Irish Journal of Anthropology

IJA

Volume VII
2004

Edited by A. Jamie Saris

IRISH JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGY (IJA)

Editor:
A. Jamie Saris

Volume VII.

ISSN 1393-8592

Published by The Anthropological Association of Ireland

Editorial Board:
Elizabeth Tonkin, Hastings Donnan, Séamas Ó Síocháin, and Gearóid Ó Crualaoich.

The Journal accepts articles in English or Irish.

Subscription Rate (Euro/Sterling): €20/£15

All communication, including subscriptions and papers for publication, should be sent to:

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Editor's Introduction

It need not be belaboured here that the *Irish Journal of Anthropology* finds itself having fallen considerably behind in its publishing commitments. In 2003 (after some lobbying on our part), my and Steve Coleman's tenure came to (what we thought was a merciful) end. Stuart McLean then assumed the editorship with high hopes of producing two editions, a late 2003 in early 2004 and one on schedule for the end of 2004. Shortly, thereafter, Stuart received a tenure-track offer at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, and he was forced, because of his imminent relocation to the US, to resign the editorship last Autumn. At the end of last year, then, the then-current president of the AAI, Séamas Ó'Síocháin, asked me to resume my journal duties until a replacement could be found. I (it must be said) grudgingly agreed.

It seems to me to be a bit strained to produce a 2003 edition in middle of 2005, so I have made a decision to produce no number for 2003 (undoubtedly this will make counterfeits of the volume extremely valuable to scholars in the future), and resume publishing with a late edition of 2004 (this one, Number VII) with a further one later this year for 2005 (Number VIII). This strategy will at least make for a better relationship between journal dates and standard chronology. It will also clear the backlog of articles in hand and under review, allowing my replacement, Séamas Ó'Síocháin, to begin his tenure with a clean slate.

I would like to thank Emma Heffernan for her trojan work as editorial assistant for this volume.

"Seeing and Not Believing:"
Ultrasound Technology and Pregnancy Loss

Yvonne McGrath

Seeing the fetal image has become a ubiquitous part of modern-day techno-pregnancy. Ultrasound technology has become a normal and expected part of prenatal care. Ultrasound scanning, unlike other more invasive tests such as amniocentesis,[1] does not carry the risk of miscarriage, and therefore fetal imaging as a means of gaining knowledge about fetal health and well-being is firmly embedded in both maternal and obstetric discourses as a cost-effective, safe and valid use of visualization technology.[2] While ultrasound images are open to a wide range of interpretations and speculations, they are now commonly constructed as the first "baby picture" in a family's experience of pregnancy.

At the same time, one-in-five pregnancies end in miscarriage. This paper focuses on instances of pregnancy loss, raising the question of what meanings does the technology take on, and what other discourses are informing what it means to miscarry (Miscarriage Association of Ireland n.d.). Ultrasound scans are a very particular kind of intervention; the ultrasound scan offers desired access[3] to the fetus and thus allows women and their supporters to construct a relationship with their baby-to-be. However, when there is an *absence* of the expected image, the technology takes on a more complex position within the experiences of early pregnancy, constructions of fetal identity, and of fetal death. This raises questions surrounding what death in the womb might mean and how it is understood and rationalized or *not* by women who have had these experiences. I attempt to show how "life" and "death" are attributed in different ways and how these constructs are part of the liminal state in which pregnant women exist. Essentially, I am considering how these varying discourses, produced through varying visualizations of the fetus, may be used to comprehend pregnancy loss and death in the womb.

The experience of miscarriage is intensely private, particularly if it is an early miscarriage, where knowledge of the pregnancy has not yet been made public. Miscarriage is a different kind of death and is configured in different ways to other death. Early pregnancy loss, for example, is not subject to the same ritualization as other death. As Linda Layne indicates in her work on pregnancy loss is the United States, in many ways available scripts do not exist for a ritualization of these deaths and these same issues are in play in Ireland. In some respects miscarriage is an invisible death, lacking the social elements of other death, yet fetal death can now be subject to visual inspection. Seeing miscarriage as loss of "life," then depends on how the fetus is constructed and to what degree it is granted personhood. Secondly, as Jenny Littlewood argues, "Miscarriage articulates societies' concerns about how life is attributed" (1999:226).

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1 See Rayna Rapp's "Testing Women, Testing the Fetus" for interesting analysis on amniocentesis in a US context.

2 See www.ob-ultrasound.net

3 A desire that is obviously created, at least in part, by the very existence of the technology.

Death of the fetus or the "unborn" is complicated and situated in the very scripts that produce fetal personhood. These discourses surrounding knowledge of fetuses are augmented by debates about abortion. Irish fetuses have a particular place in the landscape of Ireland; the "unborn" are granted a "right to life" in the constitution.[4] Rosanne Cecil's work on stillbirth in Northern Ireland for example, has shown how the "unborn" are considered and managed by women, the medical profession and society, varies in both time and space (Cecil 1996). Ireland has a complicated history surrounding the contestation of rights to abortion. It is possible to tease out how the "right to life" movements have informed the production of knowledge around fetuses in Ireland. They draw on visual media, similar media to the ultrasound image itself and rather than seeing these discourses as separate, it is necessary to see how they may be integrated into creating scripts for understanding fetal personhood and fetal loss. The *granting* of fetal life exists in both visualisation technology and the imagined world of fetuses.

Pregnancies, once accepted, are imbued with considerable social (McClain 1975 cited in Littlewood 1999) and psychological (Drife 1993 cited in Littlewood 1999) investment by both the mother and society. This "investment" from society has particular significance in an Irish setting that privileges the fetus in such a unique way. Laury Oaks argues in her work on pro-life movements in Ireland that it is through reproduction that "visions of "Irishness" are imagined and expressed" (1997:133). Notions of fetal personhood can be embedded in these ideas of the unborn and shed some light on the almost ubiquitous acceptance of the imagined and technologically enhanced fetus. I am attempting to ground these ideas in individual experiences, illustrating how women configure their experiences of pregnancy loss.

Linda Layne argues that both biomedical and holistic approaches to maternity care "propagate, the belief that reproduction is something that can and should be controlled" (2003a:1885). Miscarriage cannot be "undone" or "saved;" it is a death that can only be seen once it has occurred. Biomedicine cannot come to the rescue and produce "a happy ending"; ultrasound technology can only confirm fetal death, but as I will show even this is not a neutral interpretation. There is no happy ending but there are real consequences that underscore the vulnerability and liminality of early pregnancy. Ultrasound scanning allows for early prenatal death to be visualized, but this visualization is measured in terms what cannot be seen, rather than what can be seen. For women who have experienced pregnancy loss, the technology itself can take on an important role in confirming fetal life and normalcy. The heartbeat is the first thing checked for on an ultrasound and it allows women to move from the "I'm pregnant," (positive results in urine test) stage to, as one woman put it, "from bump to baby" or another "I'm pregnant, but now I'm carrying a child." Seeing the fetus has become the point of identifying life, recognising life is now a "rigorous scientific endeavour" (Lock 2002:35). For the vast majority of my informants seeing the fetal image was the legitimising marker of early pregnancy.

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4 Article 40.3.3 of the Irish Constitution states that "It shall be unlawful to terminate the life of an unborn unless such termination is necessary to save the life, as distinct from the health, of the mother where there is an illness or disorder of the mother giving rise to a real and substantial risk to her life, not being a risk of self-destruction."

I suppose it depends, the first time around with Ruairi, I suppose, I suppose it was kind of, even though I knew I was pregnant, I was pregnant 12 weeks pregnant, the first [ultrasound scan] *was confirmation, yeah I really am pregnant cos' it seemed like a very unreal thing the first time around, for me that was it obviously confirmed* (Marie 31 year-old woman pregnant with 3rd child and 4th pregnancy).

Marie was an active consumer of ultrasound technology, particularly following an early miscarriage in her third pregnancy. The technology was constructed as one that confirmed fetal normalcy and *life* at the earliest stages. Marie stated that,

Yeah it was exciting the first time, it was exciting, and Michael came in with everything and me. I don't know if he was with me the second time, I think he was actually, I think he came with me with David...it wasn't because I already, I had a picture of Ruairi the minute I found out I was pregnant. I already had a picture in my head, so it wasn't a big deal.

Y: So with first one did the image look different to how thought it would be?

M : Ummm... not really cos' I'd seen pictures of other people's ultrasounds before. So I knew it was going to look like that but, at the same time because Ruairi was kind of waving his hand around it looked like he was saying would you ever get lost, it was kinda funny, like, the, he did not seem to particularly like the fact that there was this huge metal thing being shoved to my stomach, ammm, wobbling around a bit, I suppose. I'd seen the printout and I'd seen it on telly, but it's probably a little bit different when its your baby especially the first time, even though you know you're pregnant, it's confirmation, you're looking at the picture and thinking that is actually my baby, your first look, I don't think, that was not my reaction the second time around. The second time around I already had a picture in my head. I already...the first time around I was, like, I know I'm pregnant but is this way I'm supposed to feel. Where as the second time around, I knew everything was fine... well I felt, I kind of assumed everything was fine.

As Marie's narrative shows, the experience of ultrasound in subsequent pregnancies is different from the first. The reality of pregnancy did not need to be created in the same way the second-time around, being pregnant was plausible, understandable and part of Marie's reality. Marie personified her first baby in a very potent way; her second baby was not subject to such powerful ideas based on the ultrasound alone, because she already had an understanding of a baby. Marie is employing scripts that underline her unborn baby's individuality and this personification is particularly potent in relation to her miscarriage. At the same time, the construction of fetal personhood has many complexities and is situated in various fetal images and discourses surrounding these images as well as in personal experiences and other social knowledge of pregnancy.

> *When I miscarried, I knew I was pregnant for three weeks and I had a picture in my head, and was holding my baby, everything to do with my baby, I miscarried at eight weeks and I'd had no scan.*

While Marie had not had a scan, there is no doubt that visualization imagery produces ideas of the fetus as a baby. The intense personification and the imaginings of the baby-that-would-be make the experience of losing, a *particular, individual* fetus all the more potent and devastating.

The Politics of Visualization

Rayna Rapp has discussed how "fetal images may cast light on the political space in which shifting notions of maternal responsibility, abortion rights and disability rights are evolving in contemporary American culture" (1997:33). And, in many ways, the fetal image has been subject to similar forms of speculation in Ireland. As Laury Oaks discusses the pro-life movement in Ireland utilizes fetal images "to demonstrate their basic claim that fetuses are person who deserve legislative protection", they "stand[s] as a universal depiction of innocent life before birth" (Oaks 1999:179).

As the following accounts illustrate it is a combination of the discourses around fetal personhood, abortion and the pro-life movement, as well as individual women's understandings of early pregnancy and what it means to be carrying an unborn child that produces women's understandings of what it means to miscarry.

Emma is a mother of three who had a miscarriage between her second and third children. It quickly became clear that Emma had a different relationship to ultrasound technology than most women. She chose to have homebirths situating her far outside the standard experience of the vast majority of women in Ireland. Indeed, her ultrasound scans were the most medical part of her pregnancy experience. On the surface, Emma has a very reticent view of ultrasounds: Emma, however, has a paradoxical relationship with the technology, that further enforces how the narratives that surround ultrasound have become ingrained in the systems of knowledge that create the understanding of pregnancy. As a thirty-five year old woman on her first pregnancy in a hospital setting, for example, Emma would have been perceived as being a higher risk patient than younger women. She chose homebirth as she felt it was safer for both her and her unborn child. Emma felt that ultrasound was of little medical value believing that it,

> *Ummm, I'd say they're probably thinking along the lines of "it's a quick snapshot," of what's happening inside at the time and so on...*

Emma's miscarriage and her experience of the hospital only served to underline her already chagrined view of biomedicine. Emma felt that technology undermined her as a woman. While she is unique in my examination of fetal imaging in the depth of her resistance to the use of the technology she offers an interesting alternative perspective to the typically favourable response to the ultrasound. Ironically, Emma discovered that her baby was dead during an ultrasound examination at fifteen weeks. Ultrasound is often the moment of accepting a pregnancy or of creating the

reality of pregnancy, but in situations where the expected is not present, seeing is not necessarily believing.

> Y*: Had you felt movement before the ultrasound?*
>
> E: *Ummm, yes, not with the first one, but on the second, and I actually had another pregnancy, my third pregnancy that ended in miscarriage, I had felt movement there, the baby had died, and that was a major shock because I'd been feeling movement.*
>
> Y: *And it was on the ultrasound that you found out?*
>
> E*: Ummm.*
>
> Y*: And how was that handled?*
>
> E: *Awful, the midwife or nurse or whoever she was, did the ultrasound and said "Oh I can't seem to see the baby's heartbeat and then she sent me into another room and we had to wait for a doctor, eventually a doctor came in and looked at the picture on the ultrasound and said pretty much in the one breather "oh the baby's dead, probably something congenital, come in on Friday and we'll do a D&C."*

What was an almost daily event for medical staff was something far beyond that for Emma. Miscarriage as something that is overtly mourned is a relatively new convention.[5] Technology, the home pregnancy test that can register pregnancy before the absence of the menses, followed by the ultrasound scan, has certainly changed the point of recognition. If as Wendy James has discussed "recognition" presumes a "pragmatic acceptance, conferring on the embryo, foetus or infant at the least a provisional personhood," then the loss of a fetus is the loss of baby, a person (1999:170). Despite her reticence and lack of trust in technology, there is no doubt that Emma's experiences are informed by the dominant discourses that surround pregnancy, miscarriage and life. While Emma situated herself far outside the usual biomedical experiences associated with modern-day child-bearing, ultimately it was the visualization of her fetus getting smaller on the ultrasound screen that finally convinced her that her baby was in fact dead. Barbara Duden has shown that life and personhood were historically only confirmed at birth and while that moment of quickening, which Emma had experienced, marked fetal entry into the social world, birth was the definitive marker that this was indeed a person. Duden argues "only recently has pregnancy been technically and socially constructed as a "dynamic duality" with a fetus as a woman"s partner" (1999:14.) Women do not lose pregnancies they lose babies.

Emma's distrust of technology is most potently seen in her resistance to what is standard medical protocol in the cases of early pregnancy loss.

> E: *Feeling very pregnant, I had all the signs of pregnancy, I had told people I pregnant, ummm, and when in fact I was told the baby was dead, I did not believe it, because I was feeling movement, so I talked to*

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[5] For example, the writings of Victorian women indicate that miscarriage was a common event, often seen in positive light. Howell, 1979 cited in Littlewood 1999:218).

people from the miscarriage association and talked to my midwife, and I decided not to go in for the D&C on the Friday, one of the reasons was I was still breastfeeding, and I react badly to drugs in general, so I decided to not go in for the D&C and decided to see if I'd miscarry naturally or whatever, eh the Rotunda rang me a week later to see what I was doing and they offered, suggested I come in for another ultrasound, this was totally different one, it wasn't in the prenatal area, it was up in the ward, and am, I could actually see that the baby looked smaller than it had on the previous one and I found it easier to accept that the baby was dead, but in any case I did not go in for the D&C, I waited until I miscarried naturally about two weeks later, the waiting was very hard but I was glad I did it that way.

Y*: Gentler.*

E: *Yes, and also I was sure then there was no messing about and that I wasn't making a bad mistake, I do know of one woman, who had a miscarriage and a month later discovered she was carrying twins and she had only lost one of them.*

The disbelief in technology was informed by other women"s stories and of Emma's understanding of the limitations of and possible misdiagnoses of ultrasound. However, ultimately it was "seeing" that made Emma realise that her baby had in fact died, but crucially this seeing was done on her terms. Robbie Davis-Floyd's famous *Birth as an American Rite of Passage* (1992) illustrated how control and autonomy were central to many women"s satisfaction with their experience, this was particularly relevant to educated, middle-class women who often have firm ideas on what they want. But as Linda Layne has shown this is something where these models of control offer very little in the way of comfort for a woman who loses a desired pregnancy. However what is crucial in Emma's case is that beyond the discourses on the limitations of technology lies a discourse about grief and life and death that resembles the notion of autonomy in reproductive experience (2003a&b). Disbelief is a normal reaction to death and Emma's decision to wait for her body to miscarry rather that choosing a D&C was central to her healing from her miscarriage.

Lorna, a thirty-six year old mother of two who experienced an early miscarriage that was confirmed via ultrasound during her first pregnancy chose to have a D&C, following technological and medical confirmation of her loss. Her case shows how, even as early as six weeks, a planned baby has already attributed to it characteristics of personhood. In short, to repeat what I have already written, women lose "babies" not "pregnancies."

> L: *I mean it was very early, but it doesn't't feel like that to you.*

> L: *They told me that the baby was dead and that I'd have to have a procedure.*

Lorna's relationship to ultrasound was almost the opposite of Emma's. The ability of ultrasound to produce a moving image of a live fetus was reassuring for Lorna, particularly in light of problematic early pregnancies and her history of miscarriage.

> L: *In the early stages you find out that the baby is alive. And those were the most important ones.*

Here, the ultrasound scan acts as a marker of fetal life: Lorna was already employing the discourses that exist around fetal personhood and her scan served to heighten these understandings.

Lorna's sentiments were strongly echoed by 38-year-old mother of two who was pregnant with what was to be her third child. Aoife had five miscarriages at varying points between her three pregnancies

> Aoife*: I don 'tlook for it to be a baby; I look for life...I don't look for a baby as in a figure of a baby I look for a heartbeat. Then I know there's life.*

For Aoife and Lorna, seeing is confirmation, however, they have differing views of the fetus and its "personhood." For Lorna the moment of confirming a pregnancy is the moment of acceptance of a "plausible child" in the most real sense of the term (Rapp 1997). For Aoife, personhood is more processual, beginning with signs of life, and not fully in place until she can "see a whole little person". Her second trimester scan allowed her to begin to accept that fetus, until that point the possibility of loss was too strong.

These accounts illustrate the varying constructions of fetuses, particularly in these cases of loss. Women employ the available discourses to understand early pregnancy and the fetuses they carry. These discourses are limited and "stratified"; the most important discourse has become the visual discourses that allow speculation around the fetal life-world. In turn, the developments in technology underline the fetal "life" or "personhood" and consequently this fuels the pro-life movement. Both the pro-life movement, and the increasing prevalence of the fetal image in the society-at-large, have constructed these discourses around fetal personhood and, consequently, fetal death as human death. Different women, however, configure death in the womb, differently. For Aoife, her multiple experiences of pregnancy loss were understood as "natural" occurrences, sad but inevitable. For other women, accepting fetal loss was more difficult; their understandings of the fetus were more strongly personified and individualized. Both Marie and Lorna refer to the loss of "my baby," a distinct individual who must be mourned. The pro-life movement's view of fetal death as a loss of a distinct individual underlines Marie and Lorna's understandings of death in the womb.

Clearly, understandings of fetal loss need to be grounded in women's and their supporters' experiences of fetal loss, alongside the analysis of powerful discourses that strive to shape such experiences. Linda Layne has agitated for a "women-centered" approach to pregnancy loss, and this would be a huge step forward in helping women to deal with experiences of loss. Ultimately, it is women who live with these losses.

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"Riding Roughshod:" Anti-Hunting Agitation During the Irish Land War

Heather Laird

The event with which Mark Bence-Jones chooses to open his nostalgic account of the twilight of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy is the visit to Ireland by "the most dashing and glamorous huntswoman in Europe."[1] The Empress of Austria's trips to Ireland in 1879 and 1880 and her decision not to return in 1881 when "hunting had virtually been brought to a standstill through acts of sabotage and violence"[2] is the narrative Bence-Jones employs to tell us of the final triumph of a class before its precipitous decline. The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the success of Home Rule candidates in the 1874 General Election are cited as important landmarks in the downfall of the Anglo-Irish landed class, but, having gained access to the papers of a number of Ascendancy families, Bence-Jones surmises that it was the Land War and the anti-hunting campaign that marked one of the most significant moments in the history of the Ascendancy. For a class whose preferred novelty item was a chamber pot decorated on the inside with a portrait of William Gladstone,[3] a popular campaign that forced all but two or three of Ireland's fox-hunts to temporarily suspend hunting and at least five hunt committees to break up their establishments becomes, in Bence-Jones account, the ultimate betrayal - that of the landlord class by their tenantry.

L.P. Curtis Jr. provides an analysis of this "neglected aspect of the Land War"[4] in his highly informative essay "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882." In this study, Curtis, keen to point out that "the anti-hunting campaign was primarily a grass-roots movement with little or no support from the League executive in Dublin,"[5] traces the impetus for the disruptions to hunting to the decision by League branches in Queen's County (now Co. Laois) and Co. Kildare to protest repressive measures against those "reasonably suspected" under the Protection of Person and Property Act.[6] The demonstrators, Curtis states, "were expressing their hatred of coercion by depriving the landlords of their favourite pastime. They hoped that the campaign would remind those responsible for coercion of what had been done to the leaders and liberties of the Irish people."[7] In support of this thesis, Curtis draws our attention to verbal and written communications received by various hunt committees throughout the country, including a threatening letter informing Burton R. Persse, Master of the Galway Blazers, that his hounds would continue to be poisoned "until the magistrates unite in getting the suspects out of prison."[8]

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[1] Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy* (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1987), 1.

[2] ibid., 38/9.

[3] See ibid., 29.

[4] L.P. Curtis Jr., "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and Popular Protest in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 349-402, 350.

[5] ibid., 357.

[6] Protection of Person and Property (Ireland) Act (2 March 1881), 44 & 45 Vict., c. 4.

[7] Curtis Jr., "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," 376.

[8] ibid., 375. This letter was printed in the *Irish Times* (2 Jan. 1882).

As Curtis' article suggests, contemporary accounts of the anti-hunting campaign point to a number of links between this campaign and the holding of "suspects" under the Protection of Person and Property Act. The *Freeman's Journal*, primarily concerned about the effects of the campaign on the business community in Ireland, contained daily reports on both the interference with hunting and the response of hunt committees throughout the country. In the earlier stages of the anti-hunting agitation, the newspaper provided an account of a meeting held by the Kilkenny hunt committee who, having being denied access to a number of coverts in the area, wished to ascertain "the views of the farmers of the county Kilkenny with regard to the continuance of fox hunting."[9] A man named Mr. Dowling addressed the meeting and told those present that the farmers "would be in favour of hunting if the members of the Hunt Club signed a memorial for the release of the suspects arrested in that county."[10] At a similar meeting attended by the "landholders of Kildare"[11] and the Kildare Hunt, hunt members were likewise informed that an extensively-signed petition to the government for the release of the "suspects" would enable hunting to continue unimpeded.[12] A number of days later, the newspaper reported that members of the Kildare Hunt, "unanimously of opinion that hunting could not be resumed on the terms laid down in those resolutions", had resolved to discontinue hunting and sell their stud of hunters in England.[13]

An editorial in the *Leinster Leader* on 26 November 1881 condemns the poisoning of hounds, but interprets the campaign against hunting as the inevitable outcome of a dispute that dated back to the arrest of C.S. Parnell as a "suspect":

> It is now announced that there will be no further hunting in Kildare. The resolutions passed against fox-hunting at the Convention held in Naas, on the day of Mr. Parnell's arrest, and the action taken by the farmers almost everywhere through the county, in conformity with that resolution, left no doubt as to the result.[14]

The editorial informed the newspaper's readership that, following the Naas convention, negotiations taking place had begun to break down when it was discovered that the hunt committee had failed to prevent certain members from participating in the hunt. The result, according to the *Leinster Leader,* was an "uprising... so universal" that further negotiations had become extremely difficult, if not impossible.[15]

As these and other newspaper reports testify, Curtis is quite right to draw our attention to connections between disruptions to hunting and the detention of local and national Land League leaders under the Protection of Person and Property Act. What also becomes apparent when reading such reports,

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[9] "Hunting in the County Kilkenny," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (14 Nov. 1881), 7.
[10] ibid., 7.
[11] "Fox Hunting in Kildare," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (3 Dec. 1881), 5.
[12] ibid., 5.
[13] "Abandonment of the Kildare Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (5 Dec. 1881), 5.
[14] "Editorial," *Leinster Leader* (26 Nov. 1881), 5.
[15] ibid., 5.

however, is the extent to which the campaign functioned as a vehicle for the articulation for a broad range of issues. In the series of events documented by the editor of the *Leinster Leader*, it was the failure of the Kildare hunt committee to effectively enforce boycotts that led to an irreversible breakdown in communication, the intensification of the campaign, and its spread throughout the countryside. The porous nature of the campaign is likewise evident in the report that appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* concerning the meeting held in Kilkenny. After Mr. Dowling urged the hunt members attending this meeting to sign a petition for the release of the "suspects", he made the following proclamation: "the day was gone by when the gentry could ride rough-shod over them; when they could trample upon them and kick their faces off."[16] One can only speculate that if hunting, for this farmer, could function as an appropriate metaphor for rural power relations, the ability to dictate the terms by which hunting would be allowed to continue must have represented an at least partial inversion of the social and political order. In the following pages, I will draw attention to the symbolic functions served by both the hunt and the forms of resistance that made up the anti-hunting campaign. What this analysis should make clear is that while the arrest of "suspects" under the Protection of Person and Property Act functioned as an immediate stimulus for the campaign against hunting, the underlining roots of this campaign are to be found elsewhere.

For members of the local hunt, the pursuit of preserved game across fields and over ditches and fences provided, as Curtis claims, "adventure with an aristocratic flavour."[17] Two of the most prolific writers of the hunt, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, referred on a number of occasions to the sheer pleasure of the hunt. In *Irish Memories*, Edith Somerville, attempting to explain the central role that hunting had been assigned in their writings, described how "much of the fun we have had in our lives has been 'owed to horse and hound.'"[18] Nonetheless, as Somerville was to note in *Irish Memories*, hunting in Ireland was never a mere recreational activity. In Somerville and Ross's descriptions of the hunt, as in other contemporary accounts, it is clear that hunting not only fostered class solidarity within the Ascendancy, but was one of the more important means through which a particular relationship between that class, the poorer rural dwellers and the land could be both defined and maintained. Looking back with nostalgia to the days when her brother kept hounds, Edith Somerville outlined the multi-faceted nature of the hunt: "we had the best of sport and learned to know the people and the country in the way that hunting alone can teach."[19] If we are to accept Somerville and Ross's claim that hunting enabled the Anglo-Irish landlord class to establish a relationship with the "people" and the land, it would be useful to ask some questions concerning the type of relationship fostered by the hunt.

Two very different accounts of that relationship can be found towards the end of 1881 in the *Irish Sportsman* and *Irish Weekly*. In the initial phase of the anti-hunting campaign, the *Irish Sportsman* nervously reminded its readership that sport in Ireland, particularly hunting, "has ever formed a

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[16] "Hunting in the County Kilkenny," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (14 Nov. 1881), 7.

[17] Curtis Jr., "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," 351.

[18] Somerville and Ross, *Irish Memories* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1918), 272.

[19] ibid., 274

strong bond of union among all classes.”[20] The following month, a “strong bond” created by the hunt had been placed under some strain by the “systematic efforts of the Farmers to prevent hunting”; efforts that had “intensified… the bitterness of feeling now unhappily so prevalent between the Owners and Occupiers of land in Ireland.”[21] In contrast, for the editor of the *Weekly News*, it was hunting, not the anti-hunting campaign, that fostered rural tensions. According to the editorial, “Shall there be Hunting?,” a hunt comprised mainly of the propertied class that travelled freely over the land worked by the Irish tenantry provided a very visual representation of relations of dominance and subordination: “the sporting gentry” could no longer ride over their tenants’ fields as they had done ““in the good ould times” when they felt themselves lords and masters of the population around them.”[22] In the overall terms of their arguments, however, both sets of journalists are in agreement: the hunt was an important component in rural class relations, while the anti-hunting campaign posed a threat to the status quo.

Like the fox that Somerville and Ross often associated in their writings with the Irish Ascendancy,[23] the hunt roamed at will over the tenants” land. Though both were enthusiastic participants in the hunt, Somerville and Ross were more than willing to admit that it rode “sometimes, it is to be feared, where it should not have ridden.”[24] In his analysis of *The Silver Fox*, Declan Kiberd points out that Somerville and Ross were “too fastidious” to blind themselves to the criticisms that were directed at the hunting class.[25] Nevertheless, in Somerville and Ross’s recollections of the hunt, as in other less critical contemporary descriptions of hunting, members of the hunt enjoy a special relationship with the land and its features. As can be ascertained from the following passage taken from *Wheel-Tracks*, for Somerville and Ross the countryside was an active participant in this relationship, throwing up huge ditches, scenic cliff-tops and steep inclines:

> We followed the hounds over the edge of the hill. It was steep enough to make the drops off the fences seem pretty heavy, but not too steep. Soon, however, we came to a slope as sheer as was possible for horses to attempt, and Crowley and I, in the lead, had hardly gone more than a horse’s length downwards when we felt the boggy fleece of soaking sedge and heather beginning to slide under us. . . After a few palpitating moments, we arrived at a level place, and our progress arrested. I looked back, and there I saw the side of the hill, a sheet of wet, shining rock, that we had scalped as bare as the skull of an Indian warrior’s victim.[26]

In such writings, features in the landscape serve no function save that designated by the hunt. The hill that perhaps marks the boundary between two tenants’ properties merely works to demonstrate the aristocratic

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20 “Editorial,” *Irish Sportsman* (23 Oct. 1880), 5.
21 “Editorial,” *Irish Sportsman* (27 Nov. 1880), 5.
22 “Shall there be Hunting,” *Weekly News* (10 Dec. 1881), 4.
23 See Somerville and Ross, *Irish Memories*, 34, 91.
24 Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, “The West Carbery Hunt,” *Wheel-Tracks* (London; New York; Toronto; Bombay; Calcutta and Madras: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923): 124-35, 132.
25 Declan Kiberd, “Somerville and Ross: *The Silver Fox*,” *Irish Classics* (London: Granta Books, 2000): 360-78, 360.
26 Somerville and Ross, “The West Carbery Hunt,” 134.

recklessness of the members of the hunt who negotiate it and subsequently conquer its sheer slopes.

Indeed, the only land boundaries that tend to be observed in accounts of hunting are those established by hunt committees:

> The boundaries of a hunting country are not infrequently a contentious matter, but in West Carbery we have no trespassers, neither do we trespass. The Atlantic Ocean half-circles us on the south and west, and is a boundary that admits of no dispute; on the east there is a margin of thirty miles or so between us and any rivals, and northward we might run up the coast to Donegal without poaching.[27]

This is an unoccupied landscape, devoid of inhabitants save for the "country boys" who, we are frequently informed in both literary and non-literary accounts of hunting, passively observe the hunt from a hilltop. Given these descriptions, it comes as no surprise that the Empress of Austria's visits occupy such a prominent place in Mark Bence-Jones's narrative: The "country people . . . went miles in the hope of catching a glimpse of her", gathering up "the tiny lace handkerchiefs which she took out with her when hunting" and watching her take "the banks and ditches more recklessly than the most daredevil Irish."[28] In the triadic relationship that is the focus of most accounts of the hunt, it is the huntsmen/women and the land that actively engage with each other; congenial sparring partners displaying themselves to the poorer rural inhabitants.

In late nineteenth-century Ireland, when the total number of meets prior to the Land War averaged around one hundred and fifty during each week of the eight-month hunting season, hunting functioned as a conspicuous reminder of Ascendancy presence. The designated role of the tenant-farmers and labourers in this ritualized creation of spectacle was that of onlooker and sometimes recipient of payment for damage to crops, livestock and fences on the "little fields", which, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross admitted, could "look very sorry for themselves after a couple of dozen horses have galloped over them."[29] The act of hunting was, therefore, a symbolic assertion of ownership over the fields trampled by the horses' hooves. The pursuit of game over land occupied by the Irish tenantry, regardless of how these hunts were conducted, functioned as a physical enactment of property rights.

What was recognized at the Durrow League Branch meeting referred to by Curtis as one of the sources of the campaign was that the triadic relationship established by the hunt and the notion of power relations and property rights it encapsulated was open to challenge. When Reverend Edward Rowan, secretary of the Durrow League Branch, informed the Master of the Queen's County hounds that the tenant-farmers could prevent the hunt from using "*their* lands" (emphasis mine),[30] he was making it clear to the hunt committee that, while the tenantry generally tolerated hunting over the land they occupied, they considered it to be a privilege that could potentially be withdrawn. By the middle of November 1881 a very different relationship

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[27] ibid., 133.
[28] Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, 2.
[29] Somerville and Ross, "The West Carbery Hunt," 132.
[30] See Curtis Jr., "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," 359.

between the land, the hunt and the poorer rural occupants begins to emerge in newspaper coverage:

> The moment they went away with their fox a number of people, who had been assembling there for some time before, commenced shouting and blowing horns to interfere with the hunt. The hounds, however, ran down to Glangoole, near Hon Colonel White's property, where the people were found to have gathered all along the neighbouring hills, having with them a lot of mongrel hounds and other dogs, which they let loose on the foxhounds, while using at the same time violent language to those who were out with the hunt. One gentleman from the neighbourhood of Thurles was stoned, himself and his horse receiving several blows. He rode up in a fence to escape this violence, but a number of persons attacked him with sticks and forced his horse down a very steep and dangerous place... Immediately outside the demesne the crowds were found to have assembled again in large numbers, shouting and conducting themselves in the most violent manner. Owing to the violence they then displayed the hunt could not go on to Coalbrook, which was to have been the next draw. It was then hurriedly resolved to proceed to Garrancole, but the crowd assuming a very threatening attitude in that direction, this intention had likewise to be abandoned. The master . . . determined upon going to Prout's Furze, where everything was found apparently quiet. Here the huntsman dismounted and tied his mare to the fence, getting inside it himself to view the fox away ... Immediately a young man, who was observed coming down the hill-side, untied the mare, and vaulting with the greatest ability into the saddle, galloped away. The master of the hounds ... followed at once in pursuit, accompanied by the few members of the field who had then remained with him. The people collected round and began yelling and shouting as before. However, the horse was captured after a most exciting and lengthened chase. The hounds were then with much difficulty got together, and the hunt retired, followed for some distance through the fields and along the roads by the crowd.[31]

A landscape, so often depicted in the "Hunting Notes" of the *Freeman's Journal* as almost empty of inhabitants, is all-too-densely populated in this report. Features in the landscape serve quite a different function to those generally recorded in accounts of the hunt. Hilly land enables the gathering crowds to monitor the progress of the Tipperary Hounds and anticipate any sudden changes in its destination. "A very steep and dangerous place" is no longer there to display the reckless courage of those on horseback, but works with the crowd to demonstrate their helplessness. The "country boys" who watch from the hilltops are now an active and threatening presence. The huntsman of the Tipperary Hounds who dismounts and ties his horse to a fence is reduced to a passive spectator when a young man, who was observed coming down the hill-side, displays his own reckless courage to the watching crowds.

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[31] "Stopping a Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (14 Nov. 1881), 7.

Though seldom described in such dramatic terms as the above confrontation, the *Freeman's Journal* provided extensive coverage of a campaign it found somewhat baffling. For a paper that regularly dedicated an entire page to hunting appointments and, in an article on the Empress of Austria's visit in 1879, had spoken with pride of "the Hunt now famed all the world over,"[32] the anti-hunting campaign was a surprising and not altogether welcome development. The social tensions that the hunt could generate were certainly not evident to the editor who wrote in March 1879 that, when in Ireland, the Empress "saw all classes congregate in the friendly and equal rivalry of the hunting field [where] urbanity and good-fellowship prevailed from the duke to the peasant."[33] Editorials that appeared in the paper two years after this trip urged tenant-farmers in Co. Kildare to "pause before they consign to the past the splendid traditions of [the Kildare] Hunt"[34] and reminded tenant-farmers in general that "they have it in their power to stop hunting if they like, but we think they ought not to do so without having most carefully considered all the pros and cons."[35]

Nevertheless, at the campaign's climax at the end of December 1881 and beginning of January 1882, the *Freeman's Journal* was producing up to eight articles a day on the threat the anti-hunting protesters were posing to the hunting community. Most of these reports provide us with only the barest of detail. Under the title, "Preventing a Hunt," we are told that "the Killimer Hunt, near Kilrush, met yesterday, but owing to the opposition of the tenants, who threatened to maim the dogs and horses, the members were compelled to abandon the meet for the present."[36] In Kildare on 23 November,

> an unfortunate incident occurred in the poisoning of two hounds. . . One of the hounds died in the course of the run, and the other hound dropped dead after the run was over. The Master immediately stopped all further hunting. . . In the consequence of the loss of the two hounds, added to that of a third hound, which was poisoned near Gending on the previous day . . . the master has decided to hunt no longer, and has virtually cancelled all future fixtures.[37]

This report, as is the case with the previous newspaper reports I have cited, provides far greater insight into the actions and reactions of the hunt members than those of the protesters. If we divide these articles into statements concerning the men, women and children who were preventing the hunts and statements concerning those who were participating in the hunts, a number of discrepancies can be noted. The sections of the reports that are concerned with the anti-hunt protesters tell us about their actions. They shout, blow horns, threaten with sticks and poison hounds. The information we are provided with relating to members of the hunt is quite different. We are not only given details telling us of their actions, we are privy to their

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[32] "Empress of Austria," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Adverstiser* (25 Feb. 1879), 5.

[33] "Editorial," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (24 March 1879), 5.

[34] "Editorial," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (30 Nov. 1881), 4.

[35] "Editorial," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (1 Dec. 1881), 4.

[36] "Preventing a Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (5 Nov. 1881), 7.

[37] "Stoppage of the Kildare Hounds," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (23 Nov. 1881), 5.

thoughts. We are told what hunt members "resolved" to do, what they had "determined" to do, what they felt "compelled" to do, what had been their "intention" and what they had "decided." Consequently, it is through the thoughts and decisions of the members of the Tipperary Hounds, the Killimer Hunt and the Kildare Hounds that these episodes tend to be related to us.

The problems that we encounter when relying on newspaper reports as a source of information about the anti-hunting campaign and those who were involved in it are typical of the problems that are generally faced by those studying accounts of popular unrest. As Ranajit Guha has pointed out in relation to India, "evidence of this type has a way of stamping the interests and outlook of the rebels' enemies on every account of our peasant rebellions."[38] In *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, Guha warns us not only about the biased nature of official records (police reports, administrative accounts, etc.), but also about non-official sources, such as nationalist newspapers, which he claims are equally prone to speak with an "elite" voice. This does not mean, however, that newspaper articles such as those I have cited should be simply condemned and ignored. These reports may be primarily concerned with registering the effects of the campaign against those to whom it was directed against, but the reactions of those the campaign affected were predicated on the actions of the anti-hunt protesters. As I intend to demonstrate in the pages that follow, even reports which interpret the campaign from the perspective of the hunt members can be a useful source of information, not only concerning the effect of the campaign on hunting, but also about the nature of the campaign itself.

According to an article that appeared on 25 November 1881, "[t]o-day the Wexford hounds were stopped hunting at Muffin by a large crowd of farmers and labourers... In consequence of the opposition the hounds were withdrawn."[39] The following week, "in consequence of the Wexford Fox-hounds having met with serious opposition on five days out of seven since the beginning of regular hunting" it is deemed "useless" to issue a new list of hunting appointments.[40] An article published the same day, "An Attack on the Duhallow Hounds," tells us that, "a large mob assembled, stoned the hounds, and assaulted the huntsmen, completely putting a stop to all hunting."[41] A few days later, the newspaper carried a report on the Carlow and Island Hounds who are said to have been stopped by "a large crowd of people, men and boys, all armed with stout sticks."[42] These reports provide us with few details concerning the motivations of those who took part in the anti-hunting campaign, but collectively they allow us to draw two important conclusions concerning the nature of the campaign: first, that it was widespread and, second, that it was effective. As the field sports correspondent of the *Irish Times* was to report towards the end of December 1881, the actions of the anti-hunting protesters had insured that hunting was

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[38] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 14.

[39] "Stopping the Wexford Hounds," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (25 Nov. 1881), 7.

[40] "Hunting Appointments," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (3 Dec. 1881), 7.

[41] "An Attack on the Duhallow Hounds," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (3 Dec. 1881), 5.

[42] "Hunting Stopped in County Carlow," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (6 Dec. 1881), 7.

"practically extinct in a country which for well nigh a century stood in the very front rank of all matters appertaining to the chase."[43]

Other articles published in the *Freeman's Journal* and *Leinster Leader* provide us with a more detailed account of the words and actions of the protesters and demonstrate the extent to which the campaign was to fuse local disputes with issues acknowledged by such newspapers to be of national importance. On 12 November 1881, the editor of the *Leinster Leader*, discussing the effects of anti-hunting agitation on the Kildare Foxhounds, the Kilkenny Hunt, the Queen's County Hounds and the Newbridge Harriers, pointed out that over the previous week the newspaper's offices had received an unprecedented number of visits from tenant-farmers stating that they would not allow any hunting over their land until the political prisoners had been released.[44] The editorial also reported, however, on resolutions passed in Queen's County the previous Monday. Hunting would not be allowed to continue in that county "whilst the servers of writs and founders of Emergency Associations appear in the hunting field" and until "the Middlemount and Ballykealy tenants are fully and fairly settled with."[45] In some parts of the country all hunts were disrupted, while in other districts the presence of certain individuals associated in the locality with evictions, sheriff"s sales and other unpopular proceedings could result in the prevention of a hunt that might otherwise have proceeded unimpeded.

According to the *Freeman's Journal*, in November 1881 several hundred men assembled at a covert at Knock "with pitchforks, seythes [sic], hedge-slashers, and other weapons" with the intention of obstructing Lord Huntingdon's hunting party "in the event of some obnoxious person of the district being amongst them." On ascertaining that the man they were searching for was not present, the crowd, we are told, "quietly dispersed."[46] One of the earliest recorded confrontations in the campaign took place on 3 October 1881 near Coolnamuck, Co. Waterford when a group of tenant-farmers and labourers surrounded a hunt that included the special resident magistrate for the Waterford and Tipperary region, Captain Owen R. Slacke. As the demonstrators jeered the hunters, a woman is reported to have thrown a branch across Captain Slacke's saddle and threatened to "hamstring" his horse if he ever attempted to ride across her farm.[47]

As these and other newspaper accounts indicate, the anti-hunting campaign could be interpreted in a number of different ways by those partaking in it. Indeed, the popularity and, therefore, effectiveness of the campaign might best be attributed to its multifaceted nature. Some of those who gathered to obstruct hunts sought to make public their disapproval of coercive legislation, while others were motivated by the failure of hunt committees to effectively enforce boycotts on unpopular land agents, officials or "emergency men." What the tenant-farmers who walked into the offices of the *Leinster Leader* shared with the woman who threw a branch at Captain Slacke's horse was,

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[43] "Irish Sport in 1881," *Irish Times* (27 Dec. 1881), 6.

[44] "Editorial," *The Leinster Leader* (12 Nov. 1881), 4.

[45] ibid., 4.

[46] "Strange Scene at a Fox-hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (10 Nov. 1881), 7.

[47] *Cork Examiner* (5 Oct. 1881); *Waterford Daily Mail* (5 Oct. 1881). L.P. Curtis, Jr. refers to this incident in "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," 367.

however, a desire to assert control over the land they occupied and determine the conditions under which others might gain access to it. The tenant-farmers "would not allow any hunting over *their* land until the political prisoners had been released" (my emphasis).[48] The "landholder" argued that the hunt members had "no legal right to trespass on me or anyone else."[49] The woman in Waterford warned Captain Slacke against riding across *her* farm.

In his history of Irish policing from 1822 to 1922, Donal J. O'Sullivan describes the "fishing of privately owned rivers and lakes and hunting over ground which was privately owned or preserved" as a common feature of the Land War period.[50] At a time when   tenant-farmers were warning hunt members against trespassing on their land, an increasing number of allegations of trespassing and poaching were being filed against tenant-farmers and labourers. At the beginning of November 1881, the *Irish Sportsman* was proud to announce that "in Ireland poaching has not assumed the dimensions of a National vice, has never come to add its quota to the sum total of our National troubles."[51] Less than two months later, an article on salmon poaching proclaimed the banks of Irish rivers "infested by gangs of lawless marauders" and demanded that more water-bailiffs be made available.[52] The *Freeman's Journal* was likewise to express concern over the sharp rise in salmon poaching, pre-empting the *Irish Sportsman*'s support for greater levels of vigilance. Unlike the *Irish Sportsman*, however, the *Freeman's Journal* was unwilling to condemn out of hand an activity that it admitted had a "popular aspect" to it. Poachers, according to this nationalist newspaper, could be denounced as "unmanly, unsportsmanlike, and unpatriotic", but "it may be contended that the element of water by sea and land, together with all contained therein, is the common property of all." Ultimately, however, the author of the article concluded that salmon was at present the "luxury of the rich" and while he regretted that this luxury food could not "descend to the table of the poor", he argued that the preservation of salmon was essential to the Irish business community.[53]

As was recognized by the author of this article on salmon poaching, poaching is a criminal offence with significant subversive undertones. Taking food considered the "luxury of the rich" and serving it up on "the table of the poor" has long been considered a highly-symbolic crime that posed a threat not only to the material wealth of the gentry, but also to their prestige. In eighteenth-century England, Ranajit Guha reminds us, poaching "allowed the lower classes to share with the gentry such food and sport as were considered to be the exclusive symbols of privileged status," and was, therefore, in the eyes of the English landed aristocracy, not only the theft of a deer or salmon, but, more significantly, the theft of a particular form of social capital. Hoping to "save the food of the gods from desecration of the underdogs,"[54] members of the aristocracy put pressure on the King to legislate against poaching in the

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[48] "Editorial," *The Leinster Leader* (12 Nov. 1881), 4.

[49] "The Kildare Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (30 Nov. 1881), 7.

[50] Donal J. O'Sullivan, *The Irish Constabularies, 1822-1922: A Century of Policing in Ireland* (Kerry: Brandon, 1999), 157.

[51] "Editorial," *Irish Sportsman* (6 Nov. 1880), 5.

[52] "About Salmon Poaching," *Irish Sportsman* (1 Jan. 1881), 10.

[53] "Salmon Poaching," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (31 Dec. 1881), 3.

[54] Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 78.

draconian Black Act of 1723. Describing poaching as "the most defiant of all rural crimes", Guha suggests that this activity is intimately linked to rural power relations, with a marked increase in the incidence of poaching commonly preceding agrarian uprisings.[55]

As is suggested in the previous paragraph, in Ranajit Guha's analysis of Indian peasant rebellion, crime and insurgency are interlinked, but derived from two contrasting codes of behaviour and, therefore, clearly distinguishable from one another. Unlike criminal offences (such as poaching) which "must rely on secrecy to be effective,"[56] insurgency, Guha tells us, is "necessarily and invariably public and communal."[57] Consequently, in Guha's work, insurgency is the very antithesis of crime, with the criminal standing in the same relation to the insurgent as does what is "conspiratorial (or secretive) to what is public (or open), or what is individualistic (or small-group) to what is communal (or mass) in character."[58]

These distinctions are harder to maintain when applied to the events that made up the Irish Land War. Poaching towards the end of 1881 may have included the "nightly affrays" that the *Freeman's Journal* referred to in its article on Irish salmon,[59] but even small-scale poaching at this time could be openly confrontational. On 28 November 1881, the *Freeman's Journal* reported on an "extraordinary affair" that took place on the property of Dowager Lady Massy. Five tenant-farmers caught poaching on this property with greyhounds were prosecuted and fined, but returned later with a large body of men and proceeded to hunt in full view of the gamekeeper and his assistants. According to the *Freeman's Journal*, "an immense amount of damage was done, and a large number of game killed" as a result of this defiant behaviour.[60] In a letter to the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* the following week, one of the "poachers" present on that day rejected legal and cultural distinctions between "sportsmen" and "poachers" and sought to establish a new set of terms through which his "day's pleasure hunting" could be interpreted. In this alternative version of events, five men did go onto Dowager Lady Massy's property with dogs for the purpose of hunting, but they had a "perfect right" to be there "having got permission from the tenants thereon." When the gamekeeper "accosted us and told us the lands were preserved, and not to hunt on them," the men were on land occupied by Thomas Byrne, who had "invited us to hunt on his farm." The men informed the gamekeeper that, "we had leave to hunt from the tenant, who was present, and who told us to hunt away as long as we wished to. The gamekeeper took down our names to summon us, but we did not mind but hunted away" as "fines had no right to be imposed on us."[61]

Poaching, which, as Guha claims, is generally characterized by individualistic or small-group deviance from the law, was transformed in Ireland in the early

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55 ibid., 83.
56 ibid., 109.
57 ibid., 79.
58 ibid., 79.
59 "Salmon Poaching," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (31 Dec. 1881), 3.
60 "An Extraordinary Affair," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (28 Nov. 1881), 3.
61 "An Extraordinary Affair," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (6 Dec. 1881), 6.

1880s into an act of collective social defiance. The tenant-farmer who removed game from a landlord's property in the middle of the night broke laws against poaching, but the men who continued to hunt in front of Dowager Lady Massy's gamekeeper did so in open defiance of these laws and the authority behind them. Both sets of poachers were defying the landlords' absolute rights over the land and the animals that lived on it, but in the latter case the "poachers" were also refusing to accept the rationale through which their actions were judged to be illegal.

Denying the Hunt access to the land the tenant-farmers occupied was only one facet of the anti-hunting campaign. The protesters were not merely preventing hunt members from entering their farm-lands, they were challenging a social order that often gave the landlords sole rights to the animals that roamed these properties.[62] On 17 December 1881, the *Freeman's Journal* reported on a crowd of "500 people" who had gathered to prevent the Galway Hounds hunt and then "with a number of dogs, started a fox, which escaped."[63] The "crowd of about three hundred farmers," who confronted the Westmeath Hunt in the same month, were said to have killed a fox, which they displayed "fastened on a long pole."[64] The *Freeman's Journal* told of a hunt near Tullamore which "was stopped yesterday by a body of over 1,000 persons, the farmers refusing to allow the land to be crossed. A dead fox was hoisted on a pole by the mob."[65]

Towards the end of December 1881, the anti-hunting campaign was increasingly dominated by the event commonly referred to as the "people's hunt" or the "Land League hunt." In "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882," L.P. Curtis Jr. provides a brief analysis of this counter-hunting campaign, describing how large crowds would meet, through word of mouth or printed notice, to stage their own hunt. From the perspective of the landlords who held the sporting rights over the fields where these hunts took place, and also, in the opinion of a number of more recent commentators like Curtis, the gathering of tenant-farmers and labourers with their dogs in search of "protected" hares, rabbits, foxes and gamebirds amounted to "mass poaching exercises."[66] In contrast to the furtive labourer hiding a hare under his coat in the middle of the night, the "people's hunts" were, however, public and ceremonial occasions often followed by celebrations as festive as the hunt balls that took place at the end of the hunting season.

One of the first recorded events of this type took place near Clogheen, where, according to an article published in the *Freeman's Journal* on 17 November, "an immense crowd, accompanied by greyhounds, mongrels, and dogs of every description . . . extended themselves in one unbroken line of two miles

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[62] Many leases included a clause stating that the game on rented land was reserved for the landlord's use. Consequently, Thady Braughal from Clonebag could be prosecuted in December 1881 for setting snares and killing a hare on land his father leased. See "Game Prosecution," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (28 Dec. 1881), 5.

[63] "Stopping the Galway Hounds," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (17 Dec. 1881), 5.

[64] "Stopping the Westmeath Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (12 Dec. 1881), 7.

[65] "Another Hunt Stopped," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (13 Dec. 1881), 7.

[66] Curtis Jr., "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," 381.

through the country . . . killing upwards of sixty hares and rabbits."[67] The incidence of "people's hunts" appears to have peaked just over six weeks later on St. Stephen's Day, with hunts reported as having taken place at Nenagh, Bienrally Castle (Limerick), Hook, Latoon, Cashel, Dockdomnie, Moycashel, Streamstown and Birr. The 26th of December, according to an editorial in the *Freeman's Journal*, "saw the country dotted over with little armies of linked constabulary and military . . . wearily struggling after a hunt here and there - in this district or that."[68] In response to notices posted in the surrounding countryside, Nenagh in Co. Tipperary was host on St. Stephen's Day to "one of the wildest scenes ever witnessed in the South of Ireland." The 57th Regiment, who were drafted in from Limerick to prevent one such "people's hunt" taking place, encountered "crowds of peasants and others, on foot and on horseback, all wending their way from different points to the appointed place."[69] One of the largest groups to assemble during the Land War period was on St. Stephen's Day at Birr, when a crowd estimated by newspaper journalists to comprise ten thousand men, women and children hunted for game on land from which they had previously expelled an official hunt. Following the hunt, the participants, holding up Land League banners and poles from which dead animals were suspended, are reported to have marched after a band of musicians past members of the R.I.C who, according to L.P. Curtis Jr., wisely refrained from interfering with the proceedings.[70]

The hunts that took place at Birr, Nenagh and elsewhere intervened in the Irish political arena on a number of different levels. As previously stated, they challenged the landlords' ownership of the land and their sole right to the animals that inhabited it. "People's hunts" also subverted the claim that large-scale hunting with dogs was solely a gentleman's sport and that certain game, such as deer, were restricted to the tables of the rich. Many recorded details of subversive hunts suggest an engagement with what were considered to be some of the important political issues of the day. For example, at a hunt that took place in Co. Waterford, a number of dogs wore collars inscribed with names such as "No Rent", "Forster", Marwood", Goddard", Boycott,"[71] while it was common practice for animals killed during "people's hunts" to be publicly divided amongst the families of those interned under the Protection of Person and Property Act. The "immense crowd" that gathered in November 1881 for a hunt in the neighbourhood of Clogheen, for example, "killed upwards of sixty hares and rabbits, and having done so marched into Clogheen, and distributed them amongst families of "suspects"."[72] This method of distribution allowed those partaking in such hunts to clearly distinguish their actions from poaching for personal gain and demonstrate that, when participating in a "people's hunt," they were engaging in a political act.

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[67] "Hunting Extraordinary," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (17 Nov. 1881), 7.

[68] "Editorial," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (27 Dec. 1881), 4.

[69] "An Extraordinary Demonstration," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (27 Dec. 1881), 4.

[70] For an account of the events at Birr, see Curtis Jr., "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," 384.

[71] "A National Hunting Club," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (5 Dec. 1881), 5.

[72] "Hunting Extraordinary," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (17 Nov. 1881), 7.

Notices announcing the formation of the Irish National Hunting Club, the National Hunting Association, and the National Terrier and Sheep Dog Hunt that were posted in towns and villages throughout Ireland in December 1881 suggest that the people's hunts were interpreted by tenant-farmers and labourers not as criminal acts of poaching, but as a form of activity that looked to an alternative concept of legality. In contrast, for the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* the law was quite simply the law and, under its dictates, Land League hunts were "distinctly illegal." Reminding his readership that "in every letting, almost without a single exception, throughout the entire country, the game is reserved to the landlord, and even on his own holding a tenant has no right to destroy it," he implored "the people to discontinue a practice so unjustifiable in itself, and so fraught, in our opinion, with danger."[73] Two days prior to the appearance of this editorial, however, the page-layout of an edition of the *Freeman's Journal* suggested a very different understanding of "people's hunts." As was generally the practice, the title "Sporting Intelligence" was positioned on page seven of the newspaper. Under this heading, a number of subheadings supplied information on meets that had taken place over the previous days, meets that had been subject to interference by protesters and meets that were scheduled to take place over the coming days. What was unusual about this edition of the *Freeman's Journal*, however, was a section that was positioned next to "Sporting Intelligence," replicating its every stylistic detail. Printed in the same size lettering and similarly underlined, the heading "The Land League Hunts" was followed by eleven subheadings telling of "people's hunts" that had taken place over the previous days, "people's hunts" that had been subject to interference by the military and police, and hoax hunts.[74] Thus, in one week the *Freeman's Journal* offered two opposing interpretations of subversive hunts. Judged from the perspective of officialdom, "people's hunts" were illegal acts of poaching. Judged from the perspective of the tenant-farmers and labourers who participated in them, they were a form of activity that challenged the idea of poaching as defined in Ireland at that time.

During the month of January 1882, the incidence of both "people's hunts" and interference with official hunts gradually decreased. In "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882," L.P. Curtis Jr. explains this trend by reference to a number of external factors. Towards the end of December 1881, Curtis informs us, a circular was issued throughout Ireland informing resident magistrates and the constabulary that "people's hunts" were to be dealt with as illegal assemblies. By the beginning of January 1882, the military and police were dispersing hunts and making arrests in nearly every part of the country.[75] Curtis also directs our attention to a notice that accompanied the "Hunting Appointments" for the Kildare Hounds and Newbridge Harriers in the *Leinster Leader* in November 1882: "Gentlemen are most earnestly requested not to ride over New Grass, Corn or Turnips."[76] For Curtis, this notice suggests that, in the aftermath of the anti-hunting campaign, members of

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[73] "Editorial," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (9 Jan. 1882), 4.

[74] "Military Displays", "An Extraordinary Hunt", "An Expected Land League Hunt", "Land League Hunt at Littleton", "Preparing for a Land League Hunt", "A Hoax", "Precautions against a Land League Hunt", "A Hunting Party Pursued", "A Bootless Errand", "More Incorrect Information", A Moonlight Hunt". *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (7 Jan. 1882), 7.

[75] Curtis Jr., "Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War," 385-386.

[76] "Hunting Appointments," *The Leinster Leader* (25 Nov. 1882), 18. Cited in ibid., 390.

Hunts still in operation were acknowledging that their hunting activities could only continue if the tenantry allowed them to do so.

Curtis is quite right to list tough measures and a change in attitudes among the factors that brought about a cessation of the anti-hunting campaign. A number of articles and notices that appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* and *Leinster Leader* at the height of the campaign demonstrate that those partaking in official hunts were beginning to redefine their relationship to the land and those who worked it. In December 1881, the executive committee of the Ward Hounds, pointing out that "the landholders in the Hunt district have ever been most indulgent," asked that "the Ward county . . not be used as a hunting ground for the general body of hunting men who have hitherto enjoyed sport with packs which have ceased for the present to hunt."[77] The Meath Hunt issued a similar statement that month, informing disbanded hunts that "in future only the members of the Meath Hunt and residents in the county should attend its meets, the fields having increased beyond what may be considered fair to the farmers whose lands are hunted over."[78] In these articles and notices, the use of land occupied by the tenantry for the purpose of hunting is interpreted as a privilege that could potentially be withdrawn if abused.

Furthermore, there can be no doubt that the increased military and police presence had an effect on the counter-hunting campaign. On St. Stephen's Day, the people's hunt at Bienrally Castle was "met and dispersed by military and police, who had information respecting the expedition,"[79] while the Millstreet Popular Harriers "found [Latoon] guarded by soldiers and police, and were cautioned under heavy penalties against crossing the lands."[80] On 7 January 1882, the *Freeman's Journal* tells of an incident that took place at Glenstal when "police and soldiers pursued and captured twenty-seven farmers . . . [while] others of the hunting party were pursued for miles over the country."[81] In a letter published in the *Freeman's Journal* on 16 January, Clifford Lloyd described people's hunts as "illegal and intolerable, and for the future will assemble in the counties of Limerick and Clare at the peril of those joining in them, for they will be dispersed by the troops, ... who will use such means as are at their disposal and as may be necessary for the purpose."[82] On the same day, it was reported that a troop of Scots Greys, two companies of infantry and a force of constabulary had been dispatched from Limerick to prevent a hunt taking place on preserves at Castlepark.[83] During the following week, arrests were made at people's hunts near Woodford,[84] Loughlynn, [85]

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[77] "Hunting Notes: The Ward Hounds," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (14 Dec. 1881), 7.
[78] "Sporting Intelligence," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (17 Dec. 1881), 7.
[79] "A Hunt Dispersed," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (27 Dec. 1881), 5.
[80] "A 'Popular Hunt' Prevented," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (27 Dec. 1881), 5.
[81] "A Hunting Party Pursued," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (7 Jan. 1882), 7.
[82] "Land League Hunts," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (16 Jan. 1882), 3.
[83] "Anticipated Land League Hunt: Imposing Military Display," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (16 Jan. 1882), 5.
[84] "A Land League Hunt - Numerous Arrests," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (18 Jan. 1882), 7.

Millstreet,[86] and Ballybunion. [87] This more stringent official response coincided with a marked decrease in people's hunts and a reduction in the number of incidents of resistance to official hunts. Indeed, under the heading "The United Hunt Club Hounds," it was stated in the *Freeman's Journal* on 19 January that "the obstruction which had been offered to the noble sport of foxhunting in this part of the country is fast dying out."[88]

"People's hunts" did decrease in number in the month of January 1882, but before dying out they underwent a series of transformations designed to combat police and military strategies of counter-insurgency. Hunts were still advertised by both word of mouth and printed notice, but the information supplied through these mediums was often conflicting. Notices pinned to trees, gates and buildings supplied details concerning a hunt, while tenant-farmers and labourers would arrange by word of mouth to meet at a different time or location. Consequently, the police and military were often engaged in searching for groups of tenant-farmers and labourers in remote districts, while the hunts they had come to prevent had either already taken place or were in the process of taking place elsewhere. As previously stated, on St. Stephen's Day a number of alternative hunts, including those held at Bienrally Castle and Latoon, were subject to interference by the authorities. In other parts of the country, the police and military had a less successful day. The "military and a large number of constabulary" who "proceeded to a village called Nash, for the purpose of dispersing a "Land League Hunt", which was announced to be held there to-day" found "no hunt of any description and . . . had to return home." Meanwhile "the hunt was carried out some miles distant, at the Hook."[89] The purpose of hoax hunts was not always, however, to divert the attention of the authorities from actual hunts. As the month of January progressed, it became increasingly common practice for hunts to be publicly advertised when no hunt was due to be held. According to the *Freeman's Journal*, at Ballitore, "the authorities were completely hoaxed." After "waiting the greater part of the day it was found that no hunt was going to be held" and the "force of infantry, hussars, and police" returned to their bases.[90] This is one of a number of accounts of policemen and soldiers marching for miles in search of hunts that never took place.

By the end of January 1882, hoax "people's hunts" were still a relatively common phenomenon, but, as Curtis points out, people's hunts were taking place far less frequently. The gradual reduction in the number of hunts should not, however, be attributed solely to external pressures, such as increased military and police presence. To understand why this form of agrarian agitation was less prevalent in the latter part of January, it is first necessary to explain why it peaked on 26 December. This date, St. Stephen's Day, had a significance for both members of official hunts and those who

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[85] "A Land League Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (19 Jan. 1882), 7.
[86] "Prosecution of Land League Hunters," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (19 Jan. 1882), 7.
[87] "Land League Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (20 Jan. 1882), 6.
[88] "The United Hunt Club Hounds," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (19 Jan. 1882), 7.
[89] "A Land League Hunt," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (27 Dec. 1881), 5.
[90] "A Hoax," *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (7 Jan. 1882), 7.

participated in "people's hunts." The Ascendancy calendar marked St. Stephen's Day as the occasion of the Big Hunt. In "St. Stephen's Day with the West Carbery Fox-Hounds," Martin Ross described it as a date that "is dedicated to a meet of the West Carbery Foxhounds at the Clock Tower, Skibbereen, Co. Cork."[91] As throngs of mass-goers made their way "through the town to the great grey chapel above the river,"[92] the "classic pageant of Fox-hunting takes the stage with the gravity and decorum that befits its ancient traditions."[93] On 26 December 1881, the "classic pageant of Fox-hunting" was a rarer sight than in previous years, but even in Birr where the official hunt was forced to disband, public performances and pageants were very much in evidence. The tenant-farmers and labourers who marched through Birr on St. Stephen's Day displaying Land League banners and dead foxes on poles were, at least in part, mimicking and perhaps parodying the ritualized creation of spectacle so intrinsic to the official hunt.

The ascendancy cultural calendar is not our only guide to the significance of certain dates within the pattern of Irish rural life. A number of commentators, including Michael Beames, Maureen Wall and Luke Gibbons, have pointed out in their studies of Whiteboyism that agrarian agitation owed much to the traditional calendar of rural Ireland, tending to "peak" around the times of popular seasonal festivals, such as May Eve, May Day, Halloween (*Samhain*), November Eve, New Year's Eve and St. Stephen's Day.[94] Whiteboyism, Beames surmises, "marched closely in time to the rhythms of peasant life."[95] For Martin Ross, St. Stephen's Day was a "holiday of some importance" characterized by its links with Fox-hunting.[96] For the men, women and children who joined in "people's hunts" on 26 December 1881, St. Stephen's Day would have been associated with the hunting of a very different species of animal - the wren. The counter-hunting campaign was, therefore, interwoven with both subaltern and elite cultural practices. This campaign borrowed aspects from both the official hunts it threatened to displace and the rural rituals from which it perhaps gained much of its legitimacy.

While Beames is primarily concerned in the passage quoted above with forming links between agrarian agitation and festive days in the late eighteenth century, a notice banning "Hunting the Wren" that was "posted up extensively through the baronies of Ormonde, and Owney and Arra" in the latter half of December 1881 suggests that this intersection was still strong enough during the Land War period to be a cause of anxiety for the

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[91] Martin Ross, "St. Stephen's Day with the West Carbery Fox-Hounds," in Somerville and Ross, *Wheel-Tracks*, Appendix I: 277-83, 277.

[92] ibid., 277.

[93] ibid., 278.

[94] Michael Beames, *Peasants and Power: The Whiteboy Movements and their control in Pre-Famine Ireland* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983), 72-4; Maureen Wall, "The Whiteboys," in T. Desmond Williams (ed.), *Secret Societies in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd., 1973): 13-25, 16; Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), 140-1; Gibbons, "Topographies of Terror: Killarney and the Politics of the Sublime," 36-7; Luke Gibbons, "Between Captain Rock and a Hard Place: Art and Agrarian Insurgency," in Tadhg Foley and Seán Ryder (eds.), *Ideology and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998): 23-44, 41.

[95] Beames, *Peasants and Power*, 74.

[96] Ross, "St. Stephen's Day with the West Carbery Fox-Hounds," in Somerville and Ross, *Wheel-Tracks*, Appendix I: 277-83, 277.

authorities.[97] In addition, a number of articles published in the   *Freeman's Journal* towards the end of December 1881 recognized "people's hunts" and "Hunting the Wren" as interrelated activities. Under the heading, "Hunting the Wren," for example, it was stated that notwithstanding notices posted in a number of "disturbed" regions proclaiming this practice, "the customary amusement of "hunting the wren" was indulged pretty generally, and, in addition, hares to a large number were killed."[98] On 23 Jan 1882, the *Freeman's Journal* reported on the trial of twenty-seven men answering "a charge of having taken part in a riotous and unlawful assembly at Moycashel and Streamstown on St. Stephen's Day." The following interpretation of the day's events was put forward by the defence:

> A few score of boys and men, following an immemorial usage, assembled on St. Stephen's Day. Their quarry was not deer or fox, pheasant or hare, but that most persecuted of the feathered tribe, "the wren, the king of all birds," and if when passing through a field a hare started under their feet, it was only human nature if a few of the people did pursue the flying animal a few yards across the bounds of the preserved lands.[99]

The case was dismissed and the men were allowed to return home.

Described by Michael Beames as "one of the main seasonal festivals in the peasant calendar," "Hunting the Wren" involved a range of activities from the capture of the wren on the days leading up to St. Stephen's Day to the festivities that took place that night and over the following days.[100] In their accounts of "Hunting the Wren", Sylvie Muller and Kevin Danaher have provided an outline of the various practices that constituted this festival.[101] In the weeks preceding Christmas, wrenboys roamed the fields in search of wrens to capture and kill. On St. Stephen's Day, "the procession element of the ritual always took place."[102] The wrens were paraded from house to house placed on a decorated wooden tray or inside a holly bush elevated on a long pole. The group was sometimes headed by a "Captain" who was dressed in quasi-military style and carried a sword. Some of the wrenboys wore masks made from straw or animal skin or blackened their faces, while others were disguised as women (*óinseach*) or dressed as fools (*amadán*). In Co. Kerry, it was common practice for one of the wrenboys to carry a hobby-horse or *láir bhán* (white mare) with jaws and hooves designed to move by means of strings. Music was an important feature of "Hunting the Wren" with bodhrán players and other musicians often leading the wrenboys through the locality and accompanying them when they sang the "wren song" and danced at the doorsteps of houses. If the wrenboys did not receive the money or drink asked for in the "wren song," they might threaten to bury one of their wrens opposite

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[97] "Hunting the Wren,"   *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*   (28 Dec. 1881), 5.
[98] ibid., 5.
[99] "Alleged Land League Hunt,"   *The Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (23 Jan. 1882), 6.
[100] Beames, *Peasants and Power*, 73.
[101] Sylvie Muller, "The Irish Wren Tales and Ritual: To Pay or Not to Pay the Debt of Nature," *Béaloideas: Iris an Chumainn le Béaloideas Éireann* (*The Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society*) 64-65 (1996-1997): 131-69; Kevin Danaher, *The Year in Ireland* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1972).
[102] Muller, "The Irish Wren Tales and Ritual: To Pay or Not to Pay the Debt of Nature," 141.

the front door; an action that was said to prevent good luck from entering the house for one year. At the end of St. Stephen's Day, the wren might be buried according to human burial rites, i.e. his body was placed in a coffin and keened. Following the wren's burial, the money collected during the day would be used to buy food and drink, and a wren dance, also referred to as a "wren's wake", would be held that night or some days later.

"Hunting the Wren," as can be gathered from the above description of this event, contained elements that Ranajit Guha and others have pinpointed as recognizable features of popular festive days. In *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, Guha outlines some of the main characteristics of the rituals held on such days.[103] On these occasions, Guha tells us, people have licence to act in normally prohibited ways: ""Degree, priority and place" are not observed so long as these festivals of contraries continue and most of the visual and verbal signs of authority and obedience which represent social morality are mutually substituted for the time being."[104] As in "Hunting the Wren," when boys and men dressed as women and a labourer or tenant-farmer might bear the title of "Captain," status and gender reversals were commonly indulged in. Although Guha argues that the function of such ritual or prescriptive inversion was "not to destroy or even weaken a social order, but to buttress it,"[105] he acknowledges a "not too rare correspondence" between festive days and insurgency.[106] While generally, the festivities that occur on these days act as a "safety-valve device" that "reinforce[s] authority by feigning defiance,"[107] Guha points out that it is possible for a "sudden switching of codes" to transform "a festival into an insurrection."[108]

In the aftermath of the anti-hunting campaign, landlords returned to the hunting field, but, as Julian Moynahan points out, they did so with an hysterical energy suggestive of a class on the decline: "landlords resumed hunting with an enthusiasm that was perhaps obsessive, because it masked a nostalgia for dominance that would never again be satisfied in reality."[109] Whether the events that took place in Ireland around St. Stephen's Day 1881 could be categorized as an insurrection is, however, open to debate. What is possible to state is that something akin to a "switching of codes" had occurred. Displaying dead foxes on the end of long poles instead of wrens, the crowds that gathered in villages and towns on 26 December 1881 were not so much partaking in the simulated upheavals so intrinsic to festive days, as making visible a widely-held desire for a more permanent inversion of rural power relations.

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[103] Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 30-1
[104] ibid., 30.
[105] ibid., 30.
[106] Ibid., 31.
[107] ibid., 31.
[108] ibid., 30.
[109] Julian Moynahan,   *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 191.

Mexican campesinos, the neoliberal state and contesting interpretations of social justice: political implications.

Kathy Powell

Introduction

The principal aim of this paper is to raise some questions about the political implications for small peasant producers, as they work to reproduce a livelihood, and to pursue claims to social justice, within a global context in which the market economy has become taken-for-granted, a matter of common sense.

At the same time, this context is also characterized by the failure of "actually existing" liberal democracy to fulfill its promises of a just, egalitarian polity – promises which became more strident and self-righteous in the wake of similar failures on the part of actually existing socialisms. Levels of inequality have risen, while struggles for, and claims to, social justice, that have historically characterized peasant politics in Mexico, seem as much of an uphill battle as ever. As Portes and Hoffman observe, "neoliberalism has proven more successful as a political than as an economic project, as the transformations that it has wrought in society have weakened the basis for organised class struggle and the channels for the effective mobilization of popular discontent" (Portes and Hoffman 2003:77). This raises important questions about the future or, rather, about political futurity: what kind of political hopes and aspirations can be articulated in the face of an intractable dominant discourse which has failed to deliver the goods (Brown 2001).

It is widely acknowledged that the neoliberal model that dominates late capitalism has failed to "lift all boats" and has instead contributed to widening inequality and, very often, deepening poverty. Nonetheless, responses to inequality and poverty have remained limited to tinkering about with policy measures which do not impinge upon neoliberal principles and which tend to adhere to the conviction that poverty and high levels of inequality will ultimately be resolved through growth, rather then considering growing evidence that inequality itself inhibits growth (Karl 2003).

The concept of social justice has long been a significant referent in grassroots political challenges to inequalities: yet the claims of neoliberal governments to address inequalities and show common cause with the disadvantaged have been characterised by the recruitment of this concept to an accommodation to market realities. In Mexico, the proclaimed commitment of successive neoliberal regimes to social justice entails – to paraphrase Bourdieu (2002) – invoking socialist principles, in order to carry out neoliberal policies: the rhetoric of challenges to inequality is harnessed to the cause of institutionalising the market economy.

Peasant producers in Mexico, particularly in the *ejidal* sector,[1] have been experiencing deepening crisis since structural adjustment policies exacerbated the disadvantages already accumulated from what had become a neglected state sector. The consolidation and institutionalisation of the neoliberal model, as Mexico conformed to the Washington consensus – confirmed by the signing of the NAFTA[2] – has been shadowed by the 'institutionalization' of the peasant crisis and the increasing identification of this with the "poverty problem." The claim is that considerable disadvantages can be addressed by a third way-type role for the state, disassociating inequality and poverty from their specific histories of political struggle, re-casting them as *social* problems to be addressed through a combination of targeted poverty relief and market solutions.

Given the extent and depth of poverty,[3] the Mexican state was unable and presumably unwilling to adopt an extreme Hayekian version of neoliberalism (O'Toole 2003). This hesitancy has been reflected in a distancing from the label "neoliberal" and its association with hard-nosed austerity, emphasizing instead a commitment to "social liberalism", a concept developed during the Salinas sexennial, or what President Fox has called "market economy with social responsibility." Attempts in successive administrations to construct a specifically Mexican form of social liberalism which retains strong nationalist claims to legitimacy (ibid.) has not, however, involved a reconsideration of neoliberal economic strategy or its class project. The market economy and the NAFTA in particular have remained unassailable. While the election of Fox's PAN[4] government in 2000 was undoubtedly a political watershed for Mexico in that, after over 70 years of rule by the PRI,[5] Mexico was no longer a one-party state, the continuity of the neoliberal model has been assured. Successive neoliberal administrations have, however, continued to insist on their commitment to social justice in regard to the problems of rural poverty.

As Eckstein & Wickham-Crowley (2003) point out, the concept of social justice is central to the political discourse of the materially poor and politically weak throughout Latin America and beyond. Among significant sections of the peasantry in Mexico, social justice derives much historical resonance from the role of peasant armies in the Mexican revolution, and from subsequent, lengthy *agrarista* struggles: and, moreover, the concept of social justice as both a principle and an aim is enshrined in the Mexican constitution, the embodiment of the state's implicit social contract with its people. There is, therefore, a strong historical and political ownership of the concept in regard to people's rights and state responsibilities. As these responsibilities have been redefined in the dismantling of the old corporatist political system and state-led economy in favour of the market oriented, "minimalist" state, the 'appropriation' of social justice to neoliberal discourse has entailed a

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[1] The land reform sector.

[2] North American Free Trade Agreement, signed by Mexico, the U.S. and Canada in January 1994.

[3] 80% of those in extreme poverty live in rural areas (Appendini 2003)

[4] Partido Acción Nacional: National Action Party

[5] Partido Revolucionario Institucional: Institutional Revolutionary Party

significant shift in meaning,[6] a shift contested by a growing number of peasant organisations.

It is notoriously difficult to generalise about the struggles of the Mexican peasantry, who are highly differentiated in terms of income levels, standards of living, political orientation, productive relations, regionality, ethnicity. For example, my own work with peasant producers has focused on local politics among cane-growing communities in the state of Michoacán, and their sets of problems; some of which are regionally or even locality-specific, some of which relate to particular changes in the conditions of cane production, some of which relate to the liberalization of trade under neoliberalism or the undermining of peasant representative organisations. While the regional and contextual specificity of the numerous peasant demands being voiced must be borne in mind, in this paper I want to address the conceptual underpinnings of some shared grievances.

The Washington Consensus, NAFTA and its Discontents

Neoliberalism provides a raft of these grievances, of which NAFTA is perhaps the most emblematic. As Foweraker *et al.* observe, free trade agreements not only establish single markets, but "also a set of rules and expectations to which national governments can be held accountable" (2003:75): the logic of these rules and expectations runs counter to the needs and demands of peasant producers, and much of their political work for the foreseeable future consists in challenging the normative framework upon which it rests.

I will begin by outlining some of the features of the reform process that have impacted upon the *ejidal* sector, discussing how some of the reforms themselves have attempted to "recategorize" the peasantry within the normative framework of the market. I will then consider the implications of this for state-peasant relations, and for the meaning of/prospects for social justice, and raise the question of whether – ideological claims notwithstanding – peasant marginality is a structural feature of the neoliberal model.

While diverse peasant grievances have come to share a focus on the NAFTA, perceived as the institutionalization of unfair competition, they did not begin here: the agreement itself represents the consolidation of a broader set of neoliberal economic policy reforms, dubbed the Washington Consensus, in place since the mid 1980s. These were aimed at enhancing market liberalization and efficiency, and rejected directly redistributive policies (Karl 2003:134, Calva Tellez *et al.* 2004:1-3). The *ejidal* sector in particular, therefore, had already been dealing with the adverse effects of these policies for some time before the NAFTA was signed in 1994 (Calva Tellez et. al. 2004, Bartra 2004, Gates 1993): the consolidation of these policies in the ensuing years has been little short of disastrous for the sector (Appendini 2003, Otero1999, 2004, Bartra 2004, Calva et al., 2004, Schwentesius Rindermann and Gomez Cruz 2004).

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[6] "Social justice" has also undergone a serious decline: many hard-won social gains were removed or undermined, ranging from health, educational and pension provisions to subsidized agricultural credit, marketing and technical support.

The assumption that short-term adjustment "pain" experienced under neoliberal policies would be alleviated as growth eventually "floated all boats" has begun to sound especially hollow. Questions such as "how long *is* the short run?" have become more urgent as rural areas continue to deteriorate, and more sceptical as evidence accumulates that rates of growth under neoliberalism have actually been lower than under previous models. Inequalities have instead widened, calling into question claims about progress and the future, in spite of which demands to re-negotiate the agricultural chapter of NAFTA are rejected, even as the 15 year time-frame stipulated in the agreement for the removal of the limited tariff protection still afforded nears its expiry in 2008.

In a recent article reviewing assessments of the Mexican economy, including volumes by authors from the World Bank, the OECD, and ECLAC, Ros (2003) identifies a consensus that, while the economic reforms during the 1980s and 1990s claim some clear successes, in significant areas these successes have been limited. Income inequalities, regional disparities and poverty persist or have increased, and the *ejidal* agricultural sector has suffered particularly badly. Poor results have been attributed to the nature of reforms themselves, leading to calls for a coherent sets of policies aimed at establishing market competitiveness, which would include a renewed role for the public sector (op. cit.231).

Reforms affecting the *ejidal* sector have included, most notably, "privatization" of land tenure, the privatization or elimination of public enterprises (especially in marketing, leading to vulnerability to intermediaries), the abandonment of cheap credit, input subsidies, guaranteed prices, and technical support – all of which represents the loss of important social gains. At the same time, imports of basic grain affecting the *ejidal* sector have increased 60 per cent since NAFTA came into effect (op.cit. 230). Despite official encouragement for peasant producers to exercise "choice," this meant that the option of changing to producing higher-value fruit and vegetable crops for more lucrative export markets was only available to the better-off among the middle peasantry (who thereby also shouldered higher risk), while remaining in basic grain production meant continued vulnerability to increased imports (Barros Knock 2000). This trend reinforced "strong centrifugal forces of economic polarization and class differentiation" within the peasantry (Bryceson 2000: 309) and saw a further increase in off-farm activities. As Ros also observes, the *ejidal* sector is scarcely managing by incorporating a range of off-farm activities into household reproduction, including high levels of migration – which, it should be emphasized, entails both making low-cost labour available to capital north of the border, and contributing significantly to the inflow of dollar remittances to Mexico.[7] Peasant representatives have pointed out with some irony that if the government wished to talk up the growth in exports since signing NAFTA,

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[7] Remittances have become a central pillar of the economy. The governor of the *Banco de Mexico* reported a 24% rise in remittances in 2004, pointing out that the volume of remittances offsets a current account deficit mainly generated by interest payments on external debt, and avoids larger distortions on the balance of payments. *La Jornada 1/2/2005.*

they should include the 800,000 peasants who migrated to the U.S. in 2002 alone, to support their families with remittances.[8]

This set of reforms has seen – or, arguably, was designed to produce – a shake-out or "drain off of the excess" rural population (Bartra 2004:23), what Gates (1993) already in the early 1990s described as a *triage*, a "weeding out of the weak" among rural producers to leave only those who were competitive or promptly able to become so. Peasants in the *ejidal* sector have been casualties of policy designed to favour large producers in the export sector. *Procampo,*[9] a direct income subsidy designed to offset the withdrawal of subsidies to production, has been criticized for disproportionately benefiting larger landholders and for offering woefully inadequate support for the stimulation of production to small producers (Appendini 2003, Otero 1999, Cebada Contreras 2004), functioning instead as a safety net, while eligibility for the subsidy serves at local level as an instrument of political control. The subsidy is simply one component in the range of household reproduction strategies, including migration (Cebada Contreras 2004) which compose - in the manner of *bricolage* - peasant livelihoods.

Attempts to offset the impact of reforms and to create a new political support base among those most disadvantaged have taken the form of a series of poverty alleviation programmes under successive administrations– *Pronasol,*[10] *Progresa, Programa Oportunidades*[11] - involving income support subsidies targeted at the extremely poor and conditional upon "investments in infrastructure and human capital" – yet none of which have prevented "an increase in poverty or persistently high income distribution inequality" (Ros 2003:233). Appendini has persuasively argued that the reforms were implicitly premised upon the dismantling of the *ejidal* sector; moreover, as she observes in a discussion of *Progresa*, the "*[c]ategorization of the rural population as "the poor," rather than as rural producers, was effected in the poverty alleviation programme*" (2003:277, emphasis added). This change has significant implications for questions of state–peasant relations and political subjectivity – or, rather, for attempts on the part of the state, to borrow an Althusserian term, to (re)interpellate peasants as particular kinds of political subjects, who conform to a neoliberal normative framework. It also has clear implications for the meaning of and prospects for social justice.

State-peasant relations

Clearly, the dismantling of the institutional framework of *ejidal* agriculture also entailed the dismantling of the longstanding political "alliance" between the post-revolutionary state and the peasant movement to combat poverty and inequality (Gordillo 1988, Otero 1999). This "official" view of state-peasant relations (virtually inseparable from those between the peasantry and the PRI), served to

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[8] *La Jornada 4/3/2003:* "La situación en el agro está muy tirante, advierten productores": by Matilde Perez U.

[9] Programa de Apoyo Directo al Campo: Direct Rural Support Programme, introduced in 1994.

[10] Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (National Solidarity Programme),

[11] Under the respective administrations of Presidents Salinas de Gotari, Zedillo, and Fox.

disavow the political elite's privileging of private capital accumulation, on the one hand, as well as the operation of political clientelism at regional and local level on the other. The nature of these putative relations was in itself disputed in some regions,[12] but even where the notion of a "state-peasant alliance" enjoyed broad ideological legitimacy, "actually existing" relations with the state have been contested "from below" on a variety of grounds to do with the realities of political practice and the persistence of inequality.

Contested and problematic as this relationship and alliance has undoubtedly been, it nonetheless designated a site of *political* struggle in which the peasantry made very partial, highly differential but nonetheless significant gains. Under neoliberalism, this has been displaced by a form of "third way-ism" in which state responsibility takes the form of promoting policies "emphasizing limited and targeted spending for the poorest, combined with support for market-based solutions for the rest of society" (Foweraker et. al. 2003:74) – a normative formula which omits any consideration of the exclusionary nature of market "solutions" and how this has swelled numbers of those in poverty. It was precisely the exclusionary nature of the market which was strongly articulated by peasant mobilizations growing in force at the beginning of the Fox administration – whose response remained consistent with this formulaic approach.

In the face of numerous autonomous organizations[13] protesting a range of problems and unanimous in their call for a renegotiation of the NAFTA,[14] there was in government rhetoric a perceptible attempt to dichotomize the peasant sector into subsistence farmers with social problems, on the one hand, and private producers who can compete in the international arena, on the other. This was never more plainly stated than by Foreign Secretary Derbez.[15] In response to a question posed by his counterpart from the Dominican Republic, "why did Mexico engage in competition with US, if the Fox government recognizes that the agricultural sector has not received any attention for the past 20 years?,"[16] Derbez claimed that 60 - 70% of peasants had no influence upon, and no relationship with, the commercial sector since they dedicated themselves to subsistence farming. Programmes to support these families and help them out of their poverty, he went on, had nothing to do with the commercial sector or NAFTA, but were in place to ensure that they would have more sheep, goats and chickens.[17] The claim that 60-70% of the peasantry engage in subsistence farming seems an

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[12] See, for example, Nugent 1993.

[13] These include *El Barzón* (The Yoke), a national anti-debt coalition, *El campo no aguanta más* (The countryside can endure no more), an alliance of 11 autonomous organisations, as well as The National Union of Autonomous Regional Peasant Organisations (UNORCA), the National Peasant Confederation (CNC), the Permanent Agrarian Congress (CAP), and several producer organisations (including cane, maize, rice, and coffee producers): see Bartra (*op.cit:*20).

[14] Proposals drawn up include: a moratorium on NAFTA for agriculture, both emergency and long-term restructuring programmes, a comprehensive rural financial reform, including a designated proportion of GDP to both productive and social development, recognition of indigenous rights and cultures, food policies that guarantee quality to the consumer (Bartra op.cit:21).

[15] At this point recently appointed to *Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores,* previously *Secretaria de Economia.*

[16] *La Jornada* 22nd January 2003.

[17] *ibid.*

exaggeration: nonetheless Derbez went on to describe the alliance *El campo no aguanta más* as an important but *small minority* of people with *social problems.*

These remarks - made a few days before Jan 31st 2003, which saw in Mexico City the largest peasant demonstration since the 1930s[18] - reflected this same formulaic approach of market solutions for those who can, poverty alleviation for the rest.[19] However, the effort to dichotomize the peasant sector into subsistence farmers with social problems, on the one hand, and private producers, who can compete in the international arena, on the other, is deeply problematic. It vastly oversimplifies the question of differentiation, both within and between the regions, as well as conflating regionally specific sets of problems. It merely reaffirms the marginality of subsistence farmers, while overlooking the difficulties of small producers in the export sector. One example of the latter are cane producers (many of whom are extremely poor)[20] who do produce export crops, are not subsistence farmers, whose product has been subject to, at best, ambiguous arrangements under NAFTA, and who are extremely vulnerable and disadvantaged both to world market prices and the import of sugar substitutes (Hernández and Barrajas 2000). These producers have also suffered 20 years of neglect and their relations of production continue to be characterized by subordination to industrial capital. Clearly, in categorizing peasant marginalization as an issue of social concern, and defining it as the inability to avail of market opportunities, neoliberal discourse evades the political nature of both peasant struggles and the poverty question itself.

The Fox administration began its term by pronouncing itself to be a government "of businessmen, for businessmen," a slogan hardly encouraging to a severely decapitalized peasantry. While a PAN government, unlike its neoliberal predecessors, is not constrained by the necessity to deal with residual elements of the historical relationship between the PRI and the peasantry, it was nonetheless faced with the necessity to manage growing agrarian discontent. Confronted with rising levels of mobilization[21] and evidence of crisis in the countryside, the Fox administration, like its *priísta* predecessors, needed to display a commitment to tackling rural poverty and development concerns, and a solidarity with the peasantry, while continuing to insist upon the unassailability of market dominance. To this end, the government and peasant organizations negotiated the *Acuerdo Nacional para el Campo* (ANC), finally signed at the end of April 2003 (although not by all of the organizations.)[22] Amongst the latter, major reservations remained so as

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[18] It is also important to note the broad support for the mobilizations by workers unions and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

[19] Similarly, Agriculture Secretary Usabiaga has repeatedly alienated peasant groups with responses criticized as flippant, facetious and mendacious: such as his suggestion that milk producers facing marketing difficulties should "do something else"; insisting that all peasants can, like himself, pull themselves up from rags to riches and this would, as in his case, take them 47 years.

[20] Some 45% of the country's 601,988 cane producers sow between 0 – 5 hectares. www.sagar.gob.mx/Coaazucar

[21] This included demonstrations and marches, blockading of roads and the occupation of warehouses.

[22] Successive neoliberal administrations have sought to put their own "imprint" on concern for rural poverty – hence the renaming of essentially similar poverty alleviation programmes, as

not to entail a renegotiation of or exit from NAFTA. The *Acuerdo* was presented as emblematic of a renewed state/peasant relationship and as outlining measures to equip producers, and fostering the resources necessary for fuller market participation and greater competitiveness. It must also be read as a response to the widespread mobilizations among the peasantry in the first part of the Fox administration, and as an attempt to curb militancy by locking organizations into an agreement, premised on no further political action.

The *Acuerdo* is a comprehensive document that prescribes a number of programmes, projects, and support mechanisms under the auspices of several government departments. It includes programmes for international trade, economic development (support for producers with limited resources, for the landless, finance and marketing) human development (education, health, housing, nutrition), and for institutional strengthening. The comprehensiveness of its ambitions however, remains at some variance with the level of resources dedicated to the countryside.[23] Since the signing of the *Acuerdo*, peasant leaders have repeatedly expressed exasperation over the lack of progress in implementation, noting paralyzing bureaucratization, instead of the simplification of procedures, the urgent need for technical and marketing support, as well as lack of information and clarity over rules and procedures. Also singled out has been lack of action in advancing social programmes and a general need for the various government bodies involved to start "reading from the same page,"[24] as well as substantial increases in funds and a move way from what has been condemned as "minimalist and assistentialist" approaches by peasant organizations, rural economists, and the Food and Agriculture Organisation alike[25]. With the 2008 deadline for tariff elimination fast approaching, this is not encouraging: even less encouraging was Agriculture Secretary Usabiaga's recent response[26] to repeated complaints that the government has failed to comply with the agreement, stating that it was an agreement on policy measures and not an obligation, and that it contained no actual figures or numbers against which the government could be held accountable. This response would seem to support the notion that the purpose of the agreement was largely to harness peasant organizations to a weak reformism that does not challenge market logic.

Social justice?

If the ANC is an example of measures to address the discrepancy between the promises of "market democracy with social responsibility," as President Fox

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well as comprehensive policy programmes such as this one, not dissimilar from the already existing *Alianza para el Campo*. Such replication raises questions about the political functionality of the programmes as well as the most efficient use of available resources.

[23] "The Department of Agriculture (Sagarpa) receives 2.1% of total expenditure, a low figure if one takes into account that the countryside generates 20% of formal employment in the country, in addition to which one quarter of the population lives from this sector , which contributes 5% to GDP." Matilde Perez U., *La Jornada* 14th October 2004.

[24] *La Jornada* 23rd June 2004

[25] *La Jornada 21st January* 2005

[26] *La Jornada* 14th October 2004

put it, and the empirical reality of peasant marginalization, what, then, are the prospects for social justice? A commitment to social justice certainly remains a feature of government rhetoric. References to social justice as both a right and a goal, for example, are contained in the preamble to the *Acuerdo Nacional*, as well as a homage to the nation's historical debt to the peasantry and an invocation of the figure of Zapata. This is a routine appropriation of discourse for purposes of legitimation, but inserted into a different normative framework.

Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley point out that "the material aspects of political justice in Latin America do not center around claims to equality" but that state legitimacy has been "closely tied to people's perceptions of material *fairness*" (op.cit: 13-14 emphasis added). In one sense, this makes of social justice a fairly plastic concept – and rather an equivocal one - providing one possible reason why claims about commitment to social justice have been able to reside within both statist and neoliberal political discourses. Claims to social justice do not therefore necessarily demand the eradication of inequality (or differentiation) *per se*, but denounce or challenge *excessive* or unfair inequalities. This is clearly an inherently *relational* concept, both in regard to the material position of a differentiated peasantry compared to other sectors of society and, especially, in regard to the role of the state as mediator between the demands of the peasantry and of capital. The population's formal expectations of the centralist state which developed during the post-revolutionary period in regard to its responsibilities in the distribution of "fairness," very much mirrored the penetration of the state into both economy and society, and a form of social contract which stands in stark contrast to the minimalism of a neoliberal state (ibid.).

The abandonment of redistributive policies in favour of targeted alleviation for the most disadvantaged, resulting in "the categorization of rural producers as the poor" (Appendini 2003), signals the appropriation of the concept of social justice, its harnessing to neoliberal policies, and a shift in its meaning. No longer the referent of "the [political] alliance of the peasant movement with the state to combat social inequality", social justice becomes an element of a discourse *about the poor*. The state discharges its commitment to social justice by providing the means for equipping the peasantry – who now discursively overlap to a considerable degree with "the poor" - with the necessary 'human capital' to participate in the market economy. The main feature of this refiguring of social justice is that it has become an adjunct to the market economy, emptied of specific political meaning.

If it is accepted that the state's contribution to the pursuit of social justice is merely to provide poor and marginalised subjects with the wherewithal to compete in the market, then political questions about relations of domination which reproduce inequalities are less likely to be posed, much less addressed. And while the plasticity of social justice might allow it to be defined in terms of the distribution of market opportunities, its relational dimension remains problematic. Here perhaps is why the issue of *unfair* competition in regard to NAFTA in particular has been such a heated one – not simply because of the evident unevenness of the competitive field but because the state's accountability towards free market principles and partners is seen to be

prioritized over its responsibilities to the peasant sector. It is not insignificant that this is routinely described as *competencia desleal* (*disloyal* competition). Moreover, it is worth considering that while a concept of social justice which speaks to fairness might appeal to a neoliberal regime on the grounds that it can accommodate differentiation, it can also supply a unifying referent among a differentiated peasantry - precisely because perceptions of fairness are no more *just* about poverty than they are about a more even dispersal of market opportunities. Certainly, local differentiation among peasants as much informs social identity as it complicates that of class; nonetheless in the face of shared injustices such as these, class identity and solidarity emerges both as an organising principle and as an ethical argument which may provide the basis of a more radical future politics.

The categorization of small producers as "the poor" has other implications. First, if resources continue to be insufficient to "equip" everyone with the "human capital" to compete successfully in the market economy, then poverty alleviation programmes will remain a form of social welfare destined to reproduce dependency. Moreover, by defining social justice as an aspiration and legitimate right-claim of the poor, there is the risk that social justice will serve as a discursive identity marker which will guarantee the reinscription of their marginality. The question posed by Brown is relevant here: "Do rights affixed to identities partly function to imprison us within the subject positions they are secured to affirm or protect" (1995:120)?

In Mexico, social justice has long been a central referent of state-peasant relations. Its significance derives from its standing as an historical right peasants can legitimately claim, but which has been *withheld*, and which remains *pending*. It is composed, then, of historical struggle for rights, the "injuries" endured in the absence of those rights, and the continuity of struggle towards a future condition. This is important, as it carries implicit claims about the future which are shaped by historical experience.

It could perhaps be said that social justice achieves its meaning in the disparity between the way things have been, the way things are, and the way things are supposed to be, may yet be. As Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley (*op.cit*) emphasize, it is crucial to establish the context of grievance, since it is within specific contexts of *in*justice – arising from relations of production, regionality, ethnicity, exclusion – that claims to social justice acquire their meaning. In neoliberalism, claims to social justice are detached from their historical specificity. Within this paradigm, the assumption remains that "all that is going badly... is but a measure of the gap between an empirical reality and a regulating ideal" (Derrida 1994:86). Here, the 'gap' does not indicate an historical process of political struggle, but a problem that can be managed with a technical fix. Such assumptions rest on the normative assumption of the naturalness of the "free" market, which – despite claims to the contrary – is profoundly ideological in nature.

The Constitutive "Gap"

In an ideological climate dominated by the Washington Consensus, the prospect of policy reversal, of calling into question the normativity of the

market, is unlikely to be countenanced. The government is unresponsive even to calls to remove the most vulnerable agricultural sectors from NAFTA, even less so to demands that the treaty should be comprehensively renegotiated or that agriculture should be withdrawn from the agreement entirely, despite the substantial losses incurred by the *ejidal* sector and despite growing concerns that this sector will not be sufficiently brought "up to speed" by the time all agricultural tariffs will be eliminated by 2008.

The posture that there is no alternative – old and tired as it now may seem – continues to prevail. Bourdieu characterized neoliberalism as an "economistic fatalism... presented... as an uncrossable horizon of thought" (1998:126) – a fatalism which depends upon the disavowal of its ideological nature and class basis. This disavowal rests on the naturalization of the market, its designation as an extra-ideological domain – but which entails in itself, as Zizek has pointed out, an "ideological gesture par excellence" (1994:15). This gesture accomplishes at least two significant effects. Firstly:

> [a]mong the procedures generally acknowledged as "ideological" is definitely the eternalization of some historically limited condition, the act of discerning some higher Necessity in a contingent occurrence (for example, locating the market in the "nature of things"). [Zizek 1994:4]

As Zizek goes on to suggest,

> [i]s not ideology also, however, the opposite procedure of failing to notice the necessity, of misperceiving it as an insignificant contingency [such as in] ... the domain of economics, in which the ideological procedure *par excellence* is to reduce the crisis to an external, ultimately contingent occurrence, thus failing to take note of the inherent logic of the system that begets the crisis? [*ibid.*]

These same ideological procedures can be seen to be at work here: the "naturalization" of the market on the one hand, and on the other, the claim that peasant marginalisation is not systemic but contingent, a temporary feature of adjustment or attributable to the failings of previous administrations (or indeed of peasants themselves). These procedures make neoliberalism much harder to grapple with politically. At the same time, as they make particularly conspicuous the gap between socio-political realities and the ideal promised by liberal democracy and global capitalism (Foweraker et. al.2003:75), they place the constitutive nature of this gap beyond consideration.

Clearly, it is within such a gap that peasant struggles for social justice and relations with the state have been historically located. While this gap remained wide and many remained poor during the post-war period of state intervention in the economy, nonetheless *some* significant gains in levels of social well-being and income were won. During the period inequality levels improved, in contrast to the laissez-faire models before and since (Portes and

Hoffman op.cit).[27] Within the neoliberal paradigm, however, as levels of well-being have declined and hard-won social gains undermined, it is increasingly difficult for the peasantry to regard their problems as just a measure of the "gap", when their *experience of the future* promised by the model has thus far been that the gap is not only getting wider but for many is proving unnavigable.

The relentless implementation of this framework as normative, despite the havoc it has caused within the *ejidal* sector, may be based upon faith (that ultimately market solutions will come good) or upon cynicism (that peasant marginalization is an inevitable and/or an affordable outcome that can be politically fielded with placatory gestures) or some uneasy combination, but, in either case, it must be recognized that its implementation without regard for socio-political realities is "not simply functional with regard to social domination" but lies at "the very foundation of the relationship of domination" (Zizek *op.cit*: 8). This is where the concept of social justice might be re-appropriated, and dissociated from 'fairness in the distribution of market opportunities', as well as from liberal notions of progress: in a discussion of Benjamin, for example, Brown notes that "[p]rogress reconciles and attaches its adherents to an inevitable (even fatalistic) and unwittingly normative account of political formations and events. The hopefulness that a progressive view of history offers is both delusional and ultimately conservative, precluding a politics devoted to bringing about a "state of emergency" that can break with this present or "blast open the continuum of history"" (Brown 2001:162-3). The shift to neoliberalism was presented as the maturation of Mexico's revolutionary process (O'Toole *op.cit*.); an interpretation similarly guided by a linear, progressivist view of history in which the past is superseded, "left behind", or regarded as "an inferior version of the present" (Brown 2001:157).

Progressive views of history, however, run into problems when their developmental promises fail to deliver; they also neglect the ways in which the past – specific historical experience – shapes both the present and orientation towards the future (*op.cit*.). For the Mexican peasantry, their specific historical experiences of struggles for justice are likely to remain significant "sources of continuity" on which to draw - and with which to challenge neoliberal ahistoricism implicit in its discrediting of past models (Powell

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[27] This is not an argument for a return to the previous model. While neoliberal reforms have clearly severely hurt the peasant sector, at the same time it is important not to retrospectively idealize the post-revolutionary "statist" period: a point that has been been made in other contexts. Wendy Brown for example, has criticized leftist commentators in the US who formerly offered "critical analyses of state paternalism and state management of capitalism"s inequities" (1995:15), but who, in the face of the shrinking of state welfare support in the US, now argue for "a defense of the state as that which affords individuals "protection against the worst abuses of the market", and that "the welfare state empowers individuals by reducing their vulnerability to the impersonal social forces of capitalism." However, as she also points out, "[i]n the course of this defense, they decline to consider the state as a vehicle of domination or to reflect on "protection" as a technique of domination" (*ibid*.). These observations are equally pertinent to the post-revolutionary state in Mexico, characterised by the deployment of paternalism as a technique of rule, together with clientelist interventions in the distribution of social rights (in other words, social justice was distributed very unevenly).

2002). These sources of continuity seem to have a closer kinship to Derrida's elaboration of justice than to normative views of progress:

> No justice... seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some *responsibility*, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they the victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence... of the oppressions of capitalist imperialism or any of the forms of totalitarianism... without this responsibility and this respect for justice concerning those who *are not there*, of those who are no longer or who are not yet *present and living*, what sense would there be to ask the question "where?" "where tomorrow? [Derrida *op.cit*.:xix]

The generational emphasis of this view of justice resonates strongly with peasant discourses I have heard about the struggles and sacrifices of the past, how these were variously, partially successful, supported, scuppered, distorted, appropriated, problematized by the political "work" underlying paternalism, clientelism and patronage. These experiences inform a complex and exasperating present and shape anxieties as well as aspirations and hopes about the future, and for future generations in particular. Attempts to harness social justice to 'market opportunities' disembeds its meaning from historical experience of struggle, thus depriving it of sources of continuity on which to draw.

It seems inevitable that peasant politics will continue to challenge and interrogate an agenda in which the conception of social change has been "redefined as the participation of social actors in the process of capital restructuring and privatization of common goods, not as altering the relations of power in society" (Petras 1994:72). This in turn is likely to continue to be an uphill battle; as Portes and Hoffman note, the "channels for the effective mobilization of popular discontent" during the neoliberal era have been weakened; grassroots mobilization has become erratic and fragmented (*op.cit.:* 77). At the same time, as neoliberalism has contributed to an increasingly precarious socio-economic position for the peasantry, it generates sites for the emergence of new forms of politicization, witnessed in the increasing number of independent organisations and the formation of alliances amongst them. The challenges in building and *sustaining* coherent alliances from "the bottom up" are immense, yet even alliances that subsequently fragment do political work in articulating a critique, and in providing continuity for future struggles, and indeed, for struggles for the future. Political processes that now seem fragmented may in retrospect look like processes of class (re)formation, forging a new political space. A re-appropriated concept of social justice may well serve in sustaining these processes by providing a unifying referent and articulating a radical refusal of the future offered by neoliberalism.

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Narratives and Silences in Discussions of AIDS/HIV Amongst Young People in Mpumalanga, South Africa

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I entered Sipho's[1] hospital room to find him curled up in a foetal position on the bed with his back to the door and facing the windows. I walked around the bed to greet him and saw an attractive young man with a fashionable haircut who looked as though he had once been physically powerful, but was now too weak to sit up or even move easily. He was wearing blue hospital pyjamas. His face seemed drawn and tired and his lips were chapped and bleeding badly so that it seemed to me that any attempt on his part to speak would be difficult. I greeted him in Zulu and asked his permission to talk to him. I felt, given his obviously poor health, that I should check again that he was comfortable with my presence. He said I should stay and talk to him and I sat down beside the bed, which had been raised quite high so that our heads were now at the same level. I did not take out a tape-recorder.

Sipho was 29 years old when we met. He was born and lived locally, with his wife and two young children. His oldest son was seven and the other one, he smiled – he can't remember – but "still a baby". We spoke about his wife and two sons, and about his job in a local Joshua Doore furniture shop where he had worked as a salesman for the past six years. "Your uncle in the furniture business"[2] he says. His wife stayed at home to look after the children.

He told me he had come to the hospital three or four times because he was experiencing dizziness. He doesn't like it here but won't say why. On the latest occasion, two weeks ago, the doctors did tests but, he said, did not give him the results. No-one had come to talk to him about why he is sick. At this stage I asked if I should leave but he smiled and says "No, I will talk to you". But I could see that it was physically difficult for him to talk. His mouth seemed dry and he spoke in a whisper. The sores on his lips were now bleeding onto his sheets and pillow. I held a glass of water with a straw to his mouth and he took a drink.

I did not know how to broach the subject of AIDS because he was apparently not going to volunteer the information that he was HIV positive and I was no longer sure if I was supposed to know about his status. I commented about the AIDS situation in the area and Sipho shifted his position slightly and looked away. He said nothing and for a full five minutes we sat in silence. It was almost as though there was a silent struggle going on. I wanted to say, "Its OK, I know", but I couldn't. It was obvious that he was not prepared to discuss anything about AIDS. In the end I did what so many friends and family members do when confronted with a loved one diagnosed with AIDS – I

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[1] Not his real name.

[2] "You"ve got an uncle in the furniture business – Joshua Doore!" has been the marketing slogan for this national retail furniture store for the past twenty years.

pretended not to know. That was the way he wanted it. Finally he broke the silence by repeating that he did not like the hospital and was going home today. I asked again, if he wanted me to go away and again he said no.

We changed the subject and talked instead about traditional healers he had visited because of the bad dreams he has but he wouldn't talk about the bad dreams either. His eyes filled with fear. He was tiring rapidly and still struggled to talk until eventually I decided it was time for me to go. This time he agreed and we said goodbye.

Outside the nurse reconfirmed that Sipho had undergone counselling. He was not going home that day but they were confident that he would be well enough to go home at some stage "for a short while". I came away feeling incalculably sad.

This paper centres on discussions surrounding people living with HIV and AIDS in Mpumalanga province of South Africa and challenges an accepted hypothesis that a Euro-American understanding of stigma is the main reason for the silence surrounding HIV and AIDS. Through the example of Sipho's silence above, and narratives of various participants, I examine the choices available to this community in the face of the calamity that is a provincial HIV infection rate of 27.3%[3] and the silences that often accompany a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS. I begin by identifying alternative, although not necessarily mutually exclusive, cultural mechanisms, which are in place in Mpumalanga. I look at the role of stigma, whether "felt" or "enacted" (Scambler & Hopkins, 1986) and the internalisation and reproduction of external public criticisms (Goffman 1986). While some stigma does exist, it is important to emphasise that in each model identified, silence plays a major role in the strategy of a people working to protect, restructure, and re-affirm their community. This paper, then, is my attempt to understand each of these mechanisms and reconcile some of those divergent views and discordant voices.

Throughout South Africa the story of HIV/AIDS is prominent. Regular magazine and newspaper features keep the issue front and centre. Television programmes and radio talk shows have ongoing awareness campaigns and human-interest stories. Drama and musical societies do awareness concerts. Local community clinics are littered with posters and literature and hand out free condoms. Schools throughout the country have "Life Skills" teachers whose job it is to inform young teenagers about safe sex practices and the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Billboards along motorways and posters on lampposts scream out about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, although in Mpumalanga in 2001 there were fewer posters than I had seen elsewhere.

As with all public health campaigns, the message is clear, direct, and unambiguous. Using a medical model, the causes of transmission of HIV/AIDS are laid out, and people are informed about how best to protect themselves. While the politics of the latter may lead to contradictions in the message (*e.g.,* abstinence, condoms, faithfulness) there is a consistency about

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[3] South African Dept. of Health, *HIV/AIDS & STD Strategic Plan for South Africa 2000-2005:* 2000.

the former – the virus is transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids, most often during sexual intercourse but also in a variety of different forms (dirty needles, intravenous drug use, mother-to-child transmission, etc.). Despite the furore surrounding President Mbeki's comments about the link between HIV and AIDS at the 13th International AIDS Conference,[4] during recent years the message from the Department of Health has been entirely consistent with the international public health models, and the President himself has withdrawn from any further public comment on the matter.[5] It would not be true to say, therefore, that the South African public is uninformed about the existence, prevalence and causes of HIV/AIDS although the extent to which they engage with such information, and the manner in which they choose to do so, varies considerably.

Alongside the vast amounts of public information, there is a reluctance to discuss sex privately or in family circles. Although it is not a cultural taboo, it is certainly considered improper for parents to discuss sex with their children. None of those people I spoke to had received any sexual education or information from their parents, and all considered it quite proper that they learn about such matters from friends or peers, although they admitted that in many cases the information they had gained from such sources had been incorrect.

Witchcraft

As with many other African countries (and indeed further afield), there exists in South Africa a witchcraft complex, which cannot and should not be ignored. To do so would be to disregard a cultural mechanism which is "chillingly concrete, its micropolitics all too real" (Comaroff 1993:xxvii). Witchcraft has for many years provided a moral framework, a vehicle for interpretation, a means of both social healing and of searching for causal links for the frustrations of those questions that cannot ordinarily be answered – the "why me? why now?" questions.

> Witch beliefs do not merely express social relations, but are a set of beliefs and practices in their own right which structure chaotic experiences so that the world can be made meaningful. [Witchcraft] enables people to explain, diagnose and compensate for unmerited misfortune. [Hammond-Tooke cited in Niehaus 1993:500]

Just as the witchcraft paradigm itself merits attention, so too do the shared characteristics of AIDS and witchcraft. Whereas HIV/AIDS relies on an exchange of bodily fluids for transmission, witchcraft often requires the hair/nails/blood of a victim to be successful; they share symptoms of lung and stomach problems and are generally slow "wasting" sicknesses; witches are always intimately known to their victims – neighbours, family members, loved

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4 Held in Durban, South Africa in July 2000.

5 Minister for Health, Dr. Mantombazana Tshabalala-Msimang, publicly advocates a diet of raw garlic, lemon peel, olive oil and beetroot to fight HIV, arguing that South Africans should be given treatment choices and that ARVs cannot, and should not, be promoted as the sole remedy for the disease.

ones - whereas AIDS singles out particular victims within intimate social networks (Ashforth, 2002); both relate to inexorable human problems of death and undeserved misfortune and both require silence, discretion and constant vigilance, since it would appear that neither can ever really be obliterated.

Most notably, during times of extreme crisis or trauma, populist campaigns for witch-hunts emerge. Until 50 years ago, structures did exist for dealing with witches either through a ritual process of identifying and reintegrating witches into a healed and reunified community (Delius 1996), or through banishment (Niehaus 1993; Stadler 1996). However a combination of the breakdown of chiefly rule, "betterment" plans, Apartheid resettlement policies, The Suppression of Witchcraft Act (1959) and government protection of accused witches, have served not to rid the community of witches, but to upset the precarious balance of forces that did exist and to change the landscape and social responses to witches within the community.   A dissatisfaction with government responses to, and protection of, witches in the community has led to the perception that witches are even more firmly established than ever and evidence of their work is more prevalent. Not only have witchcraft accusations increased but, more often now, dealing with witches requires that their punishment be equal to or more violent than the crime itself and the past thirty years have seen an increase in stoning, beating and burning to death of those accused. In addition, accusations themselves have moved from socio-centric to egocentric. Whereas accusations in the past generally related to malice caused to an entire community, say by preventing rain to fall on crops, now they are almost entirely concerned with malice directed at individuals.

In fundamental ways, then, both HIV/AIDS and witchcraft are concerned with the politics of public morality. There is a desire to rid the community of any undeserved misfortune and evil that exists, an important part of which is currently manifest in the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. That is not to suggest that there is necessarily any blame attributed to the AIDS patient him/herself. Ashforth (2002), for example, argues that it is entirely plausible for people suffering with AIDS to interpret their afflictions as a form of witchcraft or *isidliso*, and that such an interpretation is by no means based on irrationality or superstition.

> ...[W]hile the virus might be contracted from a man's illegitimate love affairs, the witchcraft responsible for his infection could have been sent to him by his wife, his mother-in-law, or a jealous neighbour or a person in any one of a number of different relationships who might have been motivated by jealousy and hatred to malicious action. [Ashforth 2002:132]

Most significantly, however, is the knowledge that witches have the power not only to kill their victims, but to turn them into zombies – living dead, who work at night as slaves to increase the wealth of the witch. Little has been written about these individual victims who occupy the space between life and death, but given the already existing parallels between HIV/AIDS and

witchcraft, it is entirely possible that people identified as HIV positive could be seen to be occupying that same ambiguous space as the "living dead."

By virtue of their diagnosis, individuals who are HIV positive are unable to conform to standards that society calls "normal", represent a difference from socially ascribed expectations and as such are disqualified from full social acceptance, so they become stigmatised individuals (Goffman 1986). Furthermore, insofar as the diagnosis "predicts" an imminent death, it conforms to some of the expectations of how witchcraft is seen to operate. This similarity can have drastic consequences, as was the case in December 1998 when one young woman, Gugu Dlamini, was stoned and stabbed to death three weeks after making a public statement that she was living with AIDS. This act of violence is suggestive of the treatment of witches and indeed AIDS, like a witch, is anomalous and disruptive of the social order.

Similar acts of violence have been visited upon others who have disclosed their status, although, thankfully these seem to be reducing in number. Everyone is agreed then, that HIV/AIDS is stigmatised and disclosure can be dangerous. In a social-medical context of the scarcity of triple anti-retroviral therapy, HIV positive people who reveal their status to the community are declaring a social death. As I argue below, in a society whose members understand themselves as profoundly mutually constituted this social rupture can often be harder to experience than the disease.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is the Zulu word meaning variously "humanness" or "humanity." It refers to a world-view, the central tenets of which are *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person through other people)* and *Simunye (we are one!)*. It invokes a sense of the mutual construction of personhood and is widely held throughout South Africa as a philosophy, a factual description and as a code of ethics. It is sometimes glossed by Western philosophers as being a variation on the theme *do unto others as you would have others do unto you*, but, as I argue below, this translation misses some key aspects of this worldview. Above all, *Ubuntu* cannot be reduced to a simplistic individualistic versus socio-centric analysis. It is my contention that a fuller understanding of the practice and philosophy of *Ubuntu* goes some way towards explaining the relationship between HIV positive people and the wider community, including the issue of health care.

Much has been written about the view that the *other people* through whom one becomes a person has in fact a religious connotation in terms of ancestor worship, and this is indeed part of the picture (Prinsloo 1995:4, 1998:46, Van Niekerk 1994:2, Ndaba 1994:13-14). However, equally important is the affirmation of "others" and a respect for the beliefs and practices of others. There is a lesser-known but fuller translation of *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, as "A human being is a human being through (*the otherness of*) other human beings" (Van der Merwe 1996:1). Thus understood, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* is interpreted as: "To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form"

(Van der Merwe 1996:1). Effectively, *Ubuntu* tells us "only when I affirm your humanity do I fully confirm mine."

Such a strong emphasis on community can pose some difficulties. It can insist on conformity, totalitarianism and continuity, whilst shunning difference, and fearing change (Louw 1995). More than anything else, *Ubuntu* makes mutual constitution categorically part of human personhood. Clearly, if human beings are mutually constitutive, then the removal of one constituent poses a threat to the whole. The central issue in the declaration of "having AIDS," then, is that it equals "death" but "not right now." Thus, both the person living with AIDS, and her community, are left in an extremely anomalous position, structurally similar to the challenge to sociality posed by witchcraft. A sort of hole is predicted in the social fabric, one that refuses the immediate ritual reconstitution that a "real" death would offer, that is a funeral. Thus, the person with AIDS finds herself between categories not just for herself, but for every other person with whom she interacts. I have struggled to find any perspective that resonated with the public discourse and explained people's behaviour, including the narratives and more specifically the silences. This aspect of *Ubuntu*, it seems to me, explains important aspects of the symbolic economy around AIDS in Mpumalanga.

Narrative and Silence

Narratives can also be seen as a cultural mechanism, albeit one which at least initially is enacted on an individualistic basis. Narrative in the first place exists as a presentation of the self to the self. If we accept the principle that narrative is itself a process through which the life-world is reconstituted (Good 1994:133), then informants regain control and rebuild self-image with every telling of their narratives. Further, it provides a means of dealing with events and incidents that need to be accessed, tested, and processed in order to make sense of situations, both for the self and for the listener. "To explain more is to understand better" (Ricoeur 1984). It can express both internal struggles against a moral authorizing society, as well as external struggles against a structural position within society. On an inter-subjective level narratives are part of what Arendt (1958) identifies as the "subjective in-between" which is not tangible and mediated, but, she says, "for all its intangibility, this in-between is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common." Stories and storytelling exist to fill the surplus/void that escapes signification in symbolic systems. They are the means people use to constantly hold back this surplus, or reconstruct the void, and the means by which they create their identity (Zizek 1995). This a self-identity constructed through an understanding of the projection of the self to other persons.

Self-help groups do exist where HIV positive patients will meet and discuss their situation, exchanging stories in a comforting and supportive environment. Those attending refer to the positive benefits of having such a facility and say they will live longer because they are living without the extreme stress of those who have no forum within which to experience their disease. These centres do not deal with biological or technological solutions, but with social ones – preparing people who wish to disclose to their families; providing practical day-to-day assistance – a meal to those attending;

information on safe practices and care. Such centres are attended by fewer than 20% of the HIV positive population although it has to be said that non-attendance cannot be construed as rejection of this option, as there are multiple reasons for not attending – including ease of access. I was told by doctors and nurses in Mpumalanga that because nurses live in close proximity to the patients and have to interact with them when they return to the community, they do not want to become involved with counselling outside the hospital and are reluctant to provide the mandatory pre- and post-test counselling required even within the hospital setting. It seems that they require of themselves that they go through a process of "un-knowing" the knowledge that could interfere with the community dynamic. It would seem then, that narrative, while it plays a part in the lives of people living with HIV, is contingent.

Alongside narrative, the act of silence, and a knowledge of when not to speak, cannot be overlooked. The primary hypothesis in HIV/AIDS literature is often that the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS is based in "stigma;" that that stigma is in turn based on ignorance; and, finally, that fear of violent repercussion prevents people from disclosing and that with enough education, awareness and openness around the disease silence will be consigned to the past and we can all move forward.

I do not deny that stigma exists. But there are a number of questions which arise, which I feel should be examined, particularly in the light of the range of cultural mechanisms which do exist in this community. Firstly, the extent to which such stigma is "enacted" as opposed to "felt" is unclear. Secondly, must silence always be seen as obstructing the disclosure and acceptance of an HIV status? Third, should the same meaning always be inferred from silence? And finally, to what extent are silence behaviours cross-cultural? In the remainder of this paper I will attempt to examine these questions through narratives and silences collected during my own fieldwork in Mpumalanga.

Whereas "enacted" stigma refers to penalties or sanctions against people living with HIV/AIDS, "felt" stigma refers to the feelings of oppression and fear of "enacted" stigma. I asked informants how they felt about disclosing their HIV status to family and friends. While they all had had concerns about disclosing their condition, because, they said, of stigma [1, 2], those that had told their families had found at least some support, albeit after a period of education and/or counselling [3 –6]

> *[1] If I did my life would change because they would reject me. They wouldn't want to be near me or share with me. AIDS kills but its not as though you go looking for it. You go out looking for a stable life and that's what people want – not AIDS.*

> *[2] I just say I am healthy so how can I have that kind of a disease. Sometimes you think you tell your friends but you tell a snake. That friend is a snake. You can't trust a friend when you have that kind of a problem.*

[3] The family were not angry because they saw me so sick... different sicknesses in my body....so they were alright now because now they at least knew what was the problem. Also the six months treatment killed the other diseases [TB and pneumonia] and at least now I am left with just HIV.

[4] I couldn't tell my family so I moved to Capetown to live with my sister. But the doctor I was going to in Capetown told my sister about my status. When my sister confronted me I told her but I decided also to come back to Jo'burg. But she is still keeping in touch with me.

[5] I did not disclose to the family immediately. I educated them and prepared them about AIDS first and I asked them once what would they do if I was HIV positive. Then they saw me on TV.

[6] They were angry and upset and can't understand what happened to me – was it because of how they raised me or because I went away when I was still young? So many questions. They received counselling because they thought I was very sick and I was going to die tomorrow. They did not understand AIDS. Now they accept me.

When I questioned the reason for the stigma I was repeatedly told that it was because of the promiscuity that people aligned with it. A strong emphasis was placed on deserved punishment or retribution for past sins.

[7] They don't like talking to you because it's like you've sinned or you've done something wrong or you went out asking for this disease or did not behave well sexually.

[8] The terrible thing is that in some churches I have been in the elders say this subject should not be discussed because this disease only affects people who mis-conducted themselves.

[9] Hey, we are having it because of immorality.

[10] They say its because I have lived a bad life and I did this, and this, and this."

[11] They get it because they are so promiscuous. They'll sleep with anyone. They don't think like us.

[12] There is this notion that if you are HIV positive you are an outcast. You are not taking good care of yourself.

As a reaction to that, many people are at pains to emphasise that HIV/AIDS can be contracted by other means, and play down the sexual transmission of the disease, even to the point that they exaggerate the risk in other areas.

> *[13] The thing is, we have to move away from this notion that HIV/AIDS is caused by our people behaving badly and getting it through intercourse. If I go to the barber to have my hair cut and the barber has cut somebody before me and if there is even a speck of blood on the blade and he doesn't clean some of that blood, then I can get AIDS. We have to put more emphasis on other ways of contracting AIDS.*

But (except in the case of children born with AIDS) categorization of modes of transmission is not really accepted as a mitigating factor within the black community when dealing with a person with AIDS. Some white people I spoke to made clear distinctions and seemed to attach a moral hierarchy to each means of contraction of the disease. Once again, such observations simply contribute to an already established pattern of castigating the "other". They see "grades of AIDS" and in such circumstances intravenous drug use is "less bad."

> *[14] A few of my friends have children who have died of AIDS but at least in their case it was because of drugs.*

Nor is this stigma attached to promiscuity seen as contradicting the high social esteem enjoyed particularly by younger men who have multiple partners.

> *[15] It's not a cool thing if you don't sleep with your boyfriend. We encourage a certain behaviour but when something happens as a result of that behaviour they will complain that you sleep around.*

> *[16] If you are a young boy and you don't have a girlfriend then you are stupid. If you are a young boy and you have a girlfriend but you don't sleep with her, then you are very stupid. If you have many girlfriends then you are the man.*

Upon closer questioning, all informants I spoke to said that there was little stigma associated with other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as syphilis and gonorrhoea, which would, on the face of it, give lie to the stigma-based-on-promiscuity theory. Sufferers of STDs can reveal the circumstances of their infection or disease and go quite openly to clinics to receive treatment without fear of negative response from family, friends or community.

It seems that the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, despite being expressed in terms of promiscuous behaviour, has more to do with the fact that it is incurable and is bringing death into the community. Unlike other STDs, AIDS, like a witch, brings death to the community. Any element of blame focussed on anß individual's behaviour has less to do with a moral judgement against the individual for contracting the disease, and more to do with a response to the danger that the individual has caused to the wider community by visiting this disease upon the collective.

[17] People view AIDS as the most deadly disease…. I guess it [stigma] is because there is no cure for this disease, from the beginning. It is sexually transmitted like any other STD, but they don't mind about those, but HIV, no. They even hide themselves.

[18] Those very peers need to come out if they know they have HIV, but then it will be known that they have spread HIV all around – that's why they are very afraid. Because it kills.

[19] There is no stigma attached to other STDs. They don't have a problem with that. When you've got STDs you have a sickness that can be cured but when you've got HIV they say you are going to die now, now, now. They don't care as long as it's out there. They only care when it's in their home.

Among those people I spoke to where stigma does exist, it is clearly more "felt" than "enacted." HIV positive patients internalise and reproduce negative external messages, specifically about morality, even when such messages are completely without foundation. Families and community do not always react negatively to a HIV positive disclosure. Central to this, however, is the manner in which such a disclosure is made. Not surprisingly, a blanket statement to a family or community, which is not prepared in advance, seems to result in a knee-jerk reaction rather than a considered response. Further, where stigma does attach, it is not because of perceived immorality, but because of the threat to the community that such a death causes.

Despite claims to the contrary, primarily in public health literature and awareness messages, I would argue that silence does not always obstruct disclosure and acceptance of a HIV positive status. Rather, there is evidence to suggest that a substantial amount of work is carried out in the space afforded by silence. Skhosana, in her work among AIDS patients in hospice care (2002 unpublished), provides ample evidence to show that complicit silence about HIV infection is common, with intimate family all knowing and all pretending not to know. This happens within families and among friends and neighbours as well as within the wider community-run institutions.

One home-based Community Care Centre I visited was a prefabricated building with a small patch of ground, surrounded by a pre-cast concrete wall, fairly typical of the many such community self-help centres throughout South Africa. The large painted sign above the door tells visitors that the centre deals with TB and cancer. Oddly, from a public health perspective, it made no mention of the fact that it exists to support people living with HIV or AIDS – even the centre will not publicly disclose its full function. TB or Cancer diagnoses and treatment are acceptable and accepted and allow care to be given to a patient.

Similarly, I was invited to a small Pentecostal church with a congregation of about 200, which meets in a large marquee at the side of a main road in the area. I was specifically asked to speak to young members of the congregation because they have established what they identify as a safe platform from which people can publicly disclose their HIV status and receive counselling.

The church feels that as members of the community they need to tackle the issue of HIV/AIDS in the community. We spent many hours together and the final question I asked the group was whether any one of them knew (or knew of) a person living with AIDS? If the regional statistics were applied here there should have been 10 or 11 of the 40 people present who were themselves HIV positive. As I asked the question I looked towards the elder who had invited me, intending to say "I know Michael[6] deals with HIV patients, but is there anyone else?" As I began to speak I was stopped by the look of horror that spread across his face and his eyes widened. I realised that despite their expressed intention to offer a platform for disclosure and counselling, this group of people – his friends, family and church community – had no idea that one of their own elders was HIV positive. Although he had disclosed to me privately, he had never disclosed his own status to them. In fact, despite Michael's presence, at the time of my visit nobody had ever disclosed their status to the group and all the members present insisted that they knew of nobody who was HIV positive.

According to Goffman (1959), while the necessity of each individual to maintain his or her front in order to promote the group reduces the possibility of dissent, those identified as having "contravened normal expectations" are ostracized and must constantly strive to adjust to their precarious social identities. Their images of themselves must daily confront, and be affronted by, the images that others reflect back to them (Goffman 1986).   The difference in this situation is that "normal expectations" require that the community be protected against danger from within. The narratives above [17 – 19] clearly show that it is death, more than disease (even sexually transmitted disease), that is the threat, and this threat is not mainly the destruction of one individual, but of his or her role in the constitution of all other persons in his or her society. Whereas in the Western world the availability of medicine has led to AIDS being seen in the same light as many other chronic diseases (say, diabetes), this community has very little hope of accessing any medication, thus a positive diagnosis remains a death sentence. If a group identity is being expressed, then the community must surely also suffer psychologically as a result of the alienation of some of its members. In the same way as the individual is experiencing disease because of a virus, the community is also experiencing a dis-ease because of the imminent loss of one of its members. It is a communal problem, which is collectively shared and requires a collective response.   While very real and immediate threats to this community have existed for many generations, particularly during the apartheid years these were largely external threats, more easily identifiable, and the community could reshape itself to deal with or counter such threat - even strengthening itself as a result of its response to adversity.   How then do they deal with such a devastating threat from within?

I should perhaps re-emphasise at this point that I do not wish to suggest that communal or group identity be placed in opposition to individual identity. The practice of *Ubuntu* specifically works against such a polarization. Faced with a loved one, or a member of the community who is HIV positive, how does one practice *Ubuntu*? The accepted wisdom has been that a community

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[6] Not his real name.

transforms the status of the sufferer by first identifying the sickness as belonging to one cluster of symbolic domains, then ritually moving the sufferer across the mysterious margins to a new identity grounded in opposing symbolic domains. However, *Ubuntu* and *Simunye* require that the person not make that move to the new identity, he or she should be kept as part of the whole.

Such a stance requires that a diagnosis of HIV be met with an active silence. In a society where individuality is highly valued, intimacy is often created through disclosure. However, somewhat counter-intuitively, where individuals are mutually constructed, this kind of knowing silence can be far more intimate. It was easier then, for people at the church group or at the clinic to disclose their HIV status to me, because I had an insider/outsider status. I was close, but not too close. They could speak freely, knowing that my knowledge would not change their community.

By the same token my encounter with Sipho (above) was entirely counter-intuitive. Of all the people in South Africa I met who were actively "living with AIDS," Sipho was the only one I met who was socially acknowledged to be "dying of AIDS." The texture of Sipho's story, therefore, is different from my other interviews because it is shaped by the fact that, because I felt it inappropriate to use a tape-recorder, I simply listened and took notes immediately after leaving his room, but I was silent throughout. As ethnographer, I moved, during this interview, into the more participant side of my participant-observation role. I became a participant in the socialisation of Sipho's death. Without realising it at the time, I played the role that so many family members and community members play when they come into contact with a loved one diagnosed HIV positive, communicating, somewhat accidentally, a knowing silence. Clearly, I had not expected this, and was not prepared for it and my own discomfort is reflected in the fact that, despite him insisting I should stay, I constantly asked if I should (could?) leave.

One of the central efforts in healing is to symbolize the source of suffering, to find an image around which a narrative can take shape (Good 1994). Narrating is a process of locating suffering in history, of placing events in a meaningful order in time, and was used as such for the vast majority of the respondents I spoke to. The two of us in that hospital room represented a meeting of genders, race, class, and ideologies present in South Africa. However for Sipho, the "what," "why," and "wherefore" of his disease was no longer relevant. He maintained a polite but stubborn silence whenever the subject of HIV or AIDS arose, despite crude attempts on my part to bring him back to the subject. While at the time I was certainly aware of being profoundly affected by the encounter, it was only much later when I felt strong enough to re-visit my notes that I understood that the silence had provided us both with an intimate space within which to share an experience. Sipho had shown me *Ubuntu*. On a deeper ontological level he had moved me from my position as an observer and forced me to be a participant and to feel what that was like. In so doing he affirmed my humanity, and I, his. Such mutual constitution, though, could only occur in silence.

Silence is of central importance to all of the cultural mechanisms examined above. Within the witchcraft paradigm to engage in talk is to enter the struggle. Sipho told me he had visited a healer, which is not unusual in itself since more than 70% of South Africans visit traditional healers; many do so in addition to attending a medical doctor. However, Sipho could not speak of the visit – having initially mentioned it, he retreated to his silence whenever I tried to enquire any further.

This silence was not an absence, an inability to verbalise a traumatic event. Sipho had invited me to visit and to talk to him; he spoke freely and without any hesitation (within his physical limitations) about other subjects; he also insisted that I stay and talk to him. I did not, therefore, get the impression that Sipho's silence was in any way trauma-related, or even that he was necessarily uncomfortable about the silence. Any discomfort was my own.

It is equally unlikely that Sipho's reluctance to talk was because of any stigma ("felt" or "enacted"). As I said, he had been told prior to my visit that I wished to speak to people who were HIV positive. He knew, therefore, that I was already aware of his status, so that the silence was neither obstructing disclosure, nor acceptance of a diagnosis

Too often, silence in the face of HIV/AIDS in South Africa is interpreted as fear, denial, or even ignorance of the situation. Public health messages and self-help groups adopt an American-European psychologizing model of disclosure, clarity, discussion, counselling. While of enormous benefit to some, the existence of this model should not close off further exploration. It is my contention that a far more nuanced investigation is required to interpret both the silences, and their context and to incorporate this into a new, culturally appropriate model. Sipho's silence has its roots in the *Ubuntu* worldview – a silence that accommodates and even facilitates a disclosure of HIV positive status, and provides a mechanism for dealing with the patient with respect, dignity and humanness.

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<u>Review Essay</u>
Prison and Empire:
Archipelagoes of Confinement in the New World Order
A. Jamie Saris

THE ABU GHRAIB INVESTIGATIONS The Official Report of the Independent Panel and Pentagon on the Shocking Prisoner Abuse in Iraq. Edited by Steven Strasser. Illustrated. 2005 175 pp. PublicAffairs. Paper, $14.

TORTURE AND TRUTH America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror. By Mark Danner. Illustrated. 2005 580 pp. New York Review Books. Paper, $19.95.

ARE PRISONS OBSOLETE? By Angela Y. Davis. Seven Stories Press 2003. Paper, 128pp. $8.95.

This past February I had an experience that was once all but ubiquitous for travelers to and from Ireland and North America, the Shannon stopover. The compulsory deplaning accomplished, I found myself in the spiritual home of Duty Free Shopping, examining the miniature High Crosses of pressed turf, various woolen items, and even buying my mom a kitschy cottage scene to hang on her wall. Not surprisingly, there were a lot of Yanks (besides myself) milling about. The novel aspect of my forced shopping spree, through, was that this crowd was composed mostly of 200 or so US Marines and Army Reservists (according to my unscientific sample of conversations) in desert combat fatigues napping, shopping, and drinking. They were all on their way to Iraq, just shy of the second anniversary of the invasion (19 March) and the hasty declaration of "mission accomplished." I suspect that even the most gung-ho amongst them knew what they were getting into – a long, drawn out, bloody occupation whose main impetus now seems to be the inertia of its history rather than any coherent plan of leaving the country in better shape than when the war started. I wondered how many of the faces I saw there were to end up as casualty figures scarcely mentioned at home, and how many Iraqis they would kill during their foreign tenure whom would never get counted at all.

I doubt that Middle Ireland has much of a sense of the importance of Shannon to the supply line of the American occupation of Iraq. Different political cultures seem to produce forms of bad faith. By bad faith, I mean a seeming contradiction between what subjects see and what they profess. In Ireland, for example, a valorization of "neutrality" coexists more or less peacefully with such blatant examples of its violation. If such violations can be discretely hidden and little media attention paid to them, however, other forms of bad faith seem in comparison even more hypocritical, and therefore, oddly comforting. Perhaps, the most egregious form of bad faith connected to the Iraq War to date has been the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal and the American reaction to it, for here, even the worst critics of the Bush administration's policies seemed to be shown to be naïve idealists, and the proponents of the occupation to be at best the dupes of a perverse and sadistic exercise in power.

It seemed to confirm the worst opinions of the American invasion at large in much of Europe, but it did allow various Anti-War coalitions a sort of consolation prize – the knowledge of having been morally correct, making up a bit for our continued political impotence.

I begin this discussion of some new additions to what is now a sizeable bibliography on just this aspect of the Iraq War[1] with a mention of bad faith because it seems to me that the willingness of vast swathes of democratic electorates in very different countries to actively not see connections is a significant feature of this conflict. It is easy enough to hold the current American administration in contempt (for the most part they richly deserve this censure), but this sentiment obscures how even those who aver their opposition to this war contribute to its continuation, and it also misses the myriad ways that bad faith operates in the mechanics of hegemony. It seems to me that this process is fundamentally bound up with (what at least should be) important anthropological problems, that is, how people reproduce systems of meaning and power, how they imagine their world works and what they count as evidence for these beliefs, and, finally, how they understand their own agency within structures they experience as alienated from themselves. To help elaborate some of these issues with respect to the American reaction to Abu Ghraib, I will also discuss a recent volume by Angela Davis critically reviewing the penal system in the United States, as a way of connecting the recent domestic "great confinement" in America with the issue of the indefinite detainment of "Enemy Combatants" in the current exercise of American might.

The Strasser and Danner volumes give as an exhaustive account as is currently possible of the nature of the foreign archipelagoes of confinement that have sprung up during the "war on terror." They show just how much documentation of serious abuses exists that hovers at the edge of our consciousness of this conflict. Both volumes, not surprisingly, make grim reading, not just in the details of torture, or in the legerdemain of politicians and pundits as to what "abuse" actually means, but more importantly in their status as evidence of the virtuoso management of "consent" for this undertaking (which, even in America, had a sizeable plurality of the electorate opposed to the adventure, and which was overwhelmingly opposed throughout Europe). In the event, there are few Americans who know nothing about Abu Ghraib (and recognize that many such centers must exist in other places in Iraq and even farther conceptually, if not geographically, afield), but

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[1] According to my count there are nine books just on the prisoner issue in this new war, nearly all of them focused on Abu Ghraib, a scandal that became public only at the end of April 2004 Several more books are on their way, including ones surveying the abuses at Guantanamo in Cuba. There have also been hundreds of articles appearing in nearly every conceivable publishing venue (including most of one edition of the *American Anthropologist Newsletter* (Volume 45, No. 6, September 2004). Finally, the internet hits for more informal writings, such as commentaries and blogs, on these issues number in the thousands. Factoring the new works on the potential ethics of torture (e.g., Alan Dershowitz 2002), there has been something of a publishing cottage industry on the specifics of (and the theoretical justifications for) torture and abuse over the past couple of years (For a considered review of many of these works, see Hajjar 2005). Consequently, any article surveying this field is always in danger of being overtaken by events.

these revelations have only entrenched the opposition of those already opposed to this adventure, while serving at best as an opportunity for soul-searching (but not opposition) for even thoughtful commentators originally in favour of the war. For the majority of the American electorate, however, Abu Ghraib barely registered as an aside in the last presidential election. John Kerry scarcely acknowledged Abu Ghraib, for example, and, after the initial revelations, political commentators on what passes for the "Left" in the United States mentioned it only as one more deplorable aspect of the war, less pressing for a typical American voter, perhaps, than American dead and wounded and higher gas prices, but still bad. I believe that, as far as the last presidential election was concerned, the Kerry camp and its allies reckoned (probably correctly) that this was not an issue of any great importance to most Americans, especially to that stratum of the white working class, who are disproportionately represented in the military, that both the Republicans and Democrats were actively courting. Oddly (or perhaps not), no American commentator (to my knowledge) drew any connections between the abuse's violent sexual (often homoerotic) overtones and the passions aroused by the 11 state constitutional amendments banning "gay marriage" in the so-called swing states.

Nonetheless, the limited number of images that were released (and both texts give a good sense of just how little of what went on in Abu Ghraib even now could properly be called "public") seemed to demand a more principled response than glossing and denial, especially from those who supported the war who styled themselves "intellectuals." Here another, more subtle form of bad faith makes itself evident. This form of bad faith seeks not to avoid questions, merely to strictly limit their scope and the sort of issues they might raise. Thus, the traditional means of unraveling a "Scandal" immediately became preeminent in the public production of Abu Ghraib in this section of American Punditry, that is the apportioning of responsibility to individuals: "what did they know?" and "when did they know it?" These answers inevitably involve (often complicated) timelines, but they also allow for the mitigating factors of the limited conceptual horizons of significant actors in the drama (with hindsight always metaphorically positioned on higher ground), and they invariably reveal the pitfalls that lie between the inspiration for "policy" (generally good and high-minded) and its execution (always fraught, sometimes disastrously so). Like Tolstoy's aphorism about happy people, though, the answers to these questions make poor narratives, as their plot and characters tend to be numbingly similar, despite the differences in surface detail. For the current version of the Abu Ghraib narrative, they involve the usual suspects of good leaders with limited information, petty bureaucratic infighting, genuine confusion at nearly every command level as to what (if anything) constituted "torture," good people asked to do a tough job in a fallen world, and which (possibly all) of the detainees were legitimate targets of abuse. Aspects of this narrative have been intelligently enough examined by a variety of commentators (Sullivan (January 30, 2005), Brooks (4 November 2003, 11 May, 2004), and I want to sketch out some of the issues they have highlighted, if only partially, below.

 Just according to the narrow issue of "whose fault is it?" and "should someone be fired, even prosecuted?," the Strasser and Danner volumes read

like specifications in a set of charges that minimally should send the current Secretary of Defense to the unemployment line. While the available documentation makes it impossible to know for certain if anyone in the administrations "planned" all the terrible activities at Abu Ghraib (or Guantánamo, or the several other places that even informed citizens would have difficulty listing), it is clear that members of the Bush Administration, from the start, knew that their doctrine of "preemptive" war was going to entail a different relationship to prisoners of these new conflicts. First, the polities in the bulls-eye of these crusaders for freedom were seen to be either too dysfunctional or too illegitimate to treat as entities similar to the US, and therefore the Geneva Conventions, understood as agreements between states, were seen not to apply as *law* determining American responsibilities to such prisoners. Second (and more importantly), the legal wing of this administration, predominantly recruited from the reactionary *Federalist Society*, were vehemently opposed to the fundamental premise of international law, that *any* internationally-derived statute had the ability to restrict American Law or Policy.

Before Afghanistan, and the Bush administration's resolve to attack Iraq (almost certainly no later than early 2002, possibly before September 2001), legal opinions about the mechanics of these new conflicts were sought out by this administration and duly provided by its appointees. They seemed even better tailored to the administration's needs than the "Intelligence" which justified the Iraq invasion. Just one example from Strasser's work will have to do for many: in the run-up to the conflict, Assistant Attorney General Jay S. Bybee (since nominated to a federal Appellate court) analyzed the relevant statutes against torture to see exactly how far the military could go in mistreating prisoners without blatant illegality. His answer was, not surprisingly, expansive. His strategy was an interesting one, however. He actually tracked closely to the idea of "humane" treatment in the Geneva Conventions, but widened the gray area between such treatment and "torture" by almost ludicrously restricting its legitimate definition, on the one hand, and expanding the idea of military necessity, on the other. Thus, he asserted that the president was within his legal rights to permit his military surrogates to inflict "cruel, inhuman or degrading" treatment on prisoners without violating strictures against torture. For an act of abuse to be considered torture, the abuser must be inflicting pain "of such a high level of intensity that the pain is difficult for the subject to endure." If the abuser is doing this to get information, and not merely for sadistic enjoyment, then "even if the defendant knows that severe pain will result from his actions," he is not guilty of torture *per se*. Beating prisoners is not torture either: thus, Bybee argues that a case of kicking an inmate in the stomach, while the prisoner is in a kneeling position does not *by itself* rise to the level of torture. Finally, he even suggests that full-fledged "torture" of inmates (whose definition by now must be horrific indeed) might be *still be legitimate* because it could be construed as "self-defense," on the grounds that "the threat of an impending terrorist attack threatens the lives of hundreds if not thousands of American citizens." Clearly, torture could be justified almost anywhere "on the battlefield" in the war on terror because, as we know this new, seemingly permanent, state of war is "everywhere," and we are all foot soldiers in it. Only the president's discretion, we are told, forbade such activities, not international law or

evolving standards of decency. These guidelines were only formally repudiated by the administration the week before Alberto Gonzales's appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee for confirmation as Attorney-General, but what (if any) legal limits exist to abusive treatment of prisoners, according to the Bush Administration, is still, at best, vague.[2]

The results of these directives, combined with increasing casualties, and the odd defensive posture that all armies of occupation seem to develop – an anger about the lack of gratitude amongst those whom they are occupying – led to, what should have been, fairly predictable results. Again, one example from the Army's investigation into Abu Ghraib, led by Lt. Gen. Anthony R. Jones and Maj. Gen. George R. Fay, cited by Strasser, will have to do for many: "On another occasion DETAINEE-07 was forced to lie down while M.P.'s jumped onto his back and legs. He was beaten with a broom and a chemical light was broken and poured over his body. . . . During this abuse a police stick was used to sodomize DETAINEE-07 and two female M.P.'s were hitting him, throwing a ball at his penis, and taking photographs." I was resident in the United States when these stories, if not the actual pictures,[3] became public, and for the most part, the reactions were muted. Much more attention, for example, was paid to the credibility of John Kerry's three Purple Hearts or the shoddiness of the incumbent's service in the Texas Air National Guard in a war more than thirty years old than in examining this issue. Lynndie England, one of the American women who was involved in (and clearly seemed to enjoy) much of the abuse did for a moment emerge as the trailer park female anti-hero to the previously valorized Jessica Lynch,[4] but the issue of torture-as-American-policy seemed to barely register.

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[2] Given this publicly produced contempt for international legal standards, one can only admire the *chutzpah* of US Legal team invoking the Geneva Conventions prohibition against the humiliation of prisoners when defending the Bush Administration's rejection of the ACLU's Freedom of Information request for the release of more photographs and videos from Abu Ghraib. In the event, this strategy was unsuccessful, so barring the Supreme Court agreeing to hear the case, at least 100 more photographs and two more videos will be in the public domain by July 05.

[3] The best-known pictures from Abu Ghraib seem to have all been taken on one night, and the best-known of these, the hooded man on some crates threatened with electrical shocks, however disturbing, show what is clearly amongst the least reprehensible activities that are documented. Many prisoners, for example, died under "interrogation" (in other words were tortured to death). Their exact number is unknown, but it may well run into scores, and, of course, we have only a portion of the evidence available for public inspection. The overtly sexualized nature of the violence, moreover, has only been hinted at in the mass media, but was clearly an important theme in prisoner mistreatment (For a very early analysis of the scale (and nature) of the abuse, see Human Rights Watch 2004, also 2005).

[4] Jessica Lynch is a female private from very humble roots in West Virginia who was severely wounded when her convoy was attacked and more or less destroyed in the early stages of the war. She was turned over, in critical condition, to an Iraqi hospital whose personnel treated her as best they were able, given the scarcity of supplies, and informed the Americans of her presence. Iraqi medical personnel then tried to return her to a US position but were driven back by small arms fire. She was subsequently "rescued" from her situation by American Special Forces who conveniently filmed their assault. Beyond these "facts" much is hazy about her story. The American military initially produced her as a sort of female Rambo who left a wall of dead Iraqis around her position until she ran out of ammunition. It turned out that her weapon had not been fired, but some aspects of this story might have applied to one of her colleagues, a Panamanian-American woman, Shoshana Johnson (who was also severely wounded in the attack). The Army then retracted this story, but insisted that Lynch was, in fact, being mistreated by Iraqi interrogators when she was rescued (in particular that she had

This looks a lot like bad faith – knowing something is there and pretending that it is not, perhaps, at best, hoping that it will all go away. A review of the first two volumes, then, could legitimately end at this point. Americans, individually and collectively, look pretty bad in all this, but, oddly enough, America as a country does not. Abu Ghraib looks like an aberration, albeit a horrible one, but one whose exposure shows the functioning of America's military as more or less ethical, and, further, the fact of the investigation provides evidence of the United States's status as an open society. With its high ideals tarnished by a few bad apples, America still must show the moral fortitude to "stay the course" and build a democratic Iraq to provide a happy dénouement to this unfortunate chapter in "our" history.

There is, however, a second set of questions that might be asked about Abu Ghraib. These look not at its exotic qualities, but at its more mundane ones. This set of questions focuses not on the military aspect of these centers of confinement, but on their existence as *prisons*. There have been only sporadic efforts to connect Abu Ghraib and the activities of other centers of detention in the Iraq and Afghanistan adventures with the domestic prison system (and broader economic issues) in the United States.[5] Because of the writings of Naomi Klein and a few other authors, for example, at least some people by now are aware that both Army Specialists Graner and Frederick, two members of the unit (the 372nd Military Police Company) involved in the activities in most of the widely-known pictures, had backgrounds in the Corrections System in the US, but little beyond this connection has been developed, and it certainly has not been produced as part of "the scandal at Abu Ghraib" in the sense that I use the term above.

Some liberal punditry in the US has, however, been more attracted to the human side of this drama. Charles Graner, for example, has garnered some notoriety for his taste in attack dogs, his obvious relish for inflicting pain and humiliation, as well as for one of the women in his life (he and Lynndie England now have a baby together, with some of their sex acts also apparently having been recorded for posterity). This part of the story, though, ends with a whimper, as, in the end, Graner put up a very weak defence to the charges of prisoner abuse, quietly accepting a dishonourable discharge and a ten-year prison sentence (out of a potential fifteen), despite the extensive documentation available that seemingly

been sodomized). This story, too, has been challenged, but still hovers around the official version of events, and is supported by her biographer. As Lynch was unconscious during much of the ordeal, no definitive version emerged, but all commentators agreed that she was a Real American Hero, and, in the event, her "story" was quickly produced in a made-for-TV movie.

[5] An important exception to this statement is the prison reform/activist literature that has been highly critical of America's new Great Confinement since the days of the Reagan Administration. Amongst more mainstream authors, it is really only Naomi Klein (e.g., Guardian Unlimited, May 18, 2004) who has expressly connected America's carceral infrastructure, its macroeconomic trends, and some of the more unsavoury aspects of the war in Iraq or the general War on Terror (see also, Dow 2004, Elsner 2005).

should have allowed him to implicate officers far higher up the chain of command to mitigate his own guilt.[6]

What makes Graner more interesting, it seems to me, are his more quotidian qualities. A long-time member of the National Guard and involved at entry-level jobs in a couple of prisons in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, this is a man used to taking orders.[7] It is hard to believe that he would have initiated either the elaborate staging, or the extensive documentation of this abuse unless he thought these activities were condoned, even encouraged. According to a now infamous Washington Post piece, cited in the Strasser volume (as well as in *The Road to Abu Ghraib* by Human Rights Watch, amongst many others), one sergeant who witnessed the torture thought Military Intelligence did indeed approve of all of it: "The M.I. staffs, to my understanding, have been giving Graner compliments on the way he has been handling the M.I. holds [i.e., prisoners held by military intelligence]." Example being statements like "Good job, they're breaking down real fast"; "They answer every question;" "They're giving out good information, finally;" and "Keep up the good work" – stuff like that." And, indeed, there is a variety of documents (as well as the testimony of some of those Americans accused of mistreating prisoners) showing that these individuals felt they were acting within the framework of directives from Washington.

Nonetheless, as far as the official voices in America are concerned, the search for "Scandal" at Abu Ghraib ends at this point: a couple of enlisted personnel have been charged with "abuse" and duly punished, one general in direct control of the prisons in Iraq, Gen. Janis Kaminski, has received a written reprimand for her negligence, as well as a demotion to Colonel (effectively ending her career in the military). The rest of the chain of command has been officially absolved of wrong-doing. The disturbing question, "Was/Is there an American policy allowing for, even encouraging, torture?" however, remains elusive, refractory to definitive answer. The connection of Abu Ghraib to anything found in America, furthermore, seems impossible to imagine. "Scandal" in this sense is like a storm, something to be weathered, and something fated to subside.

It is impossible, however, to read Angela Davis's illuminating analysis of why so many Americans are imprisoned by other Americans, in so many brutal and violent places, and be satisfied with such an understanding of Abu Ghraib. Only months before the "breaking" of the Abu Ghraib story (but with stories of

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[6] Given the history of Americans imprisoned for military crimes connected to mistreating or killing enemy soldiers or civilians, it is unlikely that Graner will serve anywhere near his full term.

[7] I have no desire to reproduce the classist depictions of the 372nd MP Company. Such depictions of out-of-control white trash are already disturbingly common, connecting the "Left" and "Right" sides of this issue in the US. Liberal writers, like Seymour Hersh, who originally broke the Abu Ghraib story in a mainstream publication (*The New Yorker*), for example, argued that these soldiers were too poor and uneducated to have thought up this stuff by themselves, therefore, they must have had directions from their betters. The right-wing commentators who have absorbed the seriousness of the abuse at Abu Ghraib make much of the number of trailer-parks in the backgrounds of these soldiers, implicitly constructing these people as bad-apple "crackers" pulling down the reputation of "our" glorious army.

the abuse of detainees having obtained the status of persistent rumour, Davis penned a pithy Prison Abolitionist Manifesto, a state of affairs difficult to imagine at the present moment, but from her perspective, the necessary theoretical stance from which to view the prison system in the United States *as a system.* Understanding the system of domestic imprisonment, it seems to me, takes us a long way towards understanding many aspects of the current military interventions in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Davis's starting point is the sheer size of the carceral infrastructure in the United States. As of 2003, America had more than 2.1 million men, women, and children in prison, jails, and detention centers, and this number swells yearly. The total population of prisoners on the planet in the early years of this new millennium, however, has hovered around 9 million. To put it another way, with less than one twentieth of the world's population, the United States now has nearly one quarter of the global population of prisoners, with that proportion looking likely to increase in the next few years.

Despite this prison-building boom, overcrowding continues to worsen, and violence and brutality in American prisons remains a persistent, if largely hidden, and certainly under-investigated, problem. There is not the space in this piece to examine the issue of sexualized violence in prisons, but its reality is undeniable and the threat of particularly dangerous prisons or prison blocks remains an effective means of securing intelligence or punishing rebellion from inmates inside, or from people in trouble with the law outside. The signatures of this sort of violence can be seen in various corners of popular culture, from off-hand references in everything from Gangsta Rap to the middle-class-directed *Law and Order*. It is documented in ethnographic depictions of populations with experience of regular imprisonment (Bourgeois 2002, Fliesher 1995). Its more direct reality is revealed in the occasional scandal, such as in 1997, when Haitian immigrant Abner Louima was beaten and sodomized with a broomstick in bathroom of precinct stationhouse while in the custody of the 70th Precinct of the New York Police Department, an incident with disturbing resonances to the abuse at Abu Ghraib.[8]

As Davis also points out, the United States has been the global leader in ceding prison and security services to private for-profit corporations. Many low- and medium-security facilities and even a few high-security ones, for example, are now run as private enterprises, some quite profitably. Indeed, this connection between mass incarceration of poor (often black and brown) men and women, the expansion of budgets to build and run prisons (often in the face of shrinking government commitments to health, education, and welfare), and the successful reproduction of private capital around and within prisons has become so tightly bound together that many activists and some social scientists now speak of a "prison mode of production" or the "gulag economy." In this cycle of public-private capital flows, land (often formerly agricultural land no longer profitable for corporate farming, generally in areas losing

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[8] The situation at the NYPD's 70th Precinct where this assault occurred was almost too bizarre for fiction. One of the accused Officers, Justin Volpe, pleaded an insanity defense in his criminal trial, that he was in a fit of "'roid rage." Further investigation yielded evidence of an active, police-led drug ring, with anabolic steroids being especially popular with the cops in the 70th.

population and tax base) is purchased at above-market value from its private owners, a lavish building developed, and a large, captive (generally urban) population in need of (at least) basic services introduced. This process creates jobs (often more unionized than the rest of the so-called unskilled economy, and certainly more recession-proof). These jobs are disproportionately filled by the white working class, whose traditional route into the middle classes has been severely restricted by the outsourcing of lower-skilled, but, in the previous generation, reasonably well-paid, unionized manufacturing jobs. Prison Reformer, Van Jones, for example, points out that Spc. Frederick at Abu Ghraib had a decent job at the Bausch & Lomb factory in Mountain Lake, Md., until it shut down and moved to Mexico - one of the nearly 900,000 jobs that the Economic Policy Institute estimates have been lost since NAFTA. Indeed, Klein has called the attractiveness of the military for folks like England, Graner and Frederick, especially the often-oversold college assistance supposedly available after one's military enlistment is over, the "NAFTA draft" (Klein 2005).

This sort of merging of state, economy, and civil society under the aegis of corporate governance goes some way to making sense of an extremely interesting, but very under-examined, aspect of the War on Terror, that is, the proliferation of private "security" options in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This odd mixture, from the perspective of bourgeois political theory, which posits obvious boundaries between the state, the economy, and civil society, was clearly field-tested in the US Prison System. Major corporations, like Wackenhut, for example, have been running large, uniformed, generally armed, private security forces and full-scale centers of confinement in the US for more than a decade. This recent history of the US prison system inflects the interpretation of some facts that have emerged out of the Abu Ghraib "scandal." At least four out of the six prison governors in Iraq, for example, come from state prison systems in the US, with accusations of ignoring brutality in their careers. To be sure, such a background might have desensitized them to the abuses in Iraqi prisons. More importantly, however, it probably tended to normalize this merging of state servants and private contractors that has made the apportioning of blame much higher than the Privates who physically meted out the torment such a difficult task for the investigators of the activities at Abu Ghraib.[9]

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[9] One of the persistent rumours that the United States Military has been keen to deny, for example, is the presence of Israeli Military Intelligence during the mistreatment at Abu Ghraib. Certain practices that Detainees have experienced at American hands, such as water-boarding (simulated drowning), and hooding (faeces-soiled sacks covering the head for many hours) have been well documented in Israeli Defence Forces and Christian Militia mistreatment of prisoners in southern Lebanon, although these and other equally unsavoury techniques have also been in CIA "training manuals" in the public domain for decades. The normalization of "private contractors" in the war on terror, especially the easy movement of skilled soldiers between military and militarised civilian employment, however, makes the presence or absence of foreign military personnel difficult to determine and nearly impossible to prove. Like the Academy, the American Military has learned the value of short-term contract workers in making themselves more competitive in the global marketplace. The current contracting out of the harsher interrogations that we are witnessing in the US to countries like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, with fewer legal protections for detainees, is so similar to corporate outsourcing of production processes that are too dangerous and/or too environmentally unsound, for American laws, as to need little elaboration.

This contracting out of aspects of the state's monopoly on legitimate violence has garnered nowhere near the attention that it deserves. We are not talking about numerically small, elite forces like the English-based *Executive Outcomes,* subverting or supporting shaky state structures in Africa, but the widespread use of "private contractors" in the biggest deployment of the largest military establishment in the world for more than thirty years. In the War on Terror, "Private Contractors" now guard both military and civilian sites, provide support services, patrol hostile territory, engage in firefights, and even run certain prisons and collect intelligence. In short, their functions are practically indistinguishable from those of national militaries. It is impossible to get a reliable estimate of these forces, but they are only exceeded by the American and, and perhaps the British,[10] contingent in the "Coalition of the Willing." They have certainly been useful to "real" military planners who did not anticipate the ability of despised "Rag-heads" and "Hadjis"[11] to resist shock and awe tactics. They also provide plausible deniability for military and civilian leaders when a scandal is uncovered (as recently occurred in a prison in Afghanistan). Finally, they represent a pool of people to put in harm's way who do not need to be counted as casualties on the evening news, if things should happen to go wrong.[12]

De-exoticising Abu Ghraib, then, requires the recognition of what has become "normal," not just in the "War on Terror," not only in the US, but throughout the world: tightly integrated flows of capital, symbols, peoples and commodities, an enormous imbalance in military power, astonishing levels of technical virtuosity, and vast and widening inequalities both within and between polities (as well as the necessity of the security muscle to maintain this state of affairs), the whole of which is increasingly under corporate governance. These are rapidly becoming the primary structures in which we live. The photographs at Abu Ghraib of white prison guards abusing brown prisoners and its subsequent management as "scandal" strike a cord in all this for various reasons. At least in the US, they produce visual evidence of a situation that we regularly misrecognize, that is, just how common this color-coded prison tableau is in modern America, if not in all its ugly detail, then in its general outline. Like all images returned from repression, though, the images from Abu Ghraib are also eerily recognizable for consumers who may

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[10] The estimates of these forces, like nearly all the other numbers connected to this war, are subject to much debate. The highest figures available are upwards of 20,000 armed mercenaries (out of 40,000 or so private employees in the deployment). The former figure would be about double the current British contingent, the only other significant military force in this "coalition" besides the American one. For an outline of this privatization of the means of waging war, see Singer 2004.

[11] These terms of abuse are currently popular with those administering the American occupation.

[12] The first Coalition assault on Falujah was, of course precipitated by the killing and post-mortem mutilation of four such armed "contractors." These mercenaries were operating in circumstances that were never clarified. This assault encountered stiff resistance and was discontinued after US casualties began to mount. After the Presidential Election in the US, Falujah was subsequently all but destroyed in an "all out" assault that (according to official estimates) claimed the lives of over one thousand insurgents. Many times that number of Iraqi civilians must have died in the widespread destruction of a city that before the conflict numbered nearly 300,000 people, but no count of this total has been made public.

have no first-, or even second-, hand experience of America's vast carceral infrastructure. Rush Limbaugh, the conservative radio talk-show host, for example, saw simple college fraternity hazing practices in the human pyramid of abject naked Iraqis being surveyed by grinning US MPs. The question is not the sincerity of his depiction (or indeed the level of humiliation Rush endured to be "accepted" by other males in his youth). Instead, it is the persuasiveness of this argument of images (to use James Fernandez's apt phrasing) for Rush's legions of listeners. Even more interesting, perhaps, are examples, in the wake of the "revelations," of what seems to be the new way that the culture-at-large exorcises the spectres of the zeitgeist. Reality Television, at least in Europe, is now making space for the torture of "real" people, as if the rag-heads and Hadjis in these pictures are movie stars, in the same way that it normalized the ubiquity of surveillance technologies a few years ago in the odious Big Brother. These new archipelagoes of confinement and the circulation of images about them, then, stand as points of eruption of flows of people, capital, commodities, and symbols, that are generally invisible and taken for granted. This aspect of "the scandal" makes the current imbalance between the published information on such places as Abu Ghraib and anything that can rightfully be called theorizing about this mass of information, in William James's sense of a stubborn attempt to think clearly about something, even harder to understand.

It seems to me that the beginning of this theorizing of Abu Ghraib starts from recognizing its crucial positioning at the intersection of domestic and foreign fears in the United States. Abu Ghraib is the offspring of the political marriage of those sections of American society doing well on the back of widening domestic inequalities, who are committed to American unilateralism (if not imperialism) in foreign affairs, and the post-1984 Christian Right, with its attendant "tough on crime" stance at home, its lionization of Zionism abroad, and its epistemological literalism throughout. These two lines of force in modern American society are connected, albeit unequally, to interlocking and unstable material and symbolic economies. The first of these is a corporate-led global capitalism caught between the exporting of decent jobs and the importing of cheap goods, finite resources, and a shaky reserve currency. This economy can be expected to continue to produce various crises, especially with respect to control of scarce resources, such as oil. The second economy works on the valuation and exchange of symbols, dominated by a never-ending search for, and fight against, external, personified evil as the privileged means of reducing social and personal anxiety. This second economy inflects the Abu Ghraib "scandal" in a peculiarly American direction, infusing the exercise (and excesses) of raw power with the hues of moral absolutism.

In this historical moment, tragedy and farce are interestingly telescoped. Indeed, the current situation produces a surfeit of the raw material for irony – a formerly AWOL commander-in-chief declaring "mission accomplished," when the local resistance to his military adventure is intensifying; or the solemn declaration of the "end of torture chambers in the new Iraq" almost at the very moment that the Abu Ghraib scandal was breaking – but it seems to restrict the subject positions for the consumption of such tropes. A discipline which prides itself on its interest in the functioning and reproduction of systems of meaning and power, of the relationship, in the life-world of

individuals, of motivations, actions, and reflection, and of the interconnection of people, images and processes in our current moment of globalization should have ample ground to till here.

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Book Reviews

GLOBAL ETHNOGRAPHY: FORCES, CONNECTIONS, AND IMAGINATIONS IN A POSTMODERN WORLD, By Michael Burawoy, Joseph A. Blum, Sheba George, Zsuzsa Gille, Teresa Gowan, Lynne Haney, Maren Klawiter, Steven H. Lopez, Seán ó Riain, Millie Thayer. University of California Press 2000

Reviewed by Adam Drazin, Research Associate, Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin

Global Ethnography comprises a selection of papers from sociology PhD students at Berkeley. It is intended as a sequel to *Ethnography Unbound*, a previous collection of ethnographic studies by Michael Burawoy's supervisees.

This book gets top marks for its assortment of diverse, deeply personal ethnographic studies. The attempts at theoretical examination of globalization are however less satisfactory. This lacuna is probably as much a function of the tumbleweed nature of that topic as of its treatment here. Among the nine different ethnographic studies, any anthropologist is unlikely to find more than one that makes a contribution to an area of his or her interest. Each paper is preceded by an illuminating personal discussion of the experience of research, and this recurrent theme of the researcher's self-awareness may prove interesting to postgraduate readers. Several authors' backgrounds mean a close personal involvement with their area of study, and the elaboration of their own perceptions contributes significantly to the book's unity.

From the first page of Burawoy's introduction, the book asks whether globalization is "a theoretical impossibility?" (p.1). The answer turns out to be - predictably for a book with "postmodern" in the title – "perhaps." Globalization is seen more as a multi-faceted construction evident in ethnography, than as a unidimensionally-defined concept in social theory. The admirable aim is to investigate it through grounded ethnography, and we are treated to an overview of ethnographic methods with particular reference to the Chicago and Manchester schools, and how Burawoy's own personal experiences engage with these schools. The main unity between the assorted contributors, we are told, is "a broad commitment to 'soft,' hermeneutic sociology: participant observation, open-ended interviewing, ethnography" (p.ix). The introduction proceeds to look at several possible definitions of the term globalization, and these alternative possibilities then structure how the subsequent papers are grouped. The global may be found in Forces, Connections or Imaginations.

The first section concentrates on forces. The global here manifests itself in the workings of the economy, which impacts upon people in largely pathological fashion. Although people may develop some form of resistance, nonetheless the forces of globalization are likely to render them unemployed, homeless or otherwise deprived. Global forces seem to resemble a form of post-Fordism, as the more structured, heavy-manufacturing industries of the US and the

socialist block decay, and the state responds accordingly. Lynne Haney looks at the Hungarian welfare system. The reform of the welfare system brought an increasing emphasis on needs to be answered by money handouts. Clients were "pathologized" under the category of "the poor." The workings of this process occurred in parallel with Hungary opening up to the outside world, and interaction with international "experts" on welfare. Haney's discussion is well informed and well grounded theoretically, as well as including revealing examples, and contributes to the critique that informs the actual reform occurring in post-socialist Europe. Teresa Gowan, working with homeless men in San Francisco, bases her analysis on several striking ethnographic examples, although the theoretical significance of her work could be better elaborated. Some of the homeless develop ways of resisting their classification by the "outside" world, through recycling rubbish and a strong work ethic. Joseph Blum provides one of the most personal accounts, since he has worked for many years as a journeyman in the shipyard about which he is writing. He does manage to achieve a sense of perspective, and sets out a straightforward approach to labour regimes, demolishing in the process a couple of myths in the literature on labour and skill.

The second section is more of a mixed bag of papers, each with its kernel of promising ideas, but one feels that the potential has not been fully milked from the research in each case. The focus is on "connections", which can be read as global flows or communications. Sheba George works among nurses from Kerala, who have migrated to the US, and their families in the home country. There are some very good insights into family relationships, but it is surprising, given the discussion of gender, cleanliness and purity that the issue of caste is not mentioned until 24 pages into the material, only a couple of pages from the end. George prefers to frame her analysis in terms of class, but one feels that some more elaboration of the alternative frameworks more based in tradition (or justification for their exclusion) might have added to her argument. Seán Ó Riain is more successful in looking at software developers in Ireland. The context that he is studying seems genuinely "global." Through their computers and conferencing facilities, the Dublin team's work involves constant communication with colleagues in wholly different time zones, and they modify their work practices accordingly. Ó Riain looks at the relationships within this space, and how people develop ways of expressing their "global" mobility or "Irish" rootedness at different times and places. In particular, the projects on which they work progressively shape the group, and identity within it. As a project progresses, a group goes through a developmental cycle. Millie Thayer develops an interesting analysis of local interpretations of feminist knowledges in a Brazilian group, SOS Corpo. The distinctiveness of the local feminism within a global movement is especially clearly expressed. It is difficult for the reader to envisage however exactly how Brazil is different from the US. The office in Brazil, the behaviour of its members, are not described very clearly; such that the impression is given that, as feminists, these people are shaped by their ideas and not a great deal else.

The third section portrays contexts in which problems posed by the global are responded to from within the global, in the form of some kind of protest or empowerment movement. One wonders why these papers need to be

presented as studies of globalization, rather than the wonderfully sharp thumbnail sketches of protest or empowerment movements which they actually are. Zsuzsa Gille skillfully navigates the intricacies surrounding a proposed incineration plant in Hungary. History, politics, environmentalism, local rivalries, science all play a part and develop into a veritable web of global village complications. The rivalries between Gare and Szalanyi villages are a wonder to behold, as the villages mobilize socially progressive arguments from international business and from international environmentalism respectively, in putting forward their case for where waste dumps should be located. Gille captures very well the progressive passion characteristic of much of central and Eastern Europe, moving beyond ethnographies rooted in historical socialism. Steven Lopez investigates a trade union environment in Pittsburgh. In particular, he examines union responses to two of the local municipal administration's initiatives: on the one hand a renegotiation of work contracts, and on the other the threat of privatization of an old people's home. These initiatives are labeled "global" inasmuch as they form part of a "neoliberal" agenda. The union action meanwhile is labeled "global" because the crises it faces are seen as part of a wider crisis in the labour movement in the country as a whole. Lopez wears his political heart on his sleeve, calling the result of the protest actions "successes," and discusses his own role as a union organizer during fieldwork. Maren Klawiter provides a good theoretical grounding for her work, developing Susan Sontag's arguments that the way diseases are conceptualized has a socially normalizing power. Applying this approach to breast cancer, Klawiter looks at the twin development of scientific knowledge of cancer with the development of support groups. Since the 1980s, people with cancer have experienced a multiplication of relationships around the disease.

In Gille's paper, one could substitute "global" for "western;" in Lopez's for "neoliberal;" and in Klawiter's, the global is manifested as a combination of belonging to a support network, international collaboration of networks, and the scientific knowledge on breast cancer. It is suggested in the introduction to this section that the three papers are connected by the way they explore a contestation of the global from within the global, as opposed the erosion of the local by the global (as in the first section), or local people drawing on the global to create local social space (as in the second section). This layout remains generally unconvincing when, thanks to the quality of the ethnography, the social stuff that is denoted as "global" is so very specific and different in each case study.

Burawoy's conclusion is in many ways more useful than his introduction. While the theoretical overview which appeared in the introduction left the hope that a coherent viewpoint on globalization might emerge, the conclusion is much more self-aware in its examination of the importance of recognizing one's perspective on globalization, rather than essentializing it: "In this book we used ethnography to drum some reality into theories of globalization, investigating to what extent globalization is a flight of academic fancy" (p.341). He attempts to separate out material, ideological and theoretical approaches to the issue of the global. His answer is to look at "grounded globalizations" (p.341) and at "globalization in transition" (p.348), and Burawoy provides ample discussion of these ideas, critiquing Giddens and commenting on Stuart

Hall's work. These arguments provide a powerful argument for the use of ethnographic methods in this field, but at the same time leave the reader with questions as to the validity of the broad patterns that Burawoy identifies as significant. If globalizations are multiple and should be perceived as "grounded" phenomena, can one then talk of "globalization in transition" as well?

In short, those with an interest in issues of globalization will welcome the Introduction and Conclusion. Others will find several well-written and well-researched ethnographic papers.

EROS IN FOLKLORE. By Mihály Hoppál and Eszter Csonka-Takács (eds)., Budapest: European Folklore Institute, 2001. Pp 253, illustrations.

Reviewed by Dr Stiofán Ó Cadhla, Department of Béaloideas, Folklore and Ethnology, National University of Ireland, Cork.

Folklore has always been interested in narrative, behaviour and material aspects of culture, including clothing, but there has been a notable lack of attention to the creation of meaning surrounding the body itself. The essays in this collection result from two Hungarian symposia on the theme of "Eros in Folklore" convened about twenty years ago. One (*A szerelem kertjében* / In the Garden of Love) was republished in 2001 by the European Folklore Institute and the other was the 1989 gathering of the International Conference of Folk Narrative Research held in Budapest. The erotic element has always been to the fore in the descriptions of diverse outsiders who often caricatured vernacular cultures as indulging in "orgies" reminiscent of the ancient Saturnalia. The collection brings together many innovative approaches to neglected aspects of these cultures that the predominantly male pioneers of folkloristics in the early 20th century shied away from.

The core essays, those that engage most directly with the theme, introduce topics, some for the first time, and raise many interesting questions in relation to expressions of vernacular sexuality and eroticism. Erika Szepes, for example, points out that erotic symbolism is not simply alike but identical in chronologically and geographically remote areas. All hollowed objects tend to be identified with the feminine principle while all long pointed objects are identified with the masculine principle. The sexual symbolism derives from agrarian lifestyles where the spade, the plough, the seed or the hoe are male, and the earth is female. Threshing, ploughing, sowing or harvesting are popular synonyms for sexual intercourse. Culture engenders or sexes the artefact.

Ilona Nagy addresses the differing interpretations of eroticism and sexuality arguing that the distinction that sex is an instinct while eroticism is a cultural elevation of the instinct is illogical. Nagy discusses the aetiological myths surrounding the sexual formation of the first man and woman and the creation of the sexual organs themselves. With further implication for the engendered construction of the canon of folklore she points out that indexes and catalogues are often obtuse in their presentation of such motifs if they are present at all. The Russian reticence that Dagmar Burkhart refers to in regard to obscene language is echoed in many countries where scholars of folklore, lexicography, phraseology or etymology avoided the erotic nature of much popular expression and behaviour. Each case offers evidence that both the asexual or androgynous folklore of national or ideological canons and the unisex perspectives of some feminist folklorists demands revision, if a more general and embracive evidence is to emerge and influence scholarship and research.

Discussing nudity in Hungarian popular belief from a semiological perspective, for example, Mihály Hoppál raises many interesting questions. He argues that if dress is a sign-system or language then nudity signifies the absence of the sign which also carries meaning. Distinction must be drawn between sacred and profane, public and private nudity. Nudity may be used magically to avert disaster and danger, to enhance protection or to heal. The natural state was a counterpoise to the supernatural. Nakedness could stand for infertility or symbolise the absence of love and thus can be regarded, at times, as anti-erotic. This is echoed in many countries where it represents an effective element of rituals like lamenting the dead in the ecstatic performance of symbolic grief. This removes sexuality and inverts the primary (contemporary) sensual meaning of nakedness.

Eva Krekovizová and Gabriela Kiliánová locate erotic folklore in Czechoslovakia within the arguments for or against erotic scenes in cinematography. The erotic in vernacular culture is viewed as a form of intimate initiation or socialization of the individual within the community. In this milieu sexual or erotic motifs were presented openly in life cycle rituals and calendar customs. The knowledge of erotic symbols acquired at various stages in the life cycle reflected integration into the group and functioned in a similar way to formal ideas about "sex education". They define erotic folklore as expressions of the sexual relations between men and women in specific situations in anecdotes, jokes, stories, songs, customs or behaviour in which eroticism is unambiguously present. First, level expressions encompass rituals of fertility, calendar custom, christenings or weddings. These include symbolic sexual games enacted during funeral rituals. Second level expressions exist outside of ritual (although omnipresent) in the carnivalesque or Bakhtinesque world "turned upside down"; in mimicry, parody, jokes and anecdotes. Within this framework intimacy and familiarity are significant factors while barriers and taboos applied in relation to strangers. The nature of erotic folklore, particularly in the past, was such that it lent itself to informal or intimate groups. Although developed by both genders, performances varied in different contexts. In sexually homogeneous groups, all male or all female, interpretation and reception can differ from sexually heterogeneous groups.

Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj distinguishes between two kinds of sexual riddles in Finnish folklore, one with innocent answers that uses double-entendre and the other that demands an explicit answer. In the first the referent of the riddle is wrongly perceived to be sexual and leads the listener into a trap. There is no clue in the riddle as to what the correct innocent answer could be. Many use onomatopoeia drawing on the sound and image of such familiar household items as the churn (*it seethes and sloshes between the mistress' legs. A Churn*). In Winter, riddling occurred indoors while spinning, patching, making clothes or mending the tools used by men. The utensils of the kitchen were visible to riddlers and the spinning wheel, loom or churn feature in many. Many of the riddles appear to be found across Europe. The erotic riddles were a feature of both male and female gatherings but they fall mainly within the female spheres of activity.

It is undoubtedly a common platitude heard by folklorists that their subject is characterised by time-honoured adherence to quaint ascetic rituals or ramblings that were current when nations were young. Statements like "Michael Flatly made Irish dancing sexy" presuppose that folklore is a neutered field of knowledge and eclipses the engendering of a heterogeneous humanity that both secretes itself from, and is seduced by, culture. Although the introduction and most of the essays would have been greatly enhanced by some direct commentary on the key terms of gender, sexuality, and eroticism in folklore, the collection is welcome and should be conducive to further research into the recesses of vernacular gender relations.

BODY/MEANING/HEALING, By Tom Csordas, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Reviewed by Arnaud Tagnachie, PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, NUI Maynooth.

Driven by his childhood aspiration to understand the meaning of being human, Tom Csordas takes us from a field that is familiar, and composed of people with which he believes he shares a common social and cultural background to an altogether more strange and unfamiliar arena. Body/Meaning/Healing is composed of articles published previously as separately papers. It is divided into three different parts focused on empirical and theoretical agendas, while looking at how religion provides individuals with meaning through healing. We thus enter the personal reflection and anthropological journey of the author, and "the meaning of our existence as bodily beings, the way that meaning is sometimes created in the experience of the sacred, and the meaning of the transformation that can take place in such experience of the sacred" (Csordas 2002:1).

Csordas empirical agenda takes us into two different worlds in the United States: the renewal of the Charismatic Pentecostal movement, which shares the same educational Catholic background as Csordas, and that of the Navajo people. In this part, Csordas clearly points out the use of religion and rituals among the Navajo as a means of resistance (in the same manner as Comaroff (1985) did with the Tshidi community and the Zionist movement in South Africa). But his attempt to draw analogies and distinctions with psychotherapy and psychiatry unfortunately fails to give us a more adequate idea of the therapeutic and healing process of these Western medicines. The book then concludes with a third part on the "Visible Human Project" used by American scholars and students in the teaching and learning of human anatomy. The relation with Charismatic and Navajo rituals is not immediately obvious, but it enables the author to extend his conception of the body beyond the boundaries of religion and traditional medicines, into the virtual reality of a computerized body that, somehow, relates to the body in healing.

Through the understanding of the therapeutic process of religious healing with the capacity to effect the transformation of self and culture, rather than the elimination of a problem, Csordas manages to conceive of a new terminology and conceptualization to study the efficacy of those rituals. For the most part, he provides us with a rhetoric of transformation that highlights four stages during which transformation occurs – the disposition of participants; the experience of the sacred; the negotiations of possibilities or elaborations of alternatives; and the actualization of change. In his work, the ritual process is a window that gives an insight to the body and the embodied processes central to the reflections of the author, and the true subject of the book. In the conceptual approach of embodiment, the dichotomy subject/object collapses, the body becoming "the existential ground of culture and self," and the religious healing an embodied cultural process (Csordas 2002:4)

At base, Csordas's Body/Meaning/Healing is a plea for an anthropology of the body. Yet, the reflection on the body and its importance in understanding

culture and the self has been around for a while now. Most of theories in the last century have stressed the function of the body as vehicle for symbolizing society and, conversely, how society regulated the body. To me, Csordas allies these two tendencies, by using a concept of habitus developed and improved by Bourdieu with that of "being-in-the-world" deeply rooted in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which stresses the embodied nature of perception.

Extending the idea that healing happens through manipulation of symbols, Csordas moves on to the experience of the individuals that he links with symbols by means of what he calls rhetoric performance. When reflecting on the body issue in anthropology we think in terms of representation, objectification, continuity and subjectivity. The anthropology of Csordas takes us in-between, a phenomenological perspective on the body concerned with concepts such as being-in-the-world, indeterminacy, inter-subjectivity and transformation. Csordas shapes his concept of embodiment by going beyond the preconceived idea of body-object – a kind of transport for culture, art, gender, and whatever social position – and including senses, gestures as well as language. The body is in short "a field of perception and practice."

While I admire the challenging ethnographic work and theoretical orientation, I am less enthused by how the accounts in this book connect to the healing systems. While we know more and more about religious and secular medicines, and the beliefs that underlie them as cultural systems, we still know less than we would like to about the individuals that make them meaningful to the anthropologist. For example, I would have been curious to know how the "virtual body" affected the scholars and students in medicine's *techniques du corps*. When talking about Jesse, practicing Navajo healing, the author suggests that the therapeutic process is a life-long one. But, Csordas's model isolates the ritual process from the rest of the life experience. And the (pre-)disposition concept does not help us to understand the relevance of such a transformation process as a ritual healing in the course of a life time. Why the Navajo ceremonies rather than the Native American Church prayer meetings, and Navajo Christian Faith healing? I believe life stories can also tell us about the body, the collapsing relationship between mind and body, a kind of simultaneous psychic and somatic process. In this sense *Body/Meaning/Healing* is probably a bit ambitious for the amount of data it gathers, and I would have preferred the life stories to have been more developed.

One way of understanding healing rituals, for example would be, following Scheff (*Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1979) to see them as "the distanced reenactment of situations of emotional distress." The experience of the ritual, then, speaks to other experiences in the individual's life. Thus, prior to the ritual, one already witnesses a process of transformation, one that Csordas downplays when he focuses on the experience of the sacred, and its efficacy. In terms of actualization of change, a sense of "rebirth" often characterizes healing among Charismatic Pentecostals, which I would oppose to "regression" as a pre-ritual process. Like a child with his parents, the individual finds himself in a situation of helplessness that makes him seek a protective, leading, and healing figure through religion and its cosmology. My hypothesis is that the

ritual in Charismatic healing, for women who underwent abortion (Chapter III), is a culturally and socially acceptable way for them to deal with the death of their child as well as with being a daughter, and works at symbolic remove. The ritual also has a particular cosmology that is worthy of description, as it can become a transitional object (Winnicott, David, *Playing and Reality*, New York: Basic Books 1971) that links the patient "to parental forces and establishes personal autonomy" (Schattschneider, Ellen, "My Mothers Garden: Transitional Phenomena on a Japanese Sacred Mountain," *Ethos* 28(2):147-174, 2000).

In the end, *Body/Meaning/Healing* is an important book that should be of interest to a variety of scholars, as the concept of embodiment as theorized by Csordas goes beyond most disciplinary boundaries. My main critique of this work as ethnography is that I wanted to know more of how Margo, Ralph, Jesse, Marvin and the others made use of cultural and ritual symbols to articulate their own experiences.

Ethnos
Journal of Anthropology

Accepted for inclusion in the Social Science Citation Index from 2003

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