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Editor's Note

This is a tough job to give up. Trust me, I have had to quit twice. In any case, after two years of trying, I am pleased to report my success in this respect at least.

It has been very satisfying to see the *Irish Journal of Anthropology* develop over the past 8 years. It is now a true peer-reviewed publication, boasting a commitment to excellence in scholarship, alongside an impressive number of international contributors. Thanks to the consistent quality of its regular numbers and some high-profile special editions, the Journal has also developed a reputation very far afield in both a geographical and disciplinary sense. The redeveloped web page www.anthropologyireland.org/ will have all the back issues electronically available very soon, so access to our contributor's work will be very much enhanced.

These achievements would have been impossible without the work of many hands. Steve Coleman has been with me on this from the beginning and has been an important part of every stage of the Journal's growth and development over the past decade. Many graduate students at Maynooth have contributed to this publication, generally at the least interesting level of journal work – entering and checking edits and discovering just how many ways formatting errors can creep into the final version of something. I would like to thank in particular, Denise Meagher, Mark Maguire, Yvonne McGrath, Fiona Larkan, and Emma Heffernan. Finally, the Anthropology Department at Maynooth has, over many years, generously underwritten indirect costs without stint or complaint.

I would like to wish the new editor, Séamas O'Síocháin, and the new Editorial Board, every success. And I am pleased to say finally, "good-bye to all that."

On the Production of Irish Sports Spaces

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Introduction

In recent years, across a range of disciplines in the social sciences, there has been increasing interest in the concepts of space and place. What the renowned urbanist, Edward Soja, has described as an interdisciplinary “spatial turn” is reflected not only in anthropology in general, but within Irish anthropology in particular.¹ This “spatial turn,” however, has not extended into the realm of Irish sport. Anthropologists in Ireland, as elsewhere, have been less inclined than their colleagues in other disciplines to turn to sport as an object of study.² Rather, research into social, cultural, and political aspects of sport in Ireland has generally been left to scholars with backgrounds in history, sociology, and political science.³ Although a mature body of work dealing with a range of issues has been generated, space, with a few notable exceptions, has attracted little sustained analysis.⁴

In foregrounding an analysis of space I draw on the writing of the French Marxist, Henri Lefebvre, whose work has done much to assert the significance of the concept in social theory. Lefebvre’s interest, as the title of one of his most influential volumes suggests, lies less with space as a product than with *The Production of Space*.⁵ More specifically, he is concerned with the production of social space, a concept that in Lefebvre’s formulation incorporates mental and physical space, as well as the space of lived practice. (Social) space, thus produced, serves as a tool of thought and of action, and as a means of production, control, and hence domination and power.⁶

Lefebvre’s concern with production leads him to reject theories of space that treat it as an already-existing product that merely requires deciphering. He therefore rejects approaches that, having conceptualised space as little more than a mental abstraction, proceed to treat it as a text to be read or a message to be decoded. On the contrary, emphasising that social relations are enshrined in, and not simply reflected in, space, Lefebvre remarks that “social relations, which are concrete abstractions, have no real existence save in and through space. Their underpinning is spatial. In each particular case the connection between this underpinning and the relations it supports calls for analysis.”⁷

In this article I seek to extend both the anthropological literature that addresses issues of space/place, and the historical and sociological literature concerned with sport, by taking a comparative look at the space of Irish sport. Specifically, I examine the “production,” in Lefebvre’s sense, of two existing, and two “imagined” or as-yet-to-be-realised, Irish sports spaces. The article is organised both geographically – in the first half looking at the Republic of Ireland, in the second turning to Northern Ireland – and, more importantly, according to two themes. I look, first, at how interrelationships between sport, space, and national identity have come to be expressed in Irish sport. To this end, I examine how the status of Croke Park as a national space is implicated

in debates surrounding the merits of Rule 42. Until recently the rule banned the playing of sports such as rugby and soccer on Gaelic grounds. I then consider, in turn, recent attempts in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to promote the case for building new multi-sport national stadiums. I argue that the discursive construction of Croke Park and these “imagined” stadiums as particular kinds of national space must be understood in the context of changes or transformations – social, political, economic, cultural – that have occurred in Irish and Northern Irish society in recent times.

In the final section I look at the implication of sport in the production of urban public space. I explain ongoing attempts to alter the status of Windsor Park as a sectarianised space both historically, and in the context of a more recent reorganisation of public space in Belfast. Taken together, the four examples illustrate that the field of Irish sport is fertile ground on which anthropologists can play with the concepts of space and place.

Sport, space, and national identity: The GAA, Croke Park, and Rule 42

It is not surprising, given the theoretical importance he attaches to space, that Lefebvre is highly critical of interpretations of nationalism that fail to privilege space in their analysis. Mark Maguire takes up this aspect of Lefebvre’s work in his research into the construction of the Ardnacrusha Hydro-electric Scheme in the years following Irish independence.⁸ He offers Benedict Anderson’s seminal text, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, in which Anderson emphasises the manner in which people “think” the “imagined community,” as an example of an approach that tends to view nationalism as little more than a mental abstraction. It is an interpretation that, to paraphrase Lefebvre, “leaves space out of the picture.” Through demonstrating that “the physical construction (of Ardnacrusha) became a metaphor for the nation-building of the era,” Maguire illustrates how an analysis of space can add to our understanding of the construction of Irish nationalism.⁹ His research underscores Lefebvre’s assertion that,

Ideas, representations, or values which do not succeed in making their mark on space, and thus generating (or producing) an appropriate morphology will lose all pith and become mere signs, resolve themselves into abstract descriptions, or mutate into fantasies.¹⁰

As with Ardnacrusha in the post-independence era, the cultural construction of Croke Park can be interpreted in the context of discourses centring on national identity in Ireland. It is a space, however, that does not simply reflect this broader context – it is neither a national text to be read nor a blank canvas onto which versions of national identity are inscribed. Rather, its production as a particular kind of national space is bound up with the cultural construction of Irish national identity. Irish national identities are enshrined in this sports space.

Croke Park's significance as a national (sports) space derives from its status as the headquarters and national stadium of the GAA. Formed in 1884, the association was charged with promoting and protecting what were deemed to be distinctively Irish games in the face of what was regarded as British cultural imperialism.¹¹ Since then, it has always presented itself, and has been viewed by others, as a sporting and cultural organisation dedicated to the promotion of a distinctive and distinctively Irish national identity. From the early years of the twentieth century, Croke Park existed as the premier venue in which Gaelic games could be showcased.¹²

In the years leading up to Irish independence Croke Park's status as a national 'monument,' in Lefebvre's sense, became increasingly fixed due to its association with political struggle.¹³ One particular event did most to cement this association. On 21 November 1920, Croke Park was the site of what became known as "Bloody Sunday," when twelve spectators and a player, Michael Hogan, were killed by British forces during a football match. Although these are the widely agreed upon "facts," the incident remains one of the most controversial in modern Irish history. Was the massacre an act of revenge, carried out in response to the IRA's killing and wounding of British police and soldiers earlier that morning? Was it the result of a stop and search policy gone wrong? Or was the massacre, brutal as it was, the product of coincidence; of a match, played in the wrong place and at the wrong time, falling victim to violence of a political struggle? Historians of the Association, who disagree about the precise nature of the GAA's role in the Irish nationalist struggle, contest the interpretation of this event. They contest, in other words, the manner in which we should interpret this "spatial fix."

For some, the incident is clear evidence that the GAA played a pivotal role, and Croke Park occupied a central position, in the nationalist struggle. Marcus de Burca, for example, reflects that "the GAA was justly proud of the recognition by the British, implicit in the selection of the target for the reprisal, of the Association's identity with what one of the shrewdest of contemporary observers called the 'underground nation.'"¹⁴ Tim Carey agrees, noting that despite official British accounts that the match was a cover for IRA assassinations earlier in the day "the attack on Croke Park was certainly compatible with the unofficial British policy of reprisals in response to republican attacks."¹⁵ It is this interpretation that the *GAA Museum handbook* seeks to preserve as sporting heritage. In addition to highlighting the significance of "Bloody Sunday" the handbook also states that it was rubble from the Easter Rising of 1916 that first created the mounded terrace at one corner of the ground that is known today as "Hill 16."¹⁶ For de Burca, Carey, and the GAA itself, Croke Park exists as a space in and through which the history of the association, and more specifically, the history of the association's nationalist credentials, is constructed. According to this history, the GAA was not simply in the front line of the struggle for Irish independence – in the case of "Bloody Sunday" Croke Park was, literally, *the* front line. And political struggle, manifest in the rubble from the Easter Rising that was used to construct "Hill 16," was embedded in the fabric of the stadium.

Other historians, such as Mike Cronin and David Lesson, reject this interpretation of "Bloody Sunday."¹⁷ Cronin's history of the GAA emphasises

the association's emergence in the context of the "athletic revolution" in Britain and downplays its contribution to the nationalist cause. In so doing, he offers a very different account of the significance of the association's national stadium. Contrary to the histories of de Burca and Carey, the massacre of the 21st November 1920 was not borne of revenge, but of coincidence. Nor was Croke Park the front line of a national struggle. Rather, "Bloody Sunday" was a "key event, which allowed the GAA to place itself at the heart of a nationalist myth."¹⁸ Leeson draws on recently released government papers and offers the most up-to-date commentary on the incident. Although he contends that the "massacre was probably neither wilful murder nor death by misadventure," he stops short of explaining it in terms of "pure chance."¹⁹ Rather, he concludes that the shooting occurred in the context of panic in the stadium, which followed a botched plan to round up the crowd and search for weapons and wanted men.

Croke Park, as the above literature makes clear, is a space of conflicting Irish national histories. A conflicted space, we might say, in the sense that it embodies rather than merely reflects these histories. To the controversy surrounding "Bloody Sunday" we could add the symbolic naming of the stands that enclose the pitch towards illustrating the stadium's status as a national monument. Named after people associated with the Irish nationalist struggle, the stands serve as physical reminders of the GAA's support for, and Croke Park's place in, that cause. It is not only conflicting histories that are woven into the fabric of the stadium, however. In recent years, and in the context of debates centring on Rule 42, Croke Park once again emerged as "contested terrain." Specifically, it has come to embody competing and conflicting understandings of national identity, and related notions of modernity, in contemporary Irish society.

In principle, Rule 42, as it is listed in the GAA's *Official Guide*, governs the use of Association property.²⁰ In practice, however, it is more specifically understood as that rule which bans the playing of rugby and soccer on GAA grounds in general, and at Croke Park in particular. Although it has been part of the GAA rulebook for decades, it is only recently that the merits of the rule have been seriously questioned, and its very existence challenged. In the weeks leading up to the 2005 GAA Annual Congress, plans for the future redevelopment of Lansdowne Road, the "home" of the Irish rugby and the Republic of Ireland soccer teams, served to bring the status of Rule 42 into sharp focus. Anticipating the closure of Lansdowne Road in the coming years as the stadium undergoes redevelopment, the plans require that the international rugby and soccer sides play at an alternative venue during this period. In the absence of a suitable stadium elsewhere in Ireland other than Croke Park, which Rule 42 rendered unavailable, concerns were voiced about the possibility of Irish international teams having to play their home games abroad. As a result, support for the removal of, or changes to, Rule 42 gathered momentum both within the GAA and amongst an anxious sporting public. A vote on the status of Rule 42 was scheduled for Congress, giving delegates the opportunity to provide their seal of approval. Taking this opportunity the delegates, after heated discussion, duly obliged. In a move that was widely hailed in the national media as "historic" and "groundbreaking," delegates voted by 227-97 to amend the terms of Rule 42,

thereby paving the way for future soccer and rugby internationals to be played at Croke Park.²¹

To the extent that the debate over whether or not rugby and soccer matches should be played at Croke Park has been expressed in terms of Rule 42, it has been a debate characterised by a conflict over the rules of the GAA. I would argue, however, that this conflict over rules is symptomatic of a deeper conflict over space. The conflict is less about Rule 42 *per se* and more about the space(s) to which the rule refers, and the use of which it seeks to regulate, namely Croke Park and other GAA grounds. What we are confronted with, then – following Lefebvre – is not simply a conflict over a text (the GAA's *Official Guide*), but texture (the space of Gaelic games, particularly Croke Park).

Although the redevelopment of Lansdowne Road was the most immediate factor influencing the revision of Rule 42, its significance must be understood in the context of the evolution of a debate that has raged, intermittently, during the last five years. In a sense, the 2005 Annual Congress offered the latest instalment in an ongoing saga that has quite probably not yet run its course, given that Rule 42 has been temporarily amended rather than erased from the rulebook. It is necessary, therefore, to situate the issue of Lansdowne Road in the context of the genealogy of the Rule 42 debate.

From the beginning the debate has tended to be understood – by GAA members, politicians, and a broad section of the media – in terms of a conflict over the status of Irish national identity at the turn of the century. This conflict, furthermore, is viewed as entailing two opposing sides. The pronouncements of two GAA delegates in the weeks leading up to the GAA's 2001 Congress, the first time Rule 42 was seriously challenged, serve to illustrate the way in which the debate has been conceptualised. Cathal Lynch, speaking on behalf of the GAA's European Board, and speaking in favour of the motion to make Croke Park available to soccer and rugby, explained that “the world is changing, becoming multi-cultural. We should have the self-confidence to go ahead as the biggest sports organisation in the country.”²² Lynch's statement, however, found little favour with Down county secretary, Donal McCormack, who remarked that he “would have difficulty allowing non-nationalist organisations to play in Croke Park, particularly partitionist organisations.”²³

These opposing views map onto analyses of national identity in Ireland that posit a movement from a traditional and parochial nationalism of the past, expressed by McCormack, to a modern and global nationalism of the present, represented by Lynch. This kind of interpretation finds favour in some of the historical and sociological writing concerned with sport in Ireland. Cronin, for example, in *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*, contrasts what he describes as the “defensive form of nationalism” of the GAA with what he views as the “forward-looking nationalism” symbolised by Irish soccer in the 1990s.²⁴ Whilst the former is “steeped in history, is exclusive and offers the rejection of a foreign culture and the embrace of the native,” the latter is “international, is played out in front of a global media and appears more representative of what has been called “modern Ireland.”²⁵ Although not directly addressing the

cultural construction of sports spaces *per se*, Cronin suggests that the traditional and modern nationalisms of Gaelic games and soccer find expression at their respective venues.

At Croke Park, while the mood is celebratory, the setting and the annual routine are commonly understood to be a monument to the GAA and the nation state. In soccer, internationally at least, the setting is always changing, Lithuania one week, the US weeks later, but the atmosphere is more informal and expressive of an inclusive and less structured Irishness.²⁶

Cronin's interpretation, though formulated prior to, and therefore not directly addressing, the Rule 42 issue, still resonates in recent debates concerning the "opening up" of Croke Park. In particular, his analysis is reflected in the views of those who regard the ban as evidence of the GAA's exclusive and out-dated nationalism of the past. From this perspective, Croke Park, although acknowledged to be a physically impressive structure, was until recently a monument to this anachronistic nationalist history.

For others, however, including Tim Carey in his recent *Croke Park: A History*, the physically impressive and thoroughly modern stadium not only demonstrates the GAA's continued strength in contemporary Irish society, it also serves as a symbol of a prosperous, vibrant and confident Ireland.²⁷ This interpretation exemplifies what Colin Coulter describes as the "radical recent transformation of the manner in which Irishness is perceived, signified, and imagined."²⁸ Traditionally constructed as feckless, inebriated and violent by its imperial masters, Ireland has more recently been associated with, and signified, a range of positive connotations in dominant discourses in and on contemporary Irish society. From this perspective, Croke Park serves as the modern, state-of-the-art signifier through which contemporary Irish society can be read.

Although Cronin and Carey interpret Croke Park's symbolic status as a national monument somewhat differently, they both lean towards a portrayal of Irish society in general, and Irish nationalism in particular, as moving simply and unproblematically from a traditional past into a modern present. As Honor Fagan points out, however, such interpretations tend to fall back on essentialist notions of Irishness, reifying national identity and treating it as fixed, self-contained, immutable or closed.²⁹ Stressing historical depth, the fluidity of identities in general, and a heightened state of flux in an increasingly globalised world, Fagan emphasises that Ireland was always part of the broader flow of people and ideas, always globalised and always a floating signifier. Referring to Ireland's history of migration and to the movement characteristic of exiles and migrants today, she suggests that, "the Ireland of today has seen the full effect of the deterritorialization of culture."³⁰ Deterritorialization, however, as the case of Croke Park illustrates, is accompanied by moves towards the "reterritorialization" of culture.³¹ The construction of Croke Park as a particular, yet contested, national space reflects that in what many people may view as an increasingly deterritorialised world, culture continues to be enshrined in particular spaces.

Discourses constructed around nationalism did not have a monopoly on debates surrounding Rule 42 and the status of Croke Park. Financial and commercial considerations also played their part. Some of those who lobbied for change stressed that Rule 42's apparent hostility to other sports contrasts sharply with the experiences of many GAA members; others argued that the "opening up" of Croke Park to soccer and rugby would be an extension of the policy to allow other sports and concerts to take place there; still others, and often those with little sympathy for the GAA, argued that the stadium should be open to other sports because public money, granted through government funding, has gone into its construction. Those opposed to the removal of Rule 42, on the other hand, often emphasised that Gaelic games are in competition for money and players with other sports and defended the right to protect their own games by restricting the use of Croke Park, the association's most prized asset.³²

Although different, yet inter-related, arguments were put forward both in favour of, and against, the removal of Rule 42 it was also the case that the extent to which certain arguments were emphasised in public debates fluctuated over time.³³ In 2001, for example, when a motion to remove Rule 42 failed by one vote, a majority of those delegates who voted in favour did so on the grounds that it would be seen as a "politically" inclusive gesture. In other words, it would have been, amongst other things, a move in keeping with political developments in Ireland. By 2004, it was argued in the *Irish Times*, those favouring change emphasised financial considerations. The evolution of the debate, however, says less about the apparent diminishing political significance of Croke Park as an important national space than it does about the process whereby, as Lefebvre states, "no sooner has space assumed a political character than its depoliticisation appears on the agenda. A politicised space," Lefebvre continues, "destroys the political conditions that brought it about..."³⁴ Croke Park's status as a politicised national space, which for the GAA was the basis of its significance as a national "monument," became a rod with which to beat the association. It was read as further evidence that the association was clinging to a nationalism of the past.

The phrase "attempts to destroy," rather than Lefebvre's unequivocal assertion that politicised space "destroys" the political conditions that brought it about, seems more suited to an analysis of the discursive construction of Croke Park as a national space. It is particularly appropriate given that debates focusing on Croke Park and Rule 42 during 2005 witnessed the re-emergence of discursive strategies based on nationalism. The idea that the removal of the ban would constitute an important gesture to other sports, such as soccer and rugby, then assumed greater currency. Nonetheless, what may initially appear to be no more than a sporting gesture – an expression of the goodwill of one sport towards another – was often expressed in terms of "the national interest." As one Gael put it, commenting on the need for "opening up" Croke Park on the basis that Irish international teams could be forced to play abroad, "this is a matter of serious national importance, whose outcome will be a defining moment for our association and indeed for the country, in terms of maturity, confidence and inclusiveness." He went on to remark that the availability of Croke Park to other sports was in the "national

interest,” that it was about “national pride, national cohesiveness and stature,” and that the “core issue is more important than money.”³⁵

By the time the 2005 Annual Congress arrived, simultaneous appeals to virtues of “neighbourliness” and “decency,” and to “the national interest,” were voiced by the leading players in the debate. Tommy Kenroy, for example, a Roscommon delegate and one of the most vocal supporters of amending Rule 42, suggested that,

today’s decision will be a defining moment for this organisation. It will demonstrate our willingness or otherwise to serve this nation at a time of need, and it will also demonstrate our willingness to do what Irish people have always been proud and happy to do – to help a neighbour in a time of need.³⁶

In the aftermath of the vote GAA President, Sean Kelly, expressed a similar view, commenting that

On a huge policy issue it was maybe the most generous and the most liberal decision taken by any sporting or business body. Because out of the generosity of our hearts, we have put our finest asset at the disposal of our keenest rivals. The GAA is made up of people of great generosity. I think they saw that their neighbours were in trouble and they reached out a hand of friendship. The debate, while it was emotional and strong, was at the same time very mature and that’s very important.³⁷

Elsewhere, he stated that,

For many people, this was a day they would never have seen coming. They wouldn’t have seen us as being big enough or confident enough to do it. There are few other organisations that would have done it. But the GAA is made up of people who are totally committed to their own communities and their national games.... I think they have done something which is good for the GAA and something which is good for Ireland.³⁸

The manner in which Kelly explains the decision of GAA delegates to amend the terms of Rule 42 is revealing. Not only does he do so by coupling the virtue of neighbourliness with that of commitment to community and nation. He also does so by invoking the language of some of those politicians, commentators in the media, and academics who have sought to paint the GAA as a remnant of an Irish nationalist past. In countering this caricature, Kelly emphasises that the decision was made by a “confident,” “mature,” and “liberal” organisation, one very much in step with “modern Ireland.” He implies that the GAA is an organisation that is, at once, at ease with its “traditional” past and capable of adapting to a modern, even postmodern, present and future. Although he seeks to play them at their own historical game, Kelly inadvertently serves to reinforce a conception of time, premised on a radical rupture between past and present, that underlies the caricature of the GAA presented by some of its critics.

The furore surrounding Rule 42, and hence Croke Park's status as "contested terrain," has now largely dissipated. The changes to the rule empower the association's Central Council, its supreme ruling body, to decide on the use of Croke Park while Lansdowne Road is being redeveloped. As a result, it is widely anticipated that soccer and rugby internationals will be played at the stadium in the near future. It is worth reiterating, however, that Rule 42 has not been erased from the GAA rulebook. The question as to whether or not the amendments to the rule will be withdrawn once the redevelopment of Lansdowne Road is completed remains unanswered. In this context it is likely that the issue will be revisited in the next few years, and that Croke Park will re-emerge as a contested national space.

In search of a national stadium: The rise and fall of 'Stadium Ireland'

Although the status of an existing space, Croke Park, has recently received much public attention, the last few years also witnessed the emergence of a desire for a newly "imagined" multi-sport national stadium in the Republic of Ireland. The need for such a stadium, in part, was motivated by practical, sports-specific, considerations. Soccer and rugby, it continues to be said, do not possess and therefore require adequate facilities, which the new stadium would have provided. These sport-specific considerations, however, cannot be separated from, and indeed were sustained by, discursive strategies that constructed the newly imagined sports stadium as a particular kind of national and modern space. As with Croke Park, the construction of the need and desire for this new sporting space was framed by discourses anchored in "the nation." Unlike the "contested terrain" of Croke Park, however, the proposed new stadium was imagined, singularly and unequivocally, as a distinctively modern national space.

It may, on first inspection, seem contradictory to point to the limitations of Anderson's "imagined communities" in the previous section and then to proceed to examine an "imagined" sports space here. Returning to Lefebvre, however, it is clear that this is not the case. Although Lefebvre emphasises the theoretical primacy of space and asserts that the production of space should not be reduced to a language *on* space, he nevertheless does not dismiss the manner in which people think about and imagine space. Rather, mental space, or what he refers to as "representations of space," is incorporated within his attempts to present a unified theory of social space. In general, Lefebvre notes, space is "produced before being read."³⁹ But this is not always so. Rather, "reading" follows production in all cases except those in which space is produced especially in order to be read."⁴⁰ This was true of the plans for "Stadium Ireland," the Republic's proposed new national stadium. It is also true, as we will see below, of Northern Ireland's "imagined" national stadium. "Stadium Ireland" was produced, and the north's proposed national stadium continues to be produced, specifically in order to be read; in newspapers, government policy documents, media press releases, planning permission documents, architectural magazines, websites, and the like.

Following an announcement by the government in October 1998 that it was to conduct a feasibility study into building an 80,000 all-seated multi-sport stadium, a study was carried out and a report entitled *A Stadium for the New Century* published the next year.⁴¹ The report proposed that the stadium, which was envisaged as the centrepiece of an extensive “Campus of Sporting Excellence,” be built on a greenfield site at Abbotstown, West Dublin. In anticipating the physical construction of the stadium, the report also constructed the proposed new stadium as a particular kind of “imagined” national space.

The stadium was to be “a symbol of Ireland’s economic and social success as we enter the new millennium” and “an icon for the island of Ireland,” an Ireland that was “entering the 21st century as a confident, young and dynamic country, having attained international recognition for our achievements on many fronts including our economic recovery, cultural and artistic renaissance and sporting success.” It would also “contribute much to national prestige and to our sense of national pride, and the existence of a world class stadium accessible to all will act as a catalyst for the development of sport.” Looking further afield, and seeking to locate Ireland’s position in the global world order, the report stressed, “that most modern progressive economies have certain land-mark buildings to accommodate and showcase what is best about that society.”

The discursive construction of “Stadium Ireland” as a particular kind of modern national space draws on a broader, though “very particular and essentially hegemonic reading of the nature of contemporary Irish society.”⁴² As Colin Coulter points out, this is a reading that presents the transformations that have taken place in Ireland in recent years, in the wake of the so-called “Celtic Tiger,” in a singularly positive manner.⁴³ Ireland, in this view, is a country characterised by unprecedented levels of economic growth, the benefits of which are shared equally by all. It is a country, furthermore, which on the back of this economic boom has been characterised by moves towards a more secular and liberal society, one that is outward looking, inclusive, and at ease with its position in an increasingly globalised world. In short, this is a modern, post-national Ireland, an Ireland that has managed to shrug off its traditional past.

Stadium Ireland, as the feasibility study illustrates, was “imagined” as a monument to this dominant reading of southern Irish society. It was, as the report stated, to be a “symbol of Ireland’s economic and social success.” The discursive construction of the stadium as a national monument did not, however, simply reflect this broader hegemonic discourse. Stadium Ireland emerges as a significant “imagined” space in and through which this discourse was reproduced.

At the same time as hegemonic discourses of “modern Ireland” foreground suggestions of economic growth and social progress, they simultaneously marginalise contradictory tendencies within Irish society. Rising economic inequalities between the most affluent and least affluent sections of Irish society, and incidences of racism, both of which contradict portraits of a more equal and inclusive society, do not tend to feature in hegemonic caricatures of

contemporary Ireland. The comments of Bertie Ahern at the official launch of the Stadium Ireland project in January 2002 provide one such example. Voicing his support for the project and articulating the sort of space the new stadium was “imagined” to be, Ahern stated,

We are now in a position to address the economic and social challenges that have been beyond even our imagination in the past... The vision of the next century has to be about putting opportunity to work for everyone who lives on this island. And today we are talking about one vital piece of that vision. From the time Ronnie Delaney won gold at Melbourne, many of us have derived some part of our Irishness from the courage and grace of people who represent their country in sport, athletes who have lifted the hearts and spirits of their fellow Irish people. At a time when we are investing in the infrastructure that our development needs, I believe strongly that this is one vital piece of infrastructure that will help to complete the picture. As a nation, not only can we afford this undertaking – we cannot afford to let this opportunity slip.

He continued by commenting that,

This is a campus where every sporting body can find a home to suit its needs. It will, in every sense, represent a new Ireland that is confident, young, inclusive and dynamic.⁴⁴

Stadium Ireland, as Ahern’s comments make clear, was to be more than the sum of the materials that would go into its physical construction. It would exist as a monument to the new, modern, and prosperous Ireland. It is also implied that the construction of the stadium would test the extent to which Ireland had modernised, a development that would be called into question should the “nation,” to paraphrase Ahern, “let this opportunity slip.”

As it turns out, Ireland, according to this test, has failed as a modern nation. By late 2002 the government, in the face of political opposition, financial doubts and concerns regarding the scale of the project itself, announced the collapse of the existing plans. For some commentators, the “Bertie Bowl,” as the stadium came to be popularly known – due, alternatively, to Ahern’s enthusiasm for, or egotistical obsession with, the project – was as much a monument to the man himself as it was to the nation.⁴⁵ In January 2004 the government committed itself to the redevelopment of Lansdowne Road as a 50,000 all-seated stadium.

An alternative reading is that the demise of Stadium Ireland marks, in some small way, a success story in the context of contemporary southern Irish society. The grandiose and overly ambitious Stadium Ireland project, culturally constructed and given sustenance by the sort of hegemonic discourse that has interpreted the social, economic and cultural transformations in “Celtic Tiger” Ireland as singularly and uniformly positive, ultimately failed to materialise. The project, along with the dominant discourse which sought to sustain it, and which it served to reproduce,

ultimately failed to convince. There is now support for what would appear to be a much more reasonable plan, the development of a less grandiose, but no less modern (or traditional), Lansdowne Road.

In search of a post-national stadium: Northern Ireland

At the same time as plans for a brand new national sports stadium in the Republic of Ireland were being shredded, public support for the construction of a new multi-sport arena in Northern Ireland was beginning to gather momentum. Although it is impossible to quantify the extent of support for the stadium in the absence of reliable statistics, a range of interested parties, including officials of sporting organisations, national and local politicians, athletes, and fans, have voiced their approval. The discursive construction of this “imagined” stadium as a particular kind of national, or I would suggest post-national, space, and its anticipated physical construction in the future, can be interpreted in the context of recent political developments in Northern Ireland and in relation to the character of sport in Northern Irish society.

Research carried out in Northern Ireland in the last two decades has demonstrated the capacity of sport to express and reinforce political division.⁴⁶ Within this overall body of work, however, particular studies have looked at the implication of sport and leisure in the reproduction of sectarian space. Two broad strands of research are apparent. On the one hand, there has been a focus on the ways in which patterns of leisure provision reflect and serve to reproduce the broader pattern of sectarian geography within Northern Ireland.⁴⁷ On the other hand, Alan Bairner and Pete Shirlow have emphasised the significance of local soccer stadiums in the construction of certain loyalist male working class identities. The co-authors argue that local clubs, and their stadiums, provide for continuity with the past in the face of political developments that are perceived as concessions to northern nationalists.⁴⁸

The research into leisure provision and football stadiums illustrates the extent to which identities, in Northern Ireland as elsewhere, are embedded or enshrined in space. Northern Irish sporting spaces, as this literature makes clear, have existed as sites in and through which sectarian division has been reproduced. They have, in a sense, been part of the “political problem.” Recent proposals for a national sports stadium in the north have, in contrast, tended to construct this “imagined” space as an oasis of reconciliation and cross-community understanding. In short, it has been discursively constructed as part of a broader political solution.

Although proposals for a national stadium were mentioned in reports and strategy documents published by the Northern Ireland Sports Council in the late 1990s, they were more recently included in a report entitled *Creating a Soccer Strategy for Northern Ireland*, published in 2001.⁴⁹ The report was compiled by an advisory panel set up by the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland’s devolved government, and was aimed at improving the commercial viability and public image of local soccer. A sport that has historically been controlled by, and associated with, members of the

unionist population, one of the key aims of the report was to make recommendations that would broaden the appeal of the local game. It is in this context that the report recommended the building of “a stadium which would provide a neutral and welcoming environment,” one which would have “the potential to provide an inclusive venue and a welcoming environment for all.”

By 2004 a study commissioned by the government into the viability of a national stadium was completed and one possible site, that of the Maze Prison just outside Belfast, emerged as the favoured location for a proposed 30,000 all-seated venue. A “neutral,” “inclusive” stadium continued to be the dominant image conveyed in public discourse. Danny Murphy, for example, the GAA’s Ulster secretary, suggested that the proposed stadium had the potential “to signpost that sport is a vehicle for reconciliation, respect and inclusiveness in society.”⁵⁰ An unnamed Northern Ireland Office official went even further, suggesting that the stadium could be a catalyst for broader moves towards a political settlement in the north. He commented,

If they can get an agreement on a stadium then there’s no doubt this will have an impact on future political agreements between the various parties. The stadium is seen as a mechanism to unite all communities and, if all the parties voice their approval for the project, who knows what avenues this could open up? Who would have thought that a stadium would have been the catalyst for an agreement between politicians who haven’t even met yet?⁵¹

Although this is a view that is clearly overstated, it reflects an expectation, shared by many commentators, that the construction of a new national sports stadium will aid the “peace process.” This kind of thinking is evidenced in an editorial that was published in the *Belfast Telegraph* in June 2004. Reflecting on the prospect of a stadium being built on the site of a prison more closely associated with political conflict, the editorial suggested that

There could be no better advertisement for the new Northern Ireland than to create a stadium with which everyone in this community could identify. The idea, too, that such a stadium could be built on the rubble of a jail that once housed terrorist prisoners has an obvious symmetry. Out of the ashes of the past could rise the stadium of the future.⁵²

In this portrait, the “imagined” national stadium emerges, paradoxically, as a post-national space. It is not a space of conflicting national identities, but rather is a place, as the editorial notes, with which everyone can identify. Nor is it a space burdened with the remnants of a redundant history. Its attractiveness, on the contrary, rests on its ability, manifest in the “rubble of the jail,” to obliterate history.

The discursive construction of Northern Ireland’s “imagined” national stadium as a post-national space, though obviously appealing, is problematic in two respects. First, this interpretation tends to either ignore, or gloss over, the fact that sectarian rivalry is enshrined in, and political division reproduced

in, sporting spaces. It also assumes that, once raised to the ground, the site of the former jail will appear as a pre-existing neutral space standing outside of history. As a result, it fails to consider the proposed deconstruction of the jail, and the reconstruction of the site, as aspects of the “production” of this post-nationalist space.⁵³ There is no mention of the fact that the stadium, which will more than likely form part of an out-of-town complex geared more towards the bourgeois consumer than the working class soccer fan, will be built on a site that once housed hundreds of working class prisoners.

Second, and related to the previous point, discourse anchored in the stadium both draws on, and gives expression to, a broader post-nationalist interpretation of Northern Irish society that is necessarily flawed. As Pete Shirlow argues, this interpretation, exemplified in the Belfast Agreement, views political changes in Northern Ireland in recent years as heralding the beginning of the end of sectarian rivalry.⁵⁴ The creation of a power-sharing executive and the endorsement of a pluralist accord are provided as evidence that Northern Ireland is in the process of leaving behind its traditional sectarian past and entering a modern era characterised by plurality and inclusivity. Although there have been positive political developments, Shirlow points out that the ability of recent changes to dilute the rationale for sectarian conflict have been overemphasised. In fact, the Belfast Agreement, it is argued, in seeking to manage conflict and celebrate difference rather than challenge their underlying causes, has “institutionalised sectarianism” and “nurtured the conditions that have enabled the ethnic chauvinists to thrive.”⁵⁵

Northern Ireland’s national sports stadium, as it is currently imagined, then, is a monument to this post-nationalist interpretation of contemporary Northern Irish society. It is “imagined” as a space that will accommodate and celebrate difference; a space that will be shared by players, fans and officials who, although on occasion playing and watching the same games, are ultimately from *different* communities. Attempts to promote “inclusive sport,” as Alan Bairner points out, fly in the face of the central message of the Belfast Agreement and become increasingly difficult to implement in the context of increased polarization in society at large.⁵⁶ Although proposals to build a national stadium are to be welcomed, therefore, it is questionable in the current climate if the stadium will emerge in the manner presented in the *Belfast Telegraph* editorial.

Sport and the Reorganisation of Public Space in Belfast

Discussions about Northern Ireland’s proposed new national stadium continue. Outstanding issues, including where it is to be sited, how much it will cost, what sports it will accommodate, and what the structure will consist of, remain to be thrashed out. The fate of the stadium rests in the hands, and pockets, of British government ministers, Northern Irish political representatives, administrators of the province’s sporting bodies, and other local power brokers. Meanwhile, there are ongoing attempts to transform and recast an existing Northern Irish sports space, Windsor Park. These two developments – the imagining of one space, and the transformation of another – are related. Both, furthermore, must be understood in the context of the reorganisation of public space in Belfast.

One of the main factors motivating the desire for a new national stadium that will, we are told, accommodate and subsequently express diversity and plurality, is the fact that sporting venues in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, often exist as sites for a sense of alienation from the “Other.”⁵⁷ Although a sense of alienation may be related to factors such as age, class, or gender, the significance of conflicting ethno-sectarian identities is of particular relevance in the north. In short, whilst some sporting venues have been produced as Catholic/Nationalist/Republican spaces, other places are understood as “belonging” to Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists. The safety of one’s own area is opposed to the threatening and alienating space of the “Other.”

Windsor Park is a football stadium that is widely regarded as one such Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist place. Located in the loyalist Donegal Road and Village areas of Belfast, the ground is both constituted by, and constitutive of, the city’s sectarian geography. As the “home” of Linfield Football Club, the largest Protestant club in the north, the stadium has for many years served as a platform for the expression of loyalist male working class identities. It is also Northern Irish football’s national stadium, however, and it is the display of Protestant, unionist, and loyalist identities during international matches in the relatively recent past that has served to “fix” Windsor Park’s status as a highly visible and sectarianised public space.⁵⁸

Although the fortunes of Northern Ireland’s national team were followed enthusiastically by both Catholic and Protestant fans throughout most of the last century, support for the northern side, especially during the late 1980s and early 1990s, became increasingly synonymous with an exclusively Protestant identity. John Sugden and Alan Bairner persuasively argue that this development can be explained with reference to the “siege mentality” that many commentators regard as being central to unionist ideology.⁵⁹ In the face of political developments of the last thirty years, which have been viewed as largely consisting of concessions to nationalists and republicans, many Protestants and unionists have readily clung to organisations and emblems, such as the north’s international football team, which are exclusive to Northern Ireland. In particular, the northern side has provided young loyalist working-class males, who have suffered the demise of old industries and an attendant loss of communal identity, with a vehicle through which they can express their masculinity, sense of identity, and unwavering loyalty to the province.⁶⁰ The appropriation of the team has been most visibly manifest in the emblems, symbols, and paraphernalia displayed and worn by fans, and has been audible in the instances of highly emotive anti-Catholic chants, songs and rhetoric that have characterised support at international matches in the not so distant past.

In fashioning Windsor Park as a Protestant, and more specifically, loyalist working class, place, fans were able to construct the stadium as a kind of “counter-space.” Not as a space of resistance against the apparatus of an oppressive State. It was, after all, the constitutional status of the State that supporters sought to protect. Rather, as a space where fans could express their sense(s) of social, political, and economic marginalisation. In a manner consonant with Tom Carter’s interpretation of rioting in Belfast, loyalist

working class support for the Northern Ireland team demonstrated “an intense display of how participants implicitly understand the governance of their lives, as they actually exist, in localised power relations.”⁶¹

Windsor Park’s status as a Protestant place, although not seriously threatened, has undergone something of a makeover in the last few years. Although the stadium remains a space of loyalist working class identity, it has become increasingly unavailable as a site for the expression of overtly sectarian sentiments. Displays of sectarian animosity are excluded, especially on international match days. The behaviour of fans is closely monitored – by opposing fans, by a television audience, by the football authorities, by the police, and by each other. And Windsor Park, in the eyes of at least one local political representative, has become an example to the rest of Northern Irish society of how best to deal with ethnic division in the context of a stuttering “peace process.”⁶²

The ongoing transformation of Windsor Park owes much to the Irish Football Association’s (IFA) community relations policy, and to the work of the organisation’s Community Relations Officer, Michael Boyd. A high profile campaign to “tackle the problem of sectarianism at Windsor Park” has received much public attention.⁶³ However, a wider interpretative framework is also required. Set in historical context, the transformation of Windsor Park supports John Bale’s Foucauldian inspired assertion that the development of modern stadiums reflects broader tendencies toward confinement, control, and territorialisation in society at large.⁶⁴ Stadiums like Windsor Park, spatially organised in terms of segregation between supporters who are increasingly confined to numbered seats, are constructed as sites of, and for, surveillance. “This Panopticism,” Bale suggests, has “brought the stadium into line with the long-standing traditions of asylum, clinic, and prison.”⁶⁵ Clearly loyalist working class fans are as passionate now, as before, about their support for the Northern Ireland football team. The manner in which they express their support, however, is being transformed. Thus, Windsor Park emerges as more than merely a transforming space. It is also, like the asylum, clinic, and prison, a transformative space, one that has the capacity to transform sectarian bodies into disciplined, civilised, “docile bodies,” through techniques of confinement and surveillance. As the stadium’s status as a loyalist working class “counter-space” wanes, it assumes greater significance as a space for disciplined, civilised, though no less enthusiastic or vocal, spectators.

Moves to refashion the sectarian fabric of Windsor Park must also be understood in relation to recent political developments in Northern Ireland. The IFA’s community relations policy, for example, which is sponsored by the Community Relations Council and funded by the European Union, is sustained by the same discourse of diversity and plurality that underpins the Good Friday Agreement. Consequently, specific community relations strategies and broader political processes serve to mutually reinforce one another. The case of Windsor Park is instructive. Its transformation, read through a post-national lens, has been presented as evidence of the success of both community relations policies and ongoing political developments. The stadium, in other words, has been co-opted to the cause of the wider political

process. Although he does not explicitly refer to sport, Lefebvre succinctly explains the co-optation of “counter-spaces,”

Among these are spaces devoted to leisure activity. Such spaces appear on first inspection to have escaped the control of the established order, and thus, inasmuch as they are spaces of play, to constitute a vast “counter-space.” This is a complete illusion. The case against leisure is quite simply closed – and the verdict is irreversible: leisure is as alienated and as alienating as labour; as much an agent of co-optation as it is itself co-opted; and both an assimilative and an assimilated part of the “system.”⁶⁶

Lefebvre’s dismissal of leisure (read sport) as inherently alienating, along with other similar accounts, has been quite rightly confined to the dustbin. The case against the classic Marxist “bread and circuses” interpretation of sport is, as he would have it, “quite simply closed.” Nor, as Lefebvre seems to imply, does co-optation and assimilation follow a simple top-down course. In the case of Windsor Park, for example, Michael Boyd emphasised to me that the changing atmosphere in the stadium has not been imposed on, but rather has been brought about in consultation with, supporters. Nonetheless, Lefebvre’s description of the way in which “counter-spaces” may be co-opted to a broader political project as part of a more general reorganisation of space accurately explains the ongoing transformation of Windsor Park.

The “more general reorganisation of space” to which I refer is the broader reorganisation of public space in Belfast. Although it has been ravaged by the violence of the last thirty years, civic authorities have taken the opportunity opened up by recent political developments to rebuild much of the devastated city.⁶⁷ Reconstruction, as Tom Carter points out, has been primarily geared toward generating massive amounts of investment and tourism in the city. To this end, it has been driven by a process of gentrification, a process that “focuses on ‘making cities livable,’ meaning livable for the middle classes; cities have always been ‘livable’ for the working classes.”⁶⁸ Gentrification is evidenced in the “regeneration” of parts of the city centre, as well as in developments, including the Odyssey multi-purpose entertainment complex, along Belfast’s Waterfront. It is manifest, in other words, in recently constructed spaces of bourgeois conspicuous consumption.

The transformation of Windsor Park, to be sure, has not been undertaken as part of this process of gentrification. However, that the refashioning of the stadium and the gentrification of parts of the city have taken place at roughly the same time is hardly pure coincidence. The transformation of the stadium accords well with the civic authorities’ attempts, manifest in their gentrification strategies, to present Belfast as a modern, cosmopolitan city that has shed its sectarian past. Although local club games involving Linfield may not attract widespread public attention outside of the north, international fixtures do. Stories about, and images of, fans succumbing to primal sectarian desires do not help the image of an aspiring modern city.

The stadium’s transformation can also be interpreted as one aspect of a broader strategy of “containment” favoured by the city authorities. This is a

strategy, Carter suggests, that has accompanied gentrification and that is manifest in the organisation of public space.⁶⁹ The strategic routing of roads and “peacelines,” for example, has served to cordon off the city centre from working class housing estates in North and West Belfast, thereby containing the “imagined” threat of sectarian violence beyond the city limits. In addition, within the city, acceptable displays of violence, such as boxing, are contained and promoted within arenas such as the Odyssey. To these examples, we can add the case of Windsor Park. Formerly a highly sectarianised space of loyalist working class identity, it is now more likely to be presented as both a contained space, as well as a space of containment. Contained, in the sense that the behaviour of fans is monitored within a confined space. A space of containment, in the sense that the stadium now has the power not only to confine and restrict the movement of supporters, but also to reform their behaviour.

The refashioning of Windsor Park illustrates that the reorganisation of Belfast has not just been premised on the production of gentrified spaces that are spatially segregated from working class spaces. Working class spaces themselves, as the ongoing transformation of the stadium makes clear, are also potential sites for reorganisation. The reorganisation of the stadium is both constituted by, and constitutive of, the broader transformation of the city.

Conclusion: Of sport, space, and time

It has been common for anthropologists writing about sport in the last decade or so to preface their discussion with a remark to the effect that “up until now, anthropologists have paid little attention to sport.” It is not my intention here to underscore this laboured point. Rather, it seems more appropriate to highlight what this article has, I hope, illustrated, namely that in recent years Irish sportsmen and women have been as concerned as anthropologists with issues of space and place. As the examples I have discussed demonstrate, Irish sport, like anthropology, has recently undergone its own “spatial turn.” Existing spaces, such as Croke Park and Windsor Park, have been physically and symbolically reorganised. And new spaces, as plans for developing multi-sport national stadiums in Northern Ireland and the Republic reveal, have been symbolically constructed with plenty of imagination.

The four examples I have examined are not only connected, however, by the fact that they are all, at the most basic level, Irish sports spaces; in other words, by the fact that they are all similar kinds of product. The processes by which they have been produced – their production – also reveal a significant common feature. That is, in each case space has been produced as a means of apprehending time. Time, that is, understood as something that unfolds, somewhat inevitably, in our midst, and conceptualised in terms of a radical break between the past and present. The production of these Irish sports spaces, in other words, has been tied to what David Harvey refers to as the “spatialization of time.”⁷⁰

Although the Rule 42 debate has essentially been a conflict anchored in space, it is one that has been fought on the basis of a shared conception of time.

Those on either side of the debate, as well as those, such as Sean Kelly, who have sought to appeal to both sides, tend to accept that time can be divided into the traditional past and the modern, or postmodern, present and future. Conflict centres, therefore, not on the character of time *per se* but on the manner in which time should be apprehended in, and by, space. For those who argued in favour of changes to Rule 42, appeals to the GAA to remove the ban on soccer and rugby being played at Croke Park frequently amounted to calls for the organisation to embrace and celebrate the arrival of a new, modern time in Irish history. Change was required because, as it was often phrased, “in 2005” and “in this day and age” the GAA must “recognise that Ireland has moved on.”⁷¹ By implication, it was the GAA’s responsibility to catch up with time, something that could be achieved through the removal of Rule 42 and the inscription of Irish modernity on Croke Park. Viewed in this light, arguments in favour of opening the doors of Croke Park to rugby and soccer may be conceptualised as calls for a “timely reorganisation of space.”

For those who opposed amendments to Rule 42, however, the arrival of what they also understood to be a new time in Irish history is not a cause for celebration. Rather, it is a time of suspicion, even of fear. Con Murphy, a former President of the GAA, voiced his concern during the debate on Rule 42 at the 2005 Congress. In what reads like an indictment of a particular understanding of a postmodern world, one to which Ireland has seemingly subscribed, Murphy remarked that, “if you support this motion you’re voting for a new association that caters for everything and anything and stands for nothing.”⁷² For Murphy, it would seem the certainty of the past has given way to an uncertain, fragmented, chaotic present, manifest in divisions within the GAA centring on Rule 42. The GAA’s support for, and association with, Irish nationalism is understood as being compromised by a reinscription of space that would undermine the significance of Croke Park as the association’s national stadium. From this perspective, Murphy’s opposition to the motion calling for changes to Rule 42 can be read as an attempt to negate the onward march of a threatening time through the defence of one particular space of the nation.

Contrary to the view expressed by Murphy, Stadium Ireland was, and Northern Ireland’s proposed national stadium continues to be, “imagined” as a space that would embody and celebrate the arrival of a new era; a new time, in Irish and Northern Irish history respectively. Stadium Ireland, as Bertie Ahern’s comments reveal, was imagined as a space that would give physical expression to a time that had already arrived, a time characterised by Ireland’s economic boom. The significance of the north’s proposed national stadium is slightly different. This is not a stadium that is “imagined” as a monument to a time that has already arrived. Rather, it is a space that will signal the coming of a new era in the province’s history, a new time characterised by political accommodation rather than the sectarianism of the past. In the meantime, this process of transformation, as it is understood in post-national readings of Northern Irish society, is witnessed in the recasting of Windsor Park. A space that has its roots in the sectarian past, it is now portrayed as a signpost of a post-sectarian present and future.

Interpretations of Irish or Northern Irish society, which posit a movement from a traditional (nationalist) past to a modern/postmodern (postnational) present and future, are both limited and limiting. Such interpretations have been central to the cultural construction of the four Irish sports spaces I have addressed in this article. The spaces of Irish sport I have discussed, however, are neither traditional or modern, nor essentially national or post-national. Rather, they are more appropriately conceptualised as physical embodiments of ongoing processes concerned, as Lefebvre suggests, with the “production of space.” As Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson put it, “cultural territorializations must be understood as complex and contingent results of ongoing historical and political processes.”

¹ Edward Soja, ‘Writing the city spatially’, *City*, Vol. 7, No. 3, November, 2003. On space and place within Irish anthropology see, for example, A. Jamie Saris, ‘Mad Kings, Proper Houses and an Asylum in Rural Ireland’, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 98, No. 3, 1996, 539-554; Mark Maguire, ‘The Space of the Nation: History, Culture and a Conflict in Modern Ireland’, *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1998, 109-120; L.J. Taylor, ‘Re-entering the West Room: On the power of Domestic Spaces’, in D. Birdwell-Pheasant and D. Lawrence-Zuniga (eds.), *Houselife: Space, Place and Family in Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), p. 223-237; ‘Culture, Space, Representation’, special edition of the *Irish Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 4, 1999.

² Thomas Carter, ‘On the need for an anthropological approach to sport’, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 9: 405-422, 2002.

³ The essays in Alan Bairner (ed.), *Sport and the Irish: Histories, Identities, Issues* (Dublin: UCD Press) illustrate some of the recent research concerned with sport in Ireland. Of the fifteen chapters, two were written by anthropologists.

⁴ Notable exceptions include: Alan Bairner and Peter Shirlow, ‘Loyalism, Linfield and the Territorial Politics of Soccer Fandom in Northern Ireland’, *Space and Polity*, 2, 1998, 163-177; Alan Bairner and Peter Shirlow, ‘The territorial politics of soccer in Northern Ireland’, in Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti (eds.), *Football Cultures and Identities* (London: MacMillan, 1999), p. 152-163; Alan Bairner, ‘On Thin Ice? The Odyssey, the Giants, and the Sporting Transformation of Belfast’, *American Behaviour Scientist*, 46 (11), 2003, p. 1519-1532. A mature body of work on the geography of leisure provision also exists. See, for example, Alan Bairner and Peter Shirlow, ‘When leisure turns to fear: fear, mobility, and ethno-sectarianism in Belfast’, *Leisure Studies* 22 (3), 2003, p. 203-221; Peter Shirlow, ‘Sport, leisure and territory in Belfast’, in Alan Bairner (ed.) *Sport and the Irish: Histories, Identities, Issues* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2005).

⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 404.

⁸ Mark Maguire, ‘The Space of the Nation: History, Culture, and a Conflict in Modern Ireland’, *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1998.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991), p. 417.

¹¹ Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer, and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999).

- ¹² Tim Carey, *Croke Park: A History* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2004).
- ¹³ Lefebvre, quoted in Mark Maguire, 'The Space of the Nation: History, Culture and a Conflict in Modern Ireland', *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1998, p.109, notes that 'a spatial work attains a complexity fundamentally different from the complexity of the text, whether prose or poetry.... What we are concerned with here is not texts but texture. We already know that a texture is made up of a usually rather large space covered by networks or webs; monuments constitute the strong points, nexus or anchors of such webs'.
- ¹⁴ Marcus de Burca, *The GAA: A History* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1999), p. 118.
- ¹⁵ Tim Carey, *Croke Park: A History* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2004), p. 48.
- ¹⁶ *The GAA Museum* handbook, p. 3.
- ¹⁷ Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), Mike Cronin, 'Enshrined in Blood: The Naming of Gaelic Athletic Association Grounds and Clubs', *The Sports Historian*, 18 (1), 1998, p. 90-104, David Leeson, 'Death in the Afternoon: The Croke Park Massacre, 21 November 1920', *Canadian Journal of History*, April 2003, p. 43-67.
- ¹⁸ Mike Cronin, 'Enshrined in Blood', *The Sports Historian*, 18 (1), 1998, p. 90.
- ¹⁹ David Leeson, 'Death in the Afternoon', *Canadian Journal of History*, April 2003, p. 65.
- ²⁰ Rule 42, GAA Official Guide.
- ²¹ See, for example, *The Sunday Times* (Sport Section), 17 April, 2005, p. 1, 16-17.
- ²² See www.ireland.com/newspaper/sport/2004/1006/4063850658SP5SEAN.html.
- ²³ See www.ireland.com/newspaper/sport/2001/0404/archive.01040400165.html.
- ²⁴ Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, Soccer, and Irish Identity since 1884* (Dublin: Four Courts Press 1999), p. 135.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 187-188.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 189.
- ²⁷ Tim Carey, *Croke Park: A History* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2004).
- ²⁸ Colin Coulter, 'The end of Irish history? An introduction to the book', in Colin Coulter and Steve Coleman (eds.) *The end of Irish history? Critical Reflections on the Celtic Tiger* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 1-33.
- ²⁹ Honor Fagan, 'Globalised Ireland, or, contemporary transformations of national identity?', in Colin Coulter and Steve Coleman (eds.) *The end of Irish history? Critical Reflections on the Celtic Tiger* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 110-121.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.
- ³¹ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds.), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 37.
- ³² On some of these issues, see:
www.ireland.com/newspaper/sport/2005/0221/1492339784SPSLOCKED.html
www.ireland.com/newspaper/sport/2005/0223/4194088129SP5GAANEWS.html

www.ireland.com/newspaper/sport/2004/1027/3471359228SP3FIX.html

³³ [www.ireland.com/newspaper/sport/2004/1006/](http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/sport/2004/1006/4063850658SP5SEAN.html)

4063850658SP5SEAN.html

³⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991), p. 416.

³⁵ *Irish Times*, March 15, 2005, p. 23.

³⁶ *The Irish News*, April 18, 2005, p. 65

³⁷ *Sunday Times*, April 17, 2005, p. 17.

³⁸ *The Irish News*, April 18, 2005, p. 63.

³⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991), p. 143.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴¹ PriceWaterhouseCoopers, *A Stadium for the New Century* (1999). Or see www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie/pdfs/campus/csdifeasibility.pdf

⁴² Colin Coulter, 'The end of Irish history? An introduction to the book', in Colin Coulter and Steve Coleman (eds.), *The end of Irish history? Critical reflections on the Celtic Tiger* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ www.ireland.com/sports/other/2000/0127/other8.html

⁴⁵ See, for example, Tom Humphries, 'Stop the stadium Russian roulette', *Irish Times*, July 3, 2000.

⁴⁶ See, for example, John Sugden and Alan Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993).

⁴⁷ See note 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ See www.dcalni.uk/ContMan/uploads/creating_soccer_strategy.pdf. For a scholarly review of this report see Alan Bairner, 'Creating a Soccer Strategy for Northern Ireland: Reflections on Football Governance in Small European Countries', *Soccer and Society*, 5 (1), 2004, 27-42. Northern Ireland Sports Council documents include: *Starting Well, Staying Involved and Striving for Excellence: Strategy for the development of sport in Northern Ireland 1997-2005* (Sports Council, 1997) and *National Stadium Working Group* (Sports Council, 1997).

⁵⁰ 'Stadium plan gets the vote from the GAA', *Belfast Telegraph*, September 8, 2004, p. 28.

⁵¹ 'Field of Dreams', *Sunday Life*, November 21, 2004.

⁵² 'Sport for all', *Belfast Telegraph*, June 24, 2004.

⁵³ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991).

⁵⁴ Peter Shirlow, 'Northern Ireland: a reminder from the present', in Colin Coulter and Steve Coleman (eds.), *The end of Irish history? Critical reflections on the Celtic Tiger* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 192-207.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

⁵⁶ Alan Bairner, 'Inclusive Sport-Exclusive Politics? Sports Policy in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement', *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 2004, Vol. 21 (3), 270-287.

⁵⁷ Alan Bairner and Peter Shirlow, 'The territorial politics of soccer in Northern Ireland', in Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti (eds.), *Football Cultures and Identities* (London: MacMillan, 1999), p. 152-163.

⁵⁸ I want to emphasise that it is the recasting of Windsor Park as Northern Ireland's national stadium that I am concerned with here.

⁵⁹ John Sugden and Alan Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993).

⁶⁰ Alan Bairner, 'Up to their knees'? Football, Sectarianism, Masculinity and Protestant Working-Class Identity' in Peter Shirlow and Mark McGovern (eds.), *Who Are 'The People'? Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 1997) p. 95-113.

⁶¹ Thomas Carter, 'Violent Pastime(s): On the Commendation and Condemnation of Violence in Belfast', *City and Society*, 2003, XV (2): 260.

⁶² See the analysis of Trevor Ringland, former Irish rugby international and now a unionist spokesperson. His commentary was offered in the context of some of the violence that erupted, mostly in working class loyalist areas, during the summer of 2005. 'Leaders should follow football's example', *Belfast Telegraph*, September 16, 2005.

⁶³ I interviewed Michael Boyd as part of my research for my MA thesis. See Gareth Fulton, *'Playing' with Irish National Identities: Northern Irish Catholic Fans of the Republic of Ireland Football Team* (Unpublished MA thesis: NUI Maynooth, 2001). As part of a football-coaching course I took in Belfast in the summer of 2004 I also had to attend a lecture, given by Michael Boyd, on the Irish Football Association's (IFA) community relations policy. The changing atmosphere at Windsor Park and the need for a new national stadium were two issues that were highlighted during the discussion.

⁶⁴ John Bale, *Sport, Space and the City* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (London: Blackwell, 1991), p. 383.

⁶⁷ Thomas Carter, 'Violent Pastime(s): On the Commendation and Condemnation of Violence in Belfast', *City and Society*, 2003, XV (2), 255-281.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁷⁰ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

⁷¹ From the editorial in *The Sunday Times*, April 17, 2005, p. 16.

⁷² *The Sunday Times*, April 17, 2005.

The Imaginary of the Name

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Introduction

All human groups, past or present, have specific conceptions of the hereditary transmission of physical, mental or behavioral traits from ascendants to children. Indeed, they present a corpus of structured ideology in this area. A large number of societies have worked out original genetic theories that, as a rule, do not content themselves with thinking the biological blood ties, the phenomenon of resemblance and similarity, or sickness and death, but refer also to an explanatory model that globally accounts for the existence of the world, providing an ideological justification for its being, its organization and its reproduction. They see the individual as an integral part of the society in which they live and of the world around them (Augé & Héritier 1982).

The beliefs and representations connected with the individual's reproduction and development form a symbolic configuration in which the mother, the cosmos and the unborn child are united in a sort of symbiosis. The theme of the newborn's kinship with the extra-human world holds an important place in the collective representations of the child, for Albanians (like other cultures), often consider a child to be *not entirely a human being in its own right* until the rituals following the birth have definitively integrated it into the social group. This is true notwithstanding the fact that certain Balkan folklorists were unaware or denied the existence, in Southeast-European cultures, of beliefs concerning a possible life before birth or reincarnation (Stahl 1977). Similar claims, which specialists of the region have almost always advanced, perhaps even a bit too often, are surely founded on a limited model of interpretation rather than on an insufficient corpus of documents. These beliefs enable us to reconstruct the substantial ties that still bind the child to the world from which it comes. This world coincides not only with the long chain of ascendants but also with the world of the dead and the supernatural. The documents concerning the representations actualized in naming ceremonies may show what are clearly components of diffuse theories, such as that of the person's alter ego or of reincarnation.

In Albania, every individual occupies a determined place in a chain of descent. The criteria of this determination are usually conceptions concerning physical resemblance and difference, paternal and maternal kin ties, ceremonies celebrating the birth, as well as marks and practices involving augury, prediction, divination and predestination, etc. Through these conceptions, the *individual* components, which give the individual his/her singularity, are conjoined with the *inherited* components, which mark his/her place in the chain of family and kin, the *symbolic* elements, which make him/her part of the cosmic world, and the *attributes* that the person acquires and which ensure his/her social identity by giving it its individual expression, as it is with the name in particular. It is, in fact, the whole set of these multiple components and attributes that merges the individual with the space and the time in which they are embedded.

In addition to the individual, the notion of personhood includes their direct social and cultural environment, which lends meaning to their existence. The person is thus defined by situations, events and certain social powers endowed with an integrating function. Personhood, then, is not something rigid and inert. It includes many individual idiosyncrasies, as well as a sort of specific historicity. Still, it is the duty of the traditional authorities, the elders and the sages, to interpret any originality in terms of its status as an “event.”

Above all the name is never a free creation. The naming process follows a set of rules governed by the explicit criterion that only one name fits the individual. The problem is to discover this name. For Lévi-Strauss,

The choice seems only to be between identifying someone else by assigning him to a class or, under cover of giving him a name, identifying oneself through him. One therefore never names: one classes someone else if the name is given to him in virtue of his characteristics and one classes oneself if, in the belief that one need not follow a rule, one names someone else ‘freely’, that is, in virtue of characteristics of one’s own. And most commonly one does both at once.” [Lévi-Strauss (1962:240[181])]

Indeed, by way of the name, the givers, whether these are the biological or the spiritual parents, class themselves in a milieu, a period and a style, while the bearers of the name are classed in several ways because each name has a conscious or an unconscious cultural connotation that permeates the image others form of the bearer and which may have a subtle influence in shaping his personality in a positive or a negative manner (Lévi-Strauss (1962:245–246[185])).

The name-giving ceremony, therefore, is a very important event. It is a response to the complementary concerns to differentiate the individual while at the same time integrating him into the community, which in turn recognizes him. Some parts of the birth celebration, in particular naming the child, attempt to define the specific components of the new arrival by stamping them with a verbal marker that has relevance for the community. On the one hand, through the name the genealogical line of family and kin, as well as each person’s territorial belonging are defined; on the other hand, the same ambivalences found in all relations and values, which structure the social body and personal identity, are reproduced. The name is a symbolic attribute of the person. Its allocation and transmission are governed among Albanians not by rigid rules but by customs that are flexible enough to leave room for a degree of personal inventiveness without actually giving the parents full freedom of choice.

Rituals of naming and exposure

In the Kosova region of Kamenice, it is customary, when the time of birth draws near, for the men of the household, the kin group and the neighborhood, to gather in the *oda*, the room used to receive guests, next to the room where the woman is to be delivered. If she has a boy, one of the

guests, who probably enjoys the best reputation among those assembled, the trust of the newborn child's family and a good destiny in life, will have the ritual obligation of *me i dhanë emnin*, "giving or lending" the newborn baby his own name (Pllana 1970). The unmarried girls, accompanied by an older woman, announce the news of the birth to the men with special songs. They beg the designated guest to "give his name" to the new baby (Doja 1991:93):

*Ore vllazën, ore kojshi,
sonte na e kemi ni thmi,
e kemi ni thmi, ni hasret,
s'po dim emnin kush t'ja ngjet.
Le t'ja ngjet aga Mehmet,
ishalla bahet si aj vet!*

Oh my brothers, oh my cousins,
we have a child here tonight,
we have a little child, a new-
born child,
we don't know who is going to
give it his name.
Let Mehmet Aga give the child
his name,
Let's hope that it will become
like him!

Among Christians, the term *pagëzim*, "baptism," is heard more often than among Muslims, but both groups usually say *me i ngjitë emrin*, *me i vu emrin*, *me i dhënë emrin*, "to stick, put, give" the name to the child. The term *pagëzim* is generally reserved for the sacrament of baptism, which, although widespread among Albanians in primarily Orthodox or Catholic regions, is almost never assimilated to the naming ceremonies. The child is often baptized in church only after having been given its definitive name in the rituals organized for this purpose.

One formerly common custom, which is almost entirely omitted from the ceremonies today, was the practice of using lighted candles to determine the child's name. It has been described as it was practiced in the region of Drenica in Kosova (Pirraku 1978), but it is also mentioned by other ethnographers as existing in both the North and the South, for example in the region of Myzeqe, in southwestern Albania (Mitrushi 1972). The ritual is performed especially in the case of a boy, although there are accounts of the same custom being practiced for the birth of a girl, but in this case the ceremony is reduced to a minimum.

This custom, which no doubt denotes a Christian influence, is known in other European cultures as well. Because of the more coherent and conscious religious structure in these societies, however, it is used only to call upon the healing powers of certain saints when the child is seriously ill. To identify the required remedy, four candles were placed around the bed, one at each corner, and each candle was given a saint's name. The first to go out indicated the pilgrimage to be undertaken (Loux 1979:62). The procedure is altogether different in Albanian culture, where the custom was equally widespread among Christians and Muslims.

After the delivery, the mistress of the house carries the newborn child into the men's room, where it will spend its first night, alone with the master and mistress of the house. The mistress takes from the main room of the house a *shkam*, a three legged stool, a common piece of Albanian furniture, which she

turns upside down with the legs in the air. On the legs, she places a big round loaf of bread, over which she spreads a pair of *tirk*, the tight-fitting white wool trousers typical of the costume worn by the men in the North. She lays the child on top of the *tirk* and covers it with a red headscarf with black splotches. Near the child's head, she places another loaf of bread on which she disposes three candles of identical size. The master of the house gives each of the three candles the name of a living elder whom he esteems to be the wisest, bravest and probably richest man in his village. Sometimes, it is the mistress of the house who will ask the chief of the lineage to "give" her the elders' names. In other cases, it is not directly the master and mistress of the house but the godparents who are responsible for the ceremony, which includes: symbolically cutting the umbilical cord, the purifying bath, dressing the child, naming the child, laying the child in the cradle. Sometimes the godmother is assisted by three betrothed maidens, *nër unazë*, literally "with the ring," who are regarded as being pure, upright and protected by the gods who govern life. They usually come from three different villages. Each brings a candle to which she has secretly given the name of the man she regards as the most renowned elder in her village. They also bring letters or another object belonging to their fiancés or another close relative, preferably one in the army, as well as some pins and needles. Throughout the ritual, they poke holes in the letters from their fiancés, uttering the wish that the new baby will live as many years as there are holes in the letters. The audience's attention is fixed on the candles, to see which will burn the longest. The name of the elder borne by this candle, known only to the mistress of the house, the godmother or one of the three maidens, will be the child's name. This name is kept a secret from even the mother of the new baby and the rest of the household. For the time being, all that is announced is a temporary name.

In most cases, the newborn baby is provisionally named *Uk*, "wolf," or *Keq*, "bad or naughty," *Shyt*, "bald, dull, unfinished," *Cub*, "thief, bandit." After the birth, a woman of the household who is "blessed" with many children takes the newborn baby up on the roof of the house, turns to face the mountains and cries out: "*Come, wolf, the she-wolf has borne a wolf child!*" And she climbs back down (Pirraku 1978:133–134). From that moment, the child is called "Wolf," until he is given his real, permanent name. Sometimes among Muslim Albanians, the child is raised up and receives the temporary name of one of the most famous early prophets of Islam (Suleimani 1988:29). These names are supposed to bring the child luck, happiness, prosperity, success and other advantages.

When six weeks, six months or a year have elapsed, the child's parents make lavish preparations for the public bestowal of a definitive name. Among the guests of honor are, to be sure, the elders whose names had been given to the candles at the first naming ceremony, although they still do not know whose name was chosen by chance. Among the guests of honor, too, are the godmother or the three maidens who brought the candles, and who now have the honor and the obligation to bring gifts for the child and the other members of the family, notably food and items of layette and clothing. At the start of the ceremony, the master of the house, in the presence of the mistress or, in other cases, the godmother, holding the child on her lap and in the presence of the godfather, takes the floor and solemnly announces the person who has been

chosen by fate to “make a gift” of his own name to the new baby. The elder in question, flattered to have been chosen, stands up and congratulates the new baby with the same solemnity. In other cases, the master of the house calls on the elder thus chosen to ask him:

<p><i>me zemër t'ia falë emnin e vet dhe ta pranojë për probatin të zotin e shpisë së djalit të emnuem me emnin e tij.</i></p>	<p>to be good enough to give his own name and to regard the master of the house as one of his best friends.</p>
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In all cases, the aleatory aspect of the ritual is no doubt often emphasized to produce the desired name. We thus have here an apparently but falsely “probabilistic” method of name-giving that reconciles the partly free play of inter-personal relations within the limits of the requirements of an objective order. If we take a closer look at the agents required to carry out this complex ritual, we will see that they can be arranged into a system of relations of opposition and complementarity. The actors of the ritual are sometimes the mistress of the house, sometimes the godmother and sometimes betrothed maidens. They are actually or symbolically assisted by the master of the house, who takes an active part; by the godfather, who plays an implicit and effective role alongside the godmother; and by the soldier fiancés of the maidens, whose presence in the ritual is mainly symbolic. The three pairs of actors stand opposite each other in a relation of confirmation or substitution. The intermediate position of the godparent pair is explained by their role as mediators between the two generations. In all events, while these actors have the active role in the ritual, the child who receives the name and the elder or ancestor who gives the name has a passive role. The ritual objects, too, are arranged according to the same relations of opposition and complementarity, underpinned by a symbolic logic articulated around the opposition masculine/feminine. The relation between the letters and the needle, like the relation between the *tirk* and the headscarf, and the relation between the tripod stool and the loaf of bread, stand in a symmetrical relationship as opposing terms on the male/female axis.

Objects and Identity

Pins play a large role in the costume of Albanian women, and their systematic use begins when the girl reaches puberty. They are used to hold together many pieces of clothing, but particularly to pin the scarf to the hair, which, once the girl reaches puberty, must no longer be allowed to show. The sewing needle, too, is one of the young woman’s chief instruments, as well as one of her defining attributes, especially when she begins to use it to prepare the pieces of the men’s costume for her future husband. He is generally long awaited, in terms of time or space, and the letters he writes both represent him and prefigure the pieces of his clothing. Both the young women’s tools and their gestures speak here of love and marriage. The same connotation is attested by a body of comparable practices and beliefs found in other European cultures, reinforced by the fact that the other end of the needle, the eye, alone or associated with the thread, seems clearly to be a vehicle for female sexual symbolism (Verdier 1979:236–246).

The headscarf is also a symbol that changes with each stage in the woman's life-cycle, just as the *tirk* is a symbol of male virility that is inalterable once the man has reached adulthood and acquires the right to speak in public, to carry a rifle and to marry. The loaf of bread becomes a symbol of the home tended by a good housekeeper, just as the three-legged chair is a symbol of a house worthy of its master. The *shkam* and the *tirk*, regarded as very old, typically Albanian objects, symbolize the child's roots in the culture of its ancestors, just as the headscarf and the loaf of bread symbolize the honor and moral values of the household, in other words the prestige of the blood of the family line. The *shkam* is the "seat" on which the master sits when he offers hospitality or where he seats his guest. The same word is used for the "threshold" of the house, while, used as an adverb, it means "fully, wholly, perfectly, absolutely" (Çabej 1976:151). The *shkam* is the guarantee that the child is rooted in the total legacy of the lineage, just as the *tirk* seems to guarantee that the child develops his social personality, and that he grows into a "man respected for his words and deeds." The red of the headscarf further shows that dishonor can be washed only with blood, just as the bread shows that life will bring dignity only if it produces children.

All of these objects play a secondary role, though, while the attention is fixed on other objects: the candle and the flame. The relations between the ritual objects thus reproduce the relations established between the ritual actors. The active agents are opposed to the passive objects as the active objects are opposed to the passive agents. The ancestor is opposed to the candle as the child to the flame, in a relationship of symbolization by permutation of the signifier and the signified; whereas the child is opposed to the ancestor as the flame to the candle, in a relationship of incarnation through symbolization of the life-course that runs from death to birth through a process of regenerative destruction.

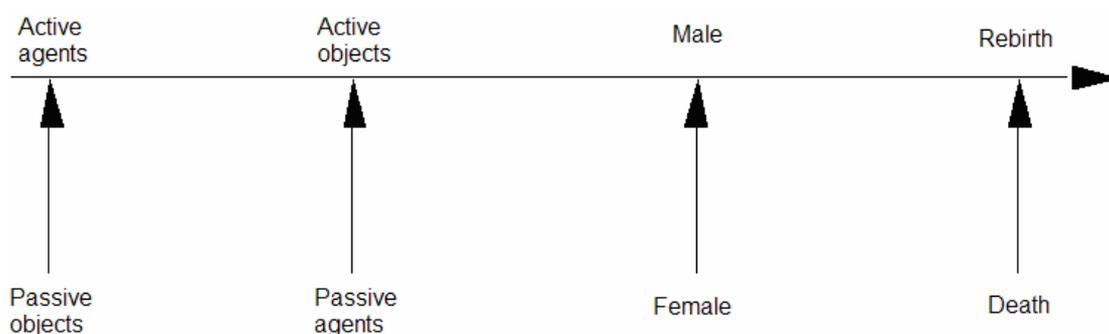


Figure 1. *Relations of opposition and complementarity in the naming rituals.*

The arrangement of the agents and objects necessary to the ritual in such a system of reiterated relations of opposition and complementarity points up the symbolism of birth, which thus finds its place in a pattern of cyclical rhythms and values overlaid in a series of synthetic structures. In this overall set of symbols, any new birth, alliance or friendship, symbolized here by the naming rituals, is merely a special synthetic structure within the immanent rhythm of the cycle of life and death. This rhythm reproduces the replacement of one generation by the next through the set of oppositions expressed in the

relations established among the active or passive agents and objects of the ritual.

The images of the heat symbolism involved in this rhythm form synthetic structures expressing the destruction of a worn-out life in order to give birth to a new life, which is at first feeble and feminine but contains the seeds of potential powers and forces, virtualized in the flame that burns down in order to generate new life. The young fiancés also cease to exist as such once the marriage is consummated, which is symbolized by the preparation of the wedding clothes. The godparents, too, cease to exist as ritual celebrants in the wedding once the nuclear family has been created, symbolized by the attributes of marriage, the headscarf and the *tirk*. Likewise the master and mistress of the house will yield their place to the new generations when the new household is established, here symbolized by the loaf of bread and the three-legged chair.

A complementary answer to the question of how the person is conceptually linked with his ascendants and social relations as a whole is provided by the notion of the alter ego or twin spirit present in other practices. This notion is found in the rituals of exposure used as a typical procedure for giving the child its name, or rather its second name, particularly when the couple's children regularly died at birth.

The cradle with the newborn baby is placed upside down at the intersection of two paths and left there until the first person to pass by sees it and hurriedly turns it over. This is a version of the familiar *Märchenmotif* of the exposed child and similar in many ways to the biblical story of the babe in the bulrushes episode of *Exodus 2*. The information about Albania is attested in ethnographic accounts from at least the mid-nineteenth century (Von Hahn 1854:149). Frazer drew copiously on these sources for his compilations of the *Golden Bough* (1990). Otto Rank (1952) also took an interest in the same traditions, then, current among Albanians and in neighboring populations, when he analyzed the mythic exposure of children. Among Bulgarians, too, if it so happens that three children of the same mother die immediately after being baptized, the parents conclude that the godfather has been ill chosen. Thus when a fourth child is born, the midwife lays it down at a crossroads and conceals herself from whoever might happen upon it. The first person to come along, man, woman or child, is supposed to pick up the abandoned baby and, without a backward glance, carry it directly to the church. The child is christened there with the name of the person who found it, and who thus becomes the new godparent (Krauss 1894:194).

It seems that, to some extent, the symbolic effectiveness of the ritual has to do with this random element (Brouskou 1988). The stranger cannot refuse to participate; he knows his role and from that moment on becomes the child's godparent. He presides over the symbolic cutting of the umbilical cord and gives the child a name, generally his own. The child thereby seems to be endowed with a new external individual identity. Nevertheless, while Frazer (1918:251) sees the procedure as essentially a way of tricking the spirits supposedly in relation with the child, it is more logical to see the child as having entered into a kinship relation with an outsider, which bears more

resemblance to an affinal relation. In this case, as in other comparable situations, the foreigner enjoys the prestige of exoticism and, by his presence, embodies the opportunity of widening social ties (Lévi-Strauss 1971:26[7]). The child might be picked up by someone of a different religion, but that would in no way alter the ritual. It might even be picked up by someone who had *gjaku* relations with the household, in other words owed a “blood-price.” There would then be an obligation *me pajtue gjakun*, “to pacify the spilled blood,” in the name of friendship.

Similar re-naming methods are used in the case of children born with serious malformations, hydrocephalics, children whose psychomotor development is highly abnormal, children who are epileptic, mentally retarded or suffering from other disabilities. These children are regarded as “smitten by the evil eye” or as “changelings,” having been interchanged with children of the *Xhinde* or evil spirits. In the first case, the child is exposed, preferably on the feast day of Saint George, with the avowed intention of curing them by giving them a new name. It even happens that the family does not ask the passerby to “give” the child his name, but simply “takes” his name, if it is known, and gives it to the child without telling the person. This is the preferred method in the Drenica region of Kosova because it is believed to be more effective in keeping the child from the evil eye.

In other cases, Tuesday is the day for exposing a “changeling;” the child is put down on the threshing floor, and someone calls out three times to “Tuesday,” to re-exchange the sick child for the one who was not sick. Tuesday, *E-Martë* in Albanian, is probably believed through a double popular etymology to be both “Mary’s Day” and a supernatural power having the vocation, from *marr-të*, to “take and remove.” When the baby begins to cry, it is said by the people exposing the child, “it’s ours,” and they call it by another name. Then the mother picks it up and hurries away without looking back (Pirraku 1978). Similar rituals, actualizing such representations of exchange, are found in other Southeast-European groups, for instance among the Romanian populations (Stahl 1977:290).

Alter egos and reincarnation

It is evident that the connection between the person’s name and his life and soul is very closely felt. Possibly it is for some such reason that, on asking a someone’s name and being told it, the Albanian says *E paç me jete!* “May you live long with!” as he does when told how many relatives one possesses. A corollary follows naturally in the case of the dead. Albanians have a horror of death that is absolutely Homeric in expression and intensity, yet the return of their souls to earth after death is always desirable. It is believed that the dead grandparent’s soul will be enabled to leave Paradise and find a new home in the body of the infant to whom its name is given. Thus, by giving a dead person’s name to a newborn child, the Albanian do not so much wish to preserve the name of the dead as to give its soul the opportunity of reincarnation. It is even reported that the neighboring Greek Macedonian add on this occasion that only owing to these reincarnations of the souls of the dead is Paradise saved from overcrowding (Hasluck 1923).

It must be admitted that, in the Albanian case, it is difficult to set a hard and fast rule concerning the relationship between naming customs and the principle of the reincarnation of ancestors, except that the child probably inherits the components of his personality from his grandfather or the person whose name he has been given. The overall stock of traditions does not provide a satisfying answer as to how the person is conceptually linked with his ascendants and with his lineage as a whole. We could talk about the probability of a theory of reincarnation, which we would be tempted to describe as “diffuse,” according to the terminology used in comparable cases studied by anthropologists (Rabain 1979:164). We must therefore not look for a homogeneous theory of reincarnation properly speaking, nor hard and fast rules about the transmission of spiritual constituents. The principle of the reincarnation or return of an ancestor is not expressed by abstract speculations, but instead in its applications to specific events that arise at set times. It is less a doctrine than a possibility, or a hypotheses, which takes shape in the presence of certain indications displayed by the child or certain unexpected turns taken by a ritual.

Different signs of physical resemblance are used to identify the child with a given ascendant in the paternal or maternal line. The complementary answer is provided by the notion of ancestral spirit conveyed by the name given. The objective of the naming rituals is to seek to induce something of the ancestor whose mark is recognized in the child’s behavior and which would be comparable to a component of the person discovered elsewhere as well, to return and enter the child (Heritier 1996:55). This something does not dictate the newborn child’s acts, but it does give them a particular form and style, easily identified by those who know the living person or knew the deceased, a form and a style that is hoped will shape and construct the person of the newborn child.

In all events, based on such theories, it is natural enough that Albanians (and people with similar notions) should suppose that a child develops the character and qualities of the dead relative whose name, and therefore soul, it possesses. It is believed that the child will at least be fortified by the attributes of the person whose name he inherits, whom he will give new life and add to his own person. The life principles of the person are transmitted to the child through those performing the ritual, in other words the active agents, in this case: the master and mistress of the house, the godparents, the young fiancés, who carry out the naming ritual; or the other people who are charged with the rituals of exposure. Nevertheless, mention is always made of the passive agents, the old men invited to “lend” their name or the stranger whose name is “taken.” Although they talk about transmission of the grandparents’ ancestral values to the grandson, Albanians as a rule speak simply about the homonym leaving his character traits to the child. One inherits the values of the person whose name one bears, in other words the person is made up of various elements, and it is expected that the child who carries the name of a particular grandfather will display the same qualities.

In a given family situation, the behavioral and character traits of a child, his specific ways of acting and his physical features, in particular the resemblance he bears to a grandfather, can become signs that are interpreted as indicating

a return. The attention of those close to the child is caught by a number of behaviors, which set off the search. The different hypotheses, formulated as affirmations, of the return of an ancestor, or in a more attenuated form, of the transmission of character traits or qualities of those with the same name, or of a more diffuse transmission within the same line, can all be regarded as attempts, of the same nature but of decreasing intensity, to find an answer. Whether it is a question of reincarnation properly speaking, of transmission of individual temperaments or of diffuse family “qualities,” the investigation seems always to proceed in the same way. A behavior, an attitude, an expected or unexpected incident during the different rituals and symbolic practices surrounding the child’s birth and development, therefore, become the subject matter for spontaneous interpretation.

The anthropological literature attests that the transmission of particular powers, properties or features skips a generation, more rarely two, passing from grandparents to grandchildren (Augé & Héritier 1982). In effect, a number of details point to assimilation of the first and third generations, and to the particularly close ties between the two. The restrictive relations obtaining between successive generations are often “corrected” by the more flexible, freer relations between alternate generations. According to an infantile “phantasy of the reversal of generations,” reported by psychoanalysts, children are convinced that as they themselves grow, their grandparents shrink (Jones 1948:407–412), so that, as time goes by, their respective positions have been interchanged. This allows a fusion between past and future generations, which blends the two into a single whole.

Even the traditions surrounding birth and socialization are more highly developed, at least when it comes to certain ceremonial sequences, among members of the third generation. In Albanian groups, it was customary for the maternal grandmother to hurry to her newly delivered daughter as soon as she learned of the birth from a child sent from her son-in-law’s house. In most regions, it is the paternal grandmother who awaits the newborn baby. She must be the first to lift it up, to take it in her arms, to cuddle it and carefully arrange it and protect it from unexpected misfortune. The immense joy that filled the grandmother exploded in the rhymed congratulations, the songs, lullabies and other traditional oral forms surrounding birth (Doja 1991:64):

*Lindi djali për bina,
u gëzua nëneja,
pa kur ta marrë në dorë,
ta kërcejë e ta këndojë,
gjithë hallet t'i harrojë.*

A boy’s been born, big as a
building,
his mother’s been rejoicing,
when she takes him in her
arms,
plays with him and sings to
him,
she forgets all her worries.

The name is usually handed down from one generation to the next, particularly in the paternal line, from grandfather to grandson or great-grandson. The practice of naming the child after its biological grandparents is still a well-established tradition in Albanian families, though it does not seem to be uniform. In those families that pride themselves on fidelity to the lineage

legacy, these names are necessarily passed on to the eldest children, the first born, second born and down to the couple's third child (Tirta 2004:205–214). In spite of the apparent rigidity of the rituals, a way can almost always be found to give the child the name of one of its grandparents or the name the grandparents had chosen in advance. In addition to the name, an effort is made to pass on the different symbolic connotations connected with the character traits and life-force of the ascendants as well as with the relations cultivated with the founder of the lineage, for it was believed that, by giving his name, he would be reincarnated in the newborn child. Albanians thus have a stock of beliefs and practices regarding the relations of identity and substitution between the child and a dead or living ascendant. This is attested by, among others, a couplet recorded in the Italian Albanian community at Montecilfone in the Molise (Doja 1991:97).

*Një ditë së punoja ka një mal,
më thanë më u kishi lerë një djalë;
ishi tata i lerë si një djalet,
e a thërritëm zoti Gjergji Petë.*

One day when I was working in
the mountains,
they told me I was father to a
son;
it was as if the father were born
himself with that son, and we
called him Gjergj, too.

This custom with which we are acquainted in European societies whereby an eldest son is given his paternal grandfather's name can be regarded as a title which is both obligatory and exclusive. There is an imperceptible transition from names to titles, which is connected not with any intrinsic property of the terms in question but with their structural role in a classificatory system (Lévi-Strauss 1962:252[190]). Indeed, the Albanian theory of transmission does not take equal interest in all individuals. In the North, it is believed that the power of the paternal grandfather, together with his longevity and his blood, which is inherited in the agnatic line, is passed on to the eldest son of the eldest son.

Yet, the same theory also privileges the relationship between a son and his mother's brother. While in general, according to Albanian etiquette, the father's parents take precedence of the mother's when a child is to be named, a dead maternal grandparent would take precedence of a living paternal grandparent. Albanian children are also reputed to resemble their maternal uncle (Memia 1963:110). They are in effect associated with the values and qualities of their uncle's "blood," transmitted through their mother's "milk." They belong to the same milk tree (*gjini*) as their uncle, they are related by *one* "milk," which is constructed by the same *gjaku*, or blood tree, whose best representative is the maternal uncle himself (Doja 1999). The names of classificatory grandfathers are used with the same connotations. The names of local people reputed for their bravery and wisdom, their sense of honor and hospitality, their prestige and wealth or other estimable values are borrowed as well.

It seems that, on the symbolic level, there is also a sort of "paternity contest" between the two ascending generations, whether paternal or maternal, reel or classificatory, comparable to other analogous situations (Lallemand 1993:217). By way of the name, collective ideology seems to establish an

opposition between the bare fact of the father's act of procreation and the destiny of the newborn child, which is voluntarily and "amicably" determined by the ancestor and vouched for by the grandparent. These representations diminish the father's image and express his dependence on the elder members of the family and kin group. It is as though the true descent tie were systematically played down, apparently in favor of the mystic amicable duo formed by the newborn child and his ancestor, or the ancestor's stand-in, the biological or classificatory grandfather.

Constructed in the same way in many other societies studied in the anthropological literature (Rabain 1979:161–212), these representations are an attempt to shape a response, at the symbolic level, to the problem of the child's place in society. Through his genealogical position, the child will have to pass from the status of outsider to that of a social being. Recognizing the descent tie, however, merely places the child on a time line, in the continuation of his ascendant's line, whereas the representation of the relationship between the child and his ancestor introduce a more cyclical dimension. By positing that the child inherits the spiritual principles of one of his ascendants, usually a grandparent, Albanians locate not only the child, but also his progenitors, in the cyclical time of their own lineage. Through the child, the progenitors are themselves placed in an *amicable* relation with their descendants. The child, identified with the ancestor or the ancestor's spirit, ensures the continuation of the lineage. The newborn child comes into the world under the sign of a debt of friendship and alliance that is contracted, and at the same time, paid off.

Such attitudes and behaviors nevertheless remain difficult to grasp if they are not linked with those surrounding the father/son and grandfather/grandson resemblance, in particular. The similarity acknowledged, and even required, between the child and a given category of kin, first attested by Malinowski (1929), is a constituent feature of the overall arrangement whereby societies define relations between affines. The components of the ideology of procreation and the various mystical influences are the other variables retained by the anthropological analysis, whose greatest merit is to provide a clear distinction between genetic givens and sociological issues (Leach 1961).

Names and Relations

Albanians do not have a positive prescription for these issues. The child "is allowed to" look like its father, its mother or someone else in the paternal or maternal line. Albanians do not say who the child "must" resemble, but they do wonder about the kind of resemblance that is likely to capture if not the child's future destiny, at least its character traits. Analogous analyses in modern Greek culture have led to similar conclusions (Vernier 1999). Whereas having the same name engenders a form of affinal relationship that can go as far as to exclude some marriages. Although it is rarely mentioned, this form of symbolic kinship is known throughout Southeast Europe (Stahl 1977:289). The resemblance confirmed by society, whether it involves physical features or the name, is always a sociological variable that clearly designates a relationship based on alliance or friendship, as opposed to filiation or descent.

At this point, let me extrapolate from the theory of the poetic function of the linguistic message as defined by Roman Jakobson (1960). I would be tempted to see in social behavior the two basic modes of arrangement used in both verbal behavior and mythic thinking, namely selection and combination. I had the occasion to see that alliance and friendship are structurally represented by Albanians as a parallel reduction of the distance between two mutually equivalent patriline, called “blood trees,” which are otherwise located on a selection axis; while filiation and descent represent the convergence of a patriline and a matriline, a “blood tree” (*lis-i-gjakut*) and a “milk tree” (*lis-i-tamblit*), which are thus located on a combination axis (Doja 1999):

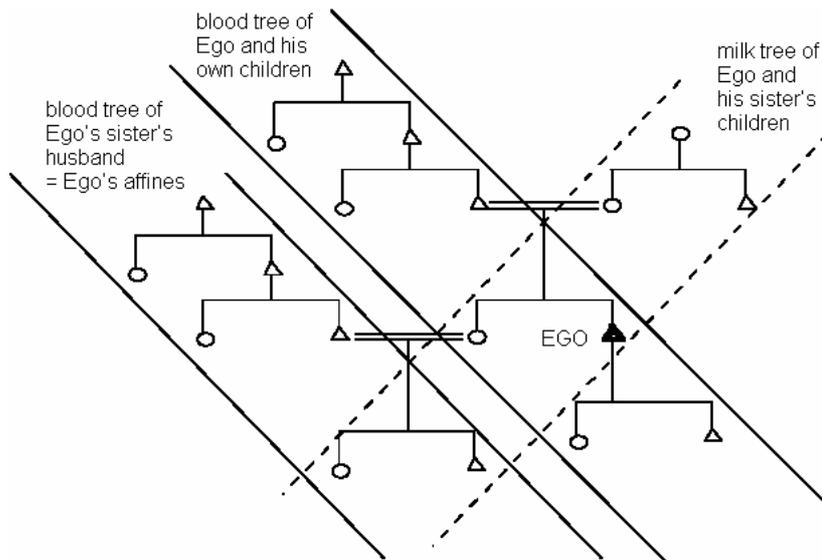


Figure 2. *Matrimonial alliance is a parallel close relationship contracted between two blood trees that want to share the same milk tree. The orthogonal encounter between a milk tree and a blood tree does not yield a marriage alliance but the convergence of Ego's paternal and maternal ascending lines.*

Clearly, in social structure, as in poetry and myth, every sequence of significant units tends to construct an equation. In such conditions, the imaginary representations of the ancestor's alter ego or his reincarnation or spirit, borne by the naming practices, should appear as a projection of the principle of the equivalence of the social values of alliance and friendship onto the axis of the combinatory sequence of filiation and descent. This is what gives this type of social behavior its symbolic, complex and polysemic essence. This way of envisaging the succession of generations and the tendency to weave between grandparents and grandchildren a kinship tie, through the projection of the social values of alliance and kinship, include many more elements still. One of the profound significations of this construction obeys first and foremost an essential logic of ambivalence.

The public use of an ascendant's name, like the resemblance between the child and an older member of the family, raises the problem of the twin existence of the elder and the child. Generally speaking, the relationship between the two, one of whom could be viewed as the double of the other, appears as though one had a tendency to absorb the other, or to “replace” him, and even to be

edging the older version towards death. Among Albanians, as in other European cultures, the newborn child is not considered merely as a returned ancestor. The bodily and nominal similarity is interpreted as a substitution: the recently deceased ancestor “comes back” in his grandson. If the father should die before his child is born, the son is given the name of his dead father. Likewise, the new baby can inherit the name of another child who has died.

Even though the first impulse is to name the newborn child after its grandparent in order that the latter’s name may not die out, the sequence of thought is apparently that life ends when the soul leaves the body, and that where a name goes the soul of that name goes too. That is, if an old woman’s name is given to her grand-daughter, her soul will leave her body and enter the infant’s, so that afterwards the old woman will die. In this line of logic procreation is conceived not as the addition of a new being to those who exist already, but as the substitution of one for another (Lévi-Strauss 1962:257–258[194–195]).

For the same reason, people are careful not to “take” the name of another living child in the kin or territorial group. All the same, it is a common Greek superstition that two persons bearing the same name cannot live in the same house, for in that case either the one or the other must die (Hasluck 1923). Also the living father or mother’s name is never given to a child, while it is usual to ask permission before giving the name of living grandparents, be they real or classificatory. Since the distance between the two is so small, it is appropriate to keep them apart in the social space, to avoid confronting them and to feign ignorance of their dangerous similarity.

The public pronouncement of this “resemblance” is always regulated by a ritual. For instance, the name of a living descendant is always bestowed with a discretion underlain by the social values of friendship and benevolence. Another name is often given at the same time; this is a nickname or another version of the same name designed to “throw other people off the trail.” Whether the ascendant whose name has been borrowed is dead or alive, use of his name is generally shunned in favor of a general designation or preceded by relationship terms such as *dajë*, *xhajë*, *xha*, “uncle,” or *plaku*, “old man.”

Cases in anthropological literature are frequent enough to show how the individual name is never used in either direct address or indirect reference to relatives, the relationship term doing service in all such cases. Even when addressing a non-relative, the individual name is very seldom used. The normal form of address consists of a relationship term, according to the relative age of the speaker and the person addressed. Only when non-relatives are referred to in conversation is it customary to use the individual name, which even then will not be used if the context plainly indicates the person referred to (Lévi-Strauss 1962:260[196]).

Nevertheless, neither the resemblance nor the name is in itself a threat that requires separating two beings that are too close or too closely related. It is simply something that it is dangerous to mention, like the individual’s good looks, intelligence or other qualities. In other words, like the “evil eye,” this

would be the “evil word” of envy, jealousy or rivalry complementing the individual on his positive attributes with the ulterior motive of doing him harm.

In the case of the ritual of exposure, we are probably dealing with a process governed by a principle of economy that can be found in analogous situations (Lallemand 1993:222–223). To be sure, there is only one child here, but an elusive one, divided between two worlds. Through him, the parents can do battle with this erratic being from another hostile, alien, unknown world, so as to ensnare, capture and fix him definitively within *our* own friendly world by giving him a new name. The term *xhinde*, “genie” or “spirit,” which betrays an Islamic origin, refers to bodily deformities and to monstrosities, which seem to be the most prevalent images used in these rituals and which denote the impossibility of identification with humans. These are forest spirits characterized by their monstrous appearance and their ability to instantly change into an animal. They belong to that world where species tend to merge into terrifying apparitions, the limits of classification and order.

We can now understand why this child represents the intrusion of a term that is the reverse of the human person. Like other analogous situations analyzed in the anthropological literature (Rabain 1979:197–201), the Albanian concept of the changeling probably supposes the existence of a second family line parallel to the human family, much as the line of ancestors replicates the line of the living family members. While this parallel recognition articulates the ordinary child with the ancestor’s benevolence and with ancestral powers, the changeling double-ganger would be a monstrous “other” with which the human being entertains a hostile, deadly relationship. The replica-child would thus be a distorted mirror image, which cannot be articulated with any historical dimension corresponding to the human order into which he must be inserted. If the atypical birth or development of a child forces the society to come to grips with the strangeness of biological life and the hostility of the outside world, it will attempt to overcome this strangeness and this hostility by giving the child, be he ordinary or monstrous, a social identity founded on friendship and kinship. This dynamic vision tends to substitute recognition for despair, action for resignation. However the tradeoff is a simplification of complex givens, the splitting of existence, with the homogeneous repetition of the same representations of exchange and re-exchange denying the diversity of the objective causes of sickness.

As to the naming ritual, its symbolism should be apparent. The fire blazes *up*, at the cost of the candle, which burns *down*. The individual life of the ancestor is thus placed at the service of the lineage and family line until the very end, marked by extinction and death. This is what enables him to be born anew, incarnated in the body of the child that will now grow *up*. Likewise, while one category of ritual exposure reinforces and renews alliance relations, sometimes by superceding relations of vengeance, others clearly announce a hostile, malevolent intent that might at times turn out to be harmful to the mediator or to the ancestor alter ego. At any case, giving the aged grandparent’s name to the newborn child is almost a sort of insurance against the child’s premature death.

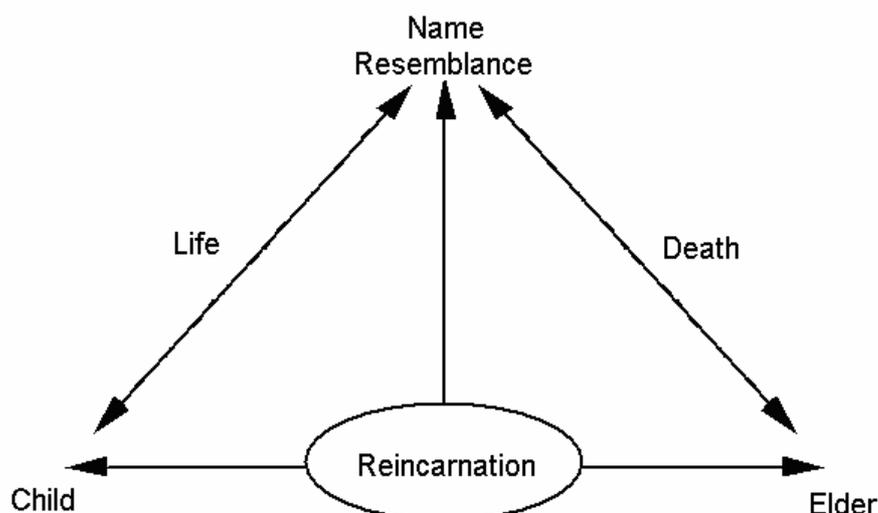


Figure 3. *The ambivalence of reincarnation.*

A different light could be cast on this problem by following Edmund Leach in considering the relationship as an equation of the not-now with the other world: "In that case past and future coalesce as attributes of the other in contrast to the present which is the factual experience of real life. The relationship between the 'here-now' and the 'other' can then be seen as one of *descent*. My ancestors belong to the 'other' category and so do my descendants. Only *I* am in the here and the now" (Leach 1966:115). This temporal break between the generations is thus readily and often assimilated to a distinction between the living and the dead, which is highly significant for understanding the information.

In addition, exogamy rules usually stipulate that a wife must not be closely related to her husband. Some aspects of marriage thus show a curious reciprocity with some aspects of death and war. It is incestuous to have sexual intercourse with a woman from one's own group, but legitimate and fitting with one's wife, that is to say with a woman who, initially and in all likelihood, could belong to an enemy group. Likewise it is a crime to kill a member of one's own group and an act of valor to kill an enemy (Leach 1965).

Among Albanians, a final and important stage in the symbolic construction of the person is marked, in the case of young males, by the giving of a rifle and participation in the armed activities of the kin and territorial group. Especially in the North, inclusion in the *Djelmenia*, the "youth group," which was the armed force of the lineage community (Doja 1999), took on great ritual importance. As a rule, the traditional Albanian virtues of heroism, courage, bravery, honor, etc. were defined primarily in the context of warfare and feuding. However, along with the young men's feuding activity, betrothal and marriage mark full inclusion in the society for the young people of both sexes. In extreme cases, young women manage to become full-fledged members of society only after having had children, especially male children.

Conclusion

In Ancient Greece as well, marriage and war were in a way “complementary institutions” that definitively made the young people part of the society (Vernant 1968). Marriage is always exogamous to a certain degree, just as the construction of the person always requires that something be surmounted. To attain the status of socialized adults ready to give life, young people of both sexes must surmount the death of their own childhood and seek a fiancé in the outside world, which is ambivalent, friendly and hostile at the same time.

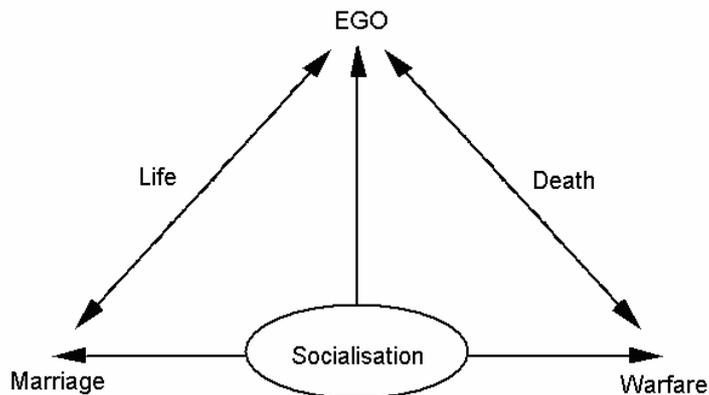


Figure 4. *Ambivalence of the construction of personal identity.*

Structurally, the bestowal of a new name “repairs” the symmetry that has been upset at birth. In contrast to a stable duplex, the eponym is presented as superseding the birth-name, with which it is thus somehow at strife, even as its declared “prevalence” reconfirms paradoxically the persistence of the displaced “supplanter.” The renaming act helps to anchor an astonishing network of internal doublings and echoes, in the explorations of twinning and projection, identity and difference. Such correspondences are like *stretti* in a longer fugue, in which repetitions and connotations counterpoint the basic doublings of newborn and ancestor. What is striking in all this is the way the names seem to reproduce, via the delicately animated shifts of language and ritual, the very mechanisms of a projection and self-reflection, as if the problem of twinning had extended its domain to the relation of word and act.

The reflexive turn in the name figures a dynamic intimacy, a co-inherence of self and other, newborn and ancestor, grounded in mutual resistance. The reciprocal movement recalls the oscillation between external confrontation and internal division and provokes a complementary reading of the contest in which the stranger is not only the child’s twin but its own phantasmic projection, who confers the gift of otherness, the blessing of change, of becoming, and is then abandoned. The mythical agon is from this perspective a parable of self-begetting. The new name testifies that the child has avoided the melancholic deadlock of being merely a newborn: by grappling the phantom of invulnerable selfhood, he is empowered as agent of his own alteration. The sign of this transformation is the act of renaming, which carries the dramatic agon into the social arena. The emphasis on “knowing by

name” forms the arena in which the struggle for “face” or “priority” is finally staged. The name thus enacts at the symbolic level a version of the struggle it represents at the existential level.

In such conditions, the affective bonds as well as the social relations and values of alliance and friendship between affines indeed seem to have something in common with the relationship between love and hate, as well as that between the living and the dead. The quest for the origin and reference to the ancestors guide and condition the construction of the person’s identity and their socialization. Such a conception leads to the notion of personhood and the socialization of the individual, since he will probably be seen throughout his life in reference to the bond he has established with the ancestor who is recognized as having determined his personal destiny and to whom he is supposed to give new life. It could thus be said that these traditions serve more or less to express the both “biological” and metaphysical thinking in which biological heredity and social heredity are intertwined.

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Cultivating Irregular Habits: Richard Burton's Fieldwork in India, 1842–1849

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Introduction

In 1851 Richard F. Burton published his first book, *Goa, and the Blue Mountains, or six months of sick leave* (*Goa* hereafter). Over the course of the following year he was to publish three more books, *Scinde or The Unhappy Valley* (2 vols. *Scinde* hereafter), *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit the valley of the Indus* (*Races* hereafter) and *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus* (*Falconry* hereafter). The four books were drawn from Burton's experiences as an officer serving with the army of the East India Company (EIC) in British India between 1842 and 1849. He spent three years of that period (1844–6) on active duty in the Sindh region of what is now modern-day Pakistan.¹ Burton's first four books belong in many respects to a longstanding tradition of European travel writing. James Clifford writes that typical travel books of the eighteenth century covered a huge array of topics; they might contain exploration, adventure, natural science, espionage, commercial prospecting, evangelism, philosophy and ethnography (Clifford 1997:197). The degree to which each was represented would depend on the interests and experiences of the particular author. Burton's first four books were indeed an eclectic mix of travelogue, memoir, politics, folklore, history and anthropology. As a young officer in Sindh, Burton embarked on an intellectual study of the region and its inhabitants. The methods employed by Burton for the researching and writing of these books resonates with later traditions of ethnographic fieldwork methodology. He collected manuscripts and wrote the first grammars of local dialects. He learned to speak as well as to read and write local languages. He associated with the people observing and participating in their economic, religious, sporting and narcotic practices. He recorded their customs associated with birth, marriage and death. Although *Races* was a dedicated ethnography of the Sindh region, the other two books concerned with Sindh, *Scinde* and *Falconry* contain enough anthropological material, that is, social history, ethnology, folklore and geography, for them to be considered a trilogy marking his debut as an anthropologist. This paper sets out to evaluate Burton's anthropological project in Sindh and the ways and means by which he trained for and conducted his ethnographic field research. It is also concerned with how that training process, largely instigated by Burton on his own, led to his transgression of certain codes of behaviour expected of British people living in British India in the mid-nineteenth century.

It was during the 1850s that Burton was to emerge as one of the leading British explorers, adventurers and travel writers. However, had he not suffered a complete breakdown in his health, he might have stayed on in India and continued his military career in relative obscurity. Burton had had something of a nomadic childhood, growing up in a number of towns and cities throughout England, France and Italy (Lovell 1999:1-15). It was after he

had been expelled from Oxford university that he had persuaded his father to secure him a commission in the army of the EIC. This was at the time of the “Afghan disaster,” the collapse of Britain’s puppet government in Kabul and the rout of its military forces there, and there was a demand for recruits (James 2003:94-6). Burton was anxious to serve in India as he felt “it would show him more of the world and give him a better chance of active service.” That Burton was ambitious in his army career is clear from the determination with which he threw himself into his language studies. He had quickly resolved that the best way to further his military career was either through action or through the acquisition of native languages. Active service in a combat situation was not guaranteed, so Burton had begun his study of languages privately before he left England (I. Burton 1893:92, 98).² Burton was quite successful in his language studies, gaining Firsts in a series of examinations set by the EIC. He was appointed interpreter to his regiment and served as an assistant surveyor on the Sindh Survey. In 1846 he contracted cholera and went on extended sick leave. Although he later returned to his regiment, he had not made a full recovery and he was eventually invalided home to his family, who were at that time living in Italy. Over the course of the next year, as he recovered, Burton “became a writer” (Brodie (1967) 1987:71-8).

In the history of anthropology, the disciplinary titles, “anthropology” and “ethnology” have been at times the subject of great contention (See Stocking 1971). The author of a modern dictionary of anthropology defines ethnology as “the comparative and historical study of cultures or peoples” and notes that in many European countries the term is used rather than anthropology (Seymour-Smith 1986). A. C. Haddon described anthropology as the “science of man” in his book *History of Anthropology* (Haddon 1910:7). He wrote that ethnology was a term often loosely used as synonymous with anthropology to cover the whole field of the science of man. As anthropology developed as a discipline the terms became more defined, until ethnology was generally restricted to the comparative and genetic study of human culture and of man as a social animal (ibid.:99). During the 1840s, what would now be termed anthropology was more commonly known as ethnology. “Ethnology, or the science of races” was defined as a combination of physical geography, anatomy, physiology, psychology, history and philology (Stocking 1973:ix). Thus, the Ethnological Society of London (ESL) had been formed in 1843. To a large extent its foundation had been a consequence of the activities of the Aboriginal Protection Society (APS). As the name suggests the APS had been primarily concerned with humanitarian issues, particularly in Australia and New Zealand. It utilised ethnology as evidence of atrocities inflicted on aboriginal peoples by the official or unofficial agents of British colonialism (Rainger 1980:702-717, Brantlinger 2003:68-94). The ESL struggled to gain recognition for the discipline. The British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) at the time classified ethnology as a subsection of zoology and botany (Stocking 1991:245).

In India, during the mid-nineteenth century, ethnology had begun to emerge as a separate discipline out of the colonial institutionalisation of science and statistics. As such, it was very much part of the colonial intelligence project

(Pels 1999:84-5). The British used censuses and cartographic surveys for attaining knowledge of the landscape and people of India and ethnology had a key role in that process. Ethnology was one of the means by which the British could make sense of India and impose order upon it (Pinney 1990:252-3). It was a useful means of cataloguing the various groups of people that came under British rule (Appadurai 2000). The army, in particular, conducted the first surveys of the Indian peoples' "health, diet and physique." Ethnology, then, was a by-product, the army's chief concern being the suitability of different groups as potential recruits. C. A. Bayly wrote that that became a "particular forcing ground" for the development of colonial anthropology in the latter stages of the nineteenth century (Bayly 1996:160-1). There were ethnological case studies made of specific tribal groups who were perceived to be prone to criminality (Brown 2003:209-14). There was also a sense among some scholars that ethnology offered a means of improvement for native peoples (Pels 1999:97). Overall, then, Ethnology was a component part of the colonial project. As Pels puts it, "the discipline descends from, and is still struggling with, techniques of observation and control that emerged from the colonial dialectic of western governmentality" (Pels 1997:164).

Burton's own claims have led his biographers to regard military intelligence as his primary occupation in Sindh.³ Yet, Burton's service record makes no mention of him engaging in any intelligence work. He does not really feature in any of the key works on British intelligence activities in India (Bayly 1996)(Hopkirk 1991). However, there were always dedicated intelligence officers operating with the great surveys in India (Keegan 2004:89). As such, Burton's role as surveyor and intelligence agent may have been one and the same thing. In a sense, then, any ethnographic material Burton may have gathered in Sindh could also have been classed as intelligence. The survey on which Burton served was primarily concerned with the possibility of rebuilding an old canal system in the Sindh region for economic and communication purposes. It was also an information-gathering exercise for the British authorities. They were mindful of the propaganda value of being seen to do more than the native rulers, to make improvements to the infrastructure of the region.⁴ The possibility of repairing and improving the canal system in Sindh had been discussed at least a year and a half before the eventual annexation of the region.⁵ Even before General Napier had seized the region in early 1843, the British had begun working, unblocking, deepening and widening canals.

Using the notes he had compiled from his time in Sindh Burton produced four articles and four books.⁶ The articles reflected his interest in languages and were later incorporated into *Races* (Casada 1990:71, 74, 77). The first of the four books to be published was *Goa* a travelogue based on his last period of time in India when he was recuperating from cholera. There are sections of ethnology and a description of a visit to the Portuguese colony of Goa and to a British hill station where he convalesced. The other three books, *Scinde*, *Races* and *Falconry* are based on Burton's period of duty in Sindh (1844-6) and are perhaps more typical of his time there. *Scinde* is primarily a travelogue of the region taken from Burton's tour of duty with his regiment and the Sindh Survey. Intended to be a popular book, there are plenty of "amusing," that is ethnocentric, anecdotes at the expense of the native Sindhians as well as

accounts of unpleasant, but, amusing physical mishaps and discomforts. Burton also used the extremely irritating and unfunny device of addressing the reader as “Mr. John Bull” throughout the text. There were frequent political asides justifying the British presence in Sindh on economic and strategic grounds. The EIC’s military occupation of Sindh had been hugely controversial and there were criticisms of General Napier’s administration of the region (Ansari 2005, Farewell 1973:30-3, Eastwick 1849). Despite all the negatives though, Burton’s descriptions of the landscape, the major settlements, history and folklore of the areas he travelled through are, in places, compelling reading. He does convey to the reader, as one writer puts it, the “predominant mode of modern fieldwork authority: ‘You are there...because I was there’” (Clifford 2002:22). There was also quite a great deal of ethnographic material in this book, with chapters given over to the folklore and traditions of the different areas and descriptions of the various groups of people living there at the time.

The Reception of Burton as a Writer

Races was not aimed at the popular market and was intended by Burton to be the first thorough study of Sindh and its inhabitants (Burton 1998:v). In the preface he wrote, “This work is offered to the Sindhi student with little hesitation. It contains long descriptions of the studies, religion and ceremonies peculiar to the race inhabiting our newly conquered country, the first specimens of the language, and notices of the literature ever printed, and what is of more consequence, a detailed account of native habits and customs, manners and ceremonies (Burton 1998:v). In Burton’s service report *Races* was referred to as an “ethnography of Scinde.”⁷ At the time, the book was also referred to as the “History of Sindh” and the top heading of each page bears the title “History of Sindh.” Of the thirteen chapters in the book, only two deal with the topography and history of the region. There are three chapters concerning the languages, literature and celebrated Sindhi authors. The remaining eight chapters treat, Moslem education in Sindh; The state of society; Sufism; An account of “different stranger tribes” settled in Sindh; Ceremonies of birth and circumcision, Marriage, death and burial; A description of the “Sindhi proper;” The “Hindoos” (sic) of Sindh and the Amil class (Burton 1998:vii-viii). As the title implies and as Burton stated in the preface *Races* was intended for British students who wished to study the region. It was, therefore, written as a complete survey of the region. Unlike a modern ethnography there was no one theme or application of theory to one aspect of the culture of the region (Clifford 2002:31). In a probable attempt to publicize the book, Burton wrote to the EIC requesting permission to dedicate it to the directors of the EIC. Permission was granted, *Races* was dedicated to the Honourable Court of Directors of the EIC and the company purchased one hundred and fifty copies of the book (IOR/L/MIL/73 f115). *Falconry*, the last of the four books to be published, was a brief treatment of the subject based on Burton’s observations of and participation in the sport in Sindh. In a postscript at the end of the book Burton gave a brief autobiographical account of his time in India. It was there that he outlined for the first time his use of native disguise among the native peoples of Sindh.

Although Burton would later achieve fame as a writer it was not on the strength of these first four books. They did not sell particularly well, in the case of *Falconry* nearly fifty per cent of the first edition remained unsold in the publishers for decades after its original publication. Norman M. Penzer, writing a bibliographical study of Burton in the 1920s, noted that these early books were quite scarce even in Burton's lifetime and were consequently not well known to scholars (Penzer 1923:41). The fact that Burton's first efforts were published at all was mostly down to timing. There was a huge interest in India among the British public at that time and articles in periodicals and books about India were popular with publishers (Peers 1998:110-5). Nonetheless, Burton received mixed reviews for his first efforts. William Newmarch, the reviewer of *Goa* in the *Athenaeum*, regarded it as the work of a novice and he felt that Burton lacked discipline particularly in matters of composition.⁸ Burton was also prone to sentimentality and used so much "persiflage and slang in the text to be bordering on the offensive." Newmarch wrote that Burton needed to lose a third of the text and redraft the rest (*Athenaeum* 1851:1225:423-5). One of his modern biographers has noted that this first piece of criticism held true for the remainder of Burton's writing career; he wrote too fast and never worked on more than one draft, just throwing in unedited raw material from his diaries (McLynn:53-4). Burton's next appearance in the pages of the *Athenaeum* was in October 1851 with a double review of *Scinde* and *Races*, again by Newmarch. He felt that Burton had repeated the same mistakes of taste and composition in *Scinde* that he had in *Goa*. There was some progress though and Burton had "improved in his knack of fast writing." He was also praised for his "obvious ability and acute powers of observation." However, some of his writing was "still at variance with the rules of good taste." Newmarch considered these flaws regrettable and an impairment of an otherwise "pleasurable read of a sketch of the scenery and people of a remote and interesting part of our Eastern empire." Burton was praised for setting a good example to other subalterns "by pursuing so diligently his inquiries into the language, literature and customs of the native population by which he was surrounded." Then Newmarch cautioned Burton, on the "fault from which he has most to fear, not only as an author but as an Indian officer, a disregard of those well-established rules of moderation which no-one can transgress with impunity." The review continued, dealing with *Races*, which was considered to be the official companion to *Scinde*. Newmarch considered this single volume work to be a "translation into sober and official language"(sic) of the material from the first book. It was felt that it would not be as interesting to the reader as *Scinde* was. Nevertheless, it was considered "a solid and acceptable addition to the literature on India and the most complete account of the Indus valley that was then available" (*Athenaeum*:1252:1111-2).

The second review in the *Athenaeum* was quite positive towards both Burton's second and third efforts as an author. Yet, that one sentence from a review stretching over two pages of text resonated, the "fault" that Burton had most to fear from as an author and an officer. The "disregard of those well-established rules of moderation which no-one can transgress with impunity." It was not quite clear from the reviewer just what lines of moderation Burton had been transgressing. There were a number of passages in the books that could conceivably have pushed the boundaries of Victorian taste. Burton's

first-hand observation of and participation in drug-taking and cockfighting, for instance (Burton 1851:i:259-266, ii:93-100). For his part, Burton seems to have interpreted the remark as a questioning of the soundness of his opinions and the accuracy of his observations. At the end of his next book, *Falconry*, there was the brief autobiographical passage in which he recounted his expulsion from university, entry to the army, studies in native languages and finally the adoption of a native disguise and identity, Mirza Abdullah. Burton recounted how he had used the disguise and alias to live among and study the people of Sindh. At the end of this piece Burton left a protest against the reviewer's warning; "Thus it was I formed my estimate of the native character. I am as ready to reform it when a man of more extensive knowledge of the subject will kindly show me how far it transgresses the well-established limits of moderation" (Burton 1997 (1852):70).

If Burton thought that he had had the final word, then he was mistaken. The *Athenaeum* was one of the most successful literary magazines of that era. It avoided religious and political controversy and was particularly careful about questions of influence on reviewers by authors and publishers (Spurgeon 1983:21, Marchand 1941). In July 1852, *Falconry* was reviewed in the *Athenaeum* by William Newmarch. The first half of the review was quite innocuous, he felt that Burton had improved as a writer and had almost succeeded in making what was quite a technical topic quite interesting to the general reader. Then he came to the autobiographical section and the "protest" at the end of the book. The readers of the *Athenaeum* were reminded of Burton's previous reviews and of his lack of moderation and extreme opinions. Newmarch then let Burton have it in no uncertain terms. It was felt that he had "overreacted" with his protest and in doing so had displayed the very traits that Newmarch had cautioned him against. Burton's autobiographical section was used in evidence against him. In particular, the matter of his expulsion from Oxford and his activities in native disguise and identity were deemed to demonstrate serious flaws in Burton's character. Newmarch wrote, "we cannot understand how it should happen that the cultivation of habits so wholly irregular should be the best possible discipline for keeping the judgement and taste in perfect order...The Spaniards have a proverb, which says – 'Tell me who you live with, and I will tell you what you are.'" Mr. Burton has been communicative enough to comply with the first half of the proverb-and if he is particularly anxious on the subject, we shall not hesitate to supply the second." It would appear that questioning the right or the competency of the reviewer to criticise his books was where Burton was really breaking the rules of moderation. The broadside concluded with, "If he (Burton) ever learns to reason-as well as to write-he will know better" (*Athenaeum* 1852:1290:765-6). The very next edition of the *Athenaeum* acknowledged the receipt of a letter from Burton, "written with great courtesy and in excellent temper." This letter apparently saw him dealing with the periodical's criticisms in a more tactful manner. The magazine didn't print the letter in full but summarised its main points; Burton had not intended to cause offence with his extreme opinions or lack of moderation. However, "he could not have told his readers how his evidence had been collected without faithfully recording things which as a matter of taste might have been suppressed." Burton also wrote that, "it is impossible in the East to acquire an

intimate knowledge of Oriental manners and customs without mixing familiarly with all orders-low as well as high" (*Athenaeum*:1291:804).

In questioning Newmarch's criticisms Burton had made a miscalculation; he turned what had been one sentence in an otherwise positive review into an embarrassing attack on his character. The soundness of his mind and his fitness to serve as an officer not to mention his credibility as a scholar were called into question. This was potentially damaging to Burton, the *Athenaeum* had one of the largest circulations of any of the literary periodicals of the mid-nineteenth century (Marchand 1941:231). The quarrel between Burton and the *Athenaeum* was perhaps minor; it has not been referred to in any of the biographies of him. Yet, some of the reviewer's comments could be taken to represent those of respectable British society in general. The main issue appears to have been Burton's questioning of the critical process. The underlying issue seemed to be over cross-cultural contact, that is, "going native." Burton had transgressed the lines of appropriate cultural contact, though the line he transgressed was a fuzzy one. He was, initially, praised for his efforts to learn the language, literature and culture of the native peoples. Burton was being publicly censured for going too far, yet he felt he had shown restraint. He had of course omitted quite a great deal of sensitive material from the four books. That material, much of it sexual in content, would be published later in the notes and appendices in his translation of *The Arabian Nights*. The fact that he had lived with a native mistress in Sindh was only disclosed in the posthumously published autobiographical section of Isabel Burton's biography of him (I. Burton 1893:i:108-9).⁹ At that time in British India sexual relationships between British men and Indian women were commonplace. Though, they were of course contrary to the official morality of the time (James 2003:207-233). Human sexuality in whatever form it might take was one of Burton's chief research interests. Throughout his career as a writer his attempts to publish such material was blocked, usually by publishers unwilling to risk prosecution under Britain's obscenity laws. One of the main reasons that Burton later co-founded the Anthropological Society of London (ASL) in 1863 was that it provided him with the opportunity to publish and publicly discuss material that was normally deemed "unfit for the drawing room table" (Burton 1863-4:317).

Fieldwork and Controversy

Throughout his life Burton courted controversy and his time in India was no exception. Burton himself subscribed to a story of how his intelligence work in a number of male brothels in Karachi had led to the end of his army career. The written report of this work was supposed to be for the eyes of Burton's commander-in-chief General Sir Charles Napier only. However, after Napier had returned to England in 1847 the report had "surfaced" at headquarters in Bombay. There was no public scandal but Burton was finished in the army; or so the story goes (Burton 1885:x:205). The authenticity of the "brothel story" has been accepted at face value by the majority of his biographers and by some historians, yet the actual report itself (and any official reaction to it) have never been located by researchers. It seems entirely within character for Burton to have conducted such research. The topic divides opinion among Burton scholars to this day. Without any hard evidence, the whole "Karachi

brothel” incident remains unsubstantiated. Burton’s army career at that point was almost certainly curtailed by the collapse of his health. The main significance of the incident lies in the fact that Burton himself claimed it to be true. There is no mention in his service record of any inappropriate behaviour or scandal. In his service record, Burton’s annual fitness reports are all positive, the inspector wrote that Burton “evinces a zeal for the service, attention to his duties, (is) highly creditable and well acquainted with his duties”(IOR/L/MIL/73 f115). In any case, Burton had courted controversy in India by less dramatic means, largely, by conducting what would now be recognised as ethnographic field research.

Burton’s letter to the *Athenaeum* does go some way to laying out his position with regard to his field research. He claimed that he did not wish to be confrontational or flout convention but merely report faithfully the results of his researches in the field. This letter also declared Burton’s interest in studying “the people.” Burton’s assertion that to really know the people you had to mix with them was quite unusual in terms of ethnographic fieldwork in the mid-nineteenth century. Anthropological research and writing during the mid-Victorian period was largely conducted by what has become known as “armchair anthropologists.” That is, the research was mainly second-hand; the data was gathered from the accounts of travellers, explorers, naturalists, missionaries and colonial officials. There were of course exceptions to this, some notable anthropologists of the period, such as A. R. Wallace, were conducting their own field research and then analysing and writing it up themselves (Stocking 1991:96). The necessity of regularised fieldwork for anthropology had yet to be a major issue in the 1840s. The practitioners of the discipline then, were striving to gain recognition for it as a valid science. The cost of travel and the lack of any kind of institutional funding were also serious obstacles to scientists of the time embarking on field research. Even when opportunities for research expeditions were presented many scientists had careers and obligations that they could not take leave from. Charles Darwin had had to seek permission from his father in order to travel as an unpaid volunteer on H.M.S. Beagle (Tort 2001:28). The scientists at home were frequently unhappy with the quantity and quality of the information they received from the people in the field. The collection of ethnographic material was usually down to the personal interests of the particular soldier, missionary or traveller. It was felt that opportunities for ethnographic research were being missed (Urry 1972:46). In the early 1870s a specially prepared questionnaire, *Notes and Queries*, was distributed to promote accurate anthropological observation on the part of these researchers (Stocking 1983:71-2). As the century progressed the need or rather the desirability for anthropologists to conduct their own fieldwork became stronger. The need for fieldwork became necessary in other disciplines as well; such as Zoology and Botany. Even within these, there was a sense that actual “fieldwork” was a dirty, distasteful and “ungentlemanly” occupation (Kuklick 1997:59).

Clearly, Burton did not just choose Sindh as the site of disinterested research. He had been posted there with his regiment by the army. Burton had been trained in “fieldwork” on the Sindh survey, though it was in the fieldwork involved in being an assistant-surveyor of canals. In a report on the “Management of canals and forests in Scinde” (1853), Burton’s friend and

former commanding officer on the survey, Lt. Colonel Walter Scott of the Bombay Engineers, outlined the qualifications an officer should possess in order to be a really useful assistant.¹⁰ Apart from basic canal engineering skills, Scott specified that the officer should be a “moderately good linguist, [as] there can be no certainty of knowing what the people want, or giving them satisfaction, if their language is not understood.” Scott had experienced difficulties with his survey work due to the lack of trained British officers. He wrote, “the fact is, that people require some slight knowledge of a subject before they are able to perceive the difficulties with it.” Scott also wrote that he preferred employing native superintendents rather than unqualified officers who stood between him “and the real person who executes the work” (Scott:8). The two men had first met in early 1844 on the boat voyage from Bombay to Karachi. Scott, a nephew of the famous novelist Sir Walter Scott, had been reading an Italian book on the “canalization of the valley of the Po” and Burton was able to assist him with the translation (I. Burton:i:126). It was Scott who had trained Burton for his work as a surveyor of canals. Burton seems to have met the practical requirements of the survey and he certainly possessed the language skills. The assistants on the survey had to operate independently of each other; Scott noted that Burton had levelled (the beds of) one hundred and fifty-two miles of canal during the winter of 1844-5 (Scott:5). The canal survey was an excellent opportunity for a budding ethnologist. It gave Burton exposure to the people of Sindh and the opportunity and time to study them.

Nonetheless, it is not entirely obvious from reading the three books on Sindh just how Burton gathered his information. At various points he is quite obviously a British officer in uniform at other points he refers to wearing native clothes but, apart from a reference to the excellent properties of henna for dyeing the skin (Burton 1851:i:277fn.), he does not specifically mention the use of disguise until the autobiographical section at the end of *Falconry*. Outside of the four books there are also later writings by Burton that help place the works in some context, particularly the section of autobiography contained within his wife’s two volume biography of him. Contrary to the popular image, “undercover” police or military intelligence work was not as widespread as the great fictional secret agents and detectives of the nineteenth century would have us believe. Sherlock Holmes may have made great use of disguise in his adventures but the stories in which he appeared were written and set in the later decades of the nineteenth century. In reality British army and police officers in the Victorian era were discouraged from engaging in undercover work on the grounds of bad sportsmanship and over fears of the possible corruption of the officers (Chesney 1972:214, Silvestri 2001:8). Even as recently as the 1970s, undercover work was problematic for some police agencies, due to the possible corruption and compromise of officers who operated in that role (Pistone 1997:112). Respectable people did not move through or participate in these places of low status without a suitable “chaperone;” they were given a guided tour by respectable authority, as with Charles Dickens’s tours of the London underworld with Police Inspector Field in the 1850s (Chesney 1972:130-5). In Britain this would have been true of slum areas; in India, it would probably have extended to all areas populated by native Indian people regardless of social position or status. There were British officers who operated in India in disguise but they were largely Indian

or Eurasian officers. Most of the British-born officers who attempted to assume a native disguise did not even convince their own people, let alone the locals (Silvestri 2000:6-7, 9). Although Burton became one of the famous users of native disguise in the Victorian era, this was due to his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and his entry to the forbidden city of Harar in East Africa, not to his use of disguise in India (Silvestri 2000:20 n.32). It was in India though, that Burton first developed his disguise, which entailed, not just learning the languages but the culture as well. Before he actually adopted his disguise he and his fellow officers on the Sindh Survey wore native clothing while they were travelling around the countryside. James Clifford writes of “appropriate costumes,” the occasions when it is necessary for fieldworkers to dress up (Clifford 1997:205). In the case of the British officers in Sindh in the 1840s, Burton lists the advantages for the wearing of native costume. “Peasants will not run away from us as we ride through the fields, nor will the village girls shrink into their huts as we near them: the dogs will forget to deafen us with their barkings, and the cattle to fly in terror at our approach.” Finally, they do not get surrounded “by beggars and pertinacious petitioners.” Burton and his companions wore the clothes for physical comfort and ease of travel. There was also a sense that they quite enjoyed dressing up (Burton 1851:ii:33). In *Falconry* there were a number of illustrations of Meer Ibrahim Khan’s hunting party based on Burton’s own sketches, which show him in native dress (Burton 1997:16, 34). When he attended dinner at Meer Ibrahim Khan’s house he stayed in native costume (Burton 1851:ii:139). Burton’s disguise may have originated in his adoption of native clothes for physical comfort as well as for security reasons. It was probably developed over time with the assistance of his native friends and may have worked because he only observed from a distance. Taking Burton’s account of the visit to the male “brothel(s)” as a model, where he went accompanied by his munshi and merely observed, he may have gone unnoticed (Burton 1885:x:205). An encounter in a market in Sindh, where Burton insulted a beggar in his own language causing a near riot, showed that his disguise was not secure if he behaved obtrusively (Burton 1851:ii:218-221). Throughout his pilgrimage to Mecca, Burton behaved discreetly and was assisted by a number of local people (See Burton 1964).

Language and Understanding

It is clearly Burton’s language skills that most enriched his ethnographic research, allowing him to delve deeper into his study of Sindhi society, and setting him off from most of his army contemporaries. Cohn (1996) writes that the British conquest of India was also a conquest of knowledge as well as territory. In the essay “The command of language and the language of command” he described how the British realized the need to acquire Indian language skills in the seventeenth century. The officials of the EIC wanted to be independent of interpreters in their dealings with the Indian merchants and nobles. The British decided which languages were important to learn and developed a system of grammar books, dictionaries, native tutors and examinations for learning them. By the time Burton enlisted in the army of the EIC this system was well established. The British officers were encouraged to learn native languages at least to the level required to command Indian troops and servants. The Englishman “had to learn to manage his own language in a

manner most conducive to the execution of orders and the gratification of his own wishes on every occasion” (Cohn quoting Gilchrist:41). In their service records, officers who had achieved the least-required level in their native language studies were reported to have gained “colloquial proficiency” in that language (See IOR/MIL/73).

The principal Indian language utilised by the British was Hindustani; Burton had begun his studies of this language before he had even got to India. At this time there were serious deficiencies in the teaching of Hindustani at Addiscombe, the EIC’s military seminary. The teachers who taught the language had usually never heard it spoken (Bourne 1979:209). In the months before he was due to leave for India, Burton took private lessons in Hindustani from one Duncan Forbes, “a curious old Scotchman” who had spent a year in Bombay. He recorded that Forbes, “spoke all his eastern languages with the broadest possible Scottish accent; and he cared much more for telling anecdotes, than for teaching. However, he laid a fair foundation” (I. Burton 1893:i:93-4). Later on the outward voyage to India, there were three Indian servants on board the ship and Burton “had made them talk with him.” Almost immediately upon his arrival in Bombay he engaged the services of a munshi (native teacher), a man named Dosabhai Sohrabji, to enable him to continue his study of Hindustani. Later when he was serving with his regiment, the 18th Bombay Native Infantry, Burton would spend up to twelve hours a day on his language studies. He had by then employed two munshis and felt that they were not enough (I. Burton 1893:i:92, 107-8). He also employed the services of, as one of his biographers put it, “that invaluable aid to the anthropologist, the linguist and the lonely soldier: a native mistress” (Farewell 1990:31). Burton later commented that, “the *bubu* (native mistress) is a walking dictionary, all but indispensable to the student teaching him Hindostani (sic) grammar and the syntaxes of native life (I. Burton 1893:i:135). On 1 April 1843, some five months after his first arrival in India, Burton was granted leave to travel to Bombay from Sindh to enter an examination in Hindustani (IOR/L/MIL/73 f115).

The examining committee was chaired by Major-General Vans-Kennedy, a noted orientalist scholar of the time. Each of the candidates was expected to make a written translation, to read and translate *viva voce* from a native book, to read a written letter, and to converse with a munshi, Mohammed Makba. Burton passed first out of twelve candidates (I. Burton 1893:i:120-1). He then immediately started to learn the Gujarati language, taking lessons from a Nagar Brahman named Him Chand and the regimental “Pandit,” whom he describes as a kind of priest and teacher to the Sepoy troops (ibid.:122-3). On 10 August 1843 Burton was appointed regimental interpreter in Hindustani, earning an extra thirty rupees a month. Later that same year Burton travelled to Bombay two more times for examinations in Gujarati and Maharatta. He was again successful coming first in the field on both occasions (ibid.:123-4, 129). Burton added Persian in 1847 and was awarded a standard prize of 1,000 Rupees by the EIC for having qualified as interpreter in four native languages. All told, he qualified as interpreter in six native languages before he left India in 1849 (IOR/L/MIL/73 f115).

In 1996, Sir Christopher Ondaatje interviewed Dr. G. A. Allana, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sindh, Hyderabad, the second largest university in Pakistan. Ondaatje was researching a book on Burton in Sindh and was enquiring into his legacy there in the modern era. Dr. Allana told him that Burton was held in good regard in Sindh and that he had made two major contributions. The first was *Races* itself, which was still used in schools and was the main reference work on the tribes and customs of Sindh. The second contribution was that Burton had recommended the use of the Arabic script for the vernacular Sindhi language for uniform use in Sindh. When the British had assumed control of region there were over twenty different language scripts in use. Every Hindu caste had its own script and sometimes more than one. The majority Muslim population also had more than one language script. The British were concerned with establishing and standardising an educational system in Sindh and the adoption of a uniform script in the vernacular language was a key part of that process. In an attempt to resolve the problem, the British established a committee of two British officers, four Hindus and four Moslems. The Moslems favoured the Arabic script and were supported by Burton. The Hindus favoured their own script and were supported by one Captain Stack. In 1848 Burton had written a memo to this committee in which he advocated the use of the “Naskhi form of the Arabic alphabet” (Ondaatje 1996:148). The outline of this argument for the adoption of this script appears in *Races*. He writes,

The Nashki form of the Arabic alphabet appears to be the most favoured by circumstances in Sindh. My reasons for advocating the adoption of the Nashki character are as follows:-1st. That all the literature of the country has been for ages written in this hand. 2nd. All educated Moslems are able to read it and most of them to write it. 3rd. Although the Hindoo Amils throughout Sindh are at present unable to read it, their knowledge of the Nastalik or Persian hand would render the difficulty of learning it nugatory. [Burton 1998:155-6]

It was 1856 before the matter was decided and a final report was published.¹¹ Commissioner Frere in his introduction to this report wrote that Burton and Stack were right “as far as the section of the community they represent is concerned” (Frere, in Ellis 1856:3). He would have preferred to use both scripts to serve the needs of the two communities. In the end, the EIC decided to use the Arabic script, as it was believed to be the most pragmatic of solutions. The reasons Frere outlined for this decision were identical to Burton’s quoted above (Frere, in Ellis 1856:4).

In theory, Burton’s success in native language studies should have been a great benefit to his career. However, in practice learning native languages (and becoming precociously proficient in them) could damage a British person’s reputation in his own society. For British soldiers, possessing native language skills could put them under suspicion of treason. Colley (2000) examined the accounts of captives and records of courts martial which show that British soldiers, especially from the lower ranks, who could speak native languages were deemed to be more likely to defect to the armies of the various Indian states that the British fought against in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. When deserters who spoke Indian languages were

caught, they were generally punished more harshly than deserters who had no knowledge of native languages. For the British, linguistic incompetence among its soldiers was a guarantee of loyalty forming as it did a barrier between them and the natives (Colley 2000:186-7). Confident as they were in their military superiority over the Indians the British were concerned about their own soldiers becoming mercenaries in the Indian armies. Throughout their campaigns in India, whenever the Indian armies successfully deployed artillery, the British would allege that the guns had been manned by British deserters (Peers 1998:129). As a rule the suspicion of defection only fell on soldiers from the lower ranks and Burton's loyalty never seems to have been in question. In his report Ellis described Burton as acting "as the organ of the Mahomedans of Sind," whereas, Captain Stack was described as acting on behalf of the Hindoos (sic) (Ellis 1856:18). Ellis did not criticise Burton in any way but the comment is a striking one. Burton did pay a "social" price for his intensive study of native languages and society; his fellow officers began calling him "the white nigger." The nickname they gave him may have been partly spurred by jealousy and resentment at his achievements and ambition but it could have cast a slur on his character. Also it must have been hurtful for Burton if he would recall it years later (I. Burton 1893:i:123).

Conclusion: Burton In-Between

Burton was himself a marginal figure in Anglo-Indian society. As he had grown up for the most part outside Britain, he had not attended a prestigious public school, which was a vital rite of passage for any young man in the upper class of British society. University could have made up for this, but, of course, he had been expelled. A commission in the army of the EIC was not ideal, but it was as much he could have aspired to. Burton's father probably could not have afforded to buy his son a commission in the regular army. As it was he had to pull strings to get Burton into the company's army. Marshall (1998) writes that the rapid expansion of Britain's territory in India during the early nineteenth century led to a great extension of public employment, particularly for soldiers. This was however, "an occupation for young males of low social status" (Marshall 1998:91). Burton records his reaction at meeting his fellow cadets for the first time, "my bringing-up caused me to be much scandalized by the sight of my future comrades and brother officers" (I. Burton 1893:i:94). The army of the EIC was considered inferior to the regular army and there was bitter rivalry between the two services (ibid.:96). Burton recalled that the officers of the EIC army were called "black officers," probably due to the fact that they commanded native troops (Burton 1876:58). Generally, army service in India left the officers with a lot of free time on their hands. Indeed, there was a major problem with alcoholism in the British armies in India, as soldiers of all ranks struggled with the sheer tedium of service (Marshall 1998:94). In Goa in particular Burton vents frustration with the conventions of Anglo-Indian society. He left a detailed and contemptuous record of a hill station, which seethed with anguished boredom (Burton 2001:199-216). The army only required him to use his language skills for issuing orders to his troops or acting as an interpreter at courts martial "of dreary length" (I. Burton 1893:i:154). This was another reason apart from improving his promotion prospects that Burton turned to language studies and eventually ethnology: to occupy his time.

Burton was also clearly pushing the bounds of respectability and the conventions of Anglo-Indian and British society in general. He was spending far more time with his *munshis* and his mistress than he was with his fellow Britishers. Sindhian society offered intellectual stimulus and some status for Burton. He was held in some regard by the Sindhians for his language studies. Burton had commented on the importance of knowledge of language for gaining the respect of the native people (Burton 1998:166). Frere had noted that Burton was one of only two Europeans, "Whom the Sindees used to consider...really qualified as a Sindee scholar (Frere, in Ellis 1856:2). Burton seems to have had close relationships with his various *munshis*. He was quite harsh though with those people he had contact with. In *Scinde*, Meer Ibrahim Khan, a Sindhian of some status, was a host to Burton in his house. Burton ridiculed him throughout his account of his visit (Burton 1851: ii: 130-183). Later in *Falconry*, he makes amends, by offering to show Meer Ibrahim Khan "in a new and perhaps a more favourable character." Burton introduced, or rather reintroduced, Ibrahim Khan as "a falconer of distinguished fame," and then later described him as his "friend" (Burton 1997: xxiii-xxiv, 1). Burton had several key native informants in his various *munshis*. Hari Chand accompanies him to the dinner at Meer Ibrahim Khan's house and later, presumably during the same visit but in a different book, is present with both men at the falcon hunt (Burton 1851:ii:130-183, *ibid.* 1997:1). Hari Chand later procured dancing girls for Burton (Burton 1851:ii:241-7). Even after he had gained his examinations in various languages, Burton seems to have maintained relations with his *munshis*. In 1876, Burton returned to Sindh with his wife Isabel. In her biography of Burton, she writes, "During this journey we saw a great deal of Mirza Ali Akbar, who was Richard's old *moonshee* when he was a boy (sic)" (I. Burton 1893:ii:79). Burton also publicly defended Mirza Ali Akbar Khan, a former *munshi*, whom he felt had been unfairly denied a pension by the government (Burton 1876:52).

The four books, and the experiences on which they were based, formed the foundation of Burton's subsequent career as a writer, explorer and anthropologist. It was in India that Burton trained for and conducted his first ethnographic fieldwork. It was in India that he first displayed his ethnographic skills; which were his capacity to learn languages, his abilities as an observer, his interest in the people and culture around him and his meticulous note-taking. Burton's own marginal status in British and Anglo-Indian society and the lack of success of the books contributed to the lack of acknowledgement and interest that his fieldwork methodology received. In Britain itself, the chief practitioners of the nascent science of anthropology were still striving to gain recognition for the discipline. The issue of fieldwork methodology was yet to be a priority. At the same time, Burton's interest in other cultures, and his ability to immerse himself in them, was not regarded with favour by British society. The criticism of Newmarch in the *Athenaeum* illustrated the problems facing those who conducted anything that resembled ethnographic research: close proximity to native peoples, even for the purpose of intelligence gathering, was in itself a suspicious activity in Victorian society.

¹ Throughout this paper I have used the spelling of Sindh that is used in modern-day Pakistan. Burton used four different spellings for the region, Sind, Scinde, Sinde and Sindh. This was apparently common practice among the British in India at the time (See Burton 1997 (1852): 70-1).

² Between 1842 and 1849, the British army was engaged in campaigns in Afghanistan (1842), Sindh (1843) and twice against the Sikhs (1845-6 & 1848-9) (James: 79-99, Farewell 1973: 23-51). Burton did not get to see combat service in any of these actions.

³ Brodie 1987: 62-68, Rice (1990) 2001: chap. 4, McLynn 1993: 41-2 and Lovell : 58.

⁴ (BL/OIOC/V/27/733/14 'Postans to Outram, 3 March 1842').

⁵ (BL/OIOC/V/27/733/14. 'Papers regarding the Scinde and Begaree Canals, 1843'. 'Lt. Walter Scott Terry to the Political Agent, Upper Sindh, 20 August 1841').

⁶ See Bibliography.

⁷(British Library (BL) /Oriental India Office Collection (OIOC) /India Office Records (IOR)/L/MIL/73 f.115).

⁸ Newmarch, William (variant spelling Newmarsh) (1820-1882). He contributed to the *Athenaeum* between 1848-1853. Newmarch's subject areas included Australia, China, India, geography/travel, law, trade, agriculture and social policy (*Athenaeum* Index. <http://web.soi.city.ac.uk/~asp> cited 08-06-2005).

⁹ This autobiographical section consists of pages 1-164 of Isabel Burton's *Life of Sir Richard Burton* published in 1893.

¹⁰ Lt. Colonel W. Scott, 'Report on the Management of canals and forests in Scinde', in *Selections From the Records of the Bombay Government No. VII*. Printed for the information of the revenue officers under the government of Bombay, March 1853 (IOR/Microfiche (MF) 1/1003).

¹¹ B.H. Ellis, *Report on Education in Sind: Fowarded March 1856*. Introduction by H.B.E. Frere Esq. Commissioner in Sind. Bombay: Printed for Government at the Bombay Education Society Press (IOR/V/27/860/51).

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Reconsidering Travel: Reflexivity, and Friendship in Anthropological Fieldwork

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“I met a traveler from an antique land.” *Ozymandias*, Percey Bysshe Shelley

Introduction

Since 1922, when both Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and Radcliffe-Brown's *The Andaman Islanders* were published, the development of an ability to travel in “out-of-the-way terrain” (Tsing 1993:9), to cope with the social, intellectual, moral and personal dislocations that such travels can entail, has been a central concern in anthropological training and practice.¹ More than a straightforward means of collecting ethnographic data firsthand, anthropological fieldwork in ‘other’ locations has come to be seen by many as a means of acquiring a deeper knowledge and understanding of one's self through reflexive analyses of one's emerging social relations in initially unfamiliar, even alienating, settings and social contexts. An anthropological sense of travel, therefore, not only refers to movements or journeys in physical and social spaces, it also indexes a range of cultured ideas about liberal education, personal and intellectual growth, and spiritual development that have, for instance, also figured in popular imaginaries of cultural tourism in recent decades. However, failure to ‘acclimatize’ to the field site, to engage productively with the people who live there causes problems for the central objective of the ethnographic project – the representation of culture as filtered through one's own presence and experiences “in the field.”

With such concerns in mind, this essay explores how ideas of travel and self-realisation figure in three engagements with anthropological fieldwork as a means of gathering cultural data for ethnographic representations. Beginning with Johannes Fabian's (2000) review of various “proto-ethnographies” – accounts of travel and exploration in Africa written by nineteenth century Europeans – I also discuss James Clifford's reading of Michel Leiris' diary of his participation in the Mission Dakar-Djibouti (1988), and Roy Willis' more recent “journey into human selfhood” in Zambian Ulungu (1999). Intentionally or not, and according to their fashioning, these texts destabilise the persistent image of ethnographers as scientists who engage in objective and unproblematic knowledge relations with the communities they “investigate” (Throop 1999), demonstrating how unfamiliar locations and cultural contexts might impact upon the minds and bodies of researchers in the field. Citing recent anthropological reflections on friendship as cultural category and social practice, I argue that the action of ‘making friends’, and some factors that figure in the process, offer a fresh perspective upon some of the issues raised by Fabian, Willis and Clifford, among others concerning the ethnographic project, its anthropological practitioners, and their representations of culture.

“The Mad Masters”

Prefacing his recent study of early Western travelogues and “tales about travel to central Africa,” Fabian reflects on the origins of modern ethnographic research methods, which he claims have developed from premises, activities, and conventions guiding scientific travel and exploration in the late nineteenth century (2000). In particular, he notes that the empirical project of documenting rational experience requires the services of an explorer/ethnographer who is in possession and full control of the necessary psychological, moral, and intellectual faculties to properly witness and record events as they take place in the phenomenal world. It is this abiding image of the intrepid, righteous, and above all, *rational* anthropologist, and the ontological status of the knowledge he or she produces, that Fabian sets out to challenge.

Observing that many anthropological certainties have become highly problematic in the postmodern era, making it difficult for fieldworkers to select a clearly bounded ethnographic context, Fabian marks the rediscovery of travel in itself as a key subject and metaphor in anthropological theory:

What travel meant when scientific explorers began producing knowledge about vast regions such as central Africa – the sense it had or, more often, did not have – merits close attention, especially in view of what I believe is an imminent danger of disembodied postcolonial theorising. [2000:xiv]

The particular reasons why these scientific explorers travelled through central Africa in the first place are many. Some were agents of colonial powers, while others were representing private companies in search of lucrative trading opportunities. A few were principally travelogue writers, producing knowledge of exotic lands and peoples for an emerging media industry in search of adventurous stories to tell. All were keen to document their experiences in non-Western contexts and, their individual motives for travel notwithstanding, each of these explorers contributed to the production of the European *oeuvre civilisatrice* (p. 3). However, Fabian cites “overwhelming” indirect evidence that European travellers seldom met their hosts in the clear-minded and controlled state that might be expected of scientific explorers. More often than not, they were “out of their minds” with “extreme fatigue, fear, delusions of grandeur, and feelings ranging from anger to contempt.” Ravaged by an assortment of tropical diseases, and altered by the opiates, alcohol, quinine, and arsenic with which they medicated themselves, they were often in no position to report reliably on the experience of “being there” (p. 4).²

In Fabian’s analysis, written records of early African exploration incorporate the “myth of science” as an arduous battle for victory over self and nature in the pursuit of true knowledge (p. 5). This myth contains “active ingredients” that continue to affect modern ideas and practices of ethnography, including the “normative attitude” of science, which maintains that true knowledge can only be acquired by following a positivist set of rules. In other words, we can only record that which is actually manifested in experience, and we may not

assume that any insight formulated in general terms can have any real referents other than concrete objects. Finally, cognitive value is denied to value judgements and normative statements, and the methods for acquiring valid knowledge, and the main stages in elaborating experience through theoretical reflection, are essentially the same in all spheres of existence.³ Fabian declares the need for an “antidote” to this myth, distilled not from modern ethnography but from earlier accounts of scientific travel and exploration, arguing that professional travellers and explorers were foremost among those who established the modes of knowledge production and representation that shape and inform contemporary fieldwork. Reconnecting 'scientific' ethnography to its roots in unscientific human endeavour, he echoes Stoller (1989) by recommending that anthropological fieldworkers move beyond the strictures of rationality and positivist epistemology to more fully experience being in a particular place at a particular time.

“Telling of Phantom Lands”

Fabian’s critique of the myth of scientific anthropological fieldwork suggests a way of reading Michel Leiris’ detailed record of his travels in Africa, casting him as a writer who understood all too clearly the problems with this scientific “attitude,” and its privileged role in the production of cultural knowledge for consumption in the West. “*L’Afrique Fantôme* is a monster: 533 dense pages of ethnography, travel diary, self-exploration, and “oneirography” (1988:165). So begins Clifford’s treatment of Leiris’ continuous and problematic search for a satisfactory way of telling – of collecting and displaying – an existence. The details of the particular existence in question were collected and recorded during Leiris’ time as secretary-archivist on Marcel Griaule’s 1931 Mission Dakar-Djibouti, which traversed Africa along the lower rim of the Sahara over a period of twenty-one months. A museum-collecting enterprise in essence, the mission also undertook extended ethnographic sojourns in the French Sudan (now Mali), and in Ethiopia. Clifford tells us that the mission’s collection of photos, recordings, and documents also included some 3,500 “objects” that were destined for the Trocadéro museum, soon to become the Musée de l’Homme; “The postwar passion for *l’art nègre* fostered a cult of the exotic artifact, and the carved figures and masks of West and Equatorial Africa satisfied perfectly a European fetishism nourished on cubist and surrealist aesthetics” (p. 56).

In his role as *secrétaire-archiviste* for the Mission Dakar-Djibouti, Leiris was charged with the task of recording the expedition’s historic crossing of the Dark Continent. However, as Clifford points out, the problem with Leiris’ record of encounters in Africa was his refusal to narrate his “scraps of experience.” He preferred instead to record his experiences as they happened in temporal sequence, “as if this could solve the ultimate dilemma of giving public form to personal experiences without betraying their peculiar lived authenticity.” To Clifford’s eye, then, Leiris’ ethnographic collecting is without clear guidelines, aesthetic or scientific, resulting in an excess subjectivity that, paradoxically, guarantees objectivity in the form of a personal ethnography, and amounting to a refusal of the realist imagination “in favour of an impossibly sincere record of the real: perceptions, moods, facts” (p. 167). The following passage comprises the publicity flier of *L’Afrique Fantôme* (Leiris

1934). Clifford describes this *priere d'insérer* as neither preface nor conclusion, written for readers without the time to read, and for Leiris, “a last chance to say what was being said, evoke a schema, the story he'd intended to write.”

Sick of his life in Paris, viewing travel as poetic adventure, a method of concrete knowledge, an ordeal, a symbolic way to stop growing old, to deny time by crossing space, the author, interested in ethnography for the value he gives that science in the clarification of human relations, joins a scientific expedition crossing Africa. What does he find? Few adventures, research that initially excites him but soon reveals itself too inhuman to be satisfying, an increased erotic obsession, an emotional void of growing proportions. Despite his distaste for civilised people and for the life of metropolitan cities, by the end of the journey he longs for the return.

His attempted escape has been a complete failure, and anyway he no longer believes in the value of escape. Even with capitalism's increasing tendency to render all true human contacts impossible, isn't it within his own civilisation that a Westerner can find opportunities for self-realization at the emotional level? In any case he will learn again that here as everywhere else man cannot escape his isolation: the result being that he will start out again, one day or another, caught up in new phantoms – but this time without illusions. Such is the schema of the work the author would perhaps have written if, concerned above all to offer as objective and sincere a document as possible, he had not stuck to his travel notebook, publishing it as is.

This schema is perceptible, at least in latent form, throughout a journal in which are noted, pell-mell, events, observations, feelings, dreams, ideas.

It's up to the reader to discover the germs of a coming to consciousness attained only well after the return, while at the same time following the author among peoples, sites, vicissitudes from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. [Leiris 1966:54-55, in Clifford 1988:165-166]

However, as Clifford observes, a voyage must be told. Telling stories of travels cannot simply be a sequential display of heaped observations, notes, and souvenirs; a journey makes sense as a “coming to consciousness” when, as time passes, its story hardens around an identity. “But what if one refuses to tell?”

Would it be enough to return from Africa, like Conrad's Marlow, with only a single potent word? What sorts of erasures, lies, are necessary to make an acceptable story? Or could one outmaneuver narrative and somehow tell all, transcribing with equal rigor the boring, the passionate, the interesting, the unexpected, the banal? Another way of telling: as if a thousand snapshots could testify to the real in their own way. [1988:168]

Accordingly, Leiris struggled from the start against certain narrative positions; standpoints firmly assigned to whites in the colonies, whatever their personal political or aesthetic proclivities. However, it was not until late in his voyage

that Leiris broke with the alternative, liberal stance offered by scientific ethnography, a discursive position that “understands” Africa, its peoples, and its cultures, in their own terms if possible. If ethnography studies its objects sympathetically and systematically, then Leiris characterizes it as “[I]ntense work, to which I give myself with a certain assiduousness, but without an ounce of passion. I’d rather be possessed than study possessed people... For me, abstract knowledge will never be anything but a second best” (1934:324).

Fascinated by William Seabrook’s contemporary adventure stories of Haitian voodoo and African adventure, Leiris also considered a narrative from the perspective of “the voyager who goes native and returns to evoke initiation, loss of self, terror, enlightenment” (1988:169). This, however, was one of many possible “enunciative positions” – the travelogue, the adventure story, the *grand reportage*, the utopia, the pilgrimage, the ecstatic or ironic access to wisdom, the ethnographic fable of rapport, the humanist rite of passage, the scientific myth of discovery, the quest for woman, for the bizarre, for suffering, for art, for renewal, for an authentic voice – that Leiris considered and dismissed during an interminable delay at the border of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Echoing the mission’s paralysis at the border, Leiris passed those slack days drafting and discarding prefaces, and worrying inconclusively about principles of inclusion and exclusion in addition to the aforementioned issues of genre and narrative form. Unwilling to decide upon a single narrative position from which to write, he left his text “open to objective chance, noting whatever ideas, problems, or fantasies impose themselves,” while remaining loyal to a subjectivity that recorded a dream or a bowel movement, along with observations of the locale, events of the mission, and scientific inquiries, with equal rigour (p. 170).

Clifford’s analysis of Leiris’ text suggests an authorial consciousness that avidly perceives the phenomenal world, yet would prefer to know itself, somehow, in a manner unmediated by the contents of that world, desiring a regression to existence before the need to collect oneself, to account for things and one’s life. Leiris intimates as much by his wish “[t]o be in facts like a child. That’s where I’d like to get” (1934:234). Further, opposed to a “coming to consciousness” in a fashion that alienates as it collects, this consciousness refuses to render life’s events in a form governed by narrative conventions, to avoid betraying the “real” world of unmediated experience. Testimony to his antinarrative objectives then, *L’Afrique Fantôme* is composed of the “awkward, Dadaist data” that Leiris collected from his experiences in Africa. Clifford finds it incredible that Leiris keeps on writing his entries,

Yet every day the journal’s scrupulous entries appear – long, short, elaborate, terse – each promising that *something* will somehow happen and that soon we will see what the relentless series is leading to. We never do. No moment of truth: *Afrique Fantome* is only a pen starting up each day. [1988:172]

In Clifford’s reading then, Leiris’ text combines an acute sense of the futility of existence with a tenacious desire to salvage its meaningful details – quotations, perceptions, memories – beginning a writing process that will endlessly compose and recompose an identity (p. 173). Concerned above all to

offer as “objective” and “sincere” a document as possible, he reproduced his travel notebook in full, leaving it to the reader to discover “the germs of a coming to consciousness attained only well after the return.” To some extent, this line conveys a disturbing conceptualisation of self-consciousness as a problematic growth or infection that has metastasised within a ‘body’ that is happiest when interacting in an insentient manner with the material, visceral world. Despite Leiris’ intention to remain true to this world of unmediated experience however, there is no attempt to speak “without artifice or from the heart,” to Clifford’s ear at least. His “objective,” “sincere” stance reveals itself as an effect of style, largely through an obsessive, systematically clumsy and complicated staging of the text for which the various elaborate explanations, supplementary notes, hidden prefaces, and *priers d’insérer* are props (p. 172).

“Spirits in a Material World”

Leiris’ concerns with self-knowledge, and his frustrated attempts to experience – let alone represent – a coming to consciousness in the process of travelling through non-Western space resonate in some ways with ideas contained in Roy Willis’ recent exploration of African spirit possession and healing. In the anonymously written ‘blurb’ (a contemporary form of the *prier d’insérer* that Leiris so valued) of the text in question, the reader is asked,

Where does ‘the self’ in ‘myself’ begin and end? And what do ideas of ‘spirit’ tell us about the nature of human selfhood? To investigate these poorly understood matters, veteran anthropologist, neo-shaman and paranormal healer Roy Willis spent five months in a remote part of northern Zambia exploring human consciousness in a fascinating and sometimes terrifying series of adventures. [Anonymous, quoted in Willis 1999]

Speaking to the reader from the back cover, the unknown reviewer tells us that the book is the story of Willis’ “quest,” as he participates in and films rituals of ecstatic union with nature spirits, and talks in depth with experts in managing the “awesome powers of a world beyond the ordinary.” We are encouraged to follow his research team through their day-to-day involvement in rituals of spirit revelation, healing, and exorcism, and their encounters with the “evil powers of sorcery.” Through the use of terms like “paranormal,” “remote,” “adventures,” “exploring” and “ecstatic union,” the anonymous reviewer primes us for a journey to an out-of-the-way place, far from the empirical world of conventional science and rationality. By such lights, Willis’ ethnography could be read as a contemporary ‘voyage of discovery’; a mission to discover and bring back cultural materials and products to cater to the ‘enduring European fetish for African artefacts’ that Clifford marks (1988).

More than a simple textual appetizer for those who wish to consume some African culture however, the blurb also records the presence of an attitude that mistrusts the language and epistemology of scientific ethnography, and the Western culture that constitutes and promulgates it. Indeed, In support of Willis’ research, no less than Professor Edith Turner remarks,

I cannot put it too strongly how important it is to publish this book, to correct the balance of ethnography to include the deeper levels of ritual that as yet fall outside the boundaries of “science.” Willis is one of the new breed of experiencing anthropologists, producing meticulously documented ethnography. [Quoted in Willis 1999]

While he notes that contemporary anthropology continues to concern itself with discovering and elaborating cultural concepts of the self, to Willis it is clear that a scientific ethnographic approach to matters of the mind and “spirit” cannot yield an exhaustive or comprehensive body of data on the subject. Perhaps in acknowledgement of her favourable comment on his own work, Willis claims this “matter of ‘spirit’” has been posed most forcefully by Edith Turner, who notes that, “Again and again anthropologists witness spirit rituals, and again and again some indigenous exegete tires to explain that spirits are present, and furthermore that rituals are the central events of their society. And the anthropologist proceeds to interpret them differently” (1993:11). Turner’s argument for the reality of spirit entities arises from her reported perception of a ‘spirit-form’ at the climax of a healing ritual among the Ndembu of north-western Zambia, confirming for her that “the Africans were right, there is spirit stuff, there is spirit affliction, it isn’t a matter of metaphor and symbol, or even psychology” (1993: 9).

In pursuit of such elusive knowledge of “self” and “spirit” then, Willis took himself off to the Ulungu region of Zambia to investigate reports of a secretive cult called *ngulu*, which concerns itself with the possession of people by spirits associated with the natural environment. “Here then, in the case of a people with a distinctly different traditional culture from my own Western-scientific background, was a chance to test out the newly-born idea that the human sense of selfhood, though arising out of and formed within a social matrix, had an inherent tendency to go beyond established knowledge and experience to embrace the ‘alien’ and ‘other’” (1999:2). Anticipating at least some of the recommendations about research subjectivity that Fabian would later make (2000), and in keeping to a degree with the spirit of Leiris’ desire to experience rather than record abstract ‘knowledge’, Willis set out to establish meaningful contact with members of the Zambian *ngulu* spirit cult, in pursuit of data to support his entelechy of ‘spirit’, while simultaneously repositioning himself well outside the range of research subject positions supposedly preferred by ‘mainstream’ anthropology.

To help his readers understand the ontology underlying his subject position, Willis cites Evans-Pritchard’s “magisterial” work on the Azande as the classic exemplar of the predominantly rational materialist approach to matters of culture in modern anthropology. While Evans-Pritchard considered the Zande ‘belief’ in occult forces to be illusory, the reasoning they deployed on the basis of this mistaken premise was completely logical and readily understandable to him when considered within its cultural context. His reason for rejecting the reality of the Zande world-view was rooted in the certainty that whatever is not perceptible to the senses does not exist. “Mystical notions attribute to phenomena supra-sensible qualities which, or part of which, are not derived from observation or cannot be logically inferred from it, and which they do not possess” (1937:12). Willis describes this as the “enlightenment-derived

cosmology” that posits an objective world of material objects, governed by laws that operate with the predictable regularity of a machine. However, he does not share Evans-Pritchard’s certainty of what Good might term its “truth value” (1994); “Today, instead of being a solid and unassailable bedrock of knowledge, the mechanistic model of the universe is increasingly seen as a product of a particular phase in the socio-economic history of Western civilization” (1999:43).

Willis accounts for the unorthodox research subject position he adopts when considering the *ngulu* spirit cult by describing the importance of mystical encounters and uncanny experiences in his own life. For example, while visiting Alexandria in Egypt in 1983, he underwent the “most powerful paranormal experience” of his life while sitting near Pompey’s Column, an obelisk raised by the Christian Church in the fourth century.

I became aware of a voice that sounded, paradoxically, as if it were coming both from immensely far away and from deep inside me. The speech was flowing, powerful and beautiful as a river of liquid silver and, although the words were English, it was being translated, by some mechanism that also looked ‘silvery’, from an unknown tongue. What was said was arresting. I was, it seemed, ‘guiltless and free.’ Then, following something about ‘karmic debt’, the mysterious sentence: ‘After long exile the King has come home.’ I then felt myself being immersed in healing water, a wonderfully liberating experience. [1999:6]

Following another vision in which he saw a “silver-gold cylinder tapered and rounded at both ends, with two rows of nine square windows running along its central part,” which slowly rotated on its axis as it hung in the sky before fading from view, Willis returned to the UK where he soon discovered that he had developed the power to heal. Over the years that followed, encounters with a shamanic power animal in the form of “a large and friendly jaguar” during group meditation, and a powerful female entity, naked except for a golden helmet-mask that covered her entire head, merely served as preludes to three days he spent in a spontaneous altered state, when he encountered a group of three divinities who appeared as columns of light. One of these divinities was in fact his golden-masked visitor of some years previous, who last incarnated two thousand years earlier as the biblical figure Mary Magdalene, the companion and lover of Jesus the Nazarene. Willis had no idea how this ‘knowledge’ of the identity of the visiting female divinity was acquired, but he felt that it had been inserted into his mind surreptitiously. The same process also caused him to become aware of his own previous incarnation as a “divine king” of Lower Egypt some twelve millennia ago, when he had been united in “sacred marriage” with this female entity, a “love goddess from the stars” (1999:7-9).

Feeling strongly that his experiences of the outré and numinous have prepared him for the intellectual and perceptual challenges that his “experimental” anthropological engagement with matters of the spirit in Africa might involve, Willis nevertheless fails to adapt himself successfully to respond to more mundane concerns during his fieldwork. As a foreigner with

no real social connections within his research setting, Willis quickly came to rely heavily upon his main Lungu research assistant, Mr Chisanga. Described as a tall, charismatic and elegant man in his fifties, Chisanga's "air of patrician *gravitas* was leavened by a roguish twinkle of the eye and a winning smile, both of which could seem a touch contrived" (1999:12). Noting his similarities to "Muchona the hornet," Victor Turner's "celebrated" Ndembu research assistant (Turner 1967), Willis observes that Chisanga's rootless status, restless spirit and detached view of his own culture have all played their part in his development of a wide and valuable range of contacts at all levels of Lungu society, including chiefs, priests, prophets and village headmen. As such, Chisanga provides invaluable aid by acting as social portal, interlocutor, and "emissary from another world" for his foreign employer (1999:13).

Unfortunately for Willis, Chisanga eventually reveals himself to be far more (or less) than a "marvellous interpreter of his own culture," and a "veritable impresario of Lungudom." Indeed, because of his lifestyle and resultant "social deficiencies," Chisanga is, we are told, driven to compensate for his "drastic failure to measure up to the normative values of his fellows" (p. 16) by seeking out any opportunity to better his financial position, and shows few scruples in pursuit of his wealth-generating schemes. Almost inevitably then, he comes to treat Willis as a mark, whose presence in the local community provides a chance to capitalise on a stranger's unfamiliarity with the setting. Chisanga's exploitation of Willis is not such a straightforward matter as a betrayal of trust between friends, however, and he could just as easily be considered an exemplar of a pervasive 'attitude' that recent research has identified in similar areas of privation and economic stagnation in East Africa. Writing about the relative wealth of tourists in comparison to locals in Zanzibar, for example, Sumich observes that, by local standards even the 'poor' backpacker tourists are quite wealthy, with the ability to spend the equivalent of a month's salary on a single excursion, without ever visibly working (2002:40). Under such circumstances, we are told that it is no wonder local informal tourist workers tend to view and refer to tourists in terms of the economic gain that can be had from them (p. 42).

Given that Chisanga also lives an economically and socially precarious life, perhaps the potential benefits of exploiting a rare opportunity were too much to pass over. Equally, he may have felt that his benefactor was being insincere in his desire to share in a "spiritual communion" with the people of Ulungu, while retaining exclusive control over material and financial resources that might circulate more widely in recognition of the generosity of his hosts. In any case, while he proves himself to be a sensitive and engaging research assistant who provides access to, and new perspective upon many of the peoples, settings and rituals that Willis experiences, Chisanga's insubordination, conniving nature, and mercenary economic opportunism eventually result in a schism between them. Indeed, by the beginning of the final month of the research project, Chisanga has gone from "superman to arrogant and bullying object of dislike" for Willis (p. 179).

Never far from the centre of the squabbles that constantly beset Willis' relations with his other research assistants and employees, Chisanga lays the groundwork for his demise when he betrays "behavioural signs of inner

bolshieness,” reflected in the “gratuitous rudeness” with which he treats Mary, Willis’ wife, shortly after her arrival to assist her husband in his researches in Ulungu (p. 178). Even though Chisanga makes an “abject apology” for his “rudery,” he nevertheless continues to exploit his role as research assistant in Willis’ Ulungu Research Project (URP) when opportunity presents itself, ignoring Willis’ repeated threats of dismissal. Despite the fact that Willis has offered to bring him on a trip to the UK, Chisanga cannot resist the chance to turn a research census field assignment to his own profit and, after spending his allotted (and salaried) field research period on his farm instead of conducting his census work, he returns to the URP “headquarters” bearing inferior census forms, upon a borrowed motorbike which he has damaged quite badly. As yet unaware of this deception, Willis responds to the sloppy and unfinished fieldwork by withdrawing Chisanga’s “privileges,” including his “bonus and UK visit,” but repents his decision following a nocturnal appraisal of his project’s “brilliant success,” and Chisanga’s role as “the engine powering the effort” (p. 180). Willis soon regrets his change of heart however, when he learns that yet another in a long line of creditors has enlisted police assistance to ensure recovery of a debt belonging to Chisanga. Concerned for the URP’s public image, Willis bails Chisanga out of jail, only to hear a long list of complaints against him from the project’s other research assistants and staff members.

Following the unilateral condemnation of Chisanga by his colleagues, Willis is forced to acknowledge that the man he had “invested with such a mantle of nobility,” is revealed as a “petty manipulator, a schoolyard bully! If only he’d done something really bad, like killing someone or robbing a bank, I’d have found it easier to forgive” (p. 182).

Buoyed by a sudden surge of anger over this final betrayal of trust, Willis tells Chisanga that he is finished with him, yet he declares himself unable to understand why Chisanga has “turned against” him. “I watch him, he whom I’d loved like a brother, pass through the door, and feel relief, mixed with pain and confusion” (p. 183). Reflecting upon the matter, Willis remarks that,

Apart from the betrayal of trust, the awareness of having been made a fool of, the most disturbing aspect of this business is the sheer irrationality of it. What he managed to embezzle in the way of food, paraffin, etc. could have been worth in all no more than a fraction of what he could have earned as a bonus. On top of that, he has thrown away the prospect of realizing his heart’s desire: to visit the UK. Nothing makes any sense. Or could it be that he has wearied of his messiah-hood? [p. 183]

In an unintentionally hilarious moment of insight, Willis notes the irony in the realisation that “I came here to investigate ‘spirit possession’ and became myself possessed by a particularly oppressive entity” (p. 183), yet he fails to notice the irony in his frustrated desire that ‘spirits’ – whether embodied or not – should remain cooperative, even submissive objects of study, rather than transforming themselves (like Chisanga) into knowing and self-aware agents with needs and agendas of their own. Besides, there is something of the irrational in Willis’ desire to make a spiritual saviour or “messiah” of his

friend and chief research assistant. Thief, liar and bully, Chisanga is certainly not “irrational,” and his ultimately failed relationship with Willis illustrates how very real economic, cultural and political forces necessarily condition human relationships, as well as the problems with an approach that seeks to apply a supposedly universal or etic category of *spiri* in pursuit of personal transcendence and interpersonal communion. In the final analysis, Willis’ failure to abide with perhaps his most important research Other is the failure of a relatively powerful and privileged person to recognise the many inequalities and disparities that beset ententes between peoples of the West and their friends in out-of-the-way places.⁴ When other humans with very mundane issues and concerns – even those who have been “loved like a brother” – become “haunts” or oppressive entities in his eyes, perhaps it is time for re-evaluation of the terms upon which Willis selects his friends and collaborators.

“A friend in need is a friend indeed”

In order to accomplish the ethnographic task then, it would seem that anthropological researchers must be prepared to travel in a number of spheres – natural, social, cultural, supernatural even – while at least trying to negotiate the empirical, social, legal, intellectual, and existential perils that lie in wait for any outsiders who would traverse these domains. To the extent that the writings of Fabian, Clifford and Willis⁵ suggest some of the negative consequences that living among non-Western peoples in ‘exotic’ locations might have for the bodies and minds of Western-trained anthropologists, it is reasonable to wonder how fieldworkers should prepare themselves for field expeditions that will test their resources on many levels. Certainly, graduate training in anthropology in most Western universities requires that the “pre-fieldwork” or “pre-departure” phase of the course be spent in talking, reading and writing about a range of theoretical and methodological concerns, ensuring that student researchers are equipped with a corpus of theory and ethnographic precedent to draw upon at need. However, a graduate training programme cannot so easily “upload” the social skills and abilities that fieldworkers might need to integrate successfully in their host community. An awareness of practical and theoretical concerns in anthropology is one thing, but the daily reality of “getting on” with associates, collaborators, and current or potential informants in the field is often a tricky feat to accomplish. On this note, a brief review of some of the factors and variables that figure in the formation and maintenance of friendships might offer a useful critique of the researchers and their works described above, and suggest how researchers might help to create more “research-friendly” environments for their fieldwork.

In a recent volume on the cultural dimensions of friendship, the editors observe that, aside from kinship and affinal relations, corporate associations linked with principles of territorial, political or ethnic affiliation have tended to provide the organisational means through which anthropologists have identified order in human relationships. Analyses of the processual, the idiosyncratic, the affective and the non-public aspects of social relations – all elements of at least some models of friendship – have often been far less evident (Bell and Coleman 1999:4). They contend that relationships such as

those of friendship that often do not depend solely or predominantly on ties of kinship, fixed positions of roles and statuses, permanent geographical proximity, ethnicity or even common cultural background, are becoming more evident in everyday experience, both in the West and elsewhere. They are therefore emerging – or should be emerging – as an increasingly important aspect of analysis and representation. In support of this project, the editors argue that:

For Westerners in general, friendship is a topic with much moral weight. From our friends, we hope to derive emotional support, advice and material help in times of need. Through the ambiguities and ambivalences involved in establishing and keeping friendships alive, we learn about how others see us and therefore, in some sense, how we view ourselves. [1999:1]

From the point of view of prospective anthropological fieldworkers then, a “real” friend in the field might be the best means of ensuring that research projects are completed, the research settings, subjects and data are represented in a manner that bears close scrutiny, and the researchers themselves are not too damaged in the process. And yet, the action of “making friends” is not a simple matter of applying the ideas of friendship as they are commonly construed in the West outside the cultural contexts that have produced and developed them. However, Bell and Coleman do not recognise the need to do so in any case.

Observed as a set of social practices rather than as pure ideology, Western friendship may have more affinities than is often assumed with social processes evident in other societies and cultures. Even so it should not simply be reproduced as the basis of an ‘etic’ model that could putatively be deployed in cross-cultural comparison and analysis. In fact, we argue here that there is little pragmatic sense in attempting to construct a rigid, globally applicable, definition of friendship [1999:15]

Citing Paine (1969), Bell and Coleman maintain that, if Western and particularly middle-class friendship is characterized in romantic, post-Aristotelian terms involving autonomy, voluntarism, sentiment and freedom from structural constraints, it can more readily be distinguished from other social forms. Friendship should be untainted by the inequalities of patron-client relations, the constraints of kinship, the pragmatism of certain forms of balanced exchange and the commitment to the group as found in religious fellowship. In this view, those people who are seen as capable of being true friends are the notionally free and independent actors of modern, Western, liberal thought, who live in social contexts where person and society are seen as distinct rather than meshed entities (p. 10). It is a vision of society that necessarily minimizes gross economic gradients. Overall, the characterizations of both lay and academic concepts of friendship imply that a powerful, Western (and in particular a middle-class) ideology of freedom, flexibility and creativity, that is social reality for the researcher, must be tempered by the sociological realities of institutional constraint and cultural scripts, even if these scripts are always changing and under dispute (p. 14).

The oft-quoted division between Western and other societies might well be a useful shorthand descriptive strategy, but it is an increasingly problematic means of delineating supra-local processes that are breaking down old cultural divides, and erecting new ones in unpredictable places (p. 5).

The truth of Bell and Coleman's assertion that fieldworkers must establish cordial and even close relations with informants if they are not to become like ethologists, observing interactions while remaining aloof from close social contact (p. 2), is borne out when applied to the self-exalted and deluded subjects of Fabian's historical analysis, the tortured phenomenology and subjectivity of Leiris, and the eccentric subjectivism of Willis. For the nineteenth century exponents of the "myth of scientific fieldwork," the imperial and colonial cultural milieu within which they moved and from which they derived their "attitude" rendered it extremely difficult for them to see the objects of their explorative/exploitative gaze as potential providers of emotional support, advice and material help in times of need – as friends, in other words. Frequently aloof, high-handed, sick, intoxicated, and ill-equipped to adapt to ever-changing environmental, social and cultural conditions, their various agendas also made them unsuitable as friends for those locals who might otherwise have eased their travails, enriched their accounts of foreign lands, and assisted their visitors in coming to know themselves more fully. Leiris might have found his traverse of Africa less trying had he avoided subjecting himself (and his readers) to an excess of subjectivities, considering instead why he might have found his own society so inimical to his jaded sense of self. Even though his youthful self-absorption gives way to a rather more mature reflexivity, as evidenced in his *prière d'insérer*, the sense of being-in-the-world that guides his hand and mind speaks of a lonely, friendless existence. Willis too might have had an easier time of it in Zambia had he taken his expressed desire to go beyond, to embrace the "alien" and "other" in terms of a transcendent and spiritual human selfhood, and applied it to the process of forming friendships in keeping with locally meaningful notions of self and sociality.

¹ The novice fieldworker's classic '*rite de passage*', in Van Gennep's sense of the term

² 'Being there' in an ethnographic manner discussed by Shore (1999).

³ Kolakowski quoted in Fabian 2000: 7.

⁴ See Keshodkar (2004) for a recent discussion of such concerns in the context of Zanzibar

⁵ Inadvertently in the case of Willis, whose records of his relations with his local research assistants sometimes strain the boundaries of research ethics in anthropology (pp. 177-184)

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REVIEW ESSAY

A Mercenary Author for Hire

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Darfur In Perspective. By David Hoile. 2005 The European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council (ESPCA).

The British writer and “activist” David Hoile launched a new publication on Sudan in 2005. This work comes under the title, *Darfur In Perspective*, and is published by his own London-based Organisation. Sifting through the analysis of the book, the reader would be forgiven for concluding that the book is either an evil joke or otherwise a work commissioned by the like of Musa Hilal, the notorious Darfur Janjaweed (Arab Militia) leader, whose name is certain to top the UN list for Darfur war criminals.

It is unconventional for academics to dwell too much on the personalities of the authors of books that they review. However, since Mr. Hoile claims to be a peace activist (and that his work on Darfur develops from this commitment), so it is legitimate to review his biography before we look into his thesis. So who is David Hoile and what the nature of the organisation, ESPAC, that he heads?

The eminent Sudan analyst Eric Reeves says the following about Mr. Hoile.

Mr, Hoile has used a variety of organizations to give apparent substance to his interminable propaganda efforts. In addition to “The European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council,” he also uses the name “British-Sudanese Public Affairs Council,” and “Westminster Associates”. The latter is important because, as the authoritative Africa Confidential has revealed in its most recent issue (Vol 42, No 17), “the Parliamentary register of interests lists the client of [Westminster Associates] as the Sudan government.” [Reeves 2001]

But Mr Hoile’s notoriety is not new. In his college time in Warwick, the Federation of Conservative Students (FCS), which he chaired, was disbanded for its ultra rightwing views. Even former British Conservative Party chairman Norman Tebbit, whose conservative credentials are impeccable, described the FCS as “too barking right wing” (Norman 2001).

But the lunacy of Mr. Hoile is even worse as Hyde narrates,

The Guardian has two photographs: one of David Hoile, wearing a tie with an odd appendage; the second photograph is a close up of the image appended to the tie. It is a picture of Nelson Mandela: below it are the words; “Hang Nelson Mandela and All ANC Terrorists. They are Butchers.” [Hyde 2001]

Nonetheless, the Khartoum government and the now-defunct Apartheid Regime of South Africa are not the only beneficiaries of Mr. Hoile's services. Pallister of the Guardian reports that, "Mr. Hoile has in the past allied himself with a number of unsavoury rebel and terrorist groups; the contras in Nicaragua, Renamo in Mozambique and Unita in Angola" (Pallister 2003).

The dubious connection of Mr Hoile with the no less dubious Khartoum government is also well documented. Throwing light on this connection, Sudan Update reports, "Mr Hoile also worked for Westminster Associates, contracted in 1996 to improve Sudan's international public image. He now heads the equally pro-NIF 'British-Sudanese Public Affairs Council' and 'European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council'" (Sudan Update 2005).

Using a much more powerful source, Pallister further exposes the mercenary adventures of Mr Hoile: Shortly after Mr Hoile set up the European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, Lord Avebury, chairman of the parliamentary human rights group, said in a Lords debate, "It is believed Mr Hoile receives all his money from the Sudanese government. I hope that those who receive his literature will take careful note of that" (Pallister 2005).

Well, Mr Hoile objects, but only to a limited degree. Perhaps some but not all his funding comes from the Government of Sudan, or, as he says "he has been paid only for consultancy work" (Ibid). One wonders whether the rest of his remuneration comes from the notorious oil company, Talisman Energy, Canada, with which Mr Hoile is also connected. Reeves also writes about this connection,

Talisman Energy of Canada sees something of value in David Hoile's perceptions; they have used his materials in communicating with the news media about the situation in Sudan, where they are the direct beneficiaries of the scorched-earth warfare that has been so authoritatively established. Mr Hoile's propagandistic denials of these realities are evidently just what they want to hear. Perhaps in their views of Africa, they share more yet with this profiteering bit of human viciousness. [Reeves 2001]

Contrition, however, is not in Mr. Hoile's nature. Nonetheless, the imminent UN investigation of Darfur atrocities might provide him with an opportunity for repentance. Let us then see what he has to say about Darfur.

Hoile's Thesis

So what is the thesis put forward by the author in explaining Darfur crisis? It is nothing but the usual views, if not outright propaganda, presented by Khartoum government. In a nutshell, Hoile says that the Darfur crisis has nothing to do with marginalisation of Darfur; that it is precipitated by foreign powers; that the US and the international NGOs have a role and vested interest in the eruption and continuation of the crisis; that Darfur armed Movements do not want peace; that Darfur war is waged by the Popular Congress Party of Turabi, as a strategy to get back to power in Khartoum; that the international community and the UN have treated Khartoum government

unfairly; that the government of Khartoum has conducted the war in a reasonable and responsible manner; and that the government's bombardment of civilian locations is justified and not dissimilar from US attacks on civilian enclaves in Iraq. There is no mention, never mind condemnation, of the atrocities committed by the government or its Janjaweed allies. That is not surprising as Hoile's mission seems to be to defend Khartoum's role in the Darfur crisis.

The denial of the marginalisation of Darfur region has been the hallmark of Hoile's thesis. On the contrary, he gives a portrait of Darfur as a region that is experiencing significant level of development. That he does by simply regurgitating the government's praise of its developmental policies in Darfur (Hoile 2005:11-12). He then goes further to corroborate his point by referring to various experts in the field. For example he quotes the human rights activist, Ghazzi Suleiman, "The conflict in Darfur has nothing to do with marginalisation or the inequitable distribution of wealth" (Ibid 13). Surprisingly, Suleiman has many other statements that are damning to Khartoum's policies in Darfur that Hoile conveniently chooses to ignore. A Report by the Sudan's Human Rights organisation (Sudan Organisation Against Torture; SOAT), which Suleiman, heads reads:

The Government has practised the policy of 'starve your dog, and it will follow you' with the citizens of Darfur. People lack the very means of life, such as drinking water, food and medical treatment. In short, they lack every service crucial for human existence. This is the reality of day-to-day life despite the promises which all the administrators made personally during their rare visits to Darfur. [SOAT 1998]

The marginalisation of Darfur – along with other regions in Sudan- is well documented in the Darfur Movements' major publication "the Black Book" (The Black Book 2004). Similar information is equally available in many authoritative writings on Darfur. However, the fear that this marginalisation might eventually lead to war in Darfur was also brought formally to the attention of Khartoum Government as far back as 1999. The reminder came in a form of a memorandum to the President signed by 1300 Darfur dignitaries. Whether marginalisation warrants going to war or not is a separate matter. Its simple denial, as Hoile does, is simply cannot be taken as anything other than wilful blindness.

Having denied that marginalisation of Darfur is behind the war, Hoile then launches his own conclusions. Namely, that the Popular Congress Party instigated the war in Darfur, in its futile attempt to hit back at the Government and restore Turabi to power in Khartoum. Hoile again turns to various sources including the Government as well as other "experts" like Suleiman for support (ex. Time 2004, Al-Ahram 2004 and ICG 2004). Referring to the war in Darfur, Suleiman reportedly says:

It is a struggle to seize power in Khartoum, and the battlefield is in Darfur ... Turabi is the mastermind of the existing conflict in Darfur. If he is released and if the government tries to come to an agreement with him he will stop what is going on in Darfur in a week. [Hoile 2005:16]

Suleiman has certainly earned a good reputation as a human right activist and the role he played in that field over the last decade in Sudan is admirable. Nonetheless, if the quotation is accurate, Suleiman reduces himself to no more than an amateur political analyst. To assume that Dr. Turabi has the power to stop the war in Darfur in a week, when the international community has failed to do so in years is simply bizarre. But in some ways, both Hoile and Suleiman are simply repeating the Government's doctrine:

Sudanese Interior Minister.... Admitted as much: The Popular Congress (of Turabi) is involved in the incidences in Darfur and the JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) is just another face of the Popular Congress. The Governor of Darfur Stated that the Justice and Equality Movement was the military wing of the Popular Congress. [Hoile 2005:20]

The claim that Darfur war is the work of Turabi and his Islamist party faces another challenge as well. The numbers simply do not add up at all. Together with so many other sources, Hoile admits that, of the two Darfur Movements, JEM is the smallest. This face, however, does not seem to sway him from arguing that Darfur war can be reduced to a struggle between Islamist factions in Khartoum. Neither is the fact that there is a close relationship between the SPLM of the Southern Sudan and Darfur's Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). To make matters more difficult for Hoile's thesis, both the SPLM and SLM are not sympathetic, and are often antagonistic and hostile, to the Islamic political movement in the Sudan.

The alleged connection between JEM and Turabi's deposition from power is further betrayed by the sequence of events in the Sudan. While the formation of JEM and the SLM was formally announced in the year 2001, the establishment of JEM preceded the announcement by several years. JEM grew up as a clandestine organisation long before the onset of the intense power struggle between Albashir and his former master Turabi. The evidence for that is the compilation of the Black Book that Hoile himself credits to JEM activists. The Black Book took several years to prepare and was initiated in and around 1997, an era in which Turabi was at the pinnacle of his power in Khartoum Palace.

There can be no doubt that many of JEM leaders were once active with Turabi and later Turabi and Albashir's Islamic Front that preceded the formation of the Popular Congress and the National Congress Parties – of Turabi and Albashir respectively. It is also safe to assume that many of them learnt their ABCs of politics under the auspices of Turabi. Nonetheless, many other senior leaders of JEM, the authors of this piece included, were affiliates of other Sudanese parties across the board and ranging in colour from the Umma Party to the Sudanese Communist party. In fact the Islamic Front was only the last station for young Darfurian politicians in their search for a suitable political party. Moreover, the alienation and subsequent defection of Darfur politicians from Sudanese Islamic parties did not begin with Turabi and Albashir split over power. It started as early as late 1980s and well prior to Albashir's accession to power. Both Daoud Boulad and Farouq Adam serve

here as a good example. The former left the Islamic Front to the SPLM and was executed for its cause while the latter left the same Islamists as a member of parliament to join the Unionist Democratic Party.

Hoile's allegation that JEM is an affiliate or the military wing of the Popular Congress Party must come as a flattering revelation to Turabi and his associates. Nonetheless, it makes poor logic. Following the turn of global and national events regarding militant Islam, Turabi's party is left in total disarray. Turabi's threat to bring the streets of Khartoum out to his defence proved to be empty talk that failed to translate into action. Turabi may have had a formidable past but has certainly little clout when it comes to present and future politics in Sudan. The position of JEM in Sudan's politics sharply contrasts that. Whether Hoile and his masters in Khartoum Palace concede or not, JEM is an indisputable mover and shaker of future Sudan. As such, it is simply wrong to portray JEM as simply an appendage or a tributary to the Popular Congress Party. In fact, Hoile would be more logical if he is to reverse his assumption and take the Popular Congress Party as an affiliate of JEM. That, however, has not been suggested by anyone to date.

Financing the “Rebels”

Hoile accuses various foreign powers of instigating Darfur problem or elsewhere contributing to its escalation through provision of finance to the Movements. These powers range from militant Islamic groups (see below) to the governments of Eritrea and the United states. Thus Hoile writes,

It is additionally clear that the Darfur insurgents have had considerable external assistance. The Sudan Liberation Army, for example, is said to be receiving arms and support from Eritrea ... The insurgents have also been receiving military supplies by air.... CIA has reportedly supplied arms and money to Darfur's rebels... Washington is using Darfur's rebels, as it did in southern Sudan's thirty-year old insurgency, to destabilise the Khartoum regime. [Hoile 2005:24-25]

And later,

There is no doubt that USAID has been at the heart of the “talking up” of possible deaths from the ongoing conflict and has played a central role in the declaration of “genocide” in Darfur by the United States. [Ibid:26]

Further,

... the United States is actually helping to fund some of the activities of the very gunmen involved in killing policemen – gunmen who if not themselves Islamist extremists are nevertheless closely allied with the Justice and Equality Movement. [Ibid:31]

It is well known that Eritrea does not possess airlift capabilities to deliver weapons to Darfur Movements. That then leaves the fingers pointing at the United States and its government, but only if we assume that Khartoum

government and Mr. Hoile have abandoned their early assertion of Israeli involvement in Darfur's war. Leaving Eritrea aside, it beggars belief even to contemplate that the US government has acted to boost the war in Darfur, for election purposes or otherwise, as Hoile contemplates (Hoile 2005:94). Far from it, and as records after records show, the US government has been at the far front of any other government when it comes to ending Darfur's war. Indeed, many of our Darfur "rebel" colleagues and the international observers who have witnessed the Americans in action at the Darfur Peace Talks in Abuja will share our opinion in this regard. In fact, they describe the American Talks' officials as "bullies." so to speak, but for peace rather than for the continuation of war as Hoile suggests.

In a further attempt to defend his paymasters, David Hoile attempts to develop a connection between al-Qaeda and JEM in particular. This is where Hoile's analysis disintegrates into intellectual hooliganism. In a cheap and opportunistic exploitation of the atrocious September 11 disaster, Hoile states,

The Justice and Equality Movement is said to be receiving assistance from Islamic groups and al-Qaeda... Many of the members of the military wing of the Popular Congress now involved with JEM trained with al-Qaeda members in the 1990s. Minter states that al-Qaeda instructors, including specialists in guerrilla and urban warfare and logistics, have been involved in training Justice and Equality insurgents in Darfur. [Ibid:29]

The presence of al-Qaeda activists in Darfur is alluded to several times in the book. Yet, Hoile refuses to reference his statements or to provide supporting evidence for these assertions. The reader is then left confused whether the author is reporting what is already there or speculating about possible future turns of events:

Dozens of al-Qaeda terrorists were killed in Chad in 2004. Minter states that al-Qaeda involvement in Darfur "dovetails with other reports from North Africa. The desert wastes have become al-Qaeda's latest battleground. There is no doubt that al-Qaeda is already seeking to turn parts of the Sahel – and in this case Darfur – into the next Afghanistan. [Ibid:26]

Few pages earlier, Hoile notes:

In July 2004, for example, a Saudi national said to have been "preaching holy war" within a refugee camp in Chad was arrested. There have been violent scenes at the camp in which two refugees had been shot dead by local security forces. Arms caches had also been seized in the camp. [Ibid: 30]

The involvement of the United States in financing Bin Laden in his early years in Afghanistan was certainly callous and regrettable. Post-September 11 and the after the onset of the War Against Terror present us with a different world altogether. It takes an incredible level of naivety to suggest that both the United States and al-Qaeda are knowingly or unknowingly aiding the same

armed movements. This geopolitical reality seems to have escaped Hoile's notice. In fact, the most basic knowledge about Darfur war suggests the opposite of his assertion. Given the Arab-African twist that is so evident in Darfur war, it makes little sense to assume North African al-Qaeda operatives will back the African oriented "rebels." Rather they are more likely to fight for the Janjaweed with their quasi-Arab banners and the Sudanese government whose hatred of the United States is derived from its Arab-Islamic ideology and its failed Islamic Civilisation Project. Furthermore in support of our claim, the three-man delegation from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) visiting Darfur from 5-8 June 2004 concluded that,

The OIC is "totally convinced" that the international agencies and Western media have "misrepresented" the Darfur crisis and that Khartoum did its utmost to contain it ... [There have been] no wide scale atrocities by Arabs/Janjaweed against the indigenous Darfurians for whom the rebels are fighting. [Omar 2004]

And later,

The problem is by no means more than a tribal conflict over basic resources, namely water and pasture. [Ibid]

It is obvious that the Islamic organisation considering a humanitarian crisis of such magnitude only as a small tribal conflict is biased towards Khartoum government and hostile to the rebels- JEM included. This is all music to al-Qaeda and David Hoile, but its only status as evidence fatally undermines Hoile's argument.

More much damning evidence from the writers of this same report is easy to find,

The Muslim World has its share of blame for paying a blind eye to the mass slaughter in Darfur. The Arab League (AL) and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) purport to represent the interests of the Muslim and Arab worlds. But the majority of the AL and OIC member states are flagrant violators of human rights within their own jurisdictions. As a result, they do not command the moral authority to reign in the excesses of Sudan, a member state of both the AL and the OIC. [Omar 2004]

And it goes on:

The Arab League reluctantly sent a low-key mission to investigate the mass killings in Darfur. It reported "gross human rights violations" in a member state but quickly retracted its statement under pressure from Sudan. In the wake of threats of sanctions from the UN, some AL and OIC members have worked behind the scenes to protect the Sudanese government from any impending sanctions or military intervention. [Omar Ibid]

Despite all the dubious sources which Hoile quotes, he has not been able to point to any al-Qaeda operative in Darfur. His main reference is restricted to Chad. Darfur is now among the most heavily monitored spots in Africa by both military observers and the extensive presence of international organisations. At least this is the case since the start of the war. Hoile attempts to drag Al-Qaeda into Darfur war is a tendentious ploy aimed at discrediting the rebels in front of a Western readership. It simply fails to hold water.

All for the sake of Albashir

Hoile's attempt to cast the Darfur crisis as a covert support of Albashir's political ambitions does not come without waging war against almost every other source of information on Darfur. Casualties in Hoile's book are many. For example, Eric Reeves, a formidable and well respected Darfur analyst is unfairly described as lacking in objectivity, discernment and research skills, as well as being a source of disinformation on Darfur (Hoile 2005:105-106.). The western Media in general for Hoile displays inaccurate reporting, sensationalism, prejudice and hypocrisy (Ibid:142). Guilty western media outlets include reputable household names, like the Independent, the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Observer, the Economist, the Financial Times, BBC and many others.

As for international NGOs, they equally fail to please Mr Hoile as they, "collude with journalists to hide their own agenda" (Ibid:153). The list unashamedly includes reputable institutions like MSF, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. These groups are accused by Hoile of producing reports that are questionable and flawed (Ibid:159-167).

Obscene Logic

UN Security Council Resolution (1593) dealt a terrible blow to Khartoum government. What is crystal clear is that the Resolution was not instigated by Khartoum government's failure to protect its citizens as such. It was also not triggered by the government's attacks on the rebels. Rather, the Resolution was a culmination of the international outrage against the government attacks on Darfur civilians. While the government of Khartoum can continue denying its obvious links with its surrogate army known as Janjaweed, its aerial bombardment of civilians was evident for all, in and outside the Sudan. After tremendous international pressure, the government of Khartoum pledged to end all military aerial operations in Darfur. The pledge was by all means positive and was welcome by many including Sudan government officials. For some reasons, this is upsetting for Hoile:

That governments reserve the right to use air power in war is obvious. Air power has been used in every recent conflict – not least of which during the Iraq war and subsequent occupation. That civilians are often killed, injured or displaced during even the most clinical bombing attacks against insurgents has also been amply demonstrated in Iraq. The use of power in Darfur has been no different. [Hoile 2005:177]

We must take grave exception to Hoile's last sentence in the above quotation. Despite our disagreement with the Iraq war, we can state categorically that the parallel Hoile is making is not justified. There have been only scattered reports in Iraq indicating that American forces have been deliberately bombarding civilian locations. But this has been a regular feature of Khartoum military air operations, and it is this fact that has precipitated such a powerful international outcry. Indeed, the military air force of Sudan's government consists mostly of Antonov transport planes, which are hopelessly inefficient against armed "rebels." Even against innocent civilians who cannot monitor military radio communications, the performance of these planes has not proved lethal enough for liking of the Khartoum government. That was why government bombardment was often planned to coincide with Friday prayers and market days. Only through attacking a huge congregation of people was the government able to achieve its desire to inflict maximum carnage. One has to be more than simply dogmatic to compare that with the situation in Iraq. If Mr Hoile is still not yet convinced about Khartoum atrocities, here is a communication of some of these planes engaged in "military" operations:

Any village you pass through you must burn. That way, when the villagers come back, they will have a surprise waiting for them. [An Antonov pilot ordering a ground commander of a government army battalion in Darfur, Sudan; US Senator John McCain 2004:1]

And,

An Antonov pilot over Darfur reports to his Khartoum commander: 'there is nothing under me except grass cottages, Sir'. 'I order you to bomb them and expel their religion' (*Tally deenhum*; render them unbelievers) the commander orders back. [Personal Communication from members of Darfur Movements (author's translation)]

Who owns the book?

Checking Hoile's book on the computer websites is startling. Extracts and chapters of the book have already appeared in several sites. While it is legitimate for authors to post their work in websites before their final printing it in the form of a book, Hoile's case looks odd as it seems to flaunt internationally accepted writing traditions. Parts of the book have appeared under institutions that are not expressly linked to the author, for example. While Hoile can claim to have rights to what he writes in ESPAC in which he works as a director, he cannot say the same thing regarding some other websites like the official website of the Sudan Embassy, UK. What is bizarre is that parts of the book are produced in line with other Embassy briefings. As they do not bear Hoile's name, one would have assumed that these articles were written by the Embassy staff.

Hoile's book also appears in a number of websites: Espac (www.espac.org), Embassy of the Republic of Sudan, UK (www.sudanembassy.org), Sudan Vision Independent Daily (www.sudanvisiondaily.com), and perhaps other websites which I could not track down. In addition, Hoile also posts some of

his work in general websites like Sudan.net. To conserve space, let me give two examples.

Hoile has at least 12 postings in the website under Sudan Vision Independent Daily. These postings have been turned into chapters in his book. The use of the term “Independent” affixed to the title of the site is rather enigmatic as the homepage in question comes complete with Sudan’s flag. An article under title the “Darfur: Darfur in perspective (Part 4) was posted June 14th 2004. The name of the author has been withheld. Looking over the title of the article, which is also used for Hoile’s book, it appears that extracts appear in Hoile’s book (compare pages 21-28 and Sudanvision 2004). Yet another article was posted in the Sudan Embassy website, July 13th 2004 under the title: “The Darfur crisis: Looking beyond the propaganda” with no author attached to it. Extracts of this article appear in pages 11 to 24, 33, 165-166 of Hoile’s book as well, with no reference to the website (see Sudan Embassy 2004).

Conclusion

There is nothing wrong for David Hoile, or for that matter for any author, to hold views contrary to those of other writers. It is equally acceptable for him to work for the Sudanese government as a consultant or in any other capacity. The fact that the Khartoum government is on its way to the UN Security Council on war crimes charges should not make a difference either. What is deplorable is that Hoile disguises his true affiliation and masquerades as an “independent” human rights activist and expects the world to take him as such. That is what we find utterly despicable.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Modern Babylon? Prostituting Children in Thailand

Heather Montgomery, Berghan Books: Oxford, UK. 2001, 192pp.

Emma Heffernan

Western societies and cultures tend to constitute childhood as a time of happiness, innocence and dependence, however, Montgomery's account of child prostitution in Northern Thailand offers an ethnographically-based challenge to this notion. The legal definition of "child" at international level, such as Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, holds little resonance with Thai national and cultural norms. In many depictions of rural Thailand in particular, children are seen to occupy the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder, and are often pitied for their lack of agency and powerlessness. Instead, Montgomery portrays a world where children are viewed as an economic investment, one that will pay dividends at an early age through their labour. In short, work is an integral part of life for a poor Thai child.

In the early chapters, Montgomery provides us with the theoretical frame for her research by drawing on anthropological theories of childhood and kinship, and, by deconstructing Western notions of childhood, sexuality, and innocence, she argues against a universal notion of "childhood." In order to fully understand the phenomenon child labour, or indeed child prostitution as a form of child labour, prostitution needs to be understood as a "complex ideologically motivated issue," and not simply a choice between good and evil. Indeed, portraying prostitution as evil, simply negates all other structural inequalities. Child prostitution, she contends can only be viewed within its local socio-economic context incorporating moral issues within a broader framework of globalization. On this understanding, Montgomery posits child prostitution as a form of labour, allowing it to provide a legitimate framework for examining the lives of these children from their perspective, exploring how they rationalize selling sex, as opposed to other forms of labour. While Montgomery acknowledges the inherent dangers of child labour, and indeed child prostitution, selling sex can seem like a rational choice when faced with the alternatives such as scavenging, begging, sweatshops, family farms etc. By placing the child centre stage Montgomery allows the children to speak for themselves and what emerges from their narratives is a portrayal of the complicated, dynamic world in which they live, where issues of earning an income are bound up with notions of kinship, filial duty, reciprocal obligations, status, and power.

Chapters three, four, and five comprise the main ethnographic data, based on 15 months field work in Baan Nua, a small slum community of 14 households in a rural tourist resort in Northern Thailand. In this community, child prostitution is the dominant source of income, as well as a means of providing basic necessities, success in prostitution is also a means of conferring power and status as well as a moral authority. According to Montgomery, the subtly of status is key to understanding child prostitution in Thailand. As power and

money are synonymous, prostitution therefore as a comparatively lucrative endeavour, allows the children to accrue social capital thereby improving their status within the community and consequently asserting their identity. While many NGO and campaigners against child prostitution see child prostitution as the “ultimate horror,” the children themselves see it as simply another hazard they must negotiate in a life plagued with hardship and poverty. While Montgomery suggests that the children may be operating under a veil of false consciousness, in that they may be unaware of the wider hegemonic forces at play, she sees them as active agents in their own lives, capable of making choices and decisions and she shows us how they learn to survive with their everyday reality by developing coping strategies - over two thirds of her informants are addicted to drugs and alcohol. Also, the children cope by constructing prostitution as a form of reciprocity, rather than the anonymous selling of sex, long term clients are incorporated into kinship networks – clients become “friends” and prostitution becomes “going out for fun.” The children of Baan Nua constantly reject ascribed labels and earn money to support their families, accepting prostitution as part of their lives and within this framework construct themselves as devoted daughters, loyal family members and valued members of their wider community.

In the final chapters, Montgomery reiterates her argument that child prostitutes are not a homogeneous group and these children must be considered in their own terms, as individuals, as family members and as part of a distinct community. She proposes moving away from the stereotypical discourses castigating the child prostitute as an agentless “victim,” to a discussion on “tangible realities of child prostitutes in communities such as Baan Nua,” as a means of finding real solutions. Therefore it follows that if appropriate long-term interventions are to be made then the multiplicity of experience, as well as the children’s own justifications for their lives must be included in any solutions. If the prevailing structural inequalities are to be challenged and solutions to be found, this can only be achieved by listening to the children themselves, and by situating their lives temporally within their own local socio-cultural contexts rather, than focusing on child labour or prostitution as isolated phenomena. Child prostitution cannot be fully understood without its place in the wider social processes of “family, community, economy, and globalization.”

Overall, this book provides a fresh, child-centred approach into what is an intensely contentious and complicated issue. Montgomery tackles a difficult topic head-on while providing an ethnographically rich and theoretically engaging challenge to received wisdom. By placing the children centre stage Montgomery draws us into their world and forces us to confront issues the children themselves raise, allowing us to explore their world views, their ways of interpreting their lives and experiences, and thereby understand the choices they make within the different aspects of their social lives. This is an important book, and its reach extends beyond anthropology and should of huge interest to those working with vulnerable peoples whose voices otherwise go unheard.

Culture and the Human Body: An Anthropological Prospective

John W. Burton, Waveland Press Inc., Illinois 2001. (129 pages with Index and Bibliography and 7 pages of black-and-white pictures)

Chiara Garattini

Culture and the Human Body. An Anthropological Prospective provides a good introduction to the very much broader topic of body and culture. The book is clear, easy to understand and read, and it is also short. It begins treating the interaction of body, culture and evolutionary path of humanity, moving on with ideas pertaining the body as a 'cultural costume' (p. 1), then develops some ethnographic examples of body concepts and self-identity, with connections to status, gender and initiation rituals, and it concludes by discussing issues on the role played by technology in contemporary North American in shaping body's concepts.

None of these topics is treated in any great detail, but, in general terms, each argument is well outlined with hints to broader issues and some theoretical debates, and with clear ethnographic examples. Burton deliberately develops examples from western society, along with those of non-Western ones to avoid unduly exoticising this topic.

Burton throughout the book avoids any one specific theoretical paradigm (p. 3). In his opinion, being the relationships between culture and the human body are so diverse and vast, that they require multiple models and modes of interpretation.

In the first chapter Burton uses examples from physical anthropology and human evolution to outline the connections, since the beginning of our species, between cultural behaviour and physical alterations. The author follows physical anthropology's idea that "culture" and invention of technologies are the most important means of adaptation to the environment that the human animal possesses. This is a human specific characteristic and no other animal has "culture" and technology as their first and primary means of adaptation. Behavioural attributes, capability to learn, and vast modification of the environment are the traits that most dramatically set humans apart from other mammals. Culture was (and is) our strategy to cope with life's challenges. In the author's words, "The emergence of culture not only transformed the way we once lived, but likewise transformed the human body in the process" (p. 8). Burton especially points out the importance in the shaping of our body of dynamics of food sharing while living in groups for our species, of the interaction between brain development and abstract thought with tool manufacturing, of the role of fire and language in the development of modern humans since the appearance on the planet of the Genus *Homo*.

In the second chapter Burton discusses the interaction between body and mind, in particular the "self" as an extension and product of our social existence. Even our basic biological functions are very much mediated by learned cultural behaviour (p. 25). The "cultural self" and the body are mingled one in the other, through an interaction in which "the body mediates all that we do as intelligent, conscious beings" and "conscious human

motivations are largely the result of arbitrary cultural conventions” (p. 26). The author, in short, suggests that “our bodies are transformed within a matrix of cultural rules that allow us to read and therefore interpret and predict behaviour” (p. 31). In this transformation collective rituals play an especially important role in “providing meaning,” as much in creating as in recognizing meaning.

Finally, the author briefly exposes the relation between hierarchies of power and body, and how much controlling the social body is controlling the society at large. Surprisingly, he does not mention Foucault though, and this is probably the single greatest flaw in the whole book.

Burton in the third chapter discusses ideas of ethnicity, identity and the body. He focuses on the human being as social animal and on the role played by the sense of “belonging” to a group in shaping an individual’s identity. Through ethnographic examples Burton outlines briefly issues around identity, such as race and ethnicity, role played by names and faces, and body decoration, both permanent (tattoos, aesthetic surgery, body modifications, etc) and temporary (dressing up, body painting, hair dressing, etc). The author then moves on to talk about gendered bodies, and in particular in the fourth chapter he discusses some rituals deeply connected with body and gender. Relying on Van Gennep’s and Durkheim’s theories, he explores some of the relationships between rituals and transformation of an individual’s social status. In particular the author supports the idea that initiation rituals are one of the most significant occasions of negotiating and defining a culturally constructed concept of gender and gender differentiation (p. 70). He uses ethnographic examples from four groups: the Sambia of highland New Guinea, the Wogeo of Melanesia, the Tiv of Nigeria, and the Kaguru of Tanzania. The examples are not chosen, in the author’s words, because particularly adapted for cross cultural comparison, but “because gifted anthropologists have described them with enviable skills” (p. 70). He examines the idea that women’s physical and sexual maturity (like their role in childbirth) is more “self-evident” than their male equivalents. The author discusses the statement that this physiological difference is reflected in a generally greater cultural elaboration of male initiation rituals. In this perspective male initiation ceremonies could be also regarded as some attempt to assert symbolically a male equivalent to feminine reproductive creativity (p. 85-88).

Initiation rituals impose cultural rules to define and regulate sexuality and gender: ‘to be initiated means to be regimented and controlled, to be accepted and at the same time to be dominated’ (p. 86). Even though Burton exposes the hypothesis that there is, from male part, an attempt to control female sexuality (and, ultimately, reproduction), he prefers not to generalise about object and purposes of human sexuality and suggests (based on the general idea that women tend to desire men as sexual partners just as men tend to desire women) that a major role played by initiations rituals is to channel sexual intentions and desires in a culturally prescribed direction. Initiation rituals are also described as powerful means to fulfill human desire for belonging (through becoming member of a group), with also an empowerment of the individual and its social status accepted and recognised by the other members of a community.

In the last chapter Burton briefly treats some of the most important issues around the interaction, in contemporary North American society, between new technologies and the body. If it is true that the body have been object of cultural attention and modification all during human beings' existence, the author suggests that the difference of North American society today with other societies and times is the magnitude of technological modifications of the body available, and the degree to which the body have become another commodity 'in the world of global capitalism' (p. 89). In his words this is hardly surprising because 'As human technologies have become more complex, the human body has become ever-more dependent on complex forms of technology' (p. 89). He also points out how much in the last half-century "citizens" increasingly lost control of individual's bodies, now regulated through laws defined by the modern state.

Burton in this last part talks about how culture and new available technologies are also influencing concepts and policies of reproduction. New methods of contraception, new parental analyses and artificial reproduction changed the way in which parents experienced pregnancies. Technologies such as amniocentesis and sonogram provide the author with the occasion to open a discussion around contemporary debates as abortion for medical or not medical reasons (for example the tendency to abort female rather than males in countries like China and India). In this context the author briefly outlines issues of ethics around genetics, today and in the past, treating briefly also ideologies such as those of the eugenics movement and the social Darwinism. He also provides an overview of aesthetic ideals and the body, through a brief discussion of aesthetic surgery, neo-primitivism, and other forms of body modification.

The final chapter is dedicated to issues such as the objectification of the body and bodily parts, the role played by new technologies in shaping new ideas of death (i.e. the interaction between ventilator and definition of brain death), on body transplants and harvesting of organs, bioethics and medicine, and euthanasia.

The advantage (and, indeed, the main flaw) of *Culture and the Human Body: An Anthropological Perspective* is its shortness. It outlines clearly many of the complex debates around culture and the body, without going into details. For this reason, the work is suitable as an introduction to the vast topic of the cultural body, and to provide stimuli to look for further readings. Its clear outline of the main issues, its approachable language, and its shortness increases its desirability as an introductory textbook.

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