# Anthropologica

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My Own Boss? Strategies of Resistance and Accommodation of Rural
Producers to Neoliberal Governance / Mon propre patron? Stratégies
de résistance et d'accommodement des producteurs
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Address
Weaver-Tremblay Award 2009

# Engaging Engagement: Critical Reflections on a Canadian Tradition

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***Abstract:*** In this revised address for the 2009 Weaver-Tremblay Award, I critically examine the notion of "engaged" anthropology as it has emerged, especially in the United States, and I argue that engagement has been a long-standing feature of Canadian anthropology which predates this contemporary development. I do so by briefly reviewing some of the major initiatives in Canadian anthropology, and especially applied anthropology during the 1970s and 1980s, and suggest that in Canada we did not experience the divisive debate over theoretical versus applied anthropology that characterized the U.S. and rendered applied anthropology a weaker sub-discipline in the eyes of many. I conclude by arguing for a need to celebrate how Canadian anthropology has been on the leading edge of engaged anthropology for decades.

**Keywords:** engaged anthropology, applied anthropology, Aboriginal peoples, ethics, Canada, U.S.

***Résumé :*** Dans cette allocution de remerciement pour le prix Weaver-Tremblay 2009, révisée, je soumets à un examen critique la notion d'anthropologie « engagée » telle qu'elle a émergé, spécialement aux États-Unis, et j'amène l'argument que l'engagement a été une caractéristique de longue date de l'anthropologie canadienne, antérieure à cette évolution contemporaine. Pour ce faire, je passe brièvement en revue certaines des initiatives principales de l'anthropologie canadienne, et spécialement l'anthropologie appliquée pendant les années 1970 et 1980, et je suggère qu'au Canada, nous n'avons pas connu le débat antagonisant entre anthropologies théorique et appliquée qui a été marquant aux États-Unis, et qui a affaibli la discipline de l'anthropologie appliquée aux yeux de plusieurs. En conclusion, j'allègue que nous avons besoin de célébrer combien l'anthropologie canadienne a été à l'avant-garde de l'anthropologie engagée pendant des décennies.

**Mots-clés :** anthropologie engagée, anthropologie appliquée, peuples autochtones, éthique, Canada, États-Unis

## Introduction

In Canada, we have a long standing tradition of "engaged anthropology." This tradition is best reflected in work with Aboriginal peoples but is by no means exclusive to this work, or work in Canada for that matter. Engaged anthropology is so embedded within Canadian anthropology that it rarely attracts commentary. John Bennett has argued with respect to anthropology in the U.S. (2005:1), that "in order for cultural anthropology to reorient itself toward the historical present and the changing status of former tribal people, it had to create a separate discipline called applied anthropology," which it did starting in the 1940s. I argue that anthropologists in Canada, while flirting with the idea of applied anthropology, never really embraced it as a separate sub-discipline as it has been in the U.S. Rather, I suggest that what is today referred to as "engaged" anthropology is, for Canada, nothing new, and remains a part of the Canadian anthropological canon.[1]

## Foundations of Engagement

For me, the hey-day for applied anthropology in Canada was in the 1970s and 1980s, and this laid the foundation for the kind of engaged anthropology that I consider in this paper. First at the University of Waterloo as an undergraduate, and then as a graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the mid- to late 1970s, my mentors, Sally Weaver, John Matthiasson and Skip Koolage, argued that, in order to be a good applied anthropologist, one first had to be a good anthropologist, an idea shared at that time with many influential anthropologists south of the border.[2] They saw applied anthropology as an advanced credential, an elite sub-field that required both a theoretical and a methodological sophistication in combination with sensibilities of ethics and accountability, all wrapped up in a blanket of humility. Indeed, this was part of the anthropological Zeitgeist of that era, and others, such as Milton Freeman and Richard Salisbury and, in

the U.S., John Bennett, were making the same argument that applied anthropology should spring out of serious scholarship, not be divorced from it. And why not, given that some of the earliest proponents of the field included luminaries such as Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (Bennett 2005). I was reminded by Sally, John and Skip that the currency of applied anthropology was real people and real lives, and not theoretical arguments debated among scholars, and so we had damn well better know what we are doing before we engage with those lives in an effort to make things better. I took these lessons to heart, and I took them with me into my Ph.D. program.

As a graduate student at the University of Connecticut in the early 1980s, I had the opportunity to learn a great deal about emerging trends in U.S. applied and applied medical anthropology from my advisor, Bert Pelto, and from Steve Schensul and Jay Schensul, who were already fixtures on the U.S. applied anthropology scene. For my term paper in Jay Schensul's graduate seminar in applied anthropology, I decided to write on the Canadian applied anthropology tradition. Since there was relatively little written on this at that time, and much was grey literature and difficult to access in that era in the U.S., I took the step of writing to all of those names that by now were so familiar to me, including Sally Weaver and Marc-Adélard (Adé) Tremblay. First, you will be pleased to know that virtually everyone I wrote to replied—and remember, this was the era before personal computers and email! Second, I was taken aback by their collective characterization of the field in Canada which contrasted with trends emerging in the U.S. There was one quote in particular that I still recall that seemed to capture the Canadian perspective, and which has guided me all these years, that Canadian applied anthropology represented "a sustained critique of society." What a revelation! And what a difference from the approach in my Connecticut applied anthropology courses. Steve Schensul and Jay Schensul were, by this time, promoting their "tool-kit" approach to applied anthropology which, along with Bert Pelto's drive to make all his graduate students skilled in quantitative methods and statistics, and master "rapid ethnographic assessment," was emphasizing a methodological sophistication that was somewhat unparalleled in the field. But none of this jibed with the critical and inherently theoretical subtext of my Canadian quote, nor with the detailed policy analysis for which Sally Weaver and Adé Tremblay were famous. I realized then that we had a very different anthropology tradition in Canada.

## Anthropological Engagement: New Name, Old Approach

"Applied," " activist," "advocacy" and even "engaged" anthropology have a longstanding presence in Canada. But these have generally been done in a curiously Canadian way: legally, respectfully, often quietly, almost apologetically. In my chapter in the book Noel Dyck and I edited on *Anthropology, Public Policy, and Native Peoples in Canada* (Waldram 1993), I argued that those engaged in advocacy must never lose sight of the fact that the resolution of any issues in which we involve ourselves on behalf of others will necessarily affect us differently. Those of us whose research has taken us beyond our home communities can and will return to our own backyards, our own lives, relatively unscathed by the experience; those with whom we work will live their future in the context of what we were able to help them accomplish, or the damage, inadvertent for the most part, related to that involvement. Canadian anthropologists have generally avoided the kind of affective transference that characterizes the so-called "militant" anthropologist; we eschew the notion of universal social and ethical responsibility, remain committed in varying degrees to forms of cultural relativism, and recognize that community issues are *their* issues, not ours, to be resolved by them, not us. In Canada we seem less likely to meaningfully "speak truth to power" because we recognize the risks, that we can create a great deal more problems for those on whose behalf we claim to be speaking or acting, while we return to the safe comforts of our homes and jobs.

"Engaged anthropology" is all the rage in the U.S. today. As Louise Lamphere recently suggested, anthropology in the U.S. needs to do three things "as we *become* increasingly engaged with the world" (2003:153, emphasis added): improve anthropology's public image, continue to change anthropology's relations with communities "by viewing them as equal partners," and do research on critical social issues. She published this observation in 2003. In the American Anthropologist in 2006, Barbara Rylko-Bauer, Merrill Singer, and John Van Willigen—all established U.S.-based applied anthropologists—likewise argued that "over the past decade, there has been *increasing awareness within anthropology in general* about the need for a more engaged role in both academia and the public arena ... [and ] a sizable number of anthropologists have been turning their gaze toward pressing social issues" (2006:178, emphasis added). They further argue "for the repositioning of applied anthropology, by suggesting that it serve as one of the frameworks for the discipline's goal of pragmatic engagement." Although they

don't acknowledge it, they are really speaking for anthropology in the U.S., and not beyond where other national traditions may well differ. Here in Canada there has been very little parallel discussion. Here, it seems, there is no need to argue for a repositioning. Further, these authors argue "that if anthropology is truly committed to more than just engaged rhetoric, then praxis and application must play a more central role within the discipline." Yet these authors fail to note an important article on anthropological praxis by Wayne Warry of McMaster University, published back in 1992 in *Human Organization*, the journal of the Society for Applied Anthropology. Warry chastised the central figures in applied anthropology for their lack of reference to praxis theory. He went considerably beyond what these other authors viewed as "engaged anthropology," by reconfirming the link between theory and practice and, as importantly, advocating that research participants be brought into the research as theory-builders and not just sources of data. In calling for "enlightened advocacy," Warry argued that "a praxis approach recognizes that the method of applied anthropology must resonate with its theoretical subject matter" (1992:161). A full decade before Lamphere wrote her piece, and some 15 years before Rylko-Bauer and colleagues wrote theirs, Warry argued that "theory ... must be created from communicative action that involves participants as equal partners in research ... A praxis approach would involve study participants as equal partners in open discussion of theoretical assumptions that underpin the search for pragmatic solutions to everyday problems" (1992:156).

I would suggest that this link between theory and practice, of which Warry writes, has remained central to Canadian anthropological engagement since its early days. The idea of communities as partners, for instance, emerged formerly in the early 1980s here, with the concept of community-based research and then participatory-action research, and strategic grant initiatives funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). But even these initiatives built upon long-standing practices in our field. It is telling that these developments were spearheaded by anthropologists working with Canadian Aboriginal communities. At the same time in the U.S., research with American Indian communities had fallen out of vogue, in favour of off-shore, more theoretically focused research. Back in Canada, anthropologists working with Aboriginal peoples could not as easily escape the issues of poverty that dogged their participants' lives. Simply put, our Aboriginal research participants started showing up in our classes, critiquing our work, getting elected to political office, and taking control of the research

process. Anthropology in Canada *had* to be engaged to remain viable. And it was.

Although the expression "engagement" has a fairly specific contemporary meaning, the fundamental idea behind it has been a feature of Canadian anthropology for decades and, in some ways, more than a century. Franz Boas, for instance, was involved in the work of a special committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science designed to explore the living conditions of Aboriginal people in British Columbia in the late 1880s (Hedican 1995:15). The role of Boas in the emergence of Canadian anthropology has been well-documented by Regna Darnell (Darnell 2001), among others, although the applied side of his work, strictly speaking, has perhaps been overshadowed by his larger role in the formation of the Americanist tradition. Subsequent anthropological research designed to assist in policy development, particularly for Aboriginal peoples, in many ways became the impetus for the development of Canadian applied anthropology. Anthropologists more generally played an important role in policy formation, with Diamond Jenness' involvement in Indian and Inuit policy in the 1940s through 1960s perhaps leading the way. Jenness argued that Aboriginal people should be involved in policy development that affected them—a radical idea at the time— and he along with his staff, including Marius Barbeau, emerged as advocates for Aboriginal people, and engaged in protests against the banning of the potlatch and other ceremonies. In 1939 a group of anthropologists and historians came together in Toronto to discuss the current Indian situation, and one product of this meeting was advocating for the development of a federal Indian policy (Hedican 1995). In the 1950s and 1960s, community studies undertaken by anthropologists, especially in the developing north, were focused on policy recommendations regarding administration and economic development (Dyck and Waldram 1993:9).

Back in 1977, Elliott Leyton was already able to characterize Canadian anthropology precisely in terms of engagement with marginalized groups seeking to impact the wider society. University of British Columbia anthropologist Harry Hawthorn's monumental study of Canadian Indian policy, referred to colloquially as the "Hawthorn report," had been published in two volumes in 1966 and 1967, and included co-authors and pioneers of Canadian engaged anthropology, Adé Tremblay and Joan Ryan. Sally Weaver's own 1981 analysis of *Making Canadian Indian Policy* proved to be a landmark study in anthropological engagement with policy. The "golden era" of Canadian applied anthropology is clearly centred in the 1970s through 1980s, when anthropologists played central

roles in major national issues involving Aboriginal peoples, lands and resources. Anthropological involvement in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry and hydro-electric projects in Quebec, my own work in Manitoba, extending through the travails of the Lubicon Lake First Nation of Alberta, and the efforts of Innu of Labrador to protect their rights in the face of development, firmly reminded us that Canadian anthropology could not detach from complex political issues. Admittedly, some of the "Canadian" anthropologists involved were actually foreign trained, and often immigrants to Canada, and the connection between the social activism emerging out of the Vietnam War and these very activist anthropological adventures is clear. But what these anthropologists did was engage with the idea of Canada and with the Canadian anthropological tradition, and, in so doing, became largely indistinguishable from it.

## The Canadian Tradition of Engagement

To establish the nature of the Canadian tradition and to position some of our current debates over ethics, accountability, and engagement, I turn to a volume which, today, is unfortunately little known. For its time, however, it was seminal, and still represents an important document in the history of the Canadian anthropology tradition. I am referring to *Applied Anthropology in Canada*, published in 1977 and edited by Jim Freedman. This construction paper bound and stapled volume was published by the Canadian Ethnology Society (CESCE, the forerunner of CASCA), and consisted of papers as well as transcribed conversations among participants from a special CESCE symposium organized by Sally Weaver. Many of Canada's pioneering thinkers in anthropology were involved, including Richard Salisbury, Milton Freeman, Joan Ryan, Elliott Leyton and Adé Tremblay. The sentiments expressed therein very much reflected the state of Canadian anthropology at the time.

The nature of Canadian anthropology's engagement with social and political issues and the emerging debate over the relationship between theory and practice were central themes in this volume. The question of the very existence of applied anthropology as a sub-field was raised. Elliott Leyton wrote: "I would guess that many of us would say there is no such thing as Applied Anthropology—any more than, as Harry Hawthorn used to say, there is no such thing as Applied Latin." "Indeed," he continued, "a division of our discipline into 'pure' and 'applied' sections is not only artificial but a destructive distinction." Leyton described a "style of anthropology which is distinctively Canadian: distinctive not in its methods or its concepts, but in the kinds of problems it accepts

as legitimate academic concerns, and in its understanding that some form of advocacy may be necessary to supplement the conventional academic analysis" (1977:168). "The striking characteristic of anthropology in Canada," he concluded, "is its concern with problems generated outside the narrow confines of an academic discipline" (1977:168). Policy analysis and its links to advocacy were, therefore, very much central to Canadian engaged anthropology at the time.

That applied anthropology could deteriorate into a purely technical field uninformed by theory was recognized as a problem in both Canada and the U.S. Gordon Inglis (1977) prophetically warned in this volume that "there is a danger that the anthropologist may become a general-purpose social engineer, applying bits and pieces of theory and technique from anywhere and everywhere, his or her major asset being a nodding acquaintance with a variety of concepts and methods." Perhaps this warning was heeded, as the trend of which he cautioned was much less prominent in Canada than in the U.S. For this we must thank the strong tradition, to which Elliot Leyton refers, of "uncompromising academic anthropologists who have been willing to address practical problems" (1977:181). As Inglis concluded, "we must become *engaged* in our society and, while we must not let our moral concerns lead us into doing bad science, we must equally not let our concern for scientific objectivity lead us into being bad citizens ... It is a far cry from the hustling professionalism that [Edward] Spicer and [Ted] Downing forecast for U.S. anthropology" (1977:185-186).

In summing up the papers and associated conversations, Inglis (1977:178), concluded that "whether or not we want to call it 'applied anthropology,' *something* is alive out there," and "that something is pretty vigorous." Although eventually purveyors of that "something" did begin to call it "applied anthropology," I believe, in retrospect, that that "something" was engaged anthropology as understood today. What happened subsequently is rather telling of the nature of the Canadian tradition.

## The Short Life and Quiet Demise of SAAC

The Society of Applied Anthropology in Canada (SAAC) had a short and fitful life as an association. Formed in the early 1980s, SAAC's membership fluctuated for many years, occasionally exceeding 100 members, but experienced steadily declining interest and eventually fizzled out altogether in the mid-1990s. SAAC was formed in an era in which academic opportunities for anthropologists were evaporating and some scholars, such as Salisbury, were beginning to argue that applied anthropology was "the growth point of the discipline" (1977:192). This may

explain the initial surge in membership. But the numbers were not sustainable. When I was president of CASCA a few years back, I received a short note from a Canadian government office declaring that, as SAAC had failed to make an annual report for several years, it was no longer a legal entity. I had no one to whom to send this note, as there were no officers of record. SAAC disappeared, and no one noticed. What went wrong?

It was a source of constant frustration for those of us involved that so few of our colleagues who did applied anthropology were willing to sustain their membership, or even admit formally that they did applied anthropology. Perhaps if we had used the term *engaged* anthropology right from the start, the label would have been more palatable, because relative to our current understanding of "engagement," this is what we were doing. Over the years I have come to realize that it was the fact that so many seemed to be engaged anthropologists that made the association redundant. But I think that it is also the case that the broader trends within the field of anthropology, more generally, and applied anthropology specifically, were having an impact. The tension between theory and application was growing palpable, with theory ultimately carrying the day in terms of publication and research grant success. Post-structural and postmodern theories gained a foothold in the discipline in Canada as elsewhere, and while these theories made some advances in explaining human suffering, this body of theory did not easily cross over into application. Post-structural and postmodern anthropologists began to openly mock applied anthropology as a weaker, unintellectual branch. In return, applied anthropologists began to openly mock the supposed irrelevance and incomprehensibility of these theoretical approaches. It became apparent to me that neither was reading the work of the other.

Over the years, attending both CASCA meetings and meetings of various U.S.-based anthropological associations, I (and others) have noticed a clear divergence in national trends. Just as many participants in the 1977 CESCE volume warned, the applied community in the U.S. became more technically oriented. Meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), which have grown exponentially in attendance since their CASCA-like informality of the 1980s, started to be dominated by empirical presentations, often by non-anthropologists who had accessed the methodological "tool-kit" and assumed that research with any "other" person was, by definition, anthropological. A victim of its own success, perhaps the SfAA made applied anthropology *too* accessible, in part by de-emphasizing theory and promoting empiricism.[3] Applied anthropology transitioned from a field involving

the theoretical elite of the discipline, to a field openly attractive to those who sought to eschew theoretical rigour. To some critics, applied anthropology in the U.S. seemed to spiral downward into generic, methods-oriented social science, losing sight of the importance of theories of human behaviour while attempting, curiously, to impact positively on that behaviour. One of my colleagues is fond of referring to many of the typical SfAA conference presentations as "culturally sensitive social work."

It could be argued that without overt theory, so-called "applied anthropology" is tantamount to the technical application of a skill-set that is hardly unique to and often ironically uninformed by anthropology. "Cross-cultural" does not mean "anthropological." "Community-based" does not mean "anthropological." "Participatory action" does not mean "anthropological." Employing "culture" as a variable in quantitative research most certainly does not make it anthropological. And simply being trained in anthropology does not make one's work "anthropological." The disengagement of theory from practice in U.S. anthropology may best be seen in the development of specific graduate programs in the U.S. to "train" applied anthropologists (and I find the use of the term "training" to be insightful). Unlike in the U.S., today in Canada we do not have any graduate programs built solely around applied anthropology "training," although I would add here that we *do* have programs in engaged anthropology, including—of course—at the University of Waterloo, and given Sally Weaver's legacy I cannot think of a better place for it. In Canada, applied anthropology remains very much a part of generalist, four-field education, and many graduate programs do not even have courses on it. The fact that applied anthropology in Canada has never been recognized as a "fifth" field, as has been the case with the American Anthropological Association, is perhaps telling.

When SAAC finally disappeared, it happened at a meeting with only four of us in attendance. There were many applied-oriented papers at the CASCA meetings that year, and many of the icons of Canadian applied anthropology were there, but they did not show up for the annual SAAC meeting. An association to promote applied anthropology was simply not needed. Shortly after my election to President of CASCA was announced, one avowedly applied anthropologist confronted me with the demand, "what are you going to do for applied anthropology?" My response, near as I can recall, was "keep CASCA going." There has always been space within CASCA for applied anthropology—and other sub-fields as well—without, it seems, a strong desire to have separate, targeted efforts (witness the short life of the Canadian Association for Medical Anthropology). This is part of our

tradition here. It has taken a while for me to realize this fact.

One legacy of SAAC does remain, however, one which is particularly significant to me here today. When SAAC folded I was able to negotiate the transfer of the Weaver-Tremblay Award to CASCA under Peter Stephenson's presidency, where it now thrives as the only award we make to our professional colleagues.

## The Ethics of Engagement

Engagement brings forth somewhat different ethical issues than straightforward research, and a uniquely Canadian way of dealing with ethics has emerged. I again take as my departure point anthropology in the U.S., where a certain degree of consternation over ethics has been evident. Over the years the American Anthropological Association (AAA) has debated the responsibility of anthropologists to participate in public policy matters, and has included varying statements to this effect in a series of ethics codes (Sanford 2008; Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006). In Canada, it seems we do not need ethics codes to direct us to engage in public policy issues—we just do it as part of our canon. The recent efforts by the AAA to amend its ethics statements to preclude "militant" anthropology and to "ensure" no harm to research participants underscores a fundamental difference between the anthropological traditions in the two countries. In the U.S., competing ethical sensibilities create great controversies and sometimes volatile annual meetings. Here in Canada, while CASCA has a social issues protocol, which I shepherded while President, I do not think it has ever been used. CASCA does not even have a code of ethics! Certainly there have been calls, from time to time, for such. And yet, none has been produced. I do not see this as the product of scholarly inertia. While allowing, in effect, the government to develop ethical guidelines for research and impose them is, in many ways, a rather Canadian approach—even if their understanding of ethnography is frustrating to many of us—I think there is more to it than this, for these Tri-Council efforts are still relatively recent. Thankfully, Canadian anthropology is, so far, free of some of the more pernicious episodes that other national anthropologies have weathered, such as the Yanomami controversy and human terrain system research in the U.S.

Self-described "militant" anthropology represents a different class of engagement entirely. Only in the U.S. could a "militant" anthropology arise, in which the anthropologist undertakes covert activity to expose injustice. I cannot imagine such a thing in Canadian anthropology. Perhaps the many years of efforts to develop constructive relationships with Aboriginal communities and to redress stereotypical, and largely inaccurate, folklore about anthropological thievery has encouraged us to practice our discipline in more open and transparent ways. Once people get wind that it is now "ethical" to deliberately mislead our research participants as to our aims and identities, our anthropology as we know it will no longer be viable. I could never have accomplished the research I did with prison inmates if not for my ability to establish trust, to prove my identity and to make my work transparent. Like that of certain militant anthropologists, my research participants are criminals too, but we accomplish much more in helping to make our society safe by working with them as opposed to trying to trick them into disclosing secret activities so they can be charged yet again. In some ways it is our non-threatening impartiality—our sheer powerlessness—that allows us to gain the confidence of research participants. All of this is destroyed when we lie about our identities and motives and we seek for ourselves the power to make change happen. The "primacy of the ethical" (Scheper-Hughes 1995) defines an anthropology that moves beyond the usual ethical sensibilities of the populace, and positions the anthropologist as judge, jury and sometimes executioner on what is appropriate for others to say and do and how violators should be punished. To suggest we, as anthropologists, are in any way above or more ethical than others—ethical superheroes—is dangerous for our discipline.

In Canada, I think we recognize how untenable such a position is. "Militant" anthropology did not develop here for a reason. Canadian anthropologists, in my view, are rather nervous about adopting a Foucauldian activism to "speak truth to power." We anthropologists have access to truth? Is anyone here willing to stand before their peers and announce that they have the absolute "truth" about anything? One time, in northern Manitoba, a Cree elder taught me a lesson. "Jim," he asked, "what do you know ... *for sure*?" Needless to say, I had no response. And I am quite comfortable with that.

## The Costs of Engagement

Of course engaged anthropology puts us in the middle of controversies and, by definition, makes us targets. We must never turn a blind eye to this fact: there are always costs to engaged anthropology, and I have had my share of problems. For instance, in the 1980s, Manitoba Hydro employees falsely reported to First Nations officials in northern Manitoba that I was working undercover for them, feeding them information, which precipitated a crisis meeting where I was forced to defend myself from being tossed out of the community. Of course I was also a little tickled that Manitoba Hydro thought I was such a

threat, which in turn convinced me that they probably did have something to hide! Then Manitoba Hydro officials turned around and, quoting selective passages from my book, *As Long as the Rivers Run* (Waldram 1988), stated in public venues that I believed hydro-electric development to have actually been beneficial for the Cree, contrary to my real conclusions. This is what happens to engaged anthropologists sometimes: if we choose to engage we take sides, and we create opponents, even enemies.

Subversive tactics by large energy corporations should not be surprising, I suppose. But engaged anthropologists should not necessarily expect a better reaction from their colleagues. In an effort to make my ethnography, *The Way of the Pipe* (1997), more accessible to the prison inmates and Aboriginal elders who participated in my research, as well as to corrections officials, I wrote it in a style that itself was accessible. I knew that a theoretically dense book would have no policy impact (and this is not to say the book was actually a-theoretical). In a scholarly review of the book, however, one U.S. anthropologist declared to scholars that "this book is not pitched for you. This book is not appropriately assessed with an academic yardstick; it must, instead, be understood as a work of *applied* anthropology" (O'Nell 1998:518, emphasis added). Ouch! A victim of the theory–applied rift, I suppose. More recently, my work on Aboriginal health and traditional healing, which has focused on efforts to explicate and validate traditional healing knowledge, has lead to charges against me of "malpractice." Ouch again. The source of the allegation, a horrible tome by Francis Widdowson and Albert Howard (2008), at least slagged some of my colleagues as well,[4] such as my co-authors Ann Herring and Kue Young, and put me in an index with Claude Levi-Strauss, Sting and John Lennon, so I am in good company. But on a more serious note, Widdowson and Howard make several disturbing allegations about anthropology, "the most significant perpetrator of distorted research" (2008:40). They claim that advocacy anthropology is the antithesis of social science, brings "havoc" to the Canadian legal system, and that one cannot be both an advocate and a scientist. Gordon Inglis, as I quoted earlier, would certainly disagree, as would Penny Van Esterik, the 2006 Weaver-Tremblay award winner, who noted in her address that "the best anthropological theory has clear specifiable relations to everyday life," and who advocated that, through theory, anthropologists could "take a more informed role as social critics, and ensure that justice issues pervade the discipline" (2007:5). But, as Widdowson and Howard's work suggests, perhaps we still have work to do both within and outside our discipline to articulate the nature of our engaged anthro-

pology. Working now in Belize, where through my research I am assisting a group of Q'eqchi Maya healers to establish a healing clinic, I can say without question that the costs of engagement are worth it.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, I have tried to convince of several things in this presentation. First, there is nothing new—at least in Canada—in the idea of an "engaged" anthropology, as we have been engaging engagement for a very long time, even if sometimes we called it other things. Second, we not only stew, but we do. We refuse to let reflexive critique paralyze us in responding to, and working with, communities and groups to effect change, voice concerns and redress duress. Third, we have not lost sight of the importance of theory and its relationship to the practice of our discipline. In these, I feel strongly that Canadian anthropology has been at the forefront. But, just as we are reluctant to admit readily to engagement, and definitely not to "applied" work, we have also failed to admit to being on the leading edge. This results from the quiet, Canadian demeanour, I suppose, mildly confident, definitely not cocky, and most definitely not willing to make our ideas a cause célèbre. While other national traditions have embraced the term "engagement" and have begun to promote a "new" way of doing anthropology, it seems in Canada we just motor along. As Alexander Leighton wrote in *Applied Anthropology in Canada* way back in 1977, "*not* to apply anthropology is unethical" (1977:204, emphasis added). Anthropologists in Canada have typically embraced this. It is okay to celebrate it too.

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## Notes

1. As an undergraduate student at the University of Waterloo in the 1970s, I had an opportunity to audit a course with Sally Weaver, on "Canadian Communities and Planned Change." Sally believed that anthropology in Canada could and should be useful, and her energy and passion for this idea was the spark I needed. Moving on to the University of Manitoba, I continued to study Canadian applied anthropology, and it was there where I began to learn about the seminal work being done in Quebec under the guidance of Marc-Adélard—Adé—Tremblay. As my own career developed, the work of both Sally and Adé grew in stature and remained very influential. So, when I decided that the now defunct Society for Applied Anthropology in Canada (SAAC) needed an award, it seemed logical to me that it should, in true Canadian spirit, reflect both the Anglo and

Franco traditions in its name. When I raised the matter with Sally and Adé, they were both gracious in agreeing to lend their names to the award, although Sally protested "But I am not dead yet!" Sadly, prophetically, Sally passed away just before the spring CASCA meeting where the first Weaver-Tremblay Award was presented to her friend, the late Joan Ryan. In accepting this award I honour the memory of both Sally and Joan.

I want to extend my gratitude to those individuals who nominated me for this award, and who believed me deserving, which in many ways is award enough: Janice Graham, Peter Stephenson, Regna Darnell, Julia Harrison, Ron Laliberte, Joe Gone and Sylvia Abonyi, in particular. I want to thank the members of the Weaver-Tremblay Award selection committee for agreeing with my nominators, and for the hard work that goes into selecting one among many outstanding candidates. Thanks to all of those who attended the 2009 Weaver-Tremblay lecture, continuing our celebration of Canadian anthropology as unique and engaged. Finally, for all her support, I want to thank Pamela Downe, who many years ago snatched me from the seductive jaws of generic social science by reminding me that theoretical anthropology and its practice are not mutually exclusive.

2  For instance, John Bennett, an American anthropologist who undertook influential research in Canada, continued to argue that "applied anthropology ... is simply good anthropology" (2005:2) well into the 21st century.

3  I should point out that, as a Fellow of the SfAA, I remain committed to the field and its potential and remain a strong supporter of the organization.

4  In my opinion, the book lacks the necessary scholarly rigour to be considered a "critique," and appears more like a form of attack journalism. For instance, I am an anthropologist, not a medical practitioner, and hence the accusation that I have engaged in "malpractice" seems—and I am putting this politely—rather hyperbolic. I remain puzzled that the book was issued by a scholarly publisher.

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## Thematic Section
## My Own Boss? Strategies of Resistance and Accommodation of Rural Producers to Neoliberal Governance

# Introduction

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A t the turn of the 21st century the control over the production and distribution of food is shifting from the state and national actors to the international system and multinational corporations. Governments in the North and South are disengaging from regulating agriculture to the advantage of farmers. A handful of multinational corporations control the market for agricultural inputs and the commercialization of bulk and processed foods (Müller 2008:77-81). Intellectual property rights over seeds promise tremendous profits for those who can impose them on the millions of farmers buying high-yielding or transgenic varieties. International laws[1] and private contracts progressively tighten seed regulations and close the loopholes that allowed farmers to reseed their own harvest.

Agricultural land has become an item of intense speculation with corporations from industrial nations buying access to millions of hectares of fertile farmland in developing countries in order to secure control over food and bio-fuel (Borger 2008). Developing countries at the same time are called on to redefine their concept of food self-sufficiency. Instead of making it a priority that countries should grow their own food, international development institutions advise them to open their borders for free trade in agricultural commodities and tell them that "countries that have been most successful in reducing hunger and extreme poverty have relied on trade in agricultural products, either exports or imports or both, as an essential element of their development strategy" (FAO 2005:vii). Countries are told to stop subsidizing and protecting agricultural production (FAO 2005:80), use their "comparative advantage" by growing crops for export and adopt the latest agricultural technology to order to increase productivity. The neoliberal doctrine that identifies the farmer as an independent entrepreneur encourages the state to withdraw support and to delegate concern for the poorest of the rural producers to international governance.

The traditional dependency of agricultural producers on the land, which had to be cared for in order to remain fertile and produce crops over the years, has been supplanted by an increasing dependency on chemical inputs and agricultural machinery. With the Green Revolution, promoted by international institutions and Western charitable foundations to reach the remotest corners of the globe, even small scale farming has come to rely on fertilizers, pesticides, and commercial high yield varieties and the credits needed to buy them when cash is short. The ecological consequences of the adoption of high-yield input-dependent varieties include soil depletion, reduced biodiversity, the disappearance of locally-adapted lower-yield varieties, fresh water scarcity and a total reliance on fossil fuels used in machinery and for the production of chemicals.

These developments have not been simply imposed from the top down but have been accepted and encouraged by the producers themselves and only a minority resists them. Have rural producers thus lost what James Scott described historically as the "moral economy" of the peasant based on a "subsistence ethic" (Scott 1976:31) that gives absolute priority both to holding the means of subsistence in ones own hands and to organizing production and social and ecological relations in such a way as to provide for maximum security?

More than 20 years ago Pat Mooney (1988) wrote an analysis entitled "My own boss?," looking at the motives that incited U.S. farmers to adopt an industrialized model of farming that drove them ever deeper into debt. At the time he wrote that rural producers seemed to be cut up into two persons: an autonomous producer taking his own decisions about the labour process and investments and a dependent producer servicing bankers, landlords and processors who exert domination over the production process from a distance. In this thematic section we want to take up his question about the possibilities and limits of agency of agricultural producers and extend it to agricultural producers in different parts of the world who have been submitted to an accelerated process of de-collectivization, industrialization and liberalization of agricultural markets. The common thread that runs through these articles is the question of to what extent farmers can behave strategically with respect to agro-chemical corporations, grain companies, NGOs, consultants and the state. Or, to what extent they are obliged to move tactically in a political, economic and natural environment they cannot control, attempting to use the occasions offered to them. If we define strategy the way de Certeau (1990:xlvi) does, as the possibility to calculate relationships of power from a vantage point that belongs to a sub-

ject with a will of his or her own, how are small producers and also high-tech farmers preserving the farm as this place of their own and protecting it from external mechanisms of control? What is the relationship between local strategies of resistance and accommodation of agricultural producers and supra-local processes and discursive practices through which their local life-worlds are being encompassed, marginalized and disempowered (Hornborg 2001:243)?

All the contributors to this section asked this question, though we phrased it in different ways using different analytical concepts: Susan Walsh uses the concept of "resilience" to describe the survival strategies of Bolivian potato farmers; Mary Richardson speaks of "recovering agency" through organic farming in Quebec; and, Liesl Gambold talks of "risk management strategies" of post-socialist Russian agricultural producers. To preserve or build up collective structures seems to be key to maintaining the possibility of strategic action for the farmers who would otherwise become individualized "entrepreneurs," competing among themselves for resources such as land, water or market access, and dependent on external entities such as corporations, NGOs and development agencies. The role of the state is an ambivalent one, mediating and regulating, to some extent, the unequal exchange relationships between rural producers and city dwellers by guaranteeing and setting the frame for market access or exclusion. In our findings, we all point to this complex relationship with the socialist, neoliberal or reformist state, which is now increasingly modified through the influence of international agencies and NGOs.

At a time when a "post-peasant society" (Scott 1976: 165) seems definitely established as, for the first time in history, more people live in towns than in the countryside, demands and expectations on rural producers remain high. They are expected to feed the world, the country and themselves, preserve the environment, act as a motor for growth and pull themselves out of poverty. They are thus subject to numerous governmental and non-governmental influences and interventions that are ideologically, politically and economically motivated: the Harvard Golden Boys intervene in Russia on land privatizations; Monsanto and the World Bank incite the Nicaraguan government to distribute high yield varieties to rural producers; transnational corporations involved in the seed business lobby the U.S. government to facilitate the extraction of intellectual property rights over seeds; and, environmental NGOs promote organic agriculture in Canada and around the world.

In our analysis we demonstrate the dynamic nature of these relationships and the impact of institutional and

systemic changes on farmers. We all show how neoliberal and also socialist institutions promote agricultural practices, marketing behaviour, credit taking and certification in ways that often diminish the capacity of farmers for strategic action. This is also linked, as Susan Walsh and Mary Richardson have pointed out, to the kinds of knowledge that are valued and promoted and those that are neglected and devalued. Studying agricultural producers' response to neoliberal governance means demonstrating how ecological and social relationships are inextricably linked.

Development interventions in agricultural practices are often inspired by a deficit theory of social change as Susan Walsh shows in her analysis of national and international NGOs working with Bolivian potato farmers. Instead of acknowledging that these farmers had developed sophisticated agricultural and social practices and a wealth of different potato varieties that allowed them to survive in the harsh climatic conditions of the Andes, development organizations wanted to help them by making them adopt high-yielding input-dependent varieties that drove them quickly into a spiral of debt and dependency. Walsh remarks on the charity orientation of the members of these NGOs, which makes them blind to the fact that the complex social and environmental relations that the potato farmers had developed were part of their conditions for survival and not an obsolete remnant of the past.

No matter how constraining and contradictory development interventions on farming practices and marketing strategies may be, the capacity to evaluate and appreciate them on their own terms allows agricultural producers to demystify their intent as I show in my article on discourses and practices in a Nicaraguan village. I show that farmers interpreted the interventions of a succession of governments in their own moral terms of *favores* (favours), *ayuda* (help, support) and *robo* (theft, fraud). They evaluated to what extent the demands made on them by different governments were predictable and based on the principle of reciprocity, and whether they coincided with their own ethical principles. While valuing highly the ideal of autonomy, they felt compelled to seize the opportunities afforded them through development interventions even though many of them were in contradiction with their convictions and principles.

The mandate to become independent farmer entrepreneurs handed down from Western advisors via postsocialist governments meets resistance among agricultural producers who got used to working as a collective, as Liesl Gambold shows in her analysis of Russian de-collectivization. Effective social links in the community are considered more important for strategies of survival than individual control over land and resources. In times of rapid social change and insecurity, the former members of the *kolkhoz* (collective farms) preferred to work together and to submit to the constraints of the rural community rather than to change identity and to fight alone as independent farmers.

The independence of rural producers reveals itself as quite relative even for high-tech farmers in Western countries that international institutions such as the FAO present as the model to follow (Dixon et al. 2001). In her article on large farmers in Mississippi—the majority of whom cultivate transgenic varieties of cotton, maize and soy— Gabriela Pechlaner shows how they are "sandwiched" between multinational corporations controlling their inputs and outputs. The use of biotechnology to achieve more control over various aspects of production and to increase cultivation area proved to be a double-edged sword, as multinational corporations extracted large royalties for the seeds and increasingly dictated production decisions formerly made by farmers. Thus, Pechlaner demonstrates how grower contracts and national and international laws on intellectual property rights over living organisms expropriated both farmers' control over their production and the proceeds of their work. Reseeding their harvest of transgenic crops became an illegal action and an act of resistance that brought the few farmers who dared to take this step into confrontation with the uncompromising power of multinational corporations.

To escape the power of corporations, to make their crops grow in tune with natural elements and to strive for more autonomy in decision making, farmers have turned to organic methods, thus eliminating, to a large extent, their dependence on industrial inputs. As Mary Richardson demonstrates in her article on organic farmers in Quebec, the official recognition that organic farming has received from governments and international agencies allows farmers, on the one hand, to mobilize subsidies and support but, on the other, undermines their potential for contestation. Moving from self-certification of organic production through associations of organic farmers to certification regulated by law takes away some of the autonomy that organic farmers so cherished and puts them in the realm of political and economic interests that are in contradiction with their own.

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## Note

1  The TRIPS agreement and the UPOV convention are two examples.

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# Section thématique
## Mon propre patron? Stratégies de résistance et d'accommodement des producteurs ruraux face à la gouvernance néolibérale

# Introduction

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Au tournant du XXI$^e$ siècle, le contrôle de la production et de la distribution des denrées alimentaires passe des mains de l'État et des acteurs nationaux à celles du système international et des entreprises multinationales. Les gouvernements, au nord comme au sud, se désengagent de la réglementation de l'agriculture qu'ils exerçaient en fonction de l'intérêt des fermiers. Une poignée de multinationales contrôlent le marché des intrants de l'agriculture et la commercialisation des aliments en vrac et transformés (Müller 2008:77-81). Les droits de propriété intellectuelle sur les semences promettent des profits fabuleux à ceux qui peuvent les percevoir auprès de millions de fermiers qui achètent des variétés transgéniques ou à haut rendement. Les lois internationales[1] et les contrats privés renforcent progressivement les règlementations sur les semences et referment les échappatoires qui permettaient aux cultivateurs de replanter leurs propres récoltes.

Le territoire agricole est devenu l'objet d'une spéculation intensive, alors que les sociétés commerciales des pays industriels achètent l'accès à des millions d'hectares de terres fertiles dans les pays en développement pour gagner le contrôle des aliments et des biocarburants (Borger 2008). En même temps, les pays en développement sont appelés à redéfinir leur concept d'autosuffisance alimentaire. Au lieu d'avoir pour priorité que les nations fassent pousser leurs propres aliments, les agences de développement international leur conseillent d'ouvrir leurs frontières au libre-échange des produits agricoles et leur disent que « certains des pays qui ont obtenu les meilleurs résultats dans la lutte contre la faim et l'extrême pauvreté ont considéré le commerce des produits agricoles, que ce soit à l'exportation, à l'importation ou les deux, comme un élément essentiel de leur stratégie de développement » (FAO 2005:vii). On incite les pays à cesser de subventionner et de protéger leur production agricole (FAO 2005:80), à s'appuyer sur leur « avantage comparatif » pour produire des récoltes destinées à l'exportation

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et à adopter les dernières technologies pour améliorer la productivité. La doctrine néolibérale qui identifie les agriculteurs comme des entrepreneurs indépendants encourage l'État à retirer son soutien et à déléguer à la gouvernance internationale ses responsabilités à l'égard des plus pauvres des producteurs agricoles.

Traditionnellement, les producteurs agricoles dépendaient de la terre, dont ils devaient prendre soin pour qu'elle demeure fertile et livre des récoltes année après année; cette dépendance a été supplantée par une autre dépendance aux intrants chimiques et à la machinerie agricole. Avec la Révolution verte, dont les institutions internationales et les fondations caritatives occidentales font la promotion jusque dans les coins les plus reculés de la planète, même l'agriculture à petite échelle en est venue à dépendre des engrais, des pesticides, des semences commerciales à haut rendement, et du crédit nécessaire pour les acheter quand le comptant vient à manquer. Les conséquences écologiques de l'adoption des variétés à haut rendement dépendantes des intrants technologiques comprennent l'appauvrissement des sols, la réduction de la biodiversité, la disparition des variétés à faible rendement adaptées au contexte local, la rareté de l'eau douce et une dépendance totale aux combustibles fossiles nécessaires pour la machinerie et la fabrication des produits chimiques.

Cette évolution n'a pas simplement été imposée du haut vers le bas mais a plutôt été acceptée et encouragée par les producteurs eux-mêmes, alors que seulement une minorité tente d'y résister. Les producteurs ruraux ont-ils perdu ce que James Scott décrivait historiquement comme « l'économie morale » du paysan fondée sur une « éthique de la subsistance » (Scott 1976:31) qui accorde une priorité absolue au fait de détenir le contrôle sur les moyens de subsistance, et à la fois d'organiser la production et les relations sociales et écologiques de manière à maximiser la sécurité?

Il y a plus de 20 ans, Pat Mooney (1988) a écrit une analyse intitulée « My own boss? » – Mon propre patron? – qui interrogeait les raisons qui incitent les fermiers américains à adopter un modèle industriel de production agricole qui les pousse à s'endetter toujours davantage. Il écrivait à l'époque que les producteurs agricoles présentaient un dédoublement de personnalité : celle d'un producteur autonome prenant ses propres décisions quant aux méthodes de travail et aux investissements et celle d'un producteur dépendant, au service des banques, des propriétaires fonciers et des transformateurs qui exercent à distance leur domination sur le processus de production. Dans la présente section thématique, nous voulons aborder cette question des possibilités et des limites de la capacité d'action des producteurs agricoles, et l'étendre aux agriculteurs de différentes parties du monde qui ont été soumis à un processus accéléré de décollectivisation, d'industrialisation et de libéralisation des marchés agricoles. La question commune qui traverse les articles qui suivent est celle de savoir dans quelle mesure les fermiers sont capables d'adopter un comportement stratégique face aux multinationales de l'agrochimie, aux semenciers, aux ONG, aux consultants et à l'État. Ou alors, dans quelle mesure sont-ils obligés d'agir en mode tactique dans un environnement politique, économique et naturel sur lequel ils n'ont pas de contrôle, en essayant de profiter des occasions qui leur sont offertes. Si nous définissons la stratégie, tel que le fait de Certeau (1990:xlvi), comme la possibilité, pour un sujet doté de volonté, d'évaluer les rapports de pouvoir, comment les petits producteurs mais aussi les fermiers « high-tech » préservent-ils leur ferme comme leur lieu propre et la protègent-ils des mécanismes de contrôle extérieurs? Quelle relation peut-on établir entre les stratégies locales de résistance et d'accommodement des producteurs agricoles et les processus et pratiques discursives supralocales par lesquels leur monde social local se trouve circonscrit, marginalisé et privé de pouvoir (Hornborg 2001:243)?

Tous les collaborateurs de la présente section se sont posé cette question, bien que nous l'ayons formulée de manières différentes à l'aide de concepts analytiques différents : Susan Walsh utilise le concept de « résilience » pour décrire les stratégies de survie des cultivateurs de pommes de terre boliviens; Mary Richardson parle d'agriculture biologique comme d'une entreprise de réappropriation au Québec; et Liesl Gambold s'intéresse aux « stratégies de gestion du risque » des producteurs agricoles russes de l'ère postsocialiste. Il semble que la préservation ou la construction de structures collectives soient les clés permettant de conserver la possibilité d'agir stratégiquement pour des fermiers qui autrement deviendraient des « entrepreneurs » individualisés, exerçant entre eux une concurrence pour la terre, l'eau, l'accès aux marchés, et dépendants d'entités extérieures comme les grandes sociétés, les ONG et les organismes de développement. Le rôle de l'État est ambivalent, quand il agit comme médiateur et régulateur, dans une certaine mesure, des relations inégalitaires entre les producteurs ruraux et les consommateurs urbains en garantissant et en créant le cadre pour l'accès ou l'exclusion des marchés. Dans nos conclusions, nous sommes tous amenés à considérer cette relation complexe avec l'État socialiste, néolibéral ou réformiste, qui se trouve de plus en plus influencée et modifiée par les agences et les ONG internationales.

Au moment où nous semblons définitivement établis dans une « société post-paysanne » (Scott 1976:165), alors que pour la première fois dans l'histoire plus de gens vivent dans les villes qu'à la campagne, les attentes et les demandes imposées aux producteurs ruraux demeurent élevées. On attend d'eux qu'ils nourrissent le monde, leur pays et leur famille, qu'ils protègent l'environnement, qu'ils agissent comme moteurs de la croissance et qu'ils s'arrachent eux-mêmes à la pauvreté. Ils sont donc les objets de multiples influences et interventions gouvernementales et non gouvernementales à justification idéologique, politique et économique : les Golden Boys de Harvard interviennent en Russie sur la privatisation des terres; Monsanto et la Banque mondiale font pression sur le gouvernement nicaraguayen pour distribuer des semences à haut rendement aux producteurs ruraux; les entreprises semencières transnationales font du lobbyisme auprès du gouvernement américain pour obtenir des droits de propriété intellectuelle sur les semences; et les ONG écologistes font la promotion de l'agriculture biologique au Canada et dans le monde.

Dans notre analyse nous démontrerons le caractère dynamique de ces relations et l'impact des changements institutionnels et systémiques chez les fermiers. Nous montrons tous la façon dont les institutions néolibérales mais aussi socialistes font la promotion de pratiques agricoles, de comportements de commercialisation, de modes d'accès au crédit et d'approbation du crédit qui restreignent souvent la capacité d'action stratégique des fermiers. Cela est aussi lié, comme le soulignent Susan Walsh et Mary Richardson, aux types de savoirs qui sont valorisés et dont on fait la promotion par rapport à ceux qui sont négligés et dévalorisés. Étudier la réaction des producteurs agricoles à la gouvernance néolibérale amène à démontrer à quel point les rapports écologiques et sociaux sont inextricablement liés.

Les interventions visant le développement en matière de pratiques agricoles sont souvent inspirées par une théorie de déficit en matière de changement social, comme le démontre Susan Walsh dans son analyse du travail des ONG nationales et internationales auprès des cultivateurs de pommes de terre en Bolivie. Au lieu de reconnaître que ces fermiers avaient élaboré des pratiques agricoles et sociales de haute technicité et une très riche variété de pommes de terres qui leur permettaient de survivre dans les conditions climatiques rudes des Andes, les organismes d'aide au développement ont cherché à les aider en leur faisant adopter des variétés à haut rendement mais dépendantes d'intrants chimiques qui les ont rapidement entraînés dans une spirale d'endettement et de servitudes. Walsh souligne l'orientation caritative de l'idéologie des membres de ces ONG, qui les rend aveugles au fait que les relations sociales et environnementales complexes qu'avaient élaborées ces cultivateurs de pommes de terre faisaient partie de leurs conditions de survie et n'étaient pas des vestiges désuets du passé.

Quoi qu'il en soit du caractère contraignant ou contradictoire des interventions de développement sur les pratiques agricoles et les stratégies de mise en marché, la capacité qu'ont les agriculteurs de les évaluer et de les apprécier selon leurs propres critères leur permet de démystifier leurs intentions, comme je le mets en lumière dans mon article sur les pratiques et discours dans un village nicaraguayen. Je montre que les fermiers ont interprété les interventions de gouvernements successifs dans leurs propres termes moraux de *favores* (faveurs), *ayuda* (aide) et *robo* (vol, fraude). Ils ont évalué dans quelle mesure les exigences qui leur étaient imposées par différents gouvernements étaient prévisibles et fondées sur le principe de réciprocité, et si elles correspondaient ou non à leurs propres principes éthiques. Tout en valorisant hautement l'idéal de l'autonomie, ils se sentaient obligés de saisir les occasions favorables qui leur étaient offertes dans le cadre des interventions de développement, même si une forte proportion d'entre elles étaient en contradiction avec leurs principes et convictions.

L'obligation de devenir des fermiers entrepreneurs indépendants imposée par les conseillers occidentaux par l'intermédiaire des gouvernements postsocialistes rencontre de la résistance de la part des producteurs agricoles qui s'étaient habitués à travailler en mode collectif, comme le démontre Liesl Gambold dans son analyse de la décollectivisation en Russie. L'existence de liens sociaux efficaces au sein de la communauté est considérée plus importante pour les stratégies de survie que le contrôle individuel sur la terre et les ressources. En période d'insécurité et de changement social rapide, les anciens membres des *kolkhozes* (fermes collectives) ont préféré travailler ensemble et se soumettre aux contraintes de la communauté rurale plutôt que de changer d'identité, de devenir des fermiers indépendants et d'avoir à lutter seuls.

L'indépendance des producteurs ruraux se révèle comme tout à fait relative même pour les cultivateurs « high-tech » des pays occidentaux que les institutions internationales présentent comme le modèle à suivre (Dixon et al. 2001). Dans son article sur les grands fermiers du Mississippi – qui pour la plupart cultivent des variétés transgéniques de coton, de maïs et de soja – Gabriela Pechlaner montre comment ils sont « pris en sandwich » entre les multinationales qui contrôlent leurs intrants et leurs extrants. Le recours aux biotechnologies pour gagner plus de contrôle sur divers aspects de la pro-

duction et pour accroître les surfaces en culture s'est avéré une arme à double tranchant, alors que les multinationales exigent des redevances élevées pour leurs semences et imposent des décisions de production qui étaient autrefois du ressort des fermiers. Ainsi, Pechlaner démontre la façon dont les contrats de production et les lois nationales et internationales relatives à la propriété intellectuelle sur les organismes vivants ont dépossédé les fermiers du contrôle sur leur production et des revenus de leur travail. Le fait de ressemer les graines de récoltes obtenues à partir de semences transgéniques est devenu un geste illégal et un acte de résistance qui a amené les quelques fermiers s'y étant risqué en confrontation directe avec la puissance impitoyable des grandes sociétés multinationales.

Pour échapper au pouvoir des sociétés commerciales, pour faire pousser leurs récoltes en harmonie avec les éléments naturels et pour viser davantage d'autonomie dans leurs décisions, des fermiers se sont tournés vers les méthodes biologiques, ce qui les affranchit, dans une large mesure, de leur dépendance à l'égard des intrants industriels. Comme le démontre Mary Richardson dans son article sur les fermiers « bios » au Québec, la reconnaissance officielle qu'a obtenue la production biologique de la part des gouvernements et des organisations internationales permet d'une part aux fermiers d'aller chercher du soutien et des subventions, mais d'autre part, limite leurs possibilités de contestation. En s'éloignant de l'autocertification de la production biologique par des associations de producteurs bios au profit d'une certification encadrée par la loi, les fermiers bios abandonnent une partie de l'autonomie qu'ils chérissaient tant et doivent composer avec des intérêts politiques et économiques qu'ils considèrent contradictoires aux leurs.

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## Note

1  Les ADPICS (aspects des droits de propriété intellectuelle qui touchent au commerce) et l'UPOV (Union internationale pour la protection des obtentions végétales) en sont deux exemples.

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# A Trojan Horse of a Word? "Development" in Bolivia's Southern Highlands: Monocropping People, Plants and Knowledge

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**Abstract:** Through a first-hand treatment of the humanitarian development assistance delivered to indigenous farmers in Potosí, Bolivia at the turn of this century, this paper challenges the all too common promotion of Western "capacity-building" programming and introduced technologies—particularly related to crop production—as "sacred cow" ingredients for sustainable livelihoods among farmers on the margins. The Bolivian non-governmental organization (NGO) profiled paid insufficient attention to time-tested knowledge and practices that enabled survival in places where the natural world usually has the upper hand and where the conservation of plant genetic resources is fundamental to that survival. It would have been more successful, I suggest, had it turned the deficit argument—"the poor are lacking"—for development intervention on its head. It is not what farmers lacked, but what they already had—sophisticated but threatened livelihood strategies—that required endorsement and support.

**Keywords:** Bolivia, development, livelihood, indigenous knowledge, crop genetic diversity, NGOs

**Résumé :** À partir d'une étude de première main de l'assistance humanitaire au développement administrée à des fermiers autochtones du Potosi, en Bolivie, au tournant de ce siècle, cet article remet en question la promotion très répandue des programmes de « renforcement des capacités » à l'occidentale et des technologies parachutées – en particulier en ce qui touche la productivité des récoltes – en tant que « vaches sacrées » de la capacité de subsistance durable chez les agriculteurs économiquement marginalisés. L'organisation non gouvernementale bolivienne dont j'ai fait le profil avait négligé de porter attention à des connaissances et pratiques transmises par la tradition et qui avaient permis la survie dans des lieux où le milieu naturel est généralement déterminant et où la conservation des ressources génétiques botaniques est fondamentale en vue de cette survie. Elle aurait connu plus de succès, du moins c'est ma suggestion, si elle avait pris le contre-pied de son hypothèse du déficit – « il manque quelque chose aux pauvres » – qui sous-tendait son intervention de développement. Ce n'est pas ce qui manquait aux fermiers, mais plutôt ce qu'ils avaient déjà – des stratégies de subsistance élaborées mais menacées—qui aurait dû devenir l'objet de valorisation et de soutien.

**Mots-clés :** Bolivie, développement, subsistance, savoir autochtone, diversité génétique des récoltes, ONG

Development, as in Third World Development, is a debauched word, a whore of a word. It is an empty word that can be filled by any user to conceal any hidden intention, a Trojan horse of a word.
> —Frank 1986:231

As I begin to write this account of my research experience among indigenous Bolivian farmers at the turn of this new century, our media is filled with stories about an approaching perfect storm, the convergence of climatic chaos, economic collapse and a global food crisis that has pushed farmers and low income consumers in the global South onto city streets, forced to march for their right to food. The international response to the food crisis has been to renew food aid efforts and to call for increased agricultural assistance, featuring training and packages of *improved* or high tech seeds and the chemicals they need to flourish.[2] In a recent high level meeting in Spain, for example, Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to the United Nations and Director of Columbia University's Earth Institute, asked governments to significantly increase their funding to impoverished regions for the purchase of improved seeds and fertilizers. "The lack of improved inputs is the single most important factor in the continued poor yields in smallholder farming," he and his colleagues in the Ad Hoc Advisory Group to the Madrid Conference on Food Security later wrote in their report (2009:13). Benevolent outsiders, it would seem, need to fill the void. Through training and the provision of seeds and chemicals that governments and corporations from the global North can provide, they should compensate for the presumed lack of skill and resources in these communities. This article will demonstrate that the "deficit development" and ethnocentric recipes for change offered today differ little from those I discovered in the Andean highlands eight years ago. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!

The Andean highlands of western South America are an imposing, at times merciless, landscape of arched-

backed ridges, yawning gullies, sculpted rock faces, quilted patches of green, purple, red and gold at harvest and ribbon-thin roads connecting scattered villages of adobe. When the early morning sun creeps over and down sleepy mountain ridges, their beauty takes your breath away. But their splendour reaches beyond a commanding appearance. Their indigenous residents can also lay claim to one of the world's greatest shares of cultivated plants (Zimmerer 1996:10) and more particularly to the centre of origin and diversity for potatoes, the world's fourth most important food crop (FAO 1995:4). With protein values as high as 12.9%, as late as the mid-1980s, Andean potatoes were heralded as one of the world's most nutritious sources of plant food for human consumption (Dandler and Sage 1985:126).[3]

The fields where my research was located, Bolivia's most southern department, Potosí, are in fact considered to be one of the centres of biodiversity for the potato species (Programa de Autodesarrollo Campesino 1996:11). In Ravelo, one of four regional municipalities in Potosí's Northern Province (political district) of Chayanta and home to the two Quechua-speaking Jalq'a communities that welcomed my research, agronomist Regis Cepeda catalogued as many as 53 distinct varieties (Cepeda 1996).[4]

Ravelo's Jalq'a farmers, however, are not generally recognized for this primordial diversity but rather for their production of commercial potatoes that help to feed the roughly 200,000 residents of the country's constitutional capital, Sucre, a three-hour truck ride from Ravelo's municipal capital, also called Ravelo. On Sucre streets, Ravelo's rural folk are often referred to as *los paperos*—the potato producers. Ironically, though perhaps not surprisingly, Ravelo's commercial potatoes appear to be of greater benefit to their urban consumers than to their producers. Nicole Bezençon (1994:1), a Swiss anthropologist who, in the early 1990s, studied Ravelo producers on behalf of the country's national potato research centre, Proyecto de Investigación de Papas (PROINPA), argued, in fact, that the surpluses from Ravelo farms serve to maintain the non-productive classes of the city. Like that of their displaced *compañeros* from the silver and tins mines that once drew the wealthy to Potosí (see Nash 1979), the story of the peoples of this region appears to be an inverted "rags to riches" tale in which the rich of the metropolis feed off a hinterland of producers "in rags" (see Frank 1966; Wallerstein 1974; Watkins 1977).[5]

In the year 2000, the family farm economy in Ravelo's 104 villages was one of subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture (Bezençon 1994). There were a number of comparatively successful petty commodity producers on pri-

mary transportation routes, but for most of Ravelo's indigenous farm families cash earned from market sales was rarely enough to cover costly agricultural inputs let alone household supplies such as the kerosene to fuel make-shift lamps when darkness falls. It was not, therefore, their direct link to the market economy that sustained Ravelo's Jalq'a. Rather, generations of resilience strategies kept these subsistence communities and their people alive. But the conditions of their semi-subsistence were such that migration to cities for cash remuneration, however temporary and integrated into their resilience strategies, was growing more and more important and frequent.[6]

In addition to food policies and commercial production practices favouring urban consumers, factors offered to explain deteriorated livelihood conditions over the past half century include the climatic extremes attributed to global warming, competition from foreign potato producers, the growing popularity of rice and pasta, the collapse of mining-community markets, and *minifundismo*— land shortages and soil infertility due to continuous sub-division of property among male consaguineal kin. At the heart of this last problem lies Bolivia's 1952 Agrarian Reform Act. In one paradoxical stroke of the legislator's pen, this legislation put an end to both the quasi-feudal landholdings of colonial rule and to the territorial usufruct rights within the indigenous *ayllu* governance system. Ignoring long-held indigenous practices, such as the rotation of shared lands and collective land-management strategies for example, legislators sanctioned individual land titles and the concept of individual peasant producers (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking [NOVIB] 1998:16; Platt 1982:18-21; Rivera Cusicanqui 1992:153; Urioste 1987:167).[7]

My research among the indigenous Jalq'a farmers in Ravelo and the non-governmental organizations at work in their communities suggested that there was yet another deeply ironic contributor to the marginalization and impoverishment of the municipality's indigenous farmers. This paper argues that the humanitarian development assistance delivered through NGOs had been quietly but steadily eroding the inherent strengths of these indigenous papero communities. Although largely welcomed, well-intentioned, well-funded and achieving some of the stated goals, particularly with respect to infrastructure development and community organizing based on Western structures of governance, the agencies that delivered these programs approached the development process in ways that were ultimately weakening the capacity of these indigenous farmers to live independent, healthy and productive lives on their ancestral lands.

Acting within a largely positivistic development enterprise built on a deficit theory of social change (Rahnema 1997), a homogenizing, utilitarian concept of producer and a belief in the superiority of Western science (Escobar 1995; Kulchyski 1993; Purcell 1998; Sachs 1992), these NGOs, from the political left and right, failed, to varying degrees, to take seriously the very different worldviews and knowledge systems of their indigenous "beneficiaries." Nor had they reconciled the inherent power imbalances that always privilege the Western point of view. In so doing, they paid insufficient attention to centuries-old resilience strategies that enabled survival in places where the natural world usually has the upper hand—the conservation of plant genetic resources being one of the most fundamental of these strategies.

Through a first-hand treatment of the agricultural interventions of the NGO with the longest history of work among the Jalq'a paperos, my paper will challenge the all too common promotion of Western "capacity-building" programming and new technologies—particularly related to crop production and farm livelihoods—as the critical ingredients for sustainable livelihoods among farmers on the margins. This NGO, like the two others I reviewed during a year of field research, would have been more successful had they recognized and supported the active agency of the peasants they worked with, turning the deficit—the poor are lacking—argument for development intervention on its head.[8]

Before proceeding with my account of the communities and people who generously shared their homes, food and community experiences with me, a brief overview of the concept of resilience is in order. According to Berkes et al., Holling introduced the concept of resilience into the ecological literature in 1973 as a "way to understand non-linear dynamics, such as processes by which ecosystems maintain themselves in the face of perturbations and change" (2003:13). Essentially, a resilient system will not allow stresses and shocks to dismantle its basic functions and integrity (Levin et al. 1998:224). The Resilience Alliance, a consortium of institutions and research groups that focuses on sustainability, has broadened the scope of this concept to include "integrated systems of people and nature" (Swedish Ministry of the Environment 2002:146[9]). Building on collaborative efforts between natural and social scientists, resilience is increasingly viewed as concept that helps us not only to think about environmental sustainability, but of social and economic sustainability as well (Levin et al. 1997:221). Concerned with "the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed or buffered without the system undergoing fundamental changes in its functional characteristics" (Berkes et al. 2003:14),

resilience is correctly associated with diversity. Inter- and intra-species variety, numerous and varied human opportunities, and a good selection of economic options enhance a system's capacity to "withstand shocks and surprises, and if damaged, to rebuild itself" (Swedish Ministry of the Environment 2002:147). Resilience, Berkes adds, also "allows for the multiple ways in which a response may occur, including the ability of the system to absorb the disturbance, or to learn from it and to adapt to it, or to reorganize following the impact" (2007:284). Resilience is thus also associated with the idea of adaptation and managing uncertainty. Since social and environmental systems are complex and our knowledge of them always incomplete, we need therefore, both "to reduce the degree of uncertainty about the dynamics of these complex systems" and to be innovative so we can handle change that cannot be predicted (Berkes 2007:284).[10]

## Paperos in the Puna Baja

It was with this resilience construct—the lens through which I hoped to gain insights into the world and farming practices of my Jalq'a hosts—that I headed to the majestic ridges of the Cordillera of Potosí, a minor mountain range within Bolivia's Southern Cordillera (Ochoa 1990) and to the two communities at the centre of my research, Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón.[11] Chimpa Rodeo is an ex-hacienda hamlet[12] that in the year 2000 was home to 33 families. Mojón, with 46 families, is an *originario* community, "original" because its residents were never subject to the servitude of the large landowner. At approximately 20 km and 10 km from the municipal capital, both Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón have reasonable access to Sucre markets. In an effort to strengthen their family livelihoods, farmers in both communities dedicate some of their cropland to commercial production. But like most of their neighbours in Ravelo, few of the 79 families of these two settlements have managed to build secure livelihoods from the surplus produce they bring to local and city markets.

Chimpa Rodeo has an advantage over Mojón when it comes to potential market revenue. A 45-minute walk takes one to the main road into Sucre. It also has a comparatively good secondary service road making motorized travel possible except during the worst of the rainy season. The trek into Mojón is another matter. Its service road is barely navigable at the best of times[13] and impassable during the rainy season. One heavy thunderstorm can convert the winding, boulder filled road into a rushing river. Clearly the more isolated of the two communities, residents' interaction with external institutions was in fact only fours years old. In contrast, Chimpa Rodeo had an approximately 20-year history of external

development assistance that covered a broader range of programming.

At almost identical elevations of 3,550 and 3,500 metres respectively (Mamani 1999), and being just over 10 km apart, climatic and land conditions in these *puna baja* or low highland communities are comparable. The area is semi-arid with hail, frost and water shortages a constant worry. The topography in both communities is uneven, intensely eroded and heavily deforested. Soils are lightly acidic (6.8 pH) with organic matter levels poor to moderate (Mamani 1999:32). It is important to note, however, that the ecosystem diversity characteristic of the Bolivian Andes is applicable to these communities. Land fertility can vary from hill to plateau, requiring differing fallowing periods and a variety of land use strategies.

The households in Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón are semi-autonomous economic units, since in addition to their farming activities they also depend on labour exchange and, to a lesser extent, external labour markets to fill consumption and income needs (see Collins 1988:116). Households rather than individuals, as Lambert (1977) writes of Andean communities elsewhere are conceived of as the units of ceremonial and economic participation. Farming is a family activity. Both genders line up behind the ox-driven plough to complete the planting process, and both harvest their fields and select seed for the next planting season.[14] However, as with communities elsewhere in the Andes, the farming system also reflects some gender-based differentiation, a concept commonly referred to as *complementaridad de genero* (gender complementarity). When it comes to the care and management of livestock, for example, males husband the large animals, while women, with the assistance of their children, accept responsibility for the breeding and nurturing of the smaller livestock that include sheep, goats and sometimes a few pigs. Neither role is considered superior. Cattle husbandry is highly valued. Given the comparative worth of each animal, male farmers manage, to use an analogy, the family's savings account, there to provide income if times get tough. Women's nurturing of sheep and goats, on the other hand, is also critical to the family economy. These smaller animals are important sources of manure for crops, wool for clothing, bone for implements, protein for the diet, and materials and blood for ritual celebration.

When it comes to seeding, women's fertility makes them the preferred gender for the placement of the potato tuber and other seeds in the *surco* or furrow. Indeed, with one exception, all families in my household surveys identified females as the ones who must plant the seeds to ensure the germination of crops.[15]

## Embedded and Invented

The story of the Jalq'a ethnicity of the people of Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón is a rather mysterious one since there is little documented information about their origins and history. The Jalq'a speak Quechua and proudly claim descent from the once powerful Inca Empire. They are largely agronomists of the *puna baja* (lower highlands), and *cabacera de valle* (valley hilltops) and are easily identifiable through their unique clothing, instruments, dance, songs, rituals and weavings. The thought structure so pronounced in their rituals and weavings reveals complex, supernatural, chaos–creation beliefs (Martinez 1994a:7), as well as the concept of duality that is characteristic of a pan-Andean worldview. The way that both Mojón and Chimpa Rodeo appear to embrace a common macro-identity—a shared sense of their common lineage and traditions, despite very different colonial and post-colonial histories and relationships with state and non-state actors—also suggests an ability to deal with differing or opposing orientations at once. The strong duality of their cosmovision seems, as June Nash (1979:122) articulated so well in her masterpiece on Bolivian miners, "capable of entertaining co-existent and sometimes contradictory worldviews."

Sucre anthropologist, Gabriel Martinez (1994a:2) hypothesized that as a corporate ethnic group with distinct dress, rituals and so forth, the Jalq'a are comparatively young, possibly representing the coming together of various units of disenchanted *ayllus*. Ayllus are complex, segmentary social organization and governance systems that have existed over a broad area in the Andes from pre-Inca times (Godoy 1986:723) to the present. In the Bolivian puna or highlands, the households of individual hamlets formed segments of more inclusive and larger social groups (minimal to maximal ayllus) (Godoy 1986: 738). They have operated within a framework of multi-faceted land management, governance and regional economic development strategies (Cereceda 1998:7-8; Martinez 1994b:18). While initially serving a useful purpose for state authorities anxious to collect tribute from their indigenous inhabitants, beginning in the 18th and accelerating in the 19th century, ayllus were increasingly denied political or economic authority, ensuring, as Platt has argued, "the survival of the 'nation' and the dominion of the *capa criollas* [land owners] who managed the state apparatus" (1982:14).

One system that is at the core of the ayllu approach to land and livelihood management, and that had survived in northern Chayanta into this new century, is ecological complementarity, what the Spanish call *doble domicilio* or

dual residence.[16] To varying degrees, both Mojón and Chimpa Rodeo residents have adopted this practice. Given its significance as an effective resilience strategy, selected features of its design and application in the year 2000 are highlighted.

## Building Resilience

> In the communities, from childhood on, you learn that the earth is alive, that she is called Pachamama, that she nurtures mankind.          —San Martin 1997:90

Ecological complementarity, as Murra (1985a:3) describes it, is the simultaneous control by a single ethnic group of several dispersed ecological tiers. The ayllu's internal processes of differentiation and governance appear designed to facilitate the division and management of these dispersed landholdings, with endogamy—marriage within the smallest corporate unit or minimal ayllu—practised in an effort to administer and control lands spread over dispersed ecological zones (Harris 1985; Platt 1976). The multiplicity of lands, spaced between highland and valley ecosystems, but of sufficiently close proximity, can serve both as an adaptation to high levels of climatic risk and as an effective method of generating wealth (Murra 1984). Labour exchange mechanisms and the possibility of at least one of the ecological tiers surviving the hard lessons of an unpredictable mountain microclimate contribute to an increased likelihood both of adequate subsistence and of production surpluses. Ecological complementarity then is an adaptive management system that takes uncertainty into account. Since the environment cannot be controlled nor the future predicted, it is best to keep options open and build flexibility into the system, hence the importance of farming in different ecosystems and of crop genetic diversity, which, in the case of Andean farmers, means potato biodiversity (see Armitage et al. 2007). This adaptive management, as Burchard (1976:372) suggests, "permits the human population to maximize the variation which exists within the environment in such a way as to enhance its long-term food production capacity and minimize risk." It is a very strategic approach to food security since, as Netting notes, "the long term security of any population is based not on its average level of production and consumption, but on the way in which it is able to weather periods of maximum scarcity" (Burchard 1976:403). On the ingenuity of this system for efficient production as well as the guaranteed provisioning of nutritious food, Dandler and Sage write:

> The vertical organization of production in an ecologically diverse environment such as the Bolivian Andes creates complementary exchange relationships between different ecological zones. For example, the higher altitude areas act as the repository of clean potato seed [tubers] to provision the lower intermontane valleys. Such vertical organization permits a sequential timing of production tasks through a series of consecutive, though overlapping, agricultural cycles. This allows households to spread the demands on labour more evenly over the year, reducing the burden on women and children, whilst providing the nutritional complementarity and the regular provisioning of food from different ecological zones. [1985:128]

An especially clever communal land management component of ecological complementarity that is practised on the highlands only, called *manta*, also enhances environmental benefits and the potential economic return from surplus production. While a field and its produce belong to an individual household, decisions about which fields to sew, crops to plant, rotational cycles and fields to leave fallow are collective (Platt 1982:45; Rivera Cusicanqui 1992). This corporate group decision-making structure ensures adherence to production cycles that not only benefit the commons, facilitating more ecologically sustainable production processes, but the community economy as well. Its inherent market control mechanisms can be conducive to better returns on surplus production, that is, of course, if the surrounding communities also follow this practice.

There may also be a justice ethic at work within this system. Citing Murra, Burchard (1976:428-429) offers several examples of how, within this system, the community assumes responsibility for the welfare of the "old, the disabled, and the 'poor.'" Platt (1982:45) suggests that the manta system also serves as a mechanism to increase leverage when disputes arise over lands bordering a neighbouring ayllu. Individual vulnerability to land usurpation is reduced. In sum, the system maintains an important internal control of vital resources.

The system of non-monetized product exchange or bartering between the puna and the valley, called *trueque*, is another substantive feature of ecological complementarity. It is an expression of Andean reciprocity anchored in a cosmovision that recognizes give and take within both the natural and supernatural worlds. Burchard (1976:456) considers this standardized exchange to be a critical component of the adaptive process within ecological complementarity. Hand in hand with product exchange is labour exchange. Three of the most common forms are: *ayni* where a farm family will offer services, products, tools, or animals in direct exchange for another farm family's services, products, tools or animals; *minka* where group

work parties perform a service for a particular household with the hosts providing food and beverages as well as in-kind payment for their day or days of labour; and *faena* where several households or the entire community pitch in to complete community service projects.[17]

To obtain products that cannot be harvested from the land or purchased with production income, such as tools, inputs, schoolbooks or Western medicines, also requires an additional resilience strategy: temporary migration for paid labour. Most families send one or two of their adult members to the city to work as day labourers or domestics. This short-term labour migration averaged a total of 29 days and 25 days among my respondent families in Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón respectively.

Two final features of this governance and land management system deserve attention. First, community leadership positions are non-hierarchical and rotational. They generally last a year and alternate among the male heads of households. Responsibility for governance is thus shared. No single family bears the long-term sacrifice of its strongest male producer and no single family is afforded the opportunity to dominate the community's direction and affairs. Loyda Sanchez (2002), a Bolivian educator who, in the mid-1970s, attempted to organize Andean campesinos into syndicated cadres along "rational lines" as she put it, "to no avail," attributes this communal sense of rotational leadership to an Andean preference for knowledge sharing.

Last but in no way least, there is a very profound spiritual dimension to ecological complementarity. The indigenous stewards of this system, including Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón farm families, practice a cross of indigenous–Catholic spirituality that is intimately linked with their homage to Pachamama—the earth-goddess responsible for soil and human fertility (Dandler and Sage 1985:128). Participants in my study reported a very strong spiritual and intuitive dimension to their land-use and production practices. During the Festival of the Virgin de Guadalupe in early September, for example, farmers check to see if it will be a good year for production by looking to see if the *muña* flowers bloom towards the sun. If their petals droop like tears, or if there are few blooms, it will be a bad year (Choque 1999).

Pachamama, as suggested, has been given a Catholic base by her people. During two major, three-day religious festivals I attended, including the festivals of our Lady of Guadalupe and All Souls Eve, I repeatedly heard prayers that substituted Pachamama for the Virgin Mary. As Gledhill (1994:89) correctly suggests, colonized peoples "do not simply appropriate the symbols of the dominant order but subject them to powerful inversions" and,

I would add, to careful *subversion*.[18] Scott (1990:xii) has argued that people who are deprived in society resist oppression through the construction of their own "hidden transcripts." Thus, in addition to being a pragmatic strategy to maintain cultural and environmental resilience, ecological complementarity, I would suggest, is part of the highlanders' internal transcript. The system represents highlanders' connection both to a natural world and to a broader cosmos that they insist on interpreting on their own terms.

Spanish colonizers and republican political regimes in their wake ignored indigenous peoples' demands for territorial versus individual title (Urioste 1987:167). This turn of a deaf ear to their requests seriously disrupted ecological complementarity.[19] Nevertheless, in places like Northern Potosí, principal components survived, demonstrating an impressive agency and determination that Murra observed when he returned to the region in the early 1980s:

> It is remarkable that, in spite of the pressure exercised against everything Andean and those who created them during the 450 years of colonial and republican regimes, we still encounter among highland peasants a preference for locating their fields in complementary fashion, on several different ecological tiers, sometimes located several days' walk from the centre of population. There is well-documented, contemporary evidence of sizeable groups who have managed to maintain their ethnic self-awareness, along with access to their outliers in the lowlands. [1984:119]

Ecological complementarity is not, of course, conflict-free or completely egalitarian (see Murra 1985b).[20] As with all systems, there are flaws in the design that, in addition to outside factors, weaken it. But it is a system that, when left to flourish, has allowed habitation on unforgiving lands at a level beyond hand-to-mouth subsistence. Platt's (1982:28) findings on the robust wheat economy of the region before tin and silver mines shifted the nation's priorities, represent an excellent case in point. Most importantly, this system has contributed to the stewardship of one of the world's greatest shares of cultivated plants and in-situ crop and intra-crop diversity at levels most Western farmers could hardly fathom, let alone produce.

Working with nature to balance the good of the commons with the common good—resilience thinking par excellence given the attention to the integrity and sustainability of their food production systems—has allowed the peoples in the region I studied to keep ecological complementarity alive for centuries, weakened but not com-

pletely destroyed by Spanish *conquistadores* and more recently by the pull of a market economy and development enterprise that trumpet values of competition and comparative advantage. The subjects of my particular enquiry, the Jalq'a farm families of Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón, were forced to navigate this conflicting reality. And, as the ensuing discussion will suggest, the NGOs supporting them did not make it easy.

In both Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón, the indigenous ayllu structures have given way to Western structures of organized labour that NGOs introduced.[21] It is the local *dirigente* or community head of the *syndicato de campesinos* (farmers' union) who calls the community meeting to order. Still the rotational leadership structure of the allyu system has been stubbornly maintained. The dirigente position rotates to a new family each year. Consensus decision-making and shared responsibility are consistently preferred over a voting system in which a narrow majority can rule. Competition, with its winners and losers, does not sit easily with people who need collectivity and cooperation to survive and prosper.

With respect to the application of ecological complementarity components, the biggest differences between the two communities relate to their respective adoption of the doble domicilio concept. Without exception, Mojón informants have dual residences and crop production in both their highland fields and valley lands. Indeed, with migration to the valley lands for periods of an average of 5.2 months, these respondents practice doble domicilio generally with the entire family in tow. Only a third of respondents in Chimpa Rodeo have valley lands. Respondents there spend, on average, less than two months in valley regions, mostly to barter for valley products and to pasture their animals.

Both communities practice trueque, ayni and minka on a regular basis. Both also practice rotational cropping and express a strong belief in the value of a healthy fallowing period for nutrient regeneration, although land-use pressures, particularly in Chimpa Rodeo, with its higher level of commercial production, are now a significant limiting factor. And unlike Mojón's residents, Chimpa Rodeo farm families do not practice the manta land management system.

An adequate land base upon which one can cultivate foods and husband animals is of chief importance. The manta system in operation in Mojón is a proactive adaptive management strategy to maintain fertile soils and a productive land base. Yet, as the this paper will argue, the NGO community in Mojón and Chimpa Rodeo did not treat this system, nor the other components of ecological complementarity practiced in these communities, as an essential foundation for their development strategy. It is to a history of the nature of the external intervention in Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón that I now turn.

## Broken Equilibrium

> ¡Mi papa me ha enseñado, más que los tecnicos!
> (My father taught me more [about potato diversity] than the extension workers!)
> —Chimpa Rodeo farmer, July 2000

External development agencies first established a significant presence among indigenous farming communities in the regional municipality of Ravelo just over two decades ago. The now defunct government-sponsored Instituto Boliviano Tecnico de Agropecuaria (IBTA, the Bolivian Technical Institute for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry) was one of the first institutions to arrive. In 1980, it sent staff to test and promote new technologies, featuring *improved* potato varieties and agrochemical inputs to enhance product size, health and yield (interview with former PROSEMPA employee 5 May 2000; confirmed by local resident, June 2000).

The introduction of and training in the use of new varieties and technologies was steady but gradual. But when *El Niño* wrecked havoc on the Bolivian countryside in 1982-83, external assistance was intensified. Agronomists were turned into emergency workers charged with ensuring future potato harvests in the face of heavy crop losses. Communities in other parts of the country that were forced to eat their seed[22] pushed policy makers into a panic mode. With funding from the Inter-America Development Bank, unscreened, introduced potato varieties, initially from Argentina, flooded aid distribution networks and local seed markets, even though farmers in the Municipality of Ravelo had actually managed to conserve 30% of their own seed for the next year's planting season. An extension worker with the National Potato Seed Program, PROSEMPA, although sympathetic to the troubling options facing decision-makers, considered the aid community's interventions then to be at the root of farmers' problems in 2000. "We [the aid institutions] broke," he argued, "the equilibrium that existed before!" (Interview with ex-PROSEMPA worker, 5 May 2000).

Imported with the donated introduced varieties were plant diseases previously unknown to the region. To treat these diseases, pesticides and insecticides were required. Chemical fertilizers were also recommended for introduced varieties unaccustomed to the hard soils and still harsher climate of highland farms. Both required cash which, in turn, created the need for sufficiently high production volumes. Chemically induced yields and larger

more uniform introduced varieties also put the less prolific, albeit more resistant, native potato varieties to shame, or so it would seem on the surface. Farmers raised on the principles of reciprocity were comparatively open to the gifts of tuber seeds promoted as superior (see van der Ploeg 1993:223). More and more Ravelo farmers turned to a few introduced varieties that required substances harmful to the land.[23]

*El Niño* did not appear to be the major catalyst for non-governmental intervention in Ravelo; but the "Green Revolution"[24] it accelerated was adopted by the NGOs that arrived in its aftermath. This was the case for the NGO with the longest and strongest overall presence in Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón, a Bolivian organization that I will refer to as BNGO, an acronym for "Bolivia NGO."[25] Given BNGO's leading role in the externally-funded development programming within these communities, this paper focuses on its work. It should be noted, however, that the two other agencies reviewed during my year long research—one large international organization from the American right and one UN agency—also subscribed, to differing degrees, to the deficit approach critiqued below.

BNGO entered the municipality of Ravelo in 1982 with a forestry program featuring the fast-growing but thirsty eucalyptus tree as well as imported pines. The organization emerged as a significant rural development player in this zone only at the end of the decade. Founded in 1976 by activists from the Catholic left, the organization was determined to assist Chayanta's Quechua farmers take greater control of their lives.[26]

Extension programs in all four of the province's regional municipalities, Ocuri, Colquechaca, Pocoata and Ravelo, initially included primary and curative health care,[27] literacy and gender equity education and some forestry and agricultural production training.[28] The government's increasing assumption of healthcare programming and the arrival of UNICEF's literacy program for women in the region influenced a primary focus on agricultural production.

My conversations with field staff suggested that, until recently, the BNGOs agronomists and technicians considered "unsophisticated" production practices, with their consequent low yields, to be a primary explanation for what they considered to be gruelling poverty amongst the farm families in their target communities. In a report that captured the findings of a donor-sponsored planning workshop amongst field staff, weaknesses listed under the category "Andean ecosystems" included: the low farm production yields, limited capacity to negotiate [prices] due to low levels of education, minifundismo, the limited

application of technology, and the low levels of forage production for animal feed (BNGO 1997:4).

BNGO's openly socialist ideology had contributed to an awareness of broader geopolitical and economic forces marginalizing these farmers and thus of the need to organize campesinos to effect political change. This political identity and the agency's willingness to risk government sanctioning—and the personal safety of its leaders during the organization's early history—set BNGO apart from a majority of NGOs in the department. But as agronomists trained in a mechanistic approach to science, the extension staff appears to have accepted the instrumental, positivistic development discourse of the day (see Escobar 1995). The West's technical solutions were applied to multifaceted and complex local situations, without a clear analysis of their tacit "deficit orientation" or their consequences.

To be fair, some components of indigenous farming systems were appreciated and encouraged, crop rotation and fallowing systems being two especially welcomed strategies. Product and labour exchange mechanisms were also recognized as important to the local economy, although, if programming documents offer any indication, only on a fairly superficial level. But the more fundamental system of the dual landholding and doble domicilio that these communities followed to varying degrees seems to have been considered more of a nuisance than as worthy of support. In area-wide and in-situ workshops, featuring modular, compartmentalized teaching methodologies, farmers were encouraged to stay put, intensify production, and adopt higher yield agricultural production systems. The logic, it would seem, was that if farmers were able to farm better—enhance the quality and quantity of their crops for market with improved seeds, mass production of profitable varieties and synthetic inputs—they could earn the funds needed to purchase the goods their families so desperately lacked. They would, in effect, be able to buy their way out of poverty, a message with an irony these critics of capitalism seem not to have considered.

Improved productivity for income generation objectives required a shift, of course, to higher yielding potato varieties. Compared to the rather humble, pockmarked, local varieties, these foreign interlopers were handsome and comparatively unblemished and so would do well in markets seeking uniform quality control and shapes that feed easily into the fried potato machines. It did not seem to matter terribly that the water content of these new potatoes was also considerably higher, decreasing their nutritional value, or that they would need a costly chemical solution to survive from year to year. Nor was the extra time and fuel needed to cook these less mealy potatoes taken seriously. Funds earned would take care of

these inconveniences. Potato monoculture, featuring two then three types, took hold, especially on farms closest to transportation routes.

Fortunately, most families held on to at least a handful of their favourite traditional varieties, preferring to consume the more flavourful, mealy, and faster cooking native potatoes. The Jalq'a families of Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón were no exception. A few also committed to the conservation of a lot more, inspired by their parent's proud stewardship of ancestral varieties. Most families also refused to make a complete switch to purchased fertilizers, although the amounts of sheep manure used decreased significantly in the early years of this new agriculture. But the commercial potential of faster growing and higher yield potatoes—at least in the first two years before the quality of the tuber and the soils they grow on began to decline—was too attractive to pass up. Many farmers planted most of their potato fields with the introduced tubers, abandoning or neglecting a significant percentage of the varieties that their lands and hands had once nurtured.[29]

Neighbours who observed the high yields of NGO training program graduates also sought out the new tubers. Mojón's indigenous farm families, for example, although outside NGO reach until 1996, also abandoned traditional varieties to make room for the introduced tubers. The impact of this agricultural extension training extended, in short, well beyond communities directly partnering with BNGO or other development agencies with similar programs.

Analysis of the precarious nature of market conditions, particularly given this external push towards full-fledged petty commodity production, seems also to have been overlooked. Documents I reviewed paid no discernable attention to the fact that the commoditization of the local potato economy would contribute to a mass of small producers in competition with each other (Dandler and Sage 1985:130), let alone to the notion that this competition might weaken the reciprocal exchange at the heart of ecological complementarity. Farmers able to access credit for this more expensive production entered a vicious cycle of needing more volume to make-up for lower unit prices to be able to pay back loans for agrochemicals essential to increase volume. The challenge they faced shifted from ensuring enough surplus production to obtain a modest level of disposable income to one of trying desperately to make credit payments.

Since the additional land needed for greater volumes was scarce, fallowing periods were shortened. Overused fields and drug-addicted crops made the soils less and less fertile. Like similar programs across the globe, the impact of this uniform chemical approach to production on the conservation of local varieties, or on the contribution these farmers had been making to global biodiversity does not appear to have garnered much attention from those shaping policy and programming. An extension worker who was raised in this area put it this way: "these professionals don't know about this diversity." What he learned about diversity, he said, he learned through discussion with fellow farmers (Interview 31 July 2002).

The intensive, chemically dependent monoculture of those formative years has since been challenged within BNGO. Most staff members I met also criticized the *asistencialista* or charity-orientation of the late 1980s to early 1990s. Too many handouts and not enough local ownership of the development process had created uncomfortable dependencies. By 1996, consultation had become common practice, as did the training of community promoters to motivate and monitor the application of the more sophisticated techniques they learned (Conversation with the former Ravelo program field coordinator, Sucre, July 2000).

Indigenous farmers were also encouraged to reduce, though not abandon, agrochemical treatment on their potatoes, relying more on sheep manure once again. Initial recommendations of seven bags or 644kg of fertilizer per hectare were lowered to a recommended amount of a maximum of five bags or 460kg per hectare (Interview with former extension worker in Ravelo, 6 July 2002). Crop diversification was also promoted since it had become increasingly clear that commercial potato production was not proving viable for the majority (PAC 1999). Given its affinity for Ravelo soils, attention shifted to enhanced wheat production, including the diversification of varieties. Through the planting of species once indigenous to the area, such as the very nutritious, leguminous pearl lupin called *tarwi*, and some native tree species, the value of indigenous plant varieties and the importance of intercropping were at long last acknowledged.

This incipient recognition of the importance of biodiversity was not extended, however, to an embrace of its importance to potato production. Potato monoculture, featuring four faster-growing, introduced varieties,[30] was not challenged in any significant way at the turn of the new century. The vicious cycle and tight grip of production for a competitive market in the city was not easy to break.[31]

There were some workers on staff who found a way to promote the value of potato genetic diversity. Added to the events at the local agricultural fair was a prize-winning competition for the greatest variety of potatoes. At the two fairs I attended, one in Ravelo and one in nearby

Qharaqhara, winners displayed 39 and 76 varieties respectively.[32] Yet the prizes awarded to the diversity champions highlight another contradiction that the technicians promoting this event seem to have missed. Thanks to the agro-chemical giant Novartis, winners were awarded a shovel, a 92kg bag of introduced potato seed, and pesticide with a large bright yellow plastic applicator, without, I should stress, the safety gloves or eyewear these farmers could ill afford.

During this period of BNGO's institutional reformation, producer associations were also encouraged. Based on the principles of group collateral, it was hoped that these community credit groups would minimize individual risk and facilitate access to credit for costly inputs. Yet another paradox overshadowed this program component. The lending institution that BNGO partnered with—an ecumenical social credit institution headquartered in the Netherlands and supported through ethical investments from Northern donors—tied their loans for this region exclusively to the purchase of synthetic chemicals.

## Homogenized Peasants

True to their socialist roots, BNGO trainers and extension workers were also asked to promote a *conciencia crítica* or critical consciousness among participants. Staff consistently informed farmers about their rights and the importance of union solidarity to confront corrupt and incompetent local, regional and national governance. BNGO's fieldworkers were encouraged to become active in the political arena, even to consider running for municipal office themselves. They were also asked to seek out and train young indigenous leaders with political aspirations and potential.[33]

Of importance to this discussion about BNGO's political identity is not so much the numbers they managed to send to government, but what I perceive to be a critical factor in the organization's reluctance to acknowledge, in a more substantive way, the Chayanta farmers' indigenous identity and character—the idea of their having different livelihood strategies and a different worldview. BNGO's need for a uniform and unified movement to back their political ambitions explains, in my view, their preference for the homogenized identity of peasant farmer. In the context of the often corrupt, neoliberal governance of those years, the political momentum needed for social change required participation under a single banner. The organizing of farmers was infinitely more straightforward than the organizing of diverse ethnic groups with complex ayllu governance structures and socio-economic systems that did not quite fit the Western vision of a new social order. The concept of a monolithic farming culture

conveniently swallowed up the notion of diversity and indigenous distinctiveness. For this purpose, BNGO's leaders seemed willing to ignore the work of their own research team, including an excellent study done in 1999 entitled, "The Market as Complement: Exchange in the Province of Chayanta, Northern Potosí." This excerpt from the study is worth repeating here:

> Limited knowledge among the institutions about subsistence strategies of families in the communities of the province of Chayanta...results in generalized proposals that do not consider subsistence strategies and their connection with the market as part of a logic of self-sufficiency, consumption diversity and sustainable production. [Arcienega and Garcia 1999:49, my translation]

"Culture" emerged as a more significant operational concept in a new phase of program implementation in the year 2000. Cultural events and the production of materials recognizing cultural traditions were added to the organization's roster of activities. But this attention to culture fell short of a robust appreciation and integration of alternative worldviews and knowledge systems. The etic components of culture—external, material manifestations of identity—were honoured (Interview with a former Field Program Coordinator, July 2000). The emic or internal components of culture, the alternative cosmovision and perspectives on knowledge and the nature of the universe, were obscured, except, as noted, in some very solid research documents that, like the study on indigenous market and exchange mechanisms, collected dust on crowded bookshelves.

Without a whole-hearted acknowledgement of the differences between Western and indigenous peoples' learning styles and knowledge systems, or of the political biases and power dynamics shaping these perspectives, occidental approaches to capacity-building are bound to rule the day. As anthropologist Jane Collins so aptly put it about intervention approaches she observed in other Andean regions, "science not only mirrors the society from which it emerges, but recreates those mirrored images in other societies to which it turns its attention" (1986:654).

The broader development community that BNGO operated within was no less eager to negotiate an agenda that might radically change the rules of the game and the power structures that define them. The bulk of BNGO's resources for their programming came from international donors requiring occidental planning, monitoring and training systems. In Ravelo, and more particularly Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón, resilience strategies like eco-

logical complementarity and biodiversity conservation girding subsistence livelihoods, were downplayed in favour of an industrial-oriented reality ultimately of benefit to political ambitions that required a united movement with a common agenda and perspective.

In the year 2000, estimates and reporting errors notwithstanding,[34] the average family among my fourteen Chimpa Rodeo family respondents earned approximately CAD$311 from their backbreaking labour, heartbreaking testimony to their terribly weak bargaining power in the marketplace. Mojón families in the survey lost CAD$35 in the process, with 45% of those surveyed noting that low market prices had discouraged them from even bothering to sell their surpluses. They were, on the other hand, debt free. Chimpa Rodeo farmers were forced to renegotiate their loan repayments, with most technicians I talked to convinced that defaults would be very high.[35]

During a Participatory Rural Appraisal workshop I held in both Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón, community members themselves assessed community conditions before and after external development actors first set foot on their land. All six workshop groups (three in each community) reported that soil conditions and potato diversity had deteriorated and that after an initial boost in commercial potato production, viability had declined dramatically. In a complementary exercise on the "History of Potato Production" participants reported a significant rise in the use of artificial agrochemicals since *El Niño* relief agents carried pests into their potato fields.

It would be unfair to point an accusing finger for this state of affairs at only the development community. It should also be noted that participants reported improved health care and education services, forestation, animal health and infrastructure in their area. What is clear, however, is that strategies to enhance agricultural production and the blind eye turned to the sophisticated resilience systems of their indigenous participants, including the conservation of plant genetic diversity that broadens survival options, have not reaped the economic results anticipated nor curbed the most repeated and troublesome problems facing these farm families, namely soil deterioration and soil infertility. Chimpa Rodeo and Mojón participants in my household surveys, at an average age of 35 years old, reported a 56% and 57% loss of the sub-species *Solanum tuberosum andeum*—the indigenous varieties—since they first helped grandparents and parents cultivate their family's food crops. Carr's observation based on his work with the Dasanetch of Ethiopia is instructive:

To survive, the group needed not only to produce its means of subsistence, but to reproduce the conditions that allow survival. The associated environmental and social complexes were both essential to the reproduction of the mode of production. [Merchant 1990: 677][36]

The biodiversity that remains in these communities has been maintained in spite of rather than because of occidental intervention. These proud descendants of the Inca have not fully succumbed to the development industry Frank (1986) disparages in the introductory quote above. To repeat Murra, "in spite of the pressure exercised against everything Andean and those who created them during the 450 years of colonial and republican regimes" (1984:119), the story of the people of this region is not a simple retelling of postcolonial domination and subjugation to more powerful state or external actors. The Jalq'a of Chayanta, like many of their neighbours in Northern Potosí, have never been completely conquered by occidental cultures or market forces outside their borders. They are holding onto traditional ecological knowledge systems and their continued, albeit modified, application of ecological complementarity serves as an excellent example. But capacity building programming and introduced inputs, aimed at the modernization and monetization of their agricultural economies, together with the monolithic concept of "farmer" that both influenced and was reinforced through such approaches, has seriously weakened their resilience—the ability to maintain ecological and social systems in the face of disturbances and change. However unwitting, rather than strengthening the knowledge and conditions needed to build resilience, NGOs in my research area contributed to their decline. They did so in three important ways.

First and most obvious are the addictions and dependencies on the products of Western knowledge systems that their interventions have encouraged. Accessibility to agrochemical inputs—or the credit to obtain them—replaces the need to practice alternative, more sustainable disease and pest-control management. This lost knowledge can, in turn, weaken other related livelihood strategies. Pest control systems, for example, often involve the intercropping of plants that, like the nutritious tarwi legume for example, are also of use to a family's nutrition and semi-subsistence economy.[37]

Second, and still more problematic, is the decreased opportunity to practice, and consequently maintain, traditional knowledge systems because the fecundity of the land has diminished. Increasingly addicted and degraded soils limit the land's capacity to respond to the cultivator's careful stewardship. Several of my research informants

reported that even though they want to recover their traditional potato varieties, their soils might not be healthy enough to allow them to do so. The recuperation of soil fertility is essential for the recovery of the plant genetic diversity of the crop that has earned these Jalq'a farmers their Papero nickname.

The third factor is far more complex; it seems poorly understood not only within the development agencies I studied but also within the larger development and academic communities, and is thus not easily reconciled. It relates not so much to the messages and practices development workers carry and encourage, but to the logic and methods they use to deliver those messages. The planning and agricultural extension training programs these NGOs offer are generally built on language-based, and often literacy-based, modular curricula. They follow the step-by-step, unit-to-unit, instrumental approach their Western trainers use to solve problems. For indigenous peoples who read their diverse landscapes like we read a cherished novel, knowledge systems that are linear, sequential, compartmentalized, or documented, could, if absorbed over time, prove harmful to their original knowledge base. Several of the scholars reviewed for this research have effectively questioned the validity of occidental learning theories that place linear, language-based logic at the centre of knowledge production and transmission, particularly for indigenous peoples managing complex ecosystems (Borofsky 1994; Dandler and Sage 1985:38; de Voogt 1996; Leavitt 1991; Ross 1996; Stairs 1994; Street 1994; van der Ploeg 1993; Warren and Rajasekaran 1993). The indigenous participants in my study demonstrated a considerable resistance to this instrumental logic. However, if persistent and unchecked, these occidental-style capacity-building programs could contribute to the erosion of capacity to deal with ecosystems that are layered, unpredictable and full of surprises.

NGOs, and BNGO more particularly, are clearly not, as suggested, the only development actors responsible for this decline in the resilience of these Jalq'a paperos. A complex combination of factors have influenced this erosion, not the least of which is a history of government policy favouring resource extraction and the interests of the urban centre over environmental conservation and the interests of peasants on the periphery. But these civil society actors must accept their share of responsibility for the environmental degradation and knowledge erosion that weakens indigenous farmers' ability to manage their production in more sustainable ways.[38] Hand in hand with the monocropping of potato plants, there appears to have been a monocropping of their indigenous producers and the knowledge they possess. Decision-makers con-

cerned about farmers on the margins of power and privilege today would do well to reconsider their assumptions about the Western way being the smart way. It is not what smallholder farmers lack but what they already have—highly threatened but sophisticated ecosystem management and resilience strategies—that require their endorsement and support.

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## Notes

1 USC was founded by Dr. Lotta Hitschmanora in 1945 as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada.

2 The food crisis has, for example, boosted the popularity of a comparatively recent development initiative for Africa, AGRA, the Alliance for a New Green Revolution for Africa. AGRA was launched in 2006 by the Rockefeller and Gates Foundations in an effort to strengthen livelihoods among smallholder producers. "Nothing is more urgent than ensuring that farmers have access to the inputs they need to increase farm productivity," AGRA's President Dr. Namanga Ngongi recently insisted. Using smallholder farmers in Ghana as an example, Ngongo went on to say that [they] "must significantly increase their use of improved seeds and other *modern* inputs to increase their yields and incomes" (AGRA 2009).

3 Andre et al. (2007) have in fact called for the use of Andean potato cultivars in screening and breeding programs for the development of potato varieties with enhanced health and nutritional benefits. Their study revealed that whereas β-carotene is rarely reported in potato tubers, remarkable levels of this dietary provitamin A carotenoid were detected in 16 native varieties, ranging from 0.42 to 2.19 $\mu$g g$^{-1}$ of DW. The amounts of α-tocopherol found in Andean potato tubers, extending from 2.73 to 20.80 $\mu$g g$^{-1}$ of DW, were clearly above the quantities generally reported for commercial varieties. Chlorogenic acid and its isomers dominated the polyphenolic profile of each cultivar. Dark purple-fleshed tubers from the cultivar 704429 contained exceptionally high levels of total anthocyanins (16.33 mg g$^{-1}$ of DW).

4 Fewer and fewer of the farm families of highland landscapes between 3,100 and 3,600 meters above sea level can individually speak of an abundance of potato biodiversity. Still, most Potosí families maintain at least a handful of native varieties for consumption, with some boasting from 20 to 70 varieties.

5 Nor is this exploitation unique to 20th-century indigenous farmers of Ravelo's home province of Chayanta. As British anthropologist Tristan Platt (1982:28) discovered during his research on the Macha from a sister municipality, during the 18th and 19th centuries, a greater Chayanta—consisting of five provinces that now form Northern Potosí—was the principal supplier of wheat for three of the nation's departments: Potosí, Oruro and La Paz. Chayanta's indige-

nous farmers were in fact among the richest in Bolivia until the termination of protectionist policies at the end of the 19th century. Lower priced Chilean and Peruvian wheat imports grabbed important shares of the market. This liberalization of trade, Platt notes, together with the sacrifice of this region's agricultural wealth to the highly extractive mining industry, contributed to the area's rapid return to subsistence (Platt 1982:14).

6 Permanent migration to urban slums or rainforest settlements was also on the rise, with the population growth a negative 1.25% (Municipality of Ravelo 1997:19).

7 Nor should one be too quick to accept the *minifundismo* argument as a principal factor to explain the land's increasing inability to sustain a population. As Platt (1982:43) has argued in his studies of petty commodity production in this region, given that "land fragmentation is counterbalanced by mechanisms of reunification [within a dual ecological landholding system] ... the fragmentation of holdings should not be labeled too hastily as *minifundismo*. Still, *minifundismo* continues to be the most commonly cited reason for permanent urban migration, a convenient rationale perhaps for policy makers anxious to pass the buck onto the farmers themselves."

8 It would appear that academia has also not been immune to this failure to see agency. In his recent publication about the peasantry, van der Ploeg (2008:21) argues that "peasant studies have generally been weak in acknowledging *agency* ... peasants often figure as 'passive victims.'"

9 See: http://www.sou.gov.se/mvb/pdf/resiliens.pdf.

10 A very informative overview of the emergence of resilience as a concept to understand social as well as ecological systems can be found in Folke 2006.

11 For a detailed overview of the research methods I went to Potosí with, see chapter 4 and Table 1 in Walsh 2003.

12 The hamlet was once the property of a large landlord, commonly called a *hacendado*. Chimpa Rodeo, together with a neighbouring hamlet, Ura Rodeo, form a larger community—Rodeo Huayllas—with both sharing a common chapel and one union local whose elected official or *dirigente* generally alternates between each hamlet. Their geographical separation from each other, however, appears to have influenced a somewhat distinct identity. Mojón also consists of two hamlets, Mojón Baja and Mojón Alta (lower and upper Mojón); but the geographical spread is negligible and the residents function as one tightly-knit unit.

13 UNICEF's construction of household latrines, launched and completed six months after my departure, resulted in a small extension of the road but no significant improvement.

14 Virilocal marriage takes a young wife to her spouse's household in his hamlet; land inheritance rules privilege men. Still, while there is gender complementarity, there is not strict gender-role stereotyping.

15 I did not explore the relationship between women and seeds to the degree I would have liked since my Quechua was rudimentary. I suspect, however, that women's intimate relationship with this first precious link in the food chain may be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it can strengthen their importance and status. On the other, women's fertility can evoke a sense of power that can be threatening to men who feel an increasing lack of control over their agricultural systems. Both the women and men I interacted with reported considerable levels of spousal abuse after binge drinking episodes. This issue is in need of considerably more study. For further discussion on gender task differentiation among my respondents see Walsh 2003.

16 For a full articulation of the dynamics of this complex pre-Incan, pan-Andean construction, see John Murra's groundbreaking article in 1972 along with Burchard 1976; Dandler and Sage 1985; Harris 1985; Murra 1984, 1985a and 1985b; Shimida 1985; and Platt 1976.

17 Sanchez (1982:158) insists that these manifestations of the reciprocity concept, particularly ayni and minka, should not be interpreted as devoid of vested economic interests or competitive motive. Transactions are related to competition for social prestige and social acceptance. These reciprocity processes are, with rare exceptions however, of benefit to both parties.

18 In the *Casa de la Moneda* in the city of Potosí—a museum that charts the history of Bolivia's contribution to imperial wealth through the production of silver currency—there is a collection of colonial oil paintings completed by indigenous artists. According to the guide that interpreted this collection for me, a discerning visitor will notice that these paintings include carefully disguised images from Andean mythology and beliefs. While the untrained viewer contemplates the *glory* of Spanish and Catholic imperialism, the trained observer finds symbols mocking the patron.

19 The Bolivian government's land reform legislation of 1994, INRA, allows for the territorial claims of indigenous peoples. Although painfully slow in its implementation, particularly given the new breed of "cowboy" squatter eager to slice off a handsome share of the pie, the legislation is welcomed and the source of important, albeit challenging, court claims. The current Morales administration is attempting to fast track these claims but resistance from the hacendados (large scale landowners) remains strong.

20 When land is scarce, youngest sons can be turfed from their highland homesteads onto more marginal lands (Platt 1982). Women also remain largely on the margins of public governance systems.

21 In the orginario community of Mojón, residents claim membership in the Sawana Wata Ayllu and retain a couple of traditional positions.

22 Farmers in this region produce potatoes from their tuber root rather than from seed. However, they commonly use the word *semilla* or seed when referring to the planting of potato varieties. Thus, when the word seed is used in this paper, it should be assumed that the seed is a tuber.

23 With Dutch and Swiss help, new agencies emerged to help manage and shape this new potato monoculture. In 1983, in cooperation with IBTA, a seed distributor was formed, called la Unidad de Producción de Papa or SEPA. The introduction of new high yielding tubers and techniques also required external training and ongoing advisory services. In 1989, IBTA, again with European assistance, launched PROSEMPA and its research twin, PROINPA (Proyecto de Investigación de la Papa). These two quasi-governmental agencies emerged as important organizations for Ravelo's potato farmers, particularly with respect to the

production of seed for distribution and sale. In 1994, the government closed PROSEMPA, shifting the bulk of its work to PROINPA. Through seed cleaning services, PROINPA maintains a connection with Ravelo farmers today.

24 First launched in the late 1940s by American academics concerned about Mexico's "antiquated" agriculture, the Green Revolution approach featured the development and use of hybrid varieties and chemical inputs to increase yields (see Kawell 2002; Food and Agriculture Organization 2009; Rosset 2000).

25 Because this paper is not intended as a critique of a specific NGO but rather a review of approaches that are all too common within the broader NGO community, I do not name the NGOs reviewed. Residents of this area and neighbouring NGOs will of course recognize the organizations.

26 BNGO also runs a large primary healthcare facility for migrants from Chayanta who largely reside in the peri-urban sectors of Sucre. Their urban program also includes informal educational and sports programming for impoverished children and literacy and legal rights education for women.

27 Drawing a small amount of assistance from Europe, the fledgling BNGO began with a one-room "hospital" in the founder's Ocuri residence. In a little over two decades, Ocuri staff developed one of the best-equipped regional hospitals in the country. Infant mortality rates that in 1976 in the rural areas of Potosí averaged 205 per thousand, averaged, in 1998, 110 per thousand in the most marginal municipalities of Potosí, an impressive 46% decline (NOVIB 1999:17).

28 An innovative national training program for campesino youth with leadership potential, Centro de Profesionalización Rural (CENPRUR) also emerged as a major BNGO initiative, grabbing international accolades in recent years. Villages from all over the country select their best and brightest to send to the Ocuri training centre. Once admitted, students participate in a three-year, government accredited program to become *medio tecnicos* (medium level technicians) in one of four fields: agriculture, nursing, civil engineering or public administration. In 1996, the UNDP rated this program to be one of the six most successful training programs of its nature in the country (NOVIB 1999:34).

29 One of BNGO's extension workers with family in the municipal capital wistfully recounted this story about his own mother's response to the Green Revolution she was witnessing. Upon seeing the rapid growth and substantial yield of the introduced potato crop her son had planted when he returned home from his university program, she abandoned the approximately twenty varieties in her native collection, sowing a single introduced variety instead.

30 One type—*Solanum tuberosum andeum*—had been developed in the country and was consequently a hardier and more successful variety.

31 While the embrace of potato biodiversity as a key strategy to enhance local livelihoods as well as their sustainability was slow to take hold in this region, it should be noted that there were, even in the year 2000, exciting examples of bio-diversity-based potato production elsewhere in the Andes. See http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Bridging.aspx for the history and development of one such example in Peru.

32 These totals did not necessarily represent the actual number of varieties each had conserved. Miguel Holle of the International Potato Institute (CIP) told me in May 2000 that morphological changes frequently contributed to a perception of more genetic diversity than was actually present. He estimated that there were in the vicinity of 50% fewer varieties than reported. (See Walsh 2003:102). Even if we were to cut the numbers in half, the diversity is significant. As noted, agronomist Regis Cepeda did genetic testing of varieties reported in Ravelo and found 53 distinct varieties.

33 This political work attracted its share of critics, including NGOs that considered political campaign organizing to be in conflict with an NGO's non-partisan mission of service. There was, in fact, evidence of discontent with this dual identity. In one of the municipalities I visited, complaints about the Bolivia NGO staff presence on the municipal council had surfaced in a very damning letter from a group of angry citizens.

34 These calculations take in account direct input costs, like fertilizer, pesticides, manure and in the case of Chimpa Rodeo, tractor services.

35 The previous year had not been much better. A 1999 evaluation report on BNGO activities in the broader municipality listed the average income of farm families at US$206, the bottom 16% earning US$25 and the top 8% earning US$500 (AIPE 1999:25).

36 As Miguel Holle of the Peru-based International Potato Center (CIP) cautioned early on in my research, while varietal diversity can be recaptured, the loss of knowledge needed to maintain them often cannot (Interview with Holle, CIP, Lima, Peru, 13 June 2000). For more on this conversation see Walsh 2003:214.

37 Tarwi, for instance, can be processed into a tasty, nutritious snack and is frequently found for sale in local and city markets.

38 I am happy to report that in response to the findings of this research, BNGO piloted biodiversity-based potato production into its programming in 2004. During a meeting with the organization in March of 2009, I was informed that they were in fact also promoting organic production methods throughout their extension programs.

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# Favores, Ayuda y Robo: Views of Continuity in Systemic Change in Rural Nicaragua

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**Abstract:** While a succession of governments has poured its contrasting ideologies and programs over the rural people in Nicaragua, this article looks at how villagers in Carazo challenged the objectives and categories of the governments of the day in their everyday practices and discourses. Villagers evaluated official development policies as they were applied locally, in their own terms of favores (in the sense of favours), ayuda (in the sense of help but also in the material sense of gift) and robo (in the sense of theft, but also fraud and deception). With these three terms they appraised relationships of power and control with agents of the government and of NGOs with the same moral frames with which they assessed other more direct personal relationships of reciprocity, dependency and exploitation. They thus gave their own reading of the challenges in their daily lives brought about by systemic transformations and questioned the promises of a better life.

**Keywords:** favouritism, development aid, ideologies, systemic change, governance, moral economy

**Résumé :** Pendant que des gouvernements Nicaraguayens successifs ont répandu leurs programmes et idéologies divergents parmi la population rurale, cet article explore comment des habitants d'un village au Carazo mettaient en cause dans leurs pratiques et discours quotidiens les objectives et catégories de développement des gouvernements en place. Les villageois évaluèrent les politiques du développement avec leurs propres catégories de : Favores (dans le sens de faveurs), ayuda (dans le sens d'aide mais aussi dans le sens de cadeau) et robo (dans le sens de vol, mais aussi de fraude et déception). Avec ces trois termes, ils rendirent compte des relations de complicité et de conflit avec les agents du gouvernement et des organizations non-gouvernementales utilisant les mêmes cadres moraux avec lesquels ils appréciaient aussi d'autres relations plus intimes de réciprocité, de dépendance et d'exploitation. Ils donnèrent ainsi leur propre interprétation aux défis que posèrent les changements systémiques dans leur vie quotidienne et démentirent les promesses d"une vie meilleure à venir.

**Mots-Clés :** favoritisme, aide au développement, ideologies, changements systémiques, gouvernance, économie morale

In 2004, when I returned to Los Cañales, a village on the high plateau of Carazo, after 15 years of absence, my acquaintances answered the casual question, "how has it gone since I left?"[1] with *"lo mismo"* (it is all the same). The statement was surprising, as they had experienced tremendous political and economic changes since 1990 when the Sandinistas lost the elections. The institutional structures that the Sandinistas had created to regulate agricultural production and trade had collapsed and the government of Violeta Chamorro had maintained the land reform while distributing individual land titles. Her successor, the corrupt liberal president Arnoldo Alemán, had pushed to restore Somocista property relations. NGOs had been working in the village, particularly after Hurricane Mitch, implementing numerous small development programs that had taught farmers organic agricultural techniques. The Catholic village church was closed and believers had joined evangelical churches. Some houses in the village had more holes in the roof than 15 years ago, but almost every household now owned a TV set. While I was still wondering why my friends had told me that things had stayed the same, I remembered that in 1986, at the time of the Sandinista land reform involving land distribution, technical development programs and central distribution and marketing mechanisms, villagers had also told me that their living situation had stayed the same since the Somoza period. They emphasized that they continued to lead a life *luchando y aguantando* (fighting for life and suffering hunger), a condition which none of the different development regimes had been able to change substantially.

Anthropologists (Murray Li 2007; Ferguson 1990) have recently denounced the *dispositif* of development as an "anti-politics machine," as "a machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power" while suspending "politics from even the most sensitive political operations" (Ferguson 1990:256). The anti-politics of development is intended to contain challenges to

the status quo (Murray Li 2007:8) by labour movements, land occupations and hunger riots. The development politics of the Sandinista period seems at first sight to be an exception. Talk of political struggle permeated the development discourses of government representatives and state bureaucrats. According to the official rhetoric, a claim to the benefits of a better life through "development" had to be "won," if necessary with arms in hand. However, as I will show in this article, the rhetoric of mobilization stood in contrast to the efforts of the Sandinista government to limit and channel spontaneous actions such as land occupations and to oblige farmers to sell at the lowest possible price. As a consequence, the villagers I spoke to in the 1980s considered that the development politics of the Sandinista period had not substantially changed their living situation for the better, or as one farmer put it, "life is the same. The only thing that is better is that the government has more respect for life" (Interview Adolfo Carillo Cruz[2] 1987).

Intrigued by *lo mismo*, I was incited to probe deeper into the categories that rural people used when they spoke about the ways in which they were governed. I wanted to find out how their discourse resonated and communicated with the different official discourses on development and with the regulatory frameworks created by successive political regimes.

In this article I want to do two things. First, I want to analyze how different Nicaraguan governments devised rural development programs and how they constructed rural people consecutively as "rural labourers," "rural producers," "rural entrepreneurs" and "rural poor." I want to examine what different regimes wanted rural people to do and to what extent they effectively became "subjects"[3] on whose conduct governments were able to intervene. The question I follow up in this article concerns the limits of the power of governments to make people think and behave in a particular way. Government, as the conduct of conduct of human beings (Foucault 2009), is not the preserve of the state apparatus alone. Governmental programs are also devised by transnational donors, NGOs, and a host of other authorities (Murray Li 2005:2).

Secondly, looking at the village of los Cañales over a period of 25 years, I will examine the extent to which the inhabitants identified during and after the Sandinista Revolution with governmental categorizations and accepted them as truths about themselves. I will also look at practices and discourses they devised in their everyday lives that challenged the objectives and categories of the government of the day. I will show how the villagers evaluated official development policies as they were applied in the village, and how they interpreted different govern-

mental interventions in their own terms of *favores* (in the sense of favours), *ayuda* (in the sense of help but also in the material sense of gift) and *robo* (in the sense of theft, but also fraud and deception). With these three terms, villagers appraised relationships of power and control with agents of the government and of NGOs with the same moral frames with which they assessed also other more direct personal relationships of reciprocity, dependency and exploitation. With these terms, villagers responded to official development discourses, attempting to make sense of challenges in their daily lives and in their most intimate relationships that were brought about by systemic transformations.

These concepts were not necessarily an expression of resistance to attempts at governing them, although they were used to judge the behaviour of those in power. But they were delimiting a communicative space of their own for the people using them and they were the communicative basis of "counter-conducts" (Foucault 2004:204-205), refusals of certain values and relationships presented as obligatory (Foucault 2004:202) and practices that were unexpected and uncontrolled[4] by those governing. As we will see, the forms of relationships that these concepts designated, changed with time over the last 30 years, but the moral ideas about what relationships were to be considered fair and just remained relatively stable. Contrary to the idea of progress essential in development discourses, villagers did not present their lives as a linear progression, but rather as a wheel in motion where one can either stay above and survive or be caught and potentially crushed.

I collected the material for this article during ten months of fieldwork in 1986-87 and several shorter visits of two months each in 1988, 1989 and 1990, in a village in Carazo that I call Los Cañales. I returned to the village for a short visit in 2000 and did a restudy of two months in 2004. In 2006, I went back to interview state administrators, members of NGOs, trade unions and political representatives of donor governments on the national, regional and local level about the new integrated rural development program, Pro Rural, that had been commissioned from the Nicaraguan state by the World Bank and other donors. While this article was under review in 2009, I spent another eight months of fieldwork in Nicaragua visiting Los Cañales from time to time.

## Constructing the Rural Subject

The re-peasantization of the Nicaraguan rural economy—the fact that rural people relied for their income mainly on working their own or rented land—has been one of the unintended consequences of the Sandinista Revolution.

During the 1980s, when borders were closed and imports restricted, labour migration was limited and the produce of the land constituted an essential part of the rural family budget. This development stood in striking contrast to the developments in most neighbouring countries in the 1980s, which saw a further expansion of large-scale industrialized production for export at the expense of peasant agriculture. In Nicaragua, "peasant" (campesino) became, in the 1980s and 1990s, an important ideological term used in political debates among representatives of government and farmers. However, I am not using peasant here as an analytical category to characterize the rural people I am talking about, but rather, I treat it as one of the ideological terms that have been used by others to describe them. Following Bernstein (2006:454) I think that "nothing is gained and much is obscured" by characterizing the villagers in Los Cañales as "peasants." Over the last 25 years, they had to diversify their forms, and spaces, of employment and moved in and out of the "peasant" category as Eric Wolf defined it, as "agricultural producers who control their land" (Silverman 1979:54).

Los Cañales already had a large proportion of wage labourers and migrants in the 1970s. The village lies on a dusty road six kilometres from the Pan American highway on fertile rather flat land fit for the cultivation not only of subsistence crops but also of sugarcane. Sugarcane is the main cash crop for small and large landowners and the main source of seasonal work in the village. In the 1970s, most of the inhabitants of Los Cañales were landless labourers and small farmers cultivating small, often rented plots for subsistence. The landless families and smallholders grew corn and beans in the rainy season (June to October) and worked in the dry season (November to April) on the sugarcane plantations and in small artisanal sugar mills (trapiches) of the larger local landowners, or migrated to other parts of Nicaragua or to Costa Rica. In the 1980s, the war brought labour migrations to a standstill. About a quarter of the landless families joined the production cooperative CAS, which received land through the Agrarian Reform.[5] The village was by no means a model village for its revolutionary zeal, but it played the game by creating Sandinista institutions, cooperatives, various committees and distribution outlets (puestos).

Although an important part of the revolutionary struggle took place in the countryside, the Sandinista revolution was not a peasant movement, but originated in the cities (Gilbert 1990:86). Rural labourers and farmers joined guerrilla leaders from the cities though, and started to occupy land as soon as the revolutionary struggles were won. The Sandinistas, however, were divided over issues of agrarian policy: one pole favoured the transition to a centralized socialist economy supporting state farms and heavy investment in large-scale, capital-intensive projects, whereas the other placed strong emphasis on peasant farmers and rural cooperatives and believed in locally controlled technologies (Gilbert 1990:90-91). The first position was represented by the agriculture minister, Jaime Wheelock, who shaped agrarian policies in the early years of the revolution. The estates of Somoza and his allies, covering 20% of the agricultural land, were converted into state farms producing for export.[6] In this collectivist model of agriculture, rural labourers (not peasants) were to play the role of revolutionary subjects (Nuñez Soto 1986:267). The faction of the Sandinistas following an orthodox socialist doctrine, hoped to accelerate the accumulation necessary for industrialization by investing massively in large state-owned farms (Bernstein 2006:453) and by guaranteeing their support to the large capitalist landowners who had not compromised themselves by giving political support to the Somoza regime. As a matter of fact, the Nicaraguan economy was dependent on the dollar income that farm exports provided even for its most basic needs (Gilbert 1990:87) and the Sandinistas needed to ensure the continued generation of foreign exchange (Deere et al. 1985:79). The priority given to industrialized production also showed in the price that the government offered for foodcrops. The price for rice produced on large industrialized farms, whether state-owned or private, was set at more advantageous rates than those of the staples, corn and beans, cultivated by small and medium producers (Gilbert 1990:96). To maximize the surplus produced by the large industrialized farms, salaries for agricultural labourers were capped as the government deemed that "a general increase in agricultural salaries implies a decline in the funds of accumulation available for increasing the productive base, above all if it is not accompanied by an increase in productivity" (MIDA-INRA 1982:6). After inciting farmers and agricultural workers to fight for a better life during the revolutionary struggles, the government was now urging them to practice "austerity and efficiency" (Colburn 1986:120).

Producers that cultivated their land efficiently were assured of government support if they produced according to government plans at set prices. They had to contend with the tremendous growth of state administration and regulation, with each regulation bringing exceptions to the rule and attendant privileges. The Ministry of Agriculture, MIDA-INRA (Ministerio de Desarollo Agropecuario y Reforma Agraria), educated them in intensive production methods and encouraged the use of high yield varieties, which required large quantities of fertilizer and

pesticides. The Ministry for Internal Trade, MICOIN (Ministerio de Comercio Interior), controlled the commercialization of their products and issued permits for selling them. The state distribution system, ENABAS (Empresa Nacional de Abastecimiento de Alimentos Basicos), organized the distribution of a weekly allowance of staple food and centralized state purchases of grain.

However, rural subjects did not react as they should. Discouraged by low prices, farmers refused to sell to the state (Zalkin 1986:212, 216), creating a deficit in staple crops and obliging the government to import food (Spoor 1992:10). Landlords refused to rent their land because the lease for land was officially established at a low rate and sharecropping was forbidden. Frustrated by low salaries, the workers reduced their productivity and their working hours (Deere et al. 1985:80). The economy became a generalized shortage economy, and the distribution was de facto more and more directed towards civil servants, the army, local militia and workers in state-run industrial and agricultural enterprises (Spoor 1992:22). The situation was aggravated when many farmers (especially in the north and in the interior of the country) became involved in the counterrevolutionary struggle, often on the side of the U.S.-financed Contra revolutionaries (Gilbert 1990:97). As a consequence, the Sandinistas ultimately responded to the persistent claims for land by landless sharecroppers, tenant farmers and smallholders, by encouraging them to form cooperatives and occupy underused land that would be awarded to them collectively (Mechri Adler 2000:193). In 1984, the leaders of the trade union UNAG (Union Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos) self-identified as "peasants" and promised to help "patriotic" medium-sized producers in their fight against excessive bureaucratization, supporting their demands for capital goods and production inputs (Mechri Adler 2000:335). As black market sales of subsistence goods had skyrocketed and production collapsed, the government decided to legalize what it was unable to control without a high degree of repression. In 1985, it allowed the commercialization of certain agricultural goods produced mainly by small producers (Gilbert 1990:102) such as corn, raw sugar and beans, through authorized traders on the parallel market, while it continued to appeal to their sense of moral responsibility, inciting them to sell at least part of their production into the state marketing system in order "to feed the workers in the factories." The implementation of this policy took more than two years to trickle down to the regional and district level, however, as roadblocks remained in existence until 1987 (Spoor 1992:13).

In this second half of the Sandinista period, the government created conditions that allowed especially the medium sized farmers (5 to 35 MZ[7]) to prosper economically (Spoor 1992:15), providing they ignored the incessant appeals of the government to sell at least part of the harvest at low prices through the state distribution system. At the same time, this system made them increasingly dependent on state distribution of cheap loans, Green Revolution varieties of corn and beans, and subsidized fertilizers and pesticides (Ruiz and Meussen 1993:17-18). Most producers who had access to transport or traders chose to profit from high parallel market prices that were secure, since the national borders were closed and imports restricted. In this national subsistence crisis, cultivating the land became a rewarding activity again, not only economically but also socially and politically, as the farmers were reminded every day by government propaganda of the central role they played in feeding the country and the soldiers at the front. Production levels for basic grains reached their highest level ever in 1988 (Mechri Adler 2000:320). What farmers perceived as "selling on the free market," however, was in fact taking place in a closed national economy. They would only confront the "free market" once the Sandinistas lost the elections in 1990 and Nicaragua hurried to emulate the politics of its Latin American neighbours to open up to the world economy.

In the two months following the elections, and before the government changed, the Sandinistas and Chamorro agreed to a Transition Protocol that addressed among other things the need to assure "legal security" to the beneficiaries of the Agrarian Reform (Jonakin 1997:100). For the first time, the Sandinistas distributed alienable individual and collective land titles that could be inherited and sold. However many Sandinistas and their allies used the opportunity to personally enrich themselves and to give each other land titles and real estate (Jonakin 1997:100; Cupples 1992:299). In the course of this redistribution, soon to be known as *piñata*—a game where children dance blindfolded and use sticks to try to smash a paper doll filled with sweets—the poorest 43% of the population received 4% of the distributed land while a small minority (4% of the population) received 46% (on average, 499MZ) (Mechri Adler 2000).

When Violeta Chamorro came to power in 1990, a protracted struggle over property erupted. Chamorro's election platform promised to respect the landholdings of poor beneficiaries and to restore expropriated properties only when it was possible without injuring the former (Dye et al. 1995:20). In the years following her election, her government was confronted with land claims of former owners, land invasions by former contra-revolutionary fighters and demobilized members of the Sandinista army, and pressures from the U.S. government. The government

responded by legalizing land occupations and by a politics of privatization that gave disparate groups slices of the pie but of different sizes (Dye et al. 1995:29). Land became an instrument for calming social tensions and by March 1992, the Chamorro government was reported to have transferred 701,500 MZ of land to over 24,000 families (Jonakin 1997:101). Many land titles attributed by the Sandinista Agrarian Reform to cooperatives were individualized and the members of the cooperatives became independent producers for the market, often for the first time in their lives (Merlet 1995:16). Farmers were addressed as independent "entrepreneurs" operating on the free market, a role that they had claimed for themselves throughout the Sandinista period. The encounter with the free market, however, happened without the safety net and the subsidies that the Sandinista government had extended. The Sandinista practice of pardoning loans that individual producers and cooperatives had accumulated ceased instantly as the new government was struggling to bring down the hyperinflation it had inherited from its predecessors (Jonakin 1997:103-105). Extension services were downsized and the state distribution system shut down (Jonakin 1997:103). The input-dependent type of agriculture they had become accustomed to during the Sandinista period became extremely expensive as fertilizers and pesticides were no longer subsidized. Their price on the world market put agricultural producers at a disadvantage compared to the price fetched for their products. The result was that individual producers, and especially the remaining cooperatives, rapidly went into debt again, losing land and cattle because they were unable to pay back their loans (Jonakin 1997:110). Sandinista leaders became entrepreneurs, claiming that conquering a place in the market was indispensable for exercising some influence in the new political constellation. Acquiring economic power seemed a precondition to exercising political pressure. Also the farmers union, UNAG, thought it necessary to get involved in entrepreneurial activities, attempting to replace some of the storage, commercialization, credit and extension services that the state had ceased to offer by creating its own enterprises (Mechri Adler 2000: 489-490; Jonakin 1997: 106, 110).

The liberal government of Arnoldo Alemán, elected in 1996 to replace Chamorro, attempted to reverse the Sandinista land reform and to retrieve the land of Somoza's allies through both legal and illegal means. The state entirely withdrew its support from subsistence agriculture and the two state-owned banks that had offered loans to the agricultural sector went bankrupt. The main reason was that supporters first of Chamorro (Jonakin

1997:106) and then of Alemán had taken out huge loans for buying enormous properties. They never paid them back nor were they made liable for them. Moreover, president Alemán himself obtained several large properties that were formerly owned by cooperatives for ridiculously low prices. With the second structural adjustment plan signed in 1998, and the signing of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (2005), small producers were left without state support to confront the forces of the world market.

Economic hardships during the 1990s led to a massive wave of labour migration from the countryside to the city, to neighbouring Costa Rica and to the U.S. In Nicaragua, special economic zones (zonas francas) were exempt from taxation, and foreign companies (many Chinese) built factories that employed mainly rural female labour. Cultivating the land by taking out loans, then hoping for a good harvest and favourable market prices, became an almost invariably ruinous option as prices were low and interest was high. Many small and medium producers would have lost even more land if their wage-earning children had not bailed them out in time. Having lost their relevance in terms of providing cheap labour and helping the accumulation process of industrial capital, rural people became simply "the rural poor" to those who governed them.

"The rural poor" are non-entities in political terms. They appear as mere statistical units in the World Bank's Nicaragua Poverty Assessment (2004), which states that 2/3 of people in rural areas live in poverty, 26% on less than one dollar a day. Indicators include high fertility rates (4.14%), illiteracy (18.7% in 2001), lack of sanitation (13.8% in 2001) and no access to paved roads or electricity. These "poor" are considered to be a burden on national development, to be potentially dangerous, and to be in need of having their energies channelled. The innumerable projects to help them[8] seemed invariably destined to fail. As a result, the World Bank and other donor agencies threatened to cease committing millions of dollars to poverty reduction if the Nicaraguan government did not implement programs destined to improve the living conditions of Nicaragua's poor. Since the Nicaraguan state had withdrawn support from subsistence agriculture throughout the 1990s and had concentrated its planning exclusively on the development of clusters for export agriculture, donors now forced the government to formulate a rural development plan that reintroduced the needs of the rural poor and claimed to consult them on their needs and priorities through participatory processes. The rural development plan, Pro Rural, however, published in 2006, proposed more of the same: exchanging traditional

varieties for high yielding ones through the *Libra por Libra* (Pound for Pound) program, which is likely to increase their dependence on high-cost inputs; granting easier access to loans through the establishment of new rural loan funds, which addresses a real demand, but may aggravate poverty rather than alleviating it (Legovini 2003); and consolidating the land markets through the progressive realization of a land registry, which may accelerate even further the commoditization of land without increasing tenure security (Broegard 2000).

In 2006, the Frente Sandinista De Liberation Nacional returned to power and Daniel Ortega was re-elected president of Nicaragua. Many of the Sandinista leaders are now among the richest people in the country and the Sandinista government unambiguously supports free market principles, while using strong socialist rhetoric in its public discourses. The government has promised to eliminate hunger in the countryside launching a US$150 million program, *Hambre Cero* (Zero Hunger), that lends poor rural women farm animals and seeds for a fraction of the purchase price and provides technical assistance. The objective is to "recapitalize" rural producers and to make them capable of pulling themselves out of poverty. This practice has now been imitated by a number of development NGOs and the Program for Food Security of the FAO, flooding the countryside with farm animals that are hard to feed on small parcels of land.

The various rural development policies that a succession of Nicaraguan governments put forward were intended to "conduct the conduct" of peasants (Foucault 1983:212), not through direct coercion but by setting conditions from which a type of conduct would follow that suited their political objectives. Different regimes attempted to govern rural people who had emerged as dangerous subjects in the prolonged civil war of the 1970s and 1980s by "changing their mentalities" (Wheelock and Lucas 1979:106), while making real or bogus concessions, rather than by confronting them directly. In the next three sections, I will analyze how inhabitants in a small village on the high plateau of Carazo experienced the outcomes of all these attempts at rural development in their own terms of favores, robo and ayuda.

## Favores: From Patronage to Brokerage

The term *favor* evokes an informal reciprocal but hierarchical bond that a person with authority and resources establishes with a person in need of resources, in exchange for allegiance and services. Villagers used that term to qualify relationships to landlords, bureaucrats and development brokers. Obtaining land for cultivation for instance was considered a favor and obliged the tenant in multiple ways. In return for being allowed to work a piece of land tenants were expected not only to share the harvest or pay rent but also to be at the disposal of their patrons whenever they needed them. For this relationship to be experienced as *favoritismo*, the tightly knit bonds of personal exchange between tenants and large landlords, the landlord had to limit his exertions on the tenant. He had to respect a certain moral idea of the economic and not invade the subsistence needs of the tenant. This idea of subsistence as a moral claim is in keeping with the "moral economy of the poor" that James Scott identified among South Asian peasants (Scott 1976:32-33) and among urban and rural poor in 18th- and 19th-century Europe.

Before the revolution of 1979, some of these landlords reigned over the village as patriarchs with several common law wives and dozens of children to whom almost the whole village was related in one way or another. The largest landowner in the village, Don Frederico, ran his ancient sugar mill right in the middle of the village. The labourers who helped him with the harvest of sugarcane or in the mill, were allowed to cultivate a manzana of land or to sow their beans between the rows of freshly planted sugarcane. Don Frederico paid the lowest salaries in the village and compensated his workers—insufficiently as they thought—with three meals a day. Nonetheless, they continued to work for him since land was scarce and the bonds that tied them to the old man were highly complex. He had helped out families in distress and was godfather to innumerable children in the village. One of his workers explained, nonetheless, that it was preferable to have several patrons rather than to rely with one's whole existence on a single one.

At first, the Sandinistas attempted to break open the structures of dependency and eliminate *favoritismo*. In practice, however, the agrarian reform of the 1980s did not entirely sever these complex ties. Don Frederico, for instance, was exempted from any reforms as he had helped the Sandinista guerrillas during the war. He was well connected to government as one of his sons occupied an important post in the Ministry of Industry and the second one held a leading position in the largest state-owned sugar factory. Instead, the Sandinista government became a patron itself, facilitating access to land and other resources. As land laying idle was not simply distributed to those who needed it, but had to be gained in a protracted struggle, the occupants needed the political and institutional support of the Sandinistas to hold onto the land they had invaded.

In Los Cañales, the cooperative of small peasants and landless labourers who had occupied the land of two absentee landlords right after the revolution had to face the

threat of eviction for four consecutive years before the land was officially expropriated. Formally, the land remained the property of the state and land titles were distributed to the cooperative only after the elections of 1990. For the landless labourers who joined the cooperative, the Sandinista state became a capricious new patron whose conditions were opaque and difficult to accept. They understood Sandinista politics as another form of favouritism, which they called *compañerismo* (favouritism among comrades). As Alberto Moraves, the vice president of the production cooperative CAS (Cooperativa Agricola Sandinista), explained, the term meant that the Sandinistas helped only those with land, loans, chemicals and seeds who organized themselves in cooperatives. In exchange they were expected to sell their produce to the state.

The owners of sugar mills and cane plantations complained that the cooperative tied up the labour they needed in their fields and that members of the cooperative now felt like *dueños* (masters) who did not work for others. In reality, however, membership in the cooperative and the time worked by each member fluctuated greatly and changed from year to year, except for a core group of members. As the cooperative was selling most of its production for low prices to the state, and as the weekly salary that the members were paying each other was extremely low, the cooperative offered its members the prospect of securing food for their families, but could ensure only a limited cash income below or equivalent to that earned in local sugar mills.

Moreover, getting involved with the production cooperative was experienced as a risk, and one of the landless peasants told me that he preferred not to become a member, because this would make him a client of the Sandinistas. He thought that those who "lived in the heat of Tomás Borge" (the minister of the interior) at the time of the Sandinistas would have a hard time if the government changed: "the wheel, the wheel of life it changes, it turns. You have to stay in the flow, otherwise it crushes you." In a kind of resigned pragmatism, he did not believe that a radical improvement of his position in society through radical acts such as land occupations could be long-lived.

On the other hand, those in Los Cañales who had given help and shelter to the Sandinista guerrillas who knocked at their door during the revolutionary struggles had gone against the wheel, though not necessarily all based on strong political convictions. For them, the Sandinistas were the boys (*chavalos, muchachos*) whom they had helped and from whom they expected understanding and support. Rudolfo Gutiérrez, whose brother was killed as a reprisal for their help to the guerrillas, became head

of the local Sandinista Defence Committee after the revolution. He considered it a favor of the Sandinistas that he obtained permission to slaughter a cow every second week and to sell it at set prices to the village population. By buying and selling beef he was able to set up a flourishing cattle trade that allowed him to increase his own herd. His wife, Carolina, was granted the right to distribute food and basic household items each week on rationing cards, and she managed to run a small shop for other staple goods at the same time. Nobody questioned their privileges since they had taken the risk of assisting the Sandinistas and were now being legitimately rewarded for it. More contested was the permit that the wife of the head of the production cooperative had obtained to sell a few crates of beer and low quality rum each week. Rumours had it that while running her little bar, she was working as an informant for the political police of the Ministry of the Interior.

After the Sandinistas lost the election in 1990, the state progressively ceased to play the role of the patron who put his own resources at the disposal of the clients. The system of patronage and dependence built on landownership likewise declined. Favores were now distributed by a new category of brokers (Gupta 1998:147) who drew on the resources of international development aid and skimmed off portions for themselves. One of the new claimants for the role of broker was Gustavo Ortiz the manager of two local sugar mills. When, under pressure from the World Bank, the Bolaños government introduced local structures of self-government to allow the village to have direct representatives at the municipal level, he stepped forward as a candidate even though he did not live in the village. He was elected by his workers to the general indifference of the village. The new structures of local representation promoted by the World Bank were supposed to give villagers the opportunity to determine development policies together with the municipal council. Although Gustavo Ortiz had been a political friend of the mayor of the municipality, he quickly began to compete with him for influence. The strategy he chose was to make himself a broker for development projects that did not fall under the control of the municipality and that were not part of its strategic planning. With the help of a political friend who was a deputy in the national assembly, and through the Institute for Rural Development and the MARENA (Ministerio de Recursos Naturales), he organized a reforestation project for his sector that would bring, as he said, barbed wire, agricultural tools and cheap seeds. As he cheerfully told me, "you have to follow the money. If it is not here, it is there, or there or over-there." Through his role as a broker, he entirely depoliticized the

political role he was supposed to play as a local representative, made it a vehicle for his personal ambitions and relegated the villagers to the position of mere spectators. One of his former workers commented on his ambitions: "the only interest that he or the mayors of this municipality have ever had is to make money for themselves."

Gustavo Ortiz went beyond the fine line between a personal relationship of unequal exchange and outright manipulation and selfishness. The villagers were aware that the favores he distributed did not make use of his own property but relied on the delivery of development services from which he skimmed off a profit. The transition from patronage to brokerage changed the nature of the bond through favores and made it less predictable and reliable. By sharing the proceeds of a development project which they considered a scam, villagers found themselves to be complicit in what some of them would characterize as robo.

## Robo: The Rejoinder of the Villagers

Robo includes a wide field of meanings, from robbery and theft to fraud, deceit and usury. In relation to authority, robo is used when the unequal relationship of favouritism transgresses what is considered a moral boundary and becomes a pure relationship of exploitation or appropriation. In Sandinista times, when villagers accused state institutions of robo they mostly meant low prices offered by the state for agricultural products, road checks to stop illegal traders and (after 1987) high interest on their bank loans.

In the 1980s, the word robo was commonly used to characterize the state distribution system, particularly the practice of intercepting illegal traders and seizing their merchandise. As staple food was getting scarce in the cities, and since the army needed to be fed, the Ministry of Internal Trade set up roadblocks. However, most staples like corn and beans were transported by women and children—called by government officials the "army of ants" in sacks on overland buses—and sold in the city at several times the official price. In order to take a sack of beans or corn on a bus, a written permit was needed stating that this food would be used for personal needs. The newspapers were full of heartrending stories about poor women surrounded by crying children, from whom MICOIN had confiscated a sack of beans because they did not have a permit.

In the spring of 1987, MICOIN agents stopped three tortilla bakers from a neighbouring village and confiscated corn they had just bought from the local cooperative. The village women meeting in the evening in Carolina's distribution outlet to fetch the few goods that were distributed on their ration card, discussed the event for

weeks. They interpreted the seizure as robo and some of them surmised that the agents of MICOIN themselves were selling the seized goods on the black market. The agents had morally disqualified themselves because although they had acted according to the letter of the law, they had shown no sympathy or compassion for the poor women trying to earn a living.

In 1987, when hyperinflation set in, the interest on loans remained far below the rate of inflation. In 1988, the interest rates skyrocketed but the loans were pardoned at the end of the year to prevent rioting in the countryside. It was therefore extremely advantageous for the farmers to take up loans and pay them back as late as possible. The prices middle-sized producers (who did not need all their harvest to feed their families) could obtain for their produce on the town markets and from legal and illegal traders allowed them to build up reserves mainly in the form of cattle for the first time. This sudden enrichment, on the other hand, also created a feeling of unease, as described by a middle-sized producer who usually sold part of his harvest for a low price to the state:

> This government does not know its people very well. The government wants to do the impossible in all ways for its people, but the people do not understand it. If you make a mistake and your mother punishes you and then comes your father and gives you a kiss, then you no longer know what you are supposed to think. [Interview Adolfo Carillo Cruz 1987]

He expressed the conviction shared by many farmers who sympathized with the Sandinistas, that the state was too permissive and inconsistent. Some like Adolfo Cruz even thought that the Sandinistas did not know their own people and their egotism. As they violated the unwritten law of reciprocity, many farmers feared outstanding claims and were uncertain whether they would be able to keep what they had acquired. Rumours circulated about new expropriations, which would affect the middle-sized farmers who did not give the state the cheap products that it rightfully expected from them. Thus, Sandinista governance and its credibility was not judged according to the laws and formal structures they had instituted, but according to how these were applied *at a just measure* in everyday life, not too strict and not too lax.

Interestingly, the occupation of land lying idle did not fall under the category of *robo*. Land occupation was not considered appropriation even by conservative villagers. According to the moral terms the villagers expressed, land should not lay idle, but feed those who needed it, or as the vice-president of the cooperative put it:

The land is for the industrious hands that work it. It is not for oneself. The land is for those who work it and if they don't want to work it, it will pass on into the hands of those who want to work it. [Interview Alberto Moraves 1987]

The election of the UNO party of Violeta Chamorro threw the villagers who had supported the Sandinistas into a new state of uncertainty. The wheel of life had turned once again and the members of the cooperative were uncertain whether they would be allowed to keep the land title that the Sandinistas had granted them upon leaving power. What aggravated the matter was that many Sandinista leaders had morally disqualified the Agrarian Reform in the Piñata, attributing the majority of land titles to themselves. Rudolfo, the former head of the Sandinista Defence Committee, would now ridicule Ortega, the Sandinista leader, each time he appeared on television. Besieged by the constant rumours about expropriation, and uncertain about the legitimacy of their land-titles, six of the 13 members of the production cooperative sold their share of the title in the beginning of the 1990s at throw-away prices to a large landowner from a neighbouring town. In addition, members of the new government participated in the fast sell-out of agrarian reform titles. President Alemán himself forced indebted cooperatives near the village where I did my fieldwork to sell thousands of hectares near the protected coast line well below market prices. Then he used public funds to have a road built to open the area for tourism. The road never made it all the way to the coast because, before finishing it, he was put into prison on charges of corruption by his successor and former vice president, Bolaños.

In the 1990s, robo permeated all aspects of daily life. Not only the laws but also the moral principles guiding everyday routines seemed to have lost their force. Rudolfo's wife, Carolina, explained that she slaughtered her chickens out of fear that they would be stolen by her neighbours. She was never able to harvest the mango trees on outlying fields because the fruit disappeared shortly before harvest. Neighbours who owned TV sets, refrigerators and radios told me that somebody always had to stay at home to make sure these possessions were not stolen. The most common, and for the villagers often tragic, form of robo threatened them whenever they were in contact with private or public institutions.

Farmers told me how they had lost their savings, cattle and land because a member of the family had to be treated for a serious illness, because they had had a conflict over inheritance or because they had been unable to pay back a loan. Lawyers made legal procedures even more complicated than they were in reality and simulated intense activity while they remained inactive, at best, or even colluded with the opposing party. Getting land registered was as expensive as actually buying it. Doctors prescribed expensive treatments for illnesses that people did not have and did not treat those they suffered from. Rudolfo told me when he fell ill in the middle of the 1990s, with a slowly progressing paralysis, the doctors robbed him of his cattle herd. A doctor in the next city promised to heal him with eight injections a week. He sold cattle and was taken to town by a friend every week, only to find out two months later that the doctor had given him nothing but vitamin C.

As most of the political parties were identified with the practice of robo (with the exception of the MRS, a small splinter group from the FSLN that had not participated in the Piñata), it seemed senseless to trust government institutions or representatives. The problem was openly discussed, even within government departments. As one of the administrators in the Ministry of Agriculture put it:

There is a lot of robbery (despojo) and the judicial authorities are not transparent. There is a lot of influence peddling and there are municipalities—as people told us—where the judge is the wife of the police chief and the lawyer is the cousin of the judge. All sorts of manipulations are thus easy to do. There is a serious problem of corruption. The institutions that should be the protectors of the laws of the land and of their application don't guarantee them and this facilitates all sorts of things. [Interview MAGFOR 2006]

Villagers told me they had no expectations that things would improve through the new structures of local self-governance imposed by the World Bank and donor states, nor did they think they could influence governmental decision making: "Things are dictated from up there and down here it's prattle (chompipen)." Their strategy consisted in removing themselves from the state and having as little as possible to do with its private and public institutions. The laws of the state ceased to be effective and people seemed to be left to their own devices and the help (ayuda) of their closest friends.

## Ayuda: No Reciprocity Possible

Ayuda (help, support) describes, ideally, a relationship of reciprocity, ayuda mutua (reciprocal help), that links acquaintances and family members in a relationship considered fair. The term ayuda is used however also to talk about development aid and about money and gifts from relatives abroad (remesas) that are essential to assure subsistence and cannot be reciprocated. The poor (los

*pobres)* seem to have a moral right to receive help (ayuda) in order to survive.

This is how one of the farmers described a relationship of ayuda mutua:

> I have a politics of man to man with Luis. I help him and he helps me. He does chores for me and I pay him. When I help him I don't charge him because Luis is very poor. If he helps me I consider his help very valuable, because if he went and cut sugarcane instead he would earn more. I recognize this. Ayuda mutua! [Interview Marco Sevaro 1987]

The Sandinistas attempted to use the concept of ayuda mutua to explain the political relations and economic dependences inside the Sandinista state as personal relations of reciprocity. In the 1980s, the political leaders of the FSLN encouraged this interpretation by organizing public and half public assemblies, where they stood "with their face to the people" (*cara al pueblo*), exposing themselves to criticism and complaints and promising to remedy specific problems. Political strategies and objectives were conveyed through this personalized discourse. In return, the criticism that the villagers had of the political system was not expressed in ideological terms but was concrete, addressed to specific persons and phrased in their own moral terms. What was considered fair was neither total equality, nor total appropriation, but a relationship of reciprocity with clearly defined obligations.

In meetings with farmers in the village, a representative of the Nicaraguan Development Bank and the Ministry of Commerce presented the price and loan politics of the government as a personal problem linked to pressures exerted by his employer, the State, and tried to make the debtors sympathize with his difficulties in implementing these policies. Government representatives expressed their disappointment that their political work did not convince the farmers to sell their produce at a low prices to the state. As one employee of the Banco del Desarollo Rural (Rural Development Bank) put it:

> They show no conscience. We explain to them that we are not producers, that we are consumers and that they have to produce in order to help us, because we in turn help them too with loans and technical assistance. [Interview Employee of the Banco del Desarollo Rural 1986]

Bank employees linked the abstract categories of "producer" and "consumer" and the universalizing claim of a worker-peasant alliance with their personal situation and needs. The farmers did the same and interpreted the ideological concept of a peasant-worker alliance as a personal relationship based on sympathy and compassion. After the 1987 harvest, the vice-president of the cooperative, Alberto, explained to me that he felt sorry (*mi duele*) that the production cooperative had not sold any grain to the state, as the state had just provided them with asbestos shingles to cover the roof of their new granary, which would allow them to sell the grain progressively throughout the year. A farmer who had just sold his entire harvest to private dealers explained that the *muchachos* (boys) would understand that a poor man had to look out for himself (*defenderse*) and that he could not sell his production for a low price.

In the last 20 years, the production and sale of corn and beans, which had played such an important role in Sandinista times, had declined in economic importance for the families and also for the state. During the years of Sandinista rule, farmers had become accustomed to taking loans before seeding, for buying high-yielding varieties, fertilizers and pesticides, and in order to rent a tractor for cultivating their land. In the 1990s, many farmers who had continued the practice of taking out loans had lost cattle and land to the bank because the loans were not forgiven by the new regime. Now, medium producers also lost their oxen and had to cultivate their smaller plots of land by borrowing oxen and a plough in exchange for a share of the harvest. Many farmers continued to cultivate their fields, but their main source of income became remittances from children who had emigrated to the U.S. or who worked as seasonal labourers in Costa Rica. In many families, children were raised by their grandmothers while their mothers and fathers were working abroad or in Managua. Ayuda mutua—reciprocal help—was one of the basic principles of these family relationships.

The family of Alberto Moraves offers a successful example of this relationship. Alberto and his two sons managed to hold on to the land titles they obtained when the cooperative was dissolved. Alberto, his sons, his daughter and sometimes even his wife left the village for months and years at a time to work as migrant labourers in Costa Rica and as housemaids and cooks in Managua, while the remaining members of the extended household cultivated the fields (10.5 MZ altogether). Alberto hardly ever took out a loan, although he had no problem obtaining one. He mainly financed his farm inputs with money earned with migrant labour. When I last visited them, the extended family had moved into a big house in the centre of the village.[9]

The practice of reciprocal help that was so successful for the Moraves family got lost, however, in the exaggerated expectations that other families projected on their emigrant family members, especially those who had man-

aged to enter the U.S. Any child was able to explain that a worker earned 10 times more an hour in Costa Rica and 100 times more in the U.S. Some youths even refused to start working for the small salaries that were offered in the village while their fathers were thought to be earning many times that amount. These expectations were fuelled by the extravagant gift giving during the homecomings of some migrant children.

On the second day of my brief visit in 2000, for example, I witnessed the unexpected visit of Rudolfo's and Carolina's eldest daughter Leila, her husband and four children. After 15 years working in the U.S., and a successful hunger-strike by the Nicaraguan community, they had finally obtained their Green Cards and were allowed to leave the U.S. without losing their status. They arrived in the village with a rented pickup truck filled with household items: a gas stove, a huge TV set plus video player, a big refrigerator, a stereo set, an electric rice cooker, a microwave oven, an electric insect killer, clothes, sheets and plastic dishes. Leila had obviously wanted to bring her parents all the comfort and status she had achieved in the U.S. after all these years of hard work. When Leila and her family left that evening to sleep in town (the children refused to use the latrines on the farm), Rudolfo and Carolina were left confused. Carolina was wondering how to repair the roof of the house they were living in and how high the electricity bill would be to run all these appliances. Four years later, after Rudolfo had died, Carolina was desperately waiting for money transfers from Leila who by that time was divorced from her husband and had her own difficulties to cope with. The occasional money transfers from far-away family members, unpredictable as they were, thus created expectations and disincentives for those relying on them and yet another type of dependency. They also devalued the painstaking efforts made by farmers to feed their families at least partially with the fruit of their land. Not only did the Aleman government abdicate responsibility for peasant agriculture, but the generation between 15 and 30 years of age also regarded agriculture as a senseless activity. Land had no productive or symbolic value for them any more.

The projects and small development programs that NGOs and the World Bank financed in the village had an effect not unlike the unpredictable money transfers from family members. Although they claimed to ensure the "participation" of those concerned so that they would become "empowered" "to help themselves," such projects transformed the villagers into "the assisted," unable to give something back in return. At the end of the 1990s, the German branch of the Catholic aid organization Caritas financed a program for family gardens. These gardens had an organizing committee that administered small sums of money that each participant paid in each month. The committee also distributed donated goods such as clothes, food and garden utensils. The participants cultivated a vegetable garden together and learned techniques of organic agriculture. They produced organic pesticides, practiced companion planting and made compost. The members of the NGO taught them how to cook with soybeans, and since soybeans were not grown in Los Cañales, they distributed them so that the women could try out the recipes. When the program ran out and the aid stopped coming in, the core of the group continued gardening together for another year and a half until the treasurer built herself a house and according to fellow members, plundered the funds. Then the common gardening work also stopped. The women spoke about the project with a certain amusement. "It was a nice project, but far too much work, especially the composting. It is a shame, but the recipes for soy cookies are useless now too." The villagers participated but did not have a word to say in the actual planning of the project.

Unemployed agronomists also tried to develop projects for the village, which they hoped would provide them with a job. The villagers cooperated, when asked, in the applications for all these projects, providing copies of their land titles, identity cards and signatures. They did not do this because they expected to improve their living conditions in the long run, but simply because they wanted to get their share—the local expression was *agarar algo*, grab something—whether zinc for the roof, barbed wire, medicine, laying hens or vegetable seeds.

Neither the generous loan politics of the Sandinistas, nor the aid—ayuda—from donors were in keeping with ideas of dignity that the villagers had. To take something without offering anything in return seemed like robo, both immoral and a relationship that cannot last and that one cannot rely on. It was justified as a means of survival beyond morals. As Alberto Moraves put it:

> Autonomy (*autonomia*) is the basis for the existence of each person and this autonomy is not respected in this society by those who are in power. Although we have 90% poor people and 10% rich people in Nicaragua, the poor don't count. All our elected deputies are interested in is their salary of C$60.000[10] a month and not the situation of the people who they should represent. Help is coming from foreign countries, but the question is, what do those who help us expect for their help in return? What will they request from Nicaragua in exchange? [Interview Alberto Moraves 2004]

## Conclusion

In their struggle to survive, villagers search for small tactical advantages and look for allies, without ever trusting one patron too much. The semantics that the villagers use to make sense of the different techniques of governance that have been tried out on them over the last 25 years, puts the principle of reciprocity in the centre of their relationships and does not fundamentally distinguish whether state or non-state power is exercised over them. To establish a personal relationship with those who possess the power and economic resources seemed self-evident and pragmatic to them. It was also obvious that this relationship could not be based on the principle of equality or justice, but that they could only hope for a certain transparency and continuity. Relationships with those in power qualified with the terms favores, ayuda and robo changed. Traditional patronage and compañerismo with the Sandinista government were based on a certain reciprocity and trust, though it more often than not put the villagers at a disadvantage. The relationship of brokerage, which replaced these relationships during the 1990s to a large extent, was based not on reciprocity but on the complicity of the villagers with the development brokers who skimmed off profits from the international development system. The shift from ayuda mutua to one-sided help from family members and development NGOs was out of line with the "moral economy of the poor" (Scott 1976:32) who preferred a secure, if inequitable, relationship of reciprocity, rather than the uncertain promises of development aid. Also, relying on the charity of far-off donors made the exploitative relationships inherent in the global neoliberal system, and endorsed by the neoliberal Nicaraguan government, even more obscure and difficult to oppose.

To conclude, I come back to my initial question of why the villagers in Los Cañales talk about continuity, lo mismo, in spite of important systemic changes. Seen through the categories of favores, ayuda and robo with which the villagers make sense of their relations with government and non-state "developers," the different political systems kept them in a position of personal dependency and did not allow them to achieve what Alberto called autonomy. In the ideological scheme of the early Sandinista revolution, peasants were supposed to believe in a relationship of fair reciprocal help between workers and peasants while providing the country with cheap agricultural commodities to allow for rapid industrialization. Ironically their personal aspirations to acquire individual titles to land that might have allowed them to secure food self-sufficiency, were only satisfied once the Sandinistas

lost power. Yet again, their aspirations were crushed. Under the Chamorro government, heavy debt loads, high interest and the generalized corruption of the Alemán regime made them lose these assets whenever they came into contact with the state. To the inhabitants of Los Cañales, development discourses with their "tales of triumph" (Gupta 1998:41), of overcoming hardship and poverty, appear as fictions providing the ruling regimes with their chief legitimating function that helps to keep them in power. They experience their individual lives not as a progression, a trajectory of potential improvement outlined in development discourses, but rather as a wheel that turns constantly and that can crush one's existence in the process.

Lo mismo challenges the programs and projects undertaken by governments, NGOs and international organizations to improve the lot of the rural people and the moral and political leadership of those who attempt to regulate populations, bodies and things in the name of progress (Gupta 1998:34). By contesting negative representations of the past that are central to development narratives, the villagers denied that progress had taken place. Lo mismo points out that both large and small projects of the Sandinista revolutionaries and the post-Sandinista reformers have failed to improve their economic situation. It points to the unintended consequences of such structured changes and to the contradictions between development plans and practices.

Lo mismo is not a statement about history standing still, about the absence of change in general. It is part of a mètis[11] discourse contesting the validity of development discourses, in particular the prospect of a bright future, the ultimate arrival of Third World people in consumer heaven or an egalitarian paradise. This discourse is not only an existential complaint about precarious living conditions, it is also subversive because it challenges the ways in which state and non-state organizations intervene in people's lives in the name of development and attempt to regulate populations, bodies and things in a supposedly common interest. Lo mismo ridicules teleological images of modernity that act as an "absent presence" (Gupta 1998:40) in discourses about development. By analyzing development with their own categories of favores, ayuda and robo, the "underdeveloped" (atrasados) retained the capacity of lexical autonomy (Cusso and Gobin 2008:10) and refused to become a shabby imitation of the "developed."

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## Notes

1 *Como le ha ido desde la ultima vez que nos hemos visto?*
2 All names of villages and persons are pseudonyms.
3 I use the word "subject" here in the dual meaning that Foucault gives it: "Subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (Foucault 1982:781).
4 The term *Eigensinn* (acting according to ones own mind) used by Alf Lüdke (1993) would fit here as well.
5 In 1986, when I did a survey of all households, the eight biggest landowners owned 50% of the land though not more than 100MZ (see endnote #7) each, while 50% of the families did not possess any individual land title.
6 In 1978, large farms with more than 500MZ controlled 36.2% of the land (2,920,000 MZ in 8 million MZ). Farms that had between 200 and 500MZ controlled 16.2 % (1,311,000 MZ), those of 50 to 200MZ 30.1% (2,431,000 MZ), those between 10 to 50MZ 15.4% (1,241,000 MZ) and those with less than 10 MZ 2.1% (170,000 MZ). In 1988, 1,326,000MZ had been distributed to peasants and 948,000MZ to state farms (Mechri Adler 2000:405).
7 One manzana (MZ) equals 0.7 hectares.
8 Nicaragua has consistently been, since the late 1980s, among the top aid receiving countries in the world in terms of aid per capita; most years it places among the top five.
9 All the members of the Moraves family had become evangelists belonging to the Mennonite Church and the Iglesia de Dios.
10 In 2004 this was US$4000.
11 From Greek, "cunning intelligence," born out of prudence: people with mètis seize opportunities or devise tricks that enable them to prevail in adversity without exceptional physical strength.

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# Into the Hands of the Many: Production and Persistence in Rural Russia

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the Russian village of Moshkino provides an opportunity to analyze neoliberal market development in the postsocialist context. Unenthusiastic growth in individual farming has resulted due to a desire among villagers to farm collectively. This desire is based on internalized and culturally accepted forms of labour exchange and social welfare. Villagers have succeeded in creating a neoliberal collective—a farm that operates under basic market principles but maintains the labour and social support structure of the traditional collective. The Russian model is a salient example of how capitalism cannot be exported as uniformly as consultants have suggested.

**Keywords:** Russia, privatization, neoliberalism, emotions, postsocialism, farming

***Résumé :*** Dans cet article, le village russe de Moshkino nous fournit l'occasion d'analyser l'évolution du marché néolibéral en contexte postsocialiste. Il en est résulté une croissance peu enthousiaste de l'exploitation agricole individuelle, puisque les villageois préféraient conserver le modèle collectif. Ce désir est fondé sur des formes internalisées et culturellement acceptées d'échange de travail et de soutien social au bien-être. Les villageois ont réussi à créer un collectif néolibéral – une ferme qui fonctionne avec des principes fondamentaux du marché mais conserve les structures de travail et de soutien social du collectif traditionnel. Le modèle russe est un exemple saisissant de comment le capitalisme ne peut pas être exporté de manière aussi uniforme que ne l'ont suggéré les consultants.

**Mots-clés :** Russie, privatisation, néolibéralisme, émotions, postsocialisme, agriculture

Despite sweeping reform efforts in Russian agriculture after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the majority of rural inhabitants continue to rely on community collective agricultural endeavours to earn a living. Privatization has not resulted in a growing class of rural private entrepreneurs, or a population of independent family farmers. While there are more family farms than before the 1991 reforms, "80%-90% of agricultural land is still controlled by large former collectives" (Lerman 2009:4). Indeed, changes have occurred, but they have not been as far-reaching or as representative of free-market development as economists predicted they would be. The resulting hybridity in privatized agricultural structures stands neither as a testament to the conservative history of the collective nor as proof of the inevitability of free market shifts. This paper examines the institutional and emotional attachment to work and production found in the persistent collective organizations and suggests this not an outright defiance of neoliberalism but is a community response to institutional shifts resulting in a neoliberal collective.

## Background

The research on which this paper is based was carried out in a village called Moshkino 400km south east of Moscow. Moshkino was once home to the collective farm "60 Years October," which was organized as a result of forced collectivization in 1930. Many villagers can easily still identify the land their grandparents farmed individually prior to Stalin's collectivization drive. Just as villagers decades earlier were forced into collective farming against their wills, Moshkino villagers were ushered into privatized agriculture in 1993-94. I spent 11 months doing research in Moshkino during 1997-98 and returned in the summer of 2002 for follow-up research. The sentiment expressed by villagers during both of these periods was the same: in 1997-98 of the nearly two hundred villagers interviewed 93% said they were uninterested in

pursuing independent farming while in 2002 there was a slight increase with 95% claiming to be "uninterested."[1] The mandate that had been handed down from the government, largely to appeal to Western economists and bureaucrats who had a keen interest in seeing the Soviet system successfully dismantled, was one about which villagers said they had no choice.[2] Even with the provisioning of institutional support by Western privatization organizations, the local population was not persuaded to leave their collective community-based organizations. The quality and purported economic potential of privatized institutions was of little consequence to villagers who instead viewed their own traditional rural institutions as worth saving after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Effort was maintained in mutual support and subsistence endeavours while talk of the free market echoed around them. Interestingly, more than 15 years after privatization villagers are not openly lamenting the ineptitudes of the market economy, but rather the risk that "the art of living together is getting lost" in the shuffle.[3]

In the summer and fall of 1991, Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs and other Western economists met in a country home outside Moscow to advise President Yeltsin on how to best orchestrate the impending economic and political restructuring of the crumbling Soviet Union. By December, President Yeltsin had signed a government resolution entitled "On the Procedure for the Reorganization of Collective and State Farms."[4] Managers of collective and state farms were charged with carrying out the privatization of collective enterprises and farmland, and they had to do so by 1 January 1993. The attack on collective agricultural structures was to be swift and comprehensive, becoming known as "shock therapy." One way Western governments could be more certain that the Soviet system would not be resurrected was to remove businesses, land and wealth from state control and redistribute it into the hands of the many citizens. In light of the aims of neoliberalism, where control of a major part of the economy should rest in the private sector in order to further deregulation and government efficiency, once the Russian people had access to and control over the production of food and other goods, the invisible hand of the market would arguably begin to work its magic. As Sachs prescribed in his well-known article "What is to be done?," "the energies of business must be unleashed, through the combination of market reforms in the East and financial assistance and open markets in the West" (1990:24). Similar to a neoclassic point of view of economic transition where "the destruction of the traditional institutions of central planning guarantees the appearance of a market economy," the only message being delivered to the Rus-

sians was one of comprehensive institutional change (Sánchez-Andrés and March-Poquet 2002:1).

This message resounded more convincingly in urban areas where concepts of community support were not as persuasive a part of institutional history. The village situation was different. A primary, albeit overlooked, concern for the transformation of the nation's vast rural populations was how to give new incentives to the farm workers who were having the historical socio-economic safety net torn from beneath them. In addition to the "practical" problems of privatized farming and dismantling collectives (Van Atta 1993:83; Wegren 1998:86), village social structures were threatened and part of the subsequent resistance shown to comprehensive changes in labour practices was, I argue, to try to preserve some of these traditional features of rural life. If working collectively no longer ensured villagers' medical care, daycare for children or other social services, but did maintain important socio-emotional connections, there was little incentive to cast that cultural practice aside.

First a note on *institution* as I am using it here is in order. An institution is something relevant to human behaviour only in that it actually does something. Institutions govern the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions are social forms. Thus institutions are structures and mechanisms of social order but they are also significant practices and relationships within those social collectivities. As Searle argues, the essential role of human institutions is "not to constrain people but to create new sorts of power relationships" (2005:10). An institution, like the concept of culture, is therefore, enabling rather than ultimately restrictive, although both qualities certainly present themselves. While institutions can and do change with pressure from individual actors in terms of the parameters for acceptable engagement within one, they also have a great ability to be maintained even after those who might have been instrumental in the initial formalization have long since gone. This is part of the deontology that Searle highlights with regard to the critical rights, duties, obligations, requirements and permissions characteristic of institutions (2005). Institutions are cultural artifacts containing both the possibilities and parameters for interaction. While they are constructs of collectivity, they are manifest through the actions of individuals, which is why examining the individual response to privatization is salient.

As individuals, our experience of educational, social, economic, political and social institutions creates a framework of expectations. Very few of us will experience in our lifetime the kind of comprehensive institutional shift

Russians experienced in the 1990s. Such a shift does not take place without a germane response from the villagers who were charged with carrying the rural process of restructuring forward. By evaluating the choices made by villagers on an individual level, we capture a telling picture of the wider social and institutional realm of the Russian village. Here I will link the individual villager's participation in collective institutional practices with their socio-emotional choices and cast light on the persistent rural message of community coherence.

## The Village Setting

By the end of 1992, the city of Nizhnii Novgorod, not far from my research site, had become a leader in economic reforms in Russia. The first privatization in the country took place here in April 1992 with the International Finance Corporation assisted privatization of shops. The British Know How Fund, together with the World Bank-International Finance Corporation, funded and organized the privatization of industry and the reorganization of collective farming. These procedures employed a public auction method as the allocation mechanism for privatized resources. Despite farm and enterprise managers' mixed reception for the auction method, since along with the opportunity to control or even own assets went the risk that the assets would go to some other individual or group, auctions were used without significant problems. In fact many higher-ups in state and collective farms did fall into step with the changes as they saw an opportunity to grab, solidify or extend their power within the privatization schema. Average villagers, however, were less moved by the overall process.

In late October 1997, I attended the first reorganization meeting of the Fyodorovsky *kolkhoz* (collective farm) two hours north of Nizhnii Novgorod. Speaking to a crowd of approximately 60 people, Alexei, the privatization representative, focused on the imperative for the collective to reorganize. He described the various ways that they could do this; they could reregister as a joint stock company, a limited partnership, a collective private venture farm and so on. He also explained how they could, as workers and shareholders in these organizations, receive *dividendi* (dividends) in the future. He said finally, that the most preferential choice would be to form private, family farms. Throughout, he avoided the disinterested gazes of the attendees as he read nervously from his notes. Finally he said "I am here because you have decided to reorganize, am I right?"[5] No one responded for some time until one older woman yelled out, "We don't know what's happening. What do you mean 'reorganize'? What language are you speaking? It's not Russian!" Many people stirred in

their seats and the rest of the meeting was brief. The director of the collective told the villagers they had no choice; the collective was bankrupt and had no way of supporting everyone unless they reorganized, thus qualifying them for monetary aid from foreign sources like the World Bank. He implored them to vote for reorganization despite their confusion, which they did a few minutes later. Serafima, interviewed after the vote, said she felt like she might suddenly be sent away, "Off to the gulag—you know our history—one can never be sure what's going on, so it's good that a Westerner is here."[6] Eventually the farm did reorganize into a Joint Stock Company and continued to farm and raise pigs as they always had, collectively, but they qualified for much-needed bankruptcy forgiveness and an influx of cash to keep them afloat for the next few years.

This scenario was typical of the times. The farms were forced to reorganize and villagers were mainly concerned with their immediate subsistence needs. Because the process was entirely top-down, villagers rarely had a choice but to attempt to fold the reorganization process into their lives. Their responses at Fyodorovsky and in Moshkino highlight an intricate combination of historical memory and an emotional interface with the economy.

In Moshkino, the farm was reorganized in the first agricultural auction, with great media hype, under the direction of Ekaterina. Ekaterina was the former accountant, economist and eventual sub-chairman of the kolkhoz and worked on the kolkhoz for 16 years before assuming the role of director for the newly formed Joint Stock Company. In the reform auction, Moshkinskoe received 1,477 hectares of land, 400 cows, 200 pigs and eight horses. As of December 2000, there were 80 permanent paid farm workers, down from 92 in January 1998, and 20 seasonal workers (see Table 1).[7]

**TABLE 1**
**Moshkino Population Features**

| Population Feature | 1998 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|
| Village Population | 203 | 165 |
| Full-Time Farm Workers | 92 | 38 |
| Seasonal Farm Workers | — | 15-30 |
| Number of Workers Who Emigrated | — | 8 |
| Births | 10 | 2 |
| Deaths | 12 | 7 |

This reduction in the number of full-time farm workers would signal progress to many since "redundant agricultural labour is generally regarded as the main obstacle

to productivity growth in Russian agriculture" (Lerman et al. 2008:62).[8] More critical, however, is to note that the village population has not substantially decreased, therefore pointing to the necessity for many villagers to find wage employment elsewhere. Generally this comes in the form of non-farm self-employment such as increasing production in the household garden or collecting and selling wild mushrooms and berries. Most Moshkino villagers continue to try to maintain some minimal form of contract, informal or formal, with Ekaterina to ensure a monthly in-cash or in-kind income. The self-employment subsistence efforts, while perhaps reducing the "redundancy" of agricultural labour, are only "stopgap measures" not intended to be longterm employment activities (Lerman et al. 2008:70). A sustainable long-term solution has yet to emerge.

The rural population of Russia has been declining since the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, a significant 27% of the population is still rural making villagers and their responses to privatization the central actors in this economic reform era (Lerman 2009).[9] Thus, the behaviour of rural dwellers has been singled out as the reason for sluggish agricultural reform. Many analyses of the transitional economies of Eastern Europe and Russia have pointed to the characteristics of individuals as a primary culprit in the lethargic activity surrounding individual farming. Rural Russians have been characterized as lazy, unable to understand the need to work hard, unfamiliar with basic market principles necessary for success, risk averse, or just too habitually drunk to manage private farming (Deininger 1995). Only a few have actually teased out some of the more cultural, or first-level institutional factors that created suboptimal situations for a growing individual farming sector. In so doing, it is clear that classic economic theory falls short in explaining the slow transformation of Russian agriculture. The villagers' actions after reorganization rest on more than the weighing of fiscal risk, possible gains and future outcomes. We are all risk averse. We simply have varying degrees of risk we are willing to take on given the possible rewards. On a fundamental level the situation in Russia contained "too much risk for rural people to accept" (Allina-Pisano 2008:90). This risk can be interpreted on a fiscal level, as is the case in many neoliberal analyses, or nuanced more broadly to include emotional, social and cultural elements. In the end, the literature has maintained that a rural class of independent and prosperous private farmers has not developed due to various conditions, including the implementation of the reform process from above (O'Brien et al. 2004), the weakness of civil society (Howard 2003), institutionalized corruption in the process of economic development (Schoenman 2005), historical relationships between peasants, labour and land (Shanin 2003), and the fact that rural responses and adaptations to change have not followed models that were accurately interpreted by Western academics (Wegren 2005). Certainly these were all factors in Moshkino.

Like others in post-Soviet Russia, Ekaterina has her feet in two different realms: first as director of a newly independent agricultural venture pressed to create a profit, second as matriarch of a village institution still charged with providing social support to villagers. Villagers expect more from Ekaterina in terms of social welfare than they do in terms of a profitable, reorganized farm. Failure in the former would be unconscionable while failure in the latter would matter little to the individual villager. The institution of social welfare, a significant practice and relationship for villagers, remained a firm part of the collective intentionality after reorganization. During my research I witnessed dozens of occasions where villagers were offered small jobs to do on the farm and then were given an in-kind payment, usually produce or meat. Older men and women gathered in a dark, cold barn to help sort and sack potatoes in late autumn. Some filled in if other workers were ill and the cows needed to be milked. Generally people who had worked on the collective their entire lives still looked for some way to participate in the life of the farm. Ekaterina did not often turn them away.

The idea of connectedness in the village was always critical, whether one viewed it as propaganda or idealized nostalgia, thus to many individuals something salient had been lost. Vlad, one of the animal keepers on the farm, said, "before, I knew who I was working for and why. I might not like it but I was here for the collective. We all were. Now I am here, still working, thank god, but for what?"[10] A collective worker's effort in the Soviet village was met by the efforts of others which lends more meaning to the collective institution, and to the individual, who can emotionally rationalize, as Searle describes, "when I am engaged in collective action, *I* am doing what I am doing as part of *our* doing what we are doing" (2005:6). For some, the successes of the post-Soviet reforms are more resounding than the failures, but the dissenting voices offer a clear opportunity to delve more deeply into the individual's response to institutional shifts especially in the case of purported market advancement. The fact remains, the labour relationships during and after the transition in rural Russia remain "strongly influenced by the Soviet legacy" (Shlapentokh 2006:9) and much less influenced by neoliberal opportunism.

## The Obshchina and the Village Institution

To understand the relationship between the individual and the village institution today it is necessary to examine the pre-Soviet *obshchina*. There is great variation in the definition of the term, but most agree that the obshchina was a commune of sorts. These communes were peasant communities as opposed to individual farmsteads. A peasant had little independence from the obshchina. The individual was not the owner of the land—his claim was merely to the use of his share of the communal land. The Emancipation Act of 1861 gradually granted personal freedom to Russia's serfs and gave official support to the organic concept of the obshchina, thus arguably formalizing one of the first rural institutions of Russia.

The concept and position of the obshchina is important because it sets the rural Russian experience apart from other possible comparisons. Russian philosophers have attached importance to the obshchina as a unique feature distinguishing Russia from other countries.[11] Similarly, the *kollektiv* that effectively replaced the obshchina was a very culturally specific phenomenon, existing almost exclusively in Soviet society (Kharkhordin 1999:75). In the Russian context, the rural community, the total agricultural institution and the individual were intertwined in a persistent, if not complex and pliant, way. The obshchina stood as a rural corporate entity, and as such, was a property owner (Watters 1968). Communal property in the village was group-owned and partitioned among all members for their individual use. This included most critically each households' kitchen garden. Common property, on the other hand, was open to the use of all members and devoted to the benefit of the community. This included roads, pastures and meadows. If one equates ownership with control, then it was the obshchina and not the individual peasant who owned the land. The individual's place in the community was thus an intersection of his communal labour efforts and his personal rewards. The levelling effect of the obshchina's ultimate control over the land and thus livelihood make rural Russia stand apart from other "company towns" or single-industry communities in Europe or North America. Despite its long history, the obshchina was effectively destroyed by the Stolypin agrarian reforms (1906-1914), the Russian Revolution (1917) and subsequent collectivization of the USSR. However, the dye had been cast for the model of the rural Russian community characterized by a symbiotic relationship between the individual and the institution.

## The Individual and the Village Institution

Institutional changes in every society typically come about in a slow and somewhat measured manner. In times of crisis such as warfare, internal political unrest, or economic strain, institutional reactions may be more dramatic. Significant institutional shifts were a long-standing feature of the former Soviet Union. Reconstituting the ground-level behaviours of the villagers, organizing the methods for enforcing such transformation, negotiating the governance structure charged with monitoring the success of such plans, and reframing the institutional rhetoric designed to replace discarded cultural frameworks for local meaning and action, were all part of the Soviet system. Most of the institutional plans were not the result of organic shifts in the country. In fact, the very idea of "unofficial" institutional policies was anathema to Soviet life. With each new Five-Year Plan, Soviet citizens were put to the test with yet another recipe for increasing agricultural and industrial productivity and ensuring the Soviet Union's eventual place of dominance in the world order. The forced collectivization of agriculture was the socialist state's main tactic in its efforts to push the peasants from their old way of life. This new method and discourse of farming was to be one steeped in collectivity, progress for the people—not one's individual family or community—and the countryside. This was necessary in order to fuel industrial growth and provide food for workers in the cities. After collectivization was decreed necessary to fulfill Stalin's First Five-Year Plan (April 1929, which called for a 150% increase in agricultural production), cadres were sent into the countryside to explain the benefits of collectivization and *enroll* peasants in the new collectives. What transpired was unexpectedly strong resistance from peasants leading to an all-out government attack on traditional farming practices as found in the obshchina.

Ironically, in 1993, a similar process began when international development agencies and local government offices began ushering in the shift from collective to individual farming. As described above, when I arrived in Moshkino, the process was still underway throughout the region with development representatives, or neoliberal cadres—the revolutionaries of neoliberalism—holding village meetings and preaching the benefits of private landholding and farming. Eventually, nearly 12 million Russians received the right to land shares as a result of privatization, thus creating a huge and potentially powerful population of first-time land owners. This process, however, was often more complicated than reports conveyed.

Many analysts assumed, like the architects of the privatization process themselves, that once the initial difficulties of the transition had passed, individuals would take up the reins of market-driven farming in search of financial success. In these analyses, however, the individual actors were effectively subsumed within features of the privatized market institutions being developed (Åslund 1995; Mau 1999). A sociologist from Moscow, when asked about the level of attention being paid to the individual and social aspects of reorganization in the rural areas, told me, "there is not enough attention on the social element of privatization, especially in the villages where there is not such a tradition of private farming. They don't show the same interest as people in the cities, but it is not part of the reorganization program to understand this."[12] The dearth of social analysis at the time of reorganization resulted in what many would argue was a program of privatization centred on legal frameworks, national political economy and registering businesses rather than on the social lives of people. The negligence of attention to village socio-emotional constructs was easily avoidable. In other situations where market reforms have taken place and cultural institutions were integrated with the economic transformations rather than dismantled, reforms have been more successful. Research demonstrates that individuals support transitions which maintain the integrity of traditional emotional economies.[13]

New Institutional Economics (NIE) has attempted to deviate from other neoliberal economic frameworks by drawing out the individual in a system of economic analysis. In trying to systematically examine economic issues that classic economic theory simply assumes away, Williamson (1985), winner of the 2009 Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, focuses his New Institutional Economics on the importance of various institutions and their relative importance in local economies. Part of NIE in general is a greater self-consciousness about its behavioural assumptions and using a more comparative approach which appeals to anthropologists. Local institutions, thus, are recognized as being key factors in explaining differences in performance between industries, nations, and regions (Brousseau and Glachant 2008). Because local institutions are culturally bound, they provide a framework for understanding horizontal and vertical arrangements in various settings and how transformation might affect them.

Williamson (2000) expands on the institution by designating four levels. The first level, the culturally embedded institutions that are shaped by informal rules, cultural beliefs, religion and local norms and values, is perhaps more the territory of traditional anthropology.

This is the level of analysis most critical here. The second level is the legal environment of the institution based on laws including property rights. These formalize the choices available and subsequent behaviours of individuals. Third level institutions have more to do with the process of transactions and fourth level institutions control and create rules for allocating resources. The persistent theme in each of these levels is the way institutions formalize group *and* individual behaviour, creating "schema" for behaviour, in anthropological terms. NIE is unique in that it recognizes the evolution of institutions as both an informal and formal process (North 1990). In other words, individuals, their beliefs and practices, are recognized as agents in the process. Institutional power structures and changes within them can arise organically or be compelled by outside forces, but are always the result of individual actors.

The Russian context is clearly one where it is possible to examine the implementation of such institutional reordering from outside. In terms of an institutional analysis, those at the second level, concerned with the legal environment, third level, the process of transactions, and fourth level institutions controlling and creating rules for allocating resources, were first to be shifted. As far back as 1989-90, Soviet legislation allowed first, the creation of a non-state enterprise as a cooperative; second, the denationalization of land and non-land assets by transferring them legally from the state to kolkhozes and *sovkhozes* (state farms); and third, the establishment of a legal basis for individual (family) farming. With the introduction of the Law on the Peasant Farm in December of 1990 and more recent (2008) laws and decrees defining the legal forms of large agricultural enterprises, land ownership, and the procedures for certifying and exercising ownership rights, it was expected that creating private holdings in rural areas would result in an institutional shift at all levels. This was extended to individual behavioural modification expectations, namely that the "magic of property" (Kingston-Mann 1991:23) and private "ownership would compel market behaviour in rural residents" (Allina-Pisano 2008:56). As it turned out, few villagers were interested in establishing individual farms, and management and operating practices inside large agricultural enterprises remained largely unchanged when my research began in 1997. Clearly, legislation was not enough to bring private agriculture into being.

While NIE theory allows for a more culturally nuanced economic analysis of the individual within institutions, there are shortcomings. A key problem with Williamson's NIE model is that while it recognizes the multi-dimentional quality of local institutions, it is not

holistic enough in its overall framework and most notably leaves individual voices out of an analysis that arguably wrests the individual from the background of economics. Once again we find the individual existing in theory but not in practice. NIE is a useful starting point but the discussion is dangerously tautological without a clear epistemological basis. Rather than maintain the individual's existence and agency in some transient way, it is necessary to concretely present the interaction between the individual and the institution.

## Instituting a Neoliberal Identity

Instituting neoliberalism requires what Wegren referred to as "an attitudinal, behavioural, and cultural revolution" (2005:2). The risk to first level institutions, to local economies and cultures, is part of global neoliberalism (Robotham 2005). Individuals in communities are responsible for carrying the change by adopting an ethos of competition, fiscal differentiation and power inequities (Bourdieu 1998; Granovetter 1985; Woolcock 1998). Even the most ardent capitalists admit that this transformation requires more than supporting legal structures. Alan Greenspan, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of the United States, argued that capitalism is "not nature at all, but culture" (Pfaff 1999), as the Russian case exemplifies.

Neoliberalism accentuates the productive capacity of the individual within the market, but it is still within *communities* of individuals that change and innovation must occur. Habermas offers a lesson in the representativeness of individual actors by arguing that agents who act are not simply individuals since knowledge is socially constructed at the level of larger agents—such as institutions (1981:100).[14] Pointing out the limitations of methodological individualism present in the foundations of neoliberal thinking, Habermas argues that this model cannot account for the real diversity of moral systems that exists in societies (1998:10-16). Certainly rural Russia is no different in its degree of complexity in traditional and contemporary moral systems. Thus the application of market principles critical to neoliberal ideology and practice wound up as an uncomfortable fit in rural contexts.

When Sachs and the others at the Harvard Institute for International Development implemented privatization in Russia, they paved the way for competitive neoliberal manoeuvring. This took a nation with relatively insignificant wealth disparities to a new level of full-blown hyper-inflation and the overnight status of having as many billionaires as Saudi Arabia. Privatization certainly rewarded those who were well positioned and could

quickly take control of the nation's considerable natural resources and it appeared that the market might quickly gain control and rescue Russia from its decades-long stagnation within a state-controlled command economy. The "Harvard Boys," as Wedel referred to them (1998), were given carte blanche by both the Clinton Administration and the Russian government, whose representative Anatoly Chubais, Yeltsin's economic tsar, was single-handedly responsible for getting presidential decrees passed without parliamentary approval in order to carry out his radical capitalist reform process. The corruption that followed, more closely resembled "Klondike capitalism" than the nascent building of a reliable new market system (Wedel 1998). Rather than displaying the measured institutional guidelines of neoliberal policy, "'fiscal discipline,' 'structural reforms,' and 'export competitiveness'" (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002:113), the free market in Russia created an institutionalized financial free-for-all. The shift in economic policies and politics did not result in reliable institutional restructuring in which individuals could trust. Trust in public and social institutions in Russia is the lowest in the world, behind the most advanced countries but also those known for instability like Columbia and Nigeria (Shlapentokh 2006). Thus, responses to neoliberal policies might have to do with a more macro-level interpretation of Russian culture and national identity as it plays out in the village.

Historians and Russian Studies scholars recognize that there are constant contradictions and tensions within Russian identity. Those more ethnographic in their approach see Russian national identity as a process rather than a result, much the same way anthropologists view culture as an ever-changing reality in the lives of individuals and communities (Franklin and Widdis 2004). One element of Russian national identity has been a so-called perpetual identity crisis. This "preoccupation with the problem [of identity] itself" is well recognized in Russia as Franklin notes (2004:27). A contributing factor to this identity crisis is the historical reality of Russian national identity being seen as a tabula rasa, coloured by a process of foreign cultural traditions being injected into the nation (i.e., Byzantine, Scandinavian, Mongol, Germanic, and finally, American) (Widdis 2004). The replacing of traditional communal systems by market-oriented ones follows this history, and prepared the ground for the current discourse and rejection of non-native agricultural systems as being distinctly non-Russian.

A tension between culturally embedded institutions of pre- and post-privatization has resulted in divisiveness between neoliberal logic and agendas and the lived experience of individuals (Ninneto 2005:446). During my

research, village concerns in Moshkino were centred on food, health and community. Olga, a 32-year-old mother, said, "there's all this talk about the market and dividends and growth, but all I see is my own garden and my family and neighbours ... we all wonder how to get through the winter and not starve. Is that privatization?"[15] The unfairness of the reorganization process and the resulting disparity between Russians was blatant to Olga and others for whom trying to eke out a living in "capitalism's austere margins" was a struggle (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002:114).

## The Cultural Institution of Community

Often missing from the postsocialist literature is an exploration of the social and emotional attachment farm workers feel towards their labour. This is not merely a romanticized imagining by journalists or academics, but an expression of the lived experience of many farm workers for whom the village provided all manner of infrastructural and socio-emotional support. In Moshkino, the former collective farm was remembered as a strong and relatively successful farm. Many villagers expressed pride in their involvement with the collective and saw the postsocialist situation as a sort of aberration in terms of cultural and subsistence practices. Yuri, 37, was one such person. One warm summer morning he stood in front of the farm garage. I was asking him about the system of help in the village—how individuals find the assistance they need to gather their hay or do other household garden work. Yuri said that individuals help one another (*drug za drugum*), and families also rely on each another for help. He sighed explaining,

> the *sel'soviet* [village council] used to help us but now everything is falling apart. Before, the head of the sel'soviet was very strict and we liked him. He kept everything in his fist and everything worked. We all had what we needed. Now we only have the potato we grab from the ground and the air we breathe.[16]

Ira, 46, expressed a similar dissatisfaction with the current situation in light of the way things used to be. "We didn't have very much before but we all had enough and the farm was a good place to be. You didn't need anything else if you worked for the farm you had had food and friends, sometimes a little party. Now, it's a shame."[17]

Once the reorganization process was completed, approximately 90% of rural farmland was still held by former state and collective farms and their successor parent farms (Wegren 1998). Some former collective workers were aware that their efforts to hold the community together through shared labour and subsistence were

being read in the West as reflections of their inability as individuals to change. However they were not motivated by outside analyses of their situation. Stepan, a pensioner who lost his full-time employment on the farm, said that he reads the newspaper sometimes and cannot believe what they write about farming:

> They always talk about how we need to have stronger results, but they have no idea what my life is like. I barely make it, how do they expect us to increase our work? We always work hard. Ask any person in any village.[18]

Wegren et al., in an article "more interested in the *effect* of reform on different rural actors than on the *effectiveness* of policies to achieve reform goals," found that 60% of farm workers over five regions in Russia considered themselves "losers or absolute losers" in the wake of the reforms (2002:2, 6). For most villagers, the reforms were asking them to reconfigure not only their economic institutions and farming practices, but their very identity.

Far from being romanticized ideas about collectivity, the response of villagers has exhibited a recognition of what Wolf describes as the interactional processes of cultures and communities "as they emerge from sources of power and hegemony" (Yengoyan 2001:ix). In fact Wolf warns against romanticizing peasant communalism as a self-sacrificing altruistic endeavour. Due to its reliance on individual actors the peasant community is a collection of individuals who actually have to be drawn into the same system of mutual constraint. So the collective community in Russia did not "abolish individual striving" but merely strove to control it (Wolf 2001:58). Individualism is one of the ultimate advantages of capitalism (Hayek 2007:68). This is meant to unseat collectivism, but what it ultimately emphasizes is the benefit of individual market competition, which was not an endogenously developed tradition but it was also not unknown in the villages. As Wolf (2001) argued, a focus on rural community does not mean that there are no individual self-interests. Quite the contrary, one recognizes one's self-interests as being part and parcel of collective interests.

In Russia, even with the historic institutional importance of the state in organizing communal rural affairs, the individual maintained a critical presence. The philosophical development of the Soviet individual was necessary so that the group itself was also more advanced (Fitzpatrick 1993:756). The ideal, however, was for individuals themselves to view their own development in the context of the group as a whole. Despite its intent, centralized planning in the Soviet Union failed to eradicate the state's depend-

ence in extremis on individual local producers (Ellman 1979: 66-73; Kideckel 1993).

Nationalism was the impetus for the formation of communalism and the interests of the commune were rhetorically more closely allied with those of the state. Therefore, loyalty to the collective was also loyalty to the state and this connected collective farms throughout the Soviet Union to one vast, great cause. A farm worker's individual identity was thus linked to the state daily through their labour. The way peasants would cleave to "traditional arrangements which guarantee his access to land and to the labour of kin and neighbours" meant peasant economies have often been characterized as illogical and averse to individual competition and acquisitiveness (Wolf 2001:xxii). In order for agricultural privatization to succeed as planned in Russia, the rewards of individualism, and the competition involved have to be accepted, and production increases, rather than the state, must be seen as the vehicle for social welfare improvements.

Rural collectivity, however, could not easily adopt such neoliberal models. Village arrangements combined to form a common ethos among rural dwellers, one that stands in stark contrast to the neoliberal ethos. The traditional Russian practice of "joint responsibility" worked to spread villagers across extremes of wealth and poverty creating a weakened state of being for all but maintaining social balance. All group members, whether it was a work group or a village, "stood surety for all other members in dealings contracted by (or imposed upon) the group as a whole" (Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia 1993:140). Much of the forced historic generosity, labour sharing and scattered agricultural fields were part of this moral economy, as important in terms of physical produce as in terms of emotional subsistence. These communal insurance efforts were part of what made the rural economy, with success in protecting all individuals in a village from severe lack, "more human than the market economy" (Polanyi 1957:163). What was apparent on the reorganized Moshkinskoe farm, was what Worobec describes as the "concern for the equality of burdens and obligations" (1995:20) that make the first institutional level of a neoliberal agriculture so distasteful to villagers. Such an institution lacks the informal but critical depth of local justice, where community members might be focused on household sustenance, but are also aware of keeping the market at arm's length since unlimited involvement in the market threatens a villager's hold on his source of livelihood, namely, other community members (Wolf 1969).

## Pride and Emotional Attachment

Williamson's first level institutions—those which are culturally embedded—were at risk in post-Soviet Russia. Despite attempts in NIE to acknowledge the individual, it is anthropologists who have done more to draw out the individual from the institution in the postsocialist context (Allina-Pisano 2008; Müller 2007; Paxson 2005; Pine 2002; Ries 1997; Verdery 1996). Part of this disciplinary success arises in recognizing the agency of actors and their creativity, especially in times of flux. While some researchers admit going to Russia expecting to find a "continuation of the age-old mechanisms of a collectivist lifestyle" (Kharkhordin 1999:2), I actually first went expecting to find the budding growth of small business owners and individual farmers but instead found the collective. My fieldwork experiences forced a clear recognition of a decision-making level outside of the strict confines of the neoliberal market. This was the realm of the emotional economy.

The emotional economy is an economy of subsistence and an economy of feeling (Heady and Gambold Miller 2006). It is where the value of one's work effort is weighed not only by its potential for earning profits, but also by its profits in social cohesion and manoeuvrability. Between the former collective workers in Moshkino, there are still traditional "feeling rules" (Hochschild 1983:56) that act as a template for establishing and maintaining the sense of entitlement or obligation that influences community emotional exchanges. These "rules" within the emotional economy tell us how we "should" be feeling in relation to our livelihood and those with whom we work. They help guide us in understanding the possible outcomes of our social interactions. In economic terms, the way individuals then capitalize on social relations can, in some situations, become correlated with economic capital, as Bourdieu (1985) points out. Labour-related behaviour can be substantially influenced by individual emotional reckoning much in the way Nussbaum (1999) highlights the importance of emotions in the efficacy of development projects and the way such projects are implemented at the level of traditional cultural institutions. Emotions such as shame, guilt, pride and joy are critical movers in individuals' decision making on all levels, including the economic.

In this vein, the difficulty experienced by Moshkino villagers was both emotional and economic. The effects of post-Soviet economic restructuring and political upheaval forced a renegotiation of the rural individual's emotional place in the wider national milieu and within the village itself. The commitment to community institu-

tions that followed is complexly interwoven. It is somewhat path-dependent, certainly historical, and also a product of responses to the reforms themselves. Despite the importance of Soviet propaganda in creating cultural institutions, the attachment to the collective of other farmers and villagers is not necessarily a by-product of successful planning. This kind of rural communal coherence has been seen before. Among hacienda workers in Mexico, Wolf argues that they "abdicated much personal autonomy in exchange for heightened social and economic security," which was provided by the group and the paternal owner (2001:130). Existing in the "margins of capitalism," as rural agricultural workers often do, creates an environment of community cohesion and concern. In a space where capitalist individualism can cost you your crops and livelihood, consideration for those nearby makes sense. This mutual support among members can make "diffuse groups an extraordinarily important phenomenon in a society founded on communal pressure" (Kharkhordin 1999:321). In China, there have been successful reform outcomes where public–private institutions have maintained national pride while instigating economic profitability *and* stimulating social connectedness. Labour recruitment companies which help place rural women as domestic labourers in urban homes also develop the women's *suzhi* (Hairong 2003). This suzhi helps bridge the individual's socio-emotional needs with the modern market demands as it "marks a sense and sensibility of the self's value in the market economy" (Hairong 2003:494). Preserving some sense of traditional collectivism facilitates the successful engagement of these women in market transactions that might otherwise feel unnatural.

Even in more historically capitalist settings farming has retained the socio-emotional code of conduct prevalent in more informal face-to-face economies. Exchange and abiding support with those around you means that everyone's behaviour can be monitored and kept in check. Salazar describes the importance of maintaining this "all-pervasive personalism" in 20th century rural Ireland because it "lubricates the junctures of an otherwise cold and distant monetary exchange" (1995:181). Village residents are sensitive to what they have experienced as being a more emotionally supportive institutional system. It is morally difficult to take advantage of someone you see day in and day out. It is not unheard of, it just has the potential to make life unpleasant.

Cohesiveness in agricultural communities also arises from a shared pride in ones labour, labour that is often not valued in urban centres. Farming is hard work, but any government, whether communist or capitalist, must encourage farmers to keep growing food. The propaganda

of how important farming is to the health and wealth of a nation belies events such as Farm Aid concerts which have been designed to help American farmers who are in economic distress.[19] In this context, it is important to point out that the modernization of rural life in the U.S. and Canada has had socio-emotional results shockingly similar to the distress expressed by Moshkino residents. For example, in rural Oklahoma, Ramírez-Ferrero (2005) identifies pride as the most salient dimension of the moral and emotional life of farmers. Pride is wrapped up in cultural valuations of land, family farming, and hard work. However, structural changes in the 1980s challenged this moral and emotional order resulting in an alarming spike in the number of suicides among Oklahoma farmers. Initially attributed to simple economic hardship, Ramírez-Ferrero shows how agricultural restructuring ("modernization") brought about important social and cultural changes that frayed the basic structures of social support existing in the past, leaving farmers wrestling with emotionally crushing challenges to their pride, and often turning to suicide.[20] In Moshkino, the rate of suicide has not increased, but levels of apathy and unhappiness arguably have. Alcoholism—always a problem—has soared in rural Russia with more deaths from alcohol poisoning than ever before.[21]

The attachment villagers feel to their work, as both a site of employment and earnings and a locus for emotional integrity and well-being, is part of the embeddedness of village institutions. That complex union between the village economy, social networks and labour should not be mistakenly characterized as a stagnant, fixed relationship. Embedded simply implies interwoven and connected. This scenario was also true in Bulgaria where Creed (1998) found that villagers' employment activities were a central feature of their individual personal identity. Thus, the reorganization process was met by an attempt "to use socialism to domesticate capitalism" thereby maintaining important "symbiotic" relationships between individuals and parent farms (Creed 1998:277).[22] After reorganization, 87% of Moshkino villagers were still tied to the parent farm through formal or informal agreements with farm director Ekaterina.[23] Ekaterina commented frequently on the strain between trying to build a profitable farm and taking care of the villagers who "gave their lives to the collective."[24] I often wondered why Ekaterina did not strike out on her own with her experienced and hardworking husband. When asked how long she intended to be the director at the Moshkinskoe farm, she laughed and replied, "longer than I'd like, I'm sure, but as long as they [pensioners] need me."[25] Ekaterina could easily become an independent farmer, as she possessed the social and

cultural capital that would enable her to manoeuvre in neoliberal agricultural institutions. However, she felt that it was important "to help those who couldn't manage to farm independently due to psychological and material problems."[26] It was common for postsocialist managers, especially older ones with long-term ties to the village and farm employees, to try to maintain care of those relying on them (Humphrey 2002; Koester 2000; Wegren et al. 2002). Ekaterina's rationalization may sound too altruistic to be true, considering the opportunities for self-advancement provided to managers on reorganized farms, but there are also undeniable burdens of her choice, which were quite apparent to me. She had put aside her potential for substantial individual gain as a private farmer to ensure the health and well-being of the community.[27] If anything, her ability to keep the farm together and functioning helped maintain the embedded nature of work, social networks and personal fulfilment.

The interconnectedness of social networks and individual contentment is not just a characteristic of the Soviet collective or rural culture but is also a salient feature of human life in general; one that is sought by workers in all manner of industries. When it is lacking, individuals express being genuinely unhappy (Boym 2002; Freedman 2007; Humphrey 2002). In Russia, those whose work history consists mostly of communal labour on the collective have expressed concerns over the lack of interconnectedness that seemed to accompany privatization. These individuals tend to "gravitate towards the pole of traditionalism," which is why so many farms appeared to be operating more or less as they had been before reorganization (Buchowski 2003:18).

At one village meeting in 2002, there was a discussion about helping the pensioners collect their hay and other supports Ekaterina should offer villagers whether they technically worked for the farm or not. A few were grumbling about the time it takes to help everyone with their personal harvest when 47-year-old Sveta said, "we have already lost our collective. We were a strong one. We shouldn't lose the life of our village too."[28] Her fear, like that of many others, was that the mutual care that typified the village would be cast aside in the wake of market reforms. This paternalistic organization of the collective as the primary social and economic safety net went hand in hand with the Socialist state's agenda to, as Ashwin notes, "cultivate work as the 'basic unit' of individuals' lives" (Weiner 2007:32). Villagers rightly feared the "redefining of common pool resources as commodities" as well as the redefining of social welfare networks as employment relationships (Allina-Pisano 2008:5). The interactions between individuals were thus thrust under

a microscope as villagers examined the strength of their previous ties and the necessity or desire for redefinition.

Despite the general resistance to private farming, some villagers have elected to take the risk and break out on their own. Two former farm workers in Moshkino decided to use support being offered to individual farmers and attempt to make it without the help of the parent farm. Private farmers were initially able to access loans to help meet the substantial start-up costs facing them, but much of the promised, continued government support never materialized. Nevertheless, some have succeeded. Indeed, in a survey of 800 village households Wegren et al. (2002) found that private individual farmers earned more, had acquired more in the way of durable goods, enjoyed a greater sense of job security and considered themselves "winners" in the privatization process more than any other rural residents. However, the reality is that private farmers are still a minority in most places in Russia. While reorganized collective farms, or corporate farms, make up 80% of farms in Russia, only 10% are individual private farms.[29]

Only one individual farmer in Moshkino persisted between my initial period of fieldwork in 1997-98 and my follow-up research in 2002. Oleg had started to farm, trying to draw on the support and help of his brother nearby, but he found that after his first year, he had doubts about his choice and his ability. He was relatively young, only 34, when the farm privatized, and had a wife and two young children. His wife was one of the few who worked outside the village in a grocery store ten kilometres away.[30] Oleg went to the regional agricultural restructuring office and asked about support. They offered to help him write a business plan to present to the bank in order to get a loan for private farmers. He wrote the business proposal, or as he put it, "I put down exactly what they told me to and nothing more," and within a couple of months he was granted a loan.[31] With the money, he could purchase a harvester and several of the smaller implements that he required to do his work. He was focusing on potatoes and a combination crop including soy that was being encouraged because he could sell it for livestock feed to some of the larger farms in the area. Oleg said that initially he enjoyed his work and felt hopeful. However, soon he felt "very alone" and could not keep up with the work without additional help and machinery. He complained about the sheer amount of work in farming alone but also noted that "throughout the day it is not just that I need more hands to help, but that I spend all day by myself working. It makes the work mere drudgery and thus the work feels harder." His older brother, who still worked for the Moshkinskoe farm, would offer help on occasion but

worked hard for the parent farm and like most villagers, still had to put in a substantial amount of time working in his own household garden.

By the time of my research in 2002, the percentage of total food production in Russia contributed by household gardens was 54%.[32] Over 85% of the villagers I interviewed were attempting to increase productivity in their personal gardens primarily for personal consumption. By relying on his brother's assistance, Oleg was asking him to devote less time to his household garden without being able to provide any substantive remuneration except future promises. Oleg had to sell all of his crops if he hoped to make any profit, and most villagers plant a substantial number of potatoes and therefore would not benefit from receiving more as in-kind payment. Oleg began to sense that his brother was not willing to help him and this created a temporary rift between them. Eventually, Oleg decided to ask Ekaterina if he could come back to the farm. He explained,

> When I went to the [farm] office I was not feeling good. I felt like they would see that I couldn't do it, that I was weak somehow, that they might think I shouldn't be allowed back since I had left. I only wanted to try to make it, that is what we were told to do [in reorganization]. Ekaterina was very nice. She did not make me feel ashamed. It was a short conversation, but she said I could come back to my old job.[33]

Fortunately for Oleg he was able to sell his harvester to a farm not far away and pay back most of his high-interest loan immediately.

Tatiana was the other private farmer in Moshkino and remains an anomaly as the only person earning all of their income from independent endeavours. She is 45 years old and attended the agricultural institute in Nizhnii Novgorod. When the Soviet collective was being reorganized in 1994, Tatiana and her tractor driver husband decided to stay with Ekaterina and work on the Moshkinskoe Joint Stock Company farm. Tatiana was an agronomist on the collective and under Ekaterina she became the chief agronomist of the new farm. After one year, she decided to leave the farm because she felt as if she was still working for a collective and she wanted to work for herself. Having been part of the management sector, Tatiana had an advantage on the path to success. She had more social and cultural resources than most people in the village. These include education, elevated knowledge about the institutional systems involved in large-scale agriculture, and an elevated reputation due to her previous position as the collective's agronomist. All of this gave her what some might argue is the mental acuity necessary to move into individual farming while others, uncertain and unconvinced, remained with the collective.[34]

Tatiana has established herself as a rural entrepreneur but she and her husband live a rather socially isolated life in this small village. They were never present at any larger gatherings I attended and they are even estranged from Tatiana's mother, sister and cousin in the village.[35] Tatiana is also the object of mistrust and envy in the village. She and her husband do not help their kin with farm work but they do help neighbours who ask. However, they ask them to pay in cash or reciprocal labour—something many saw as necessary to bring to my attention because it transgressed the traditional value of mutual aid by adding cash to the equation. Buchowski similarly argued that entrepreneurs in rural Poland have become "detached" from the community (2003:19). Like Tatiana they could be categorized as the "dispossessed," people who Humphrey describes as "falling outside the primary unit of society" (2002:25), in this case the former collective farm.

Interviews with villagers always illuminated their behavioural disposition towards collective farm work versus farming alone. This "disposition" is not a factor of human nature, but rather a temperament resulting from a history and cultural ethos valuing the collective institution of agricultural labour and social cohesion. Mikhail Ivanovich, a 47-year-old farm worker, said that "farm work is work you do with others" and to work alone is "like eating alone, it just doesn't feel right."[36] This perception of work and competition, and the value assigned to these culturally defined notions, are important factors informing individual responses to reorganization. Williamson's ideas behind NIE stressed that these behaviours are part and parcel of a larger response and that "it is not uncertainty or small numbers, individually and together, that occasion market failure but it is rather the joining of these factors with bounded rationality on the one hand and opportunism on the other that gives rise to exchange difficulties" (1975:7).

Nadia, a 77-year-old pensioner, told me that she felt "stronger and safer" as part of the collective and that she could never make it on her own as an independent farmer without the support of others. She did not even consider leaving the parent farm because, "together our village is stronger, but alone, we are weak."[37] While the economic costs of not belonging to a social network are more severe for the elderly, even younger people have been reticent to shift to a neoliberal system. Nadia's 27-year-old grandson, Sasha, told me that if he wanted to farm alone, he could. "I am young and I can make my way, I am sure. But what am I supposed to do with my family? My parents

and my grandmother still rely on Ekaterina's farm and I have my first child to think about now. I can't take chances, even if I wanted to."[38]

The results in Moshkino have created a kind of neoliberal collective—a farm that operates under basic market principles but maintains the labour and socio-emotional support structure of the traditional collective farm. Since, in broad terms, the market is functioning, these hybrid forms could be read as a way to strengthen neoliberal reforms rather than a strike against them.[39] This is even more valid if one assesses the socio-emotional gains in the village with the economic ones. Weighing profit potential is a standard feature of neoclassical economic theory and even NIE, but maximization can, and often does, veer into the emotional. Taking your labour out of the collective farm in order to farm independently might mean future fiscal gains, but the certain emotional toll of this break could easily outweigh those possible gains. The reduction of risk in leaving an unstable Joint Stock Company farm to manage your own labour and income increases the risk of social rebuking or the "embourgeoisement" of private farmers Szelényi (1988) describes in Hungary. Some will not take that emotional risk.

Considering the magnitude of the historical and cultural institutions facing reformers it is surprising that more efforts were not made to maintain collectivism. As part of a rural economy, agricultural endeavours are even more a "social construct and a cultural experience" (Salazar 1995:5). Whether one considers the Russian case or other experiences of rural transformation, the scenario has nearly always been similar: the market cannot replace the cultural institutions upon which villagers rely. In Russia, transformations continue, but even more in a neoliberal vein. A *New York Times* article described the unthinkable: "the business of buying and reforming collective farms is suddenly and improbably very profitable" (Kramer 2008). As world food prices soared, some entrepreneurial businessmen saw the millions of hectares of arable but fallow land in Russia as money waiting to be harvested.[40] The article notes that the trend appears to be to further consolidate large portions of Russia's available land to create factory "cluster" farms. Infrastructurally, this is more easily done since most farms remained collectively structured but there is still the problem of the rural population. Kramer (2008) notes that some investors interested in corporate farming in Russia have "resorted to hiring psychologists to untangle the village culture and determine how best to instill a work ethic." Another investor argues that giving higher salaries to individual farmers is not the way to motivate them, but one should instead give them "rewards emphasizing the team nature of the work." Even in light of a potential new phase of instituting neoliberalism in the village, the individual in the collective cannot be forgotten.

## Conclusions

As the literature and my research demonstrate, the complexities of the postsocialist rural economy go far beyond material circumstances and constraints. Classic economic theories of capitalism are inadequate for analyzing contemporary postsocialist events, which present an array of hybrid economies, fluid and multifaceted, neither collective nor fully integrated into the neoliberal market. In fact, it seems that while some may steadfastly maintain that Russia has fully integrated into the market (Åslund 1995), in fact the post-Soviet context could be the best example of what Gudeman has called "what it means to be human in the making of material life—conflicted and torn between community and market" (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002: 129). While this paper does not attempt to offer suggestions for a better way, it is intended to illustrate that in the age of neoliberalism there are still important diverging voices. Certainly many of those voices would probably love to join the choir of market success, but they have made clear with their actions that the market was not made for everyone. Considering the historical and cultural foundations of Russia, the market of the West just does not seem to fit well in the emotional economy of the village. This emotional economy is not only embedded in traditional peasant societies, it is embedded in *all* societies. All economies, not only those in a postsocialist context, have a moral component and an emotional system of valuation both of product and of process. In situations where the potential profits from maintaining the emotional and social valuation systems outweigh those that might result from neoliberal market competition, communities will not risk losing traditional validation systems. This is heightened in rural institutions where direct personal involvement in the market has been slow to develop and traditions of communal cohesion provide familiar cultural scripts for labour and well-being.

Collectivism in Moshkino is easily read as failure; failure to adapt, failure to adopt and failure to competitively engage the market. Ekaterina's farm is still operating and the number of workers she can continue to pay each year has decreased from nearly 100 when I first met her to just under 40. She had tried to adjust her farming strategies overall in order to make a greater profit, but she does not pay dividend rent for access to land shares that all the farm workers have entrusted to her, nor has she been able to increase wages enough to pull her workers out of poverty. What she has managed to do is make sure

her workers, and especially the pensioners in the village, have access to domestic animals, occasional products and the socio-emotional support system the farm provides. Neoliberal "failures" such as these might actually translate into local institutional and socio-emotional successes. Perhaps the two are not mutually exclusive.

The NEI analysis is not comprehensive, and in fact despite a nod to the culturally embedded institutional level which supposes individual actors, the model is still fraught with shortcomings due to its inherent lack of a comparative approach. Nevertheless, the systems or levels of analysis that exist in NEI show that institutional changes can come at one level and not spread into the other levels without the right conditions. It is unlikely that private farming will surpass large corporate farms, household garden production or imports at any time in the near future, despite legal frameworks allowing for the buying, selling and cultivation of land individually. While there are winners in the Russian neoliberal market, those who were weak in the Soviet period remain weak after privatization.

While the neoliberal model has been successful in creating markets and market-behaviour in many non-Western contexts, in Russian villages we seem to find a challenge. Given the history of communalism, in practice and in propaganda, villagers have opted to resist market behaviours that risk destroying their culturally embedded work structures. Whether greater attempts to embrace the market would eventually benefit farm workers, they have not left behind their institutionalized socio-emotional support systems. Not for lack of wanting a better life, these villagers maintain their symbolic horizontal structures in favor of a vertical neoliberal model. Privatization was intended to break up large state and collective farms and redistribute land into the hands of individual farmers who would then compete in a rural market. Instead, most of the farms were renamed, re-registered and remain in the hands of the many, collectively.

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## Notes

1   Throughout my fieldwork, I conducted semi-structured and informal interviews with village residents, farm workers, farm managers and local authorities. I also collected surveys gathering data on basic household demographics, land use, property and subsistence.

2   See Jessica Allina-Pisano (2008), especially chapters 2 and 3, for a detailed rendering of a similar situation in the Black Earth region.

3   Interview 14 July 2002.

4   See "O poryadke reorganizatsii kolkhozov I sovkhozov" (*Zemlya I lyudi*, no. 2, January 10, 1992, pp. 1, 3) for discussion of Yeltsin's signing of this resolution.

5   Fieldnotes 26-28 October 1997.

6   Interview 26 October 1997.

7   Eight workers relocated, two were fired, and two quit but still live in Moshkino.

8   The figures in Table 1 do not reflect the many villagers who have informal contracts with Ekaterina and are still receiving some in-kind support.

9   Many analyses correlate the percentage of rural inhabitants to successful marketization of the economy (fewer rural inhabitants and lower agricultural share of the overall employment index meaning higher income per capita after privatization) (Lerman 2007). This correlation is not so simple when one considers the rural population rate of other countries such as Ireland (40%), Finland (39%), Netherlands (34%) or the United States (20%) and Canada (20%) (United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, Population Division 2009).

10  Interview 8 February 1998.

11  See for example the writings of Alexander Herzen (1995) and Pyotr Chaadayev.

12  Interview 27 September 1997.

13  Rudnyckyj (2009) gives an example of how neoliberal market reform in Indonesia was bolstered due to its combined effort to transform workers into more responsible and dedicated religious subjects while also training them to be more productive factory workers. In this setting, the emotional economy is enacted in a spiritual reform that finds success in "reconfiguring work as a form of worship and religious duty" (Rudnyckyj 2009:105).

14  Allina-Pisano (2008:56) borrows ideas of ontogeny from Gould (1977) in describing the post-socialist situation and how the lives of individuals were meant to change in accordance and in step with broader economic and social infrastructures.

15  Interview 28 July 2002.

16  Interview 16 July 2002.

17  Interview 22 July 2002.

18  Interview 9 March 1998.

19  In 1985, I attended the first of these concerts which "defend[ed] and bolster[ed] family farm centred agriculture. By strengthening the voices of family farmers themselves, Farm Aid stands up for the most resourceful, heroic Americans–the family farmers who work the land" (Farm Aid N.d.).

20  Suicide among farmers is more far-reaching than we imagine. Chandarkar (2007) illustrates the economic and social stress felt by farmers by pointing to more than 5000 suicides between 1997-2007 in Andhra Pradesh, India. In Ghana, tomato farmers were committing suicide in astonishing numbers in 2007.

21  Russia, historically, has one of the highest alcohol consumption rates in the world, a rate which increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Between 1990 and 1994 the rate of alcohol-related deaths in Russia quadrupled (Pridemore and Kim 2006:230). In addition, while rates of suicide in Moshkino have not increased, Russia currently has among one of the highest suicide rates in the world.

22  "Parent farms" are the reorganized collective or state farms still operating communally.
23  Based on the author's 2002 survey data.
24  Interview 5 August 2002.
25  Interview 21 July 2002.
26  Interview 21 July 2002.
27  It should be noted that Ekaterina certainly received some personal gains. She was able to travel to the U.S. and to other European countries to tour personal farms during the first wave of privatization and she had access to local goods and services due to her position. However, living as she did, under close scrutiny by her neighbours and colleagues, she did not appear to have risen too far above the others.
28  Interview 28 July 2002
29  *Rossiia v tsifrakh* (Moscow: Goskomstat, 2008), p. 445.
30  My research in 2002 clearly showed that those who had someone in the household employed outside of the village were faring much better economically.
31  Interview 21 July 2002.
32  *Rossiia v tsifrakh* (Moscow: Goskomstat, 2003), p. 207.
33  Interview 2 August 2002.
34  See Gray 2003 for a similar account of individual strategies.
35  Their absence from village gatherings could be attributed to the fact that so many villagers are still involved with the collective farm and gather not only as neighbours, but also as co-workers. In addition, in 2002 Tatiana began shifting her practices to buying processed foods wholesale and selling them in the village and throughout the local area. This moved her and her family even further away from local labour and social practices.
36  Interview 22 July 2002.
37  Interview 24 January 1998.
38  Interview 27 January 1998.
39  See for example Sharma's (2006) description of an Indian government initiative on women's empowerment and how the NGO model was enacted by individuals in a hybrid way that worked for local cultural institutions and government traditions of social welfare.
40  These entrepreneurs, taking advantage of a new reform allowing foreigners to own agricultural land, came from both in and outside of Russia and include hedge fund managers, Russian oligarchs and Swedish businessmen.

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# Biotech on the Farm: Mississippi Agriculture in an Age of Proprietary Biotechnologies

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**Abstract:** Agricultural biotechnologies have been introduced with a number of proprietary mechanisms: patents on seeds, grower contracts, incentive agreements and even litigation. Scholarly research on this proprietary framework's impact on power relations in agriculture has primarily focused on developing countries. This article draws on 40 interviews conducted in the agricultural community in Mississippi, United States, to investigate the technologies' impact on agricultural production, and farmer's response to this impact. I find that farmer's control over their production is reduced in important ways, limiting their opportunities for strategic response, but some acts of resistance in the legal forum are having a limited impact.

**Keywords:** biotechnology, agriculture, proprietary, patents, political economy

*Résumé :* Les biotechnologies agricoles ont été implantées avec un certain nombre de mécanismes de propriété intellectuelle : brevets sur les semences, contrats de culture, conventions incitatives et même poursuites judiciaires. La recherche académique sur l'impact de cet encadrement de propriété intellectuelle sur les rapports de pouvoir en agriculture s'est concentrée principalement dans les pays en développement. Le présent article s'appuie sur 40 entrevues menées dans la communauté agricole du Mississippi, aux États-Unis, pour qualifier l'impact des technologies sur la production agricole, et la réponse des agriculteurs à cet impact. J'ai trouvé que le contrôle des fermiers sur leur production s'est trouvé restreint de manière importante, ce qui limite leur capacité de réponse stratégique, tandis que certains gestes de résistance dans l'arène légale obtiennent un impact limité.

**Mots-clés :** biotechnologie, agriculture, propriété intellectuelle, brevets, économie politique

## Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization is contested on the grounds of its extent, inevitability, and even novelty. Even if globalization is an ideologically driven political project, as many increasingly now characterize it (for example, McBride and Shields 1997; McMichael 2004; Urmetzer 2005), subscription to it nonetheless entails some very real ground-level conditioning. Regulatory reform for trade liberalization is at the heart of this conditioning. With respect to agricultural biotechnologies, this is evidenced in a strengthening of intellectual property rights, a retrenchment of public breeding, and an overall weakening of regulatory oversight. Seemingly nowhere has this reform been so unrestrained as in the U.S. Nonetheless, research on the potential social impacts of agricultural biotechnologies has largely focused on developing countries. Scholars and social movement actors have highlighted numerous inequities from introducing high capital agricultural biotechnologies to developing countries: the capture of developing country genetic resources as a form of recolonization, the technologies' unsuitability for developing country needs, and the inappropriateness of their proprietary aspects for low income countries, to name a few (see Arends-Kuenning and Makundi 2000; Barton and Berger 2001; Fitting 2008; Gonsalves et al. 2007; Howard 2000; Shiva 2001; Teubal 2008).

Given that the U.S. is a driver of the new biotechnologies—both with respect to being at the forefront of technological development and with respect to their rate of adoption—it appears to be in an assumed position of privilege, and impacts in that country have garnered far less scholarly attention. New laws and contractual obligations associated with agricultural biotechnologies indicate that significant changes are occurring in the agricultural systems of developed countries such as the U.S., however: patents on seeds, prohibitions on seed saving, grower contracts, and a rise in litigation between

technology developers and agricultural producers all suggest that a social reorganization of agriculture may be occurring, whereby ownership and control over agricultural production is expropriated from farmers and shifted to corporations. Despite these rapid changes associated with the technology, we know little of the experiences of those who actually use it. Important work can be found on structural shifts occurring in the agrifood system and on how agricultural biotechnologies increasingly affect these structural systems (see, for example, Kloppenburg 2004; Mascarenhas and Busch 2006; McMichael 1992; Wilkinson 2002), but studies that include the perspectives of farmers in developed countries are largely lacking, with some few exceptions (for example, Mauro and McLachlan, 2008; and, related, Müller 2008).

This paper seeks to address this gap by seeking the perspective of farmers from Mississippi to answer: to what extent have the proprietary aspects of agricultural biotechnologies facilitated a social reorganizing of agricultural production, and what effect does any such reorganization have on farmers' control over their production? Intimately related to the discussion of a social reorganization of agricultural production are the questions of the technologies' broader social worth and potential negative environmental and health impacts, and even their long-term viability in the face of weed and insect resistance. While these are important considerations for a social evaluation of the technologies, they are beyond the scope of this paper.[1]

The research for this paper was conducted as part of a larger, comparative investigation between Saskatchewan, Canada and Mississippi, U.S.A. These regions were selected primarily because there was important litigation between farmers and technology developers which could be revealing of the direction in which the proprietary framework for agricultural biotechnologies was developing. In Mississippi, *Monsanto Co. v. McFarling* and *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs* have the hallmarks of such cases for reasons which will be discussed. Furthermore, Mississippi had a disproportionately high number of such cases, further supporting it as a region of interest. An important secondary consideration was the degree and significance of exposure farmers had to biotechnologies, which, as will be discussed, is considerable in Mississippi.

The data for this research was drawn from 40 personal interviews, conducted during a visit to Mississippi in May and June 2005, a subsequent email interview with a representative from the Monsanto Company, and court reports and related legal documents. Interviews were face-to-face and semi-structured, and subjects included those directly involved in litigation (i.e., litigants and lawyers), as well as those involved in agriculture more broadly: producers, seed dealers, knowledgeable informants (for example, extension agents, farm media), and stakeholder organizations (for example, farm bureau, sustainable agriculture organizations). Respondents were selected either for their role as representatives of key institutions or by a targetted snowball technique (to include consultants, seed dealers, etc.). While not statistically generalizable, referrals were sought from diverse sources to reduce bias, and farmers were sought from the large-scale, highly industrialized delta region as well as the smaller-scale enterprises predominantly in the hills. Subsistence farmers were not included.

The first section of this paper will briefly discuss the political economy of agriculture literature in order to provide a theoretical context for the relationship between technology developers and farmers, and to present my argument for where political economy concepts fall short with respect to the new technologies. I suggest the addition of a new term, "expropriationism," to address this conceptual deficit. This section also briefly outlines the national and supranational regulatory structure that mediates the relationship of producers to the new biotechnologies. In the second section, I draw on the interview data to discuss both farmers' motivation for adopting biotechnologies and their frustration and concern over the conditions of that adoption. In the third section, I consider the question of resistance, broadly conceptualized. While farmers give full voice to their objections to their changing conditions, is there any orchestrated action to resist these changes, or even individual acts of opposition? I argue that the greatest effort to change the increasingly institutionalized power imbalance between technology developers and farmers is evident in the small number of seed saving cases that proceed to litigation. I conclude with suggestions for future research.

## Agriculture in Theoretical Perspective

As anyone who has stood beside a modern combine can attest, despite the old-time feel of the countryside, agriculture in the U.S. has developed significantly from the past. Providing a theoretical perspective for a system that straddles the modern and the ancient has proven to be difficult. While some scholars cast agriculture under broad theories of industrialization, the most analytically productive works are those that acknowledge the natural limitations to agriculture's full-scale industrialization. As argued by Goodman and Watts (1994), attempts to wash over the specifics of agriculture with the "gloss of Fordism" and other such broadly applied industrialization conceptualizations overlook important exceptions that need to be

explained. These exceptions result from agriculture's inseparability from nature and its processes, such as land, weather, photosynthesis and gestation cycles. The conceptual tools of appropriationism and substitutionism developed by Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson (1987) overcome this conceptual distortion by specifically focusing on how capital accumulation could occur in agriculture despite its particularities. As a consequence, they have proven to be very important means of addressing agriculture's exceptionalism, up to and including many of the changes initiated by the new agricultural biotechnologies.

Goodman et al. (1987) argue that as agriculture could not be brought wholesale under the control of capital, given its grounding in the natural processes of the earth, capital had to pursue a piecemeal and discontinuous path of agricultural industrialization through two means: appropriationism and substitutionism. Appropriationism is defined as the "discontinuous but persistent undermining of discrete elements of the agricultural production process, their transformation into industrial activities, and their re-incorporation into agriculture as inputs" (Goodman et al. 1987:2). A prime example is the replacement of horse manure with commercial fertilizer. Substitutionism follows a similar process, but replaces agricultural end products with industrial ones, reducing agricultural products to inputs for the processing sector. The substitutions of frozen "oriental vegetable medley" for fresh produce, or margarine for butter, are cases in point. Biotechnology has now vastly expanded the potential for capital accumulation in agriculture by enhancing capital's ability to bring nature under even greater industrial control. Agricultural biotechnology applications open the door to new appropriation strategies—as we have already seen with herbicide tolerance and insect resistance—and a seemingly limitless array of substitution strategies, as biological catalysts facilitate the reduction of crops to their (substitutable) components for input into the food-processing sector or for industrial applications.

While agricultural biotechnologies deepen and extend the potential for appropriationism and substitutionism in agriculture, there are indications that this is not the only means by which they are facilitating capital accumulation. Jack Kloppenburg (2004) argues that capital accumulation in agriculture has been impeded by nature's obstruction to the commodification of the seed (that is, its reproducibility). As a consequence, capital has attempted to commodify the seed through two routes: one technical (i.e., physical impediments to reproduction, such as hybrid technology) and the other social (i.e., legislation to protect plant breeders, such as the Plant Variety Protection Act). Cast more broadly than with respect to

the commodification of seeds, the host of legal and contractual conditions associated with agricultural biotechnologies suggest that another social route to accumulation is opening up. For example, with some variation by crop, place and time, Monsanto's required Technology Use Agreement binds farmers to a number of contractual provisions in addition to setting the technology fee and restricting seed saving: farmers must agree to only sell their crop to approved processors; they consent to the inspection of their fields for a set number of years; they agree that any disputes will be settled in the jurisdiction of Monsanto's hometown of St. Louis, Missouri; and they agree that any infraction will be penalized by 120 times the actual damages. This is only one of a number of proprietary changes associated with the new biotechnologies, as will be discussed. Early indications suggest that these changes are actually shifting control over agricultural production from farmers to biotechnology developers, with an associated shifting of economic benefit.

In short, the strategies of appropriationism and substitutionism have historically acted to minimize the economic significance of agriculture and of its producers in the production of agriculture-based end products. The latter have been increasingly sandwiched between the accumulation strategies of both the input and output sectors, where the "real" capital accumulation occurs. These strategies of appropriationism and substitutionism may now be joined by a third—for which I suggest the term "expropriationism"—in order to explain capital accumulation in agriculture through the use of laws, contracts and other legal mechanisms associated with biotechnologies. That is, I define expropriationism as a form of accumulation by legal means cast broadly. To specify, it is defined less by an individual legal mechanism—although, patenting seeds is certainly a central component of it—than by the confluence of legal mechanisms and processes that weave together to shift the relationship between technology developers and farmers in a way that facilitates the former's accumulation strategies. To a certain extent, many of expropriationism's features are not unprecedented—even patents on seeds preceded agricultural biotechnologies—but what is unprecedented is the breadth and level of interconnection between these features. Expropriationism thus indicates a new form of capital accumulation that is bound up with the seed, but actually transcends it, as capital is extracted not just through the seed, but through new systems of power and control associated with its purchase and use.

Given that the purpose of these mechanisms is to facilitate private capital accumulation, "expropriationism"

used here differs from the conventional legal and Marxist usage of expropriation conducted by a public body ostensibly for public good. The expropriation occurring here is not for public benefit—arguments regarding the public utility of promoting private accumulation for technological advancement notwithstanding—but is in keeping with the neoliberal trend of accumulation through dispossession (Harvey 2003). To a limited extent, this is based in an ideologically motivated position on public benefit. More conventionally consistent with the above terminology, however, is that if it is not directly employed by a state body, the strategy is certainly state facilitated. In short, the available avenues for capital accumulation are highly dependent on a number of historical and natural conditions, technological developments and state policies. While scientific and technological developments provide new opportunities for capital advancement, the state can act as an essential backer of this innovation, and can facilitate or hinder the diffusion of technological products through regulation and oversight. Thus, regulation is an important mediator of the nature and extent of technology diffusion.

Regulatory oversight associated with agricultural biotechnologies occurs globally—embodied in supranational regulatory agreements such as around intellectual property rights—and locally. Although the "local" actually encompasses a range of regulatory levels including federal, state and even county levels, the only regulations pertinent to the issues discussed here occur at the federal level.[2] The most significant supranational regulatory agreements relevant to agricultural biotechnologies are the Biosafety Protocol of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which entered into force in 2003 (although the Convention entered into force in 1993), and a number of World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements negotiated in the 1986-94 Uruguay Round, such as the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). While the Protocol is certainly very important politically, and has practical manifestations in regions such as the European Union, the U.S. is not a signatory to it. The country is, however, a member of the WTO and fully subscribes to (indeed was instrumental in the creation of) the WTO's TRIPS agreement. This is quite understandable given the country's high level of investment in the industry and the fact that 75% of publicly traded biotechnology companies are based in the U.S. (ETC Group 2005), including the Monsanto Company, the world's largest seed company. In any case, my concern here is with the ground level neoregulation[3] for the primacy of the market that occurs in conjunction with this agreement.

The WTO's TRIPS agreement aims to establish a minimum standard for intellectual property rights protection amongst its members. With respect to plants, there is little doubt that TRIPS aims to "[extend] the realm of patent law far beyond the common practice of most countries" (Müller 2006:61). In the TRIPS text, intellectual property protection for plants is supported through patenting or through an "effective sui generis system" (WTO 1994, Article 27.3b). There is some ambiguity in exactly what criteria would denote an "effective" alternative system, but subscription to the standards set by the Convention for the International Union for the Protection of Plant Varieties (UPOV) is actively promoted by Northern countries. One of several important differences between intellectual property protection through patenting versus through UPOV is found in UPOV's "farmer's exemption." While a general utility patent on seeds would force farmers to buy new seed for planting each year, the "farmer's exemption" allows farmers to save seeds for their own use, but not for reselling. The 1991 version of UPOV allows for double protection through both plant breeders' rights and patents. The U.S. is a member of this version—which leaves the implementation of the farmer's exemption to national prerogative—and it unequivocally supports patent protection on plants. The loss of farmers' rights to save their own seed is the ultimate social route—in the terminology of Kloppenburg (2004)—to the commodification of the seed. Further, given that seeds are self-reproducing, state support for their patenting creates a conflict of rights between farmers and technology developers when the patented genetic material propagates itself. However, plant patents are only one element in a host of new state-supported production conditions associated with agricultural biotechnologies.

In addition to the strong intellectual property protection essential for the profitable commercialization of the technology, U.S. support for biotechnology is demonstrated in a reluctance to strongly regulate the industry. Under the 1986 *Coordinated Framework for the Regulation of Biotechnology*, U.S. biotechnology regulation was designated to three existing agencies: the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This regulatory approach is based on an overall policy position that the products of biotechnology are "substantially equivalent" to their conventionally produced counterparts. Thus, they can be similarly regulated, as end products, rather than by the process through which they were created. While there are significant concerns with the appropriateness of this approach for such a novel technology—most notably, as contrasted by the regulatory approach of the Euro-

pean Union—the U.S. regulatory approach is rife with failure even according to its own criteria, as evidenced by a number of "incidents": the unapproved for human consumption Starlink Corn contamination disaster in 2000 (resulting in the range of a billion dollars in recalls and lawsuits); improperly contained pharmaceutical crops in 2002; unapproved Bt10 corn contamination in 2005; and, GM rice contamination in 2006 (for more on these incidents see Bratspies 2002, 2003; Mandel 2004; Wright 2005). Even a 2005 audit by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) characterized the department's regulation as lax and ineffective (USDA OIG 2005).

The retrenchment of public plant breeding is another feature supportive of the accumulation strategies of technology developers. In the U.S., there has been a progressive loss of public plant breeding in conjunction with a reorganization of research for commercial purposes: as a consequence, the public sector has been relegated to basic research, from which the private sector develops commercial applications and brings them to market (for an excellent historical treatment of this topic, see Kloppenburg 2004). Further discussion of these issues extends beyond the scope of this paper and can be found elsewhere (Pechlaner 2007; Pechlaner and Otero 2008).

Overall, state-facilitated support for private capital accumulation in agricultural biotechnologies through strong intellectual property protection, retrenchment of public breeding, and weak regulatory oversight has created a particular institutional context for their introduction. This paper is primarily concerned with the first of these and with related proprietary elements. As a result of state support for these technologies' proprietary aspects, agricultural biotechnologies are in lockstep with a particular mode of delivery that has markedly affected the resulting patterning of agricultural production. This "patterning" arguably amounts to an outright reorganization of agricultural production according to the dictates of private capital. I will now turn to farmers' reactions to these changes.

## On the Biotech Farm in Mississippi

Agriculture is very important to the state of Mississippi. Broadly defined—including poultry, forestry, catfish, cattle and row crops—agriculture is the state's number one industry and it provides direct and indirect employment to 30% of Mississippi's workforce (Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce [MDAC] N.d.). What makes Mississippi so favourable to agriculture—its long, hot summer and a short, mild winter—also makes it highly susceptible to weed and insect pressures. Consequently,

it provided a favourable context for the introduction of the two main traits of genetic engineering in agriculture: insect resistance (with insecticidal properties engineered into the crop) and herbicide tolerance (allowing for the application of weed-killing herbicide over the top of existing crops). These genetically modified (GM) varieties are available in three of the state's top five agricultural crops, cotton, soybeans and corn, and adoption is near complete. By 2005, 96% of the cotton and 96% of the soybeans grown in Mississippi were genetically engineered (USDA NASS 2005). Similar statistics for corn are not available; however, knowledgeable informants suggest adoption of the technology has been much slower in corn due to problems with yield. The Monsanto Company was the first to offer these technologies in the state. Monsanto's herbicide tolerant system, Roundup Ready (RR), was offered for soybeans in 1996, cotton in 1997 and corn in 1998. The company's insect tolerant system, Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) was launched for cotton in 1996 and corn in 1997 (Monsanto Company 2005). Stacked varieties (including both Bt and RR) also became available around this time.

The Monsanto Company's early start allowed it to quickly corner the market in GM varieties in Mississippi. In 2004, Bayer CropScience launched an alternative herbicide tolerant system but for a variety of reasons, by 2007, it had reportedly only captured an estimated 3% of the market. At that time, there was as yet no competition with Monsanto's Bt system available. Consequently, in 2005, almost ten years after the introduction of the first GM crops in Mississippi, Monsanto had a virtual monopoly on biotechnologies in the state. This market capture very likely had a significant impact on the way in which the company practiced, and very definitely had an impact on the way in which farmers perceived it to practice. Three main themes can be extracted from the interviews: farmers considered biotechnology applications to be "just another tool" in their agricultural toolkit; the technologies were increasingly considered to be an essential part of their agricultural practice; and, the conditions of their use were restrictive and inequitable, while the technologies' provider, the Monsanto Company, was perceived to be a bully who dictated their every move and penny spent.

By all accounts, farmers who used biotechnologies fully appreciated their physical properties with some differences in impact between the two technological traits. In general, however, these traits were appreciated as management tools that allowed farmers more flexibility with their schedules (for example, when to spray herbicide), reduced the overall time, energy, and labour required for the production of their crops (by reducing trips to the

field for cultivation and spraying), while (in the case of Bt cotton) reducing risk. Although the economic benefit was ambiguous (savings on fuel and labour were countered by the higher cost of the seed and the technology fee), the issue of ease of use and saving time was not. Those who used biotechnologies replied to queries regarding their physical attributes with responses that ranged from "easy" and "wonderful" to "blessing" and "saved the industry." The latter was a response to the introduction of Bt cotton, which was launched just one year after a devastating heliosis (a type of worm) outbreak financially crippled a large number of cotton farmers in the state, some irrecoverably. In this case, the use of Bt technology acted as an insurance policy: you paid a high price for the technology, but secured your investment in your crop in return.

No indication was given in the interviews that Mississippi farmers regarded either technology as a necessary evil they were adopting despite environmental and health concerns, or that biotechnologies produced "frankenfoods," as is often heard in media debates. Rather, these were considered to be perspectives coming from outside of Mississippi agriculture. This is not to imply that no one noted drawbacks. Indeed there were some—specifically, weed and insect resistance and herbicide drift—but the prevailing attitude expressed in interviews within the agricultural community was that biotechnologies provided "just another tool" comparable to conventional agriculture. As one GM farmer described it: "I don't see it as any different of a tool of conventional crop breeding or inorganic fertilizers that came on in the probably early 20th century. Or moving from a mule to a tractor ... You have to continue to evolve. That's just part of it" (#3). A rare environmentalist in the state, who worked in media but was also a small organic producer, similarly characterized the perceived normality of GMOs as an agricultural tool: "I have not come across anybody who is willing to use conventional chemicals and not use GMOs" (#23).

For those interviewed, therefore, biotechnologies appear to occupy a fairly straightforward position on a historical chain of technological improvements. A very important note regarding this position, however, is that while biotechnologies provide "just another tool," these tools are increasingly seen to be essential in Mississippi. Therefore the farmer above, in continuing his thoughts on the technologies' role in a long chain of technological improvements, further reflected, "in Mississippi it's just a fact of life and it's just something we accept, and say it's just something we need and have got to have to stay in business" (#3, GM Producer). That is to say, agricul-

tural biotechnologies are a tool of agro-industrialization, and the technological treadmill this implies is no impediment to their being frankly considered a necessity for survival. I will return to this point presently.

In short, agricultural biotechnologies have been highly successfully integrated into agricultural production practices in Mississippi. Few that I spoke to offered any significant critiques of the technologies until the topic shifted to their proprietary framework and conditions of use, at which time the critiques were voluminous and invariably related to the issue of control. Costs, seed saving restrictions, technology agreements, changing production and reward rules, monopoly control—intertwined in the perception of a shifting fabric of control over agricultural production.

Cost was the number one concern raised regarding the technologies' drawbacks, often in quite emotional terms: "They are scaring us" (#24, GM Producer). Prices had just taken a major jump for both GM seed and the technology fee in the 2005 season. According to Monsanto, their pricing was based "on sharing the profit potential delivered to growers ... versus the cost and benefit of the alternative products that they might otherwise use." In their evaluation, they were "offering more value to the grower than what the pricing reflected" (#41, Monsanto Co.). As will be discussed, the high cost of the technology is not something farmers can easily avoid in favour of these "alternatives." Further, while the vast number of respondents felt that the cost was far out of line with what it used to be and what it ought to be, even those few who were more moderate in their views expressed significant concerns over its future direction. While soybean farmers could technically save a portion of their crop for reseeding the following year (for different reasons, this is not significant to corn or cotton) and still pay Monsanto a technology license, rules against seed saving nonetheless legally obligated them to repurchase seed every year. This precluded a significant cost saving strategy in light of what many felt were wildly rising seed prices in a monopoly market: by 2005, GM soybean seeds worth only $6 on the commodity markets cost producers $30 to purchase as an input, and the cost of GM cotton reportedly "doubled." The retrenchment of public breeding programs further disadvantaged farmers: first, they lost a valuable source of good quality conventional seed; and second, this seed had acted as a check on the demands of private seed dealers who now had no such controls. As one farmer described this difference in the context of the 2005 seed price increases:

It used to be that the state of Mississippi, Stoneville experimental station or whatever, they had germplasm and they came out with varieties, along with the … companies. And that tended to keep [them] from going, you know, nuts. But that's not true anymore. [#34]

While the 2005 cost increases were without a doubt dramatic, calculations of the actual cost for a farmer depend on a variety of constantly changing factors. For example, the technology agreement originally required farmers to use Monsanto's herbicide Roundup, instead of an inexpensive generic version. When this strategy became legally untenable, Monsanto lowered the price of its herbicide and increased the cost of its technology fee. It goes to the heart of the control issue that these shifting factors act as economic dictates of a farmer's production practices. The latter occurs at the juncture where cost intersects with a range of agreements, rules and reward programs. In another example, in 2005, the technology fee for cotton was shifted from a per acre pricing to a per seed charge. This change shifted the bulk of the cost of GM farming onto the cottonseed itself, with associated production changes as seed that used to be one of the cheapest inputs became something to regulate and minimize. This had a very specific impact on farmers' production practices:

You go back, it was really cheap. The seed was the cheapest thing. You could just plant a whole lot of seed … But now you want to know exactly how many seeds. You plant exactly the same. I was planting 2 seeds every 8 inches. [#6, GM Producer]

While the shifting locus of the cost itself instigated production changes, Monsanto's incentive programs further restricted farmers' range of viable choices. As explained by an agricultural expert on cotton, Monsanto's pricing is based on a certain projected seeding rate, which is actually below that recommended by the agricultural extension agency. To plant a higher rate is exorbitantly expensive without joining the company's reward program, which places a cap on the cost in exchange for customer loyalty to its herbicide. The incentive to use Monsanto's herbicide is therefore considerable.

Replant protection is another motivator for using Monsanto's herbicides. As with a commitment to use Roundup, farmers who experience a planting failure are provided with a rebate on repurchasing seed. Given the cost difference between generic herbicide and Roundup, this still was an insufficient motivation for some farmers. But with changes in the pricing structure of seed to include the technology fee (instead of charging the tech-

nology fee by the acre), this motivation was greatly increased. While replant guarantees vary, some seed compensation is typically provided. When the technology fee was charged on a per acre basis, farmers only paid this once. With the shift of the technology fee onto the seed, however, in the event a farmer had to repurchase 50 percent of his seed anew, he would ultimately pay 1.5 times the technology fee. An agricultural consultant explained to me why he thought the company had made the change with an increasingly familiar "because they can" shrug at Monsanto's profit motives: "They have it, they control it, so why not" (#7).

Changes such as these indicate a shifting locus of production control: Monsanto's agreements, rules and incentive programs increasingly dictated aspects of production that had previously been under a farmer's prerogative. Those I interviewed further expressed a keen awareness that farmers were dependent on a very limited source for the technologies, and that this created a huge power imbalance with Monsanto, one that most felt the company was exploiting to the fullest: "Maximum inventory control. They got it, lock stock and barrel … I'm just telling you how people feel. They feel it's been rammed down their throats, and they don't have anything to say about it" (#20, Soy expert). In short, Monsanto's monopoly control as a GM supplier was frequently characterized as wholly detrimental to farmers' autonomy. At the same time, the opinion that the technologies were essential acted to curtail rejection, no matter how reprehensible the company or its conditions of sale. As one producer of GM crops described it: "Oh [farmers] don't like the company. I think if you polled people in this area it would probably be 100 percent. Monsanto is not a loved company. But they all use it; they have to" (#6).

As agricultural biotechnologies represent the perceived best practices of the up-to-date Mississippi farmer, many felt that to refuse the technology was to risk obsolescence. As further articulated by the farmer above: "Those who didn't go with the technology, it passed them by and they're out. They couldn't compete" (#6). As a consequence, within ten short years of its adoption, it is not unusual to hear statements such as: "We can't grow cotton without the Bt" (#4, GM Producer). Given the level of technological dependence, the challenge to producer control that has been ushered in with agricultural biotechnologies is significant.

The evidence above suggests that important changes are occurring in agriculture that allow for capital accumulation strategies that cannot adequately be explained by the concepts of appropriationism and substitutionism. Farmers are increasingly frustrated by concerns far

greater than strict calculations of profit, but that arise from the various strands of technology agreements, patents, incentive agreements and other legal mechanisms that have woven together to cohesively shift the basis of control over production from them to Monsanto. As a consequence, the evidence appears quite strongly in support of the conceptual addition of "expropriationism" in order to account for the web of new capital accumulation strategies. While there is certainly some overlap between these concepts, particularly between appropriationism and expropriationism—for example, replacing farm-saved seed with purchased GM technology is another form of appropriationism—there is sufficient distinction in the breadth and depth of legal mechanisms that are acting to facilitate this new accumulation strategy that these changes cannot be incorporated under appropriationism. There is no doubt that reorganization is occurring in agricultural production since the introduction of biotechnologies, and that this reorganization entails a progressive expropriation of farmers' control over their production process. Agricultural biotechnologies' proprietary aspects appear to have set a clear trajectory. Whether this will ultimately render farmers as contract labourers or glorified sharecroppers remains to be seen, although it is increasingly in the realm of the imaginable for some:

> We could end up in a society—the pork industry has already gone there, the chicken industry has already gone there, they tried to take the fish industry there— we could end up working for somebody else. Instead of being little independent producers out here, we end up working for the Tyson's chicken company. We can't compete anymore because they control everything. [#29, Consultant/Producer]

## Resisting Expropriationism

Given the apparently high level of objection to the production conditions associated with GM technology, it seems reasonable to expect farmers might engage in some tactics or strategies to change these conditions. Such actions—which I broadly characterize as "resistance"— could include refusing to use Monsanto's herbicide, writing letters, lobbying, and litigation, to name a few. Despite the overwhelming sentiments of frustration and resentment expressed by farmers, however, there were few concrete suggestions on what should or could be done regarding the imbalance of power they were experiencing. Competition was frequently suggested as a catchall solution, with little clarity as to expectations of success. Ironically, with the wind and the wide open spaces of the Mississippi delta the potential for a farmer's herbicide application to "drift" onto another farmer's crop is high, thus creating a significant risk of crop damage for farmers in this region who might wish to switch to a variety tolerant to a herbicide other than Roundup. In this case, the rapid success of the technology itself poses a barrier to competition. Actual strategies of resistance appear to be limited to reverting to conventional seeds, using generic herbicide and saving seed illicitly. Rather than solely an economic tactic (though it is for some), this last can also be a deliberate strategy for challenging the rules of the technology as will be discussed below.

As the statistics have indicated, those who chose not to use biotechnologies in Mississippi were very few in number. In the face of the 2005 seed price increases, however, many farmers were upset enough to consider reverting back to conventional seeds. A rare conventional cotton farmer, for example, explained how, in the face of the 2005 price increases, a friend of his opted to try conventional cotton for the first time in years: "they were highly upset about the tech fee increases, and so more or less as their way of rebelling against that, they chose to go back to conventional" (#12).

The availability of conventional seeds was a point of contention, however, contrasting those who pointed to their listing in catalogues against those who dispute their equivalent yield and quality and their dubious quantity (thus being technically available, but not practically viable). The quantity question became far less ambiguous after the 2005 price increases. An expert in soy stated that he had a lot of problems with farmers complaining that they could not get conventional seeds: "We had growers who wanted to grow conventional and couldn't get them, couldn't get the seed. And they had a hard time understanding that" (#20). While this effectively shut down a return to conventional seeds as a means of resistance, it is in part the nature of the supply delay of seed stock production (a one year delay) in the face of an abrupt change in demand. In this sense, farmers really had no choice but to "take it."

It is clearly not just the availability of conventional seeds that prevents farmers from making the transition back to conventional varieties. For example, more than one interviewee told me that while farmers will say they refuse to spend $30 per bag on soybeans, they would ultimately do it anyway because of the relative hardship of reverting to conventional production. This is an important point given the vociferous objection to Monsanto in the context of the virtual lack of concerted resistance efforts, outside of the 2005 attempts to revert to conventional varieties. It seems fair to extrapolate from farmers' level of commitment to the technologies, and from

the sprinkling of comments with the sentiment of "not rocking the boat," that producers are hesitant to mount a strategic resistance to reform the conditions of the technologies' diffusion because they fear they could simply be withdrawn. In fact, an attempt by a number of attorneys from Atlanta, Georgia to initiate a class action lawsuit to recoup a portion of Monsanto's technology fees on soybeans appears to have run dry in Mississippi due to this very fear of "not having the availability of the technology" (#31, GM Producer). As the peceding producer put it, "I knew going in what I was doing, and I knew what I was going to pay, and I paid it, and I'm not willing to take a chance and lose something that's good." It would appear that changing the conditions of the technologies' use in this way is tantamount to unionizing a Wal-Mart: there is always a risk that the corporate response might be to shut down its facility, or, in this case, to withdraw the technology from the market.

A less orchestrated form of resistance is through individual acts of illegal seed saving. For obvious reasons, establishing the degree to which this occurs is difficult, although there is reason to believe it was more prevalent when the technologies were first introduced. The only indications are those that can be extrapolated from Monsanto's attempts to eradicate the problem. In 2007, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) published an update of its 2005 report on the Monsanto Company's legal actions against farmers (CFS 2005). According to the update, by October 2007, the Monsanto Company had filed 112 lawsuits in 27 different states over technology agreement violations or violations of its patent through acts such as seed saving. These suits involved 372 farmers and 49 small farm businesses (CFS 2007). As noted in the update, however, the lawsuits themselves do not adequately represent the number of farmers who have interacted with the company with respect to seed piracy matters, as pre-court settlements require farmers to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Based on the company's own reporting of its range of seed piracy activities engaged in by 2006, the Centre for Food Safety calculated the company to have engaged in from 2,391 to 4,531 such matters (CFS 2007).

There is anecdotal evidence that when biotechnologies were first introduced, resistance to the patenting of seed and the prohibition on seed saving was high, and that this resistance was very practically manifested in ignoring the restriction. Monsanto's response to non-compliance has been quick and sharp, however. Further, there are many who believe that Monsanto "just picked a few" (#37, Litigant) to prosecute as examples for the others. In any case, once selected, Monsanto appears to have spared no effort or expense in their legal actions, from purchasing

an empty lot for surveillance across from one defendant's business,[4] to employing a bevy of lawyers to prosecute the resulting cases. Judgements against those who were prosecuted were also significant: by 2007, the 57 recorded judgements against farmers ranged from over $5,000 to over $3 million, with an average judgement of just under $400,000 (CFS 2007). These judgements are far below the actual cost of the entire legal proceeding to the farmer.

Given the high cost of litigation and the imbalance of power and resources available to those involved in such litigation, the vast majority of farmers appear to settle in the face of such high stakes litigation. For a limited few, however, this imbalance of power only fuels greater resistance. Tennessee cotton farmer, Kem Ralph, for example, became famous for being the first person to go to jail over genetically engineered seed when he burned the disputed seed in contravention of a judge's orders. Ralph's perspective was unequivocal: "Even though I been in prison, I don't care. I feel honoured because I'm fighting these people" (#38). Out of the ten cases filed in Mississippi, two—*Monsanto Co. v. McFarling* (hereafter "*McFarling*") and *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs* (hereafter "*Scruggs*")—stand out for their direct challenge to the system. At the time of research, both these cases were ongoing. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to go into great depth on these cases (for more, see Pechlaner 2007), a few points do need to be made.

According to Mississippi farmer Homan McFarling, seed saving has been a longstanding practice in his family: "we've always saved seed and replanted it.... My dad saved them before that, and his dad saved them before that." (#16). He claims that when he bought some of Monsanto's new seeds, in 1997, he was not aware that he was not supposed to save them. Rather, he was busy with planting time and never read the technology agreement when it was presented. "They said I had to sign it to get the seed, so I just signed it" (#16). As early as 1998, Monsanto approached McFarling with a settlement offer of $130,000 for his alleged infringement of their patent. McFarling claims he rejected Monsanto's two settlement offers because he could not afford them and because he did not think he had done anything wrong: "I told them right then, no, I don't got that kind of money. And I didn't want to settle with them, I didn't think I'd done nothing wrong. You know, planting and saving seed, what did I do?"(#16). When asked whether he would have settled if they asked for a lower amount, he remained consistent, "No, I don't think so. I ain't never thought about settling." His reasoning is straightforward, "I don't feel like I've done nothing wrong" (#16).

If McFarling indeed started from a place of lack of awareness of the new rules, he soon became a stubborn

defender of the rights of farmers to save their seed. In the course of his long legal proceedings—initiated in 2000—McFarling did not back down from his position that he had "done nothing wrong." Despite the severity of his legal troubles, McFarling nonetheless indicated to the court that "unless enjoined, he intended to plant soybeans saved from the 2000 harvest in 2001."[5] Monsanto applied for—and was granted—a preliminary injunction preventing him from doing so. Nonetheless, in practice, McFarling clearly resisted the expropriationist tendencies of the new biotech regime. Having refused to settle, McFarling moved the issue from one that might be characterized as "training the locals"—that is, training Mississippi farmers to comply with the new intellectual property rules that accompany GM seeds—to one that directly challenged the legitimacy of the new rules.

McFarling's course of litigation provided a defence to the charge of infringement through counterclaims against Monsanto's means of disseminating the technology and included claims of violation of the Plant Variety Protection Act (legislation permitting seed saving), monopolization, unreasonable restraint of trade, and violation of Mississippi antitrust law and patent misuse. In this way, McFarling forced a wealth of complex issues to be considered by the court. These ranged from the extremely abstract (whether the patent covered both trait and germplasm or only trait, and whether the patent was "exhausted" in the second generation) to the very concrete (the legality of the damages clause), and drew in the whole agro-biotechnology delivery structure to question whether the new system of rules was unfairly biased against farmers.

Despite three appeals, McFarling failed overall with respect to patent misuse, antitrust and related claims. He did, however, have a partial success during his challenge of two terms of the technology agreement: the "forum selection" clause, which designated the jurisdiction of dispute settlement, and the "120-multiplier" clause, regarding damages. In the former, any farmer in dispute with Monsanto must travel to Missouri, greatly increasing the expense and impact of any such litigation. While this clause was ultimately upheld, Circuit Judge Clevenger filed a strongly worded dissent on the basis that the Technology Agreement as a whole represented a "contract of adhesion," that is, a contract between parties of unequal power with take-it-or-leave-it provisions and with no other source for the necessary goods. Clevenger argued that "farmers sign the Technology Agreement if they wish to remain competitive in the soybean market,"[6] and consequently, supporting the provisions of such an adhesion contract against a defendant was "in derogation of his constitutional rights."[7]

The 120-multiplier clause required an accounting of actual damages and then multiplied it by 120, a calculation that would seemingly bankrupt any infringing farmer. In a rare victory, this clause was determined to constitute punitive damages, which are unenforceable under Missouri law, and was struck down. The removal of this clause reduced a significant threat against farmers facing litigation with the company. According to a paralegal involved with a number of the cases, "a lot of the farmers have settled with Monsanto because of the 120 multiplier ... Nobody could pay it" (#18). Nonetheless, despite the striking down of the 120 multiplier, the damages ultimately awarded were still significant. The district court awarded Monsanto approximately $375,000 in damages, which at $40 per bag fell between the established royalty of $6.50 per bag that McFarling argued would be appropriate and the $73.20 to $80.65 per bag proposed by Monsanto.[8] McFarling appealed the damages, but they were affirmed in May 2007. A subsequent petition by McFarling to the U.S. Supreme Court was denied on 7 January 2008.

While McFarling was not successful in the majority of his challenges, in many ways he set the stage for the Scruggs case and the evidence and lines of argument appeared to gain in strength. *Scruggs* also had a greater potential to take many of the issues raised in *McFarling* further, given the Scruggs' superior resources: the Scruggs brothers are reportedly the largest farmers in three counties, and had 20,000 acres under production, a farm supply business, and a cotton ginning facility. Mitchell Scruggs himself had an estimated net worth of $5 to $8 million dollars.[9] As a point of comparison, McFarling did not even have a patent lawyer on his case.

As in *McFarling*, the factual evidence of infringement was straightforward. The Scruggs admitted to purchasing and resaving Monsanto's seed and to not signing a technology licence. While they vehemently denied selling saved seed through their farm supply store, they readily admitted to not requiring farmers to sign the technology agreement. Monsanto did not make the Scruggs a settlement offer. This is perhaps not surprising given that Mitchell Scruggs demonstrated every intent to reclaim a farmer's right to farm saved seed. Pointedly, he did not require his own customers to sign Monsanto's technology agreement on the basis of principle: "It was no law or anything said that I had to force a farmer to sign a contract that I didn't believe in myself. I mean Monsanto just wanted the farmers to sign it so they would have some kind of strong arm on them" (#15).

Scruggs' battle with Monsanto eventually cost him his seed dealership, as he was no longer allowed any con-

tact with the company's technology. By 2005 he had opened a new store, Scruggs Farm Lawn & Garden Home Improvement Warehouse. At that time, he still cast his legal issues in the context of the broader concerns of farmers in the face of the changing rules associated with agricultural biotechnologies:

> I don't think it's fair, then or today or anytime, for one company to use any type of technology to monopolize the whole seed industry and control the food and fibre of the world. That wasn't what patents were intended to do. [#15]

There is little doubt that Mitchell Scruggs saw himself as playing a defensive role in resisting those changes.

Notwithstanding some of the unique elements in *Scruggs*, similar to *McFarling*, we see a defence that is heavily steeped in the propriety of Monsanto's prohibitions on seed saving, raising such issues as patent exhaustion (over successive generations of seed), patent misuse or antitrust (such as through tying the trait to the germplasm and the herbicide to the trait), antitrust violations, and violation of the Plant Variety Protection Act. Essentially, they are challenges launched at the market disadvantage for farmers created through contracts and other means, and which have already been noted in farmers' complaints about the company. Despite many strong arguments, the Scruggs' claims were nonetheless thwarted at almost every stage. The District Court found insufficient grounds to proceed to trial and granted Monsanto's motion for Summary Judgment, while denying that of the Scruggs. On appeal, the Scruggs again launched strong allegations about Monsanto's controlling practices, alleging that it:

> misused its patents to impermissibly exclude competitors in trait and herbicide markets, create and police a seed cartel, raise prices, tie/bundle/leverage separate products, fix pricing components, mandate economic waste, harm competition, restrain trade and extract monopoly profits."[10]

By 2005 the Scruggs had not yet succeeded in any significant aspects of their claims, but they had succeeded in providing a large amount of evidence to put such issues into question. Subsequently, the Attorney General of Mississippi submitted a brief in support of proceeding to trial, arguing that the Scruggs presented sufficient evidence of Monsanto's market power and "well documented allegations of disturbing exercises of such power."[11] While a number of the Attorney General's stated concerns echoed arguments regarding farmers' "choice" in the context of the "indispensable nature" of the Roundup Ready trait, his

main concern was that these power issues not avoid being put to trial:

> Monsanto's inefficient and costly no-replant policy imposed on Mississippi and other American farmers has continually evaded judicial scrutiny on its merits— or potential lack thereof—as to whether it violates federal antitrust laws. The time is now ripe for such an inquiry.[12]

Despite such support, and significant efforts to bring the issues to trial, the Scruggs have failed in their numerous attempts to make legal headway. The Summary Judgment decision was affirmed in August 2006. In December, the Scruggs applied for rehearing but the application was denied. They subsequently applied for hearing by the Supreme Court but this request was also denied on 16 April 2007. In 2009, the Scruggs petitioned the court to reconsider its 2004 denial of their motion for Summary Judgment in light of a subsequent court decision material to the issue of patent exhaustion. While the application was denied, the Court recognized that the issue involved a controlling question of law, and left an opening for appeal. On 4 May 2009, the U.S. Court of Appeals denied permission to appeal but noted that "Scruggs may raise these issues on appeal from the final judgment or injunction."[13]

While the long battle of *Scruggs* may still find new ground, to date, Monsanto has prevailed in reorganizing systems of power and control in conjunction with the introduction of agricultural biotechnologies in ways that provide new mechanisms for capital accumulation. As characterized by a Monsanto representative, the rulings in these two cases, "reinforce both the legality and the appropriateness of Monsanto's business model" (#41). Nonetheless, in both *McFarling* and *Scruggs* it is clear that at the very least, the transition to the new expropriationist paradigm is not occurring without challenge. While neither case has made significant inroads into changing the power dynamics associated with the adoption of agricultural biotechnologies, both cases have forced a number of these dynamics into the light for further scrutiny. Whether this exposure will help ultimately to prompt a change in these dynamics remains to be seen.

## Conclusion

As we can see here, however one views them, the introduction of agricultural biotechnologies has been an important event for Mississippi agriculture. Biotechnologies are far from passive, however, simply offering their physical properties for farmers to take up like a shiny new hammer. In addition to their physical properties, biotechnologies

have been associated with important neoregulatory institutional changes such as enhanced intellectual property rights, weak regulation and a retrenchment of public plant breeding. It is a tribute to the complex social character of the technologies that farmers do not perceive them as either wholly good or bad, but as multifaceted, and playing many roles in the network of agricultural production in Mississippi. Along the different points of this network you can hear polarized statements about their worth—from being the "salvation" of Mississippi cotton to being the means to "controlling the food and fibre of the world"—that are nonetheless not necessarily contradictory. That said, it is clear here that the proprietary aspects of biotechnologies have been hugely significant in reorganizing agricultural production in Mississippi, so much so that I argue that the important explanatory concepts of appropriationism and substitutionism need to be joined by a third, "expropriationism," in order to account for new capital accumulation strategies based on them.

Despite some important physical drawbacks to the technology (notably, drift and increasing resistance), it is nonetheless a tribute to the technologies' desirability that farmers in Mississippi are so hugely drawn to their use despite their objections to Monsanto and to the restrictive conditions attached to the technologies' purchase and use. In response to what amounts to a profound and progressive narrowing of options, farmers have been vociferous but subdued: vociferous in denouncing what can generally be characterized as a loss of control, but subdued in strategic actions to address it. There seems little doubt that the high level of technological dependence has drastically curtailed any potential resistance to the production conditions set by Monsanto. For the most part, Mississippi farmers are shrinking their range of mobility without much of a fight—outside of the very few who have reverted to conventional seeds—largely because they find the technologies' physical benefits outweigh their costs at the present time. It remains an open question whether significant change will be possible in the plausible event that this balance shifts. The judicial and regulatory bodies of the U.S., for their part, appear almost uniformly supportive of the institutionalization of private sector accumulation strategies that ultimately diminish farmers' alternatives and limit their range of action.

While strategic action in response to the shifting balance of power between farmers and technology developers seems very limited in the Mississippi farming community, it is, however, practiced outside it by environmental and other NGOs, such as the Centre for Food Safety. Further, for a very limited few, the legal forum has become the site of a more strategic contestation of the conditions of the technologies' use. While not necessarily deliberate in their legal engagement with the company (though perhaps it was deliberate for some), once engaged it is clear that a number of farmers have cast themselves in a larger role than self-preservation. Therefore, while resistance for the majority of farmer appears limited to tactical responses, such as using generic chemicals, a few have engaged in direct resistance in the legal forum. As we have seen in *McFarling* and *Scruggs*, however, the impact of this resistance has been limited to date, and the expropriationist trajectory of the unfolding regime appears undaunted. Nonetheless, the issues are gaining exposure in the broader farming community, as can be seen by the involvement of the Solicitor General of the U.S. in *McFarling* and the Attorney General for the State of Mississippi in *Scruggs*, and this could ultimately create reform pressures.

Much has happened in agriculture since the interviews were conducted in 2005. Most significantly, subsequent years have seen a "perfect storm" of pressures on agricultural commodities—for example, drought in Australia, population growth, rising incomes in developing countries—that have caused both an agricultural boom and a global food crisis. In addition, rising energy costs have prompted a policy of agrofuel development in a number of countries, which has made a highly debated but significant contribution to the upward pressure on the value of agricultural commodities. While prices have subsided, in large part, due to the subsequent global financial crisis, tighter credit may actually curtail production and prompt a resurgence of the boom (Blas 2008, 2009). Moreover, in the long term, many of the factors prompting the increase in prices remain, although much will depend on the tenuous fate of the agrofuel industry. Such factors will likely be important to the configuring of the new regime in developed countries. As high prices increase the profitability of farming, restrictions on seed saving and related measures will only marginally impact profits, and consequently will garner less resistance from farmers. Pfeffer (1992), for example, argues that good economic times support a presumption of a mutually beneficial relationship between agribusiness and farmers, which breaks down when times are hard. Relatedly, how agricultural biotechnologies are positioned to respond to global climate and other environmental changes will also influence farmers' level of acceptance of the conditions under which they are released. These are important factors for future research on this topic.

Finally, my own research suggests that while there are a number of strong parallels between the experience of farmers with agricultural biotechnologies in Saskatch-

ewan, Canada, and that of farmers in Mississippi, there are also a sufficient number of differences that suggest that the unfolding of capital accumulation strategies needs further research to strengthen conclusions about its trajectory, and about the avenues for, and successes of, resistance to this trajectory. This research, in conjunction with related research in regions where the technologies' adoption has been thwarted (such as in a number of countries of the European Union), would be another important addition to our understanding of these processes.

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## Notes

1   For further discussion of some of these issues, see Pechlaner 2007.

2   A number of very interesting state and county level regulatory battles have occurred over agricultural biotechnologies—for example, over the potential for regional GM bans—however this article is directly concerned with the experience of farmers in Mississippi where such battles have not occurred.

3   Neoregulation and reregulation both strive to overcome the conceptual defects of the term "deregulation," which implies a retrenchment of the state and fails to capture its active participation in establishing the primacy of the market. I and my co-author (Pechlaner and Otero 2010) opt for the term neoregulation as more appropriate to characterize the current aspects of regulation which require the active participation of the state but are distinct from a reapplication of earlier welfare state style regulation.

4   *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs*, 342 F. Supp. 2d. 602. (N.D. Miss 2004) at 606. (United States district Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, Western Division, 2 July 2004:4)

5   *Monsanto Co. v. McFarling*, 302 F. 3d 1291 (Fed. Cir. 2002) at 1294.

6   *Monsanto Co. v. McFarling*, 302 F. 3d 1291 (Fed. Cir. 2002) at 1301.

7   *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs*, 342 F. Supp. 2d. 602. (N.D. Miss 2004) at 1306.

8   Monsanto Co. v. McFarling, 488 F. 3d 973 (Fed. Cir. 2007) at 977.

9   *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs*, 249 F. Supp. 2d. 746 (N.D. Miss. 2001) at 760.

10   *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs*, 459 F. 3d. 1328 (Fed. Cir. 2006) (Brief of Appellants, 2 May 2005: 8).

11   *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs*, 459 F. 3d. 1328 (Fed. Cir. 2006) (Brief of Amicus Curiae, Jim Hood, Attorney General State of Mississippi, 20 May 2005:20).

12   *Monsanto Co. v. Scruggs*, 459 F. 3d. 1328 (Fed. Cir. 2006) (Brief of Amicus Curiae, Jim Hood, Attorney General State of Mississippi, 20 May 2005:16).

13   *Monsanto Co. v. McFarling*, No. 900, 2009, Lexis 11700 (Fed. Cir. 4 May 2009) at 5.

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# L'agriculture biologique et les paradoxes de la reconnaissance

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***Résumé :*** L'agriculture biologique telle qu'elle se pratique aujourd'hui a émergé dans le contexte d'un mouvement social alternatif dont les membres ont remis en question les pratiques agricoles conventionnelles, et développé des méthodes de production qui visent un meilleur équilibre écologique. En raison de cette approche contestataire, l'agriculture biologique a longtemps existé en marge des modèles agricoles dominants et n'a bénéficié que de peu de soutien institutionnel. En fait, pour de nombreux agriculteurs, la recherche d'une plus grande agencéité – une autonomie décisionnelle et une indépendance face aux conseils d'experts, intrants industriels, syndicats de production, etc., plus grandes – constitue une motivation majeure de leur pratique de l'agriculture biologique. Au cours des dernières années cependant, celle-ci a perdu de sa marginalité pour acquérir une plus grande acceptation sociale et institutionnelle, plaçant les agriculteurs devant les paradoxes de la reconnaissance, laquelle inclut une implication accrue de l'État.

**Mots-clés :** agriculture biologique, agencéité, mouvement social, motivations, typologie

***Abstract:*** Organic agriculture as practised now emerged out of a counter-cultural social movement that sought to question conventional agricultural practices and to develop more ecologically sound ways of producing food. It has hence long been at the margins of dominant agricultural models and has benefitted poorly from formal support. Indeed, for many organic farmers, the possibilities for greater agency on their farms— being more independent of expert advice, of industrial inputs, of marketing boards and the like—is one of the main motivations for producing organically. In recent years, however, organic farming has moved increasingly into the mainstream and farmers find themselves facing the paradoxes of greater public recognition as well as greater government support and intervention.

**Keywords:** organic agriculture, farming, agency, social movement, motivations, typology

## Introduction

L'agriculture biologique telle qu'elle se pratique aujourd'hui s'est développée dans le contexte d'un mouvement social alternatif dont les membres ont remis en question les pratiques agricoles conventionnelles – qui cherchent à accroître la productivité par l'utilisation d'intrants synthétiques, par exemple – en développant des méthodes de production qui visent un meilleur équilibre écologique[1]. En raison de cette approche contestataire, l'agriculture biologique a longtemps existé en marge des modèles agricoles dominants et n'a bénéficié que de peu de soutien institutionnel. En fait, pour de nombreux agriculteurs, la recherche d'une plus grande agencéité[2] – une autonomie décisionnelle et une indépendance plus grandes face aux conseils d'experts, aux intrants industriels, aux syndicats de production, etc. – constitue une motivation majeure de leur pratique de l'agriculture biologique.

Au cours des dernières années cependant, l'agriculture biologique a perdu de sa marginalité pour gagner en acceptation sociale et institutionnelle. Elle prend dorénavant une place plus centrale dans le paysage agroalimentaire. Ce processus d'acceptation publique met les agriculteurs face aux paradoxes de la reconnaissance, laquelle va de pair avec une implication plus grande de l'État. Cette reconnaissance tant souhaitée, ainsi que l'appui politique et financier qui l'accompagne, a des implications qui rendent plusieurs acteurs ambivalents, notamment en ce qui concerne les normes nationales de la production biologique et, de façon plus générale, les procédures de certification.

Le cas de l'agriculture biologique, exploré ici par le biais d'un travail ethnographique de terrain auprès d'agriculteurs biologiques québécois, éclaire les paradoxes qui surviennent lorsqu'un mouvement social réussit à disséminer ses idées et son projet de société au sein d'une plus large culture. D'un côté, ce mouvement est en mesure de mobiliser des ressources et de profiter des opportunités institutionnelles; mais de l'autre, ce succès peut miner son

pouvoir de contestation, car il se fait absorber par des institutions et des logiques gouvernementales (Tovey 2002).

## Méthodologie

La recherche sur laquelle se base cet article visait à appréhender différentes dimensions de l'agriculture biologique, et parmi elles : le rapport au vivant et aux technologies; le rôle de l'agriculture biologique dans la création et la transmission de savoirs écologiques; et les questions philosophiques posées par l'agriculture biologique sur le vivant. L'objectif consistait à la fois à analyser les structures et les réseaux de l'agriculture biologique, et à dessiner un portrait sensible qui rende compte des aspects phénoménologiques de l'expérience vécue par les agriculteurs. Je prends donc l'expérience vécue par les individus comme point de départ pour ensuite remonter vers les politiques, les idéologies et les mouvements qui informent, inspirent et nourrissent leurs activités et leurs façons de voir (Burawoy 2000). Cette perspective permet d'examiner l'influence des processus et des *ideoscapes* (Appadurai 1996) globaux sur des pratiques et des savoirs extrêmement localisés, qui établissent ainsi des liens entre la mondialisation et les divers réseaux d'acteurs situés à différents paliers.

L'analyse de ces différentes dimensions de la réalité exige des méthodes d'approche variées. Afin de comprendre le mouvement global pour l'agriculture biologique, des listes d'envoi sur Internet, des revues en ligne et des groupes de discussion ont été utilisés. Des articles publiés dans un journal agricole et dans des revues sur l'agriculture biologique, et ce, autant aux niveaux québécois, que canadien et international, ont été analysés. L'occasion d'assister à des évènements qui se déroulaient dans le milieu de l'agriculture biologique au Québec (foires, colloques, visites de fermes, etc.) a été autant que possible saisie. Des entrevues en profondeur ont également été menées avec des agriculteurs biologiques de divers secteurs afin de bien saisir la complexité de leurs expériences. Ces entrevues ont été conduites dans cinq régions du Québec[3], dont la diversité a permis de couvrir différentes conditions climatiques et géophysiques, diverses dynamiques régionales ainsi qu'une variété de secteurs de production. En tout, ce sont des entrevues sur pas moins de trente-huit fermes[4] qui ont été menées, auxquelles se sont ajoutés des entretiens complémentaires auprès d'intervenants d'organismes dont le mandat est d'offrir un appui au secteur de l'agriculture biologique.

Au total, ce sont donc quarante-huit agriculteurs et agricultrices[5] (sur les trente-huit fermes, plusieurs sont en effet exploitées par des couples) qui ont été interviewés. De ce nombre, vingt (soit 41,67 %) ont grandi sur une ferme, et vingt-huit (58,33 %) ne sont pas issus du milieu agricole. Cinq vivent dans un couple dont l'un des membres a grandi sur une ferme. On peut observer une tendance générale dans laquelle l'élevage est associé à des fermes où un des producteurs émerge du milieu agricole (57, 89 %), alors que la production horticole – de légumes, de fruits, de sirop ou de plantes médicinales – est davantage pratiquée par des gens qui n'ont pas grandi sur une ferme (13/19, soit 68,42 %)[6]. Cette différence entre les activités des gens provenant d'un milieu agricole et les autres s'explique par les coûts prohibitifs des infrastructures requises pour s'établir en élevage (en terres, quotas, bâtiments, machinerie et équipement). Le plus souvent, ces fermes sont transmises d'une génération à l'autre, soit par héritage, soit par la vente à un prix préférentiel. Des « néo-ruraux » ont quant à eux tendance à acheter des fermes plus petites (parfois sur des terres marginales), qui se prêtent à des projets horticoles à échelle réduite, bien qu'il y ait de nombreuses exceptions à cette règle.

Je vise à explorer dans cet article les motivations des agriculteurs biologiques afin de mieux comprendre les stratégies qu'ils adoptent : la promotion vs le rejet de l'appellation biologique; les réseaux de proximité vs les réseaux commerciaux nationaux et internationaux; les réseaux politiques et institutionnels traditionnels vs les réseaux émergents. Ces différentes stratégies suggèrent l'existence de sous-groupes au sein du mouvement, indiquant des tendances parfois contradictoires, parfois complémentaires et qui parfois se recouvrent. L'évolution du mouvement social lié à l'agriculture biologique se révèle ainsi à travers les stratégies adoptées par ses adhérents face à l'institutionnalisation et la standardisation de la définition du « bio ».

## Une approche anthropologique de l'agriculture biologique

L'agriculture biologique n'est ni un système agricole traditionnel, ni une approche tout à fait moderne de la production agricole; c'est-à-dire qu'elle n'a pas été transmise de génération en génération dans un contexte culturel et environnemental donné, à l'inverse des pratiques de nombreux paysans à travers le monde. Au contraire, l'agriculture biologique s'est développée ici en opposition explicite à l'agriculture industrielle moderne telle qu'elle s'est construite au cours du siècle dernier, mais plus particulièrement depuis les années 1930. L'agriculture biologique est en opposition avec les tendances modernes qui vont vers l'industrialisation, avec les notions de progrès, de productivité et d'efficacité qui l'accompagnent; et elle s'appuie cependant sur de nombreux développements issus de la modernité, en particulier les sciences agrono-

miques et biologiques. L'étude de l'agriculture biologique exige donc une approche qui tienne compte à la fois de son évolution en tant que mouvement social, et de la perspective qu'elle propose quant aux relations entre la nature et la société.

La présente recherche se situe à l'intersection de différents courants théoriques. La littérature sur les mouvements sociaux, d'une part, permet de comprendre le rôle de ceux-ci dans la production et la transmission de savoirs alternatifs et de visions du monde (Eyerman et Jamison 1991; Tovey 2002). Il s'agit dans ce cas d'un mouvement qui prône une re-connaissance radicale des relations entre la société et la nature (Goodman 2000; Goodman et Goodman 2001; Goodman et Watts 1997; Tovey 1999; Vos 2000). La littérature anthropologique sur la construction sociale de la nature, les savoirs écologiques et l'écologie politique, d'autre part, facilite l'appréhension des diverses dimensions de la relation entre les humains et leur environnement en prenant en considération le matériel, le discursif, le social et le culturel (Argyrou 2005; Descola 2005; Descola et Pálsson 1996; Escobar 1999; Ingold 1996; Latour 1997; Milton 1997; Poirier 1996; Rose 1999).

Les mouvements sociaux figurent en bonne place parmi les éléments de la société qui participent à la remise en question des relations entre nature et culture. Le mouvement environnemental en est un bon exemple, notamment par ses différents courants qui proposent une transformation de la relation entre l'homme et la biosphère. Le mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique propose également un autre rapport au vivant, cette fois à travers la production agricole. Mais s'agit-il vraiment d'un mouvement social dans le plein sens du terme? Si un mouvement social peut se définir par « un groupe d'individus qui participent à un processus idéologiquement cohérent et non institutionnalisé visant à changer l'état actuel et la trajectoire de la société » (Garner 1995:43, ma traduction), alors on peut dire que l'agriculture biologique en est un. Si, par contre, on le définit comme un « système d'action comprenant des réseaux mobilisés d'individus, de groupes et d'organisations qui, sur la base d'une identité collective partagée, tentent d'obtenir ou de prévenir le changement social, principalement par le moyen de la contestation collective » (Rucht 1999:207, ma traduction), alors le cas est moins clair, car on ne peut pas dire que la contestation collective caractérise l'agriculture biologique. Je me rallie pour ma part à la définition formulée par Michelsen (2001), qui affirme que l'agriculture biologique est un mouvement social proposant l'autoréglementation comme solution à des problèmes issus des politiques agricoles. Autrement dit, les producteurs biologiques adop-

tent une approche différente face à l'agriculture, plutôt que de lutter pour des changements politiques, comme le font les mouvements sociaux traditionnels. Selon Michelsen, puisque l'agriculture biologique se fonde sur une critique radicale de l'agriculture dominante, qu'elle regroupe des individus provenant de groupes sociaux très divers et qu'elle est basée sur des valeurs distinctes, elle constitue bien un mouvement social du fait qu'elle vise à changer la société, du moins en partie (Michelsen 2001:64).

Deux traditions principales marquent le développement de la théorisation sur les mouvements sociaux : le structuro-fonctionnalisme et le behaviorisme, d'une part, qui ont influencé la tradition américaine prédominante, qui considère les mouvements sociaux comme des acteurs rationnels poursuivant des buts politiques par la mobilisation stratégique de ressources. Dans cette perspective, les analystes se sont principalement penchés sur les organisations de mouvements sociaux (SMO, *social movement organizations*) et sur les stratégies politiques déployées pour atteindre leurs objectifs; et la tradition européenne, d'autre part, fortement influencée par le marxisme et la théorie critique. Les mouvements sociaux y sont considérés comme des réseaux culturels créant de nouvelles identités basées sur de nouveaux styles de vie et de relations sociales. « Les mouvements sociaux cherchent le changement à travers l'innovation politique et culturelle – en reconstruisant des valeurs, des identités personnelles et des symboles culturels, ainsi qu'en contribuant à l'émergence de modes de vie alternatifs » (Tovey 2002:3). Alors que la théorie sur la mobilisation de ressources (RMT, *Resource Mobilization Theory*) se penche sur la capacité des mouvements à utiliser diverses ressources (personnes, matériels et idées) pour mobiliser les appuis et être pris au sérieux, la théorie culturelle, pour sa part, met de l'avant le sens politique et l'identité socio-historique.

Ces deux tendances peuvent être perçues comme des perspectives théoriques opposées; cependant, ce sont aussi des moments distincts dans l'histoire des mouvements sociaux. Les perspectives « politiques » semblent pour leur part mieux adaptées à l'étude des « vieux » mouvements sociaux caractéristiques des sociétés industrielles et postindustrielles où les buts politiques « émancipatoires » ainsi que l'action collective instrumentale prédominaient (comme dans le cas des mouvements pour les droits des travailleurs et des droits civils, ainsi que des mouvements syndicalistes). Les approches « culturelles », quant à elles, s'adaptent mieux aux réalités des « nouveaux » mouvements sociaux (NMS), qui sont davantage tournés vers le sens, la culture et l'élaboration de valeurs alternatives, proposant ainsi des politiques identitaires

et prônant une action collective expressive (et non instrumentale).

Les tentatives de réconcilier ces approches ont permis de nuancer ces visions polarisées des mouvements sociaux. Certains auteurs remarquent que les mouvements sociaux passent à travers des phases politiques et culturelles au cours de leur cycle de vie : des actions non institutionnalisées de protestation collective peuvent devenir des intérêts institutionnalisés, aboutir à la formation de groupes d'intérêt et à des formulations de politique partisane (Tovey 2002:4). La linéarité de ce modèle est, somme toute, problématique, puisqu'il prétend d'emblée que tous les mouvements traversent des phases évolutives similaires. Au lieu de cela, Jean Cohen (1996) suggère que les mouvements sociaux renferment simultanément les deux tendances.

> Les mouvements sociaux contemporains ont une « double tâche politique » : ils doivent s'engager dans une « politique d'influence » au sein même de la sphère politique et, simultanément, dans une « politique identitaire » dans la vie courante ou dans la sphère de la société civile. Autrement dit, les mouvements sociaux visent à la fois la société politique et civile[7]. [Tovey 2002:4]

Cohen (1996) souligne pour sa part avec force que ces compréhensions divergentes des mouvements sociaux ne sont pas le simple fait de la théorisation mais représentent plutôt une réponse aux activités et aux objectifs divergents en présence au sein même des mouvements.

Alberto Melucci (1989) voit de son côté dans les mouvements sociaux un défi pour les systèmes de pensée dominants, voire pour le pouvoir établi, alors que Ron Eyerman et Andrew Jamison (1991) considèrent plutôt que le sens symbolique ou expressif que ces mouvements véhiculent agit comme une force sociale constructive, un déterminent fondamental pour la connaissance humaine. Ils précisent que « ce que l'on perd de vue, c'est le rôle dynamique, le rôle de médiateur joué par les mouvements dans ce que l'on pourrait nommer le façonnage social de la connaissance » (Eyerman et Jamison 1991:47)[8]. Ils insistent sur les dimensions cognitives des mouvements sociaux :

> Un mouvement social n'est pas une organisation ou un groupe d'intérêt particulier. Il ressemble davantage à un territoire cognitif, un nouvel espace conceptuel habité par une interaction dynamique entre des organisations et des groupes différents. C'est à travers les tensions existant entre différentes organisations sur la définition et les actions dans un espace conceptuel, que l'identité (temporaire) d'un mouvement social se forme[9]. [Eyerman et Jamison 1991:55]

Ainsi, bien qu'il soit vrai que des mouvements sociaux aboutissent à la création d'organisations et d'institutions, ces structures plus formelles ne constituent que des véhicules pour le sens du mouvement; la signification de celui-ci se situe au sein de l'espace cognitif créé par le mouvement. Eyerman et Jamison soutiennent que le mouvement social joue un rôle de médiateur dans la transformation du savoir populaire en un savoir professionnel, et dans l'attribution de nouveaux contextes pour la réinterprétation du savoir professionnel. Ils s'intéressent donc au rôle que jouent les mouvements sociaux dans le développement de la connaissance humaine :

> La société se construit par la « re-connaissance », par des actes récurrents de savoir qui se poursuivent sans cesse. Dans cette perspective, la connaissance n'est pas seulement ou même principalement une connaissance systématisée, formalisée du monde universitaire, ni (simplement) un savoir scientifique produit par des professionnels reconnus. C'est plutôt la praxis cognitive au sens large qui informe toute l'activité sociale. C'est donc à la fois formel et informel, objectif et subjectif, moral et immoral, et, de façon plus importante, professionnel et populaire[10]. [Eyerman et Jamison 1991:49]

Ce concept de « praxis cognitive » réfère aux interactions entre les pratiques individuelles, collectives, et macrosociétales. Pour ces chercheurs, la connaissance est le produit d'une série de rencontres sociales à la fois *à l'intérieur* des mouvements, *entre* les mouvements ainsi *qu'entre les mouvements et leurs adversaires* :

> Lorsque l'on se focalise sur la praxis cognitive des mouvements sociaux, leur importance comme des forces créatrices au sein de la société, comme des sources d'inspiration et de connaissance devient évidente[11]. [Eyerman et Jamison 1991:58]

Ainsi, par leur dynamique autour des savoirs, les mouvements sociaux contribuent à l'émergence de nouveaux champs, de nouveaux cadres conceptuels, de nouveaux rôles intellectuels, et de nouveaux problèmes et idées scientifiques. Il y a trois dimensions à cette construction des savoirs : premièrement, la dimension cosmologique du mouvement lui donne sa mission, sa vision utopique ; deuxièmement, les technologies développées au cours des activités du mouvement reflètent ses préoccupations pratiques ; et troisièmement, les formes d'organisation qui y sont développées permettent au mouvement de se donner des structures pour disséminer son message et ses nouveaux savoirs (Eyerman et Jamison 1991). Tovey (2002) note cependant que ces différentes dimensions entrent parfois en conflit, l'accent pouvant être mis sur

l'une aux dépens d'une autre. Par exemple, des intérêts politiques et commerciaux cherchent à focaliser sur la dimension technique de l'agriculture biologique, dont certains éléments seraient transférables à l'agriculture conventionnelle (sans la remettre fondamentalement en question). Cette position est cependant inacceptable pour de nombreux producteurs biologiques qui défendent la dimension cosmologique de leur projet, notamment la critique de l'agriculture industrielle et la nécessité d'une vision plus holistique. Nous verrons dans ce qui suit comment ces différentes priorités apparaissent dans la réalité québécoise et de quelle façon elles induisent différentes définitions du « bio ». Mais commençons plutôt par parcourir brièvement l'histoire de l'agriculture biologique.

## Le mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique

Pour dresser un portrait de l'histoire de l'agriculture biologique – en faire pour le moins un survol rapide –, il faut remonter au moins au début du XXᵉ siècle. À cette époque, certains scientifiques, philosophes et agriculteurs critiquent ouvertement l'urbanisation, l'industrialisation, la perte de savoir-faire en cours dans les sociétés occidentales, de même que les notions de progrès, d'efficacité et de productivité qui y sont reliées. À partir de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, l'utilisation accrue de la machinerie et des fertilisants artificiels suscite la préoccupation auprès de ceux qui craignent les effets néfastes de ces nouvelles pratiques sur les milieux environnementaux, sanitaires, sociaux et culturels. On appréhende par exemple la dépopulation et l'enlaidissement des paysages ruraux, la perception mécanique et instrumentale des animaux de ferme, les conséquences imprévisibles des pesticides, ainsi que les effets nocifs de ceux-ci sur la santé humaine (Conford 2001). Ces arguments restent au cœur des motivations du mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique.

Il est intéressant de noter que l'Asie constitue une source d'inspiration pour plusieurs fondateurs de la « pensée bio », une Asie qu'ils ont rencontrée à l'occasion de voyages, de travail ou de recherches. Le botaniste Albert Howard, par exemple, passe quelque vingt-cinq ans en Inde (de 1905 à 1931) et y développe une méthode de compostage qui est encore utilisée aujourd'hui. Au tout début du vingtième siècle, le médecin Robert McCarrison vit pendant sept années parmi les Hunzas (un peuple situé dans ce qui est aujourd'hui le nord du Pakistan) et y observe les liens entre leur alimentation, les méthodes culturales basées sur l'application de compost et leur impressionnante santé physique et mentale. En 1907, Franklin King, quant à lui, voyage en Chine, au Japon et en Corée, où il observe la fertilisation des champs avec les matières fécales. Parmi ces pionniers du « bio », figure aussi Rudolf Steiner, père de l'anthroposophie et de la biodynamie. Celui-ci considère que tout est à la fois matériel et spirituel. Il étudie (principalement au cours des années 1920) les interactions entre les forces cosmiques et terrestres, lesquelles permettent, selon lui, le plein épanouissement des organismes vivants.

Toutes ces personnes et bien d'autres croient en un ordre naturel dont les limites ne peuvent être dépassées sans impunité. Elles décrient la vision mécaniste des processus naturels, et plusieurs considèrent que la terre est un don de Dieu, le compostage une forme de rituel, et le jardinage un moyen d'exprimer la Grâce de Dieu. La pensée biologique à cette époque était donc explicitement chrétienne, épousant une vision du rôle de l'être humain comme gardien de la terre. Pour certains, ces perspectives vont de pair avec une critique de la société capitaliste, et constituent parfois un appui en faveur du socialisme. En général, ils défendent le paysan et critiquent la monoculture, la mécanisation, la surproduction, l'étalement urbain et le système financier.

Dans la foulée des mouvements de la contre-culture des années 1960, plusieurs de ces idées trouvent résonance. De jeunes urbains déçus cherchent un mode de vie qui soit cohérent avec leurs idéaux écologistes, anticapitalistes et holistes. L'agriculture et l'alimentation apparaissent alors comme des moyens tout désignés pour questionner le complexe militaro-industriel et construire une société plus juste, plus saine, plus écologique (Belasco 1989). Si le mouvement actuel pour l'agriculture biologique est profondément enraciné dans cette époque, il faut cependant souligner deux choses : premièrement, les agriculteurs biologiques actuels ne sont pas tous les héritiers idéologiques de ces mouvements contestataires; et deuxièmement, ces mouvements englobaient beaucoup plus que l'agriculture biologique[12]. Enfin, il faut rappeler que, bien que de nombreux jeunes aient déménagé à la campagne en quête d'un mode de vie plus « vert », la réalité de la pénibilité du travail, des privations financières et matérielles ainsi que l'ascétisme qui allait parfois de pair avec le « retour » à la terre ont parfois miné leur idéalisme originel et incité plusieurs d'entre eux à repartir en ville. Toutefois, les plus résistants ont pu développer des savoirs, des techniques et des outils dont ils ont tiré profit au fil des années; un pragmatisme innovateur et un savoir-faire qui, on le voit maintenant, continuent à inspirer les praticiens d'aujourd'hui (Vos 2000).

## Le contexte québécois

Dans le contexte québécois, la Révolution tranquille – lors de laquelle certains acteurs sociaux ont cherché à se

défaire du contrôle du clergé et des élites politiques et économiques étrangères – a coïncidé avec d'autres mouvements socioculturels et politiques progressistes qui visaient à promouvoir des changements en profondeur dans la société (Vaillancourt 1982). Ainsi, on s'interroge sur l'impact du développement capitaliste sur l'environnement et l'agriculture. De nombreux groupes écologistes voient le jour, et parmi eux, le Mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique (MAB). La prolifération de coopératives d'aliments naturels au Québec témoigne de l'intérêt que les mouvements écologistes suscitent à propos des questions agro-alimentaires (Fortin 1985).

Malgré le manque de soutien de la part du Ministère de l'agriculture des pêcheries et de l'alimentation (MAPAQ) (Amouriaux 2000), un réseau d'enthousiastes de l'agriculture biologique se forme et, en 1979, la OCIA (*Organic Crop Improvement Association*) certifie la première ferme québécoise (Bergeron 2006). Ce n'est qu'en 1988 que le MAPAQ et l'Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA)[13] reconnaissent officiellement l'agriculture biologique comme une méthode de production parmi d'autres (et non comme une alternative aux méthodes conventionnelles de production agricole, ce qui aurait été perçu de façon plus menaçante). Malgré une attitude souvent méprisante envers les agriculteurs biologiques et ceux qui les appuient, le MAPAQ met en place un réseau de « répondants bio » : des agronomes qui ont pour tâche d'offrir des services-conseils aux producteurs « bio » de leur région.

La certification se met en place au Québec à travers plusieurs organismes différents au fil des années[14]. En 1979 est fondée l'Association de biodynamie du Québec; celle-ci offre encore aujourd'hui des services de certification Demeter[15]. En 1984, une branche québécoise de la coopérative de certification OCIA est formée, dotant les agriculteurs biologiques d'une autre certification reconnue internationalement et d'une structure facilitant le développement d'ateliers de formation. Le Mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique met aussi sur pied un programme de certification sous la marque de commerce « Québec vrai » et, en 1991, l'Organisme de contrôle de l'intégrité des produits biologiques (OCIPB) commence à accréditer des organismes de certification. Sans aller dans les détails de l'histoire de Québec vrai, rappelons que cette coopérative devient en 1997 un organisme sans but lucratif (OSBL) autonome. Puis, en 1995, deux personnes impliquées dans le domaine de la certification fondent une entreprise privée : Garantie-Bio. En 1997, cette dernière s'associe à Écocert, basée en France, dont la certification est reconnue par tous les pays européens ainsi que par les États-Unis et le Japon. Cette association offre dès lors aux producteurs québécois une plus grande facilité d'accès aux marchés internationaux.

En 1994, des représentants de tous les secteurs de la chaîne d'approvisionnement (agriculteurs, transformateurs, distributeurs, fonctionnaires, agronomes, chercheurs, certificateurs, enseignants, consommateurs et accréditeurs) créent une table filière[16] biologique. Deux ans plus tard, en 1996, on adopte une nouvelle loi sur les appellations réservées et, l'année suivante, la filière rassemble les quatre organismes de certification afin de mettre en place une norme biologique pour le Québec. L'objectif consiste à développer un consensus provincial en vue d'un futur débat sur une norme nationale. La norme québécoise est adoptée en octobre 1998 et le Conseil d'accréditation du Québec (CAQ) créé pour la mettre en application. Le CAQ est plus tard remplacé par le Conseil des appellations agroalimentaires du Québec (CAAQ), organisme responsable de l'accréditation des agences de certification dans le domaine agroalimentaire. En novembre 2006, le CAAQ devient pour sa part le Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants (CARTV), mis sur pied par le gouvernement du Québec dans le cadre de l'application de la *Loi sur les appellations réservées et les termes valorisants*. Ainsi, depuis février 2000, l'appellation « agriculture biologique » est réservée au Québec, ce qui veut dire que tout aliment qui y est produit, transformé, emballé ou étiqueté « biologique » est sujet à la loi sur les appellations réservées et doit donc être certifié par un organisme accrédité. Les produits importés doivent également respecter cette loi pour pouvoir bénéficier de l'appellation.

Ainsi, des structures institutionnelles plus formelles émergent au fil des années, à mesure que s'accroît la demande en produits biologiques et que s'agrandit la distance entre les consommateurs et les producteurs. La certification par un tiers remplace ainsi la relation de confiance qui caractérise l'achat direct. Les normes servent donc à rassurer le consommateur quant à la fiabilité de l'étiquette « bio » et à protéger l'agriculteur contre l'utilisation frauduleuse de l'appellation biologique (Guthman 2004). En d'autres termes, les organismes de certification protègent l'appellation biologique. Cependant, il importe de rappeler que les normes et les procédures de certification ne proviennent pas des hautes sphères ni ne sont imposées par elles; elles ont été développées par et pour les agriculteurs eux-mêmes. Ce nouveau contexte a attiré, en retour, de nouveaux agriculteurs (parfois d'anciens producteurs conventionnels, mais aussi des agriculteurs débutants) et de nouvelles agences de certification, dans un processus itératif.

Ce processus ne s'est pas fait – et ne se fait toujours pas – sans conflit. Le contenu idéologique du « bio » consti-

tue un important sujet de polémique. En particulier, les débats continuent quant à la récupération du « bio » par des intérêts individuels et corporatifs qui puissent viser le profit avant tout et entraîner un affaiblissement des exigences de la production biologique. Certains y voient une dilution du sens qu'avait (ou devrait avoir) l'agriculture biologique. Ils souhaiteraient plutôt, par exemple, que l'agriculture biologique soit encore investie de sa mission en faveur d'une revitalisation rurale, d'un revenu juste, des aliments de qualité, d'une redistribution de la richesse et d'une vision sociale progressiste. Ces préoccupations deviennent plus aiguës dans un contexte où de grandes chaînes se lancent dans la vente de produits biologiques et où des compagnies alimentaires non biologiques achètent des marques « bio ». Alors qu'à l'origine, « biologique » signifiait non transformé, sain et nourrissant, on retrouve maintenant sous cette étiquette de plus en plus d'aliments instantanés, très sucrés, salés et gras. Plusieurs craignent que les grandes corporations n'en viennent à dominer le secteur et que les aliments biologiques soient récupérés par le système agro-alimentaire auquel ils s'étaient opposés. Il n'y a donc pas de consensus quant à la meilleure approche à adopter : faut-il accroître le marché du « bio » (même si ça se fait à travers les corporations) ou demeurer un marché de niche, enraciné dans des communautés et des économies locales, quitte à renoncer à une plus grande disponibilité des produits biologiques? Nous allons examiner ces différentes tendances par le biais des motivations des agriculteurs biologiques, de leurs prises de position, et des stratégies qu'ils utilisent afin d'avoir une certaine agencéité dans leur travail.

## Motivations et stratégies des agriculteurs biologiques au Québec

Tous ces producteurs biologiques partagent une relation critique avec la production agro-alimentaire dominante et un désir de produire dans un plus grand respect de l'environnement. Toutefois, certains « types » de producteurs biologiques partagent des affinités particulières liées à des valeurs, des perspectives et des parcours personnels spécifiques. De nombreux termes apparaissent dans la littérature qui illustrent ces divergences. Certains comparent les agriculteurs « engagés » (*committed, lifestyle*) aux entrepreneurs (*business, commercial*) (Guthman 2004). D'autres parlent de traditionalistes et d'anti-traditionalistes (Pedersen et Kjægård 2004) ou de pré-modernes, modernes classiques et modernes réflexifs (Kaltoft 2001). Au Québec, Amouriaux (2000) identifie des militants, des conventionnels et des chasseurs de prime. Notre recherche propose pour sa part de nouvelles catégories inductives ancrées dans le parcours historique de

la culture biologique ainsi que dans les motivations exprimées par les agriculteurs, dans leurs choix relatifs à la production et la mise en marché, et dans leur insertion dans des réseaux. Cette typologie aide à comprendre la position de chaque sous-groupe par rapport à la plus grande acceptation sociale et à la reconnaissance officielle dont l'agriculture biologique bénéficie aujourd'hui, révélant par là les différentes stratégies empruntées pour préserver un espace propre qui soit moins sujet à des mécanismes de contrôle externe. Les différents types d'agriculteurs biologiques identifiés dans la présente recherche, au nombre de cinq, sont les suivants : en premier lieu, les adhérents à la contre-culture; en deuxième lieu, les agriculteurs de proximité; puis, les agriculteurs commerciaux; ensuite, les traditionalistes innovateurs; et enfin, les jeunes néo-ruraux.

### 1. Les adhérents à la contre-culture

Plusieurs des agriculteurs investis dans la production biologique depuis leurs débuts sont des héritiers de l'idéologie des mouvements de la contre-culture des années 1960 et 1970. Il s'agit en général de personnes qui ne sont pas issues du milieu agricole, qui n'ont pas hérité d'une ferme et qui ont fait des choix de vie sous l'influence des mouvements de retour à la terre, d'environnement, de paix et d'alimentation santé. Puisque ces individus n'avaient pas de racines dans le milieu agricole, ils étaient moins influencés par les idées dominantes sur la « bonne pratique agricole » et plus détachés des identités et des pratiques traditionnelles. Ces adhérents à la contre-culture perçoivent en l'agriculture davantage un mode de vie qu'une simple entreprise; ils adoptent une façon de vivre frugale qui leur permet de subvenir à leurs besoins avec de faibles revenus. Ils sont plus susceptibles de développer de petites entreprises artisanales ou des projets de « paniers bio »[17], par exemple. Plusieurs membres de ce groupe se concentrent sur des produits à valeur ajoutée, et ce, sur de plus petites superficies, parfois même sur des terres plus marginales. Ce sont, en résumé, des gens qui ont délibérément choisi une vie comportant un certain degré d'insécurité, avec la conviction qu'elle se doit de correspondre à leurs aspirations profondes. Une productrice maraîchère se confie :

> On est riches pareil, mais pas en argent. [...] je fais, je sais pas combien de fois en bas du salaire minimum, mais j'ai une maison, j'ai un immense terrain, je suis libre de mon temps [...]. Si on parle travail, ma vie c'est juste ça. C'est devenu un mode de vie. L'entretien de ce lieu-là, j'ai beaucoup de richesses, mais au niveau économique ça ne s'exprime pas encore. [#29]

Cette citation souligne le fait que pour cette catégorie de producteurs, la richesse n'est pas seulement un concept monétaire, mais est aussi associée à la liberté, à l'autonomie et à l'environnement social et physique. Tout comme pour les adhérents à la simplicité volontaire, l'important repose dans la réalisation d'un travail significatif et dans une plus grande liberté de temps, plutôt que dans la consommation.

Un producteur de fines herbes explique sa vision d'entreprise :

> Moi, je me dis, le jour où je vais avoir assez de revenus pour vivre, pour bien vivre, bien on n'augmentera plus. Je ne veux pas avoir une grosse compagnie, puis 10 ou 20 employés. Ce n'est pas mon but. Mon but, c'est juste de vivre ici, sur notre terre, puis … après ça, s'il n'y a pas assez de producteurs de fines herbes, bien on en formera, on aidera le monde à se partir en business. [#09]

Ces mêmes propos, exprimés de façon différente par de nombreux autres agriculteurs biologiques, confirment les conclusions de plusieurs recherches en sciences sociales réalisées dans d'autres pays qui démontrent que la façon dont les agriculteurs biologiques abordent leur entreprise agricole est à contre-courant de ce que Tovey (2002) appelle « l'entrepreneuriat capitaliste conventionnel ». La participation à un mouvement social qui prône certaines valeurs rend ces choix professionnels et personnels plus faciles à vivre, du fait qu'ils sont partagés par d'autres et que leurs adhérents s'offrent un appui mutuel.

Parmi ce groupe d'adhérents à la contre-culture se trouvent des gens pour lesquels la dimension spirituelle de leur travail constitue une motivation importante qui oriente leur pratique. En tant qu'enfants de la contre-culture, ils sont influencés par les spiritualités orientales, amérindiennes ou « nouvel âge », qui se sont répandues en Amérique du Nord entre les années 1960 et 1980. Certains pratiquent la biodynamie, mais tous voient en l'agriculture une façon d'incarner sur le plan matériel leur vision du sacré. Une agricultrice résume cette perspective : « c'est une communion avec ce qui m'entoure, avec l'univers, la nature, les animaux, les autres occupants de la Terre ». La dimension spirituelle prend parfois priorité sur le reste du travail, par exemple pour ce producteur de pommes :

> Si j'ai pas une vie intérieure en rapport avec ça, je passe à côté. Si ma vie intérieure et ma gestion sont différentes, je veux dire, ce sera jamais harmonieux. Et si je pense d'une façon et que j'agis d'une autre façon, ça marche pas. [#27]

Pour ce groupe, il est de première importance de préserver un très grand espace pour leur propre cheminement, leurs expériences de vie, la transmission des savoirs marginaux et l'incarnation des valeurs, parfois aux dépens de la rentabilité ou des choix strictement d'entreprise. Ici, agencéité va de pair avec conscience et apprentissage en continu. Une productrice explique ce qui la motive :

> La conscience. C'est ça qui m'intéresse. De sentir que je suis tout le temps ouverte, que je suis tout le temps en apprentissage, que je découvre de plus en plus, que je demeure vivante, puisque j'apprends pour enseigner, puisque j'apprends à chaque jour, puis, le lendemain, je l'enseigne pratiquement. Que le passage se fait. Que je ne me love pas sur moi-même, mais que je reste ouverte à mon milieu. Que je remplis ma mission, à quelque part, et que je le fais avec beaucoup de plaisir. [#21].

Les agriculteurs biologiques adhérents à la contre-culture trouvent leurs racines idéologiques, sinon personnelles, dans les mouvements de contestation des années 1960. Ceux qui ont commencé à pratiquer l'agriculture biologique à cette époque l'ont fait en l'absence d'un système de certification, d'un marché structuré pour leurs produits et d'un soutien officiel pour cette forme de production agricole. Le plus souvent, ils vendaient directement à leurs clients, ou mettaient leurs produits en vente sur les tablettes de coopératives d'alimentation saine et de magasins d'aliments naturels. Ce groupe de producteurs a mis sur pied plusieurs organismes de certification, a participé à l'éducation publique et a formé des regroupements d'agriculteurs biologiques. En un mot, ces producteurs ont participé à la structuration du secteur et des réseaux qui existent aujourd'hui.

2. Les agriculteurs de proximité

Les agriculteurs de proximité[18] forment un autre sous-groupe plus récent d'adhérents à la contre-culture. Ils ont refusé d'agrandir leur ferme, choisissant de demeurer bien enracinés dans leur communauté à un moment où de grandes fermes plus commerciales entraient dans le secteur. Ce groupe se positionne en contrepoint vis-à-vis des productions d'exportation et des chaînes d'approvisionnement longues. Ils vendent sur les marchés locaux et entretiennent des relations directes avec ceux qui consomment leurs produits. Ces agriculteurs ne s'identifient pas nécessairement à l'appellation biologique au sens réglementaire, choisissant plutôt de mettre l'accent sur les aliments locaux, la proximité entre producteur et consommateur et le terroir – des stratégies que certains appellent *post-organic* (Moore 2006). Par opposition aux aliments « de nulle part » qui remplissent la plupart des

épiceries, ils proposent des aliments « localisés », c'est-à-dire liés à un territoire spécifique[19]. En général, ces producteurs sont ouvertement anti-corporatistes et ont une analyse fine du système agro-alimentaire. Ils rejettent la culture bureaucratique et la réglementation de l'État. Ils visent à offrir plus qu'un produit « bio »; ils proposent la relation, l'appartenance et l'éducation. Plusieurs agriculteurs de proximité choisissent de ne pas se faire certifier (ou d'arrêter leur certification) parce qu'ils entretiennent des relations de confiance avec leurs clients et ne ressentent pas le besoin d'une vérification par un tiers pour y arriver. Ils défendent les valeurs qui faisaient partie du mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique à l'origine, c'est-à-dire un système agro-alimentaire plus juste et plus enraciné dans le territoire. Certains s'opposent ardemment à ce qu'ils perçoivent comme une récupération de leur travail de longue haleine, alors que d'autres veulent simplement travailler à une échelle plus humaine et locale. Ce contact direct leur permet d'aller au-delà du produit pour participer à la diffusion de savoirs et de visions du monde. Il leur permet aussi de tisser des liens – ou « *relations of regard* » (Sage 2003). Une productrice de plantes médicinales explique ce que le mouvement pour l'agriculture de proximité lui inspire :

> […] [C]e mouvement-là me donne beaucoup d'espoir parce que je pense que ce qui est le plus important dans tout ça, c'est que, en tant que société, on est en train de perdre nos liens avec la nature. On est en train de perdre nos liens avec la nature vivante. […] Ça, je trouve ça encourageant parce que quand tu travailles de cette manière-là avec les paniers, tu as un lien direct avec l'agriculteur, bien souvent tu vas sur la ferme, il va y avoir des festivals ou des rencontres pour que… Bon, tu sais vraiment d'où ça vient. C'est pas quelque chose qui vient de l'autre bout de la planète encore, transporté en avion, même si c'est biologique. [#20]

Ainsi, ce groupe se trouve davantage en relation avec d'autres petits producteurs qu'avec des producteurs biologiques à plus grande échelle ; ils ont aussi des affinités avec les mouvements *Slow Food*, altermondialistes et paysans. Son importance économique demeure marginale, mais sa contribution à la sensibilisation du public ainsi qu'à la critique du modèle commercial dominant et du système agroalimentaire mondialisé est significative. La réflexivité politique est une des caractéristiques rassembleuses des agriculteurs de proximité. Ces agriculteurs innovent habituellement dans les formes de mise en marché ainsi que dans la diversification des produits de terroir ou à valeur ajoutée – des stratégies qui leur permettent de se soustraire à une commercialisation dominée par de grandes compagnies tout en s'assurant une plus grande part des profits générés, par le biais de la vente directe. Ces agriculteurs de proximité vont au bout de leurs prises de position, refusant qu'un système agro-alimentaire qu'ils déplorent les assimile, et favorisant des rapports personnels avec ceux qui consomment leurs produits. Certains vont jusqu'à refuser la certification, perçue comme trop contraignante et pas assez sensible aux conditions socio-environnementales locales. D'autres, au contraire, considèrent le système réglementaire comme un acquis important du mouvement qu'il faut conserver et soutenir afin de protéger l'intégrité de l'appellation « bio ». Dans le contexte québécois, plusieurs appuient l'Union paysanne ou Équiterre (un groupe écologiste qui gère plusieurs programmes en agroenvironnement, dont un réseau de « paniers bio »). Un producteur maraîcher résume bien la perspective de ce groupe d'agriculteurs :

> C'est un peu comme une satisfaction personnelle de créer la nourriture. Il y a tout le temps quelque chose de positif, pas comme si on coupait des arbres ou si on vendait des billets de Loto-Québec. C'est vrai, des choses inutiles, il y en a sur la terre. On produit de la nourriture, donc, c'est déjà ça. [#03]

## 3. Les agriculteurs commerciaux

Depuis les années 1980, un nouveau groupe d'agriculteurs biologiques émerge et prend de l'envergure. Ce sont des producteurs qui travaillent à plus grande échelle et visent une plus grande productivité, une plus grande rentabilité et une plus grande efficacité. Ils occupent le secteur plus commercial et plus industriel du marché : ils produisent de grandes quantités de produits certifiés « bio » pour des marchés généralement plus distants, comme les chaînes d'épicerie, les usines de transformation agroalimentaires et les marchés d'exportation. Ce sont des entrepreneurs plus pragmatiques qu'idéologiques. La certification est essentielle à la rentabilité de leur entreprise car ils dépendent fortement des primes biologiques et de la certification pour pouvoir accéder aux marchés. On qualifie parfois ces agriculteurs d'opportunistes, de « chasseurs de prime » qui utilisent une approche minimaliste de substitution d'intrants plutôt qu'une conception agroécologique de la ferme[20]. Cependant, de nombreux membres de ce groupe sont aussi des enfants de la contre-culture, engagés envers les valeurs de l'agriculture biologique; des valeurs qu'ils appliquent simplement à une plus grande échelle. Ils visent ainsi la compétitivité, la rentabilité et la prospérité de leur ferme, en plus de chercher à rendre les produits biologiques disponibles au plus grand nombre. Ces producteurs croient en la conver-

sion possible d'un plus grand nombre de terres aux méthodes biologiques et encouragent les producteurs conventionnels à se lancer dans cette nouvelle voie.

En général, les agriculteurs commerciaux s'impliquent davantage dans les démarches politiques – dont font partie la définition de normes nationales et la négociation de primes pour les produits biologiques – de même que dans le développement de marchés nationaux et internationaux. En conséquence, leur perspective sur l'agencéité diffère : ils cherchent à influencer les politiques, les normes et les exigences de la certification, plutôt qu'à s'y opposer. Ce groupe appuie généralement les organismes qui jouissent d'une plus grande acceptation officielle, tels que la Fédération de l'agriculture biologique du Québec (FABQ, qui relève de l'UPA) et la Table-filière biologique (chapeautée et financée par le ministère de l'agriculture, le MAPAQ). À titre d'exemple, le plan stratégique élaboré par la filière biologique (pour 2004-2009) vise à faire monter à 80 % le niveau de confiance des consommateurs en l'appellation biologique, à tripler le nombre de fermes biologiques ou en transition[21] au Québec, à multiplier par cinq la valeur des produits biologiques transformés au Québec et celle des produits biologiques vendus sur les marchés domestiques, et enfin à tripler la valeur des exportations de produits biologiques québécois. La filière se penche également sur les problèmes de mise en marché, de soutien technique et financier pour des fermes biologiques, ainsi que de contamination potentielle des cultures biologiques par les cultures transgéniques. Pour les producteurs biologiques commerciaux, ces enjeux sont extrêmement importants pour la viabilité de leur entreprise. Leur rapport avec le public – les consommateurs – est beaucoup plus distant et indirect que dans le cas des agriculteurs de proximité; la plupart ne vendent pas directement aux clients, mais plutôt à des grossistes de la transformation et de l'exportation; ils sont parfois aussi soumis à la gestion de l'offre[22], comme dans les cas du lait et de la volaille. C'est donc à travers leur fédération de producteurs, la Fédération de l'agriculture biologique du Québec, ou la filière, qu'ils cherchent à influencer les politiques et la perception du public.

4. Les traditionalistes innovateurs

Le paysage social de l'agriculture biologique comprend de plus en plus de producteurs conventionnels convertis aux méthodes biologiques. Je les appelle à la fois traditionalistes et innovateurs pour souligner leur enracinement dans l'histoire agricole du Québec (avec ses organismes, ses politiques et son paysage socioculturel), mais aussi pour les distinguer des autres agriculteurs traditionalistes par leur désir d'innover, de prendre des risques et de suivre une voie différente. Ces producteurs sont plus influencés par les mouvements de modernisation du secteur agricole québécois que par les mouvements de la contre-culture. Beaucoup d'entre eux ont hérité de la ferme familiale et conçoivent l'agriculture comme une entreprise familiale à laquelle tous les membres participent. Leur identité est celle d'un entrepreneur agricole qui dirige une entreprise à haut rendement. En tant que producteurs biologiques, ils aspirent à être aussi efficaces, sinon plus, que les producteurs conventionnels. En général, ils continuent de produire les mêmes denrées qu'avant la transition, pour la plupart du lait ou des céréales.

Ils sont déjà bien intégrés dans des réseaux institutionnels et s'organisent collectivement à travers des clubs d'encadrement technique, des syndicats de production et par le biais de la Fédération de l'agriculture biologique du Québec. Ils nourrissent généralement plus de liens avec des agriculteurs conventionnels qui produisent les mêmes denrées qu'eux, qu'avec des producteurs biologiques des autres secteurs. Étant bien intégrés dans le milieu agricole, ils subissent une pression particulièrement forte pour préserver des relations de cohabitation harmonieuse avec leurs voisins ; ils veillent donc à ne pas critiquer, explicitement ou implicitement, les pratiques des autres producteurs avoisinants.

> On n'est pas là pour dire : « L'agriculture biologique c'est la solution, faites comme nous! ». Parce que les premières années, on disait : « Bien oui, mais essayez-le! », mais là on ne le dit plus, parce qu'on n'est pas là pour convaincre qui que ce soit. Finalement on garde nos idées pour nous. Il y a une quantité impressionnante d'agriculteurs qui ne veulent rien savoir de ça, qui ne veulent pas se questionner [...] On met notre énergie sur notre entreprise, sur notre famille, puis sur les gens que l'on côtoie, mais on n'est pas des militants. [#07]

Les traditionalistes innovateurs, comme leur nom l'indique, ont tendance à innover dans les méthodes de production, incluant les techniques de culture et d'élevage, ainsi que dans les nouvelles technologies (plutôt que dans les démarches politiques ou la mise en marché). En fait, une de leurs principales motivations consiste en la recherche du défi professionnel. Ils se réjouissent de l'occasion d'appliquer de nouvelles approches, de retrouver le plaisir de l'agriculture et de se libérer en quelque sorte de la dépendance envers les experts. Un producteur laitier explique : « C'est que, conventionnellement, ça vient blasant, ça vient que c'est plate, il n'y a plus de défi. La solution est trop facile, tu ne te poses plus de questions ». Parlant au nom de ses confrères, il résume : « Nous

autres, ce que l'on vise, c'est d'avoir du fun en agriculture » (#06).

Ainsi, la conversion vers le « bio » permet de retrouver une plus grande agencéité dans un secteur dominé par le savoir des experts et le pouvoir de grandes corporations. L'opportunité d'être à la fois des pionniers, des innovateurs et des chercheurs constitue un grand stimulant, particulièrement chez les producteurs de lait ou de grandes cultures. En effet, ces derniers ont l'habitude de suivre les conseils agronomiques traditionnels à la lettre et s'identifient fortement à leur statut d'entrepreneur agricole professionnel. La production biologique leur permet donc de regagner l'autonomie qui leur échappait, de découvrir par eux-mêmes ce qui fonctionne bien, de fixer leurs propres objectifs, de faire leurs propres erreurs et d'inventer leurs propres méthodes individuellement et collectivement.

Tout comme dans le cas des agriculteurs commerciaux (avec lesquels ils partagent de nombreuses caractéristiques), la valeur économique et sociale de la certification est très importante pour la viabilité de leur ferme. Les producteurs céréaliers constituent un bon exemple, car ils travaillent sur plusieurs fronts à la fois : l'amélioration des techniques de culture (tels que le sarclage, les semis directs, la rotation des cultures, le compostage), le développement de variétés adaptées à la fois aux conditions climatiques des régions québécoises et aux exigences de la production biologique, ainsi que le développement de marchés locaux et internationaux pour leurs céréales. Cela se fait individuellement autant que collectivement, parfois par le biais des associations de producteurs. Dans le cas des producteurs laitiers, ils ont dû convaincre leur fédération de négocier une prime sur le lait biologique, de fournir un transport séparé pour leur lait et d'organiser une mise en marché particulière, sans quoi le lait biologique ne pourrait être commercialisé séparément du lait conventionnel. Le secteur de la viande biologique fait actuellement face à un défi semblable de structuration du secteur afin de mieux identifier et valoriser ses produits sur le marché. Les producteurs de viande biologique sont donc moins ambivalents face à une plus grande reconnaissance publique, et à une meilleure structuration du secteur et des normes nationales, car ils en dépendent très fortement. À l'instar des agriculteurs commerciaux, leur agencéité est liée à leur pouvoir d'influence sur la direction que prend le secteur du biologique, et non à la création de réseaux alternatifs qui refléteraient mieux leurs positions idéologiques.

5. Les jeunes néo-ruraux

Un nouveau groupe apparaît actuellement dans le paysage du « bio », formant « la nouvelle culture de l'agriculture ». Ses membres comprennent des jeunes de la génération Y[23] dont on dit qu'ils sont capables de gérer de grandes quantités d'information, de faire plusieurs choses en même temps, d'apprivoiser rapidement les nouvelles technologies, en plus d'être des experts dans le développement de réseaux. Cependant, parmi ces jeunes plutôt « high-tech », se démarque un groupe doté d'idéaux communautariens, désireux de se tailler une place dans l'agriculture biologique. Plusieurs de ces jeunes possèdent une formation en agriculture, mais n'ont accès ni à la terre ni à la machinerie. Ils explorent donc des solutions qui font appel à des réseaux de solidarité et à des approches créatives pour atteindre leurs buts. Par exemple, au lieu d'acheter une ferme familiale, plusieurs empruntent, louent ou achètent la terre en mode coopératif. Des fiducies foncières permettent parfois ces ententes inhabituelles. Les entreprises créées par ces jeunes néo-ruraux impliquent souvent des arrangements sociaux différents car elles ne sont habituellement pas gérées par un couple ou une famille, mais plutôt par une petite communauté d'amis, de bénévoles et de stagiaires qui font partie de réseaux de gens à la recherche d'un mode de vie rural. Nombre d'entre eux ont des projets de « paniers bio »; en réalité, la moitié des agriculteurs dans le réseau d'agriculture soutenue par la communauté sont âgés de moins de quarante ans (alors que seulement 20 % des agriculteurs québécois sont âgés de 34 ans ou moins)[24]. Certaines de ces fermes font partie d'un petit réseau d'entreprises biologiques qui travaillent en synergie. Ce groupe innove dans les formes sociales, notamment dans l'organisation du travail, la tenure foncière et la vie en communauté – et non dans les méthodes de production (comme les traditionalistes innovateurs), dans les démarches politiques (comme les agriculteurs commerciaux), ou dans la mise en marché et les produits de niche (comme les adhérents de la contre-culture). Ils partagent souvent les mêmes positions que les agriculteurs de proximité, entretenant des liens personnels avec leurs clients, rejetant parfois la certification et défendant une position éthique particulière face à l'agriculture.

À travers cette typologie des agriculteurs biologiques, on constate des différences générationnelles : d'abord, la plupart des adhérents à la contre-culture ont commencé dans les années 1970; ensuite, les traditionalistes innovateurs et les agriculteurs commerciaux se sont incorporés dans les années 1980 et 1990; puis, les jeunes néo-ruraux forment le groupe le plus récent, ne ressemblant ni à l'un, ni à l'autre. Les agriculteurs de proximité traversent les décennies et se renouvellent constamment. Une dimension importante de ce phénomène consiste en la perméabilité de ces groupes, qui représente un avantage : en

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effet, loin d'être étanches, ils se chevauchent et s'influencent mutuellement. Ainsi, certains agriculteurs traditionnels adoptent des idées sur les énergies subtiles et la spiritualité, alors que des héritiers de la contre-culture deviennent des entrepreneurs agricoles efficaces et bien organisés en réseaux. Ces influences font partie d'une dynamique permettant aux producteurs biologiques d'expérience de disséminer les « valeurs bio » parmi les nouveaux venus. Les anciens agriculteurs conventionnels transmettent aussi leurs connaissances sur la gestion efficace d'une ferme et l'utilisation des instances traditionnelles (comme l'Union des producteurs agricoles ou le Ministère de l'agriculture) pour leurs propres besoins organisationnels.

Il est aussi important de noter qu'il n'y a pas de lien entre ces catégories et la taille de la ferme ou le secteur de production. Ainsi, certains petits producteurs peuvent partager les objectifs d'efficacité et de rentabilité des agriculteurs commerciaux, tout en valorisant la transmission des savoirs et des valeurs à des bénévoles hébergés sur la ferme. De même, certains grands producteurs céréaliers peuvent intégrer des pratiques biodynamiques dans leurs méthodes, ou partager une vision holistique de la ferme comme un agro-écosystème qui doit favoriser la vie de tous les vivants. On constate que les agriculteurs biologiques ne correspondent pas facilement à des stéréotypes, défiant ainsi la catégorisation et les idées reçues. Cependant, l'identification de certaines tendances permet d'attirer l'attention sur les différentes approches de l'agriculture biologique, et de souligner la diversité au sein de ce groupe ainsi que les multiples façons de préserver une agencéité sur leur ferme.

En résumé, les agriculteurs de la contre-culture expriment leur agencéité en refusant de devenir des entrepreneurs capitalistes conventionnels. Ils choisissent plutôt une pratique qui corresponde à leurs aspirations idéologiques, centrées sur un mode de vie « riche » en liberté, en autonomie et en relations humaines, souvent aux dépens de la richesse monétaire. Certains de ceux-ci mettent de l'avant la recherche personnelle et spirituelle, rejetant l'idée même de l'agriculture comme une activité productive d'abord et avant tout. Ils prônent plutôt l'agriculture biologique comme une voie vers une ontologie relationnelle, une communication sensible avec d'autres règnes de vie.

Les agriculteurs de proximité, tout comme un certain nombre de jeunes néo-ruraux, préservent un espace d'agencéité à travers des stratégies de mise en marché directe et de développement de réseaux locaux de relations et d'échanges. S'opposant explicitement à un système agro-alimentaire mondialisé qui dissocie « produc-teurs » et « consommateurs », et contribue à l'injustice sociale et à la pollution de la planète, ils choisissent de participer à la création d'économies locales qui nourrissent à la fois les corps et les relations entre les individus. Alors que certains défendent la certification comme un acquis important du mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique, d'autres rejettent ce qu'ils perçoivent comme un processus bureaucratique et inadapté aux réalités des agriculteurs biologiques à petite échelle. Ils ne ressentent pas le besoin d'une réglementation par l'État, contrairement aux agriculteurs commerciaux et aux traditionalistes innovateurs qui en ont besoin pour exporter leurs produits et les commercialiser dans des chaînes d'épicerie.

Pour cette catégorie de producteurs biologiques, l'agencéité réside plutôt dans les stratégies d'influence qu'ils peuvent exercer sur la définition des normes, la détermination des primes et le développement des marchés. Ces producteurs visent à démontrer qu'une ferme biologique peut être aussi productive, rentable et efficace qu'une ferme conventionnelle. Ils cherchent activement à développer de nouveaux savoirs, de nouvelles techniques et de nouvelles organisations qui serviront leurs objectifs. Bref, ils veulent créer des entreprises viables à l'intérieur des systèmes économiques et réglementaires nationaux et internationaux. Leur agencéité est fortement liée à cette capacité à être de véritables acteurs sur leur ferme, à développer leurs propres savoirs et techniques, plutôt qu'à l'observation des conseils agronomiques conventionnels. En fait, ils engagent souvent à travers des clubs leur propre agronome qui les appuiera dans leurs apprentissages et leurs démarches, renversant en quelque sorte la situation fréquente dans le réseau conventionnel où l'on reçoit des savoirs au lieu de les générer. Retrouver le plaisir et le défi de faire de l'agriculture et redevenir de véritables acteurs sur la ferme s'avèrent les motivations les plus déterminantes pour ces producteurs biologiques, tout comme pour d'autres.

## L'agriculture biologique comme quête d'agencéité

L'étude du cycle de vie des mouvements sociaux permet de vérifier qu'ils sont en constante transformation; d'observer leur tendance à se séparer en différentes branches sous l'effet des gains obtenus; et de constater également l'existence de tensions en leur sein. Certains acteurs s'investissent dans les dimensions culturelles et le mode de vie proposés par leur mouvement; d'autres s'engagent dans des processus politiques; d'autres encore se consacrent à des innovations technologiques. Bien que toutes ces actions soient importantes et même complémentaires, elles suscitent des tensions, car ces différents acteurs peu-

vent avoir des priorités divergentes (Eyerman et Jamison 1991; Tovey 2002). Il existe plusieurs exemples de ces tensions au sein du mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique : les différends au sujet des normes nationales et des politiques gouvernementales; les débats sur le rôle de la Fédération de l'agriculture biologique du Québec et de l'Union paysanne; les conflits liés aux développements technologiques, tels que les pesticides biologiques; les tensions entre les systèmes locaux d'approvisionnement et le commerce mondial en font tous foi. Ainsi, les mouvements sociaux vivent des tensions internes, en plus des frictions externes avec les institutions dominantes (Tovey 2002).

Ces forces centrifuges mènent parfois à la fin du mouvement ou à sa division en plusieurs mouvements séparés. En fait, l'espace créé par un mouvement social est temporaire et constamment envahi par d'autres acteurs (Eyerman et Jamison 1991). Ainsi, le succès d'un mouvement est paradoxal. D'une part, il permet de mobiliser des ressources et de tirer profit de certaines opportunités (par exemple, l'obtention de subventions, la participation à des décisions politiques et la création de nouvelles structures, telles que les filières). D'autre part, la reconnaissance officielle coïncide aussi souvent avec la fin du pouvoir contestataire du mouvement, absorbé par les logiques et les institutions gouvernementales (Tovey 2002).

Par exemple, à l'origine, les normes représentaient un des lieux privilégiés pour l'expression de l'agencéité des agriculteurs biologiques. Ces normes, débattues et définies par et pour les agriculteurs eux-mêmes, sont basées sur leurs expériences, leurs idéaux et leurs savoirs. Au fur et à mesure qu'on a transféré la responsabilité de ces normes aux institutions bureaucratiques (qui sont de plus en plus éloignées de la ferme), et ce, même si ce transfert était jugé nécessaire par plusieurs, les producteurs ont progressivement perdu leur pouvoir décisionnel et le contrôle des activités sur leur ferme, reléguant ces responsabilités et ces pouvoirs aux experts et aux autres instances, situés hors de la ferme. Ainsi, l'agencéité accrue que cherchaient les producteurs biologiques est minée par des procédures standardisées, des inspections et davantage – et ce, même si ces normes sont réclamées dans le but de donner à l'agriculture biologique de la crédibilité et de protéger l'appellation. Afin de conserver leur pouvoir de contestation, certains agriculteurs biologiques préfèrent appuyer l'Union paysanne (qu'ils perçoivent comme plus critique à l'égard des politiques gouvernementales et du pouvoir du syndicat agricole) plutôt que la Fédération de l'agriculture biologique du Québec (liée à l'UPA); c'est le cas notamment des agriculteurs de proximité.

La double tâche d'un mouvement est d'agir à la fois dans la sphère politique et dans la sphère culturelle – créant de nouvelles identités, de nouvelles valeurs et de nouveaux modes de vie (Tovey 2002). Ces différentes prérogatives existent dans une tension dynamique. Certains individus se concentrent sur les changements de valeurs et de mode de vie, alors que d'autres participent à des processus politiques, tels que la définition de normes nationales, le développement de politiques et les activités de syndicats agricoles, ainsi que l'illustrent les différentes priorités des agriculteurs biologiques au Québec. Plusieurs des agriculteurs de proximité ne se certifient pas; ils préfèrent en effet cultiver des relations de confiance avec leurs clients, ce qui leur permet, pensent-ils, de mieux communiquer les valeurs et la vision du monde mises de l'avant par le mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique. Plutôt que de miser sur un logo pour transmettre le sens de leurs produits, ils préfèrent s'adresser directement avec leurs clients à travers des feuillets d'information sur la ferme et des conversations personnelles, qui vont souvent bien au-delà des discussions sur l'agriculture et l'alimentation. Pour cette catégorie de producteurs, les exigences de la certification sont perçues comme étant à la fois trop techniques (allant donc à l'encontre de l'idéal d'une approche agro-écosystémique holistique) et trop strictes en ce qui concerne certaines pratiques très spécifiques. Ces contraintes empêcheraient ainsi de s'adapter aux conditions écologiques, sociales et économiques locales pour tenir compte de l'agro-environnement et de l'impact écologique global de la ferme – en les forçant par exemple à importer des intrants biologiques au lieu d'utiliser des intrants disponibles localement, mais non biologiques, comme le fumier à composter ou les ingrédients pour les moulées animales.

Ainsi, le choix entre une action « culturelle » et une action « instrumentale » n'est pas seulement une manifestation des adaptations du mouvement aux circonstances changeantes, mais peut être vécu comme une dichotomie problématique à l'intérieur même du mouvement (Tovey 2002). Cette dualité (je dirais même, pluralité) des objectifs place les acteurs devant des choix difficiles quant aux priorités du mouvement, car un mouvement social est forcément composé de différentes motivations, relations et orientations. Ainsi, il y a un prix à payer pour la reconnaissance, en ce sens qu'elle place parfois les agriculteurs biologiques en contradiction avec les objectifs et les valeurs qu'ils défendaient au départ. Jusqu'à un certain point, le processus leur échappe et marque les dissensions au sein du mouvement. De plus, les conséquences de cette acceptation sociale plus large sont imprévues. Par exemple, il peut y avoir cristallisation d'une méthode de travail

et exclusion de toutes les autres, ce qui réduit la pluralité et la coexistence d'approches multiples. Les agriculteurs biologiques résistent à une définition absolue des « bonnes pratiques », proposant plutôt leurs propres réflexions sur une éthique du vivant – par exemple en s'opposant aux cultures transgéniques, aux monocultures et au confinement des animaux d'élevage.

Mais ces différentes priorités ne sèment pas que la division. Elles constituent aussi des forces créatrices qui poussent le mouvement dans différentes directions. Même si ces tensions peuvent effectivement mener à sa fragmentation, la réalité n'est pas si tranchée, car les individus incarnent souvent un mélange complexe d'idées, de pratiques et de savoirs. Les activités, les priorités et les valeurs changeantes du mouvement s'avèrent une source d'enrichissement en même temps que de déchirement. Ainsi, les conflits entre les pratiques idéales et actuelles sont ressentis autant par les individus que par le mouvement en général. Par exemple, certains individus choisissent de produire en monoculture pour des impératifs de productivité et de rentabilité, même si leur idéal tend vers une polyculture. Plusieurs utilisent des matériaux non biodégradables (bâches flottantes, paillis de plastique) du fait qu'ils sont pratiques et efficaces, même s'ils sont idéologiquement engagés à l'égard d'une ferme sans déchets. Par ailleurs, les producteurs biologiques doivent composer avec les demandes des consommateurs, parfois au prix de leurs propres préférences. Chaque ferme doit donc trouver un équilibre entre des considérations économiques, sociales, environnementales et éthiques.

## Conclusion

Si nous adoptons la définition de la stratégie proposée par de Certeau (1990) comme étant la capacité à calculer les relations de pouvoir d'un point de vue qui appartient au sujet avec sa propre volonté, nous constatons que les agriculteurs biologiques développent diverses stratégies visant à protéger la ferme des mécanismes de contrôle externe, ou du moins, à s'accommoder, à leur façon, de ces contrôles pour en tirer quelques avantages. Dans un domaine où le pouvoir des instances provinciales, nationales et internationales détermine les conditions de production, de transformation et de commercialisation, la marge de manœuvre peut paraître bien mince. Certains agriculteurs s'éloignent le plus possible de ces structures, par exemple en vendant leurs produits directement aux clients et en refusant d'adhérer à un syndicat. D'autres tentent plutôt de se servir des organismes existants, ou d'en créer de nouveaux, pour mettre de l'avant leurs propres intérêts. N'étant admissible qu'à très peu de soutien dans le contexte québécois actuel, les agriculteurs biologiques

travaillent souvent (mais pas toujours) en marge des institutions de l'État, de leurs programmes et de leur savoir expert. En l'absence de ressources établies pour les appuyer dans des démarches souvent innovantes, ils construisent des savoirs agricoles alternatifs et locaux fondés sur des observations et expériences individuelles, sur le partage des apprentissages avec d'autres producteurs biologiques et sur les savoirs diffusés à travers des organismes (tels que les organismes de certification et de formation) (voir à ce sujet Richardson 2005, 2008). Des structures sont aussi mises en place pour répondre aux besoins réels des producteurs biologiques, se substituant ainsi à l'encadrement offert par certaines instances créées par, et pour, les agriculteurs biologiques, mais perçu comme inadapté et peu sensible à leurs réalités.

On peut donc constater que lorsque la liberté de manœuvre des agriculteurs rétrécit, ces derniers se taillent de nouveaux espaces d'agencéité dans les marges de l'agriculture dominante et parfois même en opposition avec la direction que prend l'agriculture biologique. Ce que proposent les agriculteurs biologiques en tant que groupe est bien plus qu'un remède technique à ce que les tenants de l'agriculture intensive et industrielle perçoivent comme des échecs. Ils affirment une éthique particulière du vivant, une façon d'être au monde, et réaffirment l'agencéité de ce qui est vivant, un vivant dont font partie les humains. Ils croient donc au pouvoir de l'individu pour contrer la marginalisation, la désappropriation de leur pouvoir et le rétrécissement de leur marge de manœuvre. Une productrice de plantes médicinales biologiques résume bien cette position :

> Qu'est-ce qui me motive encore? La conviction profonde que moi j'ai quelque chose à faire ici. [...] Je peux gueuler. Je peux gueuler tous les jours. Je peux rager même. Mais je peux aussi agir dans mon univers à moi, qui est petit. Mais je crois que j'aime autant agir dans mon univers tout petit [...]. Je pense que j'ai un pouvoir assez important. Et j'ai bien l'intention de m'en servir et de continuer à m'en servir. [#38]

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## Notes

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2   Le terme « agencéité » est ici entendu comme l'équivalent de « *agency* » en anglais, et se rapporte à la capacité des individus à entreprendre des actions dans un contexte donné. Sans vouloir négliger l'importance de la société dans les actions des individus, j'attire ici l'attention sur l'espace que se donnent les agriculteurs biologiques pour agir selon leurs propres intérêts et convictions.

3   Ces cinq régions sont : Capitale Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches, Montérégie, Estrie, et Bas Saint-Laurent.

4   En résumé, 14 des fermes cultivent des céréales et du fourrage, habituellement en combinaison avec l'élevage pour la viande ou le lait; 12 font du maraîchage (la plupart vendent des « paniers bio »); 9 se dédient à la production laitière (dont 6 de vache et 3 de chèvre); 7 élèvent des animaux pour la viande (bœuf, porc, bison, agneau et poulet); 6 cultivent des plantes médicinales; 6 produisent du sirop d'érable (souvent en combinaison avec autre chose); et 5 possèdent des vergers. Cet échantillon n'est pas nécessairement représentatif du nombre de fermes « bio » dans chaque secteur de production. Il contient par exemple peu de producteurs de céréales et oléagineux non associés à l'élevage et les acériculteurs sont sous-représentés. Mon objectif était cependant de couvrir une diversité de types de fermes, et donc de pratiques, afin d'obtenir un éventail de perspectives le plus large possible. Plutôt que de viser seulement des fermes « bio » typiques, j'ai choisi par ailleurs d'inclure certaines pratiques et discours marginaux.

5   Les thèmes abordés au cours des entrevues se regroupent en quatre grandes catégories : 1) le portrait de la ferme (cultures, élevages, nombre d'hectares en production, boisés, friches, certification biologique, propriété de la ferme, mise en marché, infrastructures, etc.); 2) le parcours de l'agriculteur (formation, emplois antérieurs, expérience en agriculture et motivations à produire en régie biologique); 3) les savoirs mobilisés dans leur travail (apprentissage de l'agriculture biologique, sources d'aide, formation, services-conseils utilisés, documents consultés, etc.); 4) les valeurs des producteurs biologiques (définitions de l'agriculture biologique, motivations, vision de l'avenir).

6   Il n'est malheureusement pas possible de savoir si mon échantillon est représentatif de la population générale des agriculteurs biologiques québécois car il n'existe pas de statistiques permettant de connaître les caractéristiques des producteurs biologiques.

7   Ma traduction.

8   Ma traduction.

9   Ma traduction.

10   Ma traduction.

11   Ma traduction.

12   Par exemple, le retour à la terre et les expériences des communes ont aussi favorisé l'émergence du mouvement des sages-femmes ainsi que la pénétration des traditions médicales et spirituelles asiatiques et amérindiennes dans la culture anglo-américaine.

13   Au Québec, il n'y a qu'un syndicat agricole officiel : l'Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA). Pour une histoire du syndicalisme agricole au Québec, voir Kesteman et al. (2004). Bien que l'Union paysanne (un groupe syndical alternatif) ait été fondée en 2001 afin de contester ce monopole et de défendre une autre vision de l'agriculture, elle ne possède pas de statut officiel.

14   La « certification » est une preuve que la ferme qui l'obtient utilise des méthodes qui sont reconnues en conformité avec les normes établies dans l'agriculture biologique. La vérification se fait par un tiers (une agence de certification) et donne droit à l'étiquetage des produits sous le sceau de « bio ». Il s'agit donc d'une protection à la fois pour le consommateur (ce qu'il achète respecte les normes en vigueur) et pour le producteur (d'autres n'utilisent pas l'appellation sans se conformer aux mêmes critères).

15   Il s'agit d'une certification internationale qui permet de reconnaître les produits issus de l'agriculture biodynamique, qui est basée sur les enseignements de Rudolf Steiner.

16   Une « table filière » est une structure caractéristique du secteur agroalimentaire québécois qui regroupe des représentants d'un secteur d'activités (ici la production biologique). Elle se donne comme objectif de faciliter la concertation sur les enjeux du secteur ainsi que son développement optimal.

17   Les « paniers bio » (ou agriculture soutenue par la communauté) sont des livraisons hebdomadaires de produits de la ferme qu'un groupe de « partenaires » de la ferme reçoit durant la saison de production. Les partenaires achètent une part de la récolte à l'avance et partagent donc les risques associés à la production agricole.

18   Cette réalité est souvent appelée « *foodshed* » en anglais (Kloppenburg *et al.* 1996).

19   Ces termes sont inspirés de « *food from nowhere* » et « *food from somewhere* » utilisés par Hugh Campbell à la conférence du *Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society* (Victoria, Colombie britannique, juin 2007).

20   Cette approche « minimaliste » consiste à éliminer l'utilisation de pesticides et d'engrais chimiques, en les substituant par d'autres substances permises par les normes biologiques (pesticides biologiques, engrais biologiques achetés, etc.). Cette façon de faire est considérée par plusieurs comme non écologique parce que la logique de production ne change pas. Elle se base en effet sur les monocultures, l'achat d'intrants, la recherche d'une productivité maximale, etc. ; plutôt que de viser l'équilibre dans l'agro-écosystème à travers la polyculture, l'utilisation d'intrants venant de la ferme, les rotations de culture, le recours aux périodes de jachère, la pratique du compostage et l'utilisation d'engrais verts, par exemple. Cette réalité fait partie des débats qui ont cours dans la littérature sur l'agriculture biologique (en économie politique surtout), souvent appelés le « *conventionalization debate* ». La plupart des articles sur le sujet ont été publiés dans *Sociologia Ruralis* et *Agriculture and Human Values*.

21   La transition vers les méthodes biologiques est un processus qui prend au moins trois ans et qui implique de cesser

d'utiliser tout intrant prohibé (tel que les engrais chimiques et les pesticides) et de restaurer la santé du sol à travers l'application de compost, le sarclage des mauvaises herbes et l'utilisation d'engrais verts, par exemple. Pour les élevages, le troupeau doit se nourrir exclusivement d'aliments biologiques et ne recevoir aucune hormone ni aucun antibiotique pendant un an, avant de pouvoir obtenir la certification biologique.

22  La gestion de l'offre est un système en vigueur au Canada dans les secteurs de la production laitière, des œufs et de la volaille, qui permet de contrôler les quantités mises sur le marché ainsi que les prix obtenus. Les producteurs doivent donc obtenir le « droit de produire » ces denrées et respecter des quotas.

23  Appelée de diverses façons, dont « génération Net ». Ce sont des jeunes nés entre les années 1977 et 1990.

24  Voir le site laterre.ca, consulté le 14 mars 2007.

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# Articles

# Faire corps, ou comment faire du collectif en singularisant. L'exemple des ressemblances familiales

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*Résumé :* Produits de relations sociales, les ressemblances familiales s'affirment par leur caractère immanent, processuel et intersubjectif. La pluralité des mises en jeu du corps mobilisées – des techniques quotidiennes aux formes de mimésis, des processus d'imprégnation d'une culture matérielle et d'une sensorialité communes aux mises en scène de soi et des autres à travers l'imagerie familiale – permet des identifications plurielles selon les situations. Une ethnographie menée à Rome et à Varsovie montre à quel point les airs de famille permettent de « faire corps », de réguler la tension entre appartenances collectives, agissements réciproques et production de personnes singulières.

**Mots-clés :** anthropologie, corps, ressemblances, famille, identité, personne

*Abstract:* As products of social relations, resemblances within families are affirmed through their immanent, processual and intersubjective character. A plurality of bodily processes and enactments are mobilized: techniques of the body, forms of mimesis, the embodiment of material culture and a shared sensory environment in the expressive performance both of the self and others through family narratives and imagery. All these enactments allow for plural identifications according to context. Ethnographic fieldwork conducted both in Rome and Warsaw demonstrates the extent to which family likenesses enable people to be and to act as one, modifying and regulating the tension between collective belongings, reciprocal actions and the creation of unique persons.

**Keywords:** anthropology, body, resemblances, family, identity, person

## Introduction

Dans le tableau *Sainte Anne, la Vierge et l'enfant* (vers 1510) de Léonard de Vinci, les personnages se suivent rythmiquement, les corps enlacés en une chaîne de tendresse et de proximité. Ces figures, qui semblent se fondre l'une dans l'autre, sont néanmoins traversées par une tension relevant de mouvements contradictoires. Le premier est de type tactile et kinesthésique : le corps de la Vierge procède de celui de la mère, et de même celui de l'enfant procède jusqu'à l'agneau, ce dernier faisant allusion à Saint Jean-Baptiste et à la nature sacrificielle du Christ. Les corps se touchent, se suivent, exsudent presque l'un de l'autre. Il suffit de suivre les lignes des bras et l'enchevêtrement des jambes qui dessinent deux séries parfois continues (la Vierge et l'enfant), parfois parallèles, parfois entrecroisées (la Vierge et Sainte Anne, l'enfant et l'agneau) pour s'en convaincre. Les sourires bienheureux, la délimitation incertaine des corps d'Anne et de Marie ont donné lieu à la célèbre réflexion de Freud (1987 [1910]) sur les deux mères de Léonard de Vinci. En même temps, chaque personnage semble vouloir se défaire de l'emprise de son aîné : la mère se soustrait au giron de la grand-mère pour retenir l'enfant qui, à son tour, empoigne l'agneau et semble un peu pressé de s'affranchir de l'étreinte maternelle. Deux autres mouvements procèdent du regard : un premier descendant de la part des deux femmes (le regard de Sainte Anne errant de la Vierge à l'enfant), et un deuxième remontant du jeune Christ et de l'agneau. Le centre du tableau correspond à la rencontre de ces tensions avec un équilibre dynamique inconnu dans les représentations des *Metterze* traditionnelles[1], classiques ou populaires, construites autour d'une disposition pyramidale des trois figures, où Sainte Anne fait figure d'aïeule sévère et majestueuse. À l'opposé, l'historien de l'art Meyer Shapiro nous donne d'autres clefs de compréhension, resituant ainsi le tableau à la fois dans le contexte du culte voué à Sainte Anne et dans celui des transformations stylistiques du rapport entre

singularité de la figure et groupe, intervenues à l'époque de la Renaissance :

> Dans cet entrelacement des corps, progressant depuis la figure relativement stable de Sainte Anne jusqu'à la figure la plus active et la plus divisée, celle du Christ, en passant par la pose intermédiaire de la Vierge, chaque mouvement s'oppose à d'autres mouvements du même corps ou du corps voisin; mais l'ensemble de ces mouvements forme une unité complexe du plus haut niveau : une famille. [Shapiro 1982:129]

La nouveauté du tableau de Léonard de Vinci semble alors s'inscrire dans la découverte, riche d'avenir, de la Renaissance « d'une conception du comportement collectif où l'individu se révèle [...]. La nouveauté formelle de *Sainte Anne* [relève ainsi d'une manière de] donner au groupe fermé, légué par la tradition, une articulation par contrastes qui permet de rendre la spontanéité des individus et leurs impulsions divergentes, tout en maintenant le lien familial » (Shapiro 1982:130).

L'analyse de Shapiro m'a permis de mieux comprendre la séduction que ce tableau exerce sur moi depuis que j'ai commencé à travailler sur la manière de *produire* des ressemblances familiales. Car non seulement ces personnages se ressemblent – dans les poses, les gestes, les sourires, les regards –, mais cette ressemblance est accentuée par une composition familiale qui joue sur une harmonie de formes fluides, singulières et interdépendantes, où chaque action est commandée par le mouvement d'un autre personnage. Dans le tableau de Léonard de Vinci, la relation de filiation n'est pas uniquement exprimée par la pyramide des âges et par l'ordre des générations, mais par ce frottement des corps qui lie les figures entre elles et établit leur succession par un enchaînement de mises au monde.

Cet article a précisément pour objectif d'explorer les ressemblances familiales comme facteur d'analyse de cette tension entre appartenance et singularité. Comme dans le cas de ce tableau, il s'agit de « faire corps » : être ensemble, solidaires, constituer une entité sociale qui se donne à voir par une métaphore organiciste et, en même temps, fabriquer des corps individuels, irréductibles. La manière dont les airs de famille sont construits et décrits dans le jeu des relations familiales, permet d'aller au cœur d'un questionnement central dans l'anthropologie contemporaine : comment faire du collectif en singularisant? Quelles médiations font lien et sens entre l'expérience sensorielle et affective de l'individu et son imbrication dans des systèmes de relation et de pouvoir, tels que celui des rapports de parenté, dans le cas spécifique?

Ces notes de recherche présentent un terrain qui est encore en cours. Elles ne visent donc pas à apporter des réponses exhaustives, mais à faire part de plusieurs questionnements. Il s'agit d'une ethnographie menée auprès d'un nombre réduit de familles habitant à Rome, Turin, Varsovie et Gdańsk[2]. Au-delà des méthodes ethnographiques classiques, telles que l'observation et le partage de la vie quotidienne et festive des acteurs, ce terrain procède par une reconstruction des généalogies, des entretiens et des récits de vie. Les entrevues sont souvent conduites avec plusieurs membres de la famille, interviewés séparément (l'enfant, sa mère et sa grand-mère maternelle, par exemple) ou ensemble, comme lors d'un repas familial. La collecte et l'analyse des objets, des photos de famille, des enregistrements vidéo, ainsi que de deux journaux intimes viennent intégrer la dimension discursive. La diversité des techniques mises en œuvre, le caractère sensible du sujet entre partage de l'intimité et accès à la mémoire de la famille, voire à ses secrets, l'engagement demandé aux interlocuteurs impliquent un travail en profondeur qui se doit alors de privilégier un petit nombre de relations de longue durée plutôt que la multiplication des entrevues. Parler de ressemblances, de corps, d'affects suscite la réflexivité des acteurs et un exercice de recomposition et de re-signification de leurs expériences biographiques. La rencontre avec l'ethnographe donne aussi lieu à une narration à plusieurs voix où s'accomplit parfois un véritable travail intergénérationnel : une reconstruction active des liens familiaux, un retour critique sur un passé qui gît parfois au fond d'un tiroir sous forme de photo ou de journal intime.

Ce souci de rendre compte à la fois du particulier, du sensible et des échos d'un discours collectif sur l'appartenance fait que l'approche anthropologique sera, dans ce texte, enrichi par des apports de l'art et de la littérature. Les œuvres artistiques sont, dans les cultures européennes, « la » traduction par excellence de l'expérience, d'un mode de sentir et « de faire des mondes » au sens de Goodman (1978). Et une telle traduction, soustraite à la tyrannie de l'analogie et de la lettre devient, comme le dit Benjamin (1982:48), reconstruction d'un sens « qui ne s'épuise pas dans l'entendu, mais reçoit sa valeur propre du mode par lequel ce qui est entendu est relié au mode d'entendre ». Les aspects formels des œuvres et les formes de leur réception sont donc tout autant signifiantes que le contenu : de la même manière, dans l'anthropologie du corps, les manières de dire ou de faire sont tout autant parlantes, et parfois plus, que ce qui est proprement dit ou fait. Et ce n'est pas un hasard si le même Gregory Bateson qui, dans un travail sur le « corps balinais »

(Bateson et Mead 1942) cherchait à repérer des analogies formelles entre les gestes, les artefacts artistiques et les techniques de travail ou rituelles, nous a montré à quel point l'art ne constitue pas seulement un miroir des valeurs et des attentes d'une société, mais aussi un outil efficace d'intégration de dimensions autrement étanches : une recherche de grâce et une harmonisation de la variété cognitive (Bateson 1972). Langage des émotions et des intentions qui assure au sujet une insertion affective au sein de sa propre société, la sensibilité esthétique constitue d'ailleurs une des entrées privilégiées de l'anthropologie contemporaine : des apports de Gell (1998) sur les effets de l'art en tant que *agency* diffuse des sujets sur d'autres sujets, aux hypothèses de Kaufmann (2001) sur la pertinence du modèle artistique dans la quête de cohérence d'un soi pluriel, l'esthétique semble actuellement poser la question centrale des liens sensibles entre les individus.

## « Mouler la face »

Depuis les présocratiques, la philosophie et la médecine – savante aussi bien que populaire –, s'interrogent sur la transmission des composantes de la personne et les ressemblances familiales. L'apport de l'homme et de la femme, le jeu de leurs fluides, l'influence de la température, des positions, de l'imagination, des effigies au moment de la conception et de la grossesse, entrent, avant l'essor de la génétique, dans les théories de l'hérédité et de la génération (Vernier 1998). La fabrication d'êtres humains ressemblant aux savants ou aux grands hommes constitue même un trait saillant des utopies, depuis celle de Campanella qui raconte en 1602 comment, dans la Cité du Soleil, les femmes s'abandonnent à l'amour en regardant les statues de célébrités et imprègnent, par le regard, la progéniture de leurs qualités (Campanella 2002:36-37). La manière de construire et de définir des ressemblances familiales n'a toutefois pas attiré l'attention des ethnologues de manière majeure. Elles ont surtout été envisagées en tant que moyen d'analyser des systèmes de parenté. Malinowski (1929) nous apprend que chez les Trobriandais matrilinéaires, la norme juste et convenable est qu'un homme ou une femme ressemble uniquement à son père, qui moule la face de l'enfant par la nourriture physique et spirituelle, ainsi que par sa présence attentionnée aux côtés de la mère, seul parent biologique. La ressemblance au père constitue une manière, pour ce dernier, de se frayer une brèche dans un système strictement matrilinéaire, qui identifie l'agent fécondant dans l'esprit ancestral *boloma* et le père social dans l'oncle maternel. En comparant ces données à celles de Fortes sur

les Tallensi et à celles issues de son propre terrain auprès des Kachin en Birmanie, Leach (1966) montre un système de transmission croisée où les ressemblances physiques se transmettent par la lignée opposée à celle qui transfère pouvoirs, richesses, nom : donc par la mère dans les sociétés patrilinéaires ou par le père dans celles matrilinéaires. Les ressemblances peuvent aussi être interprétées comme l'épiphanie d'une société des invisibles dont l'enfant serait le passeur. Chez les Wolof (Rabain 1979) elles peuvent signifier le retour d'un ascendant ou annoncer une mort imminente, par exemple dans le cas de similitude entre un fils et son père. Pour cette raison, l'énonciation publique de la ressemblance fait l'objet d'une régulation spécifique. Cette normativité a également été mise en évidence par les études de Vernier (1999) à Karpathos, Lyon et Strasbourg, où les similitudes sont fonction du système de parenté, de l'ordre de naissance, des proximités affectives et des rapports de force entre les sexes. Le discours sur les ressemblances familiales permet donc de saisir la construction et la mise en scène d'ordonnancements sociaux, par une topologie des distances qui séparent les uns des autres. Le corps y devient le lieu de mesure, de vérification et de légitimation des appartenances, une carte à lire dont chaque détail est signifiant : il permet d'assigner à chacun sa place, homme et femme, normal et pathologique, indigène et étranger. En analysant les preuves de légitimité dans la culture romaine ancienne, Lentano montre à quel point une « voix du sang » y parle au masculin : les traces repérées sur le corps de l'enfant visent à dissiper tout doute sur son inscription dans la lignée paternelle et sur son droit à la transmission du nom, des richesses, des *mores*, de l'identité romaine même. L'enfant devra donc impérativement ressembler au père, afin que « le contenu informatif des ressemblances – l'enfant est le fils du père – coïncide parfaitement avec le bon exercice de la parenté, dans lequel certitude biologique de la maternité et certitude culturelle de la paternité se superposent sans écarts » (Lentano 2007:168).

Toutefois, la construction de ressemblances excède la dimension structurelle des systèmes de parenté et ne peut être abordée dans une seule perspective taxonomique. Comme sa notion proche d'hérédité, elle renvoie à de multiples significations ayant en commun l'idée de transmission d'éléments (physiques, psychologiques, moraux ...) le long d'une chaîne de filiation. La pensée de la ressemblance ne se réfère donc pas à un objet, mais à une relation de similitude ou de différence entre personnes et à la manière dont chacune d'elles s'inscrit dans un groupe. Il s'agit de produire des individus en ce qu'ils ont

de singulier et d'imprévisible[3] et ces individus sont la résultante d'un « feuilletage », pour reprendre la belle expression de Françoise Héritier, « un assemblage de composantes matérielles et immatérielles » (Héritier 1977:65).

Tout comme la mémoire familiale, dont elles constituent souvent le langage et le support, les ressemblances procèdent à la fois par assignation de position (elles inscrivent) et par individuation (elle subjectivent). Cette caractéristique était déjà soulignée par Maurice Halbwachs en 1925 dans son travail fondateur sur les cadres sociaux de la mémoire : « il n'y a point (de milieu) où l'on considère davantage chaque membre du groupe comme étant un être "unique en son genre" et auquel on n'en pourrait et on ne conçoit pas qu'en puisse s'en substituer un autre » (Halbwachs 1994:163). Les ressemblances familiales questionnent ainsi les processus de transmission et d'incorporation d'une mémoire familiale d'une part, mais aussi le double mouvement d'inscription dans un groupe et de production de singularités.

Le corps revêt, dans ce processus, un rôle central. Déjà en 1929, Malinowski nous alertait sur l'importance, pour les Trobriandais, de l'action quotidienne du père sur l'enfant qui lui ressemble. Le mot *kuli* – coaguler, façonner – revient à chaque instant dans les discours trobriandais en tant qu'expression d'une « doctrine sociale ». Comme la main façonne le sable mouillé, ainsi le contact avec le père moule la face de l'enfant :

> Mettez là-dessus une matière (sesa) molle : elle prendra tout de suite la forme de la main. De même le mari reste avec la femme et façonne l'enfant […] C'est de notre main que l'enfant reçoit la nourriture, c'est nous qui lui donnons fruits et gourmandises, […] et c'est grâce à cela que l'enfant devient ce qu'il est. [Malinowski 2000:155]

Ces mots acquièrent une valeur particulière à la lumière de l'intérêt que l'anthropologie contemporaine porte aux dimensions sensibles et matérielles de la construction de soi. Le long processus de dénaturalisation du corps initié par Mauss, Hertz, Bateson, ou encore Douglas a donné lieu à un recentrage qui fait de l'expérience corporelle non seulement un résultat de la culture et de la société, mais une machine à produire culture, connaissance, réflexivité (Turner 1984; Lock et Scheper-Hugues 1987; Stoller 1989; Le Breton 1990; Leder 1990; Csordas 1990, 1994; Featherstone, Hepworth et Turner 1991; Martin 1992; Lock 1993; Lock et Farquhar 2007) : « La conscience incarnée n'est pas originairement un "je pense" mais un "je sens" immédiat » (Julien et Warnier 1999:21). La relecture de la *Phénoménologie de la perception* de Merleau-Ponty (1945) a contribué à la concep-

tualisation d'un corps ouvert sur le monde, dont les frontières mouvantes témoignent du continuum entre les objets et le soi : c'est par le corps que l'objet existe et « chacun des objets porte en creux la marque de l'action à laquelle il sert » (Merleau-Ponty 1945:399).

Les théories de l'*embodiment*, l'anthropologie du sensoriel, l'attention renouvelée à la culture matérielle dans les processus de fabrication des personnes humaines (Strathern 1999), ont remis au centre de la réflexion anthropologique les notions de sujet et d'expérience et accentué la dimension relationnelle, performative, processuelle de la construction de soi, même si c'est parfois au prix d'une coupure trop nette entre l'étude du symbolique et des représentations collectives, d'une part, et l'étude du corps singulier en action, d'autre part (Diasio 2009). Nous essaierons donc de restituer des contours à ces mises en jeu corporelles qui permettent des identifications multiples : à la fois « être comme » les autres, leur ressembler, sans « être égal » en renonçant à sa singularité.

## Des ressemblances comme des techniques du corps

Dans les sociétés européennes, la naissance d'un enfant mobilise tout un savoir de discernement. Parents, amis, connaissances s'affairent autour du bébé et cherchent à reconnaître des traits qui permettent de l'inscrire dans le groupe parental. Ce travail de figuration ne cesse point avec l'âge, mais se modifie au fil du temps, est réapproprié par les enfants, voire contrasté par des formes de résistance. Toutefois, au moment de l'entretien formel, il est difficile pour mes informateurs de mettre des mots sur ce processus de fabrication de la personne par la mise en exergue des caractères transmis au sein du groupe. À la question explicite, « à qui ressemblez-vous? », Giovanni a un mouvement d'irritation : « Je ne sais pas, je suis proche de ma mère, c'est quelque chose de profond, de physique, qui a à voir avec le corps, avec le besoin d'écouter sa voix, de temps en temps, même sans avoir rien à se dire » (Giovanni, 31 ans, publicitaire, Rome). Pour évoquer une ressemblance, on dit plutôt « je suis proche de… » (Gabriella, 43 ans, kinésithérapeute, Turin; Sofia, 27 ans, étudiante, Rome; Krysia, 40 ans, entrepreneure, Varsovie) et cette image de proximité, souvent, évoquée s'affirme comme une manière de se sentir « près », aussi bien d'un point de vue affectif, que physique : une forme de contiguïté, en somme.

Un premier aspect qui émerge de ce terrain est l'idée que la ressemblance s'amorce par contact et imprégnation. Comme si un corps exsudait dans l'autre, dans un processus de contamination physique, de la même manière

que dans les images sacrées – *akheiropoietoi* – dont Ewa Kuryluk (1991) a reconstruit l'histoire et qui émanent du contact avec les humeurs de la déité – sang ou sueur –, ou encore du feu, ou de l'eau (voir le voile de Turin). Il s'agit d'un « contact qui imprime » par effet d'un échange de matière et donne lieu à une empreinte en prise directe avec l'original (Kuryluk 1991:47). Les airs de famille semblent se transmettre de manière analogue, par la proximité des corps, dans l'échange des humeurs, dans le partage concret d'une quotidienneté faite de gestes et de choses qui circulent. Cette ressemblance par contact, dont Didi-Huberman a fait l'histoire dans le domaine de l'art et de l'esthétique, constitue avant tout « l'expérience d'une relation » fondée sur une technique et des gestes (Didi-Huberman 2008:33). Tout comme dormir, manger ou nager, ressembler semble constituer une technique du corps au sens maussien du terme (Mauss 1993[1934]) : une expérience de soi et d'autrui qui passe par le corps, par le partage d'un environnement matériel et d'une culture sensible, par une dimension motrice; car chaque corps se construit dans l'interaction avec la matérialité de son environnement et dans l'interaction permanente avec le corps des autres. N'oublions pas que chez Mauss l'essai sur les techniques du corps est précédé par celui sur la catégorie de personne (1993[1938]) et que la démonstration de la relativité de cette dernière est étayée par de multiples exemples de « fabrication du je », comme dit Mauss, par la culture matérielle et par la transmission de manières de faire. Ainsi, chez les Bororos décrits par Crocker,

> [L]'identité personnelle est fondée sur une idiosyncrasie, un assemblage unique de traits physiques qui relie l'individu aux autres êtres humains à travers ces éléments aussi variables qu'indestructibles que sont les ressemblances physiques [...]. Les Bororos pensent que les personnes ne sont liées ni par le sang ni par l'appartenance à un même groupe, mais [par les personnes] qui habitent dans le même espace physique, mangent la même nourriture (car toute nourriture est partagée par les membres d'une même maisonnée), dorment et se baignent ensemble, font leurs besoins au même endroit, en viennent, après des années, à participer d'une même espèce naturelle. [Crocker 1983:162]

Nous pouvons lire dans ce sens l'importance des discours sur les goûts alimentaires, souvent mis de l'avant dans la comptabilité des similitudes et des différences, une mémoire matérielle qui donne concrétude aux rapports de transmission : « aimer le sucré », comme chez Mario (48 ans, réalisateur, Rome), ou encore avoir des rapports à la nourriture inversés selon les générations en passant

« [d]u pain et de l'oignon dont se nourrissait ma grand-mère, à la profusion dans laquelle ma mère a grandi, pour ensuite nous retrouver à nouveau dans la restriction, nous, et compter jusqu'aux petites tranches de jambon » (Chiara, 43 ans, informaticienne, Rome). Mais la cuisine se configure aussi comme une circonstance d'empreinte, un des hauts lieux de fabrication d'une culture sensible commune. Je pense aux cuisines varsoviennes que j'ai visitées avec leurs signatures sensorielles : la cuisine de Weronika (51 ans, professeur), avec les nombreux ustensiles chromés et leur sensation de froid et de dur, brillant dans un espace qui sent la cire et le riz trop cuit; celle d'Agata (65 ans, psychologue), avec les gros chaudrons constamment sur le feu et les jarres à chou; celle d'Adam et Iwona (50 et 57 ans, respectivement militaire à la retraite et institutrice), où les bouteilles et les bocaux vides s'entassent dans l'attente d'être remplis de conserves, dans une odeur d'aneth et de beurre cuit. Ces lieux denses d'une sensorialité qui leur est propre, participent à façonner des corps et des individus différents. Ils constituent des espaces où on peut être soi-même – comme un pied qui se repose dans sa pantoufle, parce que la pantoufle a pris la forme du pied – mais aussi des lieux où s'exercent la tendresse, la surveillance, le désir, le contrôle, et parfois la violence sur le corps des autres : « The home accommodates bodies, it is a location in which a civilizing process occurs to encourage people to mask evidence of bodily substances and odours, and is a place where we can most easily be our embodied selves » (Gurney 2000:55). Ce corps imprégné peut être aussi un corps remémoré selon des ordres sensoriels variables. Par exemple, une matrice sonore donne souvent profondeur et épaisseur aux souvenirs et crée des matrices de reconnaissance.

Ainsi, dans les récits de Iwona se mêlent une disposition familiale envers la musique; les bruits d'une maison qui, le soir tombant, se remplit d'amis qui se retrouvent pour chanter; les chansons russes des oncles et tantes maternels; un père qui joue la guitare; un piano qui résonne dans le salon vide; mais aussi la voix de sa mère qu'elle affirme réentendre dans sa propre voix, et qui rend si concrète sa présence, même dans la disparition.

> Ma mère n'était pas vraiment obstinée, plutôt catégorique, moi je suis un peu obstinée, je ne suis pas méchante, mais quand je pense avoir raison je ne lâche pas prise si facilement. Et les enfants sont comme moi [pause, changement de ton]. Et ce bavardage, tout le temps à papoter... tu vois à quoi je pense. Ma sœur dit que j'ai tout à fait le même caractère que ma mère, même la voix, et parfois je m'en étonne, tout d'un coup je me rends compte et je m'assieds, je me regarde et je vois la tête de ma mère, je vois ma mère, je m'écoute

faire comme elle, et les enfants font pareil, mais encore je ne leur reproche pas! [Iwona, 50 ans, institutrice, Varsovie]

Dans de nombreux témoignages, la voix déclenche la reconnaissance, produit des identifications, telle le *os* pour les Latins « une icône sonore de la personne qui a son lieu dans, le visage/bouche » (Bettini 2000:321). Dans la manière qu'a Iwona de raconter ce qui la lie à sa mère, les traits de caractère sont intimement liés aussi bien aux souvenirs d'une maison qui résonnait sans cesse des bavardages, qu'au timbre sonore de la voix maternelle. Cette empreinte sensorielle qui fait surface de manière inattendue au point de l'obliger à s'asseoir, saisie d'étonnement, n'est pas rare : comme si ces performances mémorielles ne pouvaient se manifester que dans les inadvertances, les interstices du quotidien, le relâchement des corps.

Ces ressemblances forgées par le frottement des corps apparaissent dans quelques photographies désignées par les informateurs comme témoignant d'une ressemblance « visible » et donc « vraie » : ces images ont le rôle de matérialiser la transmission de la ressemblance, de la naturaliser et de la rendre réelle. Or, ces photographies ont en commun un intense dialogue entre les corps, des postures enlacées, une contiguïté physique qui renforcent le fait d'être ensemble, d'être là, parce que chacun, dans ses postures, dans sa carnalité, est soutenu et renforcé par le corps des autres. C'est ce que La Cecla appelle des « sédimentations d'analogies » relevant d'une technique de la fréquentation et du contact (La Cecla 1999:84). Il peut s'agir de détails vestimentaires qui se répètent – un foulard, une chemise à carreaux – ou encore de postures en miroir – un port de tête, une manière d'appuyer un bras ou de croiser les jambes –, ou encore d'une disposition dans l'espace qui favorise l'impression d'un dédoublement. En même temps, les images montrent que l'analogie n'est pas homologie, ni répétition, et que la sédimentation de traits physiques ou de gestes partagés se fonde aussi sur la production de différences. Le dialogue des corps ne reproduit pas l'identique, mais fournit des matériaux, comme des briques, pour la différenciation. Ressembler implique le refus de la répétition et la perception des écarts, des déphasages. Parfois ces photographies jouent sur un ou deux éléments de similitude qui permettent de réorganiser les différences sous un chiffre commun, mais cette réélaboration à partir d'un trait spécifique constitue aussi le principe de la singularité et de la différenciation.

Dans une époque qui voit affleurer des déterminismes de toutes sortes, marquée par l'obsession de la duplication et de l'homologation, les discours et les modes de donner corps aux airs de famille nous rappellent l'importance de l'imperfection, des petits écarts : à nous lesdits postmodernes, hantés par l'authenticité et par l'angoisse de la perte de l'origine, cet « être soi avec les autres » renvoie à la *surface du bougé,* à la différence dans la répétition décrite par Deleuze (1968). C'est Mady Lafargue (1994) qui nous rappelle comment la ressemblance est à la fois matrice de reconnaissance et refus de la répétition : Dieu qui, dans les religions du Livre, fait l'homme à son image et à sa ressemblance (Genèse 1, 26) institue un ordonnancement hiérarchisé des anges à Adam et aux humains, et chasse Lucifer, celui qui, dans son outrance extrême, prétend à la ressemblance extrême. Par ailleurs, ainsi que le dit Blanchot, au moment où « la présence cadavérique est devant nous celle de l'inconnu, c'est alors aussi que le défunt regretté commence à *ressembler à lui-même* » (Blanchot 1955:270). Au moment où on lâche les amarres du monde familier et des présences chères, l'inconnu nous révèle à nous-mêmes : froide utopie d'une ressemblance totale de soi à soi, d'une conjonction parfaite entre visuel et imaginaire, du polissage d'un corps qui n'est plus matrice de l'imprévu, du désir qui souille, du temps qui use et bâtit.

## Mimesis et agissements réciproques

Les airs de famille peuvent être mesurés à l'aune d'une faculté d'imitation qui est le propre de l'être humain (Benjamin 2000a [1933]) et qui agit dans la constitution des groupes sociaux, comme Tarde le soulignait déjà en 1884. Mais si l'imitation a « toujours été considérée comme une forme de passivité dont résulte une homogénéisation plus ou moins forte de la population examinée » (Corbeau 1972:223), le mot mimésis traduit mieux son caractère dynamique, qui non seulement demande un engagement actif de la part de l'imitant, mais suppose également un enlacement du sujet et du monde grâce aux caractéristiques d'ouverture et de plasticité du corps humain.

> Lors de processus mimétiques, l'homme se fait semblable au monde. La mimésis permet aux hommes d'aller vers l'extérieur, qu'ils incorporent dans leur monde intérieur, puis d'exprimer leur monde intérieur. Elle établit une proximité aux objets qui ne pourrait être atteinte autrement et représente pour cette raison une condition indispensable à la compréhension. [Gebauer et Wulf 2005:13]

C'est l'enfant décrit par Benjamin qui se métamorphose quand il passe de vitrail en vitrail au sein du pavillon du jardin familial :

Je me colorais comme le paysage qui, tantôt flamboyant, tantôt empoussiéré, tantôt étouffé comme un feu sous la braise et tantôt luxuriant, occupait la fenêtre. C'était la même expérience que, pendant l'aquarelle, lorsque les choses m'ouvraient leur giron dès que je m'en emparais dans un nuage humide. [Benjamin 2000b [1950]:50]

Cette mimésis qui est plutôt une manière d'inscrire inextricablement sa chair dans la texture du monde ne se configure donc pas comme un phénomène optique, mais relève d'une porosité entre les corps (Taussig 1993) et d'un ajustement entre leurs mouvements. Laver un enfant, échanger des gestes de tendresse, reproduire des mimiques, faire le ménage engagent les acteurs dans un processus où, à travers l'harmonisation de leurs gestes, leurs heurts même et leurs accrochages, ils se co-construisent. Il ne s'agit pas uniquement de cette empreinte sensorielle qui rend chaque environnement familial unique, mais d'un processus d'incorporation des proches via un processus dynamique qui, tout en modifiant les sujets, ratifie leur distinction. L'anthropologie des dix dernières années s'est beaucoup intéressée au rapport entre culture matérielle et subjectivation, en montrant comment les conduites sensori-motrices de l'individu viennent à s'étayer sur des objets. Les qualités sensibles et dynamiques du monde matériel sont tour à tour incorporées et désincorporées dans les schémas corporels, de sorte qu'elles atteignent la personne au plus profond de sa subjectivité (Warnier 1999; Rosselin et Julien 2009). Beaucoup moins de travaux, par contre, sont centrés sur la manière dont se fabrique un sujet par incorporation d'un autre corps. Comment deux ou plusieurs individus se co-construisent-ils? Le mouvement a une place centrale dans ce processus :

Grâce à leurs mouvements, les hommes prennent des empreintes du monde qui, en même temps, les transforment et qu'ils transforment en une partie d'eux-mêmes [...]. En cherchant à ressembler à leur mère ou à leur père, en les copiant ou en les imitant, les enfants apprennent leurs mouvements, leurs intentions et la dimension physique de leurs actions. En assimilant, de manière mimétique, les mouvements du corps de leurs parents, les enfants saisissent pourquoi, quand, comment et dans quel contexte ceux-ci agissent. [Wulf 2007:85-86]

Cette performativité ne se déroule jamais sur un mode mécanique, répétitif; les gestes sont réinterprétés, appropriés, la mimésis étant une dynamique créatrice qui demande une réflexivité de la part de l'acteur. Ce « faire ensemble » est souligné par les informateurs comme un trait qui contribue à faire des airs de famille. Ainsi, dans

les souvenirs de Krysia (40 ans, entrepreneure polonaise), cette dimension socio-motrice apparaît fondamentale : championne de gymnastique, entraînée par son père, elle souligne à plusieurs reprises une complicité de caractère qui relève de la proximité physique, mais aussi le goût commun du mouvement, le sens du rythme et de la danse et des « corps secs comme du bois ». La photo qu'elle choisit de me montrer la présente en équipe avec son père entraîneur à côté d'elle. Le film de son mariage que nous regardons ensemble met en scène cet ajustement des corps par plusieurs tours de danse ensemble. Mais ce père a aussi un corps rompu aux longues années d'exercice auprès de sa fille, et la danse à laquelle il se livre n'est plus celle de sa seule jeunesse. Krysia, très fière, souligne cette complicité qui se manifeste par des tours de danse disco, alors même que son témoin de noce n'arrive pas à suivre : « il est anglais, il n'est pas comme nous, tu vois comment nous suivons le rythme ... ».

Car à la différence de ce qui se passe dans l'incorporation d'objets à travers l'action motrice, les personnes ne sont pas inertes, elles s'accommodent les unes aux autres, résistent, se laissent transformer. Le cas cité n'est que partiellement exemplaire en raison de l'histoire particulière de Krysia. Néanmoins, le terrain met en évidence la vitalité de ces rapports d'agissements réciproques qui permettent de dévoiler les limites de la notion de dressage ou de socialisation, qui se ferait uniquement dans le sens descendant. Les enfants font leurs parents. Par leur action mimétique sur le monde, ils contribuent à le changer et à le réinterpréter de manière créative et critique. Comme le petit Jésus dans le tableau de Léonard de Vinci, ils évoluent entre un corps lancé vers l'avant et un regard tourné vers l'arrière, alors que Marie et Anne sont « toutes orientées vers *l'ascendant* qu'exerce sur elles l'enfant qui descend d'elles » (Pontalis 1987:42). De la même manière, les parents sont modifiés par leur action sur les enfants, tout comme les empreintes de mains préhistoriques révèlent que « en projetant la couleur, c'est la main elle-même qui est d'abord transformée » (Didi-Huberman 2008:46). Ainsi, dans certaines photos de famille, l'ethnographe se demande qui ressemble à qui. Peut-on toujours définir une antériorité du modèle, comme une matrice originale dont on repère les traces? Est-ce la fille qui reprend la mère dans ses gestes coquets, ou la mère qui s'accoutume aux poses enfantines de la fille? Est-ce le garçon qui sourit comme sa maman, ou cette dernière qui choisit d'arborer un style vestimentaire proche de celui du fils? Parler d'agissements réciproques nous permet aussi de situer les ressemblances dans le temps long d'une transmission qui procède par sélection, tris, ajustements et dans des processus de socialisation ascendante par des

enfants qui agissent en acteurs à travers des mécanismes simmeliens d'action réciproque (Simmel 1917). Ces rapports de similitude ne sont pas donnés une fois pour toutes, mais se modifient selon les statuts, les âges, les relations. Nous sommes donc en mesure d'interpréter le discours de ces informateurs, et ils sont nombreux, qui, avec le temps, « prennent à ressembler », tel que le veut l'expression, à un de leurs parents : Iwona, Hanna (30 ans, théologienne, Varsovie), Agnese (47 ans, employée, Rome) à leurs mères; Adam à son père; et ce, selon des appartenances qui installent le sujet à la fois dans l'ordre des générations et dans un genre. Les ressemblances semblent ainsi une façon de construire une appartenance dans le temps, à travers le temps et malgré les transformations qu'il produit sans cesse. Elles constituent un élément de régulation des rapports sociaux qui se modifient dans la durée, mais demandent aussi une illusion de permanence.

Le revers de ce tissu de relations matérielles qui, dans la durée, dans l'action et dans le travail corporel au quotidien, construisent les sujets, est la difficulté à en parler. Et cet achoppement dans le fait de dire la ressemblance qui se produit par l'action mimétique ne vient pas seulement des informateurs; il est partagé par l'ethnologue : comment observer les modes d'agir sur les autres et en être agi? Comment décrire ces transmissions minimes et vagabondes qui s'inscrivent de manière intersubjective, ou encore ces mouvements routiniers qui condensent la mémoire corporelle dès l'enfance, au point de devenir invisibles?

Une exception brise cette règle du non-dicible : les éloignements, les deuils, les disparitions délient les langues et les corps. C'est comme si l'empreinte de l'autre ne se laissait comprendre que par son absence. « Prendre à ressembler » à sa mère, à son père, à sa grand-mère renvoie souvent à une quête de traces de ce qui n'est plus : Agnese qui reconnaît dans la texture de sa peau les ridules des femmes disparues de la famille maternelle (une mère et une tante notamment); Iwona, surprise par l'écho inattendu de la voix maternelle dans la sienne; Hanna, qui observe sur elle la manière héritée de sa mère de bouger les mains, une fois qu'elle se retrouve seule; Adam qui reconnaît dans des photos d'un père d'abord absent, puis décédé, les marques de leurs commune appartenance et commence à « s'y retrouver ». C'est le creux qui laisse percevoir la présence de l'autre, comme un négatif photographique.

Pour reprendre les mots de l'artiste Christian Boltanski : « Notre visage n'est fait que de morts : le nez de votre arrière-grand-père, les yeux d'une aïeule dont vous ne connaissez pas le nom, et ainsi de suite. Les physiono-

mies sont faites de collages de morts qui vivent en nous » (Boltanski 2009:13). Les similitudes sont alors racontées comme une manière de donner forme aux absents, de leur permettre de marquer d'un sceau le corps des descendants, et ce, de manière d'autant plus marquante que l'incertitude sur les ascendants – pour cause de guerre, de migration, de déportation, d'abandon – génère un grand désir de retrouver des traces : ainsi en est-il des traits russes du grand-père de Ewa (68 ans, retraitée, Varsovie) qui font surface chez la nièce; ou des poses de l'aristocratie tchèque chez une aïeule d'Adam à l'histoire obscure. La ressemblance ne se présente alors pas comme étant du seul ordre du dévoilement, de l'épiphanie : elle suppose le doute des origines, un risque de « ratage », des différences incompréhensibles et parfois revendiquées, un travail silencieux happé par l'incertitude et le hasard. Ainsi, dans un roman de Nancy Huston, *Lignes de faille*, la petite fille enlevée par les Nazis et adoptée par une famille allemande, intriguée par ses origines, s'interroge anxieusement : « *qui m'a donné mon grain de beauté*? […] qui m'a donné ma voix? » (Huston 2006:420-421, souligné par l'auteure).

La trace, pour reprendre Benjamin, se présente alors comme « l'apparition d'une proximité, quelque lointain que puisse être ce qui l'a laissée […] avec la trace nous nous emparons de la chose » (Benjamin 1989:464). Cette chose, dont les informateurs s'emparent, n'est pas extérieure à eux, mais c'est justement cet invisible qui les constitue et qui leur permet, par mimésis ou performance, d'accéder à une dynamique créatrice de soi. À travers la ressemblance, on accède à une différence et donc à une forme de « liberté productive » (Gebauer et Wulf 2005: 417). C'est le propre de l'empreinte généalogique selon Didi-Huberman : une « empreinte [qui] fait de l'absence quelque chose comme une *puissance de forme* », un rapport entre la vie donnée et la vie perdue car, « pour que les formes elles-mêmes se transmettent, *survivent*, il faut aussi bien qu'elles sachent disparaître » (Didi-Huberman 2008:55, souligné par l'auteur).

## Le corps comme pratique citationnelle et performative

La ressemblance donne accès à une forme de vie, c'est une catégorie du vécu, le *vécu de la ressemblance*, selon une expression de Wittgenstein. Ainsi, les « airs de famille » constituent un faisceau de signes qui n'ont de sens que dans leur usage et dans leur recomposition. « Tout signe, *seul*, semble mort. *Qu'est ce* qui lui donne vie? Il *vit* dans l'usage. A-t-il en soi le souffle vital? Il respire dans *l'usage* » (Wittgenstein 1953, § 432, souligné par l'auteur). L'usage est la respiration du signe. Les souvenirs, les chan-

sons, les albums de famille existent pour être racontés, leur signification pour les acteurs ne peut être reconstruite qu'à partir des narrations qu'ils mobilisent. De même, pour que la ressemblance existe, il faut la dire, pour que le sens jaillisse et que les similitudes prennent corps, il est nécessaire que ces signes soient reconstruits et partagés. Mais ces signes ne sont jamais univoques, ils se prêtent à des jeux de reconnaissance et de distanciation selon les moments et les situations. Comme l'affirme la petite Kristina, en essayant de reconstruire ses origines :

> Mes cheveux sont blonds, ceux de mère sont châtain clair et ceux de Greta aussi mais ça ne prouve rien, Lothar avait les cheveux blonds. Ceux de papa sont blond foncé, ses yeux sont verts et les miens sont bleus mais ceux de grand-mère sont bleus aussi. [Huston 2006:414]

De la même manière, dans le terrain polonais, les yeux bleus de Joanna se présentent comme « si semblables » à ceux de sa mère, *mais aussi* à ceux de sa grand-mère paternelle quand elle est là ou quand une fête familiale réunit autour de la table la lignée paternelle. Ces affirmations apparemment contradictoires n'en sont pas moins véridiques. Ces signes ont, pour mes interlocuteurs, la même fonction que les *spie*, les « indices », dont parle l'historien Carlo Ginzburg (1986). Le paradigme indiciaire qu'il décrit consiste à prendre en charge un signe apparent, microscopique et apparemment insignifiant, lequel est investi d'une probabilité forte à rendre compte de ce qui est indicible : comme dans la méthode de Morelli, médecin et critique d'art du XIXe siècle qui, d'après la façon dont étaient peints des détails comme le pavillon auriculaire, les ongles, les doigts des pieds et des mains, était capable d'attribuer la paternité de certains tableaux. Il s'agit d'un savoir de l'incertitude, conjectural, qu'on retrouve selon Ginzburg dans des contextes très divers : divinatoires, littéraires, ou sémiotiques-médicaux. Bien que la réalité soit opaque, il existe des écarts, des signes marginaux, qui permettent de la déchiffrer : l'organisation de ces signes se fait à travers la recherche d'une « rigueur flexible » (Ginzburg 1986:192), le paradigme indiciaire étant une manière de connaître ce qui est individuel et ne peut pas être généralisé.

Dans les observations menées en famille, les indices sont mis en valeur par des énoncés qui soulignent ou réfutent leur caractère : s'il est parfois difficile de parler de ces traces au moment de l'entretien formel, le discours sur ce qui distingue et ressemble se joue dans la relation, en particulier le rapport entre les sexes. Des « ma fille », « ton fils » lancés dans l'espace domestique, reconstruisent publiquement des parcours d'affiliation à tout moment

renouvelés. Mais les ressemblances peuvent également jaillir lorsqu'on met en action des compétences techniques – broderie, mécanique, danse, dessin, ou encore à l'occasion des petites adversités de la vie quotidienne, comme Agata qui perd ses clés et dit « je suis étourdie comme mon père »; ou enfin lors de l'évocation des maladies, le corps souffrant étant une mémoire incorporée de la souffrance des proches qui, dans les similitudes, trouve parfois une raison d'être.

Dans ce jeu performatif des ressemblances, on peut monter en épingle un trait pour rendre visibles des liens affectifs, sociaux, généalogiques; par exemple, la grande importance donnée à la coiffure. Ainsi, une photographie exposée dans la salle à manger de Jenny (48 ans, cadre d'entreprise, Rome), montre deux sœurs et une cousine maternelle, fille de la sœur de la mère, affichant en gros plan des visages souriants encadrés par des masses crépues et sombres, l'opulence de la chevelure leur conférant, pour l'interviewée, « un air de famille ». Il en est de même dans les photographies que nous regardons ensemble, avec ce trait paradoxal : c'est la partie du corps la plus manipulable et la plus modifiable qui est convoquée pour témoigner de la véracité de l'appartenance. D'où le paradoxe qui réside dans le fait d'affirmer et de nier, alternativement et selon les situations, ces similitudes qui font lien. Dans le cas de Weronika et de sa fille Basia (3 ans à l'époque de l'observation) les cheveux se prêtent à un jeu de la désaffiliation où la fillette est d'abord refusée parce qu'« étrangère » – « tu n'es pas à moi, tu es noire, tu es une Africaine » (la petite a des cheveux châtains et bouclés), « tu as des cheveux d'Africaine » – pour qu'ensuite le lien se renoue lors du moment final de l'agnition et de la reconnaissance. Cette oscillation entre non reconnaissance et reconnaissance de l'appartenance fait partie des jeux familiaux les plus fréquemment observés. En même temps, ces signes présentent, dans leur « rigueur flexible » pour reprendre Ginzburg, un intérêt particulier pour le chercheur : les cheveux de la « petite africaine » sont conservés dans un bol minuscule placé en haut de l'évier, entre une petite plante et une éponge. On ne les voit que lorsqu'on fait la vaisselle. Ce bol définit par sa présence muette et rayonnante un micro-espace domestique réservé prioritairement aux membres féminins de la famille (les hommes qui fréquentent la maison ne font pas la vaisselle), un lien-lieu partagé qui, marque d'une désaffiliation possible, contient en même temps le choix de la filiation et l'acceptation de son caractère inévitable. Ces cheveux représentent aussi ce qui permet de passer du corps vécu au signe et à nouveau, dans un processus métonymique, du signe au corps, mais en le saturant de sens par la création d'un élément tangible, concret, rayonnant

dans un espace marqué par des pratiques et empreint de féminité.

Cet exemple nous introduit à une différence conceptuelle et expérientielle entre le corps vécu et subjectivé par immersion dans une matière partagée – soit-elle celle de l'environnement matériel ou des substances physiques du corps des autres – et le corps mis en paroles ou en images. Le grec ancien a plusieurs mots pour définir ce dernier. J'en retiendrai deux : le σώμα, un complexe polysémique qui définit le corps mort ou vivant, la personne, la vie, les organes, mais surtout le corps tangible, la substance, la matière corporelle. Il peut être associé à ύλη (hyle), la matière, qui signifie aussi la forêt, le bois à brûler ou le bois de construction : bref, tout ce qui se modèle et prend forme (association qu'on retrouve aussi dans le latin *corpus* et *materia*). L'autre terme, δεμας, renvoie au corps en tant que figure, à la structure des membres, à la forme, à des éléments spécifiques comme la taille ou la démarche. Ainsi, quand les dieux prennent les semblants d'un humain ou d'un animal, ils en endossent le *demas*, l'aspect. L'opposition entre *soma* et *demas* introduit donc une complémentarité entre le corps en tant que matière et totalité, et le corps en tant que figure, signe et qualités spécifiques.

Si le *soma* donne lieu à ces processus d'imprégnation, d'incorporation et d'agissements réciproques esquissés dans les paragraphes précédents, le *demas* est mis en scène par d'autres styles figuratifs qu'on retrouve dans quelques photographies utilisées pour produire et témoigner des « airs de famille ». J'en retracerai deux.

La première typologie est celle que j'appellerais, pour reprendre Butler, une « pratique citationnelle » qui se fonde sur la répétition. Comme dans le cas du genre, les ressemblances, tout en étant pensées comme « naturelles » et « normales » sont le fruit d'une pratique de citation constante : leur validité siège dans la redondance. Ces répétitions sont mises en scène par des assemblages de photographies d'où les non-ressemblants peuvent être exclus, et ce, surtout dans l'espace intime de la chambre à coucher : ainsi en est-il chez Halina (70 ans, pédagogue polonaise à la retraite), qui n'expose dans sa chambre que ceux « qui sont proches », ceux dont elle dit « lui ressembler » lors des échanges informels. Ces pratiques citationnelles peuvent être reconstruites à l'usage de l'ethnologue : Adam constitue par exemple pour moi un montage des photos de ses grands-parents paternels, de son père à différents âges de la vie et de lui-même : la réplication des postures et des uniformes renforce les similitudes. Ces montages peuvent enfin être construits à l'usage des enfants ou des petits-enfants. Zbigniew (65 ans, conducteur de tramway, retraité, Gdansk) assemble les photos des ascendants et des ascendants de la

lignée paternelle au moment où sa fille attend un bébé, afin que ce dernier puisse prendre connaissance, une fois grand, « de la famille et des liens de ressemblance et d'hérédité ». Mario a scanné des photographies qui le reproduisent à l'âge de son enfant. Il montre ensuite de manière alternée des photos de lui enfant et de son fils, Ettore, qui vit avec sa mère en famille recomposée. La succession de visages qui sature le regard montre, à son avis, des ressemblances sans ambigüité; elle vise à renforcer des liens affectifs indéfectibles par ce que Taussig (1993) appellerait the « *magic power of replication* ». L'indétermination des ressemblances, l'incertitude qu'elles introduisent ou sont susceptibles d'introduire dans la filiation, le risque de désaffiliation imposent un travail constant : un art du faire et du défaire qui ne connaît pas de répit, car le produit en est le processus. Cette structure itérative est d'ailleurs celle des récits de famille qui reconstruisent l'histoire familiale par un mouvement en spirale, où chaque répétition du récit permet d'ajouter de nouveaux détails, comme dans le roman magistral *Les disparus*, de Daniel Mendelsohn (2007). Les montages évoqués constituent aussi trois différents degrés de manipulation photographique, qui montrent comment la progressive maîtrise des nouveaux moyens de reproductibilité de l'image (du simple accrochage au mur, au collage et au scannage) est engagée dans cette quête de certitudes.

La deuxième typologie d'exposition met en scène des corps épinglés par leur séparation et la précision des gestes. Ces stratégies performatives ont leur scène idéale lors des cérémonies scolaires, familiales et religieuses. La première communion solennelle et les fêtes scolaires de fin d'année avec remise des distinctions constituent une performance de soi, ainsi qu'un apprentissage et une mise en scène des différences de sexe, de génération, de rang. Le dialogue des corps y est moins intense et moins confiant par rapport à ce qui transparaît dans d'autres images familiales : ici les corps sont fixés, isolés, précis dans les positions; les ordres sont différenciés et hiérarchiques. Ils ne sont pas plus individualisés; au contraire, ils traduisent une inscription dans un groupe ou une généalogie : par exemple dans une des photographies de première communion, la présence de la Vierge de Czestochowa sur le fond est associée à la mère, au parrain et à la marraine, et indique la parenté spirituelle. Toutefois, le vêtement (avec le port de la cravate pour le garçon et la robe pour les filles dans le cas des fêtes scolaires ou familiales), les accessoires (le bouquet, la chandelle), le discours ou le chant que l'enfant doit présenter devant l'assemblée, les postures (la position très sexuée des mains, des jambes, du dos), la place du parrain ou de la marraine sont choi-

sis et confrontés à ceux adoptés par les parents ou d'autres membres de la parenté à leur propre communion. Ces pratiques fixées dans les albums familiaux constituent un dépôt mémoriel, une source d'inspiration, une forme d'inscription dans la génération ou le genre à travers des matrices de reconnaissance : dans la famille de Tadeusz et d'Alexandra, on me présente deux séries d'images : l'une de la première communion de la fille et de la première communion de la mère, l'autre comparant toujours la communion, mais cette fois-ci de la fille et du père. Chacune de ces séries témoignant, selon l'une ou l'autre, de l'irréfutable similitude de la fillette avec chacun de ses parents.

## Conclusions

Le terrain mené en Italie et en Pologne montre la fécondité heuristique de l'étude des ressemblances familiales. Produits de relations sociales, elles s'affirment par leur caractère immanent, processuel et intersubjectif. Caractère immanent : car les airs de famille constituent un mode d'être dans le présent qui demande à être constamment revitalisé. Ils sont toujours déclinés au temps présent, même quand ils se réfèrent à des membres de la famille décédés ou à des histoires du passé, car ils impliquent un interprète qui, ici et maintenant, trie, désigne, donne vie aux signes porteurs de sens; processuel ensuite : la quête de ressemblances semble exprimer « le dur désir de durer des partenaires dans et par leur relation elle-même » (Javeau 1992:66). Pour reprendre la distinction présente dans la langue anglaise entre *to make* – le faire qui se finalise dans un résultat tangible ou dans l'accomplissement d'une action – et *to do* – où l'idée de processus régulier et continu prime sur la visée ou l'aboutissement – on peut dire que les ressemblances sont *done* et *undone* car, tout comme le genre analysé par Butler (2004), elles ne constituent pas uniquement une stratégie de normalisation qui agit à l'échelle familiale, voire sociale, mais aussi un processus d'action individuelle et collective qui bascule sans arrêt entre la reconnaissance et ce que Lévi-Strauss (1972:52) appelait « le refus d'identifications obligées ». Ces indices de similitude et de singularité sont intersubjectifs enfin, dans la mesure où le corps des acteurs ne constitue pas uniquement le support de représentations, une machine à produire des métaphores du social ou une page blanche où s'inscrivent des traits et des identités, mais aussi un producteur de culture. Les ressemblances familiales permettent de questionner la manière dont les acteurs incorporent concrètement, dans leur chair, des systèmes d'appartenance tout en les produisant. En effet, les corps multiples que nous avons retracés dans les pratiques et discours, sont co-présents et en

interaction permanente : l'un, le *soma*, semble fonctionner par contagion (*convenientia*), l'autre, le *demas*, par analogie, pour reprendre deux modalités de ressemblance définies par Foucault (1966).

La dimension performative entre vécu et mise en scène, entre imprégnation et désignation, entre mimésis et affirmation de sa singularité, fait du corps une plaque d'articulation entre le faire pour soi et le faire pour les autres, entre l'expérience vécue, l'expérience racontée et l'expérience montrée (Turner et Bruner 1986) : une voie d'accès à des processus d'identification multiples selon les situations sociales. La mobilisation de plusieurs ordres sensoriels – la vue, le toucher, l'ouïe, le goût, l'odorat – et de plusieurs techniques d'empreinte, depuis celle qui a prise sur l'intime aux images savamment mises en scène, garantit une pluralité de points d'ancrage au monde, une possibilité de choisir et de combiner, selon le contexte, les manières de faire et dire similitudes et différences. Comme le souligne Wittgenstein, les ressemblances ne sont pas données par un ou deux traits communs à tous les membres d'une même famille, mais elles se révèlent dans la superposition de traits, dans l'enchevêtrement de plusieurs fils : elles font surface et disparaissent au gré des « jeux » – usages, contextes, pratiques, interactions. Et c'est justement leur coïncidence imparfaite, le déphasage des contours qui permet un jeu d'identifications multiples : être comme les autres et être soi. Ces corps multiples sont enfin produits et reproduits dans des espaces et à travers des artefacts : ainsi en est-il des cuisines et des salles à manger visitées à Rome et à Turin, où sont souvent exposées des photographies de la famille et qui participent à fabriquer, en même temps, des sujets proches par l'imprégnation des odeurs, des goûts, des proximités quotidiennes. L'expérience et ses expressions s'y enlacent aussi bien par la diversité de l'information que par sa redondance.

Considérer les identités incorporées telles qu'elles se donnent à lire à travers la construction des ressemblances familiales, peut nous alors aider à ne pas se cantonner à « what the body means, but how it comes through a multiplicity of continuous connections with other bodies » (Budgeon 2003:51); tout comme le grain de beauté qui, dans le roman de Nancy Huston, revient chez les enfants de quatre générations, et est tour à tour lien affectif entre la grand-mère et son petit enfant, petit compagnon de jeu, cachet de « mauvaiseté », blessure et menace de maladie, marque d'individualité, et, enfin, signe de reconnaissance dans les vicissitudes de l'histoire et l'énigme des origines.

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## Notes

1   Par *Metterze* on entend en histoire de l'art des représentations de la Vierge avec Sainte Anne et l'Enfant Jésus.

2   Le choix de ces deux terrains, l'Italie et la Pologne, est lié au désir de comparer deux contextes proches du point de vue de la religion, de l'unification nationale tardive – qui a donné priorité à l'appartenance communautaire et familiale –, de l'expérience dictatoriale, ainsi que de l'importance accordée au « sang » en tant que vecteur d'identification et de transmission dans un contexte important de migration et de délocalisation. En même temps, ces contextes culturels sont traversés par des différences profondes aussi bien socio-historiques qu'anthropologiques qu'il n'y a pas lieu, dans ce texte, de décrire dans le détail : entre autres exemples, la place de la lignée maternelle dans le système de parenté et dans la vie quotidienne, ou les formes d'enchevêtrement entre mémoire individuelle, familiale et collective. Je ne procèderai pas ici à une comparaison des clivages et discontinuités entre les deux terrains; je privilégierai plutôt les similitudes relatives aux manières de fabriquer et de penser les ressemblances.

3   Cette tension est évoquée, même si c'est dans le cadre d'une approche encore évolutionniste, par Durkheim, qui affirme, selon Tarot, que « plus les sociétés sont primitives et plus il y a des ressemblances entre les individus dont elles sont formées; [c'est] quand les particularités collectives s'estompent, [que] les singularités individuelles apparaissent » (Tarot 2008:29).

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# Lafitau Revisited: American "Savages" and Universal History

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**Abstract:** Like the Victorian anthropologists, Lafitau constructed a comparison between "savages" and "ancients." Specifically, he asserted the universality of three fundamental human institutions: religion, marriage, and government. However, he constructed his arguments in radically different ways for each of these institutions. First, he compiled a generalized account of "pagan" religion amalgamated from classical sources and descriptions of Native American religious practices. Secondly, he compared the Iroquois practices he observed with an absolute template of marriage as a divinely ordained institution. Thirdly, he provided a functional analysis of Iroquois institutions to demonstrate the effectiveness of their form of government.

**Keywords:** history of anthropology, Iroquois, religion, kinship, government, missionaries

**Résumé :** Comme les anthropologues victoriens, Lafitau a construit une comparaison entre « les sauvages » et « les anciens ». Spécifiquement, il a affirmé l'universalité de trois institutions humaines : la religion, le mariage et le gouvernement. Il a toutefois construit ses arguments par des chemins radicalement différents pour chacune des institutions. D'abord, il a compilé une description généralisée de la religion « païenne » fusionnée à partir de sources classiques et de comptes-rendus de pratiques religieuses des Indiens nord-américains. En second lieu, il a comparé les pratiques iroquoises qu'il observait avec un modèle absolu du mariage comme une institution de prescription divine. En troisième lieu, il a produit une analyse fonctionnelle des institutions iroquoises pour démontrer l'efficacité de leur forme de gouvernement.

**Mots-clés :** histoire de l'anthropologie, Iroquois, religion, parenté, gouvernement, missionnaires

A century and a half before Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society*, the Jesuit Father Joseph-François Lafitau published his huge tome, *Les Moeurs des Sauvages Americains Comparés aux Moeurs des Premiers Temps* (The Customs of American Savages Compared to the Customs of Earliest Times), published in 1724.[1] Indeed, Lafitau has been credited by Radcliffe-Brown with "discovering" the classificatory kinship terminology of the Iroquois before Morgan.[2] However, there are more important bases for comparing Lafitau to Morgan aside from a concern with kinship. Both Lafitau's *Moeurs des Sauvages Américains* and Morgan's *Ancient Society* confront Iroquois ethnography, based on the authors' own researches in the field, with accounts of classical Greek and Roman societies in order to construct a framework for a universal history of humanity.

Lafitau's work, along with that of his fellow Jesuit François Xavier Charlevoix, represented the culmination of a century of Jesuit descriptions of the native peoples of New France,[3] most notably those of Le Jeune and Brébeuf whom he cites abundantly. (The Jesuits had, of course, no monopoly on such descriptions, which were penned both by their rivals, the Recollet friars Sagard and Hennepin, and by secular explorers such as Champlain, Lescarbot, Perrot and Lahontan.) Both Lafitau and Charlevoix departed from their predecessors by incorporating their descriptions into histories. Charlevoix's history of New France, however, was a more conventional form of historical narrative. Lafitau's work was not a narrative at all, but rather a speculative attempt to reconstruct the early history of humanity, especially before the adoption of writing.

Recent reappraisals of Lafitau's contributions to anthropology and to the study of native Americans tend, alternatively, to stress his ethnography, and thus his representation of the "American savages" (Ellingson 2001; Sioui 1992), or his comparative enterprise simultaneously engulfing Americans and Ancients (de Certeau 1985;

Duchet 1985; Hodgen 1971; see also Pagden 1982:199).[4] There is consensus that his depiction of the Iroquois is largely sympathetic, though not all commentators are as enthusiastic as Sioui (1992:47), who asserts that "Lafitau's work provides a solid mass of arguments and evidence that help restore dignity to the people descended from the 'savage' nations Lafitau describes." Analyses of his comparative project have focused on how he constitutes the very terms of comparison—American "savages" and "earliest times"—and of the implications of the ways in which he interconnects them. Duchet (1985) points out that both "American savages" and "earliest times" are entirely constructed by Lafitau, in the first place an amalgam, not only of descriptions of New France, but of Brazil, Virginia, the Caribbean, indeed Mexico and Peru; in the second instance, an equally haphazard selection of material culled from classical sources. De Certeau (1985) goes further to suggest that, for Lafitau, the very act of writing serves to suppress time in the process of making "savage" customs speak for ancient relics, silencing the voices of the Ancients and the Americans in the process, thus inaugurating "l'écriture anthropologique," (anthropological writing).

Of course, Lafitau was hardly the first to compare the practices of non-Europeans with those of Greeks and Romans. Indeed, this was fairly standard practice in much early modern European travel writing, His original contribution, as de Certeau points out, was rather to theorize this comparison in terms of a framework which, like Morgan, writes a universal history while simultaneously negating specific histories. Of course, the frameworks Lafitau and Morgan envisaged were radically different, not least because each author conceptualized a different kind of time. Morgan's timeframe was geological, Lafitau's resolutely theological.

Lafitau's account consequently begins with the Creation, the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the Flood, and the dispersal of humankind after the collapse of the tower of Babel. There was obviously no space in such a chronology for "prehistory." Lafitau suggested that, before the dispersal, humans were privy to divinely transmitted moral principles, natural religion for all intents and purposes. Given the intrinsic sinfulness of human nature after the Fall, these principles were bound to be violated or distorted in the absence of revealed religion. This said, such an Augustinian perspective hardly qualifies Lafitau as a "degenerationist," as Hodgen (1971:380) and Trigger (1985:23) have alleged. On the contrary, Lafitau's central concern was to demonstrate how traces of the divine teachings were never totally abandoned, and could be found throughout the world's peoples. Jesuits

had already described the Chinese literati as exemplary in the way that they had maintained these principles relatively intact over the centuries.[5] But if such traces could be found among the Iroquois, their universality was confirmed. Such an assertion was an essential tenet of Jesuit humanism. Lafitau's account of the Native American migration from Asia was also a flat denial of polygenesis, an assertion of the essential oneness of human nature. The Iroquois, indeed all Native Americans, were moral beings who could and should be converted to Christianity.

Given Lafitau's post-diluvian paradigm, the Iroquois—indeed all Native Americans—had to have their origins in the Old World. In his efforts to uncover the mystery of their origins, Lafitau—very much like his 19th-century successors—focused on the Iroquois system of matrilineal descent, or, in his terms, gynococracy. Lafitau's extensive classical education had in fact prepared him for such a discovery. Herodotus (1899:68) had described such a system among the Lycians of Asia Minor: "they have one peculiar [custom] to themselves, in which they differ from all other nations; for they take their name from their mothers and not from their fathers; so that if any one ask another who he is, he will describe himself by his mother's side, and reckon up his maternal ancestry in the female line." On these grounds, Lafitau speculated that the Iroquois were none other than long lost Lycians, who had migrated across Asia through Siberia to America. (He dismissed the idea that they might be one of the lost tribes of Israel as preposterous [1974:Vol.1, 259-261].[6]

In a short and early chapter where he sketched out a general "Idea of the Character of Savages in General," Lafitau catalogued the virtues and vices of savage existence. Admittedly, at first glance, they appeared to be "coarse, stupid, ignorant, ferocious, without sentiments of religion or humanity, given to all the vices, the natural product of a complete freedom which is troubled neither by any sentiment of the divine or of human laws, nor by principles of reason or education." But such stereotypes, he insisted, were misleading if not flatly wrong. "They have good sense, a vivid imagination, an easy grasp of ideas, and an admirable memory. All possess at least the traces of an ancient and hereditary religion, and of a form of government" (1974:Vol. 1, 90).[7] Indeed, the centerpiece of Lafitau's argument was the assertion of the universality of three fundamental human institutions: religion, marriage and government. Nearly half the book is devoted to a demonstration that American savages in general, and the Iroquois in particular, possessed all three of these institutions in one form or another. However, the way in which he constructed his arguments was radically differ-

ent for each of these three institutions. In the first instance, he constructed a generalized account of "pagan" religion amalgamated from miscellaneous classical sources, his own experience of the Iroquois, and other (mostly but not exclusively Jesuit) descriptions of Native American religious practices. In the second, he (generally favourably) compared the Iroquois practices he observed with an absolute template of marriage as a divinely ordained institution. Thirdly, he provided a sort of functional analysis of Iroquois institutions to demonstrate the effectiveness of their form of government. In short, he provided three radically different analytical and rhetorical strategies for "humanizing" the savages.

Lafitau's chapter on religion is far and away the longest in the book. His composite picture of the religious system which was carried from Europe through Asia to the Americas included examples from classical antiquity, Zoroastrians, Mexico, Peru, Guiana, Brazil, Virginia and of course from New France. This is the only chapter, however, where his own observations played a relatively marginal role. His concern was ultimately to separate the wheat from the chaff, to uncover the core of eternal truth which lay beneath the accretion of superstition and error. The key tenets of this religious system were, minimally, belief in the divinity, in the soul and in life after death. This is hardly to say that Lafitau's discussion limited itself to any such bare minimum. The sun, he suggests, was a "natural" symbol for the divinity; consequently, the worship of fire, "pyrolatry," was a common feature of its cult. Lafitau's use of the comparative method to create a single paradigm out of composite sources taken out of context bears remarkable similarity to later constructs—Tylor's "animism" or Frazer's "homeopathic" and "contagious" magic—even if his creationist message was diametrically opposed to their evolutionary scenarios.

Unlike Tylor and Frazer, however, for whom "animism" and "magic" epitomized the logical confusion of the savage mind, Lafitau expressed considerable sympathy for this ancient-cum-savage religion as he understood it. It is instructive to compare Lafitau's attitude towards self-mortification to that of previous Christian writers. Of course, for Roman Catholics in the 17th century and earlier, self-mortification was both readily comprehensible and potentially praiseworthy. Sir John Mandeville, in the 14th century, was impressed with the readiness of (South Asian) Indians to throw themselves beneath the wheels of the "Juggernaut's" cart (1983:125-126).[8] For him, it was a scandal that idolaters were prepared to go to such lengths for false gods while Christians were unwilling to display the same level of self-sacrifice for the true God. The practices of others were, in this respect, largely a foil for what

he considered the egregious inadequacy of his coreligionists. José de Acosta, in the 16th century, saw the religious practices of the Mexicans and Peruvians in a rather different light:

> Because the religious life ... is so acceptable in the eyes of Divine Majesty, and so greatly honors his holy name and beautifies his church, the father of lies has not only tried to imitate that life but in a certain sense tries to compete with it and to make his ministers view with it in austerity and observance. [de Acosta 2002:282]

The monasteries of the virgins of the Sun in Peru, the bloodletting of Mexican priests who would pierce their bodies with spines of maguey, were so many manifestations of the Devil's imitation of religious virtue, a form of satanic parody. Nonetheless, such practices served not only "to demonstrate Satan's accursed pride and shame" but also "to waken the sense of our own lukewarm efforts in the service of Almighty God" (de Acosta 2002:287). It was hard for de Acosta to repress a begrudging sense of admiration.

For Lafitau, however, such self-mortification was in fact divinely inspired rather than a devilish travesty. Lafitau's long discussion begins with a description of the pagan mysteries of classical antiquity, which clearly expressed "the truth of religion" in spite of the later introduction of various "abominations and shameful things" which "were diametrically opposed to their initial spirit which was a spirit of death to oneself, of penance and sanctification":

> In the state of expiation which was truly one of penance, they [the initiates] kept themselves in retreat and silence, they fasted rigorously, abstained from the allowed pleasures of matrimony, made a confession of their sins, passed through many purifications representing the state of a mystical death and regeneration: finally, they underwent penalties which appeared to be a penance and an atonement for past sins. [1974:Vol. 1, 180]

Lafitau insisted on "the conformity of these initiations and mysteries of the ancients with the religions of the East Indies, of Japan and China, or even with those of such highly organized American nations as the Mexicans and the Peruvians" (1974:Vol. 1, 188), and notably:

> in the perfection to which they [the priests of these religions] aspire by the profession of a penitent, austere life, passed in fasts, abstinence, chastity, poverty, mortification [of the flesh] and finally in the practice of virtues, virtues of which they possess in truth only the external appearance, but, in this appearance, they find the claim of an entirely holy origin. [1974:Vol. 1, 189]

Here, Lafitau was careful to resort to an extremely subtle distinction. He could not assert that such practices of self-mortification in other religions were valid in any ultimate sense, for this would have made them equal to Roman Catholic Christianity; rather, these practices, invalid in themselves, nonetheless expressed a valid and holy truth.

Lafitau's interminable chapter on religion is the one which corresponds most closely to Duchet's and de Certeau's characterization of his use of the comparative method. He draws remarkably sparingly on the ethnography of New France, either from his own observations or those of his predecessors, and instead cites extensively from descriptions of other parts of America, from Virginia to Peru, in order to supplement his classical sources. If anything, it is not his Iroquois ethnography which illuminates the silences of his classical sources, but quite the reverse:

> I have no doubt at all that their initiations and tests were almost like those of the Virginian tribes of which we spoke at first but, whether they had already lost many of their customs when the Europeans began to visit them, or whether they carefully concealed their mysteries ... or, finally, whether the Europeans were not careful enough in questioning them or capable of penetrating adequately the spirit of the rites which they saw performed, we lack any detailed account of them in the old Relations. [1974:Vol. 1, 217]

Lafitau suggests that the "savages" of New France had lost or abandoned their initiation rites—the equivalents of ancient Greek and Roman "mysteries"—relatively recently. Ultimately, Lafitau's purpose is to amalgamate classical and ethnographic sources to reconstruct a sort of ur-paganism, a refraction rather than a reflection of the original divine spark.

Unlike his treatment of religion, Lafitau's discussion of marriage and the family relies very centrally on his own observations. For Lafitau, marriage, like religion, was a divinely-inspired institution. As one might readily imagine, marriage was ideally monogamous, permanent, and between individuals who were not closely related to one another. Lafitau's account of Iroquois kinship terminology was actually part of his argument for the universal applicability of incest prohibitions. Indeed, he resorted to Iroquois kinship in order to explain—or more exactly to explain away—an embarrassing passage in Genesis (20:12) which seemed directly to contradict the entire thrust of Lafitau's universal history. Abraham, who had asked Sarah to pass herself off as his sister rather than his wife in the kindgdom of Gerar, justifies himself to the king,

Abimelech, on the grounds that Sarah is indeed his half sister, child of the same father by a different mother. For Lafitau, the Hebrews, as God's Chosen People, were the only ones to keep intact the knowledge of God's commandments, the incest prohibition among them. How could Abraham, apical ancestor of the Hebrews and a holy prophet, flout the incest prohibition so flagrantly? Lafitau's excursus into the intricacies of kinship terminology provided a perfect answer: Sarah was only Abraham's classificatory sister, à la manière des Iroquois. In this instance, Lafitau resorts to the comparative method, not in order to fill in the gaps of his knowledge of the past, but rather to cover up its scandals. Iroquois classificatory kinship terminology serves as a convenient fig leaf for Abraham.

Lafitau—and Brébeuf (1996:31) before him—heartily approved the Iroquois avoidance of marriage between relatives on all sides, even distant ones, regulations which seemed to echo those edicted by the Catholic Church (which could, unlike the Iroquois, accord dispensations). The Iroquois were also monogamous, another trait which easily won approval from the missionaries. The one spot on the Iroquois record, in the eyes of the missionaries, was the frequency of divorce and the ease by which it could be obtained. It is hardly surprising that missionaries would find Iroquois marriage somewhat short of perfection. Still, except for the issue of divorce, their overall tone was one of approval. There is not the slightest hint in Lafitau that Iroquois matriliny was a sign of marital laxity. (Le Jeune, in the previous century, had in fact suggested that Montagnais men left their property to their sisters' children because they could never be sure of their own progeny.) In short, Lafitau measured Iroquois institutions of kinship and marriage in terms of what he considered universally valid, divinely decreed standards. If these practices fell short of perfection—a human, rather than a "savage" predicament—they were anything but degenerate.

Finally, Lafitau insisted, the Iroquois savages definitely had a system of government. He named such a system "gynococracy," the rule of women, to underscore its matrilineal basis, though he pointed out that governmental affairs were "in the men's hands only by way of procuration" (1974:Vol. 1, 287). Thus the office of chief always passes from a man to "his aunt's children or his sisters' or his nieces' on the maternal side" (1974:Vol. 1, 292). The successor is chosen by the matron of the group, who confers with the members of her own longhouse (cabane). As for the chiefs, "their power does not appear to have any trace of absolutism. It seems that they have no means of coercion to command obedience in case of resistance. They are obeyed, however, and command with authority; their

commands, given as requests, and the obedience paid them, appear entirely free" (1974:Vol. 1, 293). Lafitau reserves the highest praise for their councils:

> After their deliberation on whatever subject it may be, there is almost no reason, for or against, which they have not seen or weighed and, when they want to take account of their decision, they make it so plausible that it is difficult not to interpret it in the way that they do. In general, we may say that they are more patient than we in examining all the consequences and results of a matter. They listen to one another more quietly, show more deference and courtesy than we toward people who express opinions opposed to theirs, not knowing what it is to cut a speaker off short, still less to dispute heatedly: they have more coolness, less passion, at least to all appearances, and bear themselves with more zeal for the public welfare. Also it has been by a most refined policy that they have gained the ascendancy over the other nations, that they have gained the advantage over the most warlike after dividing them, rendered themselves formidable to the most distant, and maintain themselves today in a state of tranquil neutrality between the French and English by which thay have been able to make themselves both feared and sought after. [1974:Vol. 1, 297]

They managed to keep quarrels to a minimum, and to have a system of justice for resolving disputes, including the payment of compensation for homicide.

While Lafitau drew parallels between Iroquois government and examples from classical antiquity—Lycian "gynococracy" is after all an absolutely critical element of his argument concerning the ultimately European origins of the Iroquois—his account differed in striking ways from his treatment of marriage and religion. Specifically, he made no argument that Iroquois government conformed in any degree to some divinely mandated paradigm. Of course, the most theologically oriented political argument, in the 17th if not the 18th century, was the divine right of kings. This would hardly have suited the Iroquois case, where kings were notably absent. In any case, by Lafitau's time, the argument for the divine right of kings was no longer taken very seriously. As a result, this implied that Iroquois government was an entirely human achievement, and that they, rather than God, could take direct credit for its very real successes. All in all, Lafitau's account of the Iroquois moves from chapter to chapter, quietly but inexorably, from Divine Creation towards human achievement, from universally valid templates drawn from an amalgam of classical sources and travel narratives to an increasingly straightforward, first hand account of Iroquois practices.

Critical assessments of Lafitau's contribution to anthropology, by focusing either on his ethnographic representation of the Iroquois or on the nature of his comparative project, have failed to take into consideration the articulation between these two facets of his work, and most particularly, on the different ways in which they articulate with one another in different sections of the book. The section on marriage comes closest to wedding Iroquois ethnography with Lafitau's quest for evidence of traces of the divine plan. Not only are many, if not all, Iroquois practices divinely sanctioned, but they even serve to "rectify" readings of Holy Scripture. As far as religion is concerned, quite to the contrary, Lafitau has abundant recourse to classical sources as well as to descriptions of other "American savages" in order to compensate for real or perceived lacunae in the ethnography of New France. Finally, other than the putative Lycian origins of Iroquois gynococracy, the governmental institutions of the Iroquois do not conform neatly either to a classical paradigm or to the ideal of an absolutist monarchy with which the Jesuits were most comfortable, but nevertheless demonstrate that they could function legitimately.

Ultimately, Morgan was to be far more consistent in his use of his own ethnographic research to suggest that the institutions of Iroquois society in the realms of government, family and property provided a glimpse of the "prehistory" of the Greeks and the Romans. Yet there is a brief passage where, for a moment, Lafitau self-consciously rereads the Greeks in the light of his direct experience of the Iroquois:

> I took particular pleasure in reading Apollonius of Rhodes' poem on the expedition of the Argonauts, because of the perfect resemblance which I find in all the rest of the work between these famous heroes of antiquity, and the present day barbarians, in their voyages and military undertakings. Hercules and Jason, Castor and Pollux, Zetes and Calais, Orpheus and Mopsus, and all those other half-gods, who rendered themselves immortal, and to whom people have burned incense only too readily, are so well represented by a troop of rascals and miserable savages that I seem to see [pass] before my eyes those famous conquerors of the Golden Fleece, but this resemblance lowers the conception which I had formed of the glory [of these heroes], and I am ashamed for the greatest kings and princes in the world that they have thought themselves honoured to be compared to them.
>
> The famous ship Argo which has for anchor a ... stone tied to a laurel root cord, to which Hercules' weight alone served as ballast and which the Argonauts carried on their shoulders for twelve days and twelve nights in the Lybian fables, has nothing to distinguish

it from a dugout or at most from a long-boat [*chaloupe*]. This Hercules himself who chose his place on the benches with the others and took an oar in his hand, who plunged into the woods to make an oar of a little fir tree after breaking his; who, every time that they selected land to camp, lay on the shore, in the open air, on a bed of leaves or branches, is a savage in all ways and is not superior to them [the Indians]. [1974:Vol. 2, 116-117]

In this remarkable passage where Lafitau relates his epiphany, the fleeting impression that the Argonauts were far more like the Iroquois than like the sculptures of the Parthenon, we can catch a glimpse of *The Golden Bough*.

By the time Lafitau published his work, theologically inspired universal histories were out of fashion, though Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws* and Voltaire's *Essai sur les Moeurs*, attempts to understand the sweep of human history in purely human terms, had yet to be published. De Lahontan's (1905) description of the Huron and Algonquians[9] was already in print—indeed, Lafitau included objections to Lahontan's account in his book—and was to provide a far more influential portrait of the "savage" than Lafitau. Although French Enlightenment theorists relied heavily on Jesuit narratives (and no doubt took great pleasure in using them in ways absolutely contrary to Jesuit ideas), Lafitau was largely left aside, whether because of his overly theocentric conception of history or his pedantic array of classical references. Voltaire, in particular, lampooned him mercilessly:

> Lafitau claims that the [Native] Americans came from the Ancient Greeks. The Greeks had fables [i.e., myths and legends], some Americans have them too. The earliest Greeks went hunting, so do Americans. The earliest Greeks had oracles, the Americans sorcerers [i.e., shamans]. The danced on Greek holidays, they dance in America too. You have to admit that these reasons are convincing. [1963:Vol. 1, 30, my translation]

Voltaire's merciless critique of Lafitau's diffusionism is on the mark, although he certainly avoids any mention of "gynococracy," a far less trivial (if just as misleading) point of resemblance, and one on which Lafitau places far more theoretical emphasis.

Ultimately, Lafitau made his mark in Scotland. Adam Smith (1978), Adam Ferguson (1995) and John Millar (1773) all drew very heavily on Lafitau for their portrait of "savages," openly acknowledging his work as well as that of his fellow Jesuit, the historian Charlevoix. Paradoxically, it was to the sections of government and warfare that they turned, neglecting his accounts of marriage and especially of religion. Once again, the Jesuit narratives were used against the grain and Lafitau served to but-

tress universal histories where God was absent and humans alone were the principal actors.

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## Notes

1 Fenton and Moore's otherwise excellent translation (Lafitau 1974) unfortunately renders the title as *Customs of American Indians Compared to the Customs of Primitive Times*. Fenton and Moore's deliberate substitution of *American Indians* for *savages* obscures Lafitau's contribution to a whole discourse on "savagery" in early modern Europe. *Primitive* is an anachronism, all the more because the "earliest times" in question include the Greeks and the Romans. The introduction to the translation (Fenton and Moore 1974) remains the most comprehensive account of Lafitau's life, his sources and his contribution.

2 See Tax 1955:445; Radcliffe-Brown 1950:8; see also Harris 1968:17.

3 See Charlevoix 1976. Thwaites 1896-1901 is a comprehensive compilation and translation of the Jesuit Relations upon which both Charlevoix and Lafitau relied.

4 The most notable exception is Sayre (1997). However, Sayre addresses Lafitau's comparative project and his ethnographic representation of Iroquois in different parts of his book, without treating the two enterprises within a single analytical framework.

5 Fellow Jesuit Louis Le Comte (1990:364) went so far as to assert in 1697 that "for over two thousand years, China conserved the knowledge of the true God and practiced the purest moral maxims, while Europe and almost all the rest of the world was in a state of error and corruption." Admittedly, such assertions led to the condemnation of his book by the religious authorities in France.

6 Nevertheless, Harris (1968:17) laments that Lafitau's "view of American Indian cultural processes was completely trammelled by belief in the fall and the Biblical version of the dispersal of the tribes of Israel."

7 Page numbers for Lafitau all refer to Fenton and Moore's translation.

8 Much if not all of Mandeville's account is drawn from other sources, and there is considerable doubt that he ever existed, much less travelled to South Asia or anywhere else. This does not, of course, detract from the text as a window into certain medieval attitudes towards "pagan" religious practices. Such attitudes were not, it is important to stress, in any sense "typical" and certainly not uncontested, but they were not entirely exceptional either.

9 Aside from a relatively conventional (and rather exaggerated) travel narrative and an ethnographic account of the Native Americans of New France, de Lahontan added a highly original imaginary dialogue between himself and Adario, a Huron who formulates a devastating critique of European society and religion, and makes light of the Jesuits in particular.

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# The Cross-Cultural Collaboration of the Community Forest

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.    —Margaret Mead

*Abstract:* This paper explores cross-cultural collaboration between First Nations and non-First Nations people in the context of community forestry in British Columbia. Data about the case study, the Likely/Xat'sull Community Forest, was obtained through participant observation and semi-structured interviews. First Nation citizens from the Xat'sull Nation are collaborating with the non-First Nation community of Likely to create a new social reality by collectively participating to manage a community forest. Local people are exemplifying what can be accomplished when decision making over land management is carried out at the grassroots level.

Keywords: community forestry, cross-cultural collaboration, local land management, power, resistance, postcolonialism

*Résumé :* Cet article explore la collabration interculturelle entre des Autochtones et des non-Autochtones dans un contexte de foresterie communautaire en Colombie-Britannique. Les données soutenant cette étude de cas, autour de la Forêt communautaire Likely/Xat'sull, ont été obtenues de l'observation participative et des entrevues semi-structurées. Des citoyens de la Première Nation Xat'sull collaborent avec la communauté non-autochtone de Likely pour créer une nouvelle réalité sociale en participant à la gestion d'une forêt communautaire. Cette population fournit l'exemple de ce qui peut être accompli quand les décisions d'aménagement du territoire sont prises dans le cadre d'une véritable mobilisation populaire.

Mots-clés : foresterie communautaire, collaboration interculturelle, aménagement local du territoire, pouvoir, résistance, postcolonialisme

## Introduction

Cross-cultural collaboration between First Nations and non-First Nations people in the context of local resource management has not been comprehensively documented in Canada.[1] In this essay, I will explore how First Nations and non-First Nations are collaborating to collectively manage local land as equal partners under the Community Forest Agreement (CFA) program in British Columbia (BC). This investigation into community forestry has been guided by the research question: How can First Nations and non-First Nations communities work together to manage local land in a way that fosters meaningful cross-cultural partnerships and builds sustainable communities? The answer to this question lies in two interdependent factors.

The first factor is the structural or "on the ground" view of how people involved in the community forest project are "making it happen." The structural view includes the policies that individuals from different communities, with different cultural backgrounds, have developed to collectively manage a community forest. The second factor is ideological, and is linked to ideas of belonging, place and contestation over what land means and what cultural values are ascribed to land and resources. Cultural values include timber production, but they also encompass other uses for the forest such as its spiritual and aesthetic qualities, a healthy ecosystem for living and recreating in and the diversity of non-timber forest products that the forest has to offer (Anderson and Horter 2002:87).

I have addressed this broad research interest by investigating the Likely/Xat'sull Community Forest as a case study to determine what these two communities are doing to collectively manage a parcel of land at the local

level[2] The settlement of Likely[3] is non-First Nation and the Xat'sull[4] community is First Nation. Both of these places are located in the interior of British Columbia and are rural, resource-dependent settlements that have had a history of economic instability. This instability has been maintained through a reliance on local natural resources, which have been managed by large industrial licensees and centralized government policies.[5] Xat'sull and Likely are appropriate case selections for this cultural study on community forestry because they had no prior association before the inception of the CFA program.[6] Having no prior relationship is an important factor because it demonstrates how new cross-cultural partnerships are being formed through local land management.

It is a challenge to come up with one definition of community forestry, as there are as many definitions as communities trying to implement them (Gunter 2004:2). However, two criteria link the social and forestry initiatives. The first is structural: community forestry is a type of forest tenure. The second is ideological: community forestry privileges community needs and values (Booth 1998:374). A community forest can be described as a forest managed by a local government, a First Nations group, a community group, or a community-held corporation for the benefit of the entire community (Burda et al. 1997:10).

There is a gap between the theory and practice of community forestry in BC (Beckley 1998:736). The CFA program has had limited overall impact on the forest industry to date, yet it has attracted far-reaching interest in academia, the forest industry and in public discourse in local communities (Haley 2002:58). A lot has been written on the benefits of community-based tenures; yet, not much is known about how to accomplish it (Booth 1998: 351; Feit and Spaeder 2005:148). Moreover, the move from a theoretical shift to a practical "on the ground" materialization is slow. A common *theoretical* attribute of different community forests is that they are centred on sustainable social, ecological and economic development (Gunter 2004:2; McCarthy 2006:86). On the ground, though, the CFA has left its participants ensconced within the existing industrial regime (Ambus 2008:67). The provincial government still maintains control over aspects of the CFA; this new tenure has spawned minimal changes to the tenure structure as a whole (McCarthy 2006:98). Although the provincial government has relegated CFA holders as "junior partners" in the industrial system, this tenure has created space for communities to advance their local agendas (Pinkerton et al. 2008:343). Still, it is not safe to assume that CFAs will inherently achieve stable communities and sustainable forest practices because the communities may not have the ability to do so (Bradshaw

2003:146; Krogman and Beckley 2002:124; McCarthy 2006:86). Continued research into provincial programs will give communities and policy makers insight into bridging the gap between theory and practice.

It is my intention to help fill this gap by explaining the cross-cultural work taking place between individuals and how they are creating policy at the local level.[7] The Likely/Xat'sull board of directors[8] are operating under policies of open communication, building and maintaining trust, and continual cooperation through positive action. They have created a new cross-cultural paradigm by actively participating in managing the land. The land has become a common ground both literally and ideologically; board members are managing the CFA as equal partners by acknowledging the past and accommodating the rights of the Xat'sull Nation. Although the Likely/Xat'sull directors manage the project as an economic venture, they perceive the land base as a diverse ecosystem to which both communities have historical and contemporary connections.

This essay is divided into two sections. The first outlines the different theories used throughout this research. The second section deals with the analysis in which I will present the information collected during my original investigation into the cross-cultural negotiation involved in the Likely/Xat'sull CFA. I chose this particular CFA as a case study, because both communities are working together to manage a parcel of land; in Likely's case, the land is within the boundaries of the community and in Xat'sull's case, the land is part of their territory and is currently under land claims proceedings. This investigation has generated insight into how cross-cultural collaboration between two communities is achieved.[9] The Likely/Xat'sull CFA is responding to the new political landscape where more local control is being exerted at the grassroots level. This research project avoids a narrow focus that simply outlines the structure of the community-based land management agreement and attends to broad political and historical contexts (Feit and Spaeder 2005:149). Research into community control over the landscape is important and timely because these issues are relevant in the contemporary political, economic and ecological climate.

In the following section, different theories that have guided this research will be outlined. All knowledge production is a cultural event and postcolonial theory is explored to demonstrate how imperialism is being replaced by decolonized methodologies. Interpretive theory, in the sense used by Kruger and Shannon (2000), has facilitated my discovery of local meanings, while postcolonial theory has allowed me to uniformly describe the multiple "truths" inherent in the research setting.

The theoretical discussion then moves to landscape theory to show how at different times in history, as people interact in specific locales, the land is altered in a variety of ways. Land use can be seen as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that, in the context of community forestry, links the needs and values of First Nations and non-First Nations communities together. I will illustrate how policies that the Likely/Xat'sull board members have created in dealing with cross-cultural dynamics have been constructed *as* the individuals interact with each other while managing the land.

## Postcolonial and Interpretive Theory

Postcolonial studies resulted from an interaction between imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices (Ashcroft et al. 1995:1). The word *post* is not meant to denote *after* colonialism or *after* independence because all postcolonial societies are still influenced by subtle forms of neo-colonialism. For example, in BC, First Nations are dealing with the effects of being marginalized from mainstream society on reserves and in residential schools (Harris 2002:279; Hedican 2000:216). They are now overcoming mistreatment and segregation from mainstream society through land claims and treaty negotiations. By initiating action at the local level, First Nations are resisting marginalization and claiming their right to self-determination.

Interpretive theory maintains that what people believe to be true about the world is constructed as people interact with each other in specific social settings (Kruger and Shannon 2000:464). These constructs are not fixed or static truths, rather they are altered through dialogue or over time. Alterations lead to new constructions or views of reality as well as new ways of acting (Kruger and Shannon 2000:464). The intention of interpretive research is to increase insight and understanding about how relations acquire meaning by looking at what people are doing and listening to what they have to say about what they are doing (Kruger and Shannon 2000:464). In the interpretive paradigm, culture is created as individuals negotiate multiple and overlapping interpretations of what they do in social situations. In this respect, postcolonial resistance to the status-quo is a continuous process of resistance and reconstruction that is carried out as individuals act (Tuhiwai Smith 1999:4). The result of this is a forever shifting theoretical landscape because as individuals act and speak out in different ways, they challenge the status quo and produce new knowledges (Ashcroft et al. 1995:213).

To understand this continually shifting theoretical ground, the imperial project, as well as resistance to it,

must be perceived as process rather than as structure. The term *process* denotes fluidity, movement and activity, while *structure* invokes images of fixity, solidity and non-action (Ashcroft et al. 1995:213). To contextualize the notion of a process, we can think of the imperial centre influencing the colonial margins and vice versa. The margin and the centre are always in flux and are not a dyad. An example of this is the current land claims process; First Nations are exerting their rights to land, resources and cultural autonomy through negotiations and making formal agreements with the provincial and federal governments (Harris 2002:320). To think of the centre and the margin as a binary leads to an oversimplified view that ignores the institutions and procedures by which power is disseminated and sustained (Ashcroft et al. 1995:213).

In 1881, 51.9% of the population of BC were First Nation and 29.6% were British (Anderson 1991:223). Initially, force was used to appropriate land and resources from the First Nations, however, force was only part of the method used to colonize. Immigration, regulation and control over divisions of labour, access to power and status differentiation between "white" settlers and "Indians" contributed further to the colonization process (Featherstone 2005:202; Harris 2002:xxi). This example illustrates how colonizing power worked on two levels: the material and the ideological. Overt forms of social control coupled with ideological notions of "us" and "them" allowed BC to become the "society of European institutional completeness that it is today" (Anderson 1991:24).

In BC, a combination of ideology, political and legal measures were used to appropriate First Nations' land. The state relied on the use of racialized ideology that justified and informed racist policies (Harris 2002:5). In 1861, The Legislative Assembly of Vancouver Island petitioned to extinguish the rights of First Nations, and during this decade, the reservation system was established (Harris 2002:xxvii). The racist policies and laws that newcomers enacted on First Nations were not passively accepted (Harris 2002:xxx; McDonald and Joseph 2000:6). However, the colonial government's position of power afforded them the opportunity to protect colonial interests. The colonial government relied (and arguably still does) on racist policies of economic development that did not allow First Nations an equal opportunity to participate in the market economy. For example, the timber policy between 1864 and 1888 granted timber leases to European loggers in the colony and excluded First Nation people (McDonald and Joseph 2000:6). This illustrates how policy has been created and maintained to exclude First Nation economic enterprises while privileging those of

the colonizers. The colonizers moved in, set up government and courts to write and enforce policies that gave them the upper hand at the expense of First Nations peoples (McDonald and Joseph 2000:6).

The sheer physical act of moving into places, combined with the idea that the land was "free for the taking" allowed the expansion of the colony (Featherstone 2005:202). In his book, *Postcolonial Culture* (2005), Simon Featherstone demonstrates how the landscape and land practices of First Nations peoples were ignored and rendered obsolete. "The indigenous place was rendered 'space' as the local land practices were either by-passed or overridden. On its sites, the colonial place was constructed through the development of the perspectives, assumptions and technologies of Europe" (Featherstone 2005:202). When looking backward in time, this insight into how ideological life and material life are intertwined exemplifies how colonial culture came to dominate the social as well as geographical landscape.

## Landscape Theory

At a rudimentary level, landscapes are constructed out of tangible materials: rocks, trees, rivers, hills and so on. However, landscapes are also places that hold meanings created by human actors, in this regard all landscapes are symbolic in practice (Baker and Biger 1992:1). Through living in, on and with a particular landscape, humans alter the landscape but at the same time, the landscape influences what human action is carried out. There is a reciprocal process whereby the landscape is moulded by ideologies and ideologies are themselves fashioned by the actual landscape. "The product is a dialectical landscape which is a resolution of nature and culture, of practice and philosophy, of reason and imagination, of 'real' and 'symbolic'" (Baker and Biger 1992:7). Forestry exemplifies this reciprocal process between mental and material realities. Forest policy dictates who gets to define the landscape and who gets to have access and power over the resources.

Although forestry is a resource based and economic activity, it is influenced by social and cultural factors, such as the dominant ideologies held by the various stakeholders in the land: land-owners, forest-industry workers, First Nations peoples, environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts. Further, because of the expansive amount of forested land in BC, a large part of the culture is based on forest-related activities. Thus, the forests are more than simply places to harvest marketable timber, they are diverse ecosystems that humans live *within*. The concept of place is important to understand how individuals gain a sense of belonging and attachment to a particular location. People create attachments to places that are crucial

to their well-being or distress (Tuan 1990:3). Individuals *actively* manage what are socially and culturally constructed landscapes in opportunistic ways (Stott 2000:35).

The landscape should be looked at as a continuum of land use practices and ideological perceptions of the land rather than as a series of stages (Norton 1989:3). By looking at the landscape as a continuum, First Nations ways of using the land are not a distant remnant from a past that has ended; rather these practices are relevant and useful now. Furthermore, when First Nations utilize resources from their land for money they are not acting in a way that diminishes their First Nation way of being in the world. Cultures are in continual flux, and as a result so are the places they inhabit.

By using this theoretical position, I have constructed a methodology that allows community forestry to be viewed as a site of local action that is shifting the status quo. As the people in the CFA interact, they are producing new ways of being in the world and building a new knowledge base about cross-cultural relations. In the next section, I will present the original data[10] and reveal how a group of individuals from two different cultures have created their own policies at the local level to navigate an intricate web of political, economic, environmental and social issues. The Likely/Xat'sull CFA members rely on these policies to respond to the unique challenges facing them in their particular locale.

## Analysis of the CFA Case Study

It is important to understand the complex ways that land is conceptualized and explore how this relates to the on-the-ground treatment of it. In my analysis, I have drawn out seven themes that the interviewees presented as necessary for making the CFA operational and keeping it going over the long term. These seven themes from my original data, combined with theoretical ideas, are the information needed to address the research question.

The first theme deals with the board member's sense of connection to community forest land. I asked about connection because I wanted to know if people felt a relationship to the land and if so, how this was formed. Further, I wanted to know why individuals in the project would volunteer if they did not feel a sense of belonging to the land. The second theme that the interviewees raised, as a *precursor* to the CFA, was open communication and how this helped them during the proposal stage. Talking openly allowed the two sides to build trust, enabling them to write a proposal for a CFA and submit it to the government. Not only was open communication needed to build the initial rapport before the project was active, it was also relied on to keep the CFA in operation.

The remaining five themes deal with the topics that were identified by board members for the successful *continuation* of the project. Theme three is difference in cultural perspectives and includes how board members run the project using different cultural viewpoints. Theme four explains how the board is carrying out cross-cultural knowledge building through exploring differences in cultural perspectives. The fifth theme is how the board relies on running the CFA as a business to keep the project operating. The sixth theme involves capacity building and diversifying the economy beyond timber harvesting as two key challenges being dealt with by the board. Theme seven examines the benefits that the CFA has provided to each community. These benefits are perceived by board members as a way to measure the success of the project.

## 1) A Sense of Connection to Community Forest Land

For Likely members, the sense of connection comes from living within the boundaries of the community forest and having a sense of belonging in it. One Likely member stated "I look across the lake from my house and there it [the community forest land] is. It is my place of residence and it is part of our community and the land that we live on. I also work in the forest, pick berries, fish, hunt and recreate here." This individual feels concerned about what happens to the land because this directly affects their home, livelihood and ability to use the land for a variety of tasks.

Attachment to a place creates social, material and ideological dimensions as people develop ties to kin and neighbours, buy or rent land and participate in public life as residents of a specific community (Hayden 1998:112). Likely board members expressed their concerns for the land as resulting from living and recreating, and from having paid employment on the land. Another Likely member said, "I feel a sense of connection to the community forest land because we derive a certain amount of work and have historically, from the land base."

In comparison, Xat'sull board members discussed their ties to the community forest through land use rather than living within the boundaries. Xat'sull members feel a relationship to the land because it is part of their territory. These members reported being attached to the land by what they leave on the land for future and perpetual use.

The Xat'sull want to work on the land in a way that is compatible with their worldview. For example, the Xat'sull have developed the Xat'sull Land use Plan based on traditional use studies. The goal of this plan is to manage the Xat'sull territory in accordance with the Nation's "vision

of balance between human activity and environmental stewardship, to ensure development that is sustainable and in harmony with social, cultural and environmental values, in perpetuity" (Xat'sull First Nation 2005:1). Xat'sull's plan for the land and resources demonstrates how they are exerting power to redefine the imperial status quo. Land can be conceptualized as a continually shifting theoretical ground; the power to define what land is and what can be done with it is influenced by who has power to make these decisions. By working together as partners, the two communities are creating new connections to each other and to the land and resources.

## 2) Open Communication: Building and Maintaining Trust

The second topic for discussion is open communication and how this allowed trust to be built between the two communities. Board members from each community mentioned open communication as being associated with the initial stages of deciding whether or not a partnership was possible. Board members discussed how open communication has been the major contributing factor to the successful proposal, start-up and operating phases of the CFA (1999 to present). Initially, the people from Likely who were interested in submitting a proposal for a Community Forest Pilot Agreement (CFPA)[11] approached the Xat'sull Nation and asked them if they wanted to partner in order to apply. The Chief and Council agreed and, in 1998, the project organizers held a meeting in order to get feedback from both communities to the proposed project. Each of the interviewees who were at this initial community meeting talked about it when interviewed. This meeting was the foundational moment when the two communities from different cultures attempted to create a new partnership. The mood of the meeting was described as "awkward" and one interviewee said "that you could have cut the tension with a knife." This tension came from the fact that these communities had not worked together before and did not know what to expect from one another.

At the first meeting, some members of the Xat'sull community questioned why they would want to collaborate with Likely because their land claims covered the area of the community forest. The Xat'sull community project organizers explained that they wanted to share in the benefits that the land provides in terms of jobs, goods and services. Without collaborating with Likely, there was little chance Xat'sull could respond to the demands of drawing up a proposal because many of their community members were already busy with treaty negotiations and developing the Xat'sull Land Use Plan. Further, the demands of starting up a new business and community

organization and finding trained personnel to work in the forest sector would provide added challenges. All of these factors contributed to Xat'sull and Likely needing to collaborate in order to be granted a CFPA.

The Likely board members talked about their community's initial uncertainties about collaborating. Some questioned working together with Xat'sull people because they did not know them and had never been involved with them before. Others voiced concern because they worried about what the land claims process meant for landowners in Likely. Project organizers from each community had to explain that the proposed community forest land is Xat'sull territory, which made collaborating the only equitable option. Since colonization, the non-First Nation population has used the land that the Xat'sull own and governed pre-contact to the exclusion of the First Nation. Organizers explained that the land claims would not affect private land and that the only opportunity that Likely had to govern the land was through this partnership with Xat'sull as the provincial government only considers applications with meaningful First Nations consultation (Anderson and Horter 2002:72). By applying for a CFA, these two communities were agreeing to wrestle with large political issues and their lack of skills needed to participate in local land management. Local communities have traditionally been relegated to the margins of the forest industry as workers, which prevents them from building resource management skills.

One Xat'sull elder talked about how he perceived the Likely community as "afraid" of the land claims process during this initial meeting. He explained Xat'sull's position in the following excerpt during an interview:

> I am not here to take your land, I am here to share the land, which you people haven't done before. It was all shut out to us. We weren't allowed in the logging, we weren't allowed in the joint-ventures. I don't care where you want to live, but come to the realization that we were here first. My ancestors were here and give us the recognition of that. I don't want your back-yard, I don't want your house. You can have all of that—just give me the economic tools to develop my community and to help our people to strive forward. Not from government handouts, but from something that we earned as a people.

Similar statements were reportedly made at the first meeting that reassured Likely members that the Xat'sull members were not making land claims on their private property. This dialogue demonstrates how individuals were negotiating cross-cultural understandings of land, forestry and culture at the local level. The individual who said this was exercising resistance to the status quo, through openly communicating what he wanted for his people. An example like this shows how postcolonialism is a continuous process of resistance and reconstruction that is carried out as individuals act.

The initial meeting helped to set the stage for the proposal writing and submission to the government. With the support of the communities at large, the volunteers who were working on the proposal and trying to get the CFA established could move forward. Open communication helped at the initial phase of the community forest proposal and it has been the main strategy for maintaining trust between the two sides ever since. By speaking openly and honestly, conflict has been kept to a minimum. Board members used the phrase "keeping everything on the table" to describe how they manage the forest cooperatively through openly communicating.

The community forest is providing a context in which individuals from each community are building new relationships between cultures, communities and individuals. A member from Likely said, "problems would have caused it [the project] to fold by now, and everyone wants this to succeed." This demonstrates how the policy of responding to conflicts as they arise through a system of continual open dialogue is an effective way to deal with differences of opinion.

In the next section, I will discuss how the board members dealt with the reality of cultural difference. At this point, I would like to reiterate that I designed my research project with the intention of finding out first, *how* the community forest is cross-cultural. Second, I wanted to discover *if* the First Nations and non-First Nations have different perspectives, and if so, *how* these perspectives differ and *how* the two sides negotiate the collaborative project with differences.

### 3) Dealing with Different Cultural Perspectives

Cross-cultural management of the forest allows for different meanings about "land" and "ownership" of resources to be explored and negotiated. When questioned about cultural perspectives all the non-First Nations people that I interviewed perceived that First Nations peoples have different perspectives on issues such as land and ownership. Difference is seen in terms of First Nations people having a more communal view of the land and its ownership. One Xat'sull member stated "First Nations look at things more holistically. You can't take everything out ... you can't cut all the trees down. We are more tied to the land with our cultural values." Another member discussed the ownership issue by saying:

> We want a share in the land. You guys are logging it, you got the jobs, you pay the taxes so that the government can be rich and we are losing out on it. All we want is a share in it. The white community, they have the security. They can walk into a bank and ask for a bank loan, whereas, I have to get a ministerial guarantee before I can get a bank loan. This frustrates people, because people have been struggling for years and years. I don't own my house, I can't use it for collateral. Indian affairs owns it, I don't own this land [on the reserve], I can't use it for collateral. I am just borrowing it from the federal government.

This quote speaks to the complex dynamic where non-First Nations culture is perceived as over-harvesting the land and benefitting from it, while the First Nation is seen as wanting to preserve the land, but still to benefit economically from it. A balancing is taking place where both sides are creating a common ground so that they can both benefit from the resources, but also attempt to steward the land better than industry and government have in the past. However to achieve this, both sides need to expand their ability to respond to the challenges of operating and managing a CFA using cross-cultural local values, while at the same time making enough money to keep the business operating.

When asked about sustainability, the First Nation approach was seen to be on a "slower timescale" than non-First Nations because they want to leave resources on the land for perpetual use. Perceived differences between First Nations and non-First Nations were talked about by each side as being in tune with the community forest objectives of providing resources beyond timber and for many years in perpetuity.

It is too simplistic to say First Nations want to preserve the land and non-First Nations want to harvest all of the resources. The Xat'sull members explained how they are bridging the gap between two cultural perspectives by maintaining their cultural values in the modern economic context. Xat'sull members are synthesizing their First Nation's knowledge about the land into mainstream industrial resource management in two important ways. The first involves the knowledge that elders have about the area. The community forest is seen as a welcome opportunity for elders to pass on traditional knowledge. The First Nation's perspective is not to be interpreted as a relic from the past; the knowledge that the elders have about land use has historical roots and contemporary applications. Xat'sull elders educate youth about traditional ecological knowledge in the Likely area. The second way the First Nation's knowledge is being synthesized into the status-quo is with the Xat'sull Land Use Plan,

which regulates the multiple uses that take place in the forest. These multiple uses include: industrial and small-scale silviculture, eco-tourism, skiing, mining, ranching and use of the waterways for recreation. One Xat'sull member perceives retaining First Nation's cultural values as a challenge in the face of so many competing interests in the forest:

> The need for cultural value is hard to retain because of the many different people with the many different uses for the forest. There is eco-tourism, skiing, mining, ranching et cetera so with these varying uses and activities it is becoming a struggle to maintain First Nation cultural value when economic value plays such a key role.

There is a complicated dynamic where, on one hand, diversity in the forest is seen as a threat to First Nation's cultural values, as discussed in the quote above. On the other hand, the board is striving for diversification because it allows the forest to be seen as valuable beyond its ability to produce wood fibre.

There is a perception in the Xat'sull community that the CFA is only contributing to a select few people who are able to benefit from the project because they have logging equipment or forestry-related skills. The fact that major economic benefits are perceived as only accruing to those members on the reserve with forestry experience demonstrates the complicated process of trying to diversify beyond logging while, at the same time, getting more Xat'sull members trained in forestry related positions.

Diversifying allows employment opportunities to be created in fields other than silviculture, which will strengthen local employment. To address this struggle of retaining Xat'sull's cultural values in the face of economic necessity, the profits from the CFA are used to create employment opportunities in areas that are attuned with the First Nation's goals, as well as community-based local initiatives. These include, fisheries enhancement, recreation, tourism, non-timber forest products, research and education. The board is developing policy that addresses local economic needs as well as local cultural concerns; cross-cultural knowledge building is taking place through this local policy development.

## 4) Cross-Cultural Knowledge Building

Likely board members discussed how they have been able to develop more of an understanding about how Xat'sull members experience the world. Xat'sull's participation in the land claims process and the dynamics of living on the reserve are two areas with which the non-First Nations community have become more familiar. Likely members

also discussed the unique set of challenges that First Nation members experience. For example, citizens on the reserve do not have the same access to employment as the Likely citizens because they live on the reserve. For Xat'sull members, the issue of gaining access to employment from the CFA is compounded by the fact that not everyone has a vehicle or a driver's licence. These challenges have a cultural side because they are unique to the First Nations due to their particular historical and contemporary experiences of colonization.

Members from each community discussed sharing knowledge and building knowledge as a benefit of the CFA. One First Nations elder described using Xat'sull knowledge about the landscape as a way of "catching our culture by believing something from our culture. And we can learn something from your community like teaching our younger band members how to operate machinery ... it's a trade off." The way that Xat'sull knowledge is being synthesized into mainstream forestry is building a reciprocal relationship between two cultural paradigms.

## 5) Running the Community Forest as a Business

Board members rely on the policy of consensus-based decision making, rather than majority rule to solve the problem of conflict between members. There have been instances when a single member had a problem with an item on the agenda so they decided to withdraw from the discussion. For example, a member was strongly opposed to the amount of money that would have to be spent on a particular service, so that member abstained from the conversation. Individuals perceived the above-mentioned conflict as a "personal" difference of opinion rather than a "cultural" difference.

Another factor the board members described as a policy for keeping conflict to a minimum was "separating the business from the politics." This means that the Chief and Council and Chamber of Commerce do not take part in the everyday operations of the CFA. Having a separate board of directors to run the CFA allows the two sides to develop policy and regulations that are specific to the project. The Likely/Xat'sull board of directors only deals with the CFA project, whereas the Soda Creek Chief and Council and the Likely Chamber of Commerce have many responsibilities within their communities. The board members feel that having a separate governing body to manage the CFA minimizes conflict. All of the board members talked about how running the project as a business is a way to "keep the politics out," however, what is happening is that a new political relationship is being created between the two cultures.

The board relies on the policy of not focusing attention on the past in a way that hinders movement into the future; in their opinion, this has been a very effective political strategy. The non-First Nations members discussed how treaty and land claims are an important recognition of First Nations rights. One Likely member stated, "we have to recognize that there are First Nation rights in our area and we feel, as a community, that we should accommodate those rights. They have as much right to the land base and resources as we do." The CFA is seen as an important step in recognizing First Nations rights, though, it is not seen as the appropriate place to deal with the large political issues. The two communities are recognizing the realities of the past and building a new relationship through collaboration. The two sides are working together to solve the issue of capacity for Xat'sull band members so that they can respond equally to the employment opportunities provided by the CFA.

## 6) Capacity Building

The capacity of the Xat'sull Band is perceived as a primary challenge for sharing employment opportunities equally between the two communities. When interviewees discussed capacity, they were talking about the ability of First Nations to respond equally to the employment opportunities that the CFA affords. One way that the community forest provides employment is to give people seasonal jobs such as tree planting and cone picking. Another way that people can gain employment is as logging contractors.

Xat'sull began this partnership with two disadvantages in these areas: Likely has more people trained in forestry while Xat'sull only has one logging contractor. Some Xat'sull community members have gained employment through the community forest, yet, there is an uneven ability for Xat'sull to take on work in the same capacity as Likely residents. The government created the CFA policy to encourage communities to become directly involved in local forest management through silviculture crews, contracting for forest management services and other forest related activities (Penikett 2006:213). However, it is difficult for communities to respond to the opportunities because of their limited skills. Industry's concentrated control in the forest sector has made it difficult for local communities to build capacity in all aspects of silviculture. Likely and Xat'sull are faced with building their communities' capacity to respond to the challenge of providing qualified individuals for every aspect of local land management.

A factor that exacerbates this challenge is that the Xat'sull community is located over an hour drive away

from the community forest. Not only is the Xat'sull community at a disadvantage due to the lack of qualified people to respond to work, but the people who can work have a disadvantage of having to commute daily or spend the night in Likely. Location has created a unique challenge for this community to share work and access to the opportunities generated by the CFA. Given that the project is an equal partnership, the board of directors must focus on how to provide equally for each community.

Beyond Xat'sull members learning forestry related skills, the community forest is creating opportunities and benefits. Diversifying beyond forestry is a demonstration of how the project is managed more in line with holistic land use practices and traditional ecological knowledge. Diversification from a timber-based economy to one that includes different non-timber forest products is seen as a possible strategy.

*7) Benefits from the Community Forest*

The benefits that the community forest has made available demonstrate how this project has helped each settlement manage in a way that suits their local agendas. Community forest tenure allows for a development plan based on multiple resources found in the forest ecosystem and involves local-level decisions about these resources. Likely and Xat'sull have perceived benefits from the community forest resulting in access to money for small community projects. These projects exemplify how the CFA is providing economic as well as social gains that were not available when industrial forest management was in place.

The Likely community has wanted to carry out projects like this for a long time, but did not have the funds to do so before the CFA. One project was getting firewood for poor people, elderly, single mothers and other people who could not get their own winter wood very easily. In another project, elementary school children were taken out to the community forest to plant trees on logging lands. Revenue from the community forest also helped to purchase a stretcher and fuel for the first-responder vehicle. Public washrooms were built and the Likely Museum has become operational with community forest money. Small projects not only provide employment but they also help to build amenities in the community. "We aren't making millions, but I can see a difference in the small projects. Every small step is a big move towards something."

In comparison, the CFA has generated money for the Xat'sull community to sponsor social activities like sending elders from the community to the National Elders Gathering in Prince George. The community forest has helped with this since 1999 and it allows people to go who could not afford to go otherwise. Using funds from the CFA, a blade was purchased to plough every Xat'sull resident's driveway in the winter. Further, plywood was bought to build fish-camp smokehouses and restore the road to some fishing sites. Funds have been used to sponsor the "Save the Salmon Pow-wow" in Horsefly and to donate to community groups like the Parenting Group. The CFA also provided revenue for training opportunities for youth within the community forest itself and to create a summer work program for students. These projects are seen as socially and culturally important because they are allowing people to participate in cultural events that they could not normally afford. Further, by maintaining the road to a fishing site and building smokehouses it is easier for individuals to harvest food. Likely and Xat'sull have created a partnership that allows for the common goal of solidifying community sustainability.

## Conclusion

Although the CFA amounts to a mere 1% of the provincial annual allowable cut, it is important to recognize the changes created in the lived experiences of people in specific locales. According to Gibson-Graham, it would be unjust to disregard alternatives to the status-quo simply because they are comparatively small (1996:263). McCarthy (2006) points out that it may be "short-sighted" to disregard community forests as insignificant because the program has doubled in size since 1998. As of May 2008, there are six long-term CFAs, 22 probationary CFAs and 24 in various stages of the application process (Ambus 2008:42). This interest demonstrates how local forest-dependent First Nations and non-First Nations communities are resisting concentrated corporate control over timber on Crown land.

The notion of resistance has informed my research question by allowing me to examine how the shift from industrial forestry to community forestry is influencing local autonomy over the land base. However incremental, the shift to community-based management is expanding the space needed to further grassroots initiatives. Although the provincial government still holds power over many facets of the CFA program, the unique way that communities are working together is exerting power over the land and resources. Local people are gaining experience in natural resource management and policy development at the local level which is generating distinctive solutions to local challenges.

Through actively negotiating meaning, the Likely/Xat'sull board is creating a postcolonial way of interacting. Managing from the grassroots, the board members are setting an example of what can be accomplished when input from people who are attached to the land is included

in the decision-making process. The individuals who are working collaboratively on the Likely/Xat'sull CFA are focusing on similarities as well as common goals and interests that can be improved through cross-cultural work. Xat'sull and Likely are actively negotiating a new relationship with the land, based on resource management goals that combine traditional ecological knowledge with the dominant economic paradigm.

Although conflict is at a minimum, board members expressed concern over equalizing the access to opportunities and employment provided by the project. The Xat'sull community is at a disadvantage because of their location and because members from Xat'sull do not have the same capacity as the Likely members to respond to employment opportunities. The board has tried to combat this uneven distribution of work and of access to opportunity through strategies to help Xat'sull members build capacity. My observations correspond with Spaeder's and Kofinas' findings: what is needed to *create* and transform locally initiated co-management arrangements is also necessary for *maintaining* the arrangement (Spaeder 2005:165; Kofinas 2005:179).

This research is not a litmus test for all community forests in BC as each community forest is unique. However, through increasing the knowledge base of what community forests need to be successful, common attributes as well as diversity and variance between the CFAs can better be understood. By examining one case of cross-cultural community forestry, I have shown how a small group of citizens can successfully operate a local land management project by initiating and maintaining cross-cultural cooperation. I cannot say that all First Nations and non-First Nations have consistent experiences with regard to this project. There are different ways that the people in the program experience collaboration, and potentially, the same person could have different experiences over time.

The continuation of this CFA rests upon what takes place as the project is being facilitated. Continued research into this particular case study and the provincial program as a whole will give policy makers and other local communities insight into the cross-cultural aspects of community forestry. Although the Likely and Xat'sull communities have unique circumstances tied to their particular geographical location, the strategies and policies they have developed can be applied to other locations. Other communities from around BC have asked to use the Likely/Xat'sull proposal as a template for their own CFA proposals. This testifies to the ability for local communities to share knowledge and resources with one another. Board members also see interest in their proposal as a way to draw people into their project area.

The CFA is encouraging new ways of thinking about and interacting with the land and with other communities around the province. With this program, the board is creating jobs in the community and using the profits from the CFA to run social programs. Likely and Xat'sull are solidifying cross-cultural relations, while at the same time, strengthening both of their local communities. The Likely/Xat'sull Community Forest testifies to the ability of First Nations and non-First Nations people to work together as equal partners toward a common goal. I hope that knowledge about local cross-cultural land management will add to our understanding of, and ability to, support sustainable ecological development and the continuance of small rural communities.

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## Notes

1   This research was conducted in part through funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
2   The Likely/Xat'sull board of directors manages this project and they are concerned with practicing sound forest management by focusing on cultural, ecological and economic principles. The board aims to minimize the detrimental impacts of forestry on other resource values that are to be determined by the First Nations and non-First Nations stakeholders (Likely/Xat'sull Community Forests Ltd. 1999:10). To study the social value of the land, I interviewed board members in order to build local theory about how two communities with separate cultural, historical and contemporary lived experiences, can come together and manage the land base as equal partners. These communities are concerned with the integrity of the forest for ecological reasons because this will have an effect on the long-term economic and cultural sustainability of their communities (Likely/Xat'sull Community Forests Ltd. 1999:2).

3 The settlement of Likely is a small resource-dependent community of approximately 300 people that is located on Quesnel Lake and Quesnel River. Likely is situated in the centre of the East Cariboo region, which is bounded by the Cariboo Mountains to the east and the Fraser River to the west.

4 The Xat'sull First Nation is one of the four northern autonomous Secwepemc Nation bands and these four bands comprise the Cariboo Tribal Council. The Xat'sull population of "status Indians" consists of 281 people living both on and off reserve (Cheevers et al. 2001:1). There are two reserves of the Xat'sull. Deep Creek No. 2, which is located 15km north of Williams Lake and is 4105.8 acres (Xat'sull First Nation 2005). The second reserve is Soda Creek No. 1, which is 1065.2 acres and is located 30km northwest of Williams Lake (Cheevers et al. 2001:1). The Likely/Xat'sull Community Forest is located in the area surrounding Quesnel Lake, which is hunting and fishing grounds for the Xat'-sull Nation (Likely/Xat'sull Community Forest Ltd. 1999:5).

5 The two communities are working together to manage some of the most productive forest in the interior of the province (Likely/Xat'sull Community Forest Ltd. 1999:2). However, the community forest has inherited a land base that was heavily logged in the past through the industrial forest tenure system (Anderson and Horter 2002:60).

6 The membership includes those residents on or near these geographical boundaries who have a sense of belonging to the community of Likely (Likely/Xat'sull Community Forest Ltd. 1999:28). The Xat'sull settlement is not within the boundaries of the community forest, however the land base of the community forest lies within the territory of the Xat'-sull band and all band members are members of the community forest.

7 The sample for my study is the six directors of the board because they are the people directly involved in cross-cultural relations; they are the decision makers in the operation of the CFA. In addition, I interviewed the business manager and one member that was part of setting up the community forest initially, but who is no longer on the board. In total, I carried out eight interviews. All of the interviewees are male, ranging in age from 30 to 65. The person who is not on the board was identified using chain referral selection, which was done by asking the participants to identify people who possess the characteristics being examined (LeCompte et al. 1999:241). In the last question of the interview, I asked board members to identify members of their community who have played an active role in the project, but who are not currently on the board. To protect the research participants' anonymity, I have not included their names or any information in direct quotes that can be linked to them.

8 I choose to interview the Likely/Xat'sull board of directors for two reasons. Firstly, they represent the populations of each of the communities. These two communities chose to get involved with each other in order to gain access to a Community Forest Agreement (CFA) and the members from each side of the board are representatives of the community at large. Secondly, I choose to interview individuals who are actively participating in cross-cultural land management at the local level because they represent a larger population in BC (and around the world) who are involved in the day-to-day, face-to-face challenges of cross-cultural work.

9 Meetings of the board of directors were my primary research site because this is where cross-cultural work is conducted through face-to-face interactions. Board meetings are held once a month for the members to discuss business plans, resource management goals, distribution of funds, and environmental and community concerns. In 2005, I attended three board meetings over the course of six months. At these meetings, I relied on participant-observation for discovering *how* the members work together. Locally specific meanings and behaviours were recorded through attending the meetings, observing and making notes. I also relied on other relevant information that came from a literature review and conversations and emails with study participants.

10 Semi-structured interviews allowed me to use pre-set questions that focused on the domains that I observed during participant-observation and wrote about in my field notes as well as read about in the literature review. I chose to use this particular interview style because it allowed for open-ended answers that confirmed the relevance of study domains. Semi-structured interviews allowed research participants to play a pivotal role in identifying other potentially important factors and issues unforeseen at the time that I developed the questions.

11 In 1998 the British Columbia Ministry of Forests introduced this agreement through the Community Forest Pilot Project. If a community that has been awarded a CFPA manages it successfully for five years, the pilot can be turned into a long term Community Forest Agreement (25-99 years) under the Forests Statutes Amendment Act (1998, Bill 34).

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# Ideas / Idées

# Community as "Good to Think With":
# The Productiveness of Strategic Ambiguities

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You might not be surprised to learn that when I picked up my daily newspaper the other day (*Globe and Mail*, 25 April 2009) and tried to locate references to "community," I was quickly able to identify dozens of them. These references ranged over a wide variety of contexts and applications: "local community leader," "arts community," "farming community," "small community," "utopian communities," "outlying community," "technology community," "building communities," "mining community," "religious community," along with "excluded and marginalized community" were but some of the citations that appeared, including many that were not specified. "The community will not stand for this indiscriminate violence," was one of these unspecified references, proclaimed by a police officer outside a courtroom in which a judge had just rendered a decision on the sentencing of a man convicted of participation in a shootout on a Toronto street that had resulted in a number of injuries and the death of a young woman bystander (Appleby 2009:9).

The ubiquity of vague references to community is a familiar story to most of us. The range of these everyday invocations has been repeatedly noted by scholars who have in turn produced their own repertoire of proliferating references to, and multiple definitions of, community. A common scholarly response to this proliferation of unspecified invocations of, community has been to suggest that this ambiguity fatally undermines the analytical utility of this concept.

But I want to suggest a small contrarian's exercise: what if, instead of viewing this proliferation of everyday references to community as an indication of its banality, we chose to take this propagation as important in its own right? If people continue to insist on using community to refer to many different forms of association, perhaps we need to probe how it might do so rather than bemoan its lack of precision. So, rather than viewing the familiar ambiguity of allusions to community as the most problematic aspect of its conceptualization, what if we considered,

instead, the possibility of developing a mode of investigation that recognized this ambiguity as a useful analytical resource rather than as a handicap. The wide range of commonplace references scattered throughout my daily newspaper suggests that we are dealing with a veritable family of concepts[1] of sociation. That is to say we are not dealing with one concept in various references to community, but a genus of concepts. If so, our mandate in this contrarian exercise will be not to define community, but to establish a broad working model for investigating a class of related concepts. We need a framework that allows for that kind of breadth and that is, moreover, "good to think with." So rather than providing a definition, I want to suggest a working model of community that may lead us to a variety of situations and concepts. In employing this model, we may well conclude that some of these circumstances are not effectively grouped together, but such a conclusion is as useful an insight as the possibility that they might well be conceptually linked. In short, I am suggesting that the ambiguity linked with the ubiquity of references to community might just prove to be a useful vehicle for thinking about certain classes of sociation.

## Strategic "Spots" of Ambiguity

In his introduction to *A Grammar of Motives*, Kenneth Burke (1955) chastises writers who scorn one philosophic term or other as being too ambiguous. Burke notes that "since no two things or acts or situations are exactly alike, you cannot apply the same term to both of them without thereby introducing a certain margin of ambiguity" and all the more so when dealing with key or what he calls "titular" philosophical concepts (1955:xiii).[2] Rather than avoiding ambiguity, Burke calls for *"terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise"* (1955:xiii) because it is at these strategic points of ambiguity that conceptual transformations can occur. Thus in trying to develop a theory of dramatism that can be used to investigate the forms of thought involved in the attribution of motives, Burke identifies five terms that he regards as "generating principles": act, scene, agent, agency, purpose (1955:x). He is not troubled by potential overlaps between these general terms, since these intersections arise because these concepts are interrelated as "attributes of a common ground or substance," in this case the attribution of motives (1955:xiii). Indeed Burke regards the overlaps among these terms as theoretically productive because they allow the analyst to combine and recombine distinctions and, hence, anticipate or generate different classes of theory.

Community, I will argue, is just such a "titular" concept, and in investigating it we can productively draw on

concepts that are general enough that they can encompass a wide range of situations and are therefore concomitantly—and productively—ambiguous. At the same time, since these terms are all being used as attributes of the common ground of community, we should not be surprised by overlaps between them; indeed it is these interrelations that allow us to work and rework a variety of combinations and distinctions as we examine different cases. But in demarcating concepts that may prove useful to think with, we would be well placed to avoid recourse to the criteria that have usually predominated in academic reflections on this subject. As Marietta Baba notes, the Latin root of community is *communis* or common (2005: 135). Working from this notion, scholarly definitions of community have therefore often focused on listing what they consider to be the most important elements that must be held "in common" by members of a community: values, meanings, norms, or symbols being the most familiar items included in these inventories. But in and of themselves, these are essentially criteria of classification. They do not necessarily pose questions about how and whether these are mobilized in sociation. In a globalizing world in which ideas, materials and images are circulated across ever larger expanses, one would not be hard-pressed to imagine situations in which people hold similar expectations, meanings or symbols without necessarily being socially linked.

This classificatory dimension is particularly prominent in that broad swathe of contemporary scholarship that, drawing on Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined community" (1991), has treated community as, first and foremost, a form of categorical identity rather than actual interaction. But this emphasis does little, in and of itself, to focus our attention on the modalities of sociation that might be encompassed in a working model of community. As I have argued elsewhere:

> If we hold that the effort to construct communities is fundamentally an effort, whether successful, partial or failed, to mobilize social relations, then as Fredrik Barth has noted, communities cannot be created simply through the "mere act of imagining" (1994:13) or, one could add, the act of attributing. [Amit 2002:20]

Developing definitions that train our attention primarily on the categorical dimension of community is thus analogous to one hand clapping. A more effective working model of community must therefore focus on the uncertainties arising in the intersection between the idea and actualization of sociation. Thus inspired by Burke's notion of strategic ambiguities, in my own effort to develop some concepts that will allow us productively to investigate the

ground of community, I want to identify three strategic, intersecting points at which such ambiguities necessarily arise: (1) joint commitment; (2) affect or belonging; (3) forms of association.

## Joint Commitment

In delineating an emphasis on joint commitment as a key generative principle of community, I am drawing on a concept of plural subjecthood developed by Margaret Gilbert (1994) as part of her wider ranging consideration of the philosophical status of sociality. Specifically, Gilbert is concerned with illustrating that in their ongoing "search for an elucidation of categories that are in some sense fundamental," philosophers would be well advised to add sociality to a list of better recognized categories such as "time, space, materiality, and mentality" (1994:5).

To establish a notion of sociality that could constitute it as a philosophically significant category, Gilbert suggests that we might respond to the sheer variety of things social by thinking in terms of degrees of sociality (1994:9). This in turn begs the question whether there are certain phenomena that can "have a claim to the highest degree of sociality" (1994:10). To pursue this question, Gilbert distinguishes several situations of sociality: common knowledge, mutual expectations and plural subject concepts.

> There can be common knowledge of many things, about the non-human world, and about people. And there is surely a great deal of something like common knowledge among humans. The question arises: are common knowledge phenomena social phenomena to the highest degree? [Gilbert 1994:11]

But drawing on an argument put forth by Charles Taylor, Gilbert notes that people may share common knowledge of some fact without necessarily sharing an important social link. In other words, common knowledge can be shared in a "detached, external way" without necessarily implicating a genuine social bond between the holders of this knowledge (1994:13). Similarly we could expect that other people will act in particular ways and that they and we might even coordinate our own actions on the basis of these mutual expectations without this form of coordination necessarily requiring or generating a particularly strong linkage between persons. Hence, as I have noted earlier, one could argue that the increasingly expansive reach of modern communication technologies can extend this kind of repertoire of common knowledge and mutual expectations without this necessarily or automatically being associated with the generation of strong social bonds. To identify situations that involve a stronger

form of sociation, Gilbert looks to the concept of plural subjects.

Plural subjects are common phenomena that can range over a wide range of different forms of sociation. What articulates these different phenomena is their reliance on a "special unifying principle or mechanism, which I have labelled 'joint commitment'" (Gilbert 1994:14).

> If we have a joint commitment, each of us is committed, but we are committed independently. Somewhat artificially, we might put this in terms of our "individual commitments." If we are jointly committed, each one's "individual commitment" stands or falls with the "individual commitment" of the other. They cannot exist apart. [Gilbert 1994:16]

The joint commitment is "somewhat artificial" for Gilbert, because it may not be greater than, but is also not simply the sum of, two or more individual commitments as it creates a "new motivational force" in terms of which the interlocutors act. "It is neither mine, nor yours, nor a simple conjunction of mine and yours. It is rather, *our* commitment" (Gilbert 1994:16). While Gilbert's mission is philosophical rather than sociological, her rendering of "joint commitment" strongly resonates with key elements of Simmel's seminal notion of sociation, particularly his emphasis on the dialectic of interdependence between sociates (Simmel 1950). More generally both Gilbert and Simmel emphasize the wide variety of different forms that sociation can assume, yet both locate it as, first and foremost, arising through the relations and interdependence between individuals.

However, while Gilbert views "joint commitment" as the highest degree of sociality because it sets up a "true unity," a kind of "pooling of wills" (1994:20), I would be inclined to emphasize that this kind of interdependence is just as likely to engender tensions, conflict and anxiety. When you depend on other people to effect an enterprise, whether an organization, campaign, activity or what-have-you, the disagreements or divergences among you become all the more crucial and unavoidable because they need to be taken into account and dealt with in some way in order to effect or sustain the joint commitment. You can politely ignore disagreements over issues or with people on whom you do not depend, but it is much harder to be equally blasé about such differences with collaborators. That is when you are more likely to see people seeking to persuade, exhort, cajole or pressure each other to accept divergent versions of how to go about effecting joint commitments. That is why ethnic or neighbourhood associations, university departments, political parties, recreational groups or religious congregations so often give

rise to more or less heated organizational politics, factions and even ruptures. In short, joint commitments do not necessarily, or even often, generate consensus or even collegiality. Nor, for that very reason, can they always be successfully mobilized or sustained.

Placing the emphasis on joint commitment shifts the emphasis away from sameness, whether actual or imagined, as the basis for community and puts the onus more squarely on interdependence as the basis for this class of sociation. Interdependence is first and foremost a matter of coordination. Or, put in colloquial terms, "I need you to do this, I can't do it alone, but can we do this together?" Shifting attention away from sameness or "in common" kinds of attributes towards issues of coordination and interdependence allows us to acknowledge the connections between a wide variety of different sorts of possible commitments. A joint commitment can range from Suttles' (1972) notion of the "defended neighbourhood," an instrumental community of necessity set up as a mode of protection in uncertain and troubled environments, to the coordination of work related practices (Baba 2005), to more "pastoral" or romantic versions of solidarity (Creed 2006), to moral enterprises as varied as social movements, religious congregations, charities and self help organizations. A joint commitment may be ephemeral or enduring, partial or comprehensive. In other words, joint commitment is not intrinsically associated with one form of association or another, and as such, it highlights the areas of ambiguity attending which forms of sociation enable or require interdependent coordination and which do not or not as much.

## Affect-Belonging

More than anything else, perhaps, discussions of community actually revolve around this aspect, i.e., a sense of belonging to a collectivity. So when people talk about a "sense of community," they usually appear to be assuming or implying that this sense of connection is affectively charged. But this presumption obviously begs more questions than it answers. What kind of affect? How is it distributed? How is it expressed?

On an everyday basis, most of us probably do not feel a need to vocalize our sense of belonging to collectivities in which we are stakeholders. Indeed, to the extent that the kinds of joint commitments discussed above might be fairly mundane aspects of our quotidian practices, punctuating these routines with loud proclamations of belonging might be viewed as extraneous, even strange. Explicit or strong assertions of belonging are more likely to occur when people are responding to unusual or even extreme circumstances. It is for this reason that a good deal of the litera-

ture on affectively charged expressions of community has often focused on more extreme or polarized circumstances. Thus, Anthony Cohen (1982; 1985) focused his examination of community on processes of boundary marking because he argued it was on the relational boundary between us and them that a feeling of difference from others outside the collectivity superceded divergences within it and people became most self conscious of their commonality. Victor Turner argued that feelings of communitas would be most strongly felt in situations of liminality when people were outside their usual routines and relationships:

> In liminality, communitas tends to characterize relationships between those jointly undergoing ritual transition. The bonds of communitas are anti-structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential, I–Thou (in Feuerbach's and Buber's sense) relationships. Communitas is spontaneous, immediate, concrete—it is not shaped by norms, it is not institutionalized, it is not abstract. Communitas differs from the camaraderie found often in everyday life, which informal and egalitarian, still falls within the general domain of structure, which may include interaction rituals. [Turner 1974:274]

In contrast, Benedict Anderson's construction of nationalism emphasized the affective charge of the imagining of community that could lead people, in some circumstances, to be willing to die or kill for people they would never know personally (Anderson 1991). However, if Turner emphasized an intense, concrete communion and Anderson an abstracted sense of identification, both were clearly concerned with situations outside the quotidian. How then do we integrate this emphasis on oppositional or extraordinary situations as catalysts for the affective charge of community with the proliferation of frequent references to more commonplace situations or categories with which I started this essay?

While drawing on rather different conceptualizations, Cohen's, Turner's and Anderson's versions of community are dependent on the extraordinary or the polarized for eliciting communality. To the extent that they do so, they are more likely to limit rather than open up this field of investigation. So if we are interested in positioning community as a frame for interrogation rather than definition, and if we wish to extend rather than limit our field of investigation, then we need a point of departure that could conceivably accommodate the situations and issues encompassed in these more extraordinary or polarized instances but also allow for a broader range of less dramatic circumstances and responses.

But if we have to leave open the possibility that there may be a wide range of affect intersecting with different circumstances of plural subjecthood, then surely we also need to allow for the possibility that any one situation or case might also provoke a variety of different responses as well. In other words, if a joint commitment is not necessarily associated with consensus, by the same token why should we assume that it is associated with only one kind of affect or sense of belonging? To accommodate this range of possibility, I would suggest a notion of *distributed* affect-belonging. In so doing, I am inspired by the distributive model of culture that in one form or another, has been advocated by such scholars as Fredrik Barth (1987) and Ulf Hannerz (1992). Such a model of culture, according to Barth, assumes that knowledge and ideas are not simply shared but, in fact, are unevenly and unequally distributed across the "interacting parties in a population" (Hannerz 1992:13). For Hannerz, this distributive approach further entails a presumption:

> that people have understandings (also distributed in some way) of that distribution which may or may not be valid, but which in either case make a difference; these are meanings in their own right, and they affect the ways in which people deal with ideas and produce meaningful external forms. The major implication of a distributive understanding of culture, of culture as an organization of diversity is not just the somewhat nitpicking reminder that individuals are not all alike, but that people must deal with other people's meanings; that is, there are meanings, and meaningful forms, on which other individuals, categories, or groups in one's environment somehow have a prior claim, but to which one is somehow yet called to make a response. [Hannerz 1992:14]

Of course questions of belonging are as much about meaning as emotion. But adapting this broader distributive model to the more specific question of affect and community allows us to avoid using boundaries as a principal means for mapping belonging. A distributive model pushes us to move beyond us–them distinctions towards a more complex understanding of how unevenly and unequally notions of belonging, in all their permutations of meaning and emotion, may be dispersed. This is not a question simply of exclusion or inclusion but of how belonging may or may not be recognized, interpreted, responded to and felt. When linked to the question of joint commitment that I discussed earlier, this may mean that the person(s) on whom you depend to effect this mission may not be willing to recognize this obligation; might not consider it important enough to put aside other commitments; may

have a very different idea of who participates or of the nature and extent of loyalty or investment that is required. So the intersection between a distributed notion of affect-belonging and joint commitment can yield a wide range of permutations or, to use Burke's term, ambiguities.

One kind of ambiguity that is worthy of note here includes the possibility that belonging is not necessarily or automatically concomitant with a palpable sense of joint commitment or any sort of collectivity. I feel "at home" in my Montreal neighbourhood at least in part because it is filled with familiar faces, sites and memories, but that sense of belonging is largely personal rather than collective. Beyond the reciprocity that I maintain with a couple of immediate next-door neighbours, I would be hard pressed to identify a broader sense of joint commitment with this sense of connection. Down the street, an old church that had been on the verge of redevelopment has been taken over and revitalized by a new congregation. Aside from services, the congregation sponsors talks and children's activities as well as events in the nearby park that are open to the general public. I have not participated in these activities, but it is certainly possible that the sense of local belonging experienced by some of these congregants intersects with a notion of joint commitment in very different ways than my own. And, of course, notions of belonging may vary widely across these congregants, among people who participate in the events they sponsor but who are not members of the congregation, people living alongside the church, and so on.

I raise this cautionary example because it reminds us that while forms of joint commitment can and do overlap with senses of belonging, the two are not coterminous. For example, ego-centred networks may be a critical basis for shaping a sense of belonging but they are not necessarily or even the likely ground for establishing forms of joint commitment. "My friends" may be foundational to what makes me feel "at home" in certain fields or sites but these interlocutors do not necessarily know each other nor are their relationships with me likely to be part of a broader collectively coordinated effort. Instead, personal networks often feature an assortment of dyads that provide their protagonists with critical social capital without necessarily serving as the basis for a more extensive sodality. Affect may also be charged by personal memories that are not shared in their entirety with anyone. Nostalgia may be a powerful source of romanticized belonging without requiring any form of joint commitment. So, we cannot assume that a sense of belonging or an affectively charged sense of connection are necessarily linked with collective interdependence. It is precisely the ambiguity engendered by the possibility, but not the certainty, of

intersection between joint commitment and belonging that we are seeking to investigate rather than assume. In short, setting out a distributive model of belonging and affect as part of the field of investigation does not necessarily put everything up for grabs, but it is deliberately intended to unsettle our certainties about the ways in which joint commitment and belonging might or might not intersect.

## Forms of Association and Concluding Remarks

I started this essay by noting the wide range of situations and associations that are implied or listed through invocations of community in popular forums such as newspapers. This lack of specificity is what makes community as a concept and reference so attractively labile but also leads some commentators to dismiss it as being too general to be useful or as being a cover that obscures more essential understandings (Creed 2006:4). But it is in respect to this feature especially that we would be well placed to remember Burke's argument that simpler open-ended categories are best to think with if they allow us opportunities to transform our distinctions as we examine phenomena from a variety of vantage points. Since neither the possibility of joint commitment or of affect-belonging are narrowly or axiomatically associated with a particular form of association, in probing the uncertainties of their intersection, we are necessarily directed towards the broader ground of sociation. But to refrain from specifying, a priori, a set of associational forms as defining our field of investigation is not to say that these distinctions are of no consequence. In examining the interaction of joint commitment and affect-belonging across a variety of different forms of association, we have an opportunity to consider such issues as the effects of: scale, a very Simmelian concern (Simmel 1950); duration (short term as in oriented towards a particular event or highly canalized purpose or those more diffuse and of longer duration); mediation (as in face-to-face or mediated interaction); comprehensiveness (highly circumscribed association or comprehending many activities and relationships); degree of formalization, and so on. Nor does it prevent us from working through some or many of these distinctions by reference to a family of concepts such as action-set, consociation, assemblage and so on.

Keeping the range of associational forms open allows us to pose community as a question of sociation to be investigated across a variety of circumstances and qualities rather than to be prematurely delivered as yet another attempt to provide an unpersuasive precision through definition. We may not be ready (and likely never

will be) to deliver the definitive answers but we should leave ourselves as much room as possible for posing questions about the dynamics of coordination, interdependence and affect in mobilizing social relations. In so doing, we squarely position ourselves at the threshold of long-standing anthropological preoccupations that have been pursued ethnographically as well as conceptually: how, when, where and why do people come together; what are the terms of their engagement; to what extent are they able to establish and perpetuate a coordinated effort; how do they feel about it? Positioned in this way, community in all its proliferating invocations is not a cover for more crucial aspects of sociality. Rather, it speaks to the relentless uncertainties entailed in many different forms of plural subjecthood.

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## Notes

1 Margaret Gilbert (1994) uses the notion of a "family of concepts" in her efforts to establish the philosophical significance of sociality, a frame that I think can be usefully employed to characterize the field of sociation being invoked by community.

2 There is some resonance between Burke's notion of titular concepts and Rodney Needham's (1975) discussion of polythetic classifications as arrangements in which no one feature is held in common by all members of the category or is sufficient to define membership in this class. At the same time, there may well be an overlap between different polythetic categories.

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## Commentary on "Community as 'Good to Think With'"

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In several publications, Vered Amit has critically examined the ways in which anthropologists and other social scientists employ the notion of community in their research (Amit 2002a, 2002b).[1] While anthropologists formerly tended to view communities in terms of "actual interacting groupings of people," Amit states, interest has shifted in recent years where, "following on from Benedict Anderson's notion of 'imagined community' (1991), anthropologists often appear to have in mind an emotionally charged category of social relations" (2002a:17). Anthropologists have been particularly interested in the ethnic, transnational or diasporic communities that categories of migrants are believed to belong to by virtue of their emotional attachment to a particular place of origin. The existence of any sort of community among a category of people should never be taken for granted, she emphasizes, because categories—such as ethnic categories of people defined by place of origin—are externally defined and may not correspond with internally generated groups of identification and social relations. Indeed, many people may have little interest in identifying with the category of people with which they are classed by others. The notion of "imagining community," Amit warns, therefore does not absolve "scholars from the responsibility to probe carefully the social ramifications and locations of these constructs," and she adds that the "imagined can all too easily become the reified, category, group, individual sub-

ject merging into the possibilities offered by the text of attributed identities" (Amit 2002a:19).

While Amit's earlier work has largely drawn critical attention to problems associated with the ways in which the notion of community has been employed in scholarly work, she turns this critical perspective around in the present essay to suggest that the very problematic aspects of community may present anthropologists with an interesting way of investigating different forms of association. More specifically, she points out that the prevalent use of *community* to refer to any sort of imaginable population segment that seems to share something—whether an occupation, religion, societal position, locality, size et cetera—has rendered the term so vague that it may seem to be of no analytical use whatsoever. Amit suggests, however, that the very vagueness of *community*, caused by its ubiquitous use, constitutes in and of itself a fertile field of investigation that may give anthropologists new insights into different kinds of sociation in modern society. To facilitate this research she proposes an "effective working model of community" that focuses on "the uncertainties arising in the intersection between the idea and actualization of sociation."

I find Amit's suggestion that ambiguity be viewed as a means of investigating the nature of the kinds of sociation associated with community highly stimulating. It not only turns many years of deconstructive critique of the notion of community into a new and productive research strategy, it also points to ways in which we may grapple with the nature of sociality, a key concept for any anthropologist who wants to understand not only how people envision the world, but also how they actually live with

each other in this world. I therefore expect that many will find the suggested research methodology exploring the strategic ambiguities of community extremely useful in their work. If I point to certain aspects of the suggested model that can be questioned or perhaps need further exploration, this does not therefore invalidate it, but rather opens up for further discussion its potential, as well as possible limitations, within different contexts of investigation.

## The Idea vs. the Actualization of Sociation

As noted, Amit suggests that a key area of investigation is the "intersection between the idea and actualization of sociation." This means that we will be looking at that which has been conceptualized as characterized by sociation, explore whether this sociation is indeed actualized, and if so, under which circumstances and how, who is involved and what sort of meaning do they attach to this actualization. This is a very helpful and relevant approach when looking at the many different "communities" that are evoked in common parlance, as illustrated by the several references to community in the Canadian newspaper that Amit cites in the introduction to her article. Thus, for anthropologists doing fieldwork in modern Canadian society, it will be interesting to explore just what kind of local group of people the "local community leader" is believed to represent, the significance of this so-called local community to the people concerned and whether—and how—they see the designated leader as somebody who can act on their behalf; or, what kind of artists are included in the "arts community," how this is decided, by what authority and with what implications for the artists and the work they produce; or, by which criteria people are seen to be part of a "religious community" and what this community, in fact, means to the individuals so identified.

While this exercise will say a lot about the relationship between ideas and practice in relation to community, it will not necessarily say much about those forms of sociation that remain relatively unarticulated. Many—if not most—social relations are not demarcated in any way by the actors but just enacted as a matter of fact in the course of daily life. This does not mean that they are unimportant, but their importance must be found at the routinized level of social life that makes us feel at home in the world (cf. Rapport 1997), as the following example illustrates.

Some years ago I commuted for a couple of months by train from a small town to Copenhagen. One day I found myself in a compartment of people who I could tell knew each other well because they engaged in lively conversation about various matters of importance to them. It appeared that they knew each other as fellow commuters who travelled back and forth by the same train every day and they were asking each other about certain persons who were missing on the train. This was, at the level of everyday practice, a small community of travel companions, but it was not conceptualized as such. The commuters just met every day and had a good time together during the one-hour train ride. The community might perhaps become actualized at the ideational level, if the commuters saw an interest in presenting themselves as a collectivity, for example as a pressure group who needed to be at work at specific times and therefore could not tolerate frequent delays or who protested against inexpedient changes in the train schedule. As long as the trains just ran more or less on time according to the set schedule, this incidental community of people was unnoticed, just as it did not generate a consciousness of a particular group identity or a sense of belonging—yet it was clearly of importance to those concerned. Indeed, considering the fact that it was based on socializing for two hours every day, five days a week for possibly many years, it may have constituted a major form of informal social life to the commuters.

This is just one example of the many matter-of-fact, ad hoc forms of sociation that may make up a central aspect of life, and it may, therefore, be important to distinguish between marked and unmarked forms of sociation. Rewriting Arjun Appadurai slightly, we may state that unmarked sociation "refers to the plethora of social relations that characterize the world today, relations at various levels, with various valences, and with greater and lesser degrees of social consequences," whereas marked sociation refers to "the subset of these varying social relations that has been mobilized to articulate the boundary of difference" (1996:13). As emphasized by Amit, such boundary making does not necessarily correspond to the actual social relations taking place. An important question for anthropologists to address is therefore under which circumstances what kinds of sociation become actualized as ideas and therefore marked and for what purposes. I have already suggested that it may occur when a group of people find that they can further a shared interest—such as pressing for improved train service. However, the sociality that the commuters enjoyed can clearly not be reduced to their common desire to enjoy the most efficient train service. Indeed, some of the references to "community" from the daily newspaper that Amit quotes suggest that community may be perceived, to a great extent, as a form of interest group.

The simplification inherent in this demarcation of a community points to a tension between the broad and complex nature of social relations and the many forms

of sociation that they involve, and the separation and highlighting of particular subsets of relations as a recognized community in terms of a particular overriding idea. It also underscores that the notion of community is not innocent, but may be associated with powerful interests. Furthermore, in so far as communities are demarcated by not only those belonging to them, but also by others who imagine their existence, being associated with a demarcated community may not necessarily be in the interest of those involved. This has been especially apparent in the classification of certain immigrants and refugees as part of certain ethnic or religious communities. While they may identify with such communities to a certain extent, they may not agree with "the boundary of difference" highlighted by this classification. This is especially the case in the many receiving societies, where such communities have become associated with a range of problems (such as criminality or terrorism) with potentially grave consequences for anybody identified with the "community."

## A Cross-Cultural Perspective

While there is no doubt that the term *community* has won increasing use throughout the English speaking world, it cannot be identified so easily in other parts of the globe. Writing from the vantage point of a Danish-speaking society, it is obvious that there is no corresponding Danish word for "community." Indeed, it is apparent that journalists and academics experience some difficulty translating many of the "community" constructions that come to us from abroad. Thus, "the European Community" (EC) has been translated as "Det europæiske fællesskab." At a more informal level, "the international community" is usually translated as "det internationale samfund," and the term "ethnic community" as "etnisk gruppe." Each of these translations have somewhat different meanings. "Fællesskab" is etymologically close to the English "fellowship" and corresponds to the German "Gemeinschaft." The word "samfund" can be translated as "society," and "gruppe" as "group." These varying translations underline the great complexity and ambiguity of the English concept of "community" and it could be a project in and of itself to examine and compare the different ways in which "community" is translated depending on the particular context and the interests at stake. The lack of an all-embracing Danish term for community means that it is not possible to apply Amit's suggested model directly to Danish society—or to many other societies. It will be necessary to look for other ubiquitous emic terms that carry a complexity and ambiguity comparable to that of community. In the case of Denmark, I

suggest that a fruitful term might be "integration"—a sort of negative of community in that it connotes insufficient belonging within a community, society or other collectivity.

During the past few years, I have been involved in a publication project with colleagues at the Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, focusing on the concept of integration (Olwig and Pærregaard 2007).[2] During the past 50 years, the term integration has been used increasingly in public debate, but often with different meanings. According to the Danish Language Committee, an institution that registers the vernacular use of words in Danish newspapers and other public media, *integration* has been part of the Danish language since the 19th century, when it entered as a foreign loan word.[3] It was not before the middle of the 20th century, however, that it became a commonly known term. During the 1950s, it was used primarily to refer to the economic, political, and military integration taking place in Europe after the Second World War, and in the 1960s it became an important term in the public debate on the Common Market, as Danes began to discuss how joining the European Economic Community would influence Danish society.[4] During the 1970s, *integration* began to be used in the field of pre-school pedagogy that gained momentum during the 1960s and 1970s. Here, *integration* was, and still is, used to refer to the need to incorporate children of varying mental and physical capacities (for example, due to age or forms of disability) in public pre-school institutions.

By the 1990s, politicians, journalists and social scientists began to use the concept to discuss the social and cultural challenges of incorporating immigrants and refugees into the Danish welfare society. Around the turn of the millennium, the meaning of integration gradually changed from referring to more general issues of integration into Danish welfare institutions, to the specific problem of integrating immigrants and political refugees into Danish society. When a new Ministry of Integration was created in 2001 by the newly elected right of centre government, nobody had any doubts about its target group. The issue of integration no longer had to do with Denmark's position in the European Community or how to create a well-functioning group of children with various abilities, it now concerned how to deal with immigrants and refugees in Danish society.

Danish migration researchers have been critical of the term integration, pointing out that it is unclear, understood in terms of common sense assumptions and interpreted in different ways depending on the context—critiques that also have been directed at community, as Amit

points out. This lack of precision is, of course, a great problem for immigrants and refugees who face continuous demands to integrate, but no clear explication of what exactly this integration involves. For our research project, however, the ambiguity and shifting meanings of integration became an important entry point for examining varying Danish understandings of such notions as the nation-state, Danishness, the welfare society, equality and citizenship. While we had expected initially that the book would analyze how immigrants and refugees encounter and experience integration as a political project in contemporary Danish society, it became a study of how Danish notions of community (in its many permutations) and belonging are shaped and reshaped in an increasingly globalizing world. Thus, the idea of Denmark as a culturally homogeneous national community and egalitarian welfare society that is threatened by the many foreigners descending on the country has become a dominant one in many debates and policies on integration. While a concern with integration might be thought to implicate a desire to initiate a process of inclusion, it has had the opposite result in Denmark. Indeed, the Danish integration debate seems to have resulted mainly in the demarcation of a national community of good (ethnic) Danes bordered by various communities of (ethnically different) unacceptable non-Danes.

The strong Danish focus on a culturally homogeneous society grounded in a single shared national community is very different from the Canadian celebration of a multicultural society composed of a host of different ethnic and national communities. Perhaps this gives us a clue as to why "community" is so ubiquitous in Canada, whereas "integration" is all over the place in Denmark. A multicultural society depends on the existence of a multitude of different communities that can be defined in various ways depending on the purpose at hand. A culturally homogeneous society, on the other hand, requires the existence of outsiders who need to be integrated because they are different, and the terms of integration therefore are best left vague. Amit's essay, thus, not only points to the value of analyzing the ambiguity of words like *community*, it also leads to engagement with the broader semantic field of terms that are tied to words like *community* and the many notions and forms of sociation that they implicate.

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## Notes

1 I would like to thank Maja Hojer for her comments on my commentary.

2 The project resulted in the publication of the Danish book *Integration. Antropologiske Perspektiver* (*Integration: Anthropological Perspectives*) (Olwig and Pærregaard 2007). An English-language edition of this book has been prepared and the following discussion is based on the introductory chapter in this manuscript (Olwig and Pærregaard 2011).

3 This information was provided by the Danish Language Committee (*Det Danske Sprognævn*) on 12 January 2006.

4 Denmark joined the European Common Market in 1973.

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## Response to "Community as 'Good to Think With'"

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Vered Amit's paper is a welcome development of arguments she began in dialogue with Nigel Rapport in *The Trouble with Community: Anthropological Reflections on Movement, Identity and Collectivity* (2002) in which Amit argues the importance of disjunction and disembedding; unsettling the centrality of social bonds and con-

nectivity in the production of community in anthropological thinking. Amit's dynamic, ambiguous sense of the world comes from the messy contradictions of her empirical research, which shows that rupture is as significant as connection and that human association is the result of specific *efforts*. In her paper in this journal, Amit takes popular engagement with community as an impetus for academic engagement and shifts anthropological debate from the meaning of community to the terms in which it can be investigated. Instead of asking what community is, she asks what is its analytic utility as part of a cluster of concepts for delineating joint commitment, affect or belonging and forms of association—the generating principles of community.

Understanding how people are socially linked in a global world is a seminal concern in anthropology (and sociology). Amit uses the term "sociation" to discuss social linkage. Putnam (2000) uses a vaguer term, "not being alone," in his treatise on the collapse and renewal of American civic and social life. Maffesoli's (1995) use of "sociality" to refer to the small, unstable, constantly forming and reforming, temporary groupings composing everyday life, is perhaps closer to the concept of sociation used by Amit. But Mafessoli's sense of sociality as empathic, a search for those who "feel and think as we do" and his emphasis on physical proximity and circumstance, makes his concept of sociality more limited than Amit's. Although all three theoreticians of social linkage are grappling with the same thing, Amit's deployment of sociation in a framework supporting a series of questions—how, when, where and why do people come together; what are the terms of their engagement; to what extent are they able to establish and perpetuate a coordinated effort?—supports a deeper analysis of how human association works.

There are a number of things I like about this paper and they provide a way of ruminating on developments in my own discipline (sociology) and research concerns. One such is the production of disjunctive globalizations in everyday circulations of people and objects. Circulations—popularly referred to as "flow" in the lexicon of current sociological framing foregrounding mobilities—also involve forms of (dis)connectivity and the stretched and intimate sociation on which Amit's paper centres, making these common concerns from different research and disciplinary angles. In this paper, I want to comment on the strengths of Amit's essay and interject some thoughts of my own on the importance of the *geographies* of connective social substance developed in critical dialogue with the fashionable sociological concept of flow.

The first reason I like Amit's paper has to do with *significance*. Are all areas of investigation equally socially significant? I think not, which is not to say that scholars should not investigate anything that interests them. But this does not mean that it is all equally relevant and important in the organization of contemporary societies. Sociologists (in the UK) have lost interest in community, once such a rich vein of enquiry, despite the fact that, as Amit points out, people think about themselves precisely in terms of these *(dis)connections*. Popular concern is only one way of thinking about social significance. Another is fundamentality, as in serving as a base underpinning things. Social linkage is fundamental in the production of social life and activity. Although philosophers from Rousseau onward and sociologists and anthropologists from the 19th century have grappled with the bases of human sociation, it is still one of the fundamental microcosms composing the social world. It lies at the heart of everyday life in all of its manifestations from Beijing to Buenos Aires.

Social significance in academies is frequently eclipsed by novelty: the quest for new ground, the need to appear at the cutting edge, the frontiers of *novel* rather than new knowledge. This, in part, explains the turn away from classic concerns like community and forms of social linkage in sociology. But another reason is to do with the development of theoretical frameworks that occlude some research agendas and highlight others. Community and the production of social linkage have been sidelined as sociological concerns, not just by the focus on mobilities (there is no contradiction between these two concerns as Amit's work shows), but by the paradigm-shifting claims with which mobilities are padded. The "social as mobility" replaced "the social as society" (Sheller and Urry 2006:196), a scheme developed in dialogue with Castells' (1996) claims about networked society. The "new mobilities *paradigm*" (Sheller and Urry 2006:208, my emphasis) overplayed and formalized a shift in framing that foregrounded social and geographical fluidity in the production and organization of everyday life and communities dropped off the sociology agenda.

This connects with the second thing I like about Amit's paper. She provides a framing of community as sociation that sidesteps the implied binaries of settlement versus unsettlement in mobility-as-new-paradigm arguments. Sheller and Urry would deny this binary but their swipe at Heidegger's "sedentarism" in his concern with dwelling suggests otherwise (2006:208). Amit's notions of sociation, on the other hand, work as part of an open matrix of mobilities, contingency and temporariness; and in no sense does she pose community as settled. On the contrary, she presents it as *unsettled* and the ways in which it *works* are investigated and questioned. Investigation of

the production and operation of sociation, such as Amit proposes in the questions she asks in her paper, *works* equally well across the syncopated rhythms of settlement and mobility, rest and restlessness, of everyday life.

Thirdly, in developing strategic ambiguities from the philosophical work of Margaret Gilbert and Kenneth Burke, Amit's paper establishes a clear loop between theoretical and empirical enquiry. While even in sociology there is a swing back to empirical work, theoretical work maintains its centrality as a form of academic labour poorly underpinned by serious research. Conversely, empirical research often neglects to revisit or even acknowledge the theoretical premises it tests. Keeping a range of associational forms open and asking questions about them achieves a productive synthesis between research and conceptualization.

Fourthly, Amit avoids paradigmatic claims around global versus national social structures in her framing. What we hold in common in a globalized world works because people are "socially linked" (Amit, this volume). Urry (2000:186), on the other hand cannot resist paradigmatic claims, suggesting "global civil society" replaces the "social as society." But Amit's framing works at any scale from the most local and tightly drawn to the most highly distributed of diasporic scatterings. The issue is not distance but the nature and terms of engagement and the manner in which they are pursued. Scales of geographical distance are undoubtedly important in the production of social linkage and the forms they take, but *local* mobilities and the linkages they form and disrupt are important too. Sociologists and anthropologists are drawn to the social forms produced in, and implications of, long-haul travel and, as a consequence, short-haul travel and forms of sociation that work around neighbourhoods are either dismissed as uninteresting or collapsed into notions of community-as-stationary existence. As Amit suggests, common knowledge and mutual expectation are part of joint commitment and in a globalized world there will not necessarily be strong links between people. Weak ties, as Amit suggests elsewhere, are ties too.

The final reason why I like this paper is that it aims to understand the *production* of social linkage through human *work and effort*: "the effort to construct communities is fundamentally an effort" (Amit and Rapport 1994:13). This refocuses intellectual enquiry around community, ethnicity and so on, from the categorical dimensions of identity to the mechanisms and conditions of their production. Amit proposes a "distributed" sense of belonging as a field of investigation. Tim Ingold's (2000) *The Perception of the Environment* develops this emphasis on production through the idea of skill. Skill provides a use-

ful set of questions for interrogating the content as well as the cultural and environmental circumstances in which work and effort are exerted. I will return to this later in unpacking and critiquing current sociological conceptions of fluidity. Investigating the skills embedded in the production of coordinated effort would add still further to Amit's searching questions and the kinds of investigation they support. This material grounded-ness also provides an important challenge to the speculations of grand theorists who are untroubled by the operating mechanisms, details and results of human effort and skill. Anderson's "imagined community" provides an example of this easy (dis)connection challenged in this volume and Amit's earlier work.

"Imagined community" works a bit like "flow" in acknowledging a set of social mechanisms and (dis)connections while simultaneously removing the imperative to take a close look at how they actually operate.

Flow is central to conceptualizations of globalization and the paradigm-shifting claims of mobile sociology. But there is another more significant connection too with Amit's paper. Amit deals with the production of local and global social linkage—which should lie at the centre of notions of flow as ways of thinking about mobilities—but in most accounts of flow, these productions of linkage are glossed over. Flow discourages detailed investigation of the very social mechanisms composing the global world it purports to understand. When I say discourages, I mean that it facilitates discussion and description without the need for detailed knowledge of operating mechanisms. Flow fills a gap by giving us an evocative term that fails to demand further investigation: it stands in the place where a deeper understanding of mobility and sociation might stand, disrupting and discouraging. Flow therefore delivers mobility and its myriad forms of human sociation—the basic micro-scenes of all social conditions—as partially abstract categories, by which I mean stripped of the conditions of their production and their specific (micro-macro) geographies.

There are two further problems with flow. Firstly, it is misleading as a description of mobilities, and, secondly, it erases important social information in the texture of the shifting, contingent (dis)connectivity that forms sociology's and anthropology's core business, making it analytically limited. It does not tell us and discourages us from enquiring into how shape-shifting, multiply interconnected substances of sociality in individual and collective life, and the dynamics between this and the inanimate substances with which human life is intertwined, actually work. The concept of flow then obscures the mechanics of its operation.

Objects do not flow. Whether they are newly produced or historically produced and already in circulation, objects are trucked and shipped through logistical chains that calculate the cost of different combinations of travel involving port waiting times and the operation of shipping hubs and the feeder posts with which they are connected. It is unnecessary to point out that all of this is mobilized through energy and effort exerted by the people who drive trucks and cranes, sail ships, shuffle paperwork and make tea. These activities, this work, and these social lives and, on a larger scale, the global social morphologies they constitute, are not flow. They involve work, activities, travel and myriad connections. They engage, and are engaged by, diverse forms of human linkage and joint action, to use Amit's framework, which can be investigated but often are not. All of this belies the effortlessness of flow.

People do not flow either. They move about the scenes of their everyday life, on foot, by car, bus and so on, making long and short journeys in syncopated rhythms of travel and rest. People stumble and backtrack; they move along one track and switch to another and they do so in the company of a shifting group of others. They do all of these things and more; but they do not flow. People have undeclared habitual movements and they have more clearly articulated plans to travel. Travel, in short, is a useful way of thinking about the long and short-haul mobilities of everyday life. People travel and have always travelled. Key questions then become *how* do they travel, *where* do they travel, *in what circumstances* do they travel and *how are their lives composed* in travel? Travel is part of dwelling and not its counterpoint, as Amit's framing also suggests. Engaging with these questions— questions which are not asked, even if they are not concealed, by the notion of flow—reveals connective substance and social texture in the ways in which the globalized world is fabricated.

Engagement with the specifics of travel gives us the concept of the *journey*. Journeys evoke specific itineraries connecting places across neighbourhoods and continents. Running errands, trips to work, pursuit of entertainment and enlightenment, holidays, migrations of different kinds, visits to families, are all journeys connecting places of different geographic and timescales: geographies and cartographies of (dis)connective substance. Journeys are a good way to think about the connections between places: connections, of course, made by people to other people as well as to places, to return to Amit's paper. The extent to which place (dis)connections are also intertwined with people (dis)connections or whether place has intrinsic significance is fertile ground for further investigation. Drawing on Ingold (2000:206)

we can think of journeys as continuous matrices of movement, the kind of carrying along a path that may be intentional or circumstantial: a journey begins in one direction and ends up going in another. We can think about lives and subjectivities as constituted in journeys, as well as in the forms of sociation Amit suggests. Journeys constitute people's lives in shaping the kinds of lives they might live and the places in which they might live them. This works whether we are investigating the restless circulations of the homeless around a city or the work–leisure intersections of the well-heeled.

I want to propose that people are the sum of their journeys just as they are, to draw on and slightly reformulate Amit's argument, the outcomes of their social (dis)connections and the work and effort they expend in producing them. Lives and the human-being-ness (subjectivities) composing them are about where we go, how we go and, of course, who we encounter on the way and how we (dis)connect with them. I am proposing that we think about people in terms of their routine journeys and the larger, maybe migratory, journeys in which routine movements are set. What journeys compose a life? Where do specific people go? Why and how do they go? These are all questions that prompt deeper investigation of the social substance and lives flow glosses.

The concept of the journey has all sorts of possibilities as a point of access to still more social texture and, with it, deeper understanding of how the world works. Journeys involve navigation. By navigation I mean the planning and execution of journeys involved in ordinary way-finding: improvised, exploratory movement (Ingold 2000:220, 289-299). This takes knowledge and skill: a well-developed sense of how the social world works and how to live in it. What skill does it take to live a particular life? What skill does it take to survive as a homeless person or as a Somali asylum seeker in London, as a wealthy expatriate migrant in Hong Kong? Unlike flow these questions all point to a deeper understanding of the globalized social world of now.

As well as providing a mechanism for thinking about lives and subjectivities and establishing commonalities on a social scale, journeys provide a mechanism for thinking about social difference.

The lives of homeless mental health patients rotating around the streets of Montreal, for example, may be thought of as composed in the routine journeys they make, the ways in which they thread together urban space, assembling the ingredients of daily survival. Their journeys and the purposes for which they travel differentiate them across a range of social factors from other users of the same city. Mapping large and small social differences

in this way accumulates to bigger differences: to social morphology; to the substance that gives shape to the larger landscapes of the cities and societies in which we live.

So journeys establish both common ground and the substance of social differentiation. They may or may not involve social linkage. The geographies, routes and skills involved in the journeys composing routine and exceptional lives give a whole other dimension to Amit's important questions about community and the nature of social bonds.

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## Commentaire sur « Community as 'Good to Think With' »

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En introduisant son ouvrage *Communitas* (2000), consacré aux diverses appréhensions conceptuelles du problème de la communauté – chez Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, etc.–, Roberto Esposito (2000:13) soulignait à quel point cette question s'avérait incontournable dans la conjoncture actuelle. Marquée à la fois par la faillite des communismes et les nouveaux individualismes miséreux (ajoutons-y les effets spectaculaires des recours récurrents à l'ethnicité comme source de légitimité politique), la contemporanéité posait d'emblée le problème du *commun*, auquel nous n'avions tout simplement pas le choix de répondre.

Ce travail du philosophe italien s'inscrit d'ailleurs directement dans une lignée de travaux, tous aussi notables, consacrés également à ce concept malaisé : Jean-Luc Nancy (La communauté désoeuvrée, 1990), Maurice Blanchot (La communauté inavouable, 1983) et Giorgio Agamben (La communauté qui vient, 1990). Chacun, à leur manière et en dialogue les uns avec les autres, posait l'urgence de repenser les paramètres du commun, sans s'en remettre aux dérives réductrices bien connues : que ce soit la tentation de la totalisation essentialiste (avec variante fonctionnelle et/ou volontariste) ou l'arithmétique simpliste voulant additionner les intérêts individuels afin d'en arriver à l'équivalence d'un *ensemble* utilitaire. Il est à noter que ces auteurs, bien qu'ils consacraient une large part de leur travail à une profonde remise en question des présupposés lourds qu'entraîne l'usage du concept de communauté, ne souhaitaient tout simplement pas laisser tomber celui-ci (ou n'arrivaient pas à le faire).

En ce sens, la prolifération des usages du concept de communauté à laquelle nous réfère Vered Amit en guise d'introduction afin de soulever la prégnance de ce problème *partagé* s'avère – et ce n'est certainement pas une surprise – tout aussi omniprésente chez les académiciens[1]. Loin d'être répudié donc, ce concept s'impose depuis plusieurs années au gré de ses multiples usages dans des champs sociaux diversifiés. En ce sens, il s'avère un concept-clé – nous n'oserons pas dire un *fait social total* – pour réfléchir une contemporanéité qui, si l'on se fie aux auteurs mentionnés ci-dessus, appelle elle-même cette réflexion. L'omniprésence du concept de communauté n'amène donc pas seulement une réflexion – par ailleurs tout à fait bienvenue – sur le concept de communauté, mais devient un point de départ privilégié pour penser le rapport au contemporain dans toute son équivocité[2].

Le concept de communauté mérite d'autant plus une attention soutenue puisqu'il tend à dénoter un certain scepticisme ou même une aversion envers la contemporanéité. Il va sans dire, les usages communs et/ou académiques du concept renvoient fréquemment à un au-delà des liens marchands, bureaucratiques, juridiques, etc[3]. Que ces divers processus soient perçus comme étant imposés d'un extérieur quelconque ou simplement des modes d'être ensemble à altérer, les formes d'appel à la communalisation ou de rappel à la communauté peuvent s'avérer, dans de telles circonstances, des repères particulièrement instructifs permettant d'assurer un suivi des transfor-

mations sociales en cours et des interprétations qu'elles nécessitent. En ce sens, toute réflexion sur la communauté est susceptible d'être un lieu d'expérimentation sociale où se forgent à la fois les figures utopistes (avec toutes les équivoques que celles-ci comportent) ou un moyen privilégié de réinscrire le passé dans le présent (tout en affirmant le faire, paradoxalement, d'*une autre manière*).

Figure d'externalisation du contemporain donc, la communauté qui vient ou celle advenue se présente fréquemment comme une ouverture sémantique par laquelle certains opérateurs de disjonctions temporelles (vers le passé ou le futur) se jouent, s'actualisent ou s'imaginent. Par ailleurs, cette signification ambiguë du concept (potentiellement ouverture utopiste ou réinscription d'un passé idéalisé) expliquerait peut-être, en partie du moins, non seulement l'omniprésence contemporaine de ses usages, mais également l'incapacité qu'ont certains à se débarrasser du concept. Comment, en effet, imaginer qu'un concept susceptible d'être tout aussi altératif que conservateur puisse ne pas être constamment récupéré et utilisé à toutes les sauces?

Amit l'a par ailleurs bien remarqué, notamment à travers ses emprunts à Kenneth Burke, la portée analytique du concept de communauté réside bel et bien dans le fait que celui-ci se veut justement un mode de pensée de l'action sociale (de ses conditions de possibilités, de ses modalités, de sa légitimité). Les manifestations hétérogènes et les usages multiples se présentent dès lors comme autant de complexes sémantiques ambivalents susceptibles de faire passer l'émergeant, que celui-ci s'apparente à des motifs de reproduction (de nouvelles formes de conservatismes) ou des modes de mises en commun forgeant de nouvelles mobilisations sociales. Amit nous convie donc à s'attarder aux intersections entre engagement commun et sentiment d'appartenance (qui doit d'abord prendre, selon Amit, la forme d'un questionnement sur la distribution inégale de l'affect), mais sans présupposer *a priori* la forme de cette articulation. Il nous offre un excellent point de départ analytique afin de saisir les actualisations réelles de la *sociation* ou la mobilisation des relations sociales – qui sert ici de définition minimale à la communauté – tout en réussissant à court-circuiter les recours trop rapides aux diverses formes de volonté générale qui se sont traditionnellement confondues avec le concept de communauté.

L'auteur soulève et exemplifie d'ailleurs ce problème récurrent, notamment lorsqu'il s'attarde à l'étymologie du concept et sa racine *communis*, tout en soulignant au passage à quel point les travaux portant sur la communauté ont eux-mêmes tendance à s'arrêter à la recherche

d'un élément « commun » afin d'expliquer toute persistance ou consistance communautaire. De telles perspectives tendent justement à réduire les modes de sociation à une peau de chagrin, comme l'illustrent très bien les exemples choisis par Amit (Anthony Cohen, Victor Turner et Benedict Anderson) qui sont ici abordés afin de soulever certaines limites prégnantes dans la pensée de la communauté. Ceux-ci, en s'attardant davantage à saisir les fondements de la communion dans les moments de polarisation extrêmes (nous/eux) ou sous une quelconque forme de communion idéelle, s'avèrent, en dernière analyse, davantage descriptifs qu'analytiques. En concentrant l'analyse sur l'exceptionnalité et faisant fi des modes d'interaction réels et quotidiens, ces approches ressemblent davantage à des opérateurs de classification plutôt qu'à une véritable analytique des modalités réelles de mises en relation, ceci dans la mesure où elles renvoient quasi systématiquement aux mêmes référents (sens, valeurs, aspirations, symboles, contrats, etc.).

*A conrario*, Amit suggère qu'il est tout à fait plausible d'imaginer que certains éléments qui paraissent pourtant *a priori* « communs » ne dénotent pas nécessairement de véritables liens sociaux, comme l'illustrent à merveille les innombrables communications circulant à travers le *world wide web*, notant au passage que ce qui fait la socialité de nos actes ne relève pas nécessairement d'un partage commun de sentiments. Cette simple remarque, à notre avis, mérite d'être soulignée et pleinement prise en compte.

En effet, pour l'auteure, les incertitudes qui se façonnent entre l'idée ou l'idéal de la communauté et les actualisations de la sociation sont justement propices à une meilleure emprise analytique sur ces dernières. À la recherche donc des modalités quotidiennes de sociation qui ne passent peut-être pas par les concepts habituels (volonté, nécessité d'un sentiment d'appartenance fort, etc.), l'analytique d'Amit passe ainsi par l'engagement commun comme principe générateur de communauté, mais un engagement commun truffé d'écueils, d'équivoques, de conflits, etc. Si une telle perspective nous paraît particulièrement fertile pour aborder les problématiques de la communauté, axée ici sur l'interdépendance et la coordination (et n'excluant pas la conflictualité), il nous paraît tout aussi important de rappeler à quel point le concept de *dispositif*[4] peut s'avérer un outil fondamental pour orchestrer le type de repérage auquel nous convie Amit. Porter notre attention sur les dispositifs nous semble une opération faite sur mesure afin de nous instruire sur la *dépendance* (donc pas seulement de l'*inter*dépendance) qu'ils induisent à travers leurs effets de subjectivation et désubjectivation.

Pour formuler autrement et clarifier cette problématique, qui nous paraît essentielle, nous nous référerons à Giorgio Agamben qui, reprenant la définition de l'État d'Alain Badiou (Agamben 1990:89), notait que celui-ci, loin d'être l'union d'une volonté commune ou un réalignement des intérêts disparates liés contractuellement, se voulait d'abord et avant tout édifié sur l'interdit de la dé-liaison. Il suffit de généraliser cette piste pour saisir l'ampleur de la tâche incessante qui est celle de comprendre les modalités et les moyens dont les dispositifs rendent sinon interdite, du moins difficile, toute forme de dé-liaison (dans laquelle peut s'insérer par ailleurs le phénomène de la prolifération même des usages du concept de communauté).

Roberto Esposito (2000:16-20) nous lance sur une piste similaire, en s'attardant à l'étymologie du concept de communauté, à l'instar d'Amit (citant ici Marietta Baba). La dimension du *commun* qu'il lie également au champ sémantique du publique et de l'im-propriété (ce qui est commun est donc *partagé* et *n'est pas propre à*) doit être complémentée par l'appréhension de la racine *munus* qui surajoute une toute autre dimension à ce premier sens bien connu. Ici, c'est la logique du devoir (obligation, charge, office, fonction) qui prévaut et cette précision d'Esposito nous permet de mettre en relief la problématique de la *dépendance impersonnelle* qui n'est certes pas absente des formes de communalisations contemporaines. Cette logique du devoir permet surtout de garder bien en vue les obligations communautaires qui découlent de la vie sous le régime du *common wealth*.

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## Notes

1 Notons également au passage les nombreux débats chez les penseurs libéraux autour des problématiques liées à la gestion des cultures face au droit et à l'équité (nous pensons notamment ici aux débats incessants entre les allégeances communautaristes et libertariennes). Leur penchant pour la gestion du divers (la place des cultures dans l'État et les constantes remises en question opérées les unes envers les autres) nous paraît tout à fait lié à la prolifération du concept de communauté et ses multiples usages. En d'autres termes, il s'agit d'une véritable quête de l'accommodement *raisonnable*.

2 Jean-Luc Nancy (2000), préfaçant la traduction française du livre d'Esposito, y allait d'une mise en garde à ce sujet : « Il est évident que *nous* existons indissociables de notre société, si l'on entend par là non pas nos organisations ni nos institutions, mais notre *sociation*, qui est bien plus et

surtout bien autre chose qu'une association (un contrat, une convention, un groupement, un collectif, une collection), mais une condition coexistante qui *nous* est coessentielle (Nancy 2000:6) ».

3 Le rêve de la *communauté* internationale étant bien de dépasser les intérêts des *communautés nationales* établies. Seule une communauté, en ce sens, est susceptible de fonder l'au-delà et de dépasser celles qui lui préexistent (surtout après l'échec de la *Société* des nations au cours de l'entre-deux guerre).

4 Nous reprendrons ici la relecture que nous offre Agamben de la piste foucaldienne : « En donnant une généralité encore plus grande à la classe déjà très vaste des dispositifs de Foucault, j'appelle dispositif tout ce qui a, d'une manière ou d'une autre, la capacité de capturer, d'orienter, de déterminer, d'intercepter, de modeler, de contrôler et d'assurer les gestes, les conduites, les opinions et les discours des êtres vivants (Agamben 2007:31) ». Rappelons également que le sujet étant, chez Agamben (2007:32), ce qui découle du corps à corps entre le vivant et les dispositifs.

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## Response to "Community as 'Good to Think With'"

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Few concepts have drawn the critical attention of social scientists as has community. Given its centrality to the theoretical and methodological core of anthropological inquiry, it has been an ongoing focus of inquiry, discussion and debate. Its reputation as a notoriously open-ended concept has often meant that the invocation of community runs the risk of meaning something or nothing at all. *Community* can be used to mean an all-embracing totalistic and unified entity (sometimes geographically bounded) that obliterates difference, or it can signify looser forms of association such as "aesthetic communi-

ties" or "epistemic communities" which depend on superficial and transient bonds (Baumann 2001:65). Thus, a generally frustrated tone has come to pervade efforts to understand, define and otherwise cope with a term that refuses to be supplanted by others or to simply go away.

However, one could argue that this may not be such a bad thing. This is the spirit of inquiry that informs Vered Amit's commentary. It builds on the author's seminal contributions to the critique of the concept of community in anthropological thought (*Realizing Community: Concepts, Social Relationships and Sentiments* [2002] and *The Trouble with Community: Anthropological Reflections on Movement, Identity and Collectivity* [Amit and and Rapport 2000]). Amit begins with an entreaty, albeit that of a "contrarian," to consider the possibilities of community in spite of its flabbiness as an analytical concept. In thinking about community as a "genus of concepts" rather than as a term increasingly devoid of substance, it is, according to Amit, possible to think more productively about community as different "classes of sociation." In this way, Amit echoes the concerns of anthropologists who, for the past few decades, have called into question the usefulness of traditional categories and practices and the assumptions that support them (see also Amit's *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World* [2000]). Time-honoured tropes in the analysis of culture and society have increasingly become the subject of debate. Classic holistic concepts have being flagged in particular for their inability to effectively explain contemporary social processes, for example, those involving the politicization of identity through social movements such as feminism and other activisms. The reflexive turn coupled with moral and ethical concerns, initiated by Geertz's *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973), Marcus and Fischer's *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986), Clifford and Marcus' *Writing Culture* (1986), and followed by Gupta and Ferguson's (1997) problematization of the foundational concepts of "field" and "culture," helped to solidify anthropology's disciplinary distinction as primarily a form of cultural critique. Attention, for example, to the relationships between politics, power and knowledge, influenced by the work of Foucault, de Certeau and others, exposed the discipline to challenges that served in many ways to radically transform anthropological sensibilities, if not the project itself.

Critical reflections on community emerged at roughly the same time as other concepts and analytical categories came under scrutiny. Community, as it has been traditionally understood, that is in the service of conventional ethnographic work in specific locales, has increasingly faced the predicament of its methodological and analyti-

cal relevance in a world defined by concerns of globalization, transnationalism, migration and movement. The resulting anxiety of anthropologists trying to cope with an ever-changing ethnographic, conceptual and theoretical terrain has resulted in, I would argue, an over-reliance on terms such as diaspora, exile, assorted "scapes" (Appadurai 1996), cosmopolitanism(s), and clumsy terms like glocal. It is also possible to imagine that this refreshed lexicon has helped to ease the pressure that many anthropologists have felt to remain relevant as a field of inquiry.

And yet, for example, those working in the area loosely defined as diaspora studies, as I am, at times still get mired in endless definitional exercises. Indeed, there is almost as much critical scholarship on the analytical utility of the concept of diaspora as there are ethnographic studies of the same. However, what has been learned over the course of the last few decades of its broad but contentiously debated use, is that it is perhaps not so prudent to throw out the categorical baby with the bathwater. This does not so much reflect the grumblings of traditionalists anxious to preserve the integrity of the discipline, but rather as Gupta and Ferguson (1997) point out, the need to re-evaluate the organizing concepts of the discipline, rather than simply to deconstruct or dispense with them. Amit's contribution reflects this perspective well.

Amit finds the philosopher Kenneth Burke's work on ambiguity useful in her efforts to repurpose community as a conceptual tool. The point here is not simply to debate whether community as a category matters, but enquire as to how it can help us to think more nimbly about the processes which continue to give it meaning in scholarship and in the lives of those who make use of it. Community is then a "titular concept"; one that Amit argues is "productively ambiguous." That is to say that it is in the contexts of its use where meaning is found and these arise in moments of ambiguity. It is at these "strategic points of ambiguity that conceptual transformation occur." Here Amit draws on the contributions of scholars such as Charles Taylor, Margaret Gilbert, Benedict Anderson, Ulf Hannerz and others to illustrate the contingent nature of associational bonds and what animates them. Gilbert, for example, in her discussion of plural subjects, asserts that common knowledge as a form of sociality does not imply the existence of a bond between those who share this knowledge. As the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy has suggested, community is in existence as much as it is in common. However, being in common has nothing to do with communion, with fusion into a body (1991:xxxviii). Overt expressions of commonality then do not mean that groups see themselves as part of a bounded entity, or

necessarily even linked in any way. Gilbert's analysis of the family of concepts that constitute the "the plural subject" and joint commitment in particular (one which avoids any stipulation of willingness to commit) informs Amit's thinking about the necessary and sufficient conditions for the expression or formation of community. Joint commitment has the potential to generate as much conflict and tension as it does interdependence. By freeing ourselves from identifying attributes "in common," in favour of "coordination and interdependence," Amit sees renewed possibility for thinking about community devoid of the need for references to personal or collective intentionality.

Joint commitment for Amit, then, represents one of the intrinsic qualities of sociation and, more importantly a space in which ambiguity arises. The powerful affective nature of community, most commonly expressed in sentiments of belonging, is also identified as a significant point of intersection in her analysis. Here Amit turns her critical attention to Victor Turner's notion of communitas, Anthony Cohen's work on community as boundary making, and on Benedict Anderson's influential work on "imagined" communities. What unites these thinkers, according to Amit though, is their focus on the extraordinary contexts that elicit expressions or senses of community and this, she argues, poses a problem for analysis. Although the insights of these foundational thinkers have led to the most commonly cited sociological insights into community, their contributions exclude consideration of the mundane and the everyday. Alternatively, Amit introduces the notion of "distributed affect-belonging," modelled on the work of Frederik Barth and Ulf Hannerz, an approach which she argues avoids common analytical misapprehensions concerning the degree to which people are presumed to share equally a sense of belonging by virtue of their affiliations and affinities which may lead to extraordinary expressions of community, peoplehood, nation, et cetera.

In identifying the relationships between joint commitment and distributed affect-belonging as a preferred way of modelling forms of sociation, Amit hopes to provide an analytical framework for thinking beyond commonly accepted but nonetheless limiting and "categorical" notions of community. The question that comes to mind, though, is do we need another framework for thinking about community? Amit masterfully demonstrates *how* community may be good to think with, but not necessarily *why*. The ubiquity of community both in the academic and day-to-day senses of the term does not necessarily signal the need to qualify it further as an analytical tool. The past two or more decades of literature on citizenship, nationalism, globalization (and even on the Internet, "vir-

tual communities"), have all either tacitly or explicitly contemplated the presence or absence of something approximating community. Community is often presented as a pastiche of elements and entailments that ostensibly signify processes defined by principles of association and commonality, and this diminishes its analytical value. For this reason, Amit's efforts to disentangle the components of community into a "genus of concepts" related to "classes of sociation," has tremendous analytical value, particularly in its emphasis on processes rather than forms. Whether we want to think about these as expressions or manifestations of "community" per say, is up for debate.

Amit's analysis finds common purpose with anthropologists committed to reinvigorating core concepts or developing new ones suitable to emerging fields of inquiry. Anthropologists have recently come to embrace a conceptual repertoire that includes terms such as "assemblage" and "entanglement" further signalling the movement away from holistic and totalizing categories and models (including community) to those that embody the contemporary concerns and contexts to which anthropologists are drawn or find themselves (see Rabinow 2008). The resurrection of social network theory, begun with the work of Barnes (1968) and Mitchell (1969) and followed by countless others inspired by its promise and potential both as an analytical and methodological tool, has grown immensely in popularity. Most recently, the sociologist Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (2005) has garnered the attention of anthropologists working in non-traditional research settings. The attraction of approaches like Latour's for anthropologists seems to reside in a relational epistemology that assumes the mutual imbrications of humans and material nature in a process that is always ongoing, unfolding and never complete. Hence its popularity, not only for those working in science and technology studies, but for anthropologists interested in processes always in the making and, in particular, how "aggregates thus assembled...are connected to each other" (2005:22).

The most productive moments in the development of the discipline have been in the problematics that have arisen or have been identified in their use: hence, the precipitous decline in adherence to the methodological imperatives of structural-functionalism and ethnographic preoccupations with the foreign. These have been supplanted to a certain extent by multi-sited ethnography, the erosion of anthropological sensibilities based on notions of emplacement and locale, and greater attention to contingency than to natural development. The term *community*, as is the case with other anthropological concepts, is best understood as provisional and flexible, and therein

lies its analytical value and, more importantly, its power and importance in the realm of everyday life. If it continues to provoke the kinds of productive, insightful and challenging contributions as those embodied in Amit's commentary, then community will most certainly remain a concept that is "good to think with."

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## Obituaries / Nécrologie

# Cinq textes en hommage à Bernard Arcand (1945-2009)

Textes réunis par Sylvie Poirier · *Université Laval*

### Pour Bernard Arcand

Yvan Simonis    *Université Laval / Gifric*

D'aucune façon, je n'évoquerai Bernard Arcand comme si j'avais un droit particulier à le faire. Je souhaite encore moins risquer un bilan de son travail que je connais insuffisamment. Mais cet homme était attirant. Pendant vingt ans, je fus son collègue et les occasions n'ont pas manqué de se trouver avec lui aux frontières de l'amitié et du travail professionnel. Nos désaccords n'y gâchaient pas le plaisir de se rencontrer et chacun percevait la confiance qu'il accordait à l'autre aux moments mêmes où nous grognions en chœur.

Tout de lui disait ses préférences professionnelles du côté du scholarship à l'anglaise. Brillant et tout sauf naïf, Bernard Arcand avait le don immédiat d'un regard paradoxal et inédit sur ce qui l'entourait et qui provoquait de temps en temps son indignation de la bêtise d'autrui. Il avait le goût de secouer nos compréhensions et riait avec patience de la ténacité des points de vue qu'il aurait aimé transformer. Qui n'a pas profité pour relancer sa propre réflexion du regard qu'il portait sur les réalités humaines qui l'entouraient?

Nous avons tous attendu 'Das Cuiva' comme il disait, l'œuvre du *scholar* dont il rêvait sur son riche terrain colombien et qu'il n'a malheureusement pas eu le temps d'achever. Qui n'a pas admiré le bien-fondé et l'utilité de son livre avec Sylvie Vincent sur l'image des Amérindiens dans les manuels scolaires du Québec? Quel anthropologue au Québec n'est pas redevable à Bernard Arcand et à Serge Bouchard, son grand ami, d'avoir dépoussiéré avec tant de talent, désenclavé avec tant de brio dans le regard et l'écriture, nos traintrains anthropologiques? Les jeunes anthropologues savent ce qu'ils leur doivent et la profession d'anthropologue n'a plus la même image après leur passage, comme si l'anthropologie se mettait à respirer et gardait pour tous des avenirs possibles.

Joignant l'humour au talent, très sensible et attentif, secret et émouvant, on pouvait compter sur Bernard Arcand. S'il promettait, il tenait et ne trahissait pas. Nous avions devant nous un grand vivant qui le reste pour nous. Tout en lui débordait les limites de sa profession, c'est cela qui le rendait crédible aux yeux de ses collègues et amis.

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## Deux souvenirs de Bernard Arcand

Pierre Beaucage    *Université de Montréal*

De plusieurs rencontres et discussions survenues au cours des ans, deux souvenirs me reviennent particulièrement.

### Québécois et Netsilik

Notre première rencontre eut lieu à l'Université de Montréal. Nous sommes à l'hiver 1963. Elena et moi, tous deux étudiants à l'Université Laval, sommes venus faire un saut dans la Grande Ville. D'abord pour visiter la métropole (que je ne connais guère mieux que ma fiancée) mais aussi pour établir le contact avec le flamboyant département d'anthropologie fondé quelques années auparavant; à Laval, nous ne sommes alors que cinq étudiants, avec deux professeurs permanents, intégrés dans un département de sociologie et d'anthropologie. Il y a beaucoup d'animation ce jour-là à l'Université de Montréal; on va projeter *The Netsilik Eskimo*, d'Asen Balikci. Et on échange avec nos confrères, dont Bernard. D'entrée de jeu, je manifeste un étonnement bien provincial : Elena et moi avons été incapables de nous faire servir en français dans un restaurant italien du Vieux-Montréal. Les yeux de Bernard pétillent de malice : « Mais qu'est-ce que tu croyais? Ce n'est pas Québec ici. Au centre-ville, nous sommes des étrangers. » Un autre étudiant en profite aussitôt pour souligner l'urgence de faire l'indépendance!

C'est de toute autre chose dont on va parler après la projection. Certains reprochent à Balikci d'avoir « nettoyé » le campement inuk des boîtes de conserves et des tasses de thé ébréchées avant le tournage. Balikci le reconnaît : « Dans mon film, je voulais représenter la culture esquimaude traditionnelle. » Un débat s'amorce sur l'authenticité culturelle et tourne rapidement à vide. Pour ma part, imprégné par l'idéologie du développement, qui avait alors le vent en poupe, j'aurais été de ceux qui préconisent l'étude du changement plutôt que de la tradition, mais je suis sensible à l'argument de Bernard : sans s'enfermer dans une vision passéiste, il est également légi-

time d'étudier ce qui fait la différence de ces sociétés et si nous, anthropologues ne le faisons pas, qui le fera?

### La guerre des sexes en Amazonie ...

À la fin des années 1960, Bernard et moi avons fait nos études de doctorat en Angleterre presque en même temps, mais nous ne nous sommes pas croisés : il avait opté pour Cambridge et moi pour la London School of Economics. C'est peut-être pour ça, en partie du moins, que je suis devenu marxiste et lui, structuraliste. J'ai crû remarquer lors de mon séjour que l'ébullition des universités londoniennes, davantage en contact avec les soixante-huitards parisiens, tranchait avec le calme studieux des pelouses et des murs couverts de lierre d'Oxford et de Cambridge. Ce n'est qu'après notre retour au Québec que nous avons rétabli le contact, pour constater que, paradoxalement, nos orientations différentes convergeaient vers des questionnements communs. M'intéressant à l'anthropologie économique dans la perspective du matérialisme historique, je voulais vérifier l'hypothèse de Marx et d'Engels sur l'absence de rapports de domination dans les sociétés sans classes. J'avais observé des différences importantes sur ce plan entre les Garifunas de la côte hondurienne, horticulteurs forestiers et pêcheurs, et les paysans nahuas des montagnes mexicaines, chez qui les rapports sociaux, y compris les rapports de genre, étaient beaucoup plus hiérarchisés. Il me manquait des chasseurs-cueilleurs. Or, Bernard avait séjourné un an parmi l'un des rares peuples sud-américains à ne pas pratiquer l'agriculture. Il semblait enchanté de parler des Cuivas et les données abondantes qu'il me communiqua me semblèrent alors confirmer mon hypothèse (Beaucage 1976). Les petites bandes qui vivaient de chasse et de ramassage constituaient bien les « premières sociétés d'abondance », selon l'expression heureuse de Marshall Sahlins. Sans s'identifier du tout au marxisme, Bernard me parut sincèrement heureux de voir que ses données coïncidaient avec les intuitions de Marx et d'Engels. Sauf sur un point important, celui des rapports entre les hommes et les femmes. Certes, le contrôle de la chasse ne permettait pas aux hommes d'exercer une domination; il formula même l'hypothèse qu'il s'agissait d'un moyen symbolique de contrebalancer le pouvoir considérable que donne aux femmes leur rôle fondamental et manifeste dans la procréation (Arcand 1976). Il me confia cependant, qu'au niveau du quotidien, ni leur rôle économique majeur ni même la résidence uxorilocale ne mettaient les femmes cuivas à l'abri de la violence conjugale. Ce fait discordant m'amena, à terme, à reconsidérer ce que mon hypothèse avait de mécaniste : des rapports similaires à la production n'entraînent pas nécessairement des rapports sociaux semblables, comme

on le voit si l'on compare les Iroquois et les Yanomamis. Des années plus tard, je constatai que Bernard avait poursuivi sa réflexion sur une voie convergente : il en vint à remettre en question la catégorie même de chasseurs-cueilleurs (1988), tandis que j'en venais à reconnaître une place importante à la prédation, aux côtés de la réciprocité, au sein des rapports sociaux de base des « sociétés sans classes » (autre catégorie qui n'a pas résisté à l'analyse).

### ... et chez nous

Il me faut aussi mentionner le débat qui n'a pas eu lieu entre nous. En 1991, son livre *Le jaguar et le tamanoir* provoqua des remous qui débordèrent de beaucoup l'étang tranquille de l'ethnologie. Le marxisme disparaissait peu à peu de l'avant-scène politique et théorique, mais le féminisme était encore à son apogée, porté par l'entrée massive des femmes sur le marché du travail et dans la production des connaissances. Les féministes (marxisantes, radicales, réformistes) dénonçaient les formes économiques, politiques et symboliques de l'oppression des femmes et, parmi ces dernières, la pornographie qui réduisait la femme au statut d'objet sexuel. Or, le livre d'Arcand reprenait et développait une thèse esquissée dans son article de 1976, et ailleurs (voir Arcand 1979), à l'effet que ce sont les représentations qui définissent les rapports sociaux, beaucoup plus que la position dans le processus de production. Il situait cette fois le champ d'application de son hypothèse dans la société occidentale contemporaine; en simplifiant beaucoup, la pornographie produit chez les hommes ce que les romans Arlequin produisent chez les femmes, une incitation à se rapprocher de l'Autre, échappant ainsi à l'ennuyeuse et stérile solitude du tamanoir. Il s'ensuivit une levée de boucliers et certaines n'hésitèrent pas à faire de Bernard un suppôt de l'oppression des femmes dans ses formes les plus abjectes.

J'ai toujours eu l'impression que Bernard avait voulu, par une thèse poussée à la limite, provoquer un débat dans une société qui lui paraissait par moments beaucoup trop calme. Il l'a fait à la manière de Voltaire dans *Candide*, par exemple, ou dans *L'homme aux quarante écus*. Je me souviens d'avoir pris des notes en vue d'un éventuel débat; nous en avons même parlé, lors d'une brève rencontre à un congrès. Mais nous avions tous les deux d'autres chats à fouetter et ce débat n'a jamais eu lieu.

Peut-être, si les Wendat avaient raison, et si nous nous sommes trompés tous les deux, aurons-nous le loisir de poursuivre la discussion au pays des chasses éternelles?

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## Patience, patience dans l'azur ...

Pierre Maranda    *Université Laval*

Bernard Arcand abandonna McGill quand Yvan Breton, alors directeur de notre département, l'invita à se joindre à la petite cohorte « structuraliste » déjà en place. Il voulait ainsi élargir la base épistémologique du collège professoral et contrebalancer le contingent «marxiste»/ « structuralo-marxiste» qui en formait l'effectif prédominant. Bernard Saladin d'Anglure et Yvan Simonis assuraient déjà des enseignements reflétant les contributions exceptionnelles de Claude Lévi-Strauss à notre discipline. Convié par Breton, je les rejoignis en 1976 suivi peu après d'Éric Schwimmer et de Bernard Arcand. Bernard avait fait son doctorat à l'Université de Cambridge où il avait travaillé avec les éminents structuralistes Edmund Leach et Jack Goody. Nous avons alors entrepris des réformes du curriculum, avons planifié et donné des cours et organisé diverses activités, tout cela en facettes que nous voulions complémentaires.

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Bernard Arcand a éminemment pratiqué ce que j'ai appelé dans diverses publications une « anthropologie de la résonnance ». Il savait se taire pour écouter, avec attention, chaleureusement : l'ouverture. Il se mettait au diapason, pour attendre, et attendre encore. Laisser l'autre terminer le cheminement de sa pensée, le laisser déployer le pan de l'univers qu'il laisse entrevoir. Ne pas bousculer ses pauses, ses reprises... Reconnaître le geste qui indique qu'il pourrait en avoir encore à dire... Patience...

*Patience, patience,*
*Patience dans l'azur!*
*Chaque atome de silence*
*Est la chance d'un fruit mûr!*

Écrivait Paul Valéry dans *Charmes*. Et sa patience faisait que Bernard Arcand charmait – tout autant, d'ailleurs, qu'il pouvait montrer une fermeté qui, la plupart du temps, restait délicatement cordiale lorsqu'il devait exprimer un désaccord avec son ou ses interlocuteurs.

Arcand a toujours su, professionnellement mais aussi quotidiennement avec ses proches, avec ses nombreux étudiants et ses encore plus nombreux lecteurs et auditeurs à la radio ou à la télévision, vibrer avec eux, avec nous tous. Résonnant, il établissait une chaleureuse relation de consonance avec ceux qui avaient le privilège de le rencontrer. Ce qui ne l'empêchait pas, loin de là, de raisonner avec grande agilité conceptuelle et une intelligente vivacité.

Et cela dans un esprit que révèle une citation d'un de ses écrits dont je dis qu'elle le caractérisait lui-même alors que, modestement, il parlait en général :

> Les grands savants [...] sont souvent perçus comme des individus particulièrement calmes, qui dégagent une attitude sereine, couronnée parfois d'un léger sourire mystérieux. Tout le contraire des experts stressés et de certains universitaires agités qui s'excitent sur un air grave et qui souvent nous énervent. [*De la fin du mâle, de l'emballage et autres lieux communs*, avec Serge Bouchard. Montréal: Boréal, 1996, p. 161]

Ces deux phrases s'appliquent à Bernard lui-même. Tous ont pu le constater à plusieurs reprises, et moi en particulier, notamment lors de réunions du département au cours desquelles lui et moi proposions aux collègues des orientations nouvelles. Il manifestait parfois une certaine détermination face aux réticences ou réserves de ceux qui préféraient la routine aux innovations, une hardiesse qui ne l'empêchait toutefois aucunement de se consacrer entièrement et avec dévouement à une collégialité qu'il aurait parfois espérée plus dynamique. Une collégialité qu'il prit l'initiative de promouvoir et d'en maintenir l'élan au moyen de ces rencontres informelles qu'il avait mises en œuvre lors des « midis du département » dans la salle du Conseil de la faculté. Là, au cours de ces forums ouverts, nous tous avions l'occasion de traiter librement de ce qui nous tenait à cœur et d'échanger des propos parfois pétulants qui faisaient de ces occasions des moments privilégiés. Bernard fit évoluer la formule. Nos rencontres devinrent des séminaires en soirée, au cours desquels des invités de l'extérieur – ainsi que nos col-

lègues et nos étudiants des cycles supérieurs – présentaient des travaux en cours que les commentaires des participants aidaient à mieux cibler. Au département lors de ces années privilégiées, grâce aux innovations menées par Arcand, on connut des moments forts dont plusieurs gardent un souvenir nostalgique.

Au niveau académique, le dynamisme de Bernard déborda le cadre du département. De 1989 à 1991, les membres de la CASCA (Canadian Anthropological Society/Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie) apprécièrent grandement la présidence qu'il exerça avec le dévouement et le sens de l'humour qui le caractérisaient. Pendant ces années, nous considérions comme une occasion de réjouissances tout autant que de stimulation les congrès annuels auxquels nous participions avec entrain. Lors de conférences internationales, Bernard, spécialiste des Cuiva de l'Amazonie, « chasseurs-cueilleurs » auprès desquels il a fait des terrains approfondis, énonça des critiques et des remises en question de cette appellation qui ébranlèrent l'épistémologie de ses collègues. Je dois aussi signaler les apports de Bernard à l'approche évaluative d'impacts environnementaux sur les communautés amérindiennes, dont, entre autres, celui des grands projets d'Hydro-Québec. Ses vastes connaissances lui permettaient de passer avec une égale compétence des peuples du grand nord et des Amérindiens du Québec aux autochtones de l'Amazonie. En témoignent : outre les évaluations d'impacts que je viens de mentionner, il faut se remémorer son ouvrage de 1979 avec Sylvie Vincent, *L'Image de l'Amérindien dans les manuels scolaires du Québec*, son film de 1987 sur les Cuiva, *The Last of the Cuiva*, et les données ethnographiques sur ces Amérindiens de l'Amazonie qui court-circuitent pour l'interpréter la pornographie dans le monde moderne (*Le Jaguar et le Tamanoir. Vers le degré zéro de la pornographie*, 1991). Et qui ignorerait les *Lieux communs* par lesquels, avec son ami Serge Bouchard, il nous interpella pendant dix ans à la radio et sous forme de livres (1993-2003), nous apprenant à décaper la vie quotidienne.

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Bernard avait de la suite dans les idées et les explorait, où que cela le conduisît. En cela, il était profondément humain car on peut dire de lui ce que Lévi-Strauss – qu'il enseignait évidemment dans le cours sur le structuralisme – écrivait dans une de ses toutes dernières publications (il avait alors 96 ans) :

> Toujours et partout, depuis que l'humanité existe, 'suivre son idée' fut une des plus constantes occupations de l'homme. Cet exercice lui procure une satisfaction, il y trouve un intérêt intrinsèque, et il ne se

pose pas la question de savoir où cette exploration le conduira. Il est de fait [...] que l'exploration des puissances de l'esprit conduit toujours quelque part, même si plusieurs siècles ou millénaires s'écoulent avant qu'on découvre de quel niveau longtemps caché du monde réel, des idées d'allure fantastique n'étaient que le reflet. [« Pensée mythique et pensée scientifique », *Lévi-Strauss*, Paris : L'Herne, p. 41-42, 2004]

<center>*</center>

Implicitement en consonance avec ce que nos collègues français du groupe Érasme ont appelé la socio-cosmologie, Bernard, aidé par les siens à remonter dans son bureau pour y faire un dernier passage, a pu mourir en paix.

<div align="center">

*Le don de vie a passé dans les fleurs*
(Paul Valéry, *Le Cimetière marin*).

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## Bernard Arcand, Anthropologist as Engaged Outsider

Harvey A. Feit    *McMaster University*

I encountered Bernard Arcand occasionally but our exchanges were often memorable, as well as puzzling, amusing and enriching for me. Unfortunately, I never found the opportunities to get to know Bernard well.

The earliest substantial encounter with Bernard that I recall was when he served as a member of my Ph.D. oral defence committee. My 1978 dissertation was exceptionally long despite the urgings of my supervisor who warned me of the reception that its length would provoke among colleagues. Nevertheless, it somehow came as a surprise to me during the oral defence questioning, as I looked out the window at Mont Royal and sought to stay calm, that the examiners around the table had not actually read the thesis, just the introduction and conclusion.

As I relaxed, Bernard created another surprise for me. He asked a couple of fascinating questions about comparisons of Cree to other hunter-gatherers that depended on material buried in the central chapters of the thesis about hunting and social life. I did not have clear answers, but because the questions were so felicitously phrased, and they were asked with a twinkle in his eyes, they invited a discussion rather than a mental block. After the defence was over, and most of the examining committee members had departed, Bernard stayed to continue to discuss, to share more of his insights and to invite me to think and share more than I had been able to say on the spot. His engagement exemplified and affirmed that this

was a scholarly event and not just an administrative exercise.

It puzzled me for a long time after why Bernard did read the dissertation through, as it was very different in substance and style from his obvious gifts in analysis and writing. I puzzled enough that I got him to confirm that he had read it through. Over time however I came to see how Bernard repeatedly engaged ideas and issues in settings which were far from his obvious interests and I came to appreciate the exploratory intellect he brought to the world and to his colleagues. This was clearly one of the foundations of the diversity of his work. It certainly made my academic rite-de-passage a memorable and rewarding experience.

In the following decade Bernard and I were in touch through his involvement in northern Québec, including his appointment to a regional environmental committee. I do not recall that we ever sat in the same meetings, but when we did meet, we sometimes talked about and compared the environmental policy-making in the James Bay Cree and Northern Quebec Inuit regions. And I met other people involved in these regions who talked about Bernard's involvement.

In these encounters, Bernard and I had a moderate but palpable discomfort with each other. I would discuss from the perspective of a particular form of engaged anthropology, Bernard would reply from what I saw as a less engaged position that I found hard to locate, and which left me with a distinct disquiet. I am not sure I ever understood his engagement fully, but I came to appreciate many aspects of it.

In his presentation to a 1984 conference held in Kuujjuaq on environment, development and Kativik (the regional government in the Inuit areas), Bernard noted that he was the only member of his conference panel who was not immediately involved in development projects, and therefore he would try to present "a short overview of the situation seen from the outside" (Arcand 1985:244). This outsider positioning was reflected in his official involvement in the environment committee, as Bernard occupied an appointment on the committee that required the support of both Inuit and Quebec appointed committee members. It was an appointment that rather few individuals could fill. So I appreciated his honesty about taking up positions of marginality and his explorations of the roles this made it possible for him to undertake.

From the encounters we had and the stories I heard, I built up a sense and an appreciation of the effects that I think his work had in these settings, although I did not know him well enough to know if this interpretation would have overlapped with his own. I think he could speak in

ways that allowed him to expose the historical and the contingent in what others often presented as realistic, narrowly framed, and inflexible approaches to the business of such committees and of policy decision making. Given the inequalities of the situation, my sense was that his standing back to offer wider views, contingent conditions, and even playfulness and humour, which Bernard used so effectively, had effects that were not neutral but political and that he could play a very important role at critical junctures in opening situations and people to new dialogues.

The talk he gave at the environment and development conference in 1984 seems to exemplify this. He focused on misunderstandings between Inuit and governments and developers, and particularly the different ways that they identify and respond to "impacts," comparing indigenous views of life as an interconnected whole with modern views that culture is knowable only because it has distinct domains that can be understood with specific techniques (Arcand 1985). He highlighted Hydro-Québec's focus on largely economic impacts, quantification, and its insistence that you cannot "compare apples and oranges." Bernard linked the history of the separating of domains of life and culture to the 19th century creation of industrial production and of industrial workers, whose lives and milieu were divided into domains whereby only the narrowly economic aspects of their lives were relevant to their lives as employees. As the rapporteur of the conference wrote, Bernard then concluded, "If one cannot compare oranges to apples in arithmetic, they can, without doubt, be compared when one is hungry or if one likes fruit salad" (Morissette 1985:52).

Bernard's work and engagement made alternatives visible to participants in unexpected ways. It also gave me insights into a different form of engagement than my own, one that I could draw on to help my own work and my sanity in the midst of relentless and very specific assertions about which visions and practices were realistic and effective.

One of my last memories of encounters with Bernard was his visit to McMaster University a number of years ago to offer a departmental seminar and then to talk informally to a senior undergraduate class I taught that year on applying anthropology. His talk clearly influenced the ideas and probably the lives of a good number of that group of final year undergraduates struggling to imagine their futures. Bernard talked to them about his field research and writing, his book on pornography, his work as a consultant, and his media experience. They were fascinated, flocked to beers with him at the local pub after

the class, and talked about his visit throughout the remaining classes of the term. The course was different after his visit; the mood shifted perceptibly from angst to what I took to be a more confident commitment to explore possibilities.

Reflecting on his impact I think that for many members of the class he was a scholar whose work and life embodied what had drawn them to anthropology in the first place. His was a vision of anthropology and of its promise that, for many, their four years in the majors program seemed never to fulfill. I think they left the university more confident that they could find a way to do what they wanted, more appreciative of the value of what anthropology could make possible. It was clear to me that they thought that what Bernard had taught them in that seminar class was important as they figured out what specifically they wanted to do and how they wanted to engage with the world. I think they rediscovered that original vision of an anthropology that was engaged in issues that were vital to others in society, which was grounded in everyday life "at home" as well as in far away places, that was implicated in philosophical debates, and that could have effects because anthropologists could effectively communicate what they learned to wider publics. Bernard showed them how some of those visions could be fulfilled.

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## Adieu Bernard Arcand, salut l'ami

Mikhaël Elbaz    *Université Laval*

*Au séjour supérieur, nul invité, nul partage : l'urne fondamentale. L'éclair trace le présent, en balafre le jardin, poursuit, sans assaillir, son extension, ne cessera de paraître comme d'avoir été.*

*Les favorisés de l'instant n'ont pas vécu comme nous avons osé vivre, sans crainte du voilement de notre imagination, par tendresse d'imagination.*
                                        —René Char (1971:377)

Il n'est pas aisé d'écrire à la mort. Elle reste « sans réponse », nous dit Emmanuel Levinas, un scandale, la possibilité de l'impossible s'il en est, devant lequel nous sommes convoqués pour témoigner de notre désolation et de notre affection devant la singularité absolue et unique de l'ami que nous venons de perdre de vue. Comment dès lors parler « de lui » sans se l'approprier? Nous savons depuis des temps immémoriaux que rien ne console de la mort. On n'apprend guère à « mourir » en dépit de la déclaration intempestive de Georges Bataille : « Nous mourrons tous incessamment », lors de la Seconde Guerre mondiale (1973:155).

Rien ne peut donc conjurer son absence infinie, même s'il est et demeurera le destinataire de cet obituaire que d'autres qui l'ont connu, apprécié et admiré liront peut-être. Pourtant, il n'a cessé d'apparaître dans mes rêves éveillés, de se « présentifier » devant moi, comme nous disions dans mon enfance, en judéo-arabe : *hdar*, quand un être disparu disait « me voici ».

Je ne me hasarderai pas à évoquer si peu que ce soit son travail considérable dans des horizons si variés, même à grands traits, à la fois faute d'espace et parce que je ne peux prétendre à une connaissance adjugée de l'œuvre. Je procéderai par allusions rétrospectives, sous forme de fragments, pour dire notre collégialité puis notre amitié durant trois décennies. Ce sont des réminiscences d'une présence lumineuse marquée de générosité, de respect, d'humour qui ne cédait en rien à la lucidité, animée par le désir de savoir et de transmettre dans la joie

> *C'est que la nuit tombe et que les barbares ne sont pas arrivés. Certains, même, de retour des frontières, assurent qu'il n'y a plus de barbares, Et maintenant qu'allons-nous devenir, sans barbares. Ces gens-là, en un sens, apportaient une solution.*
> —*Constantin Cavafis (2003:45)*

Nous avons été engagés en tant que professeurs en 1976 par le département d'anthropologie de l'Université Laval. Nous nous trouvions alors en pleine aventure du structuralisme. Bernard avait fait la découverte initiatique des Cuiva et du solfège de l'esprit pratiqué par Lévi-Strauss. J'étais sous l'emprise du marxisme occidental, de l'École de Francfort et celle d'Althusser. Je tentais de déchiffrer la béance introduite par le nazisme dans l'expérience et le langage, la raison du sensible et la modernité. Il y avait plus d'analogies à la doxa structurale que ne voulaient bien le reconnaître marxistes et lévi-straussiens. La *disputatio* fusait non sans conséquences sur l'ordre du discours. Pour Bernard, une science des formations sociales ou de l'émergence des inégalités sociales et de l'État était tout au plus une rhétorique spéculative que ne pouvait corroborer

l'étude attentive des ontologies de diverses sociétés, dont celle des chasseurs-cueilleurs, par exemple. Le courant althussérien (Godelier, Meillassoux, Rey, Terray, etc.) était tout aussi déterminé à dégager des lois sinon des modèles qui avaient une cohérence structurale, en examinant notamment les rapports de production ou la monnaie de sel, les ordres et les castes, l'esclavage et la guerre, le mode de production « domestique » et la division sexuelle du travail.

Les deux courants étaient enclins à une formalisation du savoir anthropologique en redoublant la dialectique nature-culture par celle entre l'idéel et le matériel, la sémiotique et le politique, la théorie et la pratique. Les objets ne manquaient pas : les mythes et les rites, la parenté et le langage, le chamanisme et le rêve ... Cependant, admettre les invariants de l'esprit humain laissait dans la pénombre les régimes d'historicité auxquels l'on s'adressait et parfois la pertinence du structuralisme (et du marxisme structural) qui surplombait l'épreuve du terrain. La confusion entre la réalité et le réel discernée par Lacan (2001:225) ne nous subjuguait guère, du moins pour ceux qui l'avaient lu, et ils n'étaient pas légion.

Si l'histoire était comme nous le prétendions un procès sans sujet ni fin, des mots et des choses que nous devions penser et classer, comment nous est-il possible d'aborder l'événement, l'archive, la carte postale jaunie des ancêtres, la difficulté de dire le monde? L'anthropologie que nous pratiquions n'était pas à l'abri de ces enjeux, en parlant d'autrui, en le représentant, en déchiffrant des catégories de la pratique et des actes de langage. Les cadres même de notre enquête surdéterminaient les voix entendues, le silence des pierres, la place de l'autre dans les témoignages et la réflexivité de nos interprétations.

Ces discussions touchaient à la construction du savoir anthropologique et à la place accordée aux « Autres », proches ou lointains (M. Augé; C. Lévi-Strauss). Elles reposaient la question du statut de la subjectivité, des textes et de leur interprétation (H. Fischer; P. Rabinow) et signalaient subrepticement une réflexion à nouveaux frais sur la modernité et la colonialité (T. Asad; J. Copans; F. Dussel; W. Mignolo), la faillabilité de l'appareil critique défendu (le débat Obeyesekere/Sahlins), la possibilité d'une anthropologie de la mondialité (A. Appadurai; J. Clifford). Nous prenions enfin la mesure de l'interminable effondrement des métaphysiques auxquelles nous nous cramponnions encore, malgré la désolation et les ruines qui se dressaient devant nous. Bernard en avait saisi des dimensions essentielles (quand nous parlions de la décivilisation de Jaulin) en analysant (avec Sylvie Vincent) la prodigieuse désorientation des Amérindiens, alors même que nous les représentions comme des restes de l'image hantée d'une hantise.

Je n'évoque pas sans crainte la question autochtone, moi qui vient « d'ailleurs » et n'y connais rien. Je ne m'y associe que pour des raisons obscures, les mêmes qui m'ont poussé à me défamiliariser avec le monde où je suis né pour me consacrer au destin des immigrés et des réfugiés, de tous ceux dont le temps est discontinu et dont les paroles sont orphelines. L'épisode structural et ses apories se sont soldés par une complicité entre nous, intense sur l'essentiel, en dépit des vicissitudes que toute vie universitaire peut comporter. Dans les débats publics, lors de conférences et de colloques, Bernard avait sa façon de réfléchir à voix haute, parfois à contre-pied, au point où d'aucuns le jugeaient iconoclaste alors qu'il lui arrivait de s'en prendre à ce qui lui semblait hâtif ou indécidable à la lumière des trésors accumulés par l'anthropologie. Il pratiquait le paradoxe tout en sauvegardant la politesse qui n'était pas pour lui un simple rituel académique, mais la vie.

Notre dialogue sera plus constant quand je devins rédacteur de la revue *Anthropologie et Sociétés* et, suite à une réallocation des bureaux à la fin des années 1980, nous nous sommes « choisis » afin de partager un vaste espace qui servait naguère de laboratoire, pour y aménager un salon et des bureaux. En dépit du scepticisme qui pointait désormais envers les grands maîtres de la modernité (Marx, Freud, Lévi-Strauss), nous avions toujours plaisir à les lire car ils écrivaient magnifiquement. Ces penseurs ont aimé, chacun à sa manière, la littérature, la musique ou encore l'archéologie. Ils étaient des « Juifs de savoir » qui ont vécu une lutte intense pour se dépouiller de leur altérité sans effacer une longue pratique du commentaire et de l'interprétation[1]. En rejoignant la quête d'un savoir universaliste ou universalisable, ils épousaient la prétention du christianisme sécularisé de comprendre la modernité. Nous restions, l'un comme l'autre, des lecteurs fidèles/infidèles de leurs œuvres qui revenaient par ellipses nourrir la réflexion (le statut du fétiche chez Marx et chez Freud; la mélancolie et le travail du deuil sur lesquels Bernard travaillait pour les *Lieux communs*; la diversité et l'unité du genre humain chez Lévi-Strauss).

*And I'm neither left nor right*
*I'm just staying home tonight*
*getting lost in that hopeless little screen.*
　　　　　—Leonard Cohen, « Democracy »

*Une société qui invente le jardin zoologique est une société prête pour la télévision. Dès qu'on pense qu'il est intéressant de regarder des animaux hors de leur contexte naturel, il devient possible de contempler le monde entier depuis son salon*
　　　　　—Bernard Arcand

Bernard Arcand envisageait le monde contemporain dans ses temporalités enchevêtrées. Il savait d'expérience que l'époque que nous vivions était marquée par une profonde confusion du jugement et un désenchantement du croyable. Il persistait à croire que le récit anthropologique avait pour vocation de dévoiler le sens que nos semblables ou les autres confèrent à leurs conduites. Le travail de l'ethnologue visait moins à faire l'éloge de l'altérité qu'à la réduire en montrant que la différence est bonne à penser comme à transiger.

Tel le flâneur baudelairien, Arcand s'est mis à l'écoute et à l'observation des récits et des pratiques de la vie quotidienne de sa propre société (souvent avec son ami, Serge Bouchard). L'écriture des *Lieux communs* était pour lui un véritable travail d'érudition (dont je peux témoigner) qui ne se démentait pas et dont on perçoit la marque et la trace dans nombre d'aphorismes qu'il nous a légués. Il questionna les objets, des plus anodins aux plus savants : le sexe et la mort, le gaspillage et le gazon, l'hiver et le baseball, le vieillissement et la platitude, la bonté et la médiocrité, le western et le country.

Il touchait à tout sans être un touche-à-tout. La distinction s'impose ici, comme le fit un jour le grand philosophe Isaiah Berlin entre deux figures de l'intellectuel : le hérisson et le renard. Le premier est plutôt monomaniaque et tend à tout rapprocher d'un seul système, tandis que le second – le renard – épouse plusieurs horizons qui ne se croisent guère voire même s'opposent. Bernard avait le sens de la ruse du renard en disant qu'il n'y a jamais eu de sociétés de chasseurs-cueilleurs ou encore, que la catégorie de la vieillesse est insignifiante là où l'on vénère les ancêtres et l'on fait l'éloge de la lenteur. Pour lui, une part de la difficulté ressentie par nos concitoyens résidait dans la solitude et l'ennui, conséquences évidentes de l'accélération du temps et du rétrécissement de l'espace. En effet, avec la dissipation des sociétés d'interconnaissance, où le sens de la vie allait de soi, transparait une époque faite d'incertitudes et d'exigences « surmoïques » de jouissance.

Son livre sur la pornographie demeure une analyse lucide et prémonitoire de la société démocratique spectaculaire avec ses enchaînements récents avec la « mort exhibée sous la terreur », les reality shows, le *speed dating*, le surf des images et la compulsion de géolocalisation des êtres et des choses. Pour lui, la pornographie révélait l'individualisme moderne dans sa volonté de voir jusqu'à l'épuisement un nombre fini de situations pour constater que, derrière les images, il y avait une mélancolie, un vide indéménageable. Comment être à la fois Jaguar et Tamanoir, s'interrogeait-il, pour conclure que le dilemme vécu par les Sherente se posait à nous avec plus

d'acuité. Il réitérait, avec Legendre, que nous ne sommes pas une surhumanité : il nous fallait apprendre à vivre et assumer notre mortalité.

La surexposition du sexe promue par la pornographie ne va pas sans l'occultation de la mort, disait-il, suivant en cela Ariès, Bataille, Baudrillard et Foucault. Sans doute, l'œil devient un sexe et ces excès d'images voilent la vision et le destin des images. Sur ces enjeux cruciaux, Walter Benjamin (2003) a noté, au début du dernier siècle, que la découverte de la photographie avait inscrit dans ce qu'elle dévoilait la disparition de l'énigme, de l'implicite.

Il y aurait lieu d'ajouter que l'érotisation de tous les objets de consommation – inaugurée en 1929 avec la naissance de la « pin-up » – allait fournir au capitalisme sa figure quelque peu sadienne et sa capacité d'étendre les impératifs de jouissance. Bernard entrevoyait l'efficace des simulacres. Aurait-il fait sienne la provocation de Lacan quand il définissait la jouissance comme ce qui ne sert à rien? Sans doute. « Bien sûr », aurait-il fait mine d'acquiescer en nuançant ça et là.

Bernard s'est aussi penché sur la stéréotypie et la saturation des images dans le tourisme. Il était surpris de notre désir d'aller au loin pour se retrouver « chez soi » ou « avec les siens », immortalisant des photos d'un trajet déjà pré-disposé : « Heureux le touriste, disait-il, qui a tout vu avant l'arrivée des touristes ». En effet, la mise en spectacle du monde (« devenir image » du capital comme son « devenir monde ») était dès son ascension, consubstantielle au fétichisme de la marchandise que manifestait la première Exposition Universelle à Londres, en 1851 – et sans doute, celle de Pékin en 2010. Je n'ai pas eu la chance de discuter avec lui de ce que furent les fêtes du 400ième anniversaire de la ville de Québec auxquelles il fut associé. J'essaie parfois de simuler ce que, de part et d'autre, nous dirions de cette célébration des lieux de mémoire en place des milieux de mémoire, de la quête de pays qui s'énonce sans s'annoncer.

Au tournant des années 1980, nous cherchions à repenser le cours de la modernité et à en déchiffrer les figures – solide ou liquide. Bernard n'était pas sensible aux diverses définitions de la modernité et de ses antonymes. Ce qui primait était le quotidien sous toutes ses parures. Pour lui, ce qu'on accolait à la postmodernité : la citation, le bricolage des traditions, le jeu sur les codes populaires, l'hybridité, le pastiche, le décentrement du sujet ne signalaient rien de radicalement nouveau si ce n'est des variations d'un répertoire déjà éprouvé. Les théoriciens du soupçon le laissaient tiède (Derrida, Foucault, Said, etc.). Il se référait, avec une satisfaction évidente, à la parodie qu'en avait fait Sahlins (2002). À d'autres moments, il était plus grave alors que nous nous préparions pour la Vième Conférence internationale sur le sida en ayant à l'esprit le magnifique travail de Mary Douglas sur la pureté et la souillure, le risque et le blâme[2]. Nous avions en commun l'amour des livres et du Livre. Il m'interpellait à partir des leçons de l'Ecclésiaste quand advint l'inouï, la catastrophe : le 11 septembre 2001. Revenant de mon séminaire de doctorat, je fus sidéré d'entendre ma compagne et lui me décrire l'incalculable pendant que je mesurais, non sans stupeur, la guerre des fictions qui était désormais relancée entre l'Occident et l'islam radical.

Son style détonnait face à la posture « rangée » ou « affairée » des universitaires. Il a plus que tout autre fait de l'anthropologie au Québec un récit à la fois ludique et critique, respectueux des gens ordinaires que nous sommes tous. Il ne fut pas toujours compris, notamment par quelques esprits chagrins, au moment où il publia *Abolissons l'hiver*. Il y offrait pourtant un imaginaire d'une autre manière de vivre, même si cela pouvait apparaître une utopie ou une uchronie. De tels « esprits sérieux » semblent oublier ou méconnaître qu'une présence médiatique originale fut aussi celle de C. Lévi-Strauss. Il signa de nombreuses chroniques dans *La Reppublica* des années 1990, discernant ce que l'anthropologie pouvait nous apprendre lors de la crise de la vache folle ou à l'occasion des funérailles de Lady Diana et du rôle oublié sous nos latitudes de l'oncle maternel, lorsque le frère de Diana s'adressa aux orphelins.

*Il y a dans le livre une attente qui ne cherche pas à aboutir.*
*Lire, c'est errer. La lecture est errance.*
     —*Pascal Quignard (2002:50)*

Bernard prenait un soin particulier à travailler la langue, dans ses écrits et ses enseignements. Il récusait cette vulgate qui avait cours « d'exprimer ses opinions » sans mesurer les conséquences de la pensée faible. Il avait un plaisir évident à transmettre et susciter l'étonnement sinon de nouvelles vocations. En tant que professeurs, nous avions à témoigner d'une foi dans le savoir en sachant la difficulté d'une telle vocation, qui implique de la rigueur, de la morale et certainement pas le rabâchage. Il s'évertuait à débusquer les poncifs tels qu'ethnocentrisme, relativisme, identité, sans compter ce qu'allait devenir le maître-mot : le constructivisme.

Revenant en 2002 d'une année sabbatique à Berkeley, on lui assigna un séminaire de maîtrise sur l'identité, dans un élan d'autorité qui s'enfermait dans l'esprit gestionnaire. En dépit du désarroi de constater que ses talents n'étaient guère reconnus là où il excellait – et ce

ne pouvait être l'identité – il eut l'élégance de faire le tour d'un thème surchargé et raturé. Suivant en cela le séminaire de C. Lévi-Strauss sur l'identité, il démonta tout ce que les autres disciplines pouvaient en dire et l'impertinence à vouloir en faire un débat anthropologique. Avec la déconstruction qu'il opéra, il mit en relief des questions pertinentes pour moi qui avait investi ce thème comme trouble de l'appartenance dans la modernité. En quoi donc consiste l'identité et de quoi est-elle faite? Il répondait, à l'instar de F. Barth, que l'identité ne pouvait être un ensemble de traits repérables et évidents, comme le font de manière un peu lapidaire les États quand ils tentent de conjoindre appartenance et identité, ethnies et nation, souche et rameaux. L'identité est plutôt une médiation faite d'interlocution et de surdité entre voisins et adversaires. Reconnaissons-le, la notion est floue et n'implique ni la clôture ni la plasticité infinie. C'est donc dire que l'idée chère aux jeux postmodernes d'une réinvention constante de soi méritait d'être nuancée. Il y a en effet trop de souffrances vécues par les sujets pour n'y voir qu'une réalité autopoétique. Il fallait aussi ne pas confondre identité et identification, la seconde catégorie étant, hier comme aujourd'hui, un acte de police, de surveillance voire de tatouage. L'indétermination où nous sommes accélère les passions et les pulsions identitaires à mesure que « l'homme sans attaches » se substitue à « l'homme sans qualités » de R. Musil.

Bauman qui est un esprit lucide explique pourquoi nous vivons avec malaise les « tourments de l'ambivalence » (2010:95) en oscillant entre retrait et présence au monde, authenticité et superficialité, la durée de l'éphémère, la liberté et la sécurité dans l'univers enchanté des réseaux, du cosmopolitisme banalisé par la mondialisation marchande. J'avais écouté, ravi, mon collègue interroger les certitudes de plomb et relancer la discussion lors d'une conférence publique où je l'avais invité dans son département.

Cette péripétie était symptomale de la crise du savoir qui frappait les sciences humaines et sociales à « l'ère de l'économie du progrès et de l'excellence » dont se gaussaient les gouvernants et les dirigeants des universités, légitimant ainsi leur « règne et leur gloire »[3]. Ces mots valise de « progrès » et « d'excellence », « d'éthique » et de « gouvernance » sont en train de parachever la dissociation entre recherche et enseignement, créativité et maïeutique. L'expansion des groupes et chaires de recherches promus par « L'Empire du Management »[4] tend moins à faire avancer la pensée critique qu'à soumettre religieusement les universitaires à l'utilitarisme ambiant là même où ils dénoncent ce qui les régit de part en part.

Mille signes sont là pour en dresser l'inventaire, comme l'ont fait de manière décisive Derrida (2001), Readings (1996) et Waters (2008).

Face à tant de désarroi et parfois d'impostures, nous eûmes recours à la dérision en commandant au service des bâtiments de l'université une plaque au sigle GRIP par lequel nous venions d'instituer le Groupe de Recherche en Illusions Perdues. Nous voulions provoquer nos collègues, rebattre les cartes sur l'inflation des mots et des réseaux, alors que paradoxalement le débat s'anémiait et l'auto-censure enflait. Plusieurs furent agacés par notre désinvolture alors que d'autres voulaient comprendre ce qui se cachait sous ce signe qui n'avait rien de kabbalistique (nous disions aussi que ce pouvait être le Groupe de Recherche sur l'Identité et la Pornographie).

Tel est le destin des signes et des identifications. Pour l'un comme pour l'autre, le champ intellectuel devait rester un espace de veille et d'éveil plutôt qu'un lieu où une compulsion de productivité insensée produisait là comme ailleurs la saturation. J'ai parfois envie de re-citer le peu de langage possible, sinon l'interdit logique dont parlait Wittgenstein, « Ce dont on ne peut parler, il faut le taire », dans les termes suivants : « On ne doit écrire que si on dit quelque chose de nouveau ». Voilà qui apparaîtra atrocement élitiste alors qu'il s'agit de retrouver une adéquation entre l'esprit et les choses, de résister à l'anti-enseignement promu par Internet Inc, qui a fini par devenir le salaire de l'idéal, en place et lieu d'une philosophie de l'éducation. Foucault, qui avait le souci du savoir, écrivait que « le rôle d'un intellectuel est de ruiner les évidences, de dissiper les familiarités admises, il n'est pas de modeler la volonté politique des autres, de leur dire ce qu'ils ont à faire. De quel droit le ferait-il? » (Foucault 1994:676).

La réflexion critique était pour Bernard l'un des moyens d'accéder à plus de créativité et de liberté. C'est la mélancolie profonde et inaltérable de toute vie qui rend possible la connaissance, m'arrivait-il de lui rétorquer, citant Schelling, alors que germait l'option de remettre le tablier et d'errer pour ne pas se complaire dans l'erreur. Il faut savoir partir quand le « désert du réel » se substitue à l'aspiration d'être et de pousser les autres vers le bien, sinon le meilleur[5]. Il prit une retraite anticipée en 2005 et me dessilla suffisamment les yeux pour que je le suive six mois plus tard. Il m'avait imploré « d'abandonner les fausses arènes et les faux combats » et je lui resterai infiniment reconnaissant pour ma liberté retrouvée. Il y avait en effet d'autres chemins pour ne pas renoncer à sa propre voix et pour ne plus être dans la contre-voie.

*Chaque battement du cœur est ponctuelle réponse de la mort à la question angoissée du cœur et réponse évasive de la vie à l'énigmatique question de la mort.*
*—Edmond Jabès (1989)*

J'ai encore un souvenir que je ne peux évoquer sans une profonde tristesse. Il y a plus de dix ans, j'avais été touché en plein cœur, qu'on m'avait ouvert et retouché sans fin en l'absence de greffe. Revenant au GRIP, angoissé par ce qui étaient ma survie, mon sursis et ma chance, il me reçut avec une bienveillance attentive, me réconforta en insistant qu'il n'était pas écrit que de nous deux, je partirai le premier. Je m'en étais étonné sur le moment. J'ai été profondément bouleversé quand sa disparition confirma cette vieille règle qui régit toute amitié : de deux amis, l'un mourra avant l'autre.

Le dialogue s'est interrompu alors que j'aurais souhaité discuter avec lui du désespoir politique où nous sommes plongés, de l'illimitation du marché, du legs envers les générations (il me disait que tout comme toujours allait se jouer là), des lumières de vie et de survie auxquelles nous devons tenir malgré l'incomplétude et l'effacement de l'avenir. Je revois son visage, son aura, son style et sa manière de rester infiniment secret. Je sais désormais que je suis un peu plus seul maintenant.

Je clos ce témoignage par un aphorisme de Rabbi Nahman de Braslav, dans la langue hébraïque par laquelle j'ai appris à prier quand j'étais enfant : « *Ein Zikaron Ela Lealma Diatei* » qui se traduit par « il n'y a de mémoire que dans le monde qui vient ». Ce qui veut encore dire : Souviens-toi de ton futur. L'injonction est de sauvegarder la mémoire, la sienne, et celle qu'il nous laisse en héritage.

Salut l'ami, Adieu Bernard Arcand.

## Notes

1   L'expression « les Juifs de savoir » est longuement explicitée par l'ouvrage de Jean-Claude Milner (2006). Nous avons eu de longues discussions sur les dimensions psychosociales qui ont poussé Freud, Marx, Lévi-Strauss pour substituer le quelconque à l'universel et inversement. Voir ce qu'en dit John Murray Cuddihy (1987).

2   On retrouvera sa contribution et la mienne (avec Ruth Murbach), inspirée notamment par Douglas dans Klusacek et Morrison (1992).

3   Expression empruntée à Giorgio Agamben.

4   Voir le livre décapant de Pierre Legendre (2007). Il s'agit aussi d'un film.

5   Expression empruntée à Slavoj Zizek.

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# Peter Carstens (1929-2010)

Stanley R. Barrett   *University of Guelph*

For almost half a century as a tenured faculty member and later as Professor Emeritus, Peter Carstens graced the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto and played a prominent role in the development of the discipline in Canada. He was born in 1929 in Cape Town, and raised in Kleinzee, a diamond mining community bordering the Atlantic Ocean on the west coast of South Africa in a territory known as Namaqualand. In 1952 he completed a B.A. in social anthropology at Rhodes University, and a year later a B.A. in sociology. In 1961 he received his Ph.D. in social anthropology from the University of Cape Town.

From 1956 to 1964 he was a lecturer at the School of African Studies at Cape Town. He spent the 1962-3 academic year at the University of British Columbia after Harry Hawthorn, with whom he had been in communication about Indian reserves, arranged for him to be granted a Kroener Foundation Fellowship. During 1964-65 he was a visiting professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where his deep understanding of Marx, Weber and Durkheim had an influence on Lenski's monumental theoretical work, *Power and Privilege* (1966). In 1965 he emigrated to Canada to take up a position at the University of Toronto as an associate professor; four years later he was promoted to professor. He retired and was appointed Professor Emeritus in 1995.

Over the course of his career, Peter completed three original, long-term ethnographic projects. From 1952 to 1962 he focused on the social organization of the reserve system among the Nama, who inhabited the region of his birthplace. This research became the basis of his Ph.D. dissertation and his first book, *The Social Structure of a Cape Coloured Reserve* (1966). Years later he commented (personal communication) that he was not certain that he had got the theory side right, but he was confident the data were strong and accurate, and that was what was most important to him.

During his year at the University of British Columbia, he spent four months in a pilot study of nearby reserves. It was not until 1978 that his professional and personal commitments provided an opportunity to return to the project. From 1982 to 1991 he made five more trips to the Okanagan reserves, or a total of seven field visits altogether, ranging from periods of five weeks to five months.

The focus on Canadian reserves was a natural for him, given his previous research in South Africa, but not everyone was pleased with his eventual book, *The Queen's People* (1991), especially the postmodernists. He was criticized for understating the capacity of indigenous people to resist their oppressors and for appropriating their voice. Yet if ever there were a humanistic study of Canada's indigenous population, admirably historical in perspective and fully tuned to the inequities generated by hegemonic domination, *The Queen's People* fits the bill.

Peter was a relentless foe of apartheid. As a young man he regularly contributed pieces to newspapers condemning racism and was hounded by the state's security forces. In 1972, he received a Canada Council Research Grant to embark on a new project in Namibia, but was denied a visa by the South African government. In 1987 and 1990, as apartheid began to crumble, he was finally able to return to his natal country. He was surprised and pleased to discover that his 1966 book was well known in Namaqualand, and was wryly amused to learn that it was sometimes employed to settle disputes over land and genealogy (personal communication).

In 1992, Peter went back to South Africa to embark on his third major ethnographic project: the diamond mines of Kleinzee. This project was also a natural for him. His own father, a prospector, had been the first person to discover the rich diamond deposits at Kleinzee. Although his father quickly lost control to the powerful De Beers consortium, he became its employee as a mine pit superintendent from 1928 until his retirement in 1956. Before entering university, Peter worked for De Beers as a diamond sorter. Although his formal research in the community lasted 12 months, in a sense he had been engaged in the project for most of his life, and no doubt became his own informant. In 2001 his well-received volume, *In the Company of Diamonds*, was published, followed five years later by *Diamonds Are Dangerous*, a collection of delightful stories about diamond smuggling.

Around the turn of the new millennium, Peter decided to revisit his Nama material. He apparently had always been puzzled by what tradition meant to the Nama. What did they mean by "the old days," or "the old-old days," or even "the old-old-old days?" The initial examination of his well-worn field notes almost led him to abandon the project. The topic was simply too elusive. Then, as he put it, "the muse played a tune," calling on him to embark on a novel methodology, one which reversed the arrow of time. In the final product, *Always Here, Even Tomorrow* (2007), vignettes of everyday life are merged without regard to chronology with letters from Nama individuals, government officials and missionaries, interspersed with Peter's field notes and memories. The last half of the book is absolutely stunning. Peter's friends and mentors in Namaqualand, dismayed at what they judged as his ignorance of their way of life, decided to organize a series of "Symposia in the Veld" for his edification about the old-old-old days and the eternal fusion of past, present and future. Ironically, in view of the criticisms levelled against *The Queen's People*, the final book that Peter wrote represents postmodernism at its best, although he never identified it as such. Only a scholar in possession of superb rapport and ethnographic depth could have pulled off this innovative masterpiece.

Peter was a magnificent but unusual teacher. Often he said little in his graduate seminars, but it only took a tilt of his chin or a delicate sniff of his nostrils to convey his impression of the ongoing discussion. His interests were classical, and his command of both social anthropological and sociological theory was impressive. Indeed, it is regrettable that he never got around to writing his own theory book. He was not one to respond to fads. He was promoting a Marxist perspective in the 1960s, but did not join the bandwagon when it emerged as the reigning orthodoxy a decade later. He was in essence a private man, not easy to get to know. He rarely talked in public about his previous life in South Africa, and his humility prevented him from focusing in the classroom on his own publications. Yet, as a teacher he was unfailingly supportive and compassionate when circumstances demanded it. His scholarly standards were high and inspiring, leaving students with the impression that there was no better place to be than in his classroom, but his standards were also intimidating, and it is an open question whether any of us managed to live up to them.

It is surprising that Peter never became a departmental Chair (certainly invitations to do so came his way), but he always pulled his weight in terms of administrative duties at the University of Toronto. He also served as President of the Canadian Association of Sociology and Anthropology and editor of *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, and sat on the editorial boards of several journals.

His inherent generosity towards other scholars and his editorial skills resulted in two volumes (Carstens 1985 and 1987) on the work of Winifred Hoernlé (1885-1960),

sometimes referred to as "the mother of social anthropology" in South Africa. Hoernlé and Carstens had much in common. Both grew up in mining communities (Hoernlé in Kimberley) and conducted their early field work in Namaqualand. Both were devoted teachers and implacable enemies of apartheid. Neither of them published as much as their talents warranted, although in retirement Peter made up for lost time, producing three more books. Both were influenced by Radcliffe-Brown. Hoernlé had known him when they were students together at Cambridge University, and interacted with him when they later became colleagues in South Africa. Peter told me that he had been taught by Radcliffe-Brown during the latter's waning years (presumably at Rhodes University), and Peter's personal effects include a hand-written letter of reference from Radcliffe-Brown in 1955 strongly supporting his application for the position of lecturer at the University of Cape Town. Although Peter did not hesitate to criticize his illustrious mentor, especially the artificial separation of synchronic and diachronic analysis, his focus on social structure and his advocacy of community studies and the comparative method never wavered.

There have been higher profile and more prolific anthropologists in Canada than Peter Carstens, but arguably none has been a more talented or capable scholar. He died on May 5, 2010, after several months of illness. He is survived by his wife Chantal and by his former wife, Madeleine, and their three children. With his passing, Canadian anthropology is decidedly less than it once was.

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# Les arts d'Afrique dans les musées des beaux-arts : avancée culturelle ou capitulation scientifique?

Recenseur : *Louis Perrois*
*Ethnologue et historien de l'art*

Depuis les années 1980, on constate, un peu partout dans le monde et notamment en Amérique et en Europe, que des musées traditionnellement consacrés aux « beaux-arts » commencent à s'ouvrir aux « arts premiers » non-occidentaux (aux Etats-Unis par exemple, le *Museum of Primitive Art* de New York fut transféré au *Metropolitan Museum of Art* dès 1976). Quant aux musées ethnographiques, souvent associés à des universités, ils se transforment également afin de mettre mieux en lumière le sens des spécimens et artefacts venus d'ailleurs dans la complexité de leurs milieux d'origine. Pourquoi?

## Les arts africains, du Musée de l'Homme au musée du Quai Branly à Paris

En tant qu'ethnologue spécialiste des arts du Gabon, ayant dirigé un musée d'art traditionnel à Libreville, j'ai pu assister à cette évolution en France, entre 1995 et 2006, avec en particulier la lutte épique survenue entre le Musée de l'Homme de Paris (arc-bouté sur son statut de musée scientifique) et le tout nouveau musée du Quai Branly (conçu comme une institution culturelle vouée aux arts exotiques). Ces deux dernières années, j'ai suivi avec intérêt un processus un peu du même ordre au Canada – les polémiques en moins – avec la présentation au Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal (MBAM) des expositions « *Afrique sacrée* » (I et II 2006 et 2008), et l'ouverture de salles spécialisées sur les arts d'Afrique à la Art Gallery of Ontario de Toronto (AGO 2008).

En juin 2006, le MBAM a présenté l'art du continent africain dans une exposition intitulée « *Afrique sacrée I* » comportant un choix d'œuvres de trois collections de Montréal : l'une rassemblée dans une université, le musée de Redpath de l'Université McGill; l'autre constituée dans un musée des beaux-arts, le MBAM de Montréal; la dernière étant une collection d'une compagnie privée, le Cirque du Soleil. Une seconde exposition, en continuité avec la précédente et intitulée « *Afrique sacrée II* », a été présentée en novembre 2008, selon la même association institutionnelle bien que la majorité des prêts ait été issue de la collection du Cirque du Soleil. L'exposition présentait un total de quarante-huit sculptures, masques et objets mis en espace dans une série de galeries destinées à être consacrées à l'art africain de manière permanente.

La galerie d'art d'Ontario (AGO) de Toronto a ouvert sa première salle consacrée à l'art africain en novembre 2008, selon un point de vue résolument esthétique, sans considération pour les critères ethnographiques ou historiques. La présentation inaugurale inclut environ 80 œuvres de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et de l'Afrique centrale, datant pour certaines du XIVe siècle et d'autres du début du XXe siècle, provenant toutes de la collection de Barbara et Murray Frum.

Ma réflexion porte sur l'impact de telles initiatives, d'une part envers le public et, d'autre part, sur l'évolution corrélative de la pratique scientifique des spécialistes concernés.

## Concepts

Le principe de base sous-jacent de ces innovations, telles que les nouvelles salles du MET de New York et le tout nouveau musée du Quai Branly à Paris notamment, est que les arts de tous les peuples du monde – peuples d'Occident et peuples exotiques, peuples du passé et peuples d'aujourd'hui – doivent être considérés comme équivalents au plan culturel. Dans cette perspective, les œuvres sculptées sont analysées comme les « indicateurs » les plus pertinents et les plus spectaculaires pour intéresser le public aux réalités lointaines. Les expressions esthétiques seraient donc les vecteurs médiatiques privilégiés de l'intercompréhension des cultures, ne nécessitant pas une trop forte implication d'ordre académique de la part des publics (en termes de connaissances préalables). L'art n'aurait donc pas besoin de mots pour s'exposer.

Les muséologues partent aussi de l'idée que la découverte des « belles » choses d'ailleurs ou du passé – arts plastiques, danses, musiques, etc. – permet de faire mieux admettre des différences culturelles, pas toujours bien comprises spontanément, par un biais alternatif aux explications écrites, à savoir le recours à la curiosité et la sensibilité des publics.

Mais dans cette démarche, concernant les arts « premiers », on peut penser qu'il y a aussi, inconsciemment (notamment dans les pays ayant eu un empire colonial comme la France ou d'autres qui ont longtemps méprisé leurs minorités comme les Etats-Unis), une certaine dose de mauvaise conscience institutionnelle. Celle-ci aurait poussé, d'abord par provocation (on se souvient de l'expression du critique d'art Félix Fénéon (1920) à propos des « arts nègres » : « *Iront-ils*
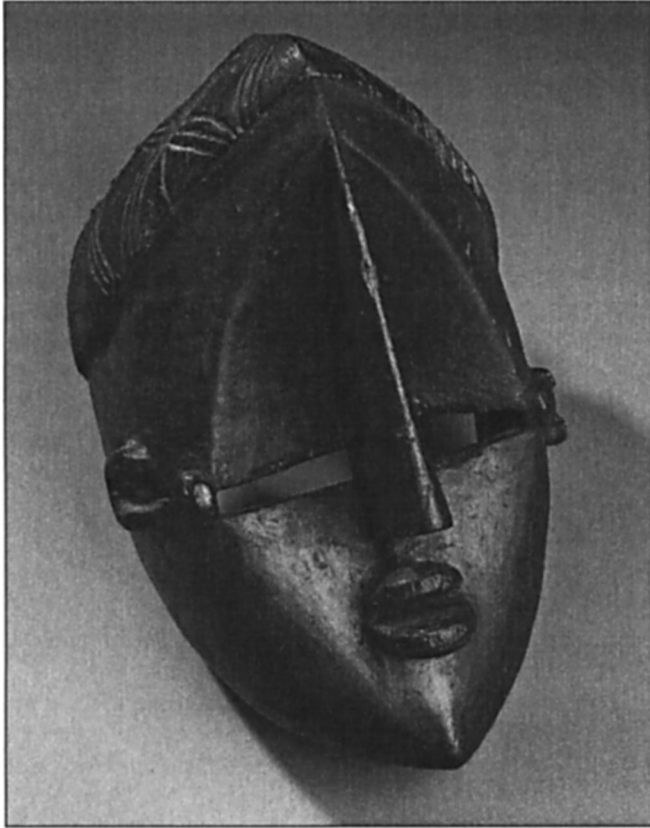
Masque masculin. République démocratique du Congo. Lwalu, début du XXᵉ sciècle. Donation de la Collection Frum, 1999. © 2008 Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario.



© AGO: Dean Tomlinson. Cérémonie de libation dans la Gallerie Frum. Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, novembre 2008.

*au Louvre?* ») puis par un positionnement à la fois moral et politique progressiste, à une « réhabilitation » de ces peuples considérés jadis comme « primitifs » ou « sauvages », et entre-temps devenus indépendants, par l'intermédiaire de leurs créations artistiques. Cette consécration tardive est en quelque sorte un moyen de « réparer » les errements du passé. Le musée du Quai Branly veut faire oublier les expositions coloniales, comme le National Museum of the American Indian de Washington, ouvert en 2004, a souhaité réhabiliter les cultures amérindiennes.

Mais à terme, la mise en exergue des « beaux » objets des terres lointaines – enfin, les objets que nous, les Occidentaux, considérons comme tels -, ne peut-elle pas conduire parfois et paradoxalement, à une vision simpliste ou reconstruite voire carrément réductrice des cultures exotiques, souvent nourrie de malentendus et d'a priori, voire aboutir à des contresens? L'approche « culturelle » serait alors à l'opposé de la démarche scientifique. Telle « belle » statue ou tel « magnifique » masque venus d'Afrique noire, jugés en Occident comme d'un style « épuré et suave » (comme par exemple les statues d'ancêtres ou les masques justiciers des Fang du Gabon ), sont aussi pour les ethnologues qui les ont étudiés in situ, des objets liés à la mort et aux rivalités de pouvoir, des représentations terrifiantes et chargées d'interdits, et non pas simplement des

objets « décoratifs ». Mon expérience de responsable de musée à Libreville m'a montré que les authentiques objets d'art traditionnel font souvent peur en Afrique car le public considère que ces artefacts sont encore trop « chargés » de forces occultes pour être ainsi dévoilés à tous.

La nouvelle offre culturelle consacrée en cette fin du XXᵉ siècle aux arts non-occidentaux, apparemment généreuse et ouverte, ne cacherait-elle pas telle quelle un appauvrissement corrélatif de l'information scientifique les concernant, un renoncement de la démarche anthropologique? N'y aurait-il pas un certain amalgame entre les beaux-arts d'Occident – largement désacralisés ou profanes – et les arts « premiers » – encore chargés de forces spirituelles? Peut-on regarder de la même façon et côte à côte, la « *Joconde* » de Leonardo da Vinci et un *byeri* Fang du Gabon avec sa boîte à crânes?

## Voir ou comprendre?

L'intérêt de la présentation muséographique habituelle des établissements scientifiques voués à l'anthropologie (musées « ethnographiques » et musées « des arts et traditions populaires ») ou même à l'histoire (musées « d'archéologie » ou « d'histoire ») est justement de ne pas se limiter à une mise en espace de caractère impressionniste, ne faisant appel qu'à la sensibilité visuelle des visiteurs. Là, les artefacts, de caractère artistique ou technique, sont toujours accompagnés d'informations circonstanciées permettant aux visiteurs de se faire une idée des contextes et de comprendre les fonctions qui ont été les leurs, à l'époque où ils ont été élaborés et utilisés. Ce qui n'est que rarement le cas dans les musées « d'art » où les « cartels » sont généralement réduits à leur plus simple expression afin ne pas interférer sur l'impact visuel des œuvres elles-mêmes auprès du public.

Il y aurait donc une incompatibilité quasi épistémologique entre ces deux façons de présenter les réalisations non-occidentales : le conservateur de musée d'art voulant avant tout mettre en valeur la spécificité et la « beauté » des items choisis; le conservateur ethnologue ou archéologue considé-

rant qu'il est nécessaire d'expliquer le lien des objets avec leur contexte et leur histoire, au motif qu'un item non référencé reste privé de sens. Le premier veut des cartels aux indications minimalistes, le second des panneaux et des cartes à caractère didactique. D'ailleurs, on constate que l'exercice est plus facile pour l'élaboration des catalogues – qu'il s'agisse de ceux des musées d'art ou de ceux des musées ethnographiques – car il est d'usage pour les uns et les autres de consacrer une partie substantielle aux explications documentaires et une autre aux illustrations pleine-page.

## Les publics d'hier et d'aujourd'hui

Maintenant, qu'en pense le public? Ayant fréquenté assez jeune le Musée de l'Homme de Paris dans les années 1950, puis y ayant fait mes études d'ethnologie, je suis à même d'avoir une idée des attentes du public qu'on y trouvait. Créé en 1937, ce musée était dans les années d'après-guerre un lieu de rêve d'aventure pour des gens qui, majoritairement, ne pouvaient pas voyager : on y découvrait aussi bien les « Eskimos » du Groenland, que les Dogon du Soudan français, les Canaques que les insulaires Polynésiens, sans oublier les hommes préhistoriques, Néandertal et Homo Sapiens, et tant d'autres encore. Les objets présentés – spécimens techniques et objets d'art, tissus et instruments de musique – y étaient tous chargés d'histoire, de culture, de symboles étranges et d'une émouvante ancienneté, parfois d'une saisissante beauté. On y découvrait les civilisations du monde.

Les temps ayant changé comme les attentes du public, l'absence d'une approche un peu plus « esthétique » a été, je crois, le grain de sable qui, dans les années 1960-1970, a enrayé peu à peu le fonctionnement du Musée de l'Homme en l'enfermant dans une conception un peu trop « ethnographique » voire un peu trop « fonctionnaliste ». Ce manque apparemment mineur, mais dûment assumé par certains responsables du musée, a conduit finalement les autorités de tutelle à imaginer un autre lieu, moins « savant » mais plus ouvert sur la « beauté » des items culturels. Il est vrai que les anthropologues « traditionnalistes » étaient habituellement peu portés – du moins en France – à cultiver une sensibilité « artistique » : tout, dans leur pratique professionnelle, les incitait à l'analyse, y compris en termes de musique, de danse ou de sculpture. Je me souviens avoir bataillé, dans les années 1980, pour pouvoir assurer au Musée de l'Homme un encadrement doctoral consacré à « l'anthropologie de l'art », appuyé sur une connaissance directe des collections. Un certain nombre de collègues anthropologues, africanistes notamment, n'admettaient tout simplement pas que cette approche puisse même exister : s'intéresser aux objets rituels sculptés et décorés du point de vue d'une démarche « esthétique » autochtone (activité des sculpteurs, techniques d'élaboration, symbolisme, définition et histoire des styles, etc.) semblait à l'époque relever d'une « hérésie » scientifique et aussi d'une compromission suspecte avec le « monde de l'art », dans la mesure où beaucoup de ces « beaux » objets se trouvaient aussi dans les galeries spécialisées d'art primitif de Paris ou New York. Seules
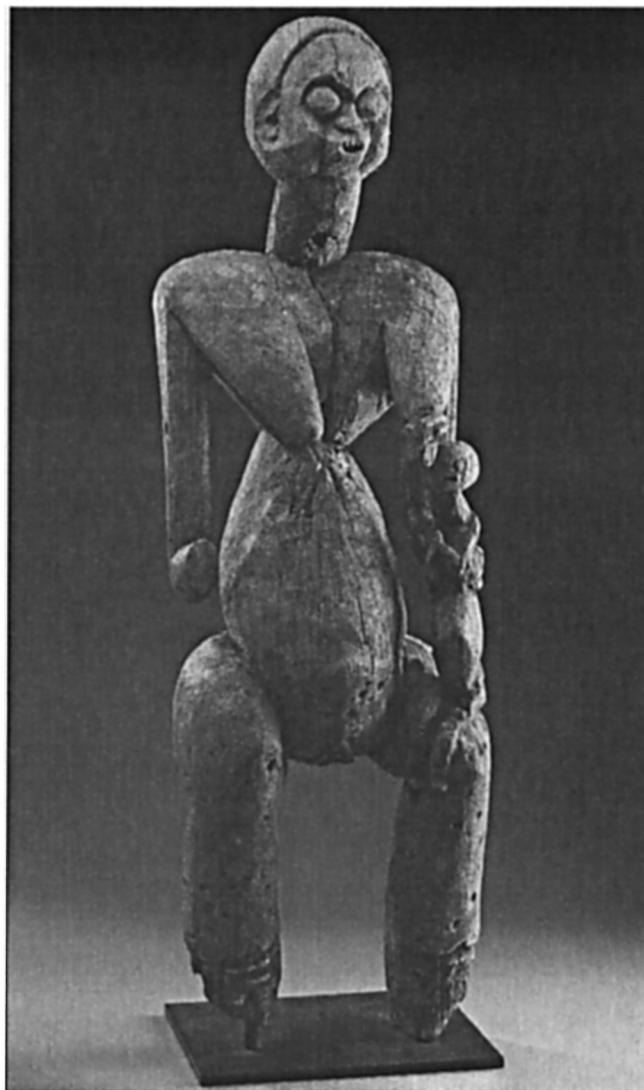


Statuette de la reine Nana avec un enfant. Cameroun, Royaume Batoufam Bangoua, c. 1912-1914. Donation du Dr. Murray Frum, 2004. © 2008 Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario.

exceptions notables à ces censeurs : Jean Laude qui, dans son ouvrage pionnier « *Les arts de l'Afrique Noire* » (Laude1966), a été un des premiers intellectuels français à tisser un lien entre « histoire de l'art » et « ethnologie »; et le tandem Michel Leiris-Jacqueline Delange qui s'est intéressé aux processus de la création en Afrique noire (Leiris et Delange1966). Ce positionnement majoritairement méfiant de la profession anthropologique française à l'égard des « arts non-occidentaux » ou « premiers » conduisit alors le pouvoir politique – avec un Chef de l'Etat lui-même passionné d'arts exotiques – non pas à essayer de la convaincre, mais plus simplement à en contourner la grogne. Et ce en … vidant le Musée de l'Homme de ses œuvres « d'art », apparemment si peu considérées par ceux qui auraient dû aussi les étudier. C'est ainsi que les pouvoirs publics élaborèrent de toute urgence, sous la pression périphérique de quelques personnalités du « monde des

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arts » – conservateurs « d'art » mais aussi galeristes –, un établissement qui leur serait consacré. Les arts « primitifs » iraient enfin « au Louvre », débarrassés de leur gangue documentaire et libérés de la tutelle des ethnologues !

## La fin des « explorateurs » : la *transition culturelle*

Et aujourd'hui? Le public du musée du Quai Branly de 2009 n'est plus celui de l'ancien musée de l'Homme des années 1950. En effet, le besoin de s'étonner des coutumes étranges des contrées exotiques a été entre-temps assouvi par la magie de la télévision qui diffuse à domicile et à l'envie, une multitude de documentaires à tonalité plus ou moins scientifique. Quelle forêt équatoriale ou quel désert n'a pas été parcouru et filmé, quel peuple autrefois « primitif » n'a pas été interviewé? Le temps des « expéditions » et des « explorateurs » est révolu et en conséquence, celui des musées spécialisés qui en rendaient compte.

Dans ce processus de « transition culturelle », la notion même de démarche anthropologique a changé de sens. L'aventure intellectuelle et parfois physique que représentait la mise en œuvre d'une recherche « ethnographique », avec ses aléas d'éloignement, d'isolement et d'adaptation aux réalités « autres » (si bien évoqués dans l'ouvrage *Tristes tropiques* de C. Levi-Strauss [Lévi-Strauss 1955], mais aussi dans les textes ironiques de Nigel Barley tels que *The Innocent Anthropologist* [Barley 1983] et *Le retour de l'anthropologue* [Barley 1994]) est devenue quelque peu obsolète aujourd'hui dans la mesure où la plupart des contrées de la planète ont été entretemps soumises aux affres de la mondialisation. Non pas parce qu'il n'y a plus rien à étudier ni à décrire à propos de ces peuples ex-« premiers », mais en raison d'un changement radical de point de vue qui doit, plus qu'autrefois, prendre en considération la complexité des changements dans toutes leurs interactions. À l'enquête « ethnographique » axée sur les traditions et les croyances encore plus ou moins en usage, s'est substituée une étude de caractère « ethno-sociologique » ou « socio-économique » des évolutions en cours. On remarquera par ailleurs que les « terrains », outre qu'ils se sont ouverts à tous vents en cette fin de XXᵉ siècle, sont devenus difficilement accessibles pour des raisons de politique internationale; ou se sont déplacés, du fait des phénomènes migratoires, parfois dans les banlieues de nos capitales occidentales.

Les musées d'anthropologie, lieux d'exposition des vécus exotiques de jadis, redeviennent donc peu à peu des musées « d'archéologie » dans la mesure où tous les artefacts traditionnels auront bientôt entièrement disparu de leurs pays d'origine; ou des « musées d'histoire naturelle », prenant en compte la globalité naturaliste de l'histoire de l'homme, dans ses aspects évolutifs et environnementaux. En fait, on actualise le concept ancien de « muséum », des établissements où étaient décrits et expliqués de façon encyclopédique les réalités globales du monde, c'est-à-dire la place de l'homme dans ses milieux. Sans développer plus avant la question de l'évolution épistémologique des « sciences humaines », aux frontières changeantes, on voit que l'anthropologie a quasiment perdu

ses objets d'étude, liés il faut bien se l'avouer, à la découverte du monde aux XIXᵉ et XXᵉ siècles et, corrélativement qu'on le veuille ou non, aux politiques européennes de colonisation.

On pourrait souhaiter cependant que ces deux types d'institution, de vocation devenue distincte, puissent néanmoins collaborer et harmoniser leurs pratiques au profit du public.

## Des icônes culturelles

Finalement, les objets d'art exotique, rescapés de ce maelström épistémologique, vont peu à peu accéder à ce statut un peu flou d' « icônes culturelles », ces artefacts sculptés et peints qui peuplent les salles de tous les musées du monde – des sarcophages égyptiens aux statues antiques et aux tableaux de Leonardo et de Rembrandt, etc. – que les touristes et les collégiens contemplent en groupes serrés sans trop se soucier de savoir d'où ils viennent précisément, de quelle époque ils datent et dans quel contexte historique ils ont été élaborés. Nous sommes maintenant dans une époque de « consommation culturelle ». Les œuvres non-occidentales, du moins les plus spectaculaires en qualité et en ancienneté, rejoignent logiquement le panthéon foisonnant des chefs-d'œuvre du monde qui illustrent l'idée qu'on se fait d'un « art universel » polyculturel. On en vient, un peu partout dans les grandes capitales, à mettre en espace des bribes du « musée imaginaire » qu'avait conçu André Malraux. Les expositions récentes du MBAM de Montréal et de l'AGO de Toronto, présentant, non loin d'œuvres importantes des arts classiques et modernes, de magnifiques spécimens d'arts de l'Afrique subsaharienne alliant qualité et ancienneté, correspondent à ce schéma.

Dans cette perspective, on doit espérer que l'arrivée des arts non-occidentaux dans les musées « d'art », à défaut d'en faire une présentation didactique désormais un peu passée de mode (mais dont on pourra sauver l'essentiel par l'élaboration de catalogues monographiques), conduise néanmoins à leur assurer une réelle reconnaissance d'ordre culturel, moral et politique, celle qui conduit à admettre que toutes les expressions artistiques, passées et présentes, d'ici et d'ailleurs, sacrées et profanes, de peuples « civilisés » ou de communautés « sauvages », constituent une part d'humanité à respecter.

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# Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

João Biehl, Byron Good and Arthur Kleinman (eds.), *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, 477 pages.

Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Sandra Teresa Hyde, Sarah Pinto and Byron J. Good (eds.), *Postcolonial Disorders*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008, 480 pages.

Reviewer: *Paul Antze*
*York University*

## Disturbing Subjects

Despite their different titles, these two collections share a common origin and a common central concern. The origin was a series of papers and discussions that took place at the "Friday Morning Seminar" of Harvard University's Medical Anthropology Program in 1999-2001. Their concern is subjectivity, broadly understood, but this word barely hints at the breadth and depth of questions they engage with. These are "big" questions in every sense of the word. "What constitutes modernity and modern subjectivity?" ask the editors of *Subjectivity*. How did colonialism shape European and North American subjectivities? What cultural paths do emergent forms of subjectivity take in non-Western and post-colonial societies? What does the anthropology of the contemporary world entail? These questions drive both volumes, albeit in somewhat different ways.

The questions are hardly new. Indeed, in one way or another they have been at the heart of an extensive theoretical literature in philosophy, semiotics, psychoanalysis and literary theory over the past thirty years. In a more modest way, medical anthropologists have also been preoccupied with subjectivity as it appears in "the illness experience," "illness narratives" and illness and healing as sites for the negotiation of personal and cultural meanings. The problem, as *Subjectivity*'s editors note, is the gulf between these two discursive worlds. On the one hand, theorizing about subjectivity, with its endless talk of discursive forms and subject positions, is all too often "overstated, obscure and even dehumanizing" (p. 13). On the other, writing about illness experience has often had "a generalist quality" that is conceptually thin and fails to address

"central theoretical concerns about the fractured nature of subjectivity [and] the ways in which persons are constituted through social experience" (p. 13).

The papers collected in these volumes seek to bridge this gulf, bringing ethnographic data on illness, suffering and care into conversation with diverse theories about subjectivity and its transformations in the West and the developing world. Given their particular focus, it is no surprise that both volumes draw their theoretical inspiration less from the anthropological canon than from writers like Freud, Benjamin, Lacan, Zizek, Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Fanon, Bhaba and others whose ideas have done much to shape current debates on this topic. It is in their framing of the conversation between theory and ethnography, however, that the two volumes take up different agendas. *Subjectivity* draws most (though scarcely all) of its case materials from Western settings (cancer wards and palliative care units, mental hospitals, the streets inhabited by the homeless) while engaging theories of the subject drawn mainly from philosophy, critical theory and psychoanalysis. *Postcolonial Disorders*, as might be guessed, looks more directly to the developing world and to postcolonial theory as embodied in the work of Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhaba, Ashis Nandy and others. The result, overall, is two very stimulating collections. While the essays in both vary in their degree of attention to theory as opposed to ethnography, many succeed in joining the two in subtle and imaginative ways. Since I cannot begin to summarize all this work here, I will instead highlight a few essays in each that stand out in speaking to one another or converging on central themes.

One such theme in *Subjectivity* involves the relationship between the subject in general and its various local incarnations. Does it even make sense to speak of a subject in general? If not, then are human subjects mere products of culture and circumstance? Is there anything special about the particular kind of subject that appears with the rise of modernity? In her lucid contribution, philosopher Amélie Oksenberg Rorty argues that the much-discussed "modern subject" is not one kind of subject at all, but a tense amalgam fusing "distinctive archeological layers of meaning" (p. 34). Behind it lies a long history of differing conceptions stretching from Aristotle and Augustine through Loyola and Descartes to Sartre and Freud.

Though hidden at times, that history continues to shape our thinking today. It remains very much alive, for example, in current debates between physicians and anthropologists about science and the authority of personal experience.

Writing from a very different perspective, Arthur Kleinman and Erin Fitz-Henry also oppose a universalist view of the subject, especially as championed by psychologists and cognitive scientists. But whereas Rorty attends to the diversity of our theories and their continuity over time, Kleinman and Fitz-Henry call attention to the profound differences in our experience of self that arise from shifting social contexts. "As our world changes, so do we," they say. They draw their examples from the history of political violence, ranging from the Holocaust to the Rwandan genocide, but perhaps surprisingly, they do not conclude that such horrific events demonstrate that people are capable of anything. What they emphasize instead is the uniqueness of each case and the complexity of individual responses. Far from making the case for social determinism, these events, when closely examined, point to a "dialectic of intersubjectivity" in which "the subjective is always social, and the social, subjective" (p. 64).

Questions about the pan-human subject and the special status of its modern variant in the West return in two essays toward the end of *Subjectivity*. In the first of these, Evelyn Fox Keller critiques the postmodern relativism that views subjectivity as entirely a product of discourse and context, unanchored to any enduring phenomenological core. Following the work of Simon Baron-Cohen, she finds that core in our ability to "read" the thoughts of others from their words and actions and thus to read our own thoughts as well. Given the central importance of this ability, she argues, there is a real danger in currently fashionable reductionist views that elide the role of intentionality. To the extent that we think of our inner states as the product of genes, receptors or computer modules, she asks, "are not all personal pronouns at risk of merging into a single, impersonal 'it'?" (p. 359).

In the second essay, Eric L. Krakauer takes up a related concern, but his target is a pervasive mode of thinking that has come to define the scientific worldview. Drawing on a critique first formulated by Heidegger, Krakauer argues that post-Cartesian science posits the whole world of experience as a series of objects to be known and mastered by a thinking subject, typically through measurement and calculation. To take this stance, however, is to miss or marginalize all those aspects of human experience that defy measurement or mastery, in particular the capacity for suffering. This failure becomes especially acute when medical science meets terminal illness, and mastery is out of the question. Here, another way of knowing is needed, a compassionate "being with" the suffering of another person, which has become the basis of palliative care.

Balancing these theoretically oriented contributions to *Subjectivity* are a series of more richly ethnographic chapters—for example, Veena Das and Ranendra K. Das on illness and the lifeworld of Delhi's urban poor, or Nancy Scheper-Hughes on the politics of remorse in post-apartheid South Africa, or João Biehl on the struggles of an abandoned invalid woman in southern Brazil. These make compelling reading and stand up well in their own right—indeed, some might fit as readily into collections with an entirely different focus. Seen in the context of this volume, however, they add weight and substance to the proposition that "the subjective is always social, and the social, subjective" (p. 64) as it plays out under the extremities of poverty, marginalization or civil strife.

A few contributions to *Subjectivity* do succeed in squaring the circle, marshalling robust ethnography in ways that yield important theoretical insights. Two of these struck me as especially interesting. The first, by Allan Young, examines the origins and history of a curious late 20th-century psychiatric disorder, "the self-traumatized perpetrator," which Young, following Ian Hacking, describes as a "transient mental illness"—an illness that is the creature of a certain time and place (p. 155). Drawing on news reports, interviews and the psychiatric literature on trauma in the period just after the Vietnam War, Young documents the convergence of political forces in both psychiatry and U.S. domestic politics that led to the creation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and then "the self-traumatized perpetrator" as its paradoxical subtype. He shows how this category came to be inhabited, first by soldiers who had actually committed atrocities and later by imitators—"factitious self-traumatized perpetrators" (p. 162)—who had never been near a war zone. The story he tells is fascinating in it own right, but also a vivid demonstration of how new subjective possibilities can emerge from a changing political environment.

In a second contribution with even broader ramifications, Ellen Corin probes a distinctive way of experiencing the world that she finds among schizophrenics in widely disparate social settings. At the core of this experience is an irreducible sense of strangeness, or "Otherness", as she calls it, that prompts an endless quest for meaning even as it defies all available cultural answers. Drawing on extensive interviews with schizophrenics in Montreal and India as well as examples from her own practice as a psychoanalyst, Corin details the phenomenology of this experience, looking especially at how schizophrenics "borrow, displace and transform cultural signifiers" in an attempt to "articulate experience that essentially eludes communication and mastery" (p. 276). Her work shows that religious symbols and practices are often central to this process, in part because they offer "a way of introducing Otherness and strangeness into language and culture," but also because they facilitate "positive withdrawal"—a self-chosen way of being on the edges of the social (p. 288). In her rich and complex discussion based on nearly three decades of research, Corin offers a major advance on long-standing debates about the relationship between schizophrenia and culture.

The essays in *Postcolonial Disorders* are more uniformly ethnographic than those in *Subjectivity*, but this makes them even harder to summarize. Moreover, as the editors tell us, "they are an unruly lot, more provocative than prescriptive,

opening up issues rather than providing closure, hinting at the hidden, at times intentionally subversive" (p. 29). The title says something about their common direction. "Postcolonial" can mean many things—a phase of history, a kind of psychology, a mode of power—but the editors construe it broadly "to indicate a legacy of violence and appropriation, carried into the present as traumatic memory, inherited institutional structures and often unexamined assumptions" (p. 6). "Disorders" says more about what is distinctive in this work, since it involves a play on words that fuses political with psychological distress. The essays in the first section ("Disordered States") take up this psycho-political link directly, but it is a theme that winds its way through much of the book.

Sometimes, we learn, the seeming madness of marginalized persons can open a space for social and political commentary. Jamie Saris offers one vivid example in his ethnography of an Irish village as seen through the lens of one "Tomàs O'Connor," a wandering ex-mental patient and local "character." Tomàs is notorious for the habit of accosting and lecturing "respectable" persons in public places, usually at length and in socially inappropriate ways. While psychiatrists might view the stranger aspects of his conduct as mere pathology, Saris shows that it is very much in keeping with traditional ideas about the role of marginal persons as social critics in rural Ireland. On many occasions his outbursts articulate more widely held resentments (for example, between local farmers and Dublin solicitors), sometimes setting the agenda for discussions that go on long after Tomàs has left the scene.

In a somewhat similar vein, Stephiana Pandolfo presents the case of Reda, a Moroccan psychiatric patient whose delusions are not quite delusions, since he likens them to the fictions of Cervantes, with himself in the role of Don Quixote. Framed in this way, the stories he creates become reflections on the impossibility of living in European and Arabic cultures at once. As Pandolfo says, "Reda takes it upon himself to articulate a malaise larger than his own, that of a collectivity of which he becomes an echo" (p. 337).

In other cases political violence creates its own locally inflected forms of mental illness. For example, John M. MacDougal chronicles the downfall of an outspoken and effective activist in Lombok, Indonesia, as a shifting political landscape undermined his brand of idealistic nationalism together with his access to followers. MacDougal traces his downward spiral into a bizarre paranoid delusional system, which, for all its strangeness, contained points of real insight into the current political situation. In a very different setting, Erica James Caple examines the emotional scars left by the chronic insecurity and pervasive criminal violence of Haiti in the post-Duvalier years, especially among the urban poor. To call these scars "traumatic" is to understate the case, since they are responses to lives lived in a state of unremitting fear. For victims of this condition, as Caple shows, intrusive memories cloaked in the idiom of *vodou* become part of the ongoing terror, arriving as the angry ghosts of lost loved ones whose murder has been neither avenged nor properly mourned.

A few of the ethnographies in *Postcolonial Disorders* move beyond this broad concern with the interplay of politics and pathology to investigate the elusive role of "the unspeakable" in postcolonial settings. Taking the unspeakable seriously, as the editors explain, means paying attention "to that which is *not* said overtly,... to that which appears at the margins of formal speech and everyday presentations of self,... to memories and subjugated knowledge claims that are suppressed politically but are made powerful precisely by their being left unsaid" (p. 15). Sometimes the forces suppressing the unspeakable are so powerful or pervasive that it becomes unthinkable as well—or at least inaccessible to conscious thought. When this happens, groups or even whole societies may come to be haunted by ideas, memories, images or fantasies that are at once alien and yet strangely familiar, examples of what Freud called "the uncanny." While this idea turns up repeatedly in the volume, two contributions develop it more fully.

In the first of these Begoña Aretxaga offers an original and penetrating analysis of the seeming "madness" of young Basque separatists who, in the 1990s turned their violence against local journalists, politicians and police, thereby alienating the very population they hoped to liberate. As Aretxaga shows, the reason for targetting these people was not simply their indirect association with the hated Spanish state. Rather, it originated in a deep ambivalence about the state itself as a vehicle for shared aspirations, an ambivalence rooted in a "traumatic secret"—widely sensed but seldom articulated—about the tainted origins of democracy in Spain (p. 43ff).

The uncanny past returns in another study by João Biehl of the so-called "Mucker War," waged by educated Germans in 19th-century Brazil against a minor religious sect that had grown up in their midst. The bizarre stories concocted about this innocuous group and the resulting extermination of its members make sense only when placed in the context of another obsession among the elite—their effort to refashion the colony into a model of Enlightenment rationalism. Biehl shows that the leaders of the attack used "a fantastic rationalism" to remake the Muckers into members of a dangerous primitive cult that posed a mortal threat to enlightened society (p. 297). The irony in this case is that the very Enlightenment ideals of tolerance and reason become the basis for an irrational attack on dark, uncanny doubles of those ideals, now imputed to the victims.

As these examples suggest, the essays in *Postcolonial Disorders*, like many of those in *Subjectivity*, are indeed provocative and even "unruly" in the sense that they repeatedly transgress disciplinary boundaries—even the very hazy boundaries defining medical anthropology today. Some might object that all this breadth verges on promiscuity, and that these collections would have been stronger had they been just a bit shorter and more tightly focused. This may well be true, but on balance, both these volumes offer so much in the way of compelling ethnography and imaginative analysis that being too inclusive seems a minor sin indeed.

**Suzanne Chazan-Gillig et Pavitranand Ramhota,** *L'hindouisme mauricien dans la mondialisation. Cultes populaires indiens et religion savante,* Paris : Karthala, 2009, 522 pages.

Recenseure : *Sophie Blanchy*
*Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense*

En prenant comme fil rouge l'histoire des lieux de cultes hindouistes qui foisonnent à l'île Maurice, ce livre offre un bel exemple d'étude des interactions du religieux avec l'économique et le politique. La répartition de ces sites dans l'espace et leur transformation dans le temps permettent de lire les événements politiques et économiques, à l'échelle de la communauté indo-mauricienne et de l'île entière. Cent-cinquante photos des lieux de culte insérées comme vignettes dans le texte donnent à l'iconographie religieuse et aux espaces cultuels l'importance qu'ils méritent.

Formée sous les régimes coloniaux français puis anglais marqués par l'esclavage et l'engagisme, la société mauricienne est partagée en deux grandes catégories, la « population générale », organisée selon des critères raciaux (population blanche, esclave et libre de couleur) et les Indo-Mauriciens, différenciés selon le critère ethnique, qui représentent plus de la moitié de la population. S'y ajoutent les Sino-Mauriciens et la communauté musulmane (d'origine indienne). Autant de catégories censitaires ou statistiques qui ont été appliquées par l'Etat au fil du temps.

Bâtie sur le développement sucrier, l'économie mauricienne a subi de profondes transformations en s'ouvrant sur le monde depuis l'indépendance en 1968 : création des zones franches d'industries textiles, restructuration du secteur du sucre, développement des hautes technologies et d'un tourisme en expansion qui occupe de plus en plus de terres. Les conditions de vie et de travail de tous les acteurs, du plus modeste ouvrier au plus puissant planteur, ont subi les effets de ces changements. La minutieuse étude de terrain des sites de cultes hindous est une manière d'aborder celle « des rapports de la religion à la mondialisation et du rôle pris par l'Etat dans ce processus » (p. 57).

Au XIXe siècle, deux périodes de morcellement foncier avaient favorisé l'enracinement des descendants d'esclaves et des engagés : pour les Indiens, la création des lieux de cultes a permis l'unification de groupes socio-familiaux à partir de la diversité des engagés, et la reconstruction d'une différenciation statutaire. Les Tamouls, Bihars, Telegous et Marathis venus d'Inde comme artisans ou coolies étaient issus de régions rurales où ils rendaient des cultes avec sacrifices sanglants. Les autels à Kali – les *kalimaï* – qu'ils érigèrent à Maurice témoignaient d'une part de formes syncrétiques avec les autres religions, le catholicisme populaire surtout, d'autre part de leur nouvelle organisation sociale. Ils sont le lieu d'inscription d'une première interculturalité entre groupes d'origine différente, la construction de groupes matrimoniaux endogames ayant généré le système de castes mauricien. L'émergence

économique des artisans tamouls devenus commerçants puis propriétaires de moulins à canne, et des coolies ayant acquis des terres, permit ensuite l'érection des premiers temples tamouls et hindous.

Les auteurs utilisent un corpus aussi important que varié constitué au cours de plusieurs années de terrain ethnographique pour donner une typologie des kalimaï. Par son histoire singulière, chacun d'eux représente une dimension des processus en jeu, montrant la fonction et la rationalité symbolique du panthéon honoré vis-à-vis de la production de classes (planteurs indépendants) et de la différenciation statutaire. Alors que les premiers kalimaï se réduisaient aux pierres des sept sœurs déposées au pied d'un arbre, ils sont devenus des autels organisés puis, à l'initiative de planteurs émergents, ont intégré progressivement des dieux excluant les sacrifices sanglants, tout en faisant preuve de syncrétisme. L'introduction de divinités masculines aux rites non sanglants sur les kalimaï ou à côté d'eux préludait à leur transformation au rythme des changements sociaux. Scissions ou réunifications des lieux de culte marquent soit les nouvelles segmentations sociales, soit la transformation des cultes populaires sous l'influence de la religion savante des groupes dominants. Les rites observés montrent ce double mouvement, brahmanisation des cultes populaires dans la cérémonie *baharia* et recréation du culte de Kali dans le culte *amourou*.

Aujourd'hui, certains kalimaï ont finalement gardé leur autonomie, d'autre se sont modernisés ou déplacés, d'autres enfin se sont transformés en temples dédiés à des divinités hindoues d'origine mauricienne non répertoriées en Inde. La rénovation des kalimaï ou la fondation de nouveaux temples révèle l'affirmation d'une identité indienne autonome, plus affiliée à la religion savante ou à des dieux modernes nouvellement émergés en Inde. La désaffection ou la privatisation des kalimaï anciens reflète la disparition de la grande plantation au profit d'un salariat ouvrier ou agricole temporaire. Des temples existent dans les moindres villages, mais relèvent parfois de deux fédérations concurrentes, ce qui souligne la tension entre hautes et basses castes. Les interactions entre les divinités, ajouts et retraits, informent sur un mode de résolution des conflits par évitement et partage des lieux et des temps, méthodes observées aussi dans d'autres contextes sociaux et économiques.

Les différences professionnelles et politiques se mêlèrent vite aux premières distinctions socio-économiques. Mais surtout, la réussite des grands planteurs indiens, qui dès 1930 jouèrent un rôle dans les mouvements coopératifs et syndicaux, tient à la relation particulière qui les unissait à leurs dépendants, autant dire qui liait le capital, et le travail, grâce à la maîtrise du lien social d'endettement institué à travers les cultes, et à la référence commune à la notion de dharma qui unissait des groupes d'intérêts pourtant différenciés. Les fondateurs des temples jouant un rôle dans l'association qui y était attachée furent alors en mesure de briguer un premier mandat politique. Les temples sont en effet les points de repères historiques de l'enrichissement de familles de grands plan-

teurs indiens ayant regroupé leurs travailleurs, leurs alliés et leur dépendants. Les Tamouls y sont parvenus en 30 ans, à partir de 1860. Les rapports entre les kalimaï et les temples se compliquèrent quand se développèrent les associations qui révélaient la puissance sociale des groupes ainsi constitués. Seule l'histoire des temples et des associations, estiment les auteurs, permet de comprendre l'émergence des fédérations et le rôle qu'y a joué la dialectique ethnique, de classe et de caste. Le foisonnement des temples – il en existe 250 et 50 sont en projet – reflète les nombreux conflits entre fédérations, la distance croissante entre Tamouls et hindous, les relations de castes et de classes à l'intérieur des communautés, la sans-kritisation des cultes. Les auteurs voient par exemple dans l'installation récente de temples sur les pas géométriques, édifices dénoncés comme obstruant le développement touristique de l'île, l'expression d'une concurrence directe pour l'accès au foncier dans un contexte mondialisé.

En 1910, une association égalitaire d'origine indienne, l'*aryasamaj*, s'était répandue parmi les travailleurs en leur dispensant une formation aux rites védiques éloignés des croyances populaires, et en favorisant une certaine conscience politique. D'autres associations virent le jour par réaction, de la part des hautes castes puis au gré de scissions liées à la caste, et prirent des engagements politiques distincts. Enfin, des sectes, dont les auteurs ne précisent pas l'origine, ont également fait leur apparition. Ces mouvements s'opposent au système des castes ou le renforcent. Le succès de la divinité Hanouman est interprété comme un dépassement de tous les clivages dans une société contemporaine plus ouverte.

C'est sur les nouveaux enjeux fonciers et financiers, dont la multiplication des nouveaux temples serait significative, que les auteurs orientent leur conclusion. Depuis 1990, Maurice voit les secteurs sucrier et textile faiblir; de nouveaux morcellements de terre pour des logements sociaux entraînent des déplacements de lieux de cultes, surtout dédiés à Hanouman, gérés par des groupes bénéficiant d'une nouvelle autonomie sociale et économique dans le contexte d'urbanisation et de développement capitaliste imposé par la mondialisation. Les auteurs soulignent les rapports privilégiés avec l'administration qu'entretiennent les sociétés et fédérations religieuses hindoues. Ces associations marquent un modèle spécifique de développement capitaliste qui serait concurrent du modèle catholique plus individuel.

Cette lecture de l'évolution dans le temps des lieux de culte est très originale et très convaincante. La relation étroite mise au jour entre lieux de culte et vie économique et politique est-elle spécifique aux formes hindoues d'expressions religieuses qui, par leur souplesse et leur inclusion, peuvent constituer ce langage riche et dynamique ? Les auteurs projettent d'étendre l'étude aux formes populaires du catholicisme et de l'islam à Maurice.

Notons cependant que la richesse des données présentées oblige le lecteur à un effort personnel de synthèse pour ne pas se noyer dans les détails, ceci à cause de deux défauts regrettables : le glossaire, indispensable pour s'orienter parmi des dénominations au sens strictement local, n'est pas à la hauteur des attentes – à preuve, le lecteur y est renvoyé dès la première page à propos d'un mot qui n'y figure pas; et surtout, un index eut été très utile pour mieux comprendre des notions ou des institutions qui ne sont pas familières aux non-indianistes, au lieu de devoir rechercher les explications dispersées dans le texte. Manquant de ces deux outils, ce bon livre très dense est donc d'une lecture parfois ardue.

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**Laëtitia Atlani-Duault et Laurent Vidal (dirs.),** *Anthropologie de l'aide humanitaire et du développement. Des pratiques aux savoirs – des savoirs aux pratiques*, Paris : Armand Colin, 2009, 360 pages.

Recenseure : *Sylvie Bodineau*
*Université Laval*

Dans le chapitre d'introduction intitulé « *L'anthropologie de l'aide humanitaire et du développement; Histoire, enjeux contemporains et perspectives* », Laëtitia Atlani-Duault nous rappelle que l'anthropologie qui produit des analyses critiques des interventions d'aide humanitaire et du développement est un des outils mobilisés par les professionnels de cette aide. En réinterrogeant l'histoire de la discipline à l'aune des réalités d'un monde globalisé, elle nous propose de repenser ce que peut être cette anthropologie et d'engager un renouvellement théorique et épistémologique de l'aide. De la participation ou non aux entreprises de colonisation, puis aux agences internationales de développement, cette histoire est jalonnée de controverses autour de la position des anthropologues, interrogeant éthique et responsabilité. Du côté des implications possibles, les positions varient, de « l'ingénierie sociale » à une approche plus modeste et distanciée où il s'agirait de défier, contester, clarifier et expliciter les hypothèses. Entre distance critique et engagement, l'anthropologie peut participer de la déconstruction et à la reconstruction des pratiques de l'aide.

L'ambition de cet ouvrage, en réunissant une équipe d'anthropologues de traditions de recherche et de nationalités diverses, les sollicitant pour qu'ils traitent, chacun, un thème d'action et de recherche dans un canevas d'ensemble homogène, est de concilier discussion théorique et illustrations précises des démarches de l'anthropologue, en donnant ainsi les clefs – didactiques comme conceptuelles – pour pouvoir penser aussi bien l'anthropologie que le développement et l'aide humanitaire. Ainsi, tour à tour, Patricia Foxen à propos des réfugiés, Pierre-Yves Le Meur et Philippe Lavigne Delville à propos du développement rural et de la gouvernance des ressources, Alicia Sliwinski à propos de l'environnement, Jacky Bouju à propos de l'assainissement et la gouvernance urbaine, Carl Kendall à propos de la santé, Charles-Edouard de Suremain à propos de l'alimentation et la nutrition et Kristina Tiedje à propos du genre, se plient à l'exercice et offrent une vision multiple de l'anthropologie du développement et de l'aide

humanitaire. Après un historique de l'anthropologie dans leur domaine, ils s'appuient sur plusieurs études de cas pour faire l'état des lieux des démarches, des positionnements et des objets de l'anthropologie du développement et de l'aide humanitaire.

Les études de cas soulignent les forces de l'anthropologie en la matière, comme sa capacité d'interpréter les changements dans la perspective de la sociologie de la connaissance, du développement de l'identité et des réflexions sur la chronicité, sur le vieillissement et sur le risque dans le cas de la santé. La complexité de certains domaines d'étude (par exemple l'assainissement urbain) offre une conjonction éminemment politique que l'anthropologie est en mesure d'aborder. Selon Jacky Bouju, l'anthropologie jette un éclairage nouveau sur la manière dont se construit aujourd'hui en ville le rapport acteur/institution ou individu/société. Selon Carl Kendall en matière d'anthropologie médicale, c'est dans le vacuum créé par l'absence de solutions efficaces que l'anthropologie a pu développer de nouvelles interventions. Avec le poids de la mondialisation, cet espace interstitiel ne cesse de s'agrandir. Il s'agit de promouvoir des approches intégratives, holistiques, éthiques et participatives afin de résoudre les problèmes posés par la maladie, la violence, la désintégration sociale et la pauvreté qui partout prolifèrent. Pour Alicia Sliwinski, l'anthropologie de l'environnement peut transmettre aux professionnels de l'humanitaire une compréhension plus riche, plus responsable et peut-être plus engagée des relations entre les hommes et leur milieu.

Au fil des situations décrites, on voit comment la discipline tantôt problématise, tantôt complète et informe le langage et les perspectives bureaucratiques des projets et des rapports des agences. On distingue, de par la diversité des démarches et des terrains décrits, les effets des degrés d'implication différents en termes de production et de transmission des connaissances : l'anthropologue comme expert et comme médiateur; l'anthropologue comme critique externe; ou bien encore une anthropologie fondamentale à partir d'une position impliquée « In and Out » dans des domaines aussi divers que le développement rural, l'environnement, l'alimentation et la nutrition ou le genre. Certaines études de cas montrent la difficile position des anthropologues sous contrat, mettant en œuvre, façonnant et influençant les politiques. Ce qui n'entache pas pour autant la conviction de tous les contributeurs de cet ouvrage que les anthropologues peuvent s'engager dans les politiques publiques qu'ils sont à même de critiquer. Charles-Edouard de Suremain fait ressortir combien la volonté de s'inscrire dans un projet réellement interdisciplinaire est un préalable nécessaire pour que l'anthropologie passe du rôle de source de connaissance à celui de mode de connaissances. Pour que cette volonté ne reste pas lettre morte, l'anthropologue doit revendiquer sa démarche, ses méthodes et ses outils et sa façon singulière d'aborder le terrain dès les prémices du projet.

En matière de méthodes, Patricia Foxen montre l'utilité de la recherche « multisites » reliant des processus plus larges aux contextes locaux et aux récits indigènes qui en sont faits. Dans ce contexte, les travaux anthropologiques recomman-

dent aux institutions et aux organisations humanitaires de tenir compte du fait que les réfugiés sont avant tout des acteurs sociaux qui, tout en ayant besoin d'aide, sont aussi capables d'autodétermination et dont les ressources collectives et individuelles reposent principalement sur leur capacité à se fonder sur leurs propres modèles culturels et politiques, et non dans l'aide humanitaire. Pierre-Yves le Meur et Philipe Lavigne Delville soulignent que l'anthropologie est à même de saisir l'hybride sociotechnique qui a pris la place de la technique en matière de développement rural, si elle se donne la peine de mettre en œuvre ses approches et ses outils, en appliquant un principe de symétrie méthodologique à tous les acteurs qui composent les situations de développement. Les objets, les personnes et les médiations qu'ils construisent ensemble par leurs interactions contribuent ainsi à la construction du développement. La prise en compte de la variable temporelle, l'importance d'une ethnographie multisites et de l'insertion dans des collectifs multidisciplinaires en rapport avec l'action en sont des éléments essentiels.

Pour conclure cet ouvrage, Laurent Vidal rappelle qu'un retour sur l'objet, sur ses contours comme sur ses évolutions au fil de la recherche, est générateur d'avancées non seulement méthodologiques, mais plus largement épistémologiques pour la discipline. Sept enjeux illustrent des questions méthodologiques comme épistémologiques et éthiques auxquelles est confronté ou que révèle l'anthropologue : les fondements de la discipline dans son ensemble (l'autonomie, l'innovation, la capitalisation) et des expressions plus singulières de l'anthropologie du développement et de l'aide humanitaire (la médiation, la temporalité, la transformation, la réflexivité). L'anthropologie vise toujours à comprendre une pluralité d'altérités. Les situations d'aide humanitaire et de développement mettent en scène des altérités composites et fluctuantes dans le temps. Aussi, dans son travail sur l'altérité, l'anthropologue est invité à se pencher sur la capacité de cet autre, de ces autres, à remettre en cause les termes de l'intervention, à bousculer son ordonnancement et, en particulier, sa pérennisation. Nous sommes là au cœur de la démarche anthropologique visant à corréler l'implication dans l'action et l'élaboration de réflexions théoriques. Contours qui ne peuvent être pensés séparément, l'un renvoyant constamment à l'autre. C'est ce que montrent incidemment les études thématiques présentées.

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**David Parkin and Stanley Ulijaszek,** *Holistic Anthropology,* New York: Berghahn Books, 2007, 292 pages.

Reviewer: *Penny Van Esterik*
*York University*

Based on the Oxford Anthropology Centenary Conference held in 2005, this book explores the boundaries of anthropology, and how to work across these boundaries with disciplines

such as psychology, neurology, museum studies, archaeology, and evolutionary biology. Although presented as an effort to broaden the range of modern British anthropology, the book has relevance for American and Canadian anthropology where the four fields approach at least makes it easier to include archaeology and biological anthropology within disciplinary boundaries. In the context of the underfunding of universities and the growth of the business mentality of corporate universities, anthropologists may appreciate the frank discussion of the financial fact that museums, biology labs and archaeology field schools are more expensive for departments to maintain than socio-cultural anthropology. In the introduction, Parkin eludes to the sense of occasion in the United Kingdom as more social anthropologists collaborate with biological anthropologists, archaeologists, and those in other disciplines whose expertise impinges on aspects of the human condition. He explains that the conference itself and the book create "an atmosphere in which cross-disciplinary thinking becomes feasible" (p. 6).

The book addresses the disturbing question of whether anthropology can and should survive as a discrete discipline within well-defined disciplinary boundaries. Motivated by the fear that anthropology will continue to splinter into ever smaller subspecialties, the authors call for a unified anthropology to re-examine its universal claims and common grounds. By addressing biocultural questions that cannot be answered by social anthropology or biological anthropology alone, such as those presented in this volume, the editors urge us to reclaim this new holism.

The preface, introduction and ten varied papers in this collection suggest that a more eclectic, new holistic anthropology is emerging—one that makes better use of neighbouring disciplines—at least at Oxford. The informative introduction by Parkin is needed to tie together papers that range broadly from an overview of an evolutionary approach to human diversity (Dunbar) to the body ecologic in ancient texts in Chinese Traditional Medicine (Hsu) to approaches to the history of religion (Whitehouse).

The papers include more abstract theoretical papers (Dunbar, Gosden, Ingold), as well as papers grounded in the particulars of horticulture in Amazonia (Rival), Yolngu mortuary rituals and art (Morphy), and the anthropometric materials collected by Blackwood, a Pitt Rivers museum staff member (Peers). While the more grounded papers may be easier to read, the more abstract theoretical papers supply opportunities to rethink basic concepts like time and mind. Gosden explores mind "as something which comes about through the interaction of the whole human organism with its world, so that intelligence resides in action as much as thought and in the social use people make of the object world" (p. 182).

Parkin finds that the meaning of the crowd requires reference to visceral and psychological issues, and asks whether religious enthusiasm elevates endorphins and aids health as when "well-being occurs through laughing, running, swimming, cycling, eating and breastfeeding" (p. 240). Hsu devel-

ops the idea of the body ecologic that uncovers the layers of past meanings about how bodies interact with the natural environment and experience ecological processes (p. 92). She argues that "those interested in how biology is contained in culture have to turn to history. It is through complex historical processes that ecological experiences become integrated into highly elaborate systems of cultural signification" (p. 122). Ulijaszek explores the dynamic interaction between humans as biological beings and the social, cultural and physical environments they inhabit, and then applies his argument to sago palm use and food security in Papua New Guinea.

Each author brings his or her understanding of holism to the book, and the editors make no attempt to reduce everyone to a common understanding of the concept. Morphy argues for the multi-determined nature of reality and the relative autonomy of different domains or components of reality (p. 154). The new holism is clearly not about totalizing integration, wholes or reductionism, but rather, in the words of Ingold, about currents of discourse that flow into one another: "any thing, caught at a particular moment, enfolds within its own constitution the history of relations that brought it there" (p. 209).

In both the theoretical and the more grounded papers, nothing is made easy for the reader who must know the intricacies of ancient Chinese medical texts, and the location and ethnographic context of Yolngu mortuary rituals without being told more than the fact that they were carried out by the Yirritja moiety north of Blue Mud Bay (Morphy p. 157).

It would be valuable to raise more parallels with cognitive anthropology that also crossed disciplinary boundaries with psychology, neurology and biology, as Parkin notes briefly in the concluding pages of the book (p. 248).

Readers may have a sense that you "had to be there" to really get it, as if they were part of a hidden audience, eavesdropping on decades of corridor talk among Oxford's anthropologists. While the authors occasionally speak to one another and indicate how their views differ, the papers seldom speak directly to one another. But as individual works of scholarship, the papers bristle with brilliance—gifts to the careful reader who views holism as one strength of a comparative, synthetic anthropology, and can use the book to rethink their own versions of the new holistic anthropology.

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**Ana Mariella Bacigalupo**, *Shaman's of the* Foye *Tree: Gender, Power, and Healing among Chilean Mapuche*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007, 321 pages.

Reviewer: *Rita Isabel Henderson*
*Université de Montréal*

*Shamans of the* Foye *Tree* extends well beyond its Library of Congress indexing under rites, ceremonies, government relations and ecology among the Mapuche people of Chile. Through

the lens of contemporary spiritual practices, this self-described experiential ethnography offers a sensitive analysis of one of southern cone South America's largest indigenous populations. The shamans to which the title refers are *machi*, a dispersed group of Mapuche healers, spiritual leaders and ambiguously positioned political figures originating from areas today composing southern Chile's Bío-Bío, Araucanía, and Lagos regions. Prospective readers should not mistake this as simply a monograph in ethnobotany or aboriginal religion. While the *foye* (also known as *canelo* and *drimys winteri*) is a sacred plant favoured in ritual congregations and healing, it also carries the symbolic conviction of "Mapuche identity and resistance to national ideologies and practices" (p. 1). For Bacigalupo, shifting gender performances of machi (in private, public, ritual, and everyday contexts) are seen at once to delineate and disrupt sociocultural and political frontiers.

Importantly for both female and male machi, the foye's hermaphroditic qualities legitimate co-gendered ritual identities, as well as transvestism and sexual variance, setting these shamans apart from dominant gender norms. In this sense, the physical bodies of machi become sites of contestation and difference between Mapuche and non-Mapuche, "the places where power, hierarchy, and healing are played out" (p. 8). We learn about how illness and accusations of witchcraft manifest themselves in the midst of uneven assimilations of dominant cultural values and practices. A chapter on gender in the Mapuche cosmic order is complemented by subsequent analyses on modern gender identities, specifically machi responses to normative ideologies and rituals around marriage, sexuality, masculinity and homophobia. The ensuing narrative conveys the creativity and complexity of political agency among a contemporary colonized people, rendering the text equally relevant to anthropologists of religion and shamanism, as to scholars of power and intercultural relations, and to health practitioners working in indigenous milieus worldwide.

Bacigalupo's reflexive attention to representation is subtle and effective in evoking the possibilities for Mapuche cultural—and by association political—expression within Chile's male-dominated, Catholic society. Refreshingly, the political is not reduced to the civic sphere alone, nor are Mapuche women and men presumed to act according to uniform political interests. This opens onto respectful consideration of debates and disagreements among Mapuche people over the risks of representing complex aspects of their culture to non-Mapuche audiences. In this case, majority Chilean discourses on concepts like homosexuality, transgenderism and normality limit machi in their public expressions of shifting gender identities to generic, ideal gender types that machi perceive as more comfortably resonating with non-Mapuche clients and Chilean society at large. Since Chile's democratic transition in 1990, the government has instituted bi-cultural initiatives aimed at transforming the state's relationship with Mapuche people (over 6% of the country's population). In this period, politicians have increasingly appropriated aspects of indigenous culture, such as publicly celebrating machi rituals, as a

means of seeming pluralistic. Nevertheless, the imagery underlying such displays routinely draws on dominant Chilean gender notions that relegate domesticity and spirituality to the female sphere. Since the formation of the Chilean state, these have served to strip machi of their political power (chapter 6).

In the context of the marginalization and posed assimilation of the Mapuche in national discourse, Bacigalupo explores how machi variously respond to expectations that they behave as either folkloric symbols of the past, or as priests, nuns, doctors, nurses and politicians. They also often disagree among themselves over the suitability of their responses to the restrictions that dominant society's imaginations of their "otherness" compel upon human experiences, the causes of suffering and the means for healing. This analysis culminates in the last chapter's poignant critique of the coercive power that majority cultural discourses hold over machi and Mapuche people. A consequence of this coercion is public secrecy about the shifting gender identities of machi, in which the anthropologist finds herself privy to a cultural fact (co-genderism among shamans) that Mapuche people do not generally articulate to outsiders (p. 259). Secrets being operational to the abuse of power, Bacigalupo rises to the challenge that they present to ethnographic inquiry. The challenge is to balance the pressure to remain silent so that machi are not further misconstrued, with the responsibility of doing justice to complex forms of knowledge that are expressed through machi's shifting gender performances. Notably, their gender identities reflect elaborate relations with the natural landscape and spirit world, which the author explores in depth in early chapters.

The reflexive approach of this text also stirs a sensitive discussion of the constantly transforming criteria that legitimate traditional machi knowledge and authority. It is perhaps not surprising that modern pressures transform public expectations of traditional leaders. Bacigalupo consistently presents this with rich detail, for example observing how machi have increasingly taken up the task of officiating in *ngillatun* ceremonies (collective petitions for blessing). Up until the last century, traditionally male orators known as *ngenpin* generally led these ceremonies. As younger generations of Mapuche men have not widely assimilated the genealogical and historical knowledge transmitted by ngenpin through oral prayers, machi have compensated for losses in ritual knowledge and oratorical ability by officiating in ngillatun either as ritual congregation members or as hired professionals (p. 70).

Throughout, Bacigalupo complements field observations and interviews with sound historical data, outlining the complex means by which Mapuche women and men have, over the decades, contended with dominant Chilean culture and non-Mapuche discourses about gender, knowledge, tradition and authority. I suggest that this synthesizes potentially useful arguments for Mapuche leaders and their allies struggling against neoliberal state power that, especially in recent years, has condoned industrial interventions in ancestral lands, leading to the degradation of natural spaces and traditional terri-

tories by logging and hydroelectric companies, as well as for highways, airports, and landfills.

Expanding on themes raised in the author's previous books and numerous articles, this text is the product of over a decade and a half of field research relationships. The regular quoting of conversations does not limit data to the verbal, but fosters a narrative that shares the authorial voice with multiple participants. Conveniently for instructors, several chapters can stand on their own, making the book amenable (either as a whole or in part) to class assignments on subjects from gender studies and the anthropology of religion, to political anthropology and field methods. While certainly accessible to undergraduate audiences, the breadth of contemporary issues addressed in this work promises the critical engagement of a good cross-section of upper-year and graduate students. Much more than serving as rich reference material on Mapuche relationships to human, natural and spirit worlds, this ethnography serves as a guiding example for ethical field research and experiential ethnography among contemporary indigenous peoples.

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**Marc-Olivier Gonseth, Yan Laville et Grégoire Mayor** (dirs.), *La marque jeune*, Neuchâtel : Musée d'ethnographie, 2008, 266 pages.

Recenseur : *Nicolas Dufour-Laperrière*
*Université de Montréal*

Sous la direction de Marc-Olivier Gonseth, Yann Laville et Grégoire Mayor, *La marque jeune* tente, généralement avec succès, de réexaminer la relation complexe entre la jeunesse socialement constituée, les phénomènes contestataires qu'on lui rattache et la consommation culturelle qu'elle engendre depuis les 50 dernières années. Livre, complémentaire d'une exposition réalisée au Musée d'ethnologie de Neuchâtel en 2008-2009, questionne la peur de la jeunesse et l'insécurité qu'elle crée dans les médias de masse et dans la population tout en instaurant de nouvelles normes sociales. Ainsi, loin de générer chaos et désordre, la jeunesse est au contraire un important facteur de renouveau et de dynamisation sociale. Elle crée de nouvelles figures culturelles, de nouvelles formes de consommation, de socialisation et d'intégration sociale. Elle est donc ultimement un élément social cohésif.

Le livre comprend six parties, qui se composent chacune de photos des installations et de détails d'artefacts présentés lors de l'exposition, ainsi que de courts textes couvrant sous des angles divers les six grands thèmes explorés. La première partie, intitulée *L'âge d'or*, porte sur la jeunesse perçue comme point de rupture d'une époque révolue et jugée meilleure. L'actuelle jeunesse s'étant substituée aux rites de passage dans nos sociétés occidentales, on explore l'univers des confréries musulmanes cairotes dans un texte de Aymon Kreil où, à l'inverse, ces communautés de jeunes se font les défenseurs d'une

certaine orthodoxie face à une société dont les mœurs se sont libéralisées depuis les années 1950. *Péril en la demeure*, deuxième partie de l'ouvrage, explore la peur de la jeunesse, la crainte de ses actions et sa constitution par les médias et les instances de pouvoir comme un élément générant de l'anomie dans la société. Portant son regard sur la délinquance juvénile en Suisse, Olivier Guéniat, dans *La perception de la délinquance des jeunes au travers du traitement médiatique des faits divers et des réalités statistiques*, démontre l'inadéquation entre le sentiment d'une augmentation de la délinquance chez les jeunes et la réalité statistique qui l'infirme.

La jeunesse, depuis 50 ans, se positionne généralement en porte-à-faux vis-à-vis des adultes qui incarnent et défendent les normes sociales en place. Aussi, par son exploration de nouvelles esthétiques et de nouvelles normes, cette jeunesse en vient à intégrer en vieillissant certaines « nouveautés » qui seront à leur tour éprouvées par les générations suivantes. Cette troisième partie, traitant le sujet dans une perspective historique, propose un texte de Joël Vacheron, *La jeunesse et les maux: le Centre for contemporary cultural studies au temps des sous-cultures*, qui porte sur le rôle central de ce centre de recherche britannique fondé en 1964 dans la définition et l'exploration des champs de recherche liés à la jeunesse et aux sous-cultures qui y prennent racine. S'ensuit la contribution de Denis Jeffrey, *De l'esprit hippie à la culture punk*, sur la multiplicité des cultures jeunes et sur les différents espaces de luttes et de redéfinitions identitaires investis par une génération qui, une fois devenue adulte, reproche maintenant à la jeunesse de refuser les limites et normes qu'ils ont eux-mêmes œuvré à redéfinir. C'est de cette même génération dont parlent Gianni D'Amato et Katri Burri dans *1968 c'est passé!*, et qui traite des manifestations de juin 1968 qui eurent lieu à Zurich et leurs portées sociales et symboliques dans la redéfinition des rapports entre la jeunesse de l'époque et l'autorité.

*Le salaire de la peur*, quatrième partie, tente une relecture des comportements de révoltes, de violences et de désorganisation, qui caractérisent habituellement les jeunes, pour en comprendre la complexité souvent évacuée dans l'analyse populaire. Le texte de David Le Breton, *Rite de contrebande d'une jeunesse contemporaine*, présente ainsi ces violences et autres comportements jugés désorganisateurs comme de nouvelles formes de rites de passage. Maintenant individualisés, s'inscrivant dans des réalités de socialisation autres que celles des générations précédentes, ils répondent à une même logique, celle de transcender un état, afin d'accéder à un statut d'individu à part entière. Alors que la révolte et la confrontation s'affichent clairement dans certains mouvements et sous-cultures, David Rossé, dans *Tu ne danseras point?*, réfléchit à la portée contestataire et à la dimension politique du mouvement musical *techno* des années 1990 qui, bien que n'étant pas présentes en avant-plan, étaient bien réelles. Traitant lui aussi de discours identitaires sous-jacents et nécessitant une compréhension intrinsèque du phénomène, Marc Tadorian, dans *Graffiti-writing: à propos d'un fragment de ville-musée*

*amnésique*, offre une courte mais très intéressante analyse ethnographique d'un pan de mur graphité de Bienne, en Suisse, et de la connaissance du langage symbolique et stylistique qui le compose et qui est nécessaire à sa compréhension. Sur les caractéristiques sociales que l'imaginaire collectif peut parfois lier à certaines formes de cultures jeunes, *Résistance du défi* de Virginie Milliot s'attarde sur le hip-hop et les identités sociales, celle de violence, de marge et de délinquance, qui lui sont souvent, à tort, rattachées. Finalement, Tania Zittoun, dans *Tolstoï, la Bible et André the Giant: les ressources que la jeunesse se donne,* adopte une « perspective psychologique socioculturelle » pour comprendre comment l'individu articule l'expérience personnelle d'avec l'expérience collective.

Débutant avec le texte d'Alain Müller sur le concept de sous-cultures et des symboles matériels autour desquels elles se consolident, l'avant-dernière partie, *Révolte purifiée,* porte sur les révoltes de la jeunesse et leur récupération par les marchés. Une fois transformés en produits, en objets consommables ou en expertises recherchées et reconnues, comme c'est le cas des Djs dans le texte de Claire Calogirou ou des techniques de production de musique techno dans celui d'Ismaël Ghodbane, des comportements et activités étant jadis condamnés ou jugées futiles peuvent ensuite se constituer comme des plus-values sociales par les individus qui s'y sont identifiés. La jeunesse, comme le démontre Jean-Marie Seca dans *La jeunesse et ses doubles: commentaires sur une prolifération idéologique datée et liens avec les musiques actuelles,* se pose alors dans une dualité comme masse consommatrice de biens sous l'emprise du marché et comme un ensemble résistant à cette même emprise par des moyens qui ont radicalement changé depuis les années 1950. Sixième et dernière partie, *La jeunesse n'est qu'un mot,* se concluant par un recueil de pensées sur la jeunesse par Howard S. Becker, propose un texte de Franz Schulteis, *La jeunesse – Mythe moderne,* qui se veut une genèse épistémologique de la jeunesse en tant que concept et dénomination relative à son contexte social et historique et s'appuyant sur les théories de Bourdieu.

Se voulant à la fois un catalogue d'exposition, une revue scientifique et une publication grand public, *La marque jeune* se compose de brefs textes, concis et offrant un intéressant survol de la question. Toutefois, l'ouvrage se perd parfois en conjectures en ayant voulu mettre l'emphase sur la genèse théorique au lieu de se pencher, autrement qu'en images, sur des phénomènes plus actuels et leurs manifestations matérielles comme le fait avec succès le texte de Marc Tadorian. Les textes, exception faite de la contribution d'Aymon Kreil sur la jeunesse salafiste, se limitent malheureusement à des formes culturelles occidentales, plus particulièrement ouest-européennes, et à leur genèse, alors que plusieurs artefacts présentés dans le livre sont d'origines africaines et asiatiques. Dans le contexte de mondialisation et d'occidentalisation de nos sociétés, il aurait été plus que pertinent d'y retrouver des contributions portant sur d'autres réalités et d'autres lieux. Entre les contributions de chercheurs, les images des salles d'exposition dont la présence dans l'ouvrage est discutable et

la présentation d'un nombre important d'artefacts liés à la jeunesse, il aurait été intéressant de présenter plus en profondeur certains éléments de cultures matérielles illustrés dans ce livre. Nous assistons plutôt à une suite de biens matériels souvent non datés dont le sens et la portée sociale ne s'inscrivent pas nécessairement dans leurs lieux d'origines, ni dans leur numéro de classification. Ce type de muséologie a les défauts de ses qualités en tentant de présenter un large éventail d'objets sans toujours offrir le contexte et l'interprétation nécessaire à la justification de leur présence dans cet ouvrage qui se présente quand même comme une synthèse théorique intéressante du phénomène de la jeunesse et de sous-cultures qui en découlent.

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**Margaret MacDonald,** *At Work in the Field of Birth: Midwifery Narratives of Nature, Tradition, and Home,* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007, 196 pages.

Reviewer: *Nadya Burton*
*Ryerson University*

In the early pages of her book, *At Work in the Field of Birth,* Margaret MacDonald asserts that midwifery is a cultural universal, and that what differs significantly across time, culture and geography, is the meaning and the practice of midwifery. It is exactly this "meaning" that MacDonald's book delves into as she explores what she identifies as some of the foundational concepts of the profession as it is being articulated and practiced in Ontario in the mid 1990s.

This book is the culmination of MacDonald's doctoral field work, an ethnographic study that was carried out over 14 months in 1996-97, at a very unique and particular time in the history of midwifery in Canada. In the wake of the regulation and funding of midwifery in Ontario in 1994, a modest number of social science texts have made their way to light—lamentably few written by Ontario midwives themselves, immersed as they are, for the most part, in the "field of birth" itself, carrying out the work of bringing alternative birthing care to Ontario women. So the story painted of Ontario midwifery comes to us from an outsider's lens, as anthropological accounts often do, drawing on particular narratives and perspectives that inevitably capture some but not all that there is to see. Given this frame, MacDonald has offered an insightful and engaging analysis of the last decade of alternative birthing care in Ontario, and of the work, cultural and clinical, of Ontario's midwives. Situated thus, at the cusp of what often gets referred to as the "new" midwifery in Ontario, MacDonald's work can certainly be seen to be contributing to and expanding the discourses of midwifery which have for decades danced around the margins of the health care system's approach to, and practices of, birthing care.

MacDonald is keenly aware that she is walking into, or writing into, the minefield of the politics of representation

when she seeks, as an interested observer, to write about a profession that has had to battle long and hard from the margins, and which is, at times, justifiably concerned about academic critique of a grassroots movement. MacDonald cites a few Canadian texts she knows to have raised the ire of midwives, pointing to some of the effects of academic critique of professional midwifery. In quite humble ways, MacDonald acknowledges the risks, the inevitable partiality and perspectival nature of the narratives she tells, while simultaneously arguing for the value of her self-stated "public intellectual goal" of seeking to articulate a series of stories that might serve as alternatives to dominant biomedical narratives relating not just to pregnancy and birth, but also to those who attend pregnant women.

Both at the time of researching this book and today, midwifery in Canada is a profession in the midst of rapid growth and change, and MacDonald has captured a moment, in the immediately post-regulation years, before the first cadre of newly trained midwives emerged from the academy where they were being trained across the province. MacDonald's ethnography therefore focuses on the first generation of regulated midwives in Ontario, a distinctive and notable population whose unique voices we are fortunate to hear in these pages. These are midwifery's "founding mothers," those midwives who practiced in a legal limbo prior to 1994, and who came through the grand-mothering process that examined and licensed Ontario's first 70-odd midwives for legal, funded and regulated practice within the health care system.

MacDonald thus acknowledges the political awareness that her informants, both midwives and midwifery consumers, bring to the interviews. "The women who spoke to me were aware of midwifery's structurally marginal past and socially vulnerable present" (p. 18). The sense of capturing a "moment" in the midwifery path, from counter-culture social movement to funded and regulated part of the health care system, is palpable. While tracking the process of transformation that came with regulation and funding is not the primary focus of the book, this moment in history nonetheless informs MacDonald's exploration of the three central narratives listed in the book's subtitle (nature, tradition and home), as foundational concepts within both the theory and practice of midwifery.

Chapter 2 of the book takes us through a concise history of midwifery in Canada; the shifts from what are often called its "traditional" forms (which MacDonald points out need to be acknowledged for their diversity), to its modern demise and renaissance. MacDonald acknowledges the lack of uniformity in this historical process, identifying locations and communities (Mennonite, First Nations, rural and remote) where the linear narrative of midwifery's demise and rebirth does not accurately tell the story. Most of this chapter is devoted to the "rebirth" of midwifery that began in the second half of the 20th century, as part of many broader social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. MacDonald addresses the battle for regulation and funding, the integration of midwifery into the health care system, the growth of educational programs at three

Ontario universities to train new midwives, and importantly, midwifery's model of care that centrally includes notions of informed choice, continuity of care, and choice of birth place—all ideas she takes up as she works through the notions of nature, tradition and home.

In the third chapter, MacDonald begins the work of unsettling any universalizing discourse of midwifery in Canada and of exploring the narrative of "tradition" in midwifery discourse and practice. She notes that two main discourses of the rebirth of Canadian midwifery (either as the resurrection of an historical "tradition" or the rise of a social movement concerned with the de-medicalization of birth) are significantly "reinvented" in her discussions with practitioners and midwifery clients. Drawing on narratives from her fieldwork she questions to what degree midwifery maps onto either of these two discourses, and explores the growing profession as a potential hybrid between science–medicine and nature–feminism. MacDonald articulates a range of what she identifies as "strains" of midwifery ideologies, including perspectives as diverse as a midwifery grounded in a kind of mothering–nurturing ideology and midwifery as a form of feminist activism. For MacDonald's informants, these approaches do not need to be mutually exclusive, and in fact what they seem to share is a conceptualization of women as capable and strong, and pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood as sites where this strength gets lived out. The midwives she quotes alternately appeal to tradition and distance themselves from it, supporting MacDonald's point that the new midwifery in Ontario is both "selective and strategic" in its appeal to tradition. The text therefore skillfully identifies and reflects upon the double-edged sword that this concept evokes. On the one hand we are presented with its value in maintaining a certain identity for midwifery as counter to the mainstream and as a practice that offers low-tech and personalized care to birthing women, and also that maintains a connection to the social-movement aspect of 1970s and 1980s midwifery. On the other hand, MacDonald does not shy away from addressing the desire that some midwives articulate, to distance themselves from tradition in order to account for and access necessary technology, to situate themselves as legitimate and modern health care professionals, and ultimately to bring greater choice to birthing women. Tradition is analyzed critically and thoughtfully by MacDonald, so that we see its diverse and fractured nature, and MacDonald identifies it not so much as a simple way of understanding midwifery past or present, but as a powerful symbol the movement continues to draw upon.

If chapter 3 is devoted to the narrative of tradition, chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to nature and home respectively. And as with the concept of tradition, MacDonald helps us to see the ways that these sometimes essentialized concepts are problematized by both midwives and birthing women, providing a thought-provoking look at the ways that gender is performed, that choice is made, and that midwives and clients negotiate the terrain of birth. MacDonald highlights how both pregnant women and their midwives are engaging in strategies that

often unsettle assumptions and preconceptions about midwifery; engaging in a meaning-making of their own which serves to construct pregnant and birthing women as competent and powerful, and midwives as both compassionate and skilled care providers. The diversity of ways that midwifery care is conceptualized by the narratives recounted in this text, serves to support a more heterogeneous and less static notion of midwifery than many may be exposed to. As technology becomes a tool to be used in the hands of midwives, as hospitals as well as homes become "midwifery spaces," as tradition can be appealed to in ways that both support and limit ideas of midwifery and birthing care, a diversity of thinking and practice within midwifery are revealed.

MacDonald has explored and articulated the way the work of midwifery is serving to reconfigure the terrain of birth. She explores the way midwifery spaces, practices and ideologies work to situate birth as normal and midwifery care as providing a radical challenge and critique of the dominant health care system that it simultaneously remains connected to in important ways. Through a nuanced and critical look at some of midwifery's oldest tropes, MacDonald provides ample food for thought. Embodying the best of a critical exploration that generously explores the very diverse ways meanings are constructed within any social movement, no matter how unified and unitary it may appear from the outside, MacDonald has written a book that should appeal to all those interested in reproduction, women's health and the theory and practice of childbirth.

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**Pierre Beaucage et le Taller de Tradición Oral,** *Corps, cosmos et environnement chez les Nahuas de la Sierra Norte de Puebla. Une aventure en anthropologie,* Montréal, Québec : Lux Éditeur, 2009, 414 pages.

Recenseur : *Anath Ariel de Vidas*
*CNRS, Paris, France*

« Ce livre n'est pas le fruit d'une recherche ethnographique classique [...] » (p. 13). Ainsi débute l'ouvrage de Pierre Beaucage, synthèse de plus de quarante ans d'« aventure en anthropologie » qui décrit l'histoire, l'écosystème, l'organisation sociale, l'espace-temps, les classifications du monde végétal et animal, les conceptions du corps et des maladies ainsi que le rapport à l'altérité sociale au sein d'une population autochtone, nahua, dans la région de la sierra du nord de l'État de Puebla au Mexique.

L'auteur avait commencé ses recherches dans la région en 1969 en étudiant l'économie paysanne locale, une démarche ancrée à l'époque dans le cadre théorique du matérialisme historique. Ses analyses, nous dit-il, le menaient à prédire l'homogénéisation culturelle des sociétés autochtones étudiées. Mais de retour sur le terrain au début des années 1980 dans le contexte du mouvement paysan autochtone dans la région, il a dû se rendre à l'évidence : les facteurs économiques étaient insuffisants pour expliquer à eux seuls la résurgence du culturel et de l'idée de l'autochtonie. Il décida alors d'explorer le rôle fondamental joué par l'univers symbolique des acteurs sociaux. Cette nouvelle approche et l'apprentissage de la langue nahuatl lui révélèrent alors l'existence d'une dimension plus profonde et plus spécifique du groupe étudié, celle des représentations et des valeurs propres.

L'auteur présente dans cet ouvrage le fruit de sa collaboration, à partir de 1984, avec les membres du *Taller de Tradición Oral* – co-auteur de ce livre – de San Miguel Tzinacapan, une association d'intellectuels autochtones qui s'est donné comme objectif de recueillir, transcrire, traduire et publier des contes nahuas mais aussi, de manière plus générale, d'inventorier le corpus local de connaissances. Ce travail en commun, décrit méthodologiquement par Beaucage, a mené celui-ci à systématiser les données recueillies et à dégager des taxonomies locales du monde végétal et animal, organisées selon un principe relationnel et pratique qu'on retrouve également dans la relation à l'univers surnaturel. Le corps, à travers une série de métaphores pour désigner ses différentes parties, constitue alors une grille de lecture pour la mise en ordre du cosmos. Ces représentations du corps et de la nature s'appliquent finalement dans les pratiques d'interprétation et de guérison des maladies selon des concepts du haut et du bas et du chaud et du froid, largement répandus en Mésoamérique. Ce système engendre un ensemble de normes régissant les relations entre humains et entre ceux-ci et le milieu ambiant.

Le traité de taxonomie, issu de catégories empiriques, est particulièrement fouillé et permet ainsi d'établir le mode local des représentations qui articule l'environnement, le corps et le cosmos. Cette analyse est étayée par de nombreuses cartes et figures qui accompagnent les descriptions et surtout d'un important vocabulaire nahua, qu'on aurait aimé toutefois voir repris dans un index en fin de l'ouvrage. Ce vocabulaire est présenté avec un souci minutieux de traduction littérale et sémantique des termes auxquels sont joints les noms scientifiques des plantes et des animaux mentionnés. La méthodologie de travail avec les différents interlocuteurs ainsi que l'évolution des interprétations sont explicites et agrémentés, parfois entre les lignes, de la présence discrète de l'auteur.

Pierre Beaucage a raison quand il affirme que « ce livre n'est pas le fruit d'une recherche ethnographique classique ». En effet, d'une part, le très riche matériel empirique présenté dans cet ouvrage constitue dorénavant une somme incontournable pour ceux qui souhaitent étudier la cosmologie mésoaméricaine telle qu'elle est déclinée dans la Sierra Norte de Puebla. Cependant, d'autre part, cette somme ne s'associe pas à une analyse problématisée et reliée à un débat anthropologique plus large. Sur le plan symbolique par exemple, le système de représentation nahua local qui lie le corps, le cosmos et l'environnement – présenté en vase clos alors qu'il est caractéristique de nombre de cultures mésoaméricaines – aurait gagné a être comparé à d'autres systèmes régionaux et à des interprétations d'autres auteurs pour en saisir les particularités et les principes communs.

Il est vrai toutefois que la spécificité de ce texte réside dans le fait qu'il est issu d'un travail en collaboration avec des partenaires locaux dont l'objectif n'est pas anthropologique mais politique. D'où aussi une certaine difficulté pour établir un compte-rendu de cet ouvrage dont le but est finalement de consigner les connaissances locales dans un livre cosigné. On aurait apprécié cependant que cette forme littéraire soit ancrée analytiquement dans son contexte. En effet, l'identité paysanne porteuse de droits agraires dans le passé, dans le cadre de la réforme agraire, se transforme aujourd'hui, dans certaines conjonctures, en identité indienne revendiquée dans un contexte de globalisation et de politiques multiculturelles qui donnent une place au *tribal slot*. En d'autres termes, l'auto identification en tant qu'autochtone est le résultat d'une articulation de processus politiques et culturels très souvent déterminée par l'État. Or, dans des régions voisines de celle où ont travaillé les auteurs de ce livre, on ne trouve pas toujours ce genre de réappropriation structurée du patrimoine culturel. San Miguel Tzinacapan et Cuetzalan (le chef-lieu) sont de ces lieux-phares dans l'anthropologie mexicaine où nombre d'équipes de chercheurs ont défilé, influençant sans aucun doute par leur présence et écrits les intellectuels autochtones locaux. Avec les évolutions socio-économiques qui ont traversé ces dernières décennies cette région, mais également d'autres zones rurales au Mexique, certains de ces intellectuels (mais pas tous) ont souhaité devenir sujets de leur propre histoire et de leur propre politique, projet qui a généré un développement politique autochtone spécifique à cette localité mais qu'on ne retrouve pas toujours ailleurs. Tout ceci est mentionné dans le livre mais pas développé alors que même en tant qu'ouvrage de divulgation pour les populations autochtones locales (entre autres), il eut été important de relativiser les données et de leur donner ainsi toute leur particularité, symbolique tout comme politique.

Il n'en reste pas moins vrai que ce livre fait découvrir à ses lecteurs une mine d'informations patiemment recueillies et organisées par l'auteur et les membres du Taller de Tradición Oral. Informations et connaissances de la tradition orale trop longtemps dénigrée qui expriment une vision du monde particulière, légitimée car traduite dorénavant à travers cet ouvrage en tradition écrite accessible, entre autres, aux nouvelles générations des populations nahuas de la région. Ce passage, absolument pas anodin, fournit à travers ce livre un très bel outil pour les accompagner dans la difficile entreprise de la multiculturalité.

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**Natacha Gagné, Thibault Martin et Marie Salaün (dirs.),** *Autochtones, Vues de France et du Québec,* Québec : Les presses de l'Université Laval, 2009, 530 pages.

Recenseure : *Jessica Savaria*
*Université de Montréal*

Ce recueil vise à faire ressortir les différentes perspectives francophones portant sur les questions autochtones et qui sont apparues à la suite d'une rencontre tenue à Paris, en 2006. Il s'agissait d'une occasion de réunir des spécialistes sur les questions autochtones et d'ouvrir un dialogue entre les deux côtés de l'Atlantique afin de faire le point sur « la manière dont le concept "autochtone", dont l'objet d'étude "autochtone", est construit dans l'espace universitaire français et québécois » (Gagné et Salaün). Le recueil se divise en six sections, développées autour de thèmes centraux. Il comporte en tout une trentaine de textes, proposant des approches variées puisque les divers auteurs proviennent de différentes disciplines des sciences humaines : anthropologie, droit, histoire et sociologie.

Le premier thème abordé dans le recueil est la généalogie du terme « autochtonie » et les auteurs approchent le sujet sous différents angles : la terminologie, les agences onusiennes et la façon de définir les peuples autochtones. Cependant, certaines idées réapparaissent dans la majorité des textes de cette section, par exemple le fait que la littérature historique ancienne soit un point de référence pour comprendre la provenance du terme « autochtonie ». Les auteurs s'entendent également de manière générale dans ce qui définit les peuples autochtones, à savoir, l'occupation première d'un territoire et/ou un lien privilégié à la terre, des mythes fondateurs, une situation politique de domination par un État central, une histoire liée au colonialisme et qui mène à une marginalisation ou à une exclusion de ces derniers. Les mouvements de résistance ainsi que les déclarations et les changements terminologiques des dernières décennies, expliqués par les auteurs, démontrent combien il peut être laborieux de tenter une catégorisation des peuples autochtones, car les contextes sont aussi diversifiés que les pays où ils se trouvent, la construction identitaire et la fonction de cette autochtonie n'étant pas figées.

La deuxième section du livre porte sur les autochtones dans le contexte de l'État-nation, rappelant que l'on doit envisager les enjeux autochtones en relation avec les juridictions étatiques. Un point important, soulevé par plus d'un auteur, particulièrement dans cette section, est l'appréhension de certains gouvernements quant aux droits autochtones, qui pourraient mettre en péril l'intégrité politique et géographique d'un État (Schulte-Tenckhoff). Dans le texte de Motard et Otis, les auteurs soulignent d'ailleurs un phénomène non négligeable dans ces questions concernant la dimension étatique : le dépassement de la territorialité classique et l'émergence d'une personnalisation du pouvoir autochtone. Un autre point essentiel est également souligné dans cette partie de l'ouvrage : les nouveaux défis que représente le fait de devoir composer avec des populations autochtones, immigrantes et colonisatrices à l'intérieur d'un même pays (Djama). Des auteurs expliquent aussi la difficulté pour des États à reconnaître les particularismes culturels de certains groupes à l'intérieur de leurs frontières et les processus d'homogénéisation ou les logiques intégratrices mises à l'œuvre par le passé, mais qui subsistent encore aujourd'hui à l'intérieur de certaines lois (Merle et Lafargue).

Les textes de la section trois sont représentatifs, quant à eux, de cas spécifiques liés aux autochtones dans les Amériques. Dans cette section, par exemple, Saganash explique, en faisant référence aux Cris de la Baie-James, combien il est essentiel de replacer les peuples autochtones dont nous parlons dans leur propre contexte historique, idée à laquelle beaucoup d'auteurs font également allusion. Bien que les revendications et mouvements de reconnaissance des droits autochtones aient conduit à une amélioration au niveau des lois dans les dernières années, diverses problématiques persistent en ce qui concerne l'autonomie gouvernementale qu'exigent les nations autochtones du Canada et du Québec (Trudel). Le texte de Gagnon aborde un sujet peu débattu par les autres : les Métis. Certains auteurs évoquent la création d'une nouvelle identité dans divers pays et ceux qui se présentent comme étant métis, mais Gagnon explique plus en détail les difficultés de reconnaissance que doivent affronter les Métis, en illustrant ses propos par la revitalisation de l'identité métis francophone du Manitoba. D'autres sujets sont également abordés : la particularité de l'appartenance à un territoire dans l'affirmation identitaire, le rôle de la musique (Vincent), les différenciations internes créées entre originaires et étrangers (Caballero) et l'utilisation des lois occidentales à l'avantage des populations autochtones, démontrant ainsi l'échec de l'assimilation (Beaucage).

Les textes qui suivent dans la quatrième partie examinent dans quels contextes des populations du Pacifique s'identifient comme autochtones. En décrivant la situation des autochtones à Taïwan, Simon tente de montrer comment cette dernière est similaire à celle des autochtones australiens ou canadiens. Dans la même lignée, Poirier fait une analyse comparative d'exemples canadiens et australiens. Encore une fois, les auteurs du recueil expliquent comment les identités particulières que revêt l'appartenance à un groupe autochtone peuvent se transformer, les différentes facettes d'une culture n'étant pas figées. Tout comme le fait Beaucage à la section quatre, Simon se questionne quant au rôle que doivent jouer les anthropologues et leur implication par rapport à ces nouveaux glissements identitaires. Je dois également mentionner que le texte de Fer, portant sur le protestantisme évangélique en milieu autochtone, met en perspective un fait nouveau étudié, également par d'autres chercheurs depuis quelques années, en ce qui concerne la conversion religieuse et les liens que les autochtones peuvent établir avec leurs propres mouvements d'affirmation identitaire. D'autres textes survolent également la dimension religieuse, mais plus au niveau rituel, des créations identitaires.

La cinquième section du livre tente de faire le point sur les recherches relatives aux autochtones et cette partie du livre est tout aussi intéressante que les précédentes puisqu'elle présente différentes approches et changements s'étant opérés au cours des dernières décennies dans les champs de recherche portant sur les questions autochtones. Le texte de Dorais nous amène à nous questionner sur les fondements mêmes du concept d'« autochtonie » et explique des arguments utilisés par

Flanagan, Widdowson, Simar et Kuper, qui semblent voir l'Occident contemporain comme la seule forme admissible de modernité : Dorais, dans une autre ligne de pensée, croit plutôt que le pluralisme du monde aide à enrichir nos savoirs et le respect des différences. Cette section amène d'autres points importants concernant les recherches autochtones : le fait que la modernité devienne centrale dans plusieurs problématiques posées aujourd'hui et l'évolution au sein des sciences humaines, qui a modifié considérablement le rapport avec les autochtones, qui ne sont plus uniquement les objets de nos recherches, mais également des sujets connaissants (Martin). La position du scientifique ayant changé, le fondement méthodologique s'en trouve modifié ainsi que l'éthique des sciences sociales, qui signifie une plus grande collaboration entre chercheurs et participants de l'étude.

Finalement, la dernière section ne comporte que deux textes, mais semble essentielle puisqu'elle porte un regard sur la dimension artistique, sujet peu abordé ou pas du tout dans les autres textes de l'ouvrage. Yves Sioui-Durand explique le paradoxe d'être un artiste amérindien d'art actuel, par le fait de se sentir constamment rattaché aux stéréotypes de l'« authenticité », développés à travers les expositions ou livres dont les objets d'études sont les Amérindiens. Le deuxième texte de cette section est en quelque sorte une comparaison entre des écrits francophones de la Polynésie et de l'Amérique du Nord et le style distinct du modèle anglophone.

En passant par le Mexique, le Canada, la Polynésie, l'Australie, l'Afrique de l'Ouest et d'autres pays, cet ouvrage permet de mieux cerner les questions autochtones sous divers angles et ouvre la porte à de nombreuses pistes de réflexions concernant les nouveaux défis amenés par les enjeux politiques concernant les luttes pour la décolonisation, l'autodétermination et la reconnaissance des droits. Le partage d'expériences comme le colonialisme et la discrimination ont permis, depuis les dernières décennies, la formation de réseaux et d'alliances autochtones à un niveau international. Plusieurs débats ainsi que questionnements contemporains sont abordés dans ce recueil, qui peut aussi être utilisé comme source de références, étant donné la revue de littérature faite par les différents auteurs. C'est donc un ouvrage pouvant intéresser aussi bien les professeurs que les étudiants du milieu universitaire intéressés par les questions autochtones. Les textes ne doivent pas nécessairement être lus dans un ordre spécifique puisque la division du recueil en sections ayant chacune un thème central permet de choisir les textes en lien avec nos intérêts de recherche personnels. Les troisième et quatrième sections du livre présentent de riches en exemples d'études de cas et d'expériences de terrain, les rendant encore plus captivants. Nous aurions cependant souhaité voir apparaître plus clairement les différences en matière de structuration des champs de recherche en France et au Québec, quoique le recueil semble réellement présenter un dialogue ouvert entre différents spécialistes francophones sur les questions autochtones. L'ouvrage comportant des textes très diversifiés et alliant plusieurs domaines d'études nous amène donc sur des pistes

de réflexion qui mériteraient d'être approfondies dans de futures recherches relatives aux autochtones comme les modalités d'appartenance après la colonisation, les identités qui se déterritorialisent ou encore les relations entre acteurs sociaux de plusieurs États : autochtones, citoyens et immigrants.

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**Richard J. Preston (ed.),** *A Kindly Scrutiny of Human Nature: Essays in Honor of Richard Slobodin,* Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2009, 145 pages.

Reviewer: *Robin Ridington*
*Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia*

These essays are loving, thoughtful and well-crafted. The book is a little gem, in fitting tribute to the thoughtful and well-crafted work of Richard Slobodin, one of the founders of the McMaster University Department of Anthropology. This *festschrift* came out of a session in honour of Slobodin at the annual conference of the Canadian Anthropology Association in 2006. Slobodin's colleagues Richard Preston and Harvey Feit introduce the man and his work with care and respect. As the title indicates, they view both as fundamentally humanistic. As Preston explains in his introduction, "*Kindly* does not mean naive but rather it suggests an undercurrent of humane interest in intentions, actions, and their consequences" (p. 1). Preston goes on to write, "Dick did not write a lot, but he wrote very well, in accessible and personable prose" (p. 11). Other tributes from friends and colleagues follow. His colleague, philosopher Sam Ajzenstat, observes that, "the word 'anthropology' is pretty much a synonym for the word 'humanities'" (p. 23). Former Student, Kenneth Little, writes, "Dick could mould his stories around most subjects of conversation and debate to develop a critical and thought-provoking sense of human nature and its quirkiness" (p. 26).

Slobodin's B.A. was in comparative literature and his M.A. in education. When he was just 23, he took a trip to the Yukon and first came into contact with the Gwich'in (Kutchin) people. When he returned to New York in 1940, he enrolled in anthropology at Columbia University, returning to the Gwich'in following military service in the Second World War. Like many liberal academics, he was blacklisted from working in anthropology during the McCarthy era and only finished his dissertation in 1959. Because of these delays, he did not begin his academic career at McMaster until 1964.

The book begins with the tributes referred to above, and closes with a previously unpublished story, "Caribou Hunt," by Slobodin himself. The story is witty, insightful and crisp in its use of dialogue and description of place. These northern adventures of a greenhorn from New York are the reality from which Slobodin's ethnographic and theoretical observations emerged. Slobodin contributed to theory through knowledge gained from the people he worked with. These observations helped clarify the sometimes abstract debates about the nature of social organization among band level societies.

The essays that follow discuss many of these debates in relation to Slobodin's contributions. Robert Wishart and Michael Asch argue that his 1962 ethnography, *Band Organization of the peel River Kutchin*, "is a powerful and prescient critique of what would become anthropological orthodoxy," that they say has justified colonial imposition "by turning what are relations of force into a process that seems natural and therefore just" (p. 33). Their essay argues that the evolutionary materialism of Steward, Murphy, Service and Wolf incorrectly predicts "the triumph of capital over the foraging mode of production" (p. 34). They cite Slobodin's detailed ethnographic and historical observations that together constitute "a powerful and often not subtle critique of the orthodoxy," and substantiate his argument that "the Gwich'in actively maintain a hunting economy" that contradicts the alleged "eventuality" of materialist theory (p. 35).

Harvey Feit's contribution, in addition to being a tribute to his friend and colleague, offers a substantial review of the literature and attendant controversies about band organization and land tenure among eastern Algonquians in relation to Slobodin's Gwich'in ethnography. As with all of Feit's writing, this piece is a thorough review of the interrelation between ethnography and theory. It is a must read for students wanting a succinct and even-handed review of this controversy anthropology. Feit's essay is followed by a review of Slobodin's work on Métis ethnography by Mary Black-Rogers, a recollection of Slobodin's contribution to *Amerindian Rebirth* by his co-editor Antonia Mills, and another tribute to Slobodin's ethnography by David Damas.

Richard Slobodin belonged to a generation of anthropologists who were guided by original ethnographic experience rather than the theories they brought with them to the field. Because of this, their contributions to theory are authentic and believable. Slobodin's teachers were the Gwich'in people he knew as much as his academic mentors. When Slobidin did turn to theory, he chose to write about W.H. Rivers, an anthropologist of the generation that preceeded him. This *festschrift* does justice to Slobodin the man, the ethnographer and the contributor to anthropological theory.

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**Samuel de Champlain, texte en français moderne annoté et présenté par Éric Thierry,** *À la rencontre des Algonquins et des Hurons 1612-1619,* Sillery, Québec : Septentrion, 2009, 235 pages.

Recenseure : *Leila Inksetter*
*Université de Montréal*

Plusieurs ouvrages sur Champlain ont été publiés dans la foulée des célébrations entourant le 400e anniversaire de la fondation de Québec. La réédition des œuvres de Champlain, en

français moderne et annotées par Éric Thierry, coïncide avec celles-ci. Le volume *À la rencontre des Algonquins et des Hurons 1612-1619* est le deuxième ouvrage d'une série de quatre : *Les fondations de l'Acadie et du Québec 1604-1611* a été publié chez le même éditeur l'année précédente et deux autres volumes sont prévus en 2011 et en 2012 (*Voyages de 1632* et *Bref Discours et des Sauvages*). Tout comme le premier volume de la série, *À la rencontre des Algonquins et des Hurons 1612-1619* est introduit par un texte original de Thierry mettant en contexte les écrits de Champlain qui font l'objet de la publication. Une courte chronologie à la fin permet de situer les principaux événements dans le temps. Il est fort probable que la même formule sera retenue pour les autres volumes de la série.

*À la rencontre des Algonquins et des Hurons 1612-1619* reproduit et réunit les textes *Quatrième Voyage* dans lequel Champlain relate son voyage de 1613 en Amérique, ainsi que *Voyages* qui traite de ses séjours en 1615 et 1618. Avant de les aborder directement, le lecteur est invité à lire l'introduction de Thierry. Celle-ci, d'une cinquantaine de pages, est divisée en trois sections. Dans la première, *La recherche de la mer du Nord*, l'auteur expose le contexte dans lequel s'est fait le voyage de Champlain en 1613 et qui a donné lieu au texte *Quatrième voyage*, les événements survenus lors de ce voyage et la façon dont la publication du texte original a été faite. On nous explique ainsi les connaissances préalables qu'avait vraisemblablement Champlain avant d'entreprendre son voyage. Ce voyage sera celui où Champlain tente d'atteindre la mer du Nord, mais après un malentendu avec les Kichesipirinis impliquant le jeune Français Vignau qui avait séjourné chez eux, il devra rebrousser chemin. Thierry s'attarde ensuite à expliquer les causes de ce malentendu et à en relever le traitement discursif qu'en fait Champlain. Cette section est claire et fort utile pour préparer un public général à la lecture du texte de Champlain. On déplorera cependant que la carte situant les nations amérindiennes au début du XVIIᵉ siècle qui accompagne cette section ne soit pas très détaillée, de sorte que nombre de groupes mentionnés dans le texte n'y figurent pas (par ex., les Onontchataronons ou les Kichesipirinis). Cette lacune nuit sans aucun doute à la compréhension d'un lecteur ordinaire pour qui la multiplication des ethnonymes est source de confusion.

La deuxième section, intitulée *Les alliances franco-amérindiennes mises à mal*, aborde la nature des relations entre Français et Autochtones entre 1612 et 1619. Les exemples utilisés par Thierry sont tirés des textes *Quatrième voyage* et *Voyages*, mais également des textes de Champlain réunis dans l'ouvrage *Les fondations de l'Acadie et de Québec 1604-1611*, le premier volume de la série annotée par Thierry. L'absence de symétrie par rapport à la précédente section surprend et confond le lecteur. En effet, on se serait attendu à ce que le deuxième texte de Champlain reproduit dans le volume fasse l'objet du même traitement que le premier, c'est-à-dire qu'on nous explique le contexte dans lequel il a été rédigé et qu'on nous présente succinctement les événements survenus avant

d'en faire une analyse plus générale. À la place, on nous présente une foule d'événements tirés d'une multitude de sources, sans nécessairement suivre un cheminement chronologique et sans prendre le temps d'expliquer au lecteur la géopolitique amérindienne de façon générale. Par ailleurs, la carte qui accompagne cette section n'est pas détaillée, de sorte qu'on y figure les villages hurons, mais sans y situer les différents groupes mentionnés dans le texte. Il est fort probable qu'un lecteur ordinaire aura de la difficulté à suivre.

La troisième section, intitulée *Christianiser les Hurons*, présente ce que la section précédente avait omis de faire, c'est-à-dire le contexte dans lequel le texte *Voyages* a été écrit et la façon dont son édition originale a été faite. On y analyse également le traitement discursif employé par Champlain pour décrire les Hurons chez qui Champlain a séjourné pendant son voyage en Amérique en 1615, puis on enchaîne avec une analyse iconographique des gravures qui accompagnent le texte *Voyages*. Cette section permet de mieux apprécier la lecture du texte de Champlain. Il aurait été souhaitable qu'on y inclue une brève description des événements survenus en 1615 et 1618 pour faciliter la compréhension de l'analyse qu'en fait Thierry, lacune que la consultation de la chronologie à la fin du volume permet de contrecarrer quelque peu.

L'introduction s'achève sur une très brève explication du processus de modernisation du langage employé pour reproduire les textes de Champlain. Ainsi, on s'est surtout consacré à la normalisation orthographique et à l'ajout de ponctuation et de paragraphes. Thierry nous informe aussi que certains mots trop désuets ont été remplacés, sans toutefois nous préciser lesquels.

Les deux textes de Champlain annotés suivent l'introduction. Les annotations sont surtout de nature explicative afin de clarifier le texte original pour le lecteur, mais aussi pour rajouter de l'information supplémentaire, comme en citant des passages apparentés écrits par d'autres chroniqueurs de l'époque (Gabriel Sagard par exemple). On y relève également à l'occasion les différences entre les versions originales disponibles. La nature des annotations est cohérente avec le public visé par une version du texte de Champlain en français moderne. Ainsi annotées, les œuvres de Champlain reproduites sont accessibles à un public général, intéressé par l'histoire, mais qui ne cherche pas à connaître les détails et subtilités linguistiques du texte original. Les informations fournies par les annotations sont utiles et divertissantes et rendent le texte de Champlain plus vivant.

Si l'intérêt de la retranscription en français moderne des textes de Champlain ne fait aucun doute et que par ailleurs la qualité et la pertinence des annotations en fonction du public visé sont indéniables, on peut toutefois douter que l'introduction rédigée par Thierry satisfasse ledit public. En effet, il est à craindre que l'introduction, qui devrait aider un lecteur ordinaire à s'initier à Champlain, pourrait avoir l'effet inverse : la multiplication des ethnonymes dans l'introduction sans suffisamment de contexte et d'explications aura facilement pour effet de confondre le lecteur qui n'a que peu de connaissances

préalables sur le sujet, risquant ainsi de le dissuader de poursuivre sa lecture. Ce serait dommage, car cela empêcherait ce lecteur d'accéder à une version de Champlain pourtant très simple et agréable à consulter. On peut comprendre que Thierry n'ait pas voulu reprendre le contexte qu'il a davantage détaillé dans l'introduction du premier volume de la série, mais une brève mise en situation, notamment en ce qui concerne les ethnonymes utilisés, aurait été nécessaire.

Outre le manque de mise en contexte, une autre difficulté à aborder l'introduction réside dans l'impression qu'elle dégage d'avoir été rédigée à la hâte. Si l'on doit souligner l'effort qu'a mis Thierry à inclure les toutes dernières publications sur Champlain, il en résulte parfois que des éléments disparates sont accolés et que des parties de texte provenant d'autres publications ont été réutilisées presque intégralement (comparer par exemple la partie concernant l'assassinat de deux Français par des Innus avec l'article de Beaulieu 2008[1]). Il est dommage que cette difficulté dans la lecture de certaines parties de l'introduction occulte un peu le fait que les informations qu'on nous fournit sont fort intéressantes.

L'ouvrage sera particulièrement apprécié à des fins pédagogiques, notamment pour des enseignants ou professeurs qui veulent présenter des textes de Champlain à leurs élèves et étudiants dans un langage accessible.

## Note

1  Beaulieu, Alain. 2008. « L'on a point d'ennemis plus grands que ces sauvages ». L'alliance franco-innue revisitée (1603-1653). Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française 61(3-4):365-395.

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## Film Review / Revue de Film

**Richard Meech**, *Vine of the Soul: Encounters with* Ayahuasca, Meech Grant Productions, 2010.

Reviewer: *Victor Barac*
*University of Toronto*

Conceived and directed by Canadian anthropologist-filmmaker Richard Meech, *Vine of the Soul* documents key aspects of the cultural diffusion of *ayahuasca* use in North America. It follows a group of Canadian ayahuasca users to the Peruvian jungle and back, documenting various aspects of their experience with the powerful hallucinogenic drug. It surveys a variety of expert opinions and provides compelling insights into the meaning and context of ayahuasca use by non-indigenous users.

The film is not an attempt at balanced reportage providing an objective report on all sides of the issue. The focus is on the positive experience and the legitimization of the ayahuasca experience. It is phenomenological anthropology and advocacy anthropology at the same time.

As a work of phenomenology *Vine of the Soul* renders an extreme form of human experience more powerfully than can even the best narrative. The setting of the ayahuasca experience is under the protective lush-green canopy of the Peruvian jungle, abuzz with bird and insect noises and so teeming with plant life that is does not seem so far-fetched that the "plants speak" to the *curanderos* (shamans), as they claim. The ayahuasca experience itself is conveyed via a balanced mixture of straight observational footage with scenes of distorted audio and visuals intended to simulate the altered state of consciousness induced by the brew.

As advocacy, the film presents ayahuasca use as something of potentially great value. Testimonials from several key informants, filmed at both their homes in Canada and in Peru, before and after their trip, show them to be fairly normal people and not debauched deviants. Getting these people to open up about their personal lives and their ayahuasca use, posing a risk to their reputations at home, must have required a great deal of trust-making work on the part of the filmmakers.

*Ayahuasca* is the Quechua term for a hallucinogenic brew, or tea, drunk by numerous indigenous peoples of South and Central America. Though the term is used to refer to the drink it is also the indigenous term for the jungle vine *Banisteriopsis caapi*, believed to be the key ingredient and the spiritual component of the drink. Drunk by itself, the ayahuasca vine produces no effects, but when combined with other plants, such as *chacruna (Psychotria viridis)*, it produces a potent mind-altering drink that is consumed in special circumstances that are simultaneously religious and medical in nature.

Ayahuasca is the focal point of an ancient shamanic tradition. By ingesting the plant shamans enter into altered states of consciousness with the purpose of retrieving lost souls or soul fragments on behalf of patients afflicted with spiritual malaise commonly translated as "soul loss"—in secular terms, a psychological condition characterized by depression, listlessness and an overall lack of will to carry on with life.

Peruvian shamans, or curanderos, have traditionally served members of their local communities with the assistance of this highly valued spiritual medicine. Increasingly, though, they are becoming service vendors for an expanding ayahuasca market among non-indigenous people. Not only is ayahuasca exported around the world, "ayahuasca tourism" draws increasing numbers of people from around the globe to South America.

In Peru, ayahuasca is recognized as a revered element of that state's indigenous cultural heritage even though its use is not yet technically legal. In some countries, such as Brazil and the U.S., its use is legally restricted to certain religious groups. Due to its increasing popularity, many other countries have started taking notice as to the legal status of the drug. Confounding legislators is the fact that the vine itself has none of the psychoactive substance DMT (N,N-dimethyltryptamine) which gives the tea its potency. The DMT, which is naturally produced by the human body in small amounts, comes from the chacruna plant (among many others) that is mixed with the ayahuasca vine to produce the tea. When ingested as a tea, DMT is released in significantly greater quantities. The

problem for ayahuasca users is that DMT is classified as a Schedule 1 drug by the UN and is thus restricted to medical and scientific use in most countries.

Unlike some other hallucinogens extracted from the indigenous medicine cabinet, ayahuasca never made it as a recreational drug. So far it has not cracked any major party scenes anywhere. South American drug cartels who saw in ayahuasca a potential bonanza have given up trying to peddle it. It is just too powerful and dangerous. Its proper use requires substantial knowledge and expertise. It is not a drug for a casual hit or high. Many foods must be avoided before its use to prevent serious illness. According to the curanderos, ayahuasca cannot become a party drug because the spiritual component dominates. Those who report positive experiences with ayahuasca speak of it in the most glowing terms of universal connectedness and love—qualities deemed lacking in our complex, urban societies.

Ayahuasca use is rationalized in various ways by the film's subjects. For one person it cured an addiction to heroin. For another it was a way to help solve family strife. For others it was an aid in the quest for greater self-knowledge. Each comes off as utterly genuine and the film thus succeeds in stirring up a great deal of empathy for its subjects.

A most laudable feature of this film is that it lets the images and subjects do all the talking. There is virtually no narrative voice-over. Yet, there is a grand narrative effect due to subtle direction and adroit editing that leads this viewer to ask many questions. For example, why does the mainstream habitually vilify hallucinogenic drug use even when it is done for spiritual reasons? Is the spiritual versus recreational drug dichotomy valid? Why do people from metropolitan world centres (and not just anthropologists) reach out to indigenous cultures for a cure to their alienation or anomie? Why do they crave Amerindian hallucinogens in particular? Why did Amerindians explore hallucinogens to a far greater extent than old world cultures (a question posed by anthropologist Weston LaBarre in *The Ghost Dance*, his classic book on the origins of religion)? Are indigenous and metropolitan cultures rendered more powerful in combination, just like the two plant ingredients of the ayahuasca brew? How will laws be changed in order to accommodate the changing drug habits of the world?

Though it does not directly answer these questions, this film provides a valuable ethnographic documentary on a contemporary cultural trend that has rapidly become global in scope. *Vine of the Soul* calls into question many reigning assumptions and laws pertaining to drug use and, as such, will remain a relevant documentary for years to come.
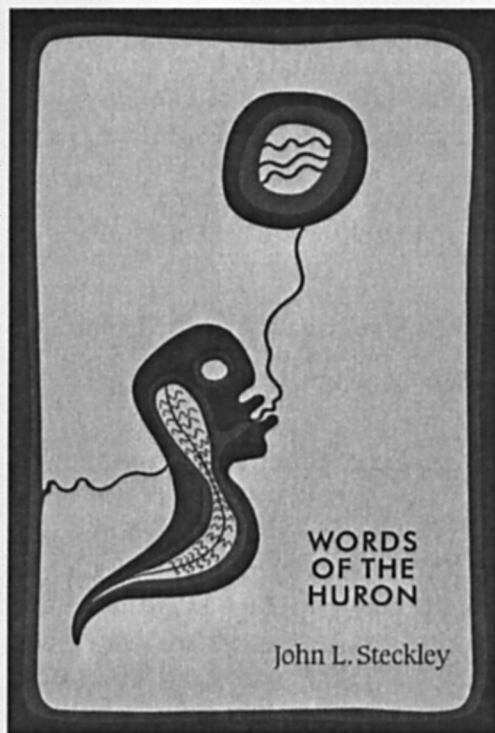
# Words of the Huron

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*Words of the Huron* is an investigation into seventeenth-century Huron culture through a kind of linguistic archaeology of a language that died midway through the twentieth century.

John L. Steckley explores a range of topics, including the construction of longhouses and wooden armour; the use of words for trees in village names; the social anthropological standards of kinship terms and clans; the Huron conceptualization of European-borne disease; the spirit realm of orenda; Huron nations and kinship groups; relationship to the environment; material culture; and the relationship between the Jesuit missionaries and settlers and the Huron people.

Steckley's source material includes the first dictionary of any Aboriginal language, Recollect Brother Gabriel Sagard's Huron phrasebook, published in 1632, and the sophisticated Jesuit missionary study of the language from the 1620s to the 1740s, beginning with the work of Father Jean de Brébeuf. The only book of its kind, *Words of the Huron* will spark discussion among scholars, students, and anyone interested in North American archaeology, Native studies, cultural anthropology, and seventeenth-century North American history.

**John L. Steckley** has taught at Humber College since 1983 in the areas of Aboriginal languages, culture, and history. His books include *Beyond Their Years: Five Native Women's Stories; Full Circle: Canada's First Nations; Aboriginal Voices and the Politics of Representation in Canadian Introductory Sociology Textbooks;* and *De Religione: Telling the 17th-Century Jesuit Story in Huron to the Iroquois.* In 1999, he was adopted into the Wyandot tribe of Kansas.

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# A Kindly Scrutiny of Human Nature

## Essays in Honour of Richard Slobodin

### Richard J. Preston, editor

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*A Kindly Scrutiny of Human Nature* is a collection of essays honouring Richard (Dick) Slobodin, one of the great anthropologists of the Canadian North. A short biography is followed by essays describing his formative thinking about human nature and human identities, his humanizing force in his example of living a moral, intellectual life, his discernment of people's ability to make informed choices and actions, his freedom from ideological fashions, his writings about the Mackenzie District Métis, his determination to take people's experience seriously, not metaphorically, and his thinking about social organization and kinship. An unpublished paper about a 1930s caribou hunt in which he participated finishes the collection, giving Dick the last word.

**Richard J. Preston** is nominally retired (Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, McMaster University) and hopes to continue his forty-plus-year span of sojourning and work with the people of the James Bay region, focusing on the cultural dimensions of globalization and tracing the emergence of the Cree concept of community. His publications include *Cree Narrative: Expressing the Personal Meanings of Events*, second edition (2002), and a great many papers.

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