainsi
qu'entre convertis. Une attention particulière est accordée à
la complexité des relations entre humains et non humains et
à la capacité des Inuit à fédérer des énergies en apparence
contradictoires. La période considérée s'étend de l'arrivée des
missionnaires (fin du XIXᵉ siècle et début du XXᵉ) jusqu'à
aujourd'hui, où l'influence croissante des églises pentecôtistes
et évangéliques, associée à celle de mouvements numérique-
ment faibles (*Baha'i*), place l'appartenance religieuse sous le
signe de l'hétérogénéité des croyances et du réajustement des
affiliations.

L'ouvrage s'organise autour du constat que le chamanisme
inuit n'a pas été éradiqué, du moins dans les deux régions prises

en compte, en dépit de l'absence de rituels immédiatement
identifiables. Le chamanisme – à distinguer du néochama-
nisme pour l'instant sans écho – persiste sous la forme d'un
ensemble de représentations préchrétiennes qui se matériali-
sent dans le contexte de la chasse à laquelle les Inuit restent
fortement attachés, malgré une économie de plus en plus diver-
sifiée. Le prisme de lecture privilégié par les auteurs est assorti
d'une exigence consistant à rester au plus près de ce que les
Inuit font et disent. Par conséquent, les données orales, somme
toute relativement fraîches, ne sont pas érigées en système, et
des bornes ont manifestement été fixées à la recherche. Il faut
savoir qu'il était difficile, voire impossible, il y a quelques
années, de s'exprimer librement et publiquement sur le cha-
manisme tant le pouvoir de l'Église était fort. Après des décen-
nies de dévalorisation des pratiques religieuses anciennes, de
répression et d'autocensure, la parole s'est dénouée. Il est
apparu que la mémoire individuelle et collective n'avait subi
qu'une période de latence, à telle enseigne que des aînés met-
tent en récit, avec aisance et fiabilité, leur expérience person-
nelle du passage du chamanisme au christianisme. Portés par
des circonstances politiques favorables, dont la création du
territoire du Nunavut en 1999, et soutenus, entre autres, par
le Nunavut Arctic College, de nouveaux espaces d'expression
permettent de transmettre, en présence d'étudiants inuit, les
connaissances préservées. Le sous-titre de l'ouvrage indique
que l'accent sera mis sur les transitions et les transformations,
mais il s'avère que la note dominante se situe du côté des dyna-
miques de la continuité et non d'une franche rupture avec un
ensemble de rituels chamaniques et de représentations qui les
fondent. Trois types de données sont croisés : d'une part, la
parole inuit telle qu'elle se donne à entendre lors d'ateliers
animés par des aînés, hommes et femmes; d'autre part, les
ethnographies classiques, en particulier celles de Knud Ras-
mussen et de Franz Boas, ainsi que les sources archivistiques.
De la confrontation entre témoignages oraux récents et sour-
ces écrites anciennes émergent des convergences, de sorte
que des pratiques dissemblables partagent des affinités,
comme le montrent le grand rituel préchrétien marquant le
solstice d'hiver (*tivajuut*) ainsi que celui de Noël (*quviasuvvik*),
qui lui a succédé. Ces deux rituels valorisent la joie et, comme
hier, les célébrations chrétiennes renforcent les échanges entre
les âmes humaines (*tarniit*) et animales (*inua*), entre les
vivants et les morts, et réaffirment les liens créés par l'épo-
nymie. Toutefois, Noël ne prend pas en charge, comme jadis,
la violence des *tupilait*, ces défunts vindicatifs qui menaçaient
la vie des humains et que le chamane savait affronter. Un autre
trait différentiel concerne la naissance de Jésus, dissociée du
retour de la lumière et surtout de l'échange sexuel – l'une des
configurations centrales de l'échange généralisé pratiqué lors
des rituels d'hiver – banni et remplacé par une symbolique ali-
mentaire. Il n'en reste pas moins que les deux rituels sont
mutuellement intelligibles, sans pour autant entraîner la dilu-
tion de l'un dans l'autre.

Contrairement à ce qui peut s'observer dans d'autres cul-
tures, et malgré des points de friction, il ne semble pas exis-

ter ni un conflit idéologique irréductible entre chamanisme inuit et religion chrétienne, ni une franche opposition à l'égard de l'action missionnaire. Il serait alors d'autant plus vain de dresser l'un contre l'autre le chamanisme et le christianisme que les témoignages montrent que des chamanes ont participé au changement en modifiant leurs pratiques. S'il est juste de considérer que la rencontre entre chamanisme et christianisme a suscité un bouillonnement de la pensée et qu'elle s'est traduite par une grande inventivité, la voix de ceux et celles pour lesquels le sentiment de perte et d'humiliation l'a emporté mériterait d'être rendue plus audible afin d'apprécier la complexité du phénomène, sans pour autant céder à la victimisation, une attitude jugée incapacitante par beaucoup d'Inuit.

L'ouvrage s'attache à définir, à redéfinir et à préciser les concepts et les notions qui le traversent et le structurent. Cette entreprise d'élucidation n'est pas une mince affaire, comme le montre la discussion consacrée aux non humains qui, tout en étant à la marge des humains et hors du social, participent à la communauté inuit de par leur intégration, à des degrés divers, au système de parenté. La difficulté est accentuée par le fait que les catégories distinguées sont constamment retravaillées en fonction de l'expérience personnelle, des circonstances, de l'état des connaissances ou de l'appartenance régionale. C'est ainsi qu'il existe divers cas de figure : appellations différentes désignant une même entité; esprits individualisés offrant des traits similaires aux esprits représentant un peuple; versatilité de certains non-humains affichant tantôt leur hostilité, tantôt leur bienveillance et les rendant ainsi inclassables. L'absence d'attributs univoques, le glissement d'une catégorie à l'autre ou le surgissement de catégories inédites (les anges et les démons) ne gênent en rien l'intelligence de la relation aux non humains, laquelle est soumise, comme d'autres phénomènes, au changement. Soucieux de traduire au mieux la posture intellectuelle inuit, les auteurs mettent l'accent sur un trait partagé : l'identité du mode d'existence des humains et des non-humains (habitat, économie de chasse, alliances matrimoniales). Face à une question qui conserve encore ses zones d'ombre, puisque les non-humains échappent aux injonctions rituelles et aux contraintes spatiotemporelles, les auteurs réalisent une ethnographie la plus exhaustive possible, tout en laissant un espace raisonnable aux certitudes et aux incertitudes, en se gardant des excès interprétatifs et en évitant les surgénéralisations. Ils sont en cela en phase avec le discours inuit qui se méfie des conclusions définitives. La question du sens à donner aux recherches tentant de faire coïncider les perspectives exprimées par les interlocuteurs sur le terrain avec les objectifs scientifiques se trouve une fois de plus posée. Les auteurs font le pari de reconnaître la validité des savoirs inuit et d'en faire la matrice d'organisation de l'ouvrage. Ce dernier, par son format même, nourrit la question des modalités de l'énonciation de l'altérité, celle des formes d'interaction les plus appropriées sur le terrain et celle de la restitution des résultats.

La dernière partie traite d'un phénomène observable à l'échelle pan-arctique : la résurgence du religieux sous l'in-

fluence des églises pentecôtistes et évangéliques. Implantées depuis 1970 dans l'Arctique canadien, ces églises attirent peu les aînés, inquiets des excès de ferveur et convaincus que le chamanisme demeure actif même en l'absence de rituels publics. En revanche, le renouveau religieux attire les autres générations ainsi que la classe politique qui y voit un accès à la promotion sociale. Une fois de plus, les Inuit vivent une période d'effervescence et de tiraillements. Cette présence concomitante des croyances ne semble toutefois pas freiner les efforts d'intelligence mutuelle et d'expression commune. Bien que le chamanisme soit associé au mal et à Satan, les rituels pentecôtistes et évangéliques partagent des affinités avec le chamanisme : la purification de la terre contaminée par les actions humaines, par exemple. Pour sa part, le gouvernement du Nunavut favorise la diffusion (orale et écrite) des savoirs du passé pour renforcer le sentiment d'appartenance à une culture distincte.

Inuit Shamanism and Christianity s'accompagne d'une bibliographie étoffée et d'un appareil de notes fourni. Il mérite d'être mentionné que les auteurs révèlent l'identité de chacun et chacune des interlocuteurs et interlocutrices inuit et leur assurent une véritable présence. L'ouvrage présente une singularité méthodologique inspirée de la nature et des résultats du travail ethnographique. Contrairement à la majorité des analyses consacrées au fait religieux inuit contemporain, les notions de syncrétisme, de revitalisation, de réinvention de la tradition ne sont pas mobilisées. Les auteurs contournent un piège qui risquerait d'enfermer les dynamiques religieuses inuit dans un cadre inadapté aux faits observés. L'ouvrage est donc utile à plus d'un titre.

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Frédéric B. Laugrand and **Jarich G. Oosten** (eds.), *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity: Transitions and Transformations in the Twentieth Century*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010, 467 pages.

Reviewer: *Michael J. Kral*
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
and University of Toronto

The word *shaman* comes from the language of the Inuit groups Evenk and Eveny, Tungus-speaking reindeer herders and hunters in Siberia. Eveny pronounce it as *haman*, and this translates to "a person who knows." Laugrand and Oosten are seasoned anthropologists and have published recent books on Inuit shamanism, conversion, and Christianity including *Representing Tuurgait, Mourír et Renaître* and *Keeping the*

Faith. In this new book they have produced a remarkable study of shamanism and the move to Christianity among Inuit in Nunavut. Their data are based on interviews with a great many elders recalling their childhoods going back to the 1930s and 1940s, and from a number of elders' workshops in several communities from 2000-2008. Elders were selected because they are the respected keepers of knowledge and wisdom and have had direct experience with shamanism and early Christianity. The information also comes from accounts of early ethnographers and explorers from Parry and Lyon in 1822 to Hall and Boas of the later 19th century, Rasmussen in the 1920s, and missionaries including Peck from the late 1800s and early 1900s. All had observed and written about Inuit shamanism or the transition to Christianity. This book is the most thorough account of shamanism and early Christianity among Inuit to date.

The Inuit shaman's roles were primarily to help procure game, heal the sick, correct the weather and protect the community from evil spirits. The shaman or *angakkuq* worked with helping spirits or *tuurngait*, who were often animals but could be anything non-human. He or she would visit the great beings like Sedna, the sea mother who controlled sea animals (and according to some Inuit groups also land animals), Sila the spirit of the air who controlled the weather, or the siblings moon man and sun woman who could help with hunting. These great spirits would punish people for violating taboos causing poor hunting and bad weather. This is where the shaman intervened. When the shaman returned from these visits, or was healing someone, confession of transgressions concerning taboos was necessary. The taboos were many and covered numerous aspects of life from hunting to eating to sewing to sex, when under certain conditions it was forbidden to do many things.

The missionaries in Nunavut, starting with Peck in 1894, were against shamanism and then popular spouse exchanges. The shaman was seen to do the work of the devil. Missionaries stopped many practices related to Inuit spirituality including singing. There were Anglican and Catholic missionaries who competed with each other and had slightly different ways of working with Inuit people. Anglican missionaries encouraged Inuit to become Christian preachers, including shamans who were already leaders, and linked Christianity with civilization to help Inuit become Westernized. Catholic missionaries did not delegate religious authority but were more likely to adopt Inuit lifestyles. Most of the Inuit practices the missionaries were against went underground, but shamans never disappeared.

Laugrand and Oosten provide 12 chapters covering Inuit life in much depth during the period of early Christianity. Shamanism initially continued with Christianity but then declined. One chapter details relationships between shamans and missionaries. Inuit winter feasts, relationships with animals in hunting and the great spirits of the sea and sky are covered in other chapters. Non-human beings on the land and in the sea are described. Shamanic initiation is discussed using individual accounts including the role of visions and dreaming. One chapter deals with healing as a sociocosmic process, and another covers the power of words and objects. Head-lifting as a healing practice and drum dancing are given a chapter. And, there is a chapter on contemporary Pentecostal and evangelical movements in Nunavut, which some elders see as being close to shamanism because of the shouting that takes place in churches.

Writing on Christian conversion of indigenous peoples often examines why some groups convert while others do not, or why some, like the Inuit, convert relatively quickly. Amazonian Indians and Australian Aboriginal people generally resisted Christianity, and some argue this was because of a fundamental mismatch. In Donald Pollock's analysis of Amazonian Indian non-conversion, he found that "they preferred their own company" (Wood 1993:308). Laugrand and Oosten show how many aspects of Christianity were compatible with the Inuit worldview. Some missionaries in Nunavut competed directly with shamans and many Inuit thought of missionaries as shamans. Inuit made decisions about conversion on their own terms and they did not convert because they wanted to join white or *Qallunaat* society. The idea of the world ending imminently was a belief that was easily adopted by Inuit as it fit with the possibility of Sila ending the world. Inuit preachers were adapting Christianity to their own traditions and shamans were converting, with some of them still practising shamanism out of sight of the missionaries. Christian spirituality emphasized helping as did the tuurngait. The giving up of taboos was seen as a relief and the transition practice of *siqqitiq* that included eating the heart of a seal emphasized this, as eating the heart had been taboo. Confession as healing had been a traditional Inuit practice with shamans. Hymns and prayers were similar to *irinaliutiit*, powerful words that could help with hunting or safe return from the land, or help in other ways, and they were like the old technique of *qinngaq* or praying by shouting. The Pentecostal and evangelical movements link sins to previous generations, similar to the old belief that one's wrongdoings would affect future generations negatively.

Does this explain why Inuit converted so rapidly? Laugrand and Oosten show how conversion was not entirely a smooth process. Richling (1989) reported that Inuit dreams, recorded by missionaries, included fear of loss of family should they not convert to Christianity. Malaurie (2007) has written that discord was created in extended families when some converted and some did not, or when some became Anglican and others Catholic. Rasing (1994) found that converted Inuit would at times avoid their heathen kin. In Igloolik, hostility was present between Anglican and Catholic Inuit until relatively recently. In *The Other Side of Eden*, Hugh Brody (2000) writes that the missionaries were "the advance guard and companions of colonial processes." It was Catholic missionaries who began some of the residential schools, including Chesterfield Inlet where much sexual abuse took place. Others argue that some groups of Indigenous people were "vulnerable" to missionar-

ies. Epidemic diseases were manifest in the North among Inuit during the time of missionaries. Did this make them vulnerable? There are few negative memories among elders in this book about the conversion process. Perhaps they were too young to have been aware of how the missionaries affected Inuit families. The most noticeable effect of colonialism on indigenous peoples has been on family life. This is not surprising for a family-based collectivist culture. Perhaps the seeking of family harmony was an influence in the rapid spread of Christianity among Inuit.

Asad (1996) proposed that studies of Christian conversion should address questions such as "what kind of epistemic structures emerged from the evangelical encounter? What new possibilities emerged for people to constitute themselves? What were the new forms of consciousness?" In this book, Laugrand and Oosten address these questions. While most Inuit today are Christian, they have retained many of their traditional beliefs and practices. The belief in special beings on the land and in the sea is widespread, and these beings are still being seen. The naming of a baby after a deceased person, the *atik*, continues as a form of incarnation or reincarnation, extending kinship ties and providing people so named with protective spirits through these names to help them in life. Drum-dancing has been revived and is now a strong cultural icon among Inuit. Interest in shamanism is returning, and an Inuit leader with a shamanic family history in one Nunavut community told me they should create a "shaman church" to fit with Christianity. Indigenous peoples have generally not conformed to Christian missionaries' notions of the exclusivity of religious affiliation (Pollock 1993). The accounts by Inuit elders and early explorers and ethnographers in *Inuit Shamanism and Christianity* are richly detailed. This erudite book takes a deep look into Inuit spirituality and should be on the shelf of anyone interested in Inuit or indigenous shamanism, Christianity, conversion, and colonialism and imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries.

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