NE AA

BULLETIN
Fall 2011

Borders, Margins & Passages

Anne M. Galvin, Guest-Editor

Contents

CONTENTS

VOLUME EDITOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BOUNDEDNESS AND MOBILITY:

NEW APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF CULTURE IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

Anne M. Galvin, St. John's University

This issue of the *NEAA Bulletin*, titled *Borders, Margins, and Passages,* was conceived in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Northeastern Anthropological Association. The essays included reflect fresh ethnographic treatments of some of the most crucial theoretical questions facing the discipline as it enters the 21st century. The relationship between space, place, and culture has been a central concern for anthropologists since Herder's (1969) German romanticist equation linked "blood, nation, and soil." It remained important as early cultural evolutionists and diffusionists debated the nature of change, and it continues to be a focus of current disciplinary concern stimulated, in part, by globalization. Having moved beyond Boas's (1989) seminal usage of the German concept of *geist* (which helped to initiate the American anthropological tradition's treatment of culture as an entity specific to a particular people and territory), contemporary anthropologists now grapple with questions about cultural mobility and change, how spaces come to be culturally inhabited and defined, and how space and place are related. Rather than indicating an essentially historical shift that can be globally identified, this approach might be more readily linked to an anthropological sea-change—geographies are now defined as dynamic and fluid, rather than static containers for human activity—and to an acknowledgement of the "intersecting flows" that have been built one upon another throughout human history (Heyman and Campbell 2009). This approach, which utilizes the contributions of historians, economists, ecologists, geographers, and political scientists, transgresses disciplinary boundaries and moves beyond the traps of the modernist project, which attempted to naturalize the sturdiness of nations and borders (Anderson 1991; Mintz 1998).

Often glossed as "globalization," contemporary approaches to the study of change come in a variety of forms; this itself is a reflection of anthropology's holistic

character. However, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot usefully pointed out, the simple idea of a "world without boundaries" does little for the advancement of anthropological knowledge and serves to perpetuate images of the current state of the world initially created by marketing agencies (Trouillot 2001). Following Trouillot's lead, the various analytical approaches contained in this collection are unified and best conceived as contributions to an anthropology of "respatialization."

Covering a range of geographical areas and topical foci, the pieces in this collection represent a critical rethinking of globalized spaces in relation to recent retheorizations of the operations of culture and formations of place. How can these new theoretical approaches help anthropology to better frame the complex structures and spaces, created by human activity, that defy the sometimes-pat explanations provided by rigid conceptions of culture and modernist conceptions of space? The selections in this volume utilize the techniques of ethnographic inquiry to better contemplate the possibilities and limitations of these new approaches to culture, space, and change within the context of lived human experience.

Questions about the mobility and fluidity of culture, as well as the dynamic and living character of space itself, have opened up new terrains of inquiry for cultural anthropologists. Entities that were once considered to be objects—states, national borders, and environments—are being re-examined as projects, formations, and systems created by human activity, and by social, political, and economic agency (Appadurai 1996; de Certeau 1984; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Hannertz 1996; Heyman and Campbell 2009; Sassen 1998). Anthropologists have been forced to reimagine and reassess spatial theorizations of what constitutes culture and how culture can be constitutive of spaces, places, and geographies. This is true whether the places of study are artistic or sacred spaces, border spaces intended to regulate movement and define inside versus outside, or geographical spaces shaped by conflict and resettlement, gentrification or, at times, neglect.

Migration and Displacement
The contributions of Kathryn V. Boswell and Amanda J. Buonopane specifically address the question of cultural preservation and adaptation under the pressure of migration and resettlement in the respective contexts of Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso and Buffalo, New York. Boswell's piece deals with the struggles of Burkinabé who had long settled in Côte d'Ivoire, but then resettled in Bobo-Dioulasso after the outbreak of civil war in Côte d'Ivoire disrupted their lives and livelihoods.

Boswell's insightful use of Appadurai's work on "the social life of things" enables her to examine Burkinabé meaning-making through their use of material culture (Appadurai 1986). She explores their sense of dispossession, contrasting mobile and immobile commodities in relation to ideas of the "successful" migrant in Burkinabé society.

Buonopane's work on Ahmadi Muslims, persecuted in Pakistan and now establishing communities in upstate New York, demonstrates the adaptability of a group that has been characterized as inherently missionary in nature. Buonopane reexamines the meaning of proselytization in relation to the upstate Ahmadis' use of what she characterizes as "flexible" approaches to the advancement of the faith. She documents a shift in their definition of missionization: upon resettlement, the Buffalo Amahdi focused on creating continuity with the younger generation, rather than on the acquisition of new converts. By emphasizing Ahmadi "bridge-building" efforts, Buonopane calls into question the assertions of those who, like Samuel Huntington (1996), have insisted upon the inherent incompatibility of Islam and the West. She challenges the imagined boundaries erected by orientalist and Islamophobic discourses that were reinvigorated after September 11.

Crossings
Denise Nuttall's and William Landon's articles continue the theme of movement and travel, but in this case it is the West "going East" in search of spirituality and artistic inspiration that is opened up for consideration. Nuttall's work examines the growing phenomenon of Westerners seeking spiritual growth by following gurus in India. She examines the shift from *gurukul*—spiritual training under an indigenous guru master—to "guru cool," which she characterizes as a hybridized New Age spiritual training under a new style of guru local to urban contexts like Mumbai. Utilizing the work of George Marcus (1998), Nuttall identifies her subject as a "traveling field" that is embodied in its practitioners rather than housed within the boundaries of a particular national territory. Here she points to the deterritorialized nature of the New Age movement and to practitioners' participation in the "reproduction and reinvention" of New Age spirituality as a global practice.

William Landon's research blurs the boundary between cultural anthropology, performance studies, and literary criticism. In his piece, Landon explores the concept of an "intercultural theatrical experience" in the context of India and the West, making the crucial point that, given India's regional and linguistic diversity, not

even Indian theatre itself draws from a uniform cultural tradition. From this perspective, Landon probes the interconnections among inter- and intra-cultural theatre, linguistic translation and adaptation in theatre, and the political and cultural implications of theatre practice in modern India. By placing Indian theatre within a global context, Landon is able to tease out issues of identity and authenticity with which most postcolonial societies grapple, arguing that the deterritorialized politics of diaspora have opened a dialogue within the arts that is both particular and universal, allowing theatre practitioners to ask fundamental questions about what it means to be human.

States, Borders, and Margins

The contributions of Charles O. Frake, Anne M. Galvin, and Suzanne Simon address the political implications of spaces, whether they are defined as national borders, margins of the state, or both simultaneously. Frake's article draws us into the world of cigarette smuggling on the Philippine–Borneo maritime border in the 1960s to tease out the nature of national borders more generally. He suggests that borders are nothing more than arbitrarily drawn lines masquerading as "natural" boundaries. According to his argument, it is precisely this arbitrariness that allows states to confer upon these lines such decisive power.

My own piece is an ethnographic account of a socially and economically disenfranchised community in Kingston, Jamaica. The research sheds light upon how "margins of the state" can create internal systems of "legal" regulation outside the state's purview, thereby calling into question the applicability of Weber's (2004) "ideal state" with its exclusive domain over the legitimate use of violence. The research examines how the informal power structures that define these marginal spaces have come to constitute and determine the operations of the state itself in relation to policing and local-level governance strategies (Das and Poole 2004).

The article by Suzanne Simon utilizes concepts from ecological economics to analyze the U.S.–Mexico border as a marginal space between two states with implications for the health of the zone's shared environment and population. Treating the border as more than a periphery, Simon builds upon Das and Poole's (2004) work on borders as determinate of what lies within and without. In this research, she examines the "negative externalities" of maquila production as an uncalculated manufacturing cost in the form of polluted ecologies and sick bodies. Negative externalities here become a form of economic productivity, which bolsters multinational capital's quest for entrenchment in marginal spaces.

This collection of papers demonstrates the diversity of regional interests within the Northeastern Anthropological Association, drawn together around the theme of *Borders, Margins, and Passages*. The range of approaches to this theme attests to the ongoing utility of fieldwork as an embodied research practice that allows deeper understanding of the dynamism of the human experience, even in the context of sweeping global change and power realignments (Clifford 1993; Trouillot 2001). These realignments include changes to traditional boundaries within and between nations, and to interactions between people and those boundaries; changes in spiritual and creative production; and changes to the patterns of global capital. Rather than shelving this set of anthropological tools, these researchers demonstrate their applicability in the 21st century. Ethnography has much to contribute to the continued production of knowledge about the human experience, even as the character of that experience is increasingly shaped by global unevenness and respatialization.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Benedict
    1983   Imagined Communities. London: Verso.

Appadurai, Arjun
    1986   Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value. *In* The Social Life of
    Things. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 3–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
    1996   Modernity at Large. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Boas, Franz
    1989   A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883–1911.
    George Stocking, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clifford, James
    1993   Sites of Crossing: Borders and Diasporas in Late Twentieth Century
    Expressive Culture. Cultural Currents 1:1–4.

Das, Veena and Deborah Poole
    2004   State and Its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies. *In* Anthropology in the
    Margins of the State. Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds. Pp. 3–33. Santa Fe:
    School for American Research Press.

de Certeau, Michel
  1984   The Practice of Everyday Life. Steven Rendall, trans. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson
  1997   Beyond Culture: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference. *In* Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 33–51. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hannerz, Ulf
  1996   Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places. New York: Routledge.

Herder, J.G.
  1969   J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture. F. M. Barnard, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heyman, Josiah McC., and Howard Campbell
  2009   The Anthropology of Global Flows: A Critical Reading of Appadurai's "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." Anthropological Theory 9(2):131–148.

Huntington, Samuel
  1996   The Clash of Civilizations. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Marcus, George
  1998   Ethnography Through Thick and Thin. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sassen, Saskia
  1998   Globalization and Its Discontents. New York: New Press.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph
  2001   The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization: Close Encounters of the Deceptive Kind. Current Anthropology 42(1):125–133.

Weber, Max
  2004   The Vocation Lectures: Science as a Vocation, Politics as a Vocation. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

LINES ACROSS THE WATER:

THE LASTING POWER OF COLONIAL BORDERS IN MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA[1]

Charles O. Frake, SUNY Buffalo

I stand on the Malaysian Pulau Selingan off the coast of Sandakan in Sabah. I see two islands in front of me. On the left is Pulau Bakkungan, Philippines, on my right Pulau Bakkungan Kecil, Malaysia. The three islands form a triangle; I am told we are all about four kilometers apart. Somewhere between us is a watery formless border but I neither see it nor sense it. We are in a zone not quite Filipino, not quite Malaysian, but very aware of being Sulu. 'Borderline' explores the idea of an imposed border in a historically borderless zone.—I-Lann, Sulu Stories

Back in the 1960s, during the heyday of cigarette smuggling between the Malaysian State of Sabah, in Borneo, and the Philippine Sulu archipelago, I was once taken by friends on the Philippine island of Basilan to visit the lair of a notorious, but highly admired, smuggler. In his house, secluded within a dense coastal mangrove forest, our host displayed many goods from across the Malaysian border. The piece de resistance was a large grandfather clock chiming away happily in spite of having reached its current location via a long, turbulent, open-speedboat voyage through wind, waves, and treacherous currents (the *suluk* which gives Sulu its name). Our host entertained us with stories of his voyages back and forth across the border, which, by his account, always occurred without incident. When I pressed him for details, he said, "Come along next time we go, and see for yourself." "But I have no
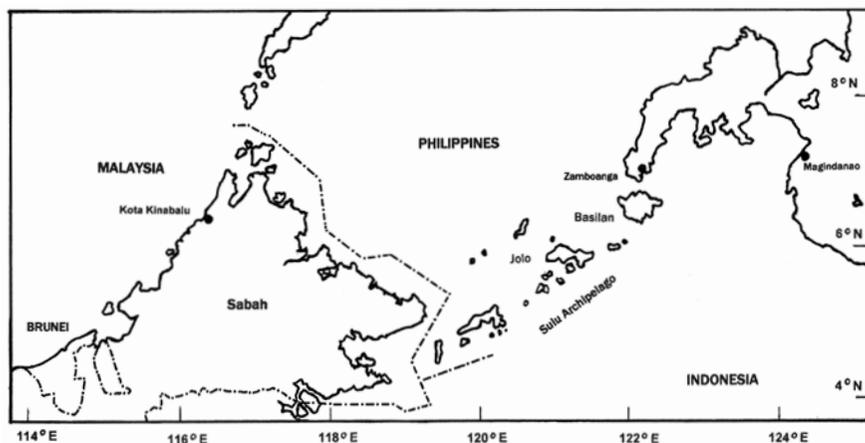
SABAH – PHILIPPINE BORDER

papers for entering Malaysia," I protested. (At that time there was no legal way to enter Malaysia via sea or air from Sulu). "Surely the Malaysian police will pick me, a white guy, out right away." "Do not worry about papers," our host replied, "we have a typewriter!" This seemed to me a rather cavalier attitude toward a national border, a line whose power in the modern world reaches sacred proportions. I did not trust their typewriter and never dared venture across that border.

How does an invisible line across the water come to have such power—an uncrossable barrier for me, a transformer of innocent petty trade into lucrative big-time smuggling for my host? Before we can begin to talk about this issue, we need some working definitions. The term *border* here refers to a kind of boundary. A *boundary* is whatever separates something from something else of the same kind—social classes, biological species, ecological zones, and cold and warm weather fronts. Many boundaries, like those between styles of cooking or between different languages, can be vague, ambiguous, and transitory. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Western Europeans devised a special kind of boundary, the national border, to separate instances of an emerging political unit, the nation-state. A *border* is a spatial boundary that takes the form of a line; one can only be on one side of the line or the

---

Indonesia, has contributed valuable information and perceptive critiques. My old Philippinist colleague, Harold Conklin, shared with me stories of his experience as consultant expert and translator for the Philippine officials involved in the 1960s border negotiations with the British and Malaysians. The map is by Terence Loan of Norwich, U.K.

other. One is either in France or in Germany. There is no in-between zone—except maybe for a "no man's land" between crossing barriers. Borders enclose the territory of a nation-state, the territory that ideally belongs to one natural, preexisting kind of people, the "nation." This vision of state, territory, and people replaced the ideal of a dynastic empire in which subjects of many ethnicities all owed allegiance to a supreme monarch. By the end of the 19th century, Europe had been totally carved up by borders enclosing new nations like Germany and Italy, older ones like France and Britain, and the surviving traditional "empires," the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman.[2] In the aftermath of World War I, the victors attempted to redraw the map so that borders more neatly enclosed a single kind of people. The old empires disappeared and many new nations emerged. But controversy and conflict continued. Since World War II and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the map of Europe has been redrawn several times and still more new nations have emerged. Behind all this conflict and controversy is the European commitment to nationalism: the idea of one people as a natural entity; one territory, the rightful homeland of this people; and one state, the nation, protected behind its borders from other similarly conceived nations.

This idea took a curious twist when, at the time Europeans were carving up Europe among themselves, European nations began to expand their territories through conquest into militarily weaker parts of the world: Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The rivalries sparked by this effort played a major role in the development of European nationalism and the rise of the nation-state as the dominant form of polity in Europe. The conquered territories, the colonies, were apportioned, as in Europe, by drawing borders on the map. But their placement on the colonial map was the result of power relations, wars, and negotiations among the European powers. It had little or nothing to do with locally conceived kinds of people or, often, even local topography. A tell-tale sign of this lack of regard for the local is the straight lines that mark so many of the borders in the colonial world—straight lines reputedly drawn by European diplomats in Berlin, London, or Paris.

A classic example of the arbitrary straight-line border is the border between Indonesia and Papua–New Guinea. This old colonial border, drawn in pre-World War I days between Dutch, German, and British colonies, is an almost perfectly

---

2 Hobsbaum (1990) and Anderson (1991) provide classic interpretations of the history of European nationalism.

straight line (there is a token curve to accommodate a large bend in the Fly River) of nearly one thousand kilometers crossing the high mountain ranges to exactly bisect the large island of New Guinea. Colonial borders were notoriously arbitrary: they largely ignored local peoples, polities, and topographies. By the end of the 19th century, Europeans had carved up and apportioned among themselves most of the remaining land in the world. This process has continued so that today every bit of land and most of the sea has been assigned to an exclusive nation. Even the uninhabitable arctic and the ocean bottom have not escaped this process. After World War II, as colonial peoples around the world regained political control of their lands, one might have predicted that these colonial borders, being arbitrary, would disappear or at least be redrawn. But around the world, these old borders remain even though the states they enclose now have new rulers and new names. The arbitrariness is now well recognized in both in postcolonial political discourse and scholarly literature. Some scholars and many African politicians have argued that this colonial-imposed arbitrariness is to blame for the problems of ethnic strife within and between postcolonial nations. If only the new nations could have "natural" boundaries in the nationalist image, the problems would disappear. A number of historians and political scientists argue that the borders are not really that arbitrary; they were drawn with local political considerations in mind, albeit the considerations of the competing colonial powers.[3] I argue here that colonial borders, like all national borders, were indeed arbitrary in their conception, but there is power in the arbitrary. It is the source of that power that needs investigation. Drawing support for my argument from local history, ethnography, and geography, I will focus on the pre-colonial zone of Brunei–Sulu, an area that embraces the Sulu and Celebes seas, their islands, and surrounding coastlines.[4] In pre-colonial times there were no borders here, no lines to cross. There were, however, centers of political and economic power located at the crossroads of maritime trade. These were the "port-polities" of island Southeast Asia.[5] Early polities such as Malacca, Makassar, Bone, Ternate, Brunei, and Sulu derived their power from their influence over the gathering and redistribution of the trade items of the day, local produce such as spices, rattan, sea

3 Nugent (1996) and Katzenellenbogen (1996) provide reviews and critiques of the African arguments.

4 The use of "zone" in this sense follows Warren's (1981) account of the Sulu Zone.

5 On the history of the maritime polities of island Southeast Asia see Kathirithamby-Wells and Villiers (1990) and Trocki (2000).

cucumbers, bird nests, and slaves exchanged for imported goods such as ceramics, metals, and textiles. They provided essential nodes in the network of commerce that linked the ancient and medieval civilizations of India and China with each other and with Southeast Asia and the Middle East. In the 12th and 13th centuries Islam began spreading across the trade routes of the Indian Ocean through South Asia and into Southeast Asia. It rapidly became the religion of the maritime world from East Africa to eastern Indonesia, providing a common identity for merchants and seafarers in this oceanic region of diverse languages and small competing polities. In the 16th century, Europeans, who were themselves competing against each other, surged into the midst of this complex world by forcibly seizing strategic ports in an effort to monopolize and channel trade to European markets. The European presence added new parameters of commerce, identity, and military technology to this picture, but the basic pattern of small, independent political centers expanding their influence outward from the ports and upstream from the river mouths initially remained (Reed 1988; Trocki 2000).[6]

The port of Jolo in the center of the Sulu Archipelago was strategically placed along trade routes from the Moluccas to China. It had as its titular ruler the sultan of Sulu, although the claim to that title and its scope of authority has been disputed. As a port polity Sulu was not only in competition with Maguindanao to the east and Brunei to the west, but, more importantly, beginning in the 16th century, with the European power of Spain operating out of its port in Manila and its Mindanao military outpost at Zamboanga. At the core of the Sulu realm were the Tausug of Jolo Island who were surrounded by peoples speaking a set of closely related languages known now to linguists as "Sama–Bajau" languages. Some, like the Yakan in Basilan and the West Coast Bajau of Sabah, were agriculturalists; others were boat-dwelling marine gatherers and fishers. But the vast majority of Sama speakers lived in villages along coasts, over reefs, or along estuaries of major rivers. They engaged in a variety of maritime-oriented activities: fishing, trading, smuggling, and piracy. Long before European presence in the region, Sama speakers had spread from the Sulu archipelago northward into the central Philippines, westward to the coasts of eastern Borneo and south to Sulawesi, Maluku, and the Lesser Sunda Islands. Although never politically integrated, these far-flung Sama speakers have retained a

6 See Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* and *Lord Jim* for vivid portrayals of life in the 19th century port-polities in Sulawesi and Borneo.

sense of linguistic and cultural identity. Most call themselves "Sama," while outsiders have long called them "Bajau." Some Sama speakers in Sabah have adopted this latter term for themselves, but in the Philippines it is used mainly by Christians and is considered rather derogatory.

Linguistic evidence sheds interesting light on the origins of the distinction between the two kinds of peoples in the region, the Sama (=Samal, Bajau, Lutao) and the Tausug (=Su(l)ug, Su(l)uk, Joloano). There is only one Tausug language with little dialect variation. Even though Tausug speakers can be found throughout Sulu and in Sabah, they are concentrated on the island of Jolo. Linguistically Tausug is a Central Philippine language very similar to the group of languages called "Bisaya'" in the Philippines. It can be shown to be especially close to the Bisayan of Butuan in northeastern Mindanao.

In contrast to the homogeneity of Tausug, the internal diversity and wide geographical spread of Sama languages gives clear evidence that Sama languages dispersed from the Sulu Archipelago preceding the appearance of Tausug in Jolo (Pallesen 1985). The Tausug must have been intruders from Butuan or, as the linguist Pallesen persuasively argued, they were originally Sama speakers trading and raiding in eastern Mindanao and intermarrying with local women. These women became the mothers of families in Jolo and the source of the mother tongue of successive generations of the "people of Jolo," literally the Tausug. Developing a distinctive language presumably added a symbolic weapon in their largely successful quest for political and economic dominance in the Sulu zone, but their dominance was also achieved through military struggle, diplomatic maneuvers, and commercial advantage. The Tausug, and also the Bugis of Sulawesi, reinforced their dominance by fostering a story—reversing real history—whereby the maritime Sama were said to be late arrivals in Sulu from Johor on the Straits of Malacca who subjected themselves to the Tausug. This self-serving story concocted by those in power has regrettably been accepted, not only by the dominated peoples, but also by many naive historians and anthropologists. When I presented a version of this paper in Sabah to an audience of mostly government officials, this account was met with surprise and disbelief. Among these Sabah officials were several self-proclaimed speakers of Sama languages, something that would be hard to imagine in the Philippines.

The popular image of fixed, unchanging, natural kinds of peoples, whether tribes or nations, is especially difficult to apply in the context of maritime Southeast Asia before the full impact of European nationalist colonialism was felt in the

19th century. That impact became manifest as the fuzzy boundaries between the pre-colonial identities and polities were transformed into sharp borders between newly created units and identities—reshaping but not eliminating the old ones. Boundaries became borders marked on the map by lines dividing up the colonial territories. This process seems to have begun in maritime Southeast Asia in 1824 when Britain and the Netherlands signed a treaty drawing a maritime border that ran through the Singapore Straits between their incipient colonial empires (Trocki 2000). Islands and peoples in the Straits and by extension all across the Malay world became, by a stroke of the pen, either British or Dutch. In the Sulu zone there was another European force to contend with: Spain. Since their arrival in the Philippines in the 16th century, the Spanish effectively halted the spread of Islam north of Mindanao. But Islam was sufficiently established in Mindanao and Sulu to resist Spanish control. Brutal conflict began which has lasted until the present. In the 19th century, Spain, aided by the development of the steam-powered gunboat, began to gain the upper hand militarily. In 1848 they destroyed the base of the notorious Sama pirates, the Balangingi. In 1851 they were able to compel the Sultan of Sulu to cede to Spain ultimate title to his domains, which then were seen by the Sultan and by the Spanish to extend the whole length of the Sulu Archipelago and to include Sabah. But North Borneo had its own complicated history of European, mainly British, involvement at this time. In spite of this treaty, the Sultan of Sulu in 1878 ceded his possessions in Borneo to the British North Borneo Company. The boundaries between British and Spanish control and between Sulu and Brunei were still unclear. An official Spanish map of 1882, interestingly titled "Filipinas y Joló" (Sulu is not part of the Philippines?), simply has "Sultania de Joló" written across northern Borneo and the Sulu Archipelago (Canamaque 1882). There were still no borders, only zones of contested and changing influence.

Vague as they were, the older colonial boundaries upon which the later, fixed borders were based had already become instrumental in shaping new identities. The power of the nation-state of Spain, which since the 17th century extended weakly and ambiguously to the area of the current border, has been instrumental in the development over the past 500 years of a special identity on the Philippine side, that of "Moro." In the 16th century, the Spanish, after sailing halfway around the world in search of a new route to the Spice Islands, encountered in the Philippines followers of Islam, the religion of their old enemies in Spain, the Moors or, in Spanish, *Moros*. They labeled all Philippine Muslims, regardless of language or ethnic iden-

tity, "Moros" in contrast to other local inhabitants of the islands who were labeled initially "Indios," then "Filipinos." During hundreds of years of bitter conflict, these labels came to mark strongly contrasting and mutually hostile identities. Moros, or *murus*, on the lips of a Christian Filipino was a derogatory epitaph for a hated enemy. The Philippine Muslims, in turn, labeled all Christians *bisaya* (slaves). Muslims did not use "Moro" amongst themselves and generally resented the label. All that changed in the 1970s after intense fighting in Mindanao and Sulu following the imposition of martial law in the Philippines by Marcos. New insurgent groups arose among Philippine Muslims. In an effort to overcome bitter rivalries among the various Muslim groups and find a label of unity for Philippine Muslims, these groups, quite consciously and loudly, began proclaiming themselves "Moros." They co-opted an ethnic slur and embraced it as a weapon to help forge their own common identity. "Moro" is now a meaningful identity specific to the Philippine Muslims. Its use has certainly not erased the ethnic differences among them— Sama, Suuk, Yakan, and Ilanun are far from united—but they all recognize themselves now as "Moros" (Frake 1998). There is, however, no single Moro language, although Christian Filipinos are always asking me if I speak "Moro."

Related to the development of this new identity on the Philippine side of the border is a negative development: the curious lack of use of the Malay language in the Philippines, in marked contrast to its prevalent use in Malaysia and Indonesia. The use of Malay really does stop at the border. On the Philippine side there are numerous languages, including Cebuano, Chabacano, and Tausug, that have limited regional use as a lingua franca, but there is no common means of communication throughout Sulu and Mindanao apart from the limited use of Tagalog and English. This situation has, of course, its roots in the colonial policies of Spain and America, as opposed to those of the English and the Dutch. But it is difficult to understand how these policies could have so effectively blocked the spread of such a useful common language. Why have the Moros not embraced Malay, the (for them) easily acquired language of their religious brethren in Malaysia and Indonesia, as their common language? History contains many puzzles.

In Sabah and Brunei, from the mid–19th century until World War II, there was a complex history of private British trading interests competing with each other, with local traders, with the Dutch, and with each other. These outside pressures continually reduced the territory claimed by the Sultanate of Brunei. In 1877 it ceded most of northeastern Borneo to the British North Borneo Chartered Com-

pany, and Brunei became a British protectorate. In the post–World War II period it eventually became an independent state. What is now the Malaysian state of Sabah became officially the British colony of North Borneo. By this time the Spanish in the Philippines had been replaced by the Americans, who inherited the struggles with Sulu, and who, after World War II, turned over political control to the Philippines. It was the new British Colony of North Borneo and the new Philippine Republic that negotiated the placement of the line across the water that became the border between Sabah and Sulu. Like the colonial border across New Guinea, this border includes a token deviation from a straight line across the sea. In 1948 Britain ceded to the Philippines a portion of the sea containing some of the Turtle Islands (Pulau Penyu). This may have been a concession to arguments by the Philippine government at the time asserting that all of Sabah, having been part of the Sulu rather than the Brunei Sultanate, now belonged to the Philippines. The concession had nothing to do with local interests or identities. That negotiated border became the Malaysian–Philippines border. In spite of its invisibility on the water, that line on the map immediately acquired the full powers of a firm national border, becoming officially uncrossable and reshaping the identities of those who crossed it unofficially. This border has been officially uncrossable since it was drawn and since officials were positioned on either side of it. Of course *officially* does not mean *actually*. People continued to cross the border as they had been for centuries before the border was conceived. But now they did it unofficially, that is, illegally. The crossing reshaped their identity.

The new national border both divided existing identities and created new ones.[7] Off Sempurna in southeastern Sabah the border cuts across the westernmost islands of the Sulu Archipelago dividing up speakers of the same Sama dialect and members of the same maritime-oriented communities. Those on the Malaysian side are called Bajau by outsiders, officials, and their principal ethnographer (Sather 1997); those on the Philippine side are variously called Samal, Luwa'an ("spit upon"), or (by Christians) Bajau. Whatever outsiders call them, to themselves they are all Sama. These border-straddling Sama have continued to visit one another relatively freely. Water is no impediment to local travel here. Petty trade continues as it always has.[8]

---

7 For similar impacts of a border drawn across mountains rather than seas, see Sahlins (1989).

8 Interestingly the border still effectively acts to restrict scholarly scope. Sather's (1997) superbly detailed account of the lives, culture, and history of the Sama just on the Malaysian side of the border makes little mention of their relations with kin and neighbors on the Philippine side.

The Sulu zone has for centuries been a hot bed of piracy, banditry, and terrorism; labels for acts of violence in these maritime areas are notoriously flexible.

In recent decades the invisible national border has had an increasing impact on the violent aspect of local life. Weapons have increased dramatically in both power and availability. Religious fervor has increased as the region is drawn into international conflict. The economic imbalance between the Philippines and Malaysia, their official religious differences, and their divergent politics manifest locally in a marked asymmetry of relations. Refugees, mostly Philippine Muslims, flee from the Philippines to Malaysia; there are no Malaysian refugees in the Philippines. "Terrorist" raiders come across the border from the Philippines, in one notorious case, to attack and take hostages from a dive resort for foreign tourists on an island on the Malaysian side of the border; there are no tourists on the Philippine side.

In addition to dividing existing identities, the Sabah–Sulu border has also fostered the creation of new national identities: Malaysian and Filipino. In the nation-state sense of citizenship, Malaysian includes non-Malays, and Filipino includes Moros and other non-Christians. It is these newly created citizenship identities that ultimately count in this modern world of income taxes, valid passports, immigration rules, and customs duties. In terms of the nation-state, you are who the state says you are. It is where you are and where you have been in respect to the borders of the state that determines who the state says you are. But the official voice of the nation-state, although powerful in official contexts, is often paid scant attention in everyday discourse. The border not only delimits official national identity, it also has the power to reshape the unofficial and illegal identities of everyday life.

The varying applications of the identity of "Filipino" nicely demonstrate the complexities of these permutations. Within the Philippines, in ordinary discourse among Christians and Muslims alike, Filipino [Pilipino, Pinoy] means a Christian Filipino in contrast to Moros and tribal peoples (the "indigenous" of contemporary official discourse, many of whom are actually now Christian). A Sama speaker from Sulu being interrogated by the Philippine authorities as a terrorist suspect is legally a Filipino national, but in local discourse (including the discourse used at the locale of the interrogation) he or she is a Moro, and definitely not considered a Filipino. Yet that same person can achieve status as a Filipino in local discourse by changing localities—by crossing the national border into Malaysia. In the Sabah capital of Kota Kinabalu, close to the seaside general market is another market known locally and labeled on tourist maps as the "Filipino market." A Filipino visitor from Manila would be surprised to find no Filipinos there. The vendors are all Moros, Muslim Sama speakers from Sulu. They live on the offshore island of Pulau Gaya in a large settlement of illegal immigrants from the Philippines. Their houses, built in Sama fashion over the water, are dispersed along the shore of the island. As in pirate days of old, when English Captain Forrest (1779) described the island as being located off "Pirates Point," Pulau Gaya has a notorious reputation among locals and police as a den of lawlessness, off-limits to outsiders. Our visitor from Manila would immediately recognize it as a "Bajau" village, a designation that Kota Kinabalu locals reserve for their own Malaysian Sama speakers residing in similar but much more prosperous-looking villages along the mainland coast. For the immigrant from the Philippines, the catch to this story is that, having shed the derogatory label of "Bajau" acquired in the Philippines and having achieved, by crossing the border, the status of a "Filipino," one finds that, in Malaysia, that is not at all a good thing. Shockingly, in Kota Kinabalu it is better to be a Bajau than a Filipino.[9]

The old colonial borders have retained this kind of power because they are arbitrary. Arbitrariness is a source of power that emanates from the work devoted to hiding that arbitrariness. If a line is located where it is for no apparent reason, it is difficult to formulate a convincing argument against it. The nation-state seizes this challenge as an opportunity. Arbitrariness invites explanation—explanation that accounts for the hidden "naturalness" that underlies the seeming arbitrariness. Nations expend a lot of work and shed a lot of blood in efforts to demonstrate the naturalness of the nation and its borders. Bloody sacrifices must be seen to have meaning, a meaning that justifies them. National borders are arbitrary, not because of where they are drawn, but because the nations they purport to enclose are, in fact, created by those very borders. "Now that we have made Italy, we must make Italians," a follower of Garibaldi is famously said to have proclaimed.

The arbitrary is powerful. A maritime border, an invisible line across the water, being apparently more arbitrary and thus requiring even more work to appear natural, can be still more powerful.

---

9 Because of lack of first-hand information, I have ignored Sabah's maritime border with Indonesia to its south. Inherited from British-Dutch colonial negotiations, its location has also been contentious and its impact on commerce and identities equally profound.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Benedict
1991   Imagined Communities. London: Verso.

Cojuangco, Margarita de los Reyes
1993   The Samals in History and Legend. Manila: University of Santo Tomas.

Forrest, Thomas
1779   A Voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas from Balambangan. London: G. Scott.

Frake, Charles O.
1980   The Genesis of Kinds of People in the Sulu Archipelago. *In* Language and Cultural Description. Pp. 311–332. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

1996   The Cultural Construction of Rank, Identity and Ethnic Origins in the Sulu Archipelago. James J. Fox and Clifford Sather, eds. Pp. 316–327. Canberra: Australian National University.

1998   Abu Sayyaf: Displays of Violence and the Proliferation of Contested Identities Among Philippine Muslims. American Anthropologist 100(1):41–54.

Gaynor, Jennifer
2005   Liquid Territory: Subordination, Memory, and Manuscripts among Sama People of Sulawesi's Southern Littoral. Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Anthropology and History. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Hobsbaum, E.J.
1990   Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

I-Lann, Yee
2005   Sulu Stories. Photo-art exhibit. Kuala Lumpur.

Kathirithamby-Wells, Jaya and Villiers, John, eds.
1990   The Southeast Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Katzenellenbogen, Simon
1996   It Didn't Happen at Berlin: Politics, Economics and Ignorance in the Setting of Africa's Colonial Boundaries. *In* African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities. Paul Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju, eds. Pp 21–34. London: Pinter.

Nugent, Paul
1996   Arbitrary Lines and Peoples Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa. In African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities. Paul Nugent and A. I. Asiwaju, eds. Pp. 35–67. London: Pinter.

Pallesen, Kemp A.
1985   Culture Contact and Language Convergence. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines.

Reid, Anthony
1999   Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Press.

Sahlins, Peter
1989   Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Saleeby, Najeeb M.
1905   Studies in Moro History, Law, and Religion. Ethnological Survey Publications 4(1). Manila: Bureau of Public Printing.

1908   The History of Sulu. Manila: Bureau of Science.

Sather, C.
1997   The Bajau Laut: Adaptation, History and Fate in a Maritime Fishing Society of South-eastern Sabah. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Trocki, Carl A.
2000   Borders and the Mapping of the Malay World. Paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, San Diego, March 9–12.

Warren, James F.
1981   The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898. Singapore: Singapore University Press

WASTE IN THE MARGINS OF THE STATE:

NEGATIVE EXTERNALITIES AND THE PRODUCTION OF THE U.S.–MEXICO BORDER REGION

Suzanne Simon, University of North Florida

This article explores the economic productivity of marginal or marginalized geographic spaces, with specific focus on the U.S.–Mexico border. In particular, I discuss ways in which the U.S.–Mexico border accommodates seemingly postmodern production processes of flexible production and accumulation (Harvey 1989) while simultaneously performing the quintessentially modern task of protecting, defining, and policing sovereign territorial boundaries. Modern European or postcolonial nation-states emerged out of the centuries-long transition from societies organized by blood, kin, or clan to societies organized by territorial boundaries. In the context of modernity, borders have historically demarcated the world's "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983) within which common cultures, languages, and legal and political systems were presumed to reside. Yet the territorial boundaries of modernity's nation-states are also essential components of contemporary global capitalism and postmodern production processes. Indeed, it is precisely national borders and the discordant environmental, labor, and pollution protection regimes they preserve that make present-day flexible and transnational production processes both possible and highly productive.

The Mexican side of the 2,000-mile-long U.S.–Mexico border provides a textbook example of global flexible production regimes and demonstrates the importance of national territorial borders to the economic organization of transnational production. I argue that a central component of the Mexican frontier region's economic productivity lies not only in the high presence of foreign-owned assembly plants throughout the area but also in the border's spatial and cultural marginality vis-à-vis both the larger Mexican and U.S. states. I suggest, additionally, that the production of waste has been of primary—rather than tangential or secondary—importance to the fundamental productivity of the border maquila

sector precisely because the spatial and cultural properties of the Mexican border region come together in such a way as to enhance the border's capacity to house "negative externalities." *Negative externalities* is an ecological economics term (Daly and Cobb 1989; Speth 2009; Tybout 1967) that will be used in this article to discuss the waste and wasting practices of the maquila industry in the northern Mexican frontier.

In the first two sections of this article, I discuss the historic marginality of the U.S.–Mexico border region and the role of the Mexican Border Industrialization Program (BIP) in encouraging the maquilization of the northern Mexican frontier. Section three elaborates on the term *negative externalities* and its utility for understanding the relation between waste, economic models, and contamination. Sections four and five describe, respectively, negative externalities in the U.S.–Mexico border environment and among Mexican laboring populations.

The Margins of the State
In *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, Das and Poole (2004) critique the conventional center–periphery model that underpins orthodox understandings of the nation-state. Briefly, they argue that western political philosophy and its incumbent humanist and social science disciplines have historically theorized the state according to the state's own internal narratives. These narratives have traditionally focused on liberal democratic convictions of contract and citizenship, while simultaneously drawing directly or indirectly upon a spatial understanding of statehood. For Rousseau, the absence of a state and social contract allowed the innocent and "noble savage" to flourish while, for Hobbes, the absence of a state meant just the opposite—an egoistic, barbaric rush in which life would be "nasty, brutish, and short." Das and Poole (2004) argue that this centrist narrative of and about the state has historically been under-scrutinized by anthropologists, with the unfortunate result that "marginal" zones and peoples have been amply studied for their anthropological value as "exotica" but not for much else. As Rosaldo pithily put it many years ago, "citizenship and cultural visibility appear to be inversely related. When one increases, the other decreases. Full citizens lack culture, and those most culturally endowed lack full citizenship" (Rosaldo 1989:198). Thus, the centrality of the state in western political thought—as well as the ideology of the state as a unitary institution (cf. Abrams 1977)—has been reflected in social scientific approaches to "margins" as areas of little significance to nation-state reproduction. Yet, as Das and Poole note, "Margins are not simply peripheral spaces. Sometimes, as in the case of the borders

of a nation's state, they determine what lies inside and what lies outside" (2004:19). If borders are lines that determine what lies inside and outside, how did the littered landscape of the northern Mexican frontier come to be?

There is also a historical narrative that complements this state-centered political philosophy, while simultaneously reinforcing the latter's overwhelming spatial tendencies. The dominant or preferred culture of any nation-state is often considered to be at its deepest and purest form among the populations that inhabit a nation's spatial core or interior. National cultures are often considered most sullied, diffuse, and irrelevant in the distant hinterlands of the nation-state. Stern voices this commonplace prejudice about the U.S.–Mexico borderlands when he notes that, "By their very nature, frontiers breed marginals, whether they are persons simply marginalized economically or socially or are, in fact, renegades, people who have rejected one cultural form for another" (Stern 1998:182). Early on, the frontier was a place for *marginals*—peoples ostracized from the emergent national cultures to the north or south (Stern 1998:158; cf. Worcester 1988). Early Spanish society viewed borderland dwellers as underclass barbarians—appropriate as frontier buffers, but little more. The ongoing prejudice of "interior" Mexican and U.S. populations toward borderlands peoples is typical of such center–periphery relations. Within the gradient that establishes the spatial and cultural core of a nation at its geographic center, Mexican border dwellers have been considered marginal and culturally suspect because of their distance from Mexico's interior and their dangerous proximity to those culturally "othered" yanquis.

The contemporary U.S.–Mexico border is one of the longest in the world to separate a First World country from a Third World country (Alvarez 1995:451). In the famous words of Gloria Anzaldua, it is an "open wound" where the "Third World grates up against the first and bleeds" (1987:3). Beginning with the region's original function as a fluid frontier between mutually advancing European nations, through its current hardening as a virtually steel-plated territorial marker, the borderlands have traditionally been a conflicted territory in which the interests of local and non-local actors have played themselves out. It has been shaped specifically by relations between Mexico and the United States, as well as by international development ideologies and discourses (Escobar 1995), so that the underdevelopment of the seemingly marginal border region is intrinsically linked to the overdevelopment of the bordering nations' centers. In recent years, of course, the border has unfortunately become known for drug-related violence; mass graves and massacres have

overwhelmed a previously bucolic Tamaulipas, and Cuidad Juarez is now recognized as one of the most dangerous cities in the world.

The Border Industrialization Program, Maquilas, and the Difference a Line Makes

The U.S.–Mexico border region that is familiar to popular and scholarly audiences today has a relatively recent history. It is largely the result of two intertwined forces: (1) the global trend toward multinational capital and flexible production regimes, and (2) the 1965 launching of the Mexican BIP.

Globalization has fundamentally altered the contours of commodity production and distribution since the early 1970s. According to David Harvey and others, the seventies witnessed a fundamental transformation of the global economy, such that oversaturated "core" economies sought new markets for their exports, while assembly and manufacture—historically located within a single factory—became transnationally parceled via an innovative commodity production chain. The novelty of this arrangement lay in the fact that the "factory" became global through the search for more favorable production conditions (e.g., cheap labor and lenient environmental and worker protection laws) at the same time that the capital anterior to the now globalized factory became ever more mobile, transitory, and, in Harvey's famous language, "flexible" (Harvey 1989; Robinson 2003:16–19). *Maquila* or *maquiladora* is the Spanish language name for the typically multinationally owned offshore assembly plants that are the basic units of this flexible economy. They are the "poster-child" plants of this postmodern, advanced, or late-capitalist production and accumulation regime, and they have been the most important actors in the reorganization of the northern Mexican border landscape from the mid-1960s until the present.

The first maquilas came to the Mexican frontier via the BIP, which emerged when the Bracero program came to an end, leaving seasonal Mexican guest workers and their families stranded on the Mexican side of the border without employment. The primary purpose of the BIP "was to absorb the former Braceros into the Mexican labor force so as to prevent their illegal immigration to the United States" (Rivera-Batiz 1986:263). It purported to provide factory employment to now unemployed men by locating foreign factories on the Mexican side of the border. As Mexican workers were being reterritorialized, multinational assembly platforms were being deterritorialized. The advantage of the Mexican frontier versus other Third World venues was the same then as it is now: quick and easy plant access for semi-literate, non-Mexican owners and managers, as well as cheap transport costs for finished products. The number of factories grew exponentially: in 1967 there were a mere 57; in 1976 there were 552, and in 1981 there were more than 600 (Seligson and Williams 1981:1).

Rather than provide jobs for unemployed men, however, the maquilas targeted young women (Fernandez Kelly 1983; Kopinak 1995:31); in a manner consistent with multinationals elsewhere, they sought "docile," young female labor (cf. Ong 1987). A Ciudad Juarez manager described the preference for women's labor this way: "'We hire mostly women because they are more reliable than men; they have finer fingers, smaller muscles, and unsurpassed dexterity. Also, women don't get tired of repeating the same operations nine hundred times a day'" (as quoted in Fernandez-Kelly 1983:181). Although this hiring practice was more prominent along Mexico's western border region, where Asian-dominated electronics or microchip industries were located, rather than along its eastern border region (Quintero Ramirez 1997), it reflected global trends elsewhere.

The BIP also initiated extensive northward migration (Seligson and Williams 1981:59–61) that continued unabated for decades. While NAFTA later purported to serve as a migration substitute, northward migration actually increased in the post NAFTA period, with maquilas still functioning as "powerful magnets" (Cornelius 2002:295). And just as border cities expanded exponentially as the factories "pulled" on interior populations, the export sector also exploded, growing by 17 to 20 percent per year between 1990 and 1997 (Hart-Landsberg 2002:20), and rising from 15 percent of GDP in 1993 to 33.5 percent in 1999 (Hart-Landsberg 2002:15).

Influenced by a border native's inimitable nostalgia, Ramon Ruiz's observations about the maquila–globalization link are worth quoting at length here:

> Today, life on the Mexican side of the borderlands only rarely conjures up that of the 1920s. For those of us who knew the old, the dissimilarity is striking. Since the 1960s, the arrival of assembly plants, an adjunct of the global economy, has radically altered the contours of Mexican border society. Old tourist hotspots recede into memory as urbanization, increasingly the offspring of offshore plants, takes hold, transforming hamlets into big cities; both Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez, plant kingpins, shelter hordes of inhabitants, hosting social ills typical of chaotic and unplanned growth. Migrants from all over the republic flock north, lured by dreams of a job in industry.

Yet globalization, what maquiladoras exemplify, merely shuffle the outlines of the asymmetrical relationship but hardly casts it to the winds. [Ramon Ruiz 2000:61]

Negative Externalities

Maquilas are the primary mechanism through which waste is so disproportionately produced along the Mexican side of the U.S.–Mexico border. What a difference a line makes. In order to understand the unique consequences of the production of waste in this region, it is best to refer to this waste by another term: *negative externalities.* The Mexican side of the U.S.–Mexico border is saturated with such externalities in the form of damaged bodies and contaminated environments, and its function as a marginal (and marginalized) culture and environmental area bears direct relevance to its four-decade history as a pollution haven.

Negative externalities are the by-products or pollution linked to most modern industrial production processes (Tybout 1972). They are waste, but not just any kind of waste. Rather, they are waste—produced alongside commodities by modern, industrial mechanisms—that get housed in local bodies and environments. With respect to the environment, they affect *public goods* (air, water, soil, etc.) and are referred to as *externalities* because the cost to public goods is not calculated into production costs (Daly and Cobb 1989:51–54). Negative externalities are "all the indirect costs of the environmental damage imposed on those downstream of polluters and on the public at large, costs that the unaided market does not require the polluter to pay" (Speth 2009:92); these externalities are largely public goods or "natural" resources which have yet to be commoditized, but which are integral to production processes.

Negative externalities figure highly within ecological economics models because classical, neoclassical, and neoliberal economic models elide waste as a hidden source of surplus value in production processes (Daly and Cobb 1989; Harris 2000; Speth 2009). As Harris puts it, "'Externalities,' such as damage from pollution, long-term resource depletion, overuse of common property resources, and insufficient provision of environmental public goods, are not taken account of in free-trade models" (2000:119). The advantage of the term *negative externalities,* rather than simply *waste* or *pollution,* is that the former draws attention to the fact that externalities are external only to the degree that they fall outside of traditional economic models. They are a function of the models themselves. Proponents of ecological

economics argue that these costs should not be hidden and, instead, should be calculated into the market value of a commodity. The goal is to move seemingly marginal negative externalities inward "to a system whereby the marginal environmental cost of an activity is incorporated into the price of the product being produced" (Speth 2009:96). In short, while orthodox economics treat nature as the background against which production takes place, the field of ecological economics inverts this model, foregrounding nature or public goods.

An additional advantage of the ecological economics model is that it pushes past the "trade–environment debate" (cf. Esty 2001) in which pro- and anti-globalization forces currently find themselves at an impasse. The intractability of this debate is a function of the false dichotomies and abstractions of orthodox economic models. A model that includes negative externalities makes refreshingly simple sense in its Marxist-inspired refusal to embellish the fact that all production begins with nature, and nature includes not only the seemingly "natural" world, but human bodies as well. In a chemically-inspired industrialized world, waste does not simply evaporate with the magical snap of a frustratingly invisible hand. Waste gets lodged in bodies and the natural world in ways that are decidedly uneven, mirroring "uneven development" and, simultaneously, reproducing both popular notions and practical realities of center and periphery.

"Garbage Imperialism[1]" in a Pollution Haven: Negative Externalities and the Environment

One of the most prevalent characteristics of the maquila boom on the northern Mexico border is the widespread contamination brought to the region by industry. Peña rightfully refers to the maquila industry as an ecological "disturbance regime" (Peña 1997:286–287). It is a well-documented fact that the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexico border has functioned as a pollution haven for maquilas, as noted by Leonard: "The relative dearth of effective environmental and health controls has enhanced Mexico's attractiveness to some U.S. firms participating in the maquiladora program" (1988:154).

_____

1 I attribute this term to Stebbins (1992) who describes this imperialism that continues to shape "north–south" or "developed–underdeveloped" relations. The international transfer and highly spatialized production of toxic waste is such a constitutive feature of contemporary globalism that its absence from Appadurai's (1996) typology of scapes would be curious were it not for the fact that environmental justice and racism has never been considered a particularly "sexy" anthropological topic.

The evidence and effects of maquila dumping is irrefutable at this point, as is the fact that the border region is essentially an environmental wasteland (Brenner et al. 2000; Mouro-Eraso et al. 1994; Simon 1997). Numerous toxicological, public health, and environmental studies have been done, both pre- and post-NAFTA, demonstrating beyond dispute the high levels of toxic chemicals that saturate the border environment. Border cities in which maquilas cluster are particularly toxic, and wastes from these cities are carried downstream via the Rio Grande. Mercury, nickel, lead, chromium, arsenic, DDT, phthalate, zinc, copper, xylene, toluene, benzene, ammonia, battery acids, and numerous other chemicals have been found that far exceed levels permissible in the United States.[2] (Brenner et al. 2000:278–279). The following unnerving suggestion has been repeated numerous times in slightly different ways by a range of reputable sources: "There is a Bhopal taking place in the border zone; it is merely taking place over months and years, rather than seconds and minutes" (Brenner et al. 2000:280).

The area is saturated with organic wastes because border cities' population growth has far outpaced the building of infrastructure that could support such growth: "As border cities expand, so do the massive quantities of sewage" (Barry and Sims 1994:30). Most *colonias*[3] have limited plumbing, if any. Ditches are dug through new colonias to collect the run-off from indoor plumbing, eventually draining the *aguas negras* (sewage) into estuaries. These aguas negras, which carry infectious disease, find their way into the Rio Bravo, then into smaller channels and, equally ominously, into ground waters. It has been estimated that 25 million gallons of raw sewage flow into the Rio Grande each day from Nuevo Laredo alone.

Moure-Eraso et al.'s report is typical of the situation:

> Two of Matamoros' *colonias* (or squatters' camps), where maquiladora workers live, are next to open drainage ditches. Residents of one colonia obtain water from shallow wells (less than 20 feet deep) made by improvised hand-drilling methods, within approximately 100 feet of the drainage ditches of FINSA, an industrial park. [Moure-Eraso et al. 2000:316]

Aguas negras are a serious and pervasive problem in border environments. Indeed, the environmental justice movement I studied during fieldwork in Matamoros (see below) was devoted principally to the eradication of a wastewater canal. As Fox reported, waste water canals, along with chain link fences, became part of the "conventional establishing shots of the border" that U.S. audiences came to know during the NAFTA debates (Fox 1999:46).

The maquila industry and the hardships of life in border cities gained considerable media attention during the course of the NAFTA debates, making an explicitly local concern a cause for bi-national outcry from certain sectors. The U.S.–Mexico borderlands came to function as a symbol of the hazards of globalization and free trade worldwide, with many maintaining that all of Mexico would be transformed into a free-trade zone under NAFTA conditions. With the emergent (if belated) awareness that pollution knows no borders, the debates drew attention to the fact that communities on both sides of the border faced environmental health risks because of the maquila industry. The concern for common environmental, health, and labor challenges catalyzed cross-border environmental organizing in both the pre- and post-NAFTA period (Brooks and Fox 2002)—even as environmental, rather than labor, concessions secured NAFTA's approval by the U.S. Congress.

While populations and ecology on both sides of the border may clearly suffer as contaminants travel through water or air emissions, it is disingenuous to suggest that the Mexican and U.S. sides are equally contaminated. My contention is that wastes, as negative externalities, were and are housed principally on the Mexican side of the border; to the degree that the U.S. border region suffers, it is due to contiguity only—again, precisely because of the difference a line makes. The majority of untreated toxic and chemical wastes have historically been dumped directly into the immediate Mexican—not U.S.—environment. Mexican border residents suffer higher levels of contamination than their U.S. counterparts because of the concentration and proximity of the toxins that are deposited in their local environment, whether it is the by-products of the lead smelting plant Alco Pacifico of Tijuana or the calcium sulfate donated by Quimica Fluor to "pave" Matamoros roads. The

---

2 The scholarly resources on this, as well as on environmental and worker contamination more generally, are so vast that extensive space would be required to document even a handful of them. I refer the interested reader to the extensive footnotes and bibliography at the conclusion of Brenner et al. (2000), as well as the numerous websites and cross-border coalitions devoted to these issues.

3 *Colonias* are unincorporated settlements on either the Mexican or U.S. side of the border. On the Mexican side, the term is used interchangeably with *neighborhoods* and typically refers to settlements within city limits. On the U.S. side, *colonias* are typically beyond town limits. In both cases, residents tend to be recently arrived im/migrants, and the settlement lacks services (roads, plumbing, electricity) until the *colonia* successfully petitions the town or city for such services.

brilliant border theorist, José David Saldívar, is a native of the southern Texas–Tamaulipas borderlands, and like Ramon Ruiz, Saldívar can provide a firsthand account of the environmental "wasting" of the region:

> In my childhood in Cameron County in South Texas, I saw the Texas–Mexico borderlands turn into an ecological wasteland, with more than ninety-three maquiladoras pouring out toxic waste and endangering life chances and life experiences on both sides of the border. As a result of these unregulated factories (of General Motors, Quimica Fluor, PEMEX, among others), there have been in the last decade what the border journalist Ana Arana calls "a disturbingly high number of anencephalic births" (a rare disorder that leaves infants without a complete brain) in the Rio Grande Valley. [Saldívar 1997:19]

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Matamoros between 2001 and 2003. The fieldwork focused on two different, but related, social justice movements. Las Caracaras,[4] the environmental justice movement with which I worked (Simon 2006), was located in a poor colonia in the southernmost outskirts of the city. Members of Las Caracaras were concerned with a range of environmental and environmental justice issues, demonstrating the interconnectedness of pollution and contamination problems in this and other waste-saturated cities. A brief list of their foci would look something like this: the anencephaly cluster mentioned above by Saldívar; Quimica Fluor's paving Matamoros roads with calcium sulfate; the fate of the Laguna Madre to the south of the city; an inextinguishable fire in the municipal dump; increasing environmental awareness within the city; and policing maquila dumping in city canals. Their primary focus, however, was on the open aguas negras canal that snaked through 13 colonias, eventually reaching the once pristine and brackish, but increasingly polluted, Laguna Madre. The canal was located less than two hundred feet from the home of Las Caracaras' leader; I drove past it every day for over a year, but the movement's members had to live next to it. The canal's vapors always constituted nothing less than an olfactory assault of both the chemical and organic kind. When we drove far south of the city to locate precisely the meeting point between

---

4 Pseudonyms are used throughout this essay for organizations, individuals, and neighborhoods. The only original proper names used are those referring to cities (e.g., Matamoros) or natural landmarks (e.g., Laguna Madre).

the canal and the laguna, we smelled it long before we saw it, and we literally followed our noses to the effluent's edge. Children whose families lived near the canal's banks often suffered hair loss and discolored skin patches. During the rainy season, the canal would sometimes overrun its banks and rats would invade neighboring homes. These were the kinds of problems with which the impoverished, yet determined, Las Caracaras members were concerned.

Wasting Bodies in the Production Process

Does the logic of negative externalities apply to people as well? The search for cheaper labor has been a driving force behind the spread of offshore assembly plants since the 1970s. Equally important, in the case of Mexico and other developing nations, is the comparative advantage of cheap labor ensured by poorly enforced health and safety regulations (Denman 1992; Graubart 2005; Kourous 1998; Simon 2007). This is especially true for the maquila enclave. Failing to provide appropriate safety equipment or raising production quotas to dangerously high levels puts workers' bodies at risk in the same way that the natural environment is put at risk through the injection of toxins into the air and water. The failure to safeguard workers' health lays open their bodies to wasting processes as workers are exposed to chemicals, glues, solvents, and other unsafe labor additives. In short, laboring bodies become repositories for negative externalities that are not figured into production costs and, in fact, are hidden sources of surplus value.

In *The Body as an Accumulation Strategy*, Harvey (2000) describes the laboring body as an "unfinished project" whose production is embedded within commodity production processes themselves. The effect of this Marxist perspective is to displace the notion that bodies (and peoples) in capitalist economies exist a priori as atomistic and discrete units whose relations to commodity production processes are secondary to their original and, allegedly, fully formed identities and bodies. This perspective draws attention, instead, to how bodies function as nodes within commodity production processes, and how social identities are forged partly as a consequence of the ways laboring bodies are situated within broader social relations of production. In short, bodies are produced alongside commodities; they are not coherent units that maintain discrete boundaries and physical existence separate from the production processes of which they are a part. As part of the assembly of parts that forms the conditions of production, human bodies—like other cogs

in the proverbial machine—become conduits through which forces of capitalist accumulation wind:

> This entails a relational–dialectical view in which the body (construed as a thing-like entity) internalizes the effects of the processes that create, support, sustain, and dissolve it. The body, which we inhabit and which is for us the irreducible measure of all things, is not itself irreducible. This makes the body problematic, particularly as the 'measure of all things.' [Harvey 2000:98].

While in Matamoros, I conducted ethnographic research among existing and former Spektra workers. Having filed a petition under the NAFTA Labor Side Agreement (Simon 2007), Spektra workers reported a range of (alleged) chemical and mechanical assaults. While their particular tribulations were not that different from workers at other maquilas in Matamoros or in other border cities, the sophistication of their petition was beyond compare: workers documented both a rash of anencephalic births and spontaneous abortions within the plant (with suspected ties to a specific glue), as well as wrist, forearm, and shoulder injuries so well known that, if or when they sought employment after Spektra, workers were viewed as "damaged goods" or "jonkeados.[5]" As one Spektra victim put it: "Spektra es bien famosa!" [Spektra is well known!][6]

Wright (2001) has studied the wasting of female bodies in the "Ciudad Juarez femicide" of recent years, adding perhaps the most innovative cultural and discursive insights to an otherwise materialist analysis. Although her focus is on gender, her insights help explain why certain bodies might be more easily "wasted" than others. Arguing that the Juarez femicide is intrinsically supported by a labor turnover narrative that implicitly condones the "wasting" of women's laboring bodies and the limited lifespan of a maquila worker, Wright demonstrates that the maquila life course is one in which waste accumulates relentlessly, and the inevitable

---

5 This is a "Spanglish" amalgam indicative of factory practices rather than a fancied border patois. Contrary to popular conceptions, border language is not a seamless Spanglish invention. On the U.S. side, one encounters ample Spanglish; on the Mexican side, that Spanglish is largely absent excepting Mexican border cities' hallowed circle of upper-crusts who shop, work, and do business on "the other side." It is unusual to find a Spanglish term like "jonkeados" among a Mexican border cities' poor; it means literally "junked" and, less literally, "wasted."

6 Tape recorded interview conducted with Angelica in her home in the Colonia Veinte de Noviembre, Matamoros, Tamp., May 23, 2002.

conclusion of a "wasted" maquila life is death:

> Mexican women represent the workers of declining value since their intrinsic value never appreciates into skill but instead dissipates over time. Their value is used up, not enhanced. Consequently, the Mexican woman represents waste in the making, as the materials of her body gain shape through the discourses that explain how she is untrainable, unskillable, and always a temporary worker. [Wright 2001:127]

Although gender is clearly the operative term in Wright's analysis, her insights into mutually reinforcing waste narratives—labor turnover combined with moral valorization—apply to the wasting of bodies in the maquila production process as a whole.

How does the damaging of workers' bodies serve capital accumulation? Foreign-owned assembly plants have migrated to southern countries for the past 40 years precisely because of the failure to enforce labor or environmental laws. Lack of enforcement results in a guaranteed revenue source that naturally gets folded back into profits and capital accumulation. In addition to regular exposure to glues and solvents, Spektra workers were regularly harassed into meeting higher production quotas. Accumulation and profitability, as noted by Cooney (quoting Marx) is typically achieved by "(1) lengthening the working day, (2) increasing productivity, and (3) increasing the intensity of work" (2001:70), all of which caused a range of enduring muscular-skeletal injuries among existing and former Spektra workers.

Conclusion

I have argued in this essay that the U.S.–Mexico border region functions as a quintessential "marginal" zone, and that the price of marginality in the northern Mexican frontier has been the environment and workers exposed to unheard-of contamination levels. Emphasis has been placed on the Mexican side of the U.S.–Mexico border in order to draw attention to (1) the ways in which multinational capital seeks out marginalized areas for wasting practices and (2) the inescapable economic productivity of negative externalities, whether housed in bodies, ecologies, or the space in-between. Decades ago, the inimitable Raymond Williams anticipated the ecological economics school's contemporary emphasis on negative externalities with his own observations of how humans, nature, and everything in-between are always already in the process of production. Writing about capital-

ism's mystification of the relation between producers and things produced, Williams stated the following:

> We ourselves are in a sense products: the pollution of industrial society is to be found not only in the water and in the air but in the slums, the traffic jams, and not these only as physical objects but as ourselves in them and in relation to them. In this actual world there is then not much point in counterposing or restating the great abstractions of Man and Nature. We have mixed our labor with the earth, our forces with its forces too deeply to be able to draw back and separate either out. [Williams 1980:83]

If, in the "mixing" that Williams refers to above, one adds "Chemicals" to "Man" and "Nature"—as is appropriate in our chemically dependent age—it becomes clear that the productivity to which he refers is, in effect, "chemically dependent." Given the fact that (1) neither science nor law has yet to catch up with the chemical advances of modern industry (Jasanoff 1995) and (2) the long-term effects of the chemical saturation of bodies and ecologies is uncertain, this author finds it safe to say that the negative externalities housed on the Mexican side of the U.S.–Mexico border will eventually amount to a price that neither ecological economics nor the maquila industry can calculate anytime soon. Not least in the incalculability of actual costs is the issue of duration: as demonstrated by the misnamed 2010 Gulf of Mexico British Petroleum Oil "Spill," once chemicals are released, it is impossible to know the long-term effects of contamination. Chemical contamination produces permanent or semi-permanent changes to the chemistry, biology, and properties of places and peoples. The halcyon dream of returning to an original state once a pathogen has been removed is nightmarish at best and naïve at worst. Negative externalities are not simply waste, but assaults on public goods and peoples—the costs of which might currently be incalculable, but the parameters of which are as predictable as Aunt Jemima and apple pie.

REFERENCES

Abrams, H. K.
    1979   Occupational and Environmental Health Problems along the U.S.–Mexico Border. Southwest Economy and Society 4:3–20.

Abrams, Philip
    1977   Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State. The Journal of Historical Sociology 1(1):58–89.

Alvarez, Robert
    1995   The Mexican–U.S. Border: The Making of an Anthropology of Borderlands. Annual Review of Anthropology 24:447–470.

Anderson, Benedict
    1983   Imagined Communities. London: Verso.

Anzaldua, Gloria
    1987   Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Appadurai, Arjun
    1996   Modernity at Large. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Barry, Tom and Beth Sims
    1994   The Challenge of Cross-Border Environmentalism. Albuquerque: Resource Center Press.

Brenner, Joel, with Jennifer Ross, Janie Simmons, and Sarah Zaidi
    2000   Neoliberal Trade and Investment and the Health of Maquiladora Workers on the U.S.–Mexico Border. In Dying for Growth: Global Inequality and the Health of the Poor. Jim Yong Kim, Joyce Millen, Alec Irwin, and John Gershman, eds. Pp. 261–292. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Brooks, David and Jonathan Fox, eds.
    2002   Cross-Border Dialogues: U.S.–Mexico Social Movement Networking. San Diego: Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies.

Cooney, Paul
    2001   The Mexican Crisis and the Maquiladora Boom: Paradox of Development or the Logic of Neoliberalism? Latin American Perspectives 28(3):55–83.

Cornelius, Wayne
  2002   Impacts of NAFTA on Mexico-to-U.S. Migration. *In* NAFTA in the New Millennium. Edward Chambers and Peter Smith, eds. Pp. 287–304. San Diego: Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies.

Daly, Herman and John Cobb Jr.
  1989 For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future. Boston: Beacon Press.

Das, Veena and Deborah Poole
  2004   State and Its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies. *In* Anthropology in the Margins of the State. Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds. Pp. 3–33. Santa Fe: School for American Research Press.

Denman, Catalina
  1992   Productos Toxicos y Potencialmente Peligrosos en la Industria Fronteriza. *In* Ecologia, Recursos Naturales y Medio Ambiente en Sonora. Jose Luis Moreno, ed. Hermosillo, Sonora: Gobierno del Estado de Sonora, Secretaria de Infraestructura Urbana y Ecologica y el Colegio de Sonora.

Escobar, Arturo
  1995   Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Esty, Daniel
  2001   Bridging the Trade–Environment Divide. The Journal of Economic Perspectives 15(3):113–130.

Fernandez Kelly, Patricia
  1983   For We Are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Fox, Claire F.
  1999   The Fence and the River: Culture and Politics at the U.S.–Mexico Border. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Graubart, Jonathan
  2005   "Politicizing" a New Breed of "Legalized" Transnational Political Opportunity Structures: Labor Activists' Uses of NAFTA's Citizen-Petition Mechanism. Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law 26:97–142.

Harris, Jonathan
  2000   Free Trade or Sustainable Trade? An Ecological Economics Perspective. *In* Rethinking Sustainability. Jonathan Harris, ed. Pp. 117–140. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hart-Landsberg, Martin
  2002   Neoliberal Myths: A Critical Look at the Mexican Experience. Monthly Review 54:7.

Harvey, David
  2000   Spaces of Hope. Berkeley: University of California Press.

  1989   The Condition of Postmodernity. Cambridge: Blackwell Press.

Jasanoff, Sheila
  1995   Science at the Bar: Law, Science, and Technology in America. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kopinak, Kathryn
  1995   Gender as a Vehicle for the Subordination of Women Maquiladora Workers in Mexico. Theme issue, "Labor and the Free Market In The Americas," Latin American Perspectives 22(1):30–48.

Kourous, George
  1998   Workers' Health is On the Line: Occupational Health and Safety in the Maquiladoras. Borderlines 6(6):1–4.

Leonard, H. Jeffrey
  1988   Pollution and the Struggle for the World Product: Multinational Corporations, Environment, and International Comparative Advantage. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moure-Eraso, Rafael, with Meg Wilcox, Laura Punnett, Leslie Copeland, and Charles Levenstein
1994 Back to the Future: Sweatshop Conditions on the Mexico–U.S. Border. Community Health Impact of Maquiladora Industrial Activity. American Journal of Industrial Medicine 20:311–324.

Ong, Aihwa
  1987   Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Peña, Devon Gerardo
  1997   The Terror of the Machine: Technology, Work, Gender, and Ecology on the U.S.–Mexico Border. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Quintero Ramirez, Cirila
  1998   Restructuracion Sindical en la Frontera Norte: El Caso de la Industria Maquiladora. Tijuana, Baja California: COLEF.

Ramon Ruiz, Eduardo
   2000   On the Rim of Mexico: Encounters of the Rich and Poor. Boulder: West-
   view Press.

Rivera-Batiz, Fransisco L.
   1986   Can Border Industries Be a Substitute for Immigration? The American
   Economic Review 76(2):263–268.

Robinson, William
   2003   Transnational Conflicts: Central America, Social Change, and Globalization.
   London: Verso Press.

Rosaldo, Renato
   1989   Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis. Boston: Beacon Press.

Saldívar, José David
   1997   Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies Berkeley: University
   of California Press.

Seligson, Mitchell A. and Edward J. Williams
   1981   Maquiladoras and Migration: Workers in the Mexico–United States
   Border Industrialization Program. Austin: University of Texas, Mexico–U.S. Border
   Research Program.

Simon, Joel
   1997   Endangered Mexico: An Environment on the Edge. San Francisco:
   Sierra Club Books.

Simon, Suzanne
   2007   Framing the Nation: Law and the Cultivation of National Character Stereo-
   types in the NAFTA Debate and Beyond. *In* PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthro-
   pology Review 30(1):22–45.

   2006   Environmental Justice as Place-Making: A Study of Mexican Migrants,
   Transnational Advocacy, and Urban Rehabilitation in Matamoros, Mexico. Social
   Justice: Anthropology, Human Rights and Peace 6(1):1–29.

Speth, James Gustave
   2009   The Bridge at the End of the World. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Stern, Peter
   1998   Marginals and Acculturation in Frontier Society. *In* New Views of Border-
   lands History. Robert Jackson, ed. Pp. 157–188. Albuquerque: University of New
   Mexico Press.

Tybout, Richard A.
   1972   Pricing Pollution and Other Negative Externalities. The Bell Journal of Eco-
   nomics and Management Science 3(1):252–266.

Williams, Raymond
   1980   Ideas of Nature. *In* Problems in Materialism and Culture. Pp. 67–85.
   London: Verso Press.

Worcester, Donald
   1979   The Significance of the Spanish Borderlands to the United States. *In* New
   Spain's Far Northern Frontier: Essays on Spain in the American West, 1540–1821.
   David Weber, ed. Pp. 1–16. Dallas: First Southern Methodist University Press.

Wright, Melissa
   2001   The Dialectics of Still Life: Murder, Women and Maquiladoras. *In* Millen-
   nial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism. Jean and John Comaroff, eds.
   Pp. 125–146. Durham: Duke University Press.

THE RISE OF THE "GURU COOL":

GLOBAL CROSSINGS OF THE NEW (AGE) GURUS

Denise Nuttall, Ithaca College

The phenomenon of following a guru, or a learned master of spiritual or other traditions, is on the rise in India. It is not unusual for a disciple to negotiate between one or more learned masters in either single or multiple traditions. While these masters ground their teachings within traditional indigenous knowledge systems, they are also drawing on non-Indian traditions from elsewhere in the global community. Whereas, once, gurus would impart information to their disciples intensely by living side by side, today the global guru is constantly on the move, crossing international borders and establishing relations with large numbers of students.

The indigenous system of the *gurukul,* of living with and learning from a master, seems to be giving way to a system, the "guru cool," whose teachings connect strongly to what we might call New Age knowledge. Drawing from my own research in connection to Indian music gurus (Nuttall 2007) and recent observations of three spiritual masters in Mumbai, I examine the powerful evolution of this new guru cool, which originated in Mumbai but is now crossing back and forth between communities around the globe. What are anthropologists and anthropology to make of these newly created forms of teaching that seem to be simultaneously Indian and "other"? Indeed, are we witnessing what Cscordas (2007) has recently described as a transnational transcendence on a globalized scale? Cscordas claims that if we look at global religious phenomena or modalities of transnational transcendent practices (such as yoga) we may find a movement "toward the status of universality—toward becoming world religions in a literal sense" (Cscordas 2007:259). How are we as ethnographers and analysts to account for the increasing globalization of the religions, spirituality, and cultural traditions of India as they are now practiced (often simultaneously) in Mumbai, New Delhi, San Francisco, and Dubai? In this paper I offer a partial perspective on the movement of young, urban disciples, both Indian and non-Indian, toward alternative spiritualities. The constant in these continuous

global exchanges, I argue, is the highly sophisticated, complex guru–disciple institution (*guru–shishya parampara*) originating in Hindu cultures and still at work in the passing on of knowledge systems, whether spiritual or other.

Traveling Fields

My interest in "traveling fields," border crossings, and the movement of Indian cultural traditions outside of India and back again, stems primarily from past research on gurus, disciples, and tabla (Hindustani, or North Indian, percussion) players.[1] Since 1995 I have been involved with tabla communities in New Delhi, Mumbai, Toronto, San Francisco, Vancouver, Bremen (Germany), and elsewhere. In living the life of a tabla disciple or student[2] in a particular school (*gharana*), located both in Mumbai and in other locations around the globe, and in following the masters of this complex percussive system, I have always been "on the move" in my anthropological field. I have come to learn that anthropological fields do not necessarily exist out there in the world (Nuttall 1998) in some geographic–spatial arena, but rather are embodied, disciplined ways of living, both locally and globally. It has become increasingly clear to me that anthropology needs to work toward multifaceted ethnographic documentation of "traveling fields" located here and elsewhere (Marcus 1998). These fields simultaneously encompass embodied ways of knowing and doing, the endurance of indigenous knowledge systems, and the formation of a global (but not necessarily universal) cultural system or systems. This is not a story of European or Western knowledge systems simply being mapped onto cultures on a global scale. The ethnographic descriptions and subsequent discussion I offer here show that cultural practices are changing within India, as they travel from India to elsewhere, and return alongside other cultural traditions (religious and otherwise) to form an intricate, vibrant, and massive movement of global spirituality.

While living and working in Mumbai and New Delhi over the years I have come to meet many gurus (both traditional and modern). The first gurus I met were connected with my research on tabla players. I also encountered spiritual masters at a local NGO called ADAPT,[3] who work with disabled students, as well as able-bodied, predominantly low-caste students. I came into contact with other gurus through relations with friends from all walks of life. And while I have always been tuned-in to the presence of spiritual teachers all around me (whether they be *swamijis*, dressed in saffron robes, or my own music gurus who, like chameleons, adapt their dress and ways of interacting as they travel the globe), it has only been in the past ten years that I have noticed a different kind of spiritual mentor emerging in Mumbai and in other major metropolitan areas of India. These learned and charismatic leaders whom I have met in my travels, I suggest, form part of a larger system of transnational mentors guiding thousands of practitioners daily on their journeys of spirituality. In doing so, the "guru cools" can be seen as active participants in the reproduction and reinvention of a complex, global, cultural practice of New Age spirituality, which connects thousands of people both locally and virtually, and allows for a modern religious identity regardless of an Indian or "other" ethnicity.

Transnational "Guru Cools"

Babaji. While working with ADAPT, I met and spent time with Babaji, their local spiritual master, who also happens to be the brother of the founder, Dr. Mithu Alur. Babaji (known outside of ADAPT as Swami Mounananda), has dedicated his life to guiding the teachers at ADAPT in their daily struggle to make sense of the pain experienced by children, and by the parents of those children, who are living as able–disabled in a culture that does not "see" them.[4] Through many conversations and lectures, Babaji has shown me a way to stillness and silence that no other spiritual master has been able to do. Early on in his married life, Babaji left his wife and daughter to pursue a "silent" and pious life, to help others unconditionally. Asking their permission, he took a vow of silence for many years, lived in the forest, and

---

1 See Nuttall 1998: In my doctoral dissertation I told the story of my journey as an apprentice with various tabla masters including Ustad Alla Rakha Khan and Ustad Zakir Hussain in Mumbai, San Francisco, and Seattle. Also see Nuttall 2007: The later section of this paper, titled *Gurus and Disciples: The Traditional Path* stems primarily from earlier dissertation research on the relationship between gurus and disciples in Indian cultures.

2 Often disciples prefer to call themselves "students" (perhaps as a result of globalization?). Even in my tabla school, the political implications of using "disciple" versus "student" is apparent, as the guru may consider some foreigners (those who perform continuously) to be "disciples" and others as "students."

---

3 ADAPT or *Able Disabled All Peoples Together* was formerly known as *The Spastics Society of India*. ADAPT has many schools located in Mumbai today, however, the major complex at the Bandra site includes space for teaching and administrative work, as well as for research and human rights advocacy.

4 In this paper I adopt the phrase *able–disabled* in reference to the constituency of students attending classes at ADAPT in Mumbai; they include both able-bodied low-caste populations as well as children and youth who have visible or invisible disabilities. The NGO promotes a teaching philosophy of inclusion, placing able and disabled together in each and every class. The concept and practice of inclusion is seen as a critical perspective for larger changes in societal attitudes.

learned about renunciation from his *guruji* (guru) in Rishikesh. Following the traditional path of a holy man or *saddhu* was, for Babaji, pivotal in the creation of his new life and identity. Eventually Babaji made his way back into the life of his daughter (Shonali Bose, now a filmmaker in Los Angeles, and the Director of *Ami*) and joined his sister in advocating for disabled peoples in Mumbai and New Delhi. Joining in to politically promote human rights for children, such as those with cerebral palsy and other physically challenging conditions, Babaji became a leading spiritual guide for the teachers at ADAPT, keeping them centered and helping them question their ways of doing and knowing in the world of the able–disabled. Additionally Babaji is sought after by many in America who are seeking a spiritual path in their lives. While visiting his daughter in Los Angeles, New York, and elsewhere in America, Babaji gathers disciples from around the globe. He does not actively seek out disciples, rather disciples seem to find him, stay with him, and learn from him.

Babaji's teachings are not based solely on Hindu scriptures but are inclusive of all religions; he draws on other spiritual masters and teachers such as Eckhart Tolle, who is famous for his book, *The Power of Now* (1997). Babaji is inspired as much by Buddhist teachings as he is by Hindu texts, stories, and philosophies. He even includes what we would call science or pseudo-science in his teachings. For example, his favorite DVD, *What the Bleep!?: Down the Rabbit Hole* (2006) inspired in him countless hours of rumination on the relationship between science and the spirit. The authors of *What The Bleep!?* express a firm belief that scientific and spiritual pursuits are one and the same. This belief in the intimate connection between science and religion is common within other spiritual transnational schools as well.

I include Babaji as a figure who is partway between the older conceptions of a swamiji and the more recent idea of a "guru cool." One day he may dress in a saffron robe (while wearing running shoes) and the next day in khaki pants, a t-shirt, and sunglasses. He promotes an image of an in-between holy man, an older, "hip" guruji who is constantly on the move, living both here (America) and there (Mumbai). And, like other guru cools, Babaji's teachings are inclusive of many non-Hindu religious texts. Like Swamiji, the learned spiritual master from Nasik, Maharashtra, whom Kirin Naryan (1989) describes, Babaji changes elements of particular stories or teachings depending on who is in his audience at the time. He carefully draws in individuals, one by one, referring to a part of their personality or using their name during the weekly seminar gathering at ADAPT. These gatherings typically take place on Tuesday after lunch in the main lecture hall, away from the hustle and bustle of the office or the classroom. Teachers, administrators, physical therapists, and guest workers from abroad come together to listen to Babaji's spiritual teachings for the week. Sometimes his message is deeply intellectual, but always it is spiritual and meaningful. Babaji asks everyone to reflect on issues relating to pain, suffering, and the intense work that they do with the children day after day. The seminars provide a positive space for workers to discuss the often-difficult emotional effects of working with the able–disabled in Mumbai.

Prasad. A few years ago I became close to Leenata Shah, a graphic designer who lived in Juhu, an upscale neighborhood in Mumbai. I was first introduced to Leenata through another friend who had worked with her in an advertising agency. And although I have known about Leenata for the past ten years, having met at house parties through mutual friends, we have only gotten to know each other recently. My vision of her in the early days was one of an upper-class, wealthy woman—a young, on-the-move designer bursting with energy and champing at the bit to make a name for herself in the growing industry of interior design. Today she lives quite a different life, in part because of her new spiritual path, which, she suggests, was "sent to her." Although Leenata is still in pursuit of a career that incorporates the fields of interior design and painting with youth counseling, her life-path has shifted to include spirituality. I introduced Leenata to Babaji and although she spent time with him, she was not interested in following him because earlier she had met and befriended a young, dynamic master of meditation, Prasad Karmarkar. Prasad, born and raised in the Dadar area of Mumbai, embodies little of the older swamiji image. I told Leenata that I wanted students from Ithaca College to learn meditation as part of an upcoming anthropological field school, so she brought Prasad to the house where I was staying, and there we conversed for the first time. He told me about his life, his spiritual path, his near-death experiences, and his actual death experience during heart surgery! His surgeons kept seeing a "breakage," as he referred to it, close to his heart. They would open him up and the breakage would already be repaired or non-existent. During one of his surgeries he stopped breathing, thus experiencing a moment of his own death.

Prasad found his spiritual path as a teenager learning from a German spiritual master (Karl Everding) who would travel back and forth to Mumbai. Eventually Prasad followed Karl to Germany to live and dedicate his life to his guruji, a meditation and Reiki master. Prasad was an intense yet down-to-earth person who wore

jeans, a t-shirt, and sunglasses, held a cell phone in his hand, and projected absolute love in his heart toward all. He was, at the very least, intriguing to me as a leader for the meditation retreat I was arranging for a study-abroad course. During our conversations, Prasad also provided some insight into the path that Leenata had now taken up alongside her interior design career. It was during this time that I understood the weight of his influence on Leenata. He is a modern-day guru who is youthful, intelligent, and easy to confide in. He brings joy into the lives of a great number of people who come to him for meditation, transformation, or peace of mind.

At the heart of the New Age Spirituality is the notion of transformation, the belief that a spiritual path can be achieved through a variety of meditative techniques and energy-healing practices such as Reiki. These healing paths center on the practice of connecting self to other and by extension integrating communities both local and global. My observations indicate that the actual form of healing is not at issue in these communities. Rather, an emphasis is placed on the movement toward transformation of the spirit, life, or lifestyle, and the desire to heal oneself and others.[5]

My students participated in Prasad's transformation retreat and, in the process, learned a variety of meditative techniques as well as how to perform Reiki as a healing energy. The Reiki intensives constitute one part of Prasad's activities as a master healer. In recent years his appeal as a leader of meditation has resulted in mass meditations in Mumbai and in places he travels outside of India (Shah 2009). In Mumbai, this young guru manages to bring together over five hundred people within a few days for large meditations, and holds bi-weekly meditations for his regular followers (approximately forty or fifty students). He also creates and conducts Reiki workshops, counseling sessions, and leadership intensives, as well as other meditation intensives that are held in Mumbai, Dubai, Frankfurt, San Francisco, and elsewhere around the world. Prasad is a much sought-after, hip guru who has transformed many lives in his role as leader or mentor. Today's hip gurus are technologically savvy, casually dressed, youthful in appearance and spirit, and seem to draw disciples predominately, although not exclusively, from the younger generations.

---

5 Green and Green note that "eastern traditions and a variety of metaphysic systems posit the existence of chakras— "etheric organs" which conduct a type of life energy referred to in different traditions by various names (eg, prana, qi)" (Green and Green in Levin 2005:93). Indeed the belief and practice of transcendent healing practices such as reiki promote the idea of these organs as mediating the "flow of life energy, engendering 'higher' orders of consciousness" (Green and Green in Levin 2005:93).

Prasad's website mentions a discipleship of 1,000 people as of 2006; I have since learned that this has grown to approximately three thousand as of 2011 (Morani 2011). In our early conversations on transformation and healing, Leenata suggested that young people connect quickly with Prasad. Students in particular relate to his way of speaking and his form of dress, which reflect a more modern lifestyle than that of older, traditional spiritual gurus. I later found out that indeed Prasad does have a special way of communicating with others; more specifically, his teachings resonate quite strongly with college-age students.

As I walked Leenata to her meditation circle one monsoon evening just down the road from where I lived in Bandra West, I was taken aback by the number of disciples lining up for the ritual communion. They seemed to be in their late teens, early twenties, and into their thirties, but mainly consisted of young, college-aged and career-minded individuals. I was asked to join in but quickly turned around and headed home for the night. Already having my own guruji meant that crossing the border into another spiritual community could increase the personal–emotional risks I encounter down the road. And although Prasad has tried to convince me to come into the center of his life and his spiritual path many times and in many ways, I stay on the outside looking in.

It is important to note the complex position I hold in Prasad's community as both an academic and as a partial participant in his way of life and teachings. Coupled with this dual role as sometimes an insider and participant in his community and sometimes an outsider anthropologist and academic, I have been devoted as a student and disciple to a family of tabla musicians initially headed by Ustad Alla Rakha Khan until his death in 2000 and now by his son, Ustad Zakir Hussain. Even though many in India search out multiple gurus or teachers of learned traditions and constantly negotiate between them, I have realized that submitting completely to one teacher is a practice that is carried on for a lifetime.

I have written elsewhere on the benefits (Nuttall 2007) of apprenticeship as a specific form of participant-observation in anthropological fieldwork; in this instance my fieldwork demanded full submission toward one guru. At the time I met Prasad I was seeking a leader in meditation for my students as part of their field school activities and, as such, I was not looking to commit to another master. During the retreat I was allowed to participate in various rituals or observe them—either up close or at a distance. I felt as though this created a unique, pivoting of my perspective in an anthropological field site. Staying on the outside of the Reiki intensive,

observing the transformation of my students, allowed for insight into cultural and ritual practices that I might not have seen otherwise. As the field school was focused on student learning, and not necessarily on my participation in a larger anthropological study, I felt it necessary to stay on the margins as much as possible. Since this retreat I have sat with Prasad and his senior disciples in meditations, fully engaging or participating in his teachings in the moments of "sitting" together. Meditating with Prasad is a powerful and intense way of being spiritual. I have experienced visions or insights during these moments that have provided clarity for me concerning relationships and events in my life.

Chariji. A number of years ago my friend, Tushar, who had risen to the top of his profession in the financial sector in Mumbai, dramatically changed his lifestyle. After meeting his guru Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, or simply Chariji, Tushar gave up smoking, drinking alcohol, and eating meat. Chariji heads a Raja Yoga meditation centre, Sahaj Marg, run under the umbrella organization Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM), located outside of Mumbai. This is a very large organization claiming membership from disciples worldwide. Although based in Mumbai, meditation centers can be found in over one hundred countries including America and Russia, as well as some predominately Islamic countries. Chariji, notes Tushar, is very much a modern guru cool who speaks strongly against the traditional trappings of the false guru and "gurudom" (Rajagopalachari 2010:123–125). Searching for a guru, according to Chariji, should be an internal search, and when the aspirant is ready, the guru will come to him. One must simply pray directly to God with deep longing and, as he states, "when we are ready for him the guru will himself knock on our door" (Rajagopalachari 2010:127). He goes on to state that "what really happens is that Master 'prepares the field,' as he puts it, by continued work of a spiritual nature. Receptive souls are attracted toward him, and the contact becomes a direct spiritual contact" (Rajagopalachari 2010:129).

Chariji promotes a spiritual concept of inner transformation and the integration of all human beings. His followers are expected to become *abhyasis* (we who practice) or meditation practitioners. One does not necessarily engage in face-to-face, daily contact with the guru or spiritual guide to become an abhyasi. Indeed the guru cannot meet face-to-face with all members worldwide on a daily basis; because of this he has preceptors who sit with practitioners to help carry out the work of the guru. Tushar has, in recent years, become one of Chariji's preceptors. Raja Yoga meditation is based on a key concept of the transmission of energy (or *trans-*

missions) from master to disciple using the master's spiritual power. Energy transmissions take place through *samskaras* (cleanings). This subtle energy is said to remove or clean the negative impressions gathered throughout the day. As a result, the "abhyasi experiences actual 'lightness' during his meditation sittings" (Rajagopalachari 2010:136).

The changes in my friends' lives—from predominately material and career-centered to spiritually centered, in which they actively seek out a guru or, like Leenata, "just happen to be taken along to a meditation circle and never look back,"—reflect changes in the lives of Mumbaikers living in a world that is economically, socially, culturally, and spiritually globalized. Many in their forties give up eating meat, drinking alcohol, or consuming other substances they have relied upon to get through the stress and intensity of living in a "rising," fast-paced culture, and now they attach themselves to spiritual masters like Babaji and Chariji. In Mumbai and around the globe urban–cosmopolitan youth are also finding their way toward a spiritual path through the new modern, technologically savvy masters who rely not so much on Sanskrit texts (although they may include them) but on New Age, alternative spiritualities.

Leenata and Tushar have not abandoned their careers to follow their spiritual leaders. Transformation does not necessarily negate pursuing financial security.[6] Clearly there has been a shift in their life goals: their new focus on spirituality makes demands on their time as they help others find their path through transformation.

Transnational–Transcultural Transcendence?
Cscordas (2007) reminds us that within the discourse of globalization, world systems, and transnationalisms the "role of religion remains understudied and under theorized" (Cscordas 2007:259). Rather than promoting an idea of globalization and religion as separate analytic categories alongside the global economy and communications, global population and diasporas, Cscordas suggests that we think more along the lines of the globalization of religion. Similar to Clifford's (1993) early work on border crossings, and Appadurai's recent discussions of "global eth-

6 Although the wider financial aspects of the recent guru phenomenon in India are not discussed by my subjects, it is important to note that the global guru industry remains one of the largest unregulated areas of growth in the Indian economy. Kapoor of Samsika Marketing Consultants suggests that the "national spiritual market" is worth around 25,000 crore rupees (US$250 billion), with a 30 percent annual growth rate (Chopra and Raval 2003:45).

noscapes" (1991), and neighborhoods and virtual neighborhoods (1996), Cscordas does not view the phenomenon of globalizing religion as uni-directional. "Once global channels are open, the flow of religious phenomenon—symbols, ideas, practices, moods, motivations—is at least bidirectional, more likely multidirectional" (Cscordas 2007:260). What we are witnessing in the community of the guru cool, in the learning and teaching of musical forms like tabla, and in New Age spiritual practices like Reiki, are spiritual–bodily centered disciplines that "travel well," or as Cscordas suggests, ones which are "portable practices" (Cscordas 2007:261). Portable practices such as Chariji's Raja Yoga meditation and Prasad's Reiki require "explicit bodily practices accompanied by more or less spiritual elaboration which may or may not form the basis for communal commitments as transformation of everyday life" (Cscordas 2007:261). However, this does not account for the persistence of the master–disciple or guru–shishya tradition. This relationship, distinctly Indian in character and meaning, must be followed, whether one is learning yoga, tabla, Reiki, or meditation, if one is to truly embody the master, be transformed, and continue on a spiritual path.

Gurus and Disciples: The Traditional Path

As I have stated elsewhere (Nuttall 2007, 1998) the guru–shishya parampara is a very specific, culturally dependent mode of learning originating from the Indian Brahmanic tradition of religious study. It is a form of apprenticeship that offers no easy translation, philosophically, culturally, or spiritually. Anthropology has barely begun to decipher the significance and importance of this form of apprenticeship within Indian cultural contexts, much less comprehend the possible use of this form of learning in its de-territorialized spaces within the South Asian diaspora. Milton Singer has, in the past, referred to the guru–disciple relationship as a "kind of apprenticeship" which can be used in both religious and secular activities (Singer in Nuttall 1998). However, this apprenticeship is different from the Euro-centric or Western notion of apprenticeship. Disciples are dependent on their gurus for a lifetime as even after death their image is intimately connected to their master, his life, and his achievements. There is no doubt that the guru–shishya is a profound and intimate sociocultural and personal relationship. In a discipleship the guru becomes a central figure in the disciple's life. In India the traditional model of the guru–shishya revolves around two central concepts: the disciple must follow the rules of obedience, *susrusa*, and must have implicit faith, *sraddha*, in the teachings of

the master (Zimmer 1951:48). Obedience and implicit faith imply reverence, and of course service, to the teacher in whatever way the teacher demands (Nuttall 1991). It is imperative that the guru is seen to hold and impart absolute knowledge; knowledge gained through experience is passed on to the disciple to ensure the reproduction of the guru's mastery. The disciple must fervently obey and assume without question that what is being taught is the tradition itself.

The concepts of implicit faith and unquestioned obedience can be traced back to spiritual texts known as the Upanishads (Mlecko 1982:37).[7] Mlecko describes the relationship of student and teacher as one of spiritual reciprocity where the "guru provided guidance and knowledge on the spiritual path and the sisya reciprocated with obedience and devotion" (Mlecko 1982:37).[8] He goes on to suggest that very early in Indian cultures respect for the guru was evolving into a devotional form similar to that given to God. Through service, submission, or devotion, a disciple pays respect to the master. The status of a guru or a master in Indian communities is seen, in some ways, as above the respect and humility a child has for his or her parents. Masters are mediums through which God communicates and therefore they provide a direct path to the divine, to the holy.

From the Gurukul to the Guru Cool

The concept of *bhakti*, devotion to the guru and the discipline through unquestioned obedience and implicit faith, still holds among many disciples today. The idea that what a disciple is learning is indeed the tradition, "the pathway" to the divine, seems to be accepted without question. The path of the guru only transmits to the disciple through subservience and by disciplining the body–mind to "become" the guru himself, to embody him. Although the content or form of healing may be non-traditional, as in the case of Prasad's or Babaji's teachings, the cultural practices and ways of learning are distinctly Indian (albeit modern), allowing for the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student . Some of the new cultural patterns I see emerging in the guru cool, however, include Chariji's rejection of the idea that the guru holds absolute knowledge. Here the disciple is encouraged to

---

7 Literally Upanishad means sitting down opposite somebody (Mlecko 1982:35).

8 Devotion or bhakti is a significant concept in Indian spiritualism. Bhakti can refer simply to devotion or to the acts of a devotee.

9 Touching the feet of the deity, holy person, or elder in Indian cultures today seems to stem from the

seek knowledge of the spirit within oneself and to claim membership in a brotherhood. There is an absence of acts of subservience (touching feet)[9] and more emphasis placed on friendship and brotherhood. Chariji's Raja Yoga meditation comes closest to Cscordas' model of "portable practices." Thousands of followers from Minsk to Iran participate at Chariji's meditation centers, forming what some disciples claim to be a truly universal spirituality. Even though Raja Yoga meditation members subscribe to a more egalitarian philosophy of gurus and disciples, devotion toward the Master is still strongly expressed through cultural practices such as the ritual of *gurupurnima*, a day dedicated to honoring the guru, his family, and his spiritual lineage.

Depending upon the school or community, concepts of bhakti do, to a greater or lesser extent, continue to be reproduced and predominate within the new guru cool institution as this culturally dependent mode of learning and teaching travels around the globe. Whether Leenata or other senior disciples of Prasad's call him mentor, friend, guide, or guruji, they all intensely desire to be around him; they want his attention and give their love to him unconditionally just as he gives his love to them and to all who seek transformation. While Prasad appears to be "a cool guy" who promotes a relationship with his disciples as one of friendship, upon further observation during the meditation intensives it became clear to me that he works very much in the way of traditional gurus, expecting devotion and submission on every level from his senior disciples. Although my students did not touch his feet, they showed reverence in ways that their cultural upbringings allowed (washing their own and Prasad's feet before entering sacred spaces, respecting the guru's word, following the senior disciples' example, etc.). However, if they return to him, the expectation of touching his feet will certainly be there. The act of touching the guru's feet, of paying homage to the master and his teachings through a bodily gesture of submission, is perhaps one of the most difficult cultural practices faced by outsiders as they enter into this complex relationship with a master. Performing humility

---

Hindu practice of sashtang namaskar (a form of paying homage to the deity by lying prostrate on the ground with palms together at the feet of the image of the deity during worship or puja). An informant has suggested to me that this type of namaskar, essentially a respectful way of showing submission, was extended or transferred to the guru as a sign of his status as being next to God. I have witnessed the touching of feet in numerous cultural contexts both inside and outside of India especially when someone is in the presence of others who hold a higher social status whether that is father to son, professor to student, or boss to employee. For a more detailed discussion on the practice of touching feet in musical communities in India and in North America see Nuttall 1998.

in this way toward another human being challenges our established beliefs and practices on a fundamental level. Although the students could and would follow Prasad in various meditations and pay respect toward him in ways that were appropriate for them, they stopped short of performing this gesture that symbolizes complete acceptance of his word, his life, and his status.

At the meditative center, Sahaj Marg, headed by Chariji, disciples did not see their relationship with their master as one characterized by rituals such as touching feet or practicing obedience and subservience. This modern master does not teach in the traditional way, "steeped in useless rituals," (Pradhan 2010) but rather imparts his knowledge as a guide. In this instance, Chariji does not subscribe to older notions of the guru as one who has or gives absolute knowledge. Knowledge here is seen as partial; his spiritual knowledge is not absolute. Coupled with a movement away from Hindu ideals of renunciation (of family life, material goods, erotic love, etc.), becoming 'spiritual' through Raja Yoga meditation is promoted as attainable to all, no matter what gender, ethnicity, or religious background aspirants may have. The SRCM website clearly encourages seekers of spirituality to become involved in the meditations, to join the brotherhood of Sahaj Marg or "the natural path" of spirituality through the practice of simple, natural meditation techniques (Shri Ram Chandra Mission 2005).

The tradition of living with the guru full time and serving him throughout his lifetime has changed somewhat in the age of the global guru and his crossings. Today transformative intensives and mass meditations are more likely the arenas of daily encounters between new disciples and masters. Cultural practices such as touching feet, honoring the master's master, or other indigenous ways of performing respect are still front and center in this intense and intimate student–teacher relationship. Once the seed of transformation has been planted by the teacher though, senior disciples do the work of the guru on his behalf, whether this involves cleanings or the performance of other types of healing,. The connection between Prasad and his disciples, and between Chariji and his abhyasis, is still based on the assumption that this is a relationship for a lifetime, and that it will continue into the next life. The cultural changes we are witnessing in the global age of spirituality, as gurus and disciples continuously cross borders and return again to their local lives, point to the ongoing re-formulation and re-invention of what remains a distinctly Indian way of knowing and doing.

REFERENCES

Appadurai, Arjun
   1996   Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. Minneapolis:
   University of Minnesota Press.

   1991   Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology.
   In Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present. Pp. 191–210. Santa Fe:
   School of American Research Press.

Chopra, Anupama and S. Raval
   2003   Guru Chic. India Today, July 14:45-52.

Clifford, James
   1993   Sites of Crossing: Borders and Diasporas in Late Twentieth Century
   Expressive Culture. Cultural Currents, January 1:1–4.

Cscordas, Thomas
   2007   Modalities of Transnational Transcendence. Anthropological Theory
   7(3):259–272.

Green, E. E. and A. M. Green
   1971   On the Meaning of Transpersonal: Some Metaphysical Perspectives.
   Journal of Transpersonal Psychology 3:27-46.

Levin, Jeff and Lea Steele
   2005   The Transcendent Experience: Conceptual, Theoretical, and Epidemiologic
   Perspectives. The Journal of Science and Healing 1(2):89–101.

Marcus, George
   1998   Ethnography Through Thick and Thin. Princeton University Press:
   Princeton N.J.

Mlecko, Joel D.
   1982   The Guru in Hindu Tradition. Numen 29(1):33–61.

Naryan, Kirin
   1989   Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious
   Teaching. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nuttall, Denise
   2007   Pathway to Knowledge: Embodiment, Dreaming and Experience as a Basis
   for Understanding the Other. *In* Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in
   the Field. Jean-Guy Goulet and Bruce G. Miller Eds. Pp. 323–351. Lincoln: Uni-
   versity of Nebraska Press.

   1998   Gurus, Disciples and Tabla Players. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of
   Anthropology, The University of British Columbia.

   1991   Privileging the Body: Indo-Canadian Performance in Ontario. Unpublished
   M.A. Thesis. Department of Anthropology. University of Western Ontario.

Rajagopalachari, P.
   2010   My Master: The Essence of Pure Love. Manapakkam, Chennai: Shri Ram
   Chandra Mission.

Ranade Ashok
   1990   Keywords and Concepts: Hindustani Classical Music. New Delhi: Promilla.

Shri Ram Chandra Mission
   2005   Introduction: Sahaj Marg Meditation. Shri Ram Chandra Mission.
   Retrieved on July 20, 2009, from *http://www.srcm.org/index.jsp.*

Tolle, Eckhart
   1997   The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment. Vancouver:
   Namaste Publications.

Zimmer, Heinrich Robert
   1951   Philosophies of India. Bollingen Series, 26. Princeton: Princeton
   University Press.

AHMADI MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED STATES:

NEGOTIATING MISSIONARY WORK AND RELIGIOUS SUSTAINABILITY

Amanda J. Buonopane, SUNY Buffalo

Two prevalent themes in the scholarly literature on the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are the sense of resilience displayed by Ahmadis in the face of seemingly endless persecution and an inherent missionary nature that places a high priority on proselytizing. After undergoing continuous, violent persecution in their home country of Pakistan, Ahmadi Muslims strongly hold onto their faith in new homelands, displaying remarkable adaptability. This adaptability has translated into flexible approaches to *tabligh*, the propagation of the faith. After first giving some background on the Ahmadiyya movement, I will explore the missionary inclinations of the movement from its beginnings through its international dispersion. Following this, I will discuss how missionary notions are understood among Ahmadis in the United States and how missionary work is being re-conceptualized away from a focus on proselytizing. Finally, I will consider the transmission of the religion to second-generation Ahmadis and concerns about the continuation of the religious community. I conclude that by emphasizing religious continuity Ahmadis in the United States are able to transform missionary notions for use in interactions with the surrounding community without feeling the pressure to proselytize.

The following research is based on two years of fieldwork among the women of the Buffalo, New York, Ahmadiyya chapter. Ahmadiyya chapters are similar in their structure throughout the United States, but can vary in their membership composition. All of my interlocutors are of Pakistani origin; most are Ahmadi "by birth," and most immigrated to the United States from Pakistan on professional or student visas or through family sponsorship. While my findings may suggest trends across North American Ahmadiyya chapters, they specifically relate to the Buffalo chapter. Thus, research among Ahmadiyya chapters with higher numbers of converts and immigrants under refugee status (which is becoming more common) may show

variance in attitudes toward missionary notions. In her research among southern California Ahmadis, Huma Ahmed-Ghosh (2006) notes that the Ahmadiyya community she observed exhibits strong missionary and proselytizing tendencies. Since she conducts research within a small group of Ahmadis, in order to ensure anonymity, she does not disclose demographic information about her informants and the membership of that particular Ahmadiyya community.

The Ahmadiyya Movement and Its Connection to Missionary Work

With its roots in Pakistan, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a messianic Islamic revival movement that has suffered a long history of regular persecution and violence in Pakistan. According to Spencer Lavan's history of Ahmadiyya, the movement emerged in 1898 with an essential purpose—to "reform and revitalize a decadent Islamic condition" that followers believed to be prevalent throughout India at the time (1974:1). It also arose, in part, to counteract Christian missionaries and the Hindu Arya Samaj movement, and therefore dedicated much of its activity to curbing the proselytizing efforts of these groups.

Tabligh, the work done to call others to Allah and to the propagation of the faith, is at the heart of many Ahmadiyya movement activities. Many authors writing about Ahmadis note the centrality of missionary work throughout its history (Lavan 1974, Gualtieri 2004, Ahmed-Ghosh 2004, Friedmann 1989, Turner 1988). As I will show, the formation of missions abroad was the catalyst for the development of Ahmadiyyat as an international movement. However, to label Ahmadis as proselytizers would overly simplify the matter.

From the beginning of the movement, its founder and Promised Messiah, Hadrat Mirza Ghulum Ahmad, produced numerous pieces of literature and engaged in debates defending Islam against its critics. Armed with his knowledge of Christianity and Hinduism, he challenged Christian missionaries and representatives of the Hindu Arya Samaj movement in order to demonstrate Islam's superiority. Ahmadiyyat researcher Antonio Gualtieri notes that these early debates were conducted in writing, with positions and rebuttals published in newspapers and journals (Gualtieri 2004:46). Through these frequently heated exchanges, word spread about Ahmadiyyat and the movement's ideas acquired public exposure.

Ahmad's successors and other prominent Ahmadis like Muhammed Zafrullah Khan carried on this tradition of spreading the word of Ahmadiyyat through literature. Books, journals (such as the long-running *Muslim Sunrise* aimed at

converts in the United States), pamphlets, conferences, and now websites and webcasts help spread the word of Islam in general and Ahmadiyyat in particular. Following the lead of early Christian missionaries on the Indian subcontinent, the Ahmadiyya Community translated the Qur'an into other languages for dissemination abroad. The national body of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA has a specialized Department of Tabligh to oversee the current publication and dissemination of tabligh materials.

Ahmadis pursued intense missionary activity through geographically widespread efforts throughout the early 20th century. In Pakistan, military ordinances and so-called blasphemy laws denounced Ahmadis as non-Muslims, made them targets of state persecution, and sanctioned violent attacks against them. The justification for this, as well as for the persecution of Ahmadis in other areas of the world, is the contested idea that Ahmadis believe that a prophet followed the Prophet Mohammed, an offensive notion for some Muslims. As a result, they were forbidden from spreading their religion in Pakistan. Missionary activities thus acquired an international focus and Ahmadis began establishing mosques in Africa, the United Kingdom, and North America by the 1920s. Following World War II, mosques were also set up in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Denmark. These early missionary efforts were very effective at gaining converts and building a base in new countries. The mosques established by early Ahmadi missionaries were often the first mosques in these areas, and conversions were primarily aimed at non-Muslims.

The purpose of proselytizing and seeking converts did not arise out of a desire by Ahmadis to "save" others but rather from a desire to expand their community and ensure its global stability. Ahmadis consider their version of Islam to be the true Islam, as well as the ideal religion, and many believe that Ahmadiyyat practiced on a large scale can have positive social implications given its message of peacefulness, cooperation, and social justice. However, the tone in discussions about conversion is not centered on the idea of saving others, but on the practical goals of community maintenance and expansion. Furthermore, while Ahmadi missions involve doing good for others, the focus is on doing good in this life rather than on the benefits of conversion in the hereafter. Thus Ahmadis have established schools and hospitals and set up charity funds for people in need.

Through the formation of missions abroad, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community became an international movement. The early Ahmadi presence consisted of small communities whose membership included missionaries and recent converts,

creating groups that maintained a proselytizing zeal. Large-scale immigration of Pakistani Ahmadis did not occur until after severe anti-Ahmadi legislation was put into effect in Pakistan in 1984. This immigration altered the composition of North American Ahmadiyya communities, multiplying their numbers exponentially and shifting the goals and priorities of those communities in accordance with that of their new majority membership. At this point, the primary thrust shifted from missionary work to a desire for greater religious freedom and economic incentive. As Ahmadi missionaries and subsequent Pakistani Ahmadi immigrants laid the foundation abroad, the meaning and aims of tabligh changed.

Distinguishing Bridge-Building Tabligh from Proselytizing Tabligh

The role of missionary work and spreading the word about Ahmadiyyat currently seems ambiguous at various levels of the movement. Diverse ideas and attitudes concerning tabligh arise from above and below in the Ahmadiyya Movement. As an illustration of this, one interviewee noted that the Ahmadiyya community, on an official level, was almost "schizophrenic" in talking about the topic, at times emphasizing direct missionary work with the goal of gaining converts and at other times stating that talking about Islam and Ahmadiyyat is for the purpose of clearing up misunderstandings regarding the religion. In each of these instances, the audience for tabligh activities is non-Muslim. The distinction lies in the primary goal of tabligh work—to expand their community through conversions or to build bridges with their non-Muslim neighbors.

Ahmadis are concerned about the negative image of Muslims, which they perceive as dominating American media, and about corresponding anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States. These concerns have led to heightened efforts to foster better understandings of Islam among the non-Muslim American public. Huma Ahmed-Ghosh (2006) observes that the perception of Islam and Muslims in the Western world, post-9/11, is an issue of particular concern within Ahmadiyya communities. In my interviews, respondents noted that the popular media tends to portray Muslims negatively and that tabligh work, in its broad definition of "spreading the word," can counteract stereotyped images of violent Muslim men and oppressed Muslim women.

While tabligh that emphasizes building bridges can be useful in such an atmosphere, tabligh with an emphasis on proselytizing can have the reverse effect and can be alienating. This is in part due to the modern, imagined dichotomy between Islam and the West as expressed in writings such as Samuel Huntington's (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations*, which questions the ability of Islam and Western civilization to co-exist. Anthropologist Gabriele Marranci (2004) argues that the imagined boundaries created by Huntington and other pundits marginalize Muslims in western countries while fostering a general Islamophobia. Islamophobia has surfaced in the United States over recent mosque-building controversies. While there has been a heated debate over a proposed Muslim center near Ground Zero in New York City, anti-Islamic sentiment has found clearer expression in debates over proposed mosque-building in Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Sheboygan, Wisconsin; and Temecula, California. In these situations, rather than being couched in the sensitivity of the aftermath of a national tragedy, the terms of the debate clearly express a concern over the spread of Islam in the United States and a "not-in-my-backyard" attitude (Abel and Lieblich 2010). Fear that a homogeneous Islam will spread in the United States, followed by attempts to implement and enforce *shari'a* (Islamic law), is increasingly evident in the public debate surrounding such controversies. In one of the many newspaper articles on the Murfreesboro mosque debate the *Courier Journal* quotes a Murfreesboro resident speaking about why he opposed the mosque: "I don't want them to take over this country and our way of life. I don't care if they worship. I just don't want them to take over this county or this nation" (Broden 2011). The writer of this article noted that many of the other residents opposing the mosque-building project feared a spread of Islam and viewed it as a threat to their way of life.

Ahmadis see these debates in the media and are well aware of the implications of appearing to push Islam on others. As a religious group that is already persecuted by other Muslims, they are wary of actions that would create ill feelings toward them from non-Muslims. Similarly Lavan (1974) points out that at the time of Indian independence, pro-independence Muslims invoked jihad in the fight against the British, while Ahmadis largely remained loyal to British rule and advocated peaceful solutions. It is therefore understandable that there is difficulty in negotiating the aims and processes of tabligh. Since tabligh first and foremost concerns the interaction between Ahmadis and (mostly non-Muslim) non-Ahmadis, it involves both a consideration for maintaining the community as well as improving relations with others. The feeling of schizophrenia arises from the difficulty of balancing these objectives.

Views of Tabligh

The duality between "tabligh for proselytizing" and "tabligh for bridge-building" exists on the organizational level, as mentioned earlier, and also on the local chapter level among individual Ahmadis. While some Ahmadi women believe tabligh activities should be focused on encouraging interfaith dialogue and combating negative notions of Islam, others advocate a focus on conversions and work toward gaining new converts. For instance, one interviewee noted, "Islam is all about propagation." Another echoed this statement, noting that Islam requires Muslims to spread the message to others, though non-coercively. Yet another woman claimed she wished to see more converts so that their community would be larger. Conversions are encouraged at the annual national meetings where chapters with larger numbers of converts are recognized and recent converts publicly share their stories of arriving at Ahmadiyyat. Overall though, the focus of tabligh for individual Ahmadis in the United States seems to be shifting from direct proselytizing aimed at acquiring converts to more moderate efforts to spread the religion and counteract negative Muslim stereotypes, a shift that is strongly supported by the younger generation.

While some women believe that all Ahmadis should work to gain new converts, many others, especially younger women, believe that particular role is the responsibility of the official Tabligh Department and the specialized Ahmadiyyat missionaries who undergo years of training. Their unease with proselytizing may be exacerbated by the fact that Ahmadis are encouraged by the movement to spread their message to contacts they already have, including neighbors, coworkers, and friends. One Ahmadi woman noted that she would feel very uncomfortable trying to convert her friends and believes that one's religion is a deeply personal matter. While she will tell her friends and others about her religion, she does not do so with conversion motives.

Tabligh Methods

Current tabligh methods reflect this reluctance to proselytize. In contrast to more invasive recruitment methods that Ahmadis have used elsewhere and in the past, current methods tend to be casual and non-coercive, taking the form of providing information to others. When discussing the topic, local Ahmadis often quoted from the Qur'an that "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256). Indeed all tabligh methods that I have heard about or witnessed do not appear to be a zealous

endeavor to convert others. One woman I questioned about missionary work reflected the prevalent attitude: she responded that if you tell others a bit about the religion, and they like what you say, they will be encouraged to read and learn more. While converts are welcomed with open arms, the Ahmadi women prefer to see new members of their community join out of a desire to celebrate the religion, not as the result of any coercion.

The primary missionary activity noted by the women I interviewed is the interfaith symposium. The Buffalo Ahmadiyya Community has hosted 14 interfaith symposiums, averaging about two per year. The symposiums occur in a series; each symposium addresses a separate topic and includes four to five speakers representing different religions. The topics have included Women in Religion, Religion and Economy, The Concept of Messiah, Religion and Science, and Divine Guidance for Establishing Peace in the Latter Days. After attending several of these events, I concluded that these symposiums are directed toward an audience of mixed religious backgrounds rather than an entirely Ahmadi audience. The talks and speeches do not seem to be concerned with conversion to any particular religion, but rather with addressing misunderstandings about various religions and establishing interfaith dialogue.

The missionary outreach aspect of the Ahmadi interfaith symposiums is most clearly visible in the literature made available at the event. The hallway outside the conference room where the symposium is held is lined with tables offering an assortment of papers, pamphlets, and books. The writings vary, but all address topics related to Ahmadiyyat or, more broadly, Islam. Upon registration, guests receive a pamphlet about Ahmadiyyat. There are also typically opportunities to join an e-mail list for mailings and notifications about future events from the Buffalo chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Hosting interfaith symposiums helps the local Ahmadiyya community build bridges with the larger community and provides a venue for the conversation of non-Ahmadi Muslims and non-Muslims. This type of venue fosters a greater understanding of diverse religious beliefs while also addressing current issues and misunderstandings. Because of this, events such as the interfaith symposiums retain their importance outside of proselytizing efforts.

In the fall of 2009, the women of the Buffalo *ja'maat* (group) hosted their own seminar on the Wives of the Prophet Muhammad. It occurred following a widely publicized February 2009 murder in Buffalo involving a rather prominent Muslim man accused of beheading his wife. Local discussions of the crime centered on the

role that Islam was believed to have played. The idea of the seminar began as a way of counteracting these beliefs through an exposition on the position of women in Islam, specifically examining the relationships between Prophet Muhammad and his wives. The event was indeed an interfaith seminar, with about half of the women in attendance being non-Muslim. Prominent Ahmadi women from around the United States came to speak about Prophet Muhammad's wives and to candidly address questions and clear up misconceptions. In September 2010, the second annual women's seminar was held and it was an even larger success. Like the community-wide interfaith symposiums, these seminars aid in shattering misconceptions about Islam while offering information about Ahmadiyyat. By serving as a means to educate others about Ahmadiyyat, the symposiums and seminars are a useful tabligh tool, whether the intention is to encourage converts or just provide information.

Charity and Volunteerism

Like the interfaith symposiums and women's seminars, charity efforts and community outreach programs also serve as tabligh tools. Both use subtle recruitment strategies and attempt to break down the imagined boundaries between Islam and the West. In the United States, Ahmadis contribute to the movement's humanitarian division, Humanity First, which sends help worldwide, often in response to natural disasters. Ahmadi missions abroad have established a reputation for building and maintaining hospitals and schools in areas where they are needed.

The women in Buffalo regularly discuss possibilities for charitable actions on a community level; those from the younger generation seem especially concerned with volunteerism. At one women's group meeting, a young girl suggested that during the holy month of Ramadan all the women make their way to a Red Cross facility to donate blood. In the past, the volunteer activities of this women's auxiliary chapter occurred largely on an individual basis, as many of the women were also members of local women's organizations or volunteers at women's shelters. More recently, the Buffalo group has been working toward providing charity on a group level. During Ramadan, the women volunteered as a group at a local soup kitchen that is typically not open on Sundays. The kitchen is located in an area where there are few Muslims, but where other options for food can be scarce. Each Sunday of that month, the Ahmadi women purchased food and prepared meals to bring to the soup kitchen, where they were received warmly. While such charitable activities

serve the primary purpose of helping those in need and bettering society, they are also an effective form of tabligh, especially when enacted at the group level.

As a group, the local Ahmadi women have also been involved with a local women's rights coalition, the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women. This coalition held their first large event in October 2010. "Break the Cycle," a bike- and walk-a-thon to raise awareness about domestic violence received much local media attention. Some of the central organizers were Ahmadi women, and many other Ahmadis participated in the event with their families. Through these activities, Ahmadis are making themselves visible as a positive part of their communities, while taking advantage of opportunities to interact with non-Muslims on issues of shared interest. Ahmadis consider these events tabligh activities since they provide opportunities to inform others about Islam.

In contrast to more zealous conversion efforts, Ahmadis are increasingly making their presence and beliefs known to non-Ahmadis within the context of working with others in their communities. This more relaxed take on tabligh lessens the risk of alienating others through missionary efforts that are viewed as too aggressive. It is therefore widely embraced by Ahmadi youth who look forward to participating in socially conscious activities. In addition, I found that the reliance on proselytizing for community maintenance at the local level is being replaced by an emphasis on successful religious transmission to the second generation.

Raising Ahmadi Children

Second-generation Ahmadis are raised with a heavy emphasis on religion and religious education, and they face enormous pressure to stay within the Ahmadi community. Children are taught within the home and within the ja'maat, and for many children in the Buffalo chapter religious gatherings coincide with family get-togethers. There is thus a coupling of formal and informal religious indoctrination combined with pressures from both family and community to remain within the group.

In some communities, the ja'maat offers regular, organized classes for Ahmadi children to pursue Islamic studies. In areas with Ahmadi mosques and a large membership base, Islamic studies are offered for children on the weekends. One woman I interviewed fondly remembered the Islamic studies held for children every Saturday at the New York City mosque. Since the Buffalo chapter is much smaller, they often take advantage of services offered through majority Muslim groups in the

area, or through larger Ahmadi communities nearby. One woman makes the trip once a month to take her son to Islamic Sunday school in Toronto, about two hours away. The benefit of these trips is not only the religious knowledge gained, but also exposure to other Ahmadi children, something that is lacking in their secular schooling. While Ahmadi-hosted Islamic school options are not available for children in Buffalo, they are able to participate in non-Ahmadi Islamic classes, and some parents plan to take advantage of an Arabic school for their children.

While chapters that are located in smaller cities, like Buffalo, do not offer regular classes for Ahmadi children, they do provide the means for them to attain a good religious foundation and to associate with other young Ahmadis. There is a grouping for boys younger than 14, called Majlis Atfal-ul-Ahmadiyya, and one for girls younger than 15, called Nasraatul Ahmadiyya. The children's groups actively study the Qur'an and words from movement leaders. They have workbooks that include religious instruction at a beginner's level, activities, and assignments to demonstrate progress. Since group meetings for children coincide with those of their parents, these meetings take on a social aspect in which local Ahmadi families come together to hold meetings simultaneously, often in different areas of one house. These are generally well attended and understood both as serious occasions that demand productivity and as social occasions.

Providing religious education to youth goes hand-in-hand with pressures and concerns for the next generation to remain Ahmadi. For many who are ambiguous about proselytizing but are concerned about continuation of the movement, passing on membership in the group to the next generation is an important way to ensure a future for Ahmadiyyat. Mothers often noted in their interviews that one of their chief concerns for the future is that their children grow up to be good Ahmadis. Ahmadi women believe that a shared religion between family members is necessary to maintain the harmony of the family group. This personal desire to raise children within the same religion is reinforced by social pressure to conform and maintain an Ahmadi family. There is often strong pressure from the entire group to guarantee that one's children will be Ahmadis, as evidenced by several young Ahmadis who noted that their family would be looked upon poorly by the ja'maat if they were to leave the religion.

Within the home, parents try to teach their children about religion (including Arabic studies) and how to be good Muslims. According to one respondent, the extent to which religious training occurs within the home is unique for Ahmadis (as compared to non-Ahmadi Muslims). Home-based learning is invaluable in that the children learn within the context of family. When I asked one woman about the likelihood of second-generation Ahmadis rebelling against parental authority, religious teachings, or their cultural background, she said it would be unlikely because they believe strongly in teaching children with love. She claims that if children are taught with love, they will not be tempted to rebel. In fact, the rate of religious retention among second-generation Pakistani Ahmadis appears to be quite high. Among the families that I met and interviewed, nearly all the children and young adults were planning to stay with the religion, and their faith and love for their community was strong. Out of approximately thirty Ahmadi families in the Buffalo area, only one member of the second generation expressed a disinterest in Ahmadiyyat. Furthermore, the majority appeared very enthusiastic when talking about Ahmadiyyat. This seemed surprising since Ahmadiyya holds to rather conservative ideals, including the practice of gender separation and modest dress, as well as a sense of anti-materialism. These children and young adults are surrounded by friends and schoolmates who are dating, going to prom, wearing the latest revealing fashions, and networking through social websites, all behaviors which are discouraged by the Ahmadiyya community. While some do express regret at being left out of activities in which their friends and schoolmates participate, they seem to agree with the reasons behind Ahmadiyya practices and do not consider rebelling. Instead, they embrace the Ahmadiyya community and the Ahmadiyyat religion and are proud Muslims.

There are many factors that can account for this, but most can be attributed to the dedicated work of their parents, grandparents, and others within their local ja'maat. Furthermore, the Ahmadiyyat movement makes the religion relevant to the younger generation by utilizing new technology such as webcasts and by addressing important issues for younger people. In addition, the relaxed take on tabligh is appealing to this generation since many have gone through school with non-Ahmadis; their closest friends are non-Muslim and they do not wish to actively attempt conversions. For them, a focus on volunteer activities and building community bridges is much more desirable. Their community leaders also listen to what they have to say, respecting the opinions of the youth and taking their suggestions seriously. Children and young adults are given responsibilities in the Ahmadi chapter, especially in carrying out events like the interfaith symposiums: children work the registration tables and act as ushers while young adults work the video cameras that record the discussions.

A further way that faith is transmitted to the younger generation is through narratives of struggle and persecution. Those raised in the United States are told about religious persecution that occurred in Pakistan, often involving family members or close friends. Struggle can reinforce one's commitment to the religion, even when the struggle is not personally experienced. Ahmed-Ghosh states that, among the Ahmadis she studied, the crisis of persecution led to an intensified commitment to their faith (2004:74). A communal struggle is reflected in the narratives of persecution Ahmadis told me. While first-generation immigrants could remember incidences of violence against themselves or their family, younger ones knew well the stories passed down from first-generation immigrants. In addition everyone seemed to know of recent cases of Ahmadis being killed or jailed for their beliefs. The stories are not told as tales of victimhood, but instead contain a trace of the heroic and communicate strong values such as virtue. Targets of anti-Ahmadi violence are not portrayed in these stories as passive or helpless victims, but as community leaders and role models. A moral lesson emerges from the Ahmadi persecution narratives, echoing the words of an Ahmadi Imam: "to live among your persecutors and still love them is strength" (Cheema 2008). These narratives build a commitment to the religion through their coupling of struggle against persecution with communal strength of character.

The heightened efforts of older Ahmadis to ensure that the younger generation remains Ahmadi appear to be working. Effective transmission provides for religious continuity without a need to rely on conversions. Pressure to gain outside converts is thus minimized, as pressure on families to pass on their religion remains high. Tabligh is therefore allowed to take on a more relaxed purpose. Missionary work is redefined as providing information, spreading the word about Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Through this more casual approach, Ahmadis can build bridges by opening lines of communication with non-Muslims and dispelling negative stereotypes within their larger communities regarding Islam. While Ahmadis are typically treated as proselytizers in the literature on this movement, the situation is more complicated. My research suggests that in the United States, Ahmadis may be moving away from outright proselytizing and embracing an approach that focuses less on acquiring converts as its top priority.

REFERENCES

Abel, Barbara and Julia Lieblich
   2010   Rural Controversy: A Mosque in Sheboygan. Time, August 19, 2010.
   http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2011842,00.html (accessed
   January 12, 2011).

Ahmed-Ghosh, Huma
   2004   Portraits of Believers: Ahmadi Women Performing Faith in the Diaspora.
   Journal of International Women's Studies 6(1):73–92.

   2006   Ahmadi Women Reconciling Faith with Vulnerable Reality through
   Education. Journal of International Women's Studies 8(1):36–51.

Broden, John
   2011   Opponents of Mosque in Murfreesboro, TN, Say They'll Continue to Fight.
   Courier Journal, February 16.

Cheema, Imam Muktar
   2008   The Concept of Messiah in Islam. Presentation given during an Ahmadiyya-
   hosted Interfaith Symposium. Buffalo, NY; October 26.

Friedmann, Yohanan
   1989   Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and its
   Medieval Background. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Gualtieri, Antonio R.
   2004   The Ahmadis: Community, Gender and Politics in a Muslim Society.
   Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press.

Huntington, Samuel
   1996   The Clash of Civilizations. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Lavan, Spencer
   1974   The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective. Delhi: Manohar
   Book Service.

Marranci, Gabriele
   2004   Multiculturalism, Islam and the Clash of Civilisations Theory: Rethinking
   Islamophobia. Culture and Religion 5(1):105–117.

Turner, Richard B.
   1988   The Ahmadiyya Mission to Blacks in the United States in the 1920s.
   The Journal of Religious Thought. 44(2):50–66.

ACCUMULATION, WAR, AND DISPOSSESSION:

BURKINABÉ REPATRIATES' PROBLEMATIC REINCORPORATION IN THE HOMELAND[1]

Kathryn V. Boswell, Bard College at Simon's Rock

The 2002 onset of war in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, displaced a sizable portion of the several million Burkinabé migrants in residence. The number of Burkinabé and their long-term residency in the country speaks to the community's entrenchment: migrants were financially successful and socially integrated within an extensive and resourceful Burkinabé diaspora. In response to the unrest, upwards of 200 thousand Burkinabé repatriated to Burkina Faso, beginning in late September 2002 and continuing throughout 2005, though incalculable numbers refused to leave for various reasons, many of which were material.[2] Upon their return, repatriates discovered that they were largely responsible for their socioeconomic reincorporation into Burkinabé society, yet most returnees had access to few resources. This article exam-

2 The exact number of Burkinabé who returned from Côte d'Ivoire is unknown given the varied means by which migrants returned to the country. Following the September 19, 2002 onset of the conflict, the Burkina Faso government created the short term *Operation Bayiri,* or Operation Homeland, to move migrants from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso on large buses. This program, which lasted several months, assisted some ten thousand Burkinabé. Most migrants located their own transportation and returned overland via Burkina Faso's borders with Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Guinea. Returnees were registered at border crossings for a period of time, six months or so, following the initial unrest, yet migrants continued to return to Burkina Faso long after the first wave in late 2002 and early 2003.

ines Burkinabé's encounters with migration and return through the lens of material culture to show how the acquisition and loss of possessions, such as land and consumer goods, posed profound problems for repatriates' initial integration into urban Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso.[3]

Recent material culture studies (Appadurai 1986; Myers 2001) note how objects and owners' lives intertwine and illustrate how objects engender sociality, facilitate the creation of identities, and index desire. Arjun Appadurai's advice to understand "the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context" (1986:5) is fitting for a study of migrants and their possessions since both owners and objects move in the context of transnational migration. Accumulation in Côte d'Ivoire simultaneously communicated incorporation into the migrant community, connection to Burkina Faso, and preparation for an ultimate or imagined return home. In contrast, the loss and subsequent absence of items once possessed is emphasized in migrants' narrative of repatriation. The key to this narrative is that repatriates' possessions failed to move, yet remained meaningful in their absence by creating a void that resulted in social exclusion and highlighted their marginal status, marking them as "failures."[4] To examine these topics, I first address the processes of accumulation and loss in the host country before turning to the homeland to uncover the continued significance objects possess for the welfare and sociality of this emergent repatriate population.

It is useful to provide some context for this study that draws on work carried out in both Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso before discussing the historic conditions under which Burkinabé migrated from home to host country. Fieldwork unrelated to the project discussed here took place in 1999 and 2000 in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, the second largest city in the country and the eventual epicenter of the 2002 unrest (see below). It was in some measure possible to observe the ideological divisions within the country from the city's central marketplace, an economic focal point and

transportation hub that linked north, south, east and west. Bouaké seemed then, and would later become, a border city in which Burkinabé lived in enclaves that made distinct their visitor status. Of the complex relation between borders and states, Wilson and Donnan observe:

> Borders and their states are separate but related political structures, each somewhat dependent on the other for their power and strength. In this regard we follow the Weberian definition of the state as an institution which holds the legitimate use of force in a territory. Borders are always domains of contested power, in which local, national, and international groups negotiate relations of subordination and control. [1998:10]

Wilson and Donnan write of literal terrestrial zones in the state's periphery, but contestation like that mentioned here was found in Bouaké and within its foreign population. A border sensibility similar to Bouaké was visible in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso's second largest city, located 200 kilometers north of the Ivoirian border, where I conducted fieldwork in 2004 and 2005 after return to Côte d'Ivoire proved impossible. A contradictory debate over resources, autonomy, and inclusion characterized the internal dynamics of the diverse and divided repatriate community as well as this population's relationship vis-à-vis local and national government. While the specific contours of this populace were in flux, the absence of personal possessions, visible to all, palpably marked repatriates' marginal socioeconomic status.

The Establishment and Dissolution of the Burkinabé Diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire
Men and women of all ages, when interviewed about migration, cited material gain as an objective for travel to Côte d'Ivoire. The opportunities for social success and advancement were inevitably tied to the acquisition of objects—land, homes, vehicles, and consumer goods—more easily attained outside of Burkina Faso in both the colonial and postcolonial time periods. Migrants frequently explained that a desire or need for some object served as a catalyst for migration. Once situated in Côte d'Ivoire, labor was converted into currency and then turned into items that permitted migrants to attain a new social status that found expression in the host country or that would later serve to exercise a specific identity upon return to the homeland.

Men and women possessed an assortment of personal items, acquired in Côte d'Ivoire or carried from the homeland, which served multiple functions, but which

4 With reservation I use the word *failure* because the loss of material wealth in the host country underscores migrants' transnationalism; however, the moral economy of what it means to be a migrant in Côte d'Ivoire and to return to the homeland is intimately linked to material accumulation.

bore differential meaning for men and women. The allure of Côte d'Ivoire has been ever present for Burkinabé. Men have tended to invest in land, livestock, construction, and those objects that facilitated economic activities and permitted them to honor commitments to family as well as to become the head of a new household. In the past, men envisioned a return to their village with a bicycle to assist kin with trade, while more recent male migrants hoped to obtain a moped or motorcycle to fulfill similar needs. A migrant since 1947, Tahirou explains, "I saw others coming from Côte d'Ivoire with their bicycles and money, to help their families. Because of that I decided to go to Côte d'Ivoire to look for money." Women, too, have long possessed material designs in relation to migration. Women traveled with items to equip households abroad and later accumulated items, such as enamelware and cloth, with revenue from their own economic endeavors. These purchases were intended to help kin in the creation of a reputable household.

All acquisitions proved practical assets for farm work and commerce and helped to meet the collective needs of the family, but migrants also recognized the social transformations connected to these purchases. According to Gell, "Consumption is the appropriation of objects as part of one's personalia—food eaten at a feast, clothes worn, houses lived in. The incorporation of consumer goods into the definition of the social self arises out of a framework of social obligations and also perpetuates this framework" (1986:112). Objects preserved fortunes in material form to later serve as testament to individual success; however, possessions simultaneously furthered socioeconomic interaction and helped to expand investments in Côte d'Ivoire. For Burkinabé migrants, preferences took shape within host communities to inform consumer behavior by which objects became "attributes of some individual personality, badges of identity, and signifiers of specific interpersonal relationships and obligations" (Gell 1986:113) that came to be wholly situated in Côte d'Ivoire. Little did members of this prosperous diaspora then know that such material commitments would render them vulnerable in the long-term, particularly given their liminal status in the host country.

Establishment of a Diaspora. People and merchandise moved between coastal and inland West Africa before the late 19th century when France divided this territory into interdependent, but distinct, colonies where local raw materials were exploited to make these possessions profitable (Kanya-Forstner 1969). France had by 1914 largely vanquished recalcitrant peoples to consolidate an empire that extended from Senegal to western Sudan to Côte d'Ivoire (Masquelier 2009; Weiskel 1981). Ex-

treme taxation measures, *corvée* (forced labor), and military conscription produced involuntary and voluntary migrants in the decades before World War II (Asiwaju 1976, Echenberg 1991, Marchal 1980, Skinner 1960). At this time, the area that later formed the colony Haute Volta (Burkina Faso) served as a labor reservoir for adjacent French holdings, and Côte d'Ivoire in particular, to the extent that "the French drained away from it the manpower needed to work on the coastal plantations and in building the Federation's railroads" (Thompson and Adloff 1969:119). Once forced labor was eliminated and cocoa cultivation expanded, Côte d'Ivoire became the primary destination for Burkinabé in the late 1940s (Cordell et al. 1996).

Visits for the purpose of seasonal cultivation or one- to two-year stays undertaken with concrete objectives increasingly became an indefinite sojourn as whole families, rather than men alone, relocated, and Burkinabé communities proliferated throughout Côte d'Ivoire (Zongo 2003). Some Burkinabé invested in the homeland, while more frequently concrete illustrations of migrants' labors were made in the host country. Through the purchase of farms, vehicles, homes, and other items, migrants took on multiple new identities in Côte d'Ivoire becoming landowners, homeowners, businessmen, and heads of households (Koné 2002). Despite such investments, many Burkinabé retained their citizenship as a point of pride or were unable to become naturalized Ivoirian citizens due to changing legislation that made this process more restrictive. Southward migration continued unabated until the 2002 war. The resulting migration pattern between the two territories is considered "the most important in West Africa" and "the second largest network in the continent in terms of numbers of migrants and migrations—surpassed only by that of southern Africa" (Cordell et al. 1996:1).

Male migrants seldom possessed much when they arrived abroad. Those Burkinabé who arrived as the initial migrants in an Ivoirian locale often became the pathfinders for Burkinabé arriving at later dates. Migrants to urban areas, such as Abidjan and Bouaké, worked in trade and commerce, as manual laborers, or as guards, cooks, or gardeners. Most migrants, however, engaged in agricultural labor in the southern and western portions of the country, particularly in regions where cocoa and coffee cultivation flourished. This labor often took place in the context of *abusan*, "a sharecropping system in which the laborer receives a third of the farm owner's crop or profit" (Schildkrout 1978:49).

Profits earned through participation in the abusan system enabled migrants to not only invest in portable commodities, such as bicycles and livestock, but also,

due to a liberal land-access policy, to purchase real estate in their host country (Akindé 2003:16; Robertson 1982, 1987). As Burkinabé purchased land from the local population, they cleared and cultivated farms and constructed homes and businesses in these communities. Some men acquired only a few hectares, whereas others continued to obtain large tracts of land. Burkinabé further diversified their investments by creating businesses in commerce, transportation, and real estate, or became agricultural wholesalers purchasing and selling coffee and cocoa from fellow migrants and others. Small landholders, for example, sold their harvest to Burkinabé middlemen; this process of production, consumption, and exchange strengthened ties among members of the migrant population. While these activities were perceived by men as directed toward an objective in their homeland—or at least articulated as such in retrospect—the realization of more immediate needs via more proximal countrymen served to situate the majority of their social and economic resources within Côte d'Ivoire.

In contrast to Burkinabé men, who migrated to Côte d'Ivoire largely empty-handed in search of their material futures, Burkinabé women traveled across the border with items necessary for their futures. Women commonly migrated within the context of a familial network as wives, daughters, and nieces. Those migrating as wives brought with them to their new home those belongings received upon marriage. These possessions included multiple complete ensembles made from bright wax-print cloth, ordinary cooking pots for everyday use in the home, and an assortment of colorful serving dishes and extra-large cooking pots used on special occasions. These possessions facilitated their overlapping roles as wives, mothers, hostesses, and homemakers.

These objects were vital not only to the maintenance of relationships at the household level, but also to broader social interactions and particularly for participation in the social network constituted by fellow Burkinabé migrants. Tailored clothes, for example, were proudly worn for celebrations in order to be admired by other women, while women's large cooking pots and treasured serving dishes were used for the collective preparation of meals that accompany Muslim feasts, baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Former migrant Habibou's characterization of proper decorum at migrant-sponsored and attended baptisms in Côte d'Ivoire is illustrative:

You must attend baptisms with a smile on your face. You must be joyful. It is an obligation that one have these [material possessions] because if you do

not have them it is like you did not have the means. That is a rule in town. You must do all that you can to have them. You see, [Burkinabé women] will not think well of you, nor your children. They will say you have nothing.

An eventual return to Burkina Faso with evidence of migrants' industry during their tenure abroad served as an important metric of success for the Burkinabé diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire and further motivated migrants' monetary and material accumulation. Habibou's comment, however, makes clear that this incentive was not singular. Particularly for women, accumulation within Côte d'Ivoire was also driven by the need to access particular possessions as necessary adjuncts to participation in local Burkinabé social networks. Habibou, for example, intimates here that possession and exhibition of material wealth in collective celebrations has implications for children's ultimate success in locating prosperous marriage partners.

Dissolution of the Diaspora. Charismatic statesman Félix Houphouët-Boigny was an instrumental actor in the West African independence process, later becoming Côte d'Ivoire's president from 1960 until his death in 1993 (Chafer 2002). Under Houphouët-Boigny's paternalistic regime, Burkinabé were welcome in postcolonial Côte d'Ivoire and continued to make substantial contributions to the nation's economic welfare. As Toungara notes, "Since independence in 1960, there has been little change in the way the peoples of this small West African nation perceive themselves. Foremost in their psyches is their identity as members of a regional extended-family and corporate kin groups competing with others for their share of scarce economic resources and political clout" (2001:64). The 1995 introduction of Ivoirité, legislation that severely limited skilled employment to Ivoirians, by Houphouët-Boigny's successor, Henri Konan Bédié, increased ethic friction. Moreover, tension was exacerbated when Ivoirian citizenship was denied "to his [Bédié's] main political rival, Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, on the grounds that one of his parents came from Burkina Faso" (Global IDP Project). A short-lived reprieve from these hostilities occurred when General Robert Guéï came to power in 1999 during the country's first coup d'état; however, he was later removed when he tried to steal the October 2000 election from Laurent Gbagbo. Gbagbo took the position amidst mounting political strife and as relations between autochthones and migrants worsened.

Several years later, in 2002, rebel military factions seized military bases in Bouaké and Abidjan initiating a dispute that led to the north-south division of the country.

A detailed account of the war is beyond the scope of this paper, but it should be noted that poor relations between autochthones and migrants, tense before the war, further deteriorated with the unrest, particularly in areas where Burkinabé practiced lucrative cash crop cultivation (McGovern 2011). For example, affluent migrants were kidnapped for ransom, while many more encountered extortion from military, police, or civilians that reduced financial reserves earmarked for daily subsistence or long-term investments. Businessmen faced shakedowns and saw their stock plundered and premises destroyed by fire, thereby forcing them to make calculated decisions about their return home. Dispossessed of land by treachery or force, farmers fled into the forest, leaving, as one elderly woman wryly observed, "the cooking pot on the fire with the sauce inside." Such a comment can be interpreted literally as an indication of the speed with which migrants fled when violence finally broke out in the towns, villages, and encampments. A clandestine attempt to recuperate valuables sometimes occurred before return home, however, most rural and urban Burkinabé forsook their possessions for safe passage to Burkina Faso. In sum, the image of an abandoned cooking pot is illustrative of Burkinabé's reluctance to leave Côte d'Ivoire despite the volatility and their inability to heroically return to Burkina Faso as before imagined. It also serves to underscore the extent to which the idiom of kinship that once characterized relations between Ivoirians and migrants ceased in large part to exist.

As so often occurs in moments of conflict, the spread of violence throughout Côte d'Ivoire was uneven and restricted to areas where hostilities had been largely dormant. Indeed, portions of the country remained in relative peace at this time, and only some Burkinabé met with extreme violence. A familiar war-torn Côte d'Ivoire was for many migrants preferable to an uncertain future in Burkina Faso, whereas other Burkinabé were unable or reluctant to leave intact resources accumulated over years. For some migrants the cost of return was prohibitive with wartime bus fares ranging from 40,000 to 100,000 CFA (80–200 USD) per person, enormous sums for families with 12–30 members. They were thus forced to endure the precarious situation and hope for a quick resolution to the conflict. Of those migrants who remained in Côte d'Ivoire, most were ever more aware of their tenuous status as foreigners. Burkinabé who repatriated did so out of fear of assassination or in the absence of a home or accessible resources. Most returned with little more or less than they brought as newcomers. In addition to the lack of material goods, Burkinabé were so rooted that connections in Côte d'Ivoire were sometimes com-

parable to or surpassed those found in the homeland, which ultimately made the assimilation process once home more complex.

The Consequences of Dispossession

In the aftermath of their flight from Côte d'Ivoire in the face of the Ivoirian Civil War, many migrants came to have a hard-earned appreciation for the Burkinabé adage, "One who sleeps on a borrowed mat will end up asleep on the dirt." Prior to the outbreak of the war, Mamadou, a groundskeeper for 25 years, intended to remain in Abidjan to be near his grown children and to oversee his rental properties—properties that were ultimately burned in the first few days of the war. Contrary to their initial intent, many older and retired Burkinabé migrants planned to remain in the host country after decades abroad rather than return to Burkina Faso, a by then mythologized homeland. It was especially difficult to leave behind in Côte d'Ivoire a lifetime of hard work and social connections, preserved in vivid memories, to return to a country that had grown unfamiliar in migrants' absence. Upon their resettlement in Burkina Faso, many repatriates shared experiences similar to those of Hamidou, a 46-year-old farmer with young children, whose savings, set aside for the purchase of a large truck, was stolen when his taxi was stopped on a rural road and the occupants told to stand and deliver. Hamidou lost near $30,000 that day, and his 26-year association with Côte d'Ivoire came to an abrupt conclusion as his family repatriated in response to this violent encounter.

Although displaced by conflict, a migrant such as Hamidou did not return to Burkina Faso as a refugee. Defined by the United Nations (1951), a *refugee* is "a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." Due to their status as Burkinabé citizens, repatriates were largely excluded from any resources earmarked for refugee populations. What institutional support there was tended to be short-term and inadequate to meet the demand.[5] While some migrants did arrive in

---

5 Some repatriates received assistance in the form of blankets, clothes, food, and medical care at border crossings, where their points of departure, destination, and encounters during the war were briefly recorded. Stadiums in cities like Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso became sites where humanitarian aid was forthcoming for a period in 2002 and 2003. However, most repatriates with whom I worked received little and had only a few packets of cookies, a tin of corn or millet, or a blanket and water basin to show for the assistance received.

Burkina Faso with enough means to purchase land and construct new homes, others returned holding deeds to unimproved plots but not the cash necessary for their development. Many returned lacking even these assets. In short, few migrants arrived in Burkina Faso with the resources necessary to establish themselves with a standard of living resembling that which they enjoyed during their residence in Côte d'Ivoire.

These repatriates represented a new and unknown class of former migrants. For nearly a century Burkinabé had been returning to settle in the homeland with assets intact and a delineated identity—"returned migrant." The flood of migrants returning to Burkina Faso in the wake of the 2002 Civil War contradicted the picture of Ivoirian prosperity that had for so long prevailed among the Burkinabé population. One repatriate explained the distinction between the two populations thus:

> Those that came before the war, they, they are not repatriates, those who came then. They do not live under the same conditions. As you have noticed, there are people who were not touched [by the war]. They were scared because their neighbor was killed. Then [the violence] came toward him. He fled. Others left because their homes were completely burned. There are different repatriates, but he who returned, himself, he is not a repatriate. He was not repatriated. He does not lived under the same conditions. He came. He has his belongings. He does whatever he wants with his belongings. He prepared his return. They who had not prepared, they came, came, came like that. Me even, I came, I had not prepared. Thus, we have the same status.

This long-term resident in Côte d'Ivoire points to the material disparities between the two categories of former migrants: returned versus repatriated, or in one man's words, "We are Burkinabé, but of a different kind." The former retains his possessions—a home, moped, or money—which facilitate his life and livelihood. He has realized the objectives of migrati on abroad and enjoys an augmented status at home as well as the creature comforts provided by the fruits of his labor. The latter is unprepared for return in an economic, social, and psychological sense. Thus, the link between material and social welfare is evident in this comment and in similar sentiments repatriates frequently express.

The acquisition of objects abroad was envisioned as a means to realize collective and individual interests and identities. Projects repatriates undertook in Côte d'Ivoire flourished, yet were later excised with the war. James Ferguson (1999) de-

scribes the prosperity and development Zambia enjoyed in the two decades after independence and the subsequent downturn in worldwide demand for copper, the main export, as a "disconnect," a decisive transformation indicative of a bygone era. Repatriates' narratives of fortune and loss are similar tales of disconnect most evident in their illustrations of material forfeiture. As noted before, possessions accumulated by men and women were unalike and served distinct socioeconomic domains. So, too, men and women endured loss in a gendered manner in which the absence of key possessions exacerbated their marginal status in a literal or sometimes imagined manner.

The dispossession, destruction, and abandonment of land, homes, and businesses were for men a traumatic repercussion of the war. Migration histories collected from repatriates formerly inhabiting rural areas commenced with discussions of arduous abusan labor undertaken for up to seven years before migrants could begin to acquire land. Across southern Côte d'Ivoire, migrants cleared the dense forest by hand to transform undeveloped land into productive plantations. As relations between Ivoirians and foreign populations deteriorated, land made valuable thanks to Burkinabé labor was sometimes ensnared in groundless lawsuits by the descendants of a father or uncle, who in the past sold plentiful land to an abusan laborer when the two populations enjoyed more amicable relations. Many such disputes remained unresolved when war commenced. Additionally, Burkinabé were sometimes dispossessed of land by alternative means through force or treachery, in a "hunting mishap" for instance, in which the Burkinabé landholder was killed so that his land reverted to the native Ivoirian owner or more likely his descendents.

Overt violence directed at migrants produced the same effect as lawsuits and hunting accidents. Seydou lost two brothers to such violence when civilians disguised as military came to their familial compound in western Côte d'Ivoire and murdered his brothers, while Seydou and their families fled to the forest. Seydou subsequently became responsible for his brothers' families. He described this and similar incidents as *malin*, a French term in this local context implying cleverness in a devious and underhanded manner:

> We [Burkinabé] said to ourselves, "You come to buy land in order to work. You bought the land with money. The land, the land is for the owner now. It's for you." So, with suffering we work to feed our families. It's not fair that they [Bété] come to bother you. After, they [Bété] told us that if we did not

accept their conditions, we could go home. We came to find their land. We should go and leave them their land. We [Burkinabé] built plantations and houses. Plantations and houses cannot be carried on one's head. So in leaving [Côte d'Ivoire], we could not transport the plantations and houses. It is for this reason, because they wanted to kill us, that we were obligated to return.

Now landless and renting rooms for his enlarged family, Seydou points to the dilemma repatriates confronted daily with their need to pay for inexpensive housing and sustenance while plantations and houses, unable to "be carried on one's head," remained intact, yet inaccessible, in Côte d'Ivoire.

Such losses caused hardships for impoverished repatriates; however, returnees' remorse importantly centered on the erasure of former selves from their perspective. A particular shame for repatriates was the failure to construct a house while away, which was widely visible to non-repatriate Burkinabé in the homeland as an indication of scant preparations and reduced circumstances. Once important as symbolic capital, houses in the homeland that expatriate Yoruba built took on new practical value subsequent to the migrant Yoruba population's expulsion from Ghana:

> Ownership of a house in Nigeria proved to be particularly valuable after the 1969 exodus, and the first thing many migrants did on their arrival home was either to complete or to start building a house before looking for economic opportunities elsewhere. Houses at home were not only places to which the migrants could eventually retire. They symbolized and served to reinforce their commitment to their hometown, and acted as valuable reminders to the rest of the town of their success abroad. Those who also regarded them as a source of security were, in 1969, proved right. [Eades 1994:136]

Burkinabé that had never ventured to Côte d'Ivoire and former migrants with resources were beyond reproach from peers. Those who returned before the conflict, but without promised riches, encountered some rebuke, whereas postwar repatriates suffered criticism as well as pity. Formerly with means to invest in an inalienable object—a home in one's homeland—Burkinabé, while still abroad, brushed aside caution expressed in proverbs and overlooked noble motives that

first prompted migration to Côte d'Ivoire. After repatriation, alienation in the unfamiliar city of Bobo-Dioulasso and the lack of know-how in the home country—two new sentiments for once connected and fortunate migrants with homes in Côte d'Ivoire—represented for men a sense of disconnect.

Men carried treasured papers from Côte d'Ivoire or evidence from state representatives that marked their repatriate status to bolster continuities between former and present selves. They frequently pulled from wallets, traditional sacks worn around the waist, or worn envelopes documents to punctuate migration, war, and return narratives, and unfurled deeds to chronicle the purchase, improvement, and expansion of territories now lost. Court documents from an unresolved lawsuit that marred the final few years in Côte d'Ivoire underscored the suspension of one life in exchange for the debut of another. These objects were evidence of previous lives, but they were also a current testament to a constant and fruitless search for local and state assistance. Birth certificates, identity and vaccination cards, work permits, deeds and titles, and forms from their frontier crossings became emblems of repatriates' citizenship-status—protective talismans from accusations of idleness, decadence, and cowardice. Furthermore, illustrative of their determination to be productive in the homeland as once they had been in the host country, these credentials provided recourse for repatriates with their now inverted status as dependents. Individual and collective demands for assistance from the government or NGOs included these photocopied documents as support or résumé. In short, this *papier* (documentation) was intended to immunize once successful and industrious migrants against those recriminations hurled at migrants who returned before the conflict empty-handed. Repatriates' reduced circumstances were due to structural transformations in Côte d'Ivoire and not the result of some internal moral flaw.

Naturally women also mourned family farms and homes that remained in Côte d'Ivoire. These resources provided sustenance and shelter, and women's labor and funds were invested in these non-portable goods. Bimata's case demonstrates the impact of the loss of a house on women as well. She and her husband constructed a three-room home in an Abidjan *bidonville* (shantytown). Her position as a cleaning woman in a fashionable apartment complex and his night watchman work for a Lebanese-owned electronics store permitted them to add electricity to the structure and to purchase a refrigerator to make ice that Bimata sold from home. Many bidonvilles were burned within days of the war's onset to drive out rebels, largely

northerners, believed to reside within. After observing this initial destruction, Bimata believed their home would be razed and hoped to preserve more portable possessions by moving them away from the home:

> We moved our belongings to someone who had a brick house because we knew they would burn our homes. Tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, they were going to come to your home. They burned the homes in front of us. … They burned everything. … People fled. … We took our belongings to put in one of the houses so that they would not be burned. They had begun the fire when I returned [from work].

Although Bimata secured some valuables from arson, most of the items nevertheless remained in Côte d'Ivoire as the family returned to Burkina Faso in an overcrowded bus. Only a few suitcases ultimately accompanied Bimata and her family since transporters inflated baggage fees alongside already increased bus fares.

Immediately after return to Burkina Faso, a dearth of household items posed a particular challenge to women expected to clothe and prepare for the family. Lacking basic necessities was for women the most shameful conclusion to the dehumanization encountered on the return home. Whereas many residents in Bobo-Dioulasso were required to rent rooms and walk or take communal taxis, locals nonetheless possessed rudimentary objects—a cooking pot, a plastic basin for washing, soap, and clothing—to furnish a household. Such necessities were often those items women took with them on their initial trip to Côte d'Ivoire. The abandonment and absence of farms and homes was less noticeable to outsiders, but no less mourned, than the want of housewares. Witnesses to the arrival of repatriates in town frequently noted their return "without so much as a mat on which to sleep," a remark that points to the mat as an inexpensive, yet most essential, house ware that keeps one from the bare floor and more importantly clean. Also implicated in this statement is the sentiment that small children and animals, or those without personhood, can sit on the earth, whereas adults (humans and persons) should refrain from doing so. The remark, therefore, draws attention to the inhuman qualities temporarily bestowed upon repatriates in the context of their flight.

Challenges presented by the lack of housewares are but one dimension of women's material loss that also centered on consumer goods—heirlooms, presents from

marriage or celebrations, and accumulated treasures—which held personal sentimental value for repatriates as well as facilitated the creation and affirmation of women's social selves. Objects previously traveled with women to Côte d'Ivoire and were meant, with more recent purchases, to furnish women's immediate and future material and social worlds and to "transport part of their former identities to a new place" (Mehta and Belk 1991:399), the homeland.

As Fati's case here illustrates, women, like men, vocalized a "disconnect," resulting from the absence of key possessions, and were visibly excluded from social events in their communities. It was in this 2004 interview that for the first time a repatriate woman mentioned to me the loss of her belongings. Fati spoke with enthusiasm for more than an hour about her contributions to her husband's farm in Côte d'Ivoire and the intricacies of coffee and cocoa cultivation. The 30-year-old mother of three recalled her nervousness when first migrating as a bride and her husband's reassurance that she would soon reunite with old friends who previously migrated. Fati proudly recounted her husband's acquisition of seven hectare of coffee and cocoa and their joint labor on the land.

As the interview concluded, Fati collected her belongings—a plastic sack, a worn *pagne* (cloth wrap), and her two-year-old son—and then hesitated. Fati then explained in a conspiratorial tone that she, too, had lost things in the war. Her tailored outfits, accumulated over the past ten years, along with expensive, cumbersome cooking pots used for celebrations, remained in Côte d'Ivoire. Now living in Bobo-Dioulasso with her brother-in-law and his extended family, Fati confessed to a newfound self-consciousness about her appearance and lack of appropriate clothing for celebrations (e.g., baptisms, marriages), occasions where non-repatriate neighbors would be present. She saw her inability to contribute cookware to collective meal preparation for these events as limiting her participation. She instead stayed home when a celebration occurred, too discouraged and ashamed to approach the very social settings that would promote the reinsertion process.

Repatriate women's marginalization is further visible in the contest over a women's voluntary association. One of several associations in Bobo-Dioulasso that repatriates created in response to non-existent state assistance, this one focused on women's welfare and was based at a women's center financed by the state and backed by the First Lady. The association's high profile resulted in funds for projects that included literacy courses, soap production, and the collective management of a

community mill and water fountain. The association, however, did not begin as one focused on repatriates and only took on this function in response to changing demographics in the neighborhood where the association was housed.

The association was established by a returned migrant before the 2002 onset of war in Côte d'Ivoire and was a small *tontine*, or rotating credit group, that enjoyed periodic lectures from NGO and state representatives on issues that included sanitary meal preparation, HIV/AIDS prevention, and parenting. The association's credit activities required women to contribute a sum, 1,000–2,000 CFA (two to four USD), three pagne of wax-print cloth, or the colorful enamelware women displayed in homes and amassed for their own or a daughter's trousseau. At each meeting, one association member received in rotation the week's collection, whether monetary or material, and so was permitted to obtain merchandise for trade, pay tuition, or meet demands imposed by life cycle celebrations or events when costs would have otherwise been prohibitive.

Repatriate newcomers to the peri-urban area where the credit association operated attracted notice and prompted members to invite these recently arrived women to the next rendezvous. Repatriates quickly outnumbered founding members, who soon resented transformations to the association that focused more on repatriates' financial needs than their own socioeconomic interests. Soap production and other small-scale income generating activities replaced the rotating credit and accumulation of consumer goods. Disinterested in the new direction of the association and its more intensive focus on repatriates and their subsistence needs, all but three initial members rejected the reincarnated association. It was not that these initial members believed they could not benefit from these endeavors, but rather these changes highlighted a symbolic capital of which they wanted no part.

As an illustration of tensions between repatriates and non-repatriates soon after the influx of returnees, some former association members spread rumors about the repatriate women with speculation as to their HIV/AIDS status and mocked their flight from war and now destitute position. Criticism, in particular, focused on women's now untidy appearance. A repatriate remembers the metamorphosis women previously underwent in Côte d'Ivoire: "They [her friends] changed because before their departure for Côte d'Ivoire they were neither fat nor pretty. But upon their return they had become fat. Their skin was beautiful, and they also had money. They were also clean." Repatriate women, in contrast to their former selves, were thin, with skin and hair without shine and luster, clothed in faded, worn pagne.

Conditions under which repatriates lived precipitated these transformations since most lacked the means to purchase food, clothes, or cosmetics to sustain the look women maintained in Côte d'Ivoire. Another implication found in these rumors was that the dramatic change to repatriates' appearance resulted from illnesses, particularly HIV/AIDS, acquired in Côte d'Ivoire's urban centers, which further alienated this vulnerable population.

Conclusion

Repatriate Adama, when asked his reasons for migrating to Côte d'Ivoire, explained, "Often, they [migrants] earn a lot of money, and they give to their parents. They buy bicycles that they show to people. That's it, I thought to leave. Moving gives good luck to men." Like many migrants, Adama went to Côte d'Ivoire to earn money to purchase objects that would serve collective and individual purposes from which he hoped to receive numerous benefits, including *baraka* (grace), for his industriousness and assistance to the kin in the homeland. Through the movement of possessions back and forth across borders and the accumulation and loss of them, the social processes by which Burkinabé subjects are created—as migrants and repatriates— is illuminated. Men believed secure futures were found in the acquisition of land or in a business or salaried employment in an urban center, whereas women prepared for their material futures prior to migration and continued to contribute to the home once in the host country. While circular migration between the two countries persisted, the Burkinabé diaspora expanded even as the political situation became less stable—a testament to the postcolonial peace the nation encountered relative to its neighbors. The 2002 Ivoirian Civil War therefore came as a surprise to Burkinabé, whose time as migrants was unfinished and who intended to remain in Côte d'Ivoire.

The dispossession of men's land, businesses, and homes and women's abandonment of housewares and other heirlooms further speaks to the erasure of personal histories and problematizes the attainment of baraka, in Adama's words. The visible absence of objects and reduced conditions under which repatriates live are seen as a measure of their interior state, whether it is perceived as a moral failure to invest in the homeland or bodily contamination by the host country. Whereas once migration to Côte d'Ivoire was alluring and returning migrants were considered sophisticated and cosmopolitan, repatriates are now viewed with pity and in some cases scorn because they lack what once they possessed.

REFERENCES

Akindé, Francis
2003   Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-political Crises, 'Ivoirité' and the Course of History. African Sociological Review 7:11–28.

Appadurai, Arjun
1986   Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value. *In* The Social Life of Things. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 3–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Asiwaju, A. I.
1976   Migrations as Revolt: The Example of the Ivory Coast and the Upper Volta before 1945. The Journal of African History 17:577–594.

Boswell, Kathryn
2010   Migration, War, and Repatriation from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso, West Africa. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Indiana University.

Chafer, Tony
2002   The End of Empire in French West Africa. New York: Berg.

Cordell, Dennis, Joel W. Gregory, and Victor Piché
1996   Hoe and Wage. Boulder: Westview Press.

Eades, Jeremy
1994   Strangers and Traders. Trenton: Africa World Press.

Echenberg, Myron
1991   Colonial Conscripts. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Ferguson, James
1999   Expectations of Modernity. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gell, Alfred
1986   Newcomers to the World of Goods: Consumption among the Muria Gonds. *In* The Social Life of Things. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 110–140. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Global IDP Project
2002   Côte d'Ivoire: Thousands Uprooted in Worsening Ethnic Turmoil. http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/0767ca5035f0ab 5585256c83005b3ebf.

Kanya-Forstner, A.
1969   The Conquest of the Western Sudan. London: Cambridge University Press.

Koné, Mariatou
2002   Gaining Rights of Access to Land in West-Central Côte d'Ivoire. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

Masquelier, Adeline
2009   Women and Islamic Revival in a West African Town. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Marchal, Jean-Yves
1980   Chroniques D'un Cercle De l'A.O.F.: Recueil D'archives Du Poste De Ouahigouya (Haute Volta), 1908–1941. Paris: O.R.S.T.O.

Mehta, Raj and Russell Belk
1991   Artifacts, Identity, and Transition: Favorite Possessions of Indians and Indian Immigrants to the United States. Journal of Consumer Research. 17:398–411.

McGovern, Mike
2011   Making War in Côte d'Ivoire. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Myers, Fred
2001   Introduction: The Empire of Things. *In* The Empire of Things. Fred Myers, ed. Pp. 3–61. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Robertson, A. F.
1987   Dynamics of Productive Relationships. New York: Cambridge University Press.

1982   Abusa: the Structural History of an Economic Contract. Developmental Studies 18:447–478.

Schildkrout, Enid
1978   People of the Zongo. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Skinner, Elliott
1960   Labour Migration and Its Relationship to Socio-Cultural Change in Mossi Society. Africa: Journal of the International African Institute 30:375–401.

Thompson, Virginia McLean, and Richard Adloff
1969   French West Africa. New York: Greenwood Press.

Toungara, Jeanne Maddox
2001   Ethnicity and Political Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. Journal of Democracy 12:63–72.

United Nations General Assembly
    1951   Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. United Nations Treaty
    Series 189:137.

Weiskel, Timothy C.
    1981   French Colonial Rule and the Baule Peoples. New York: Oxford
    University Press.

Wilson, Thomas M., and Hastings Donnan
    1998   Nation, State and Identity at International Borders. *In* Border Identities.
    Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, eds. Pp. 1–30. Cambridge: Cambridge
    University Press.

Zongo, Mahamadou
    2003   La diaspora burkinabé en Côte d'Ivoire: trajectoire historique, recomposition
    des dynamiques migratoires et rapport avec le pays d'origine. Revue Africaine de
    Sociologie 7:58–72.

GOVERNING THE MARGINS:

CRIME CONTAINMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA

Anne M. Galvin, St. John's University

Most communities like [Perry Town] have their own little prisons, not the police station jails as such. —Resident of Perry Town, Jamaica

Under what circumstances do private citizens feel the need to create their own prisons? In Perry Town, Jamaica,[1] where I spent more than one year conducting participant observation and in-depth interviews, plus a decade conducting supplementary fieldwork, I found that residents depend upon powerful patrons for the fulfillment of basic needs. It is apparent that in poor communities such as Perry Town, community justice is one part of a larger local power structure linked to deeply rooted patronage networks.

Patronage practices have become a crucial part of life in Jamaican ghettoes, where the state's resources have long been limited by a weak economy, common among former colonies in the Caribbean (Chevannes 1992; Figueroa 1994; Stone 1985).[2] Additionally, the burden of care for citizens is in the process of being transferred to individuals and community organizations, befitting the present logic of neoliberal social and economic reform (Rose 1999). Reform, in this context, focuses not only on the selective deregulation of economic markets, but also on small government, constituted by the withdrawal of the Jamaican state from the provision of social safety nets in favor of self-help models of poverty reduction.

The nexus of events in Jamaican political history—most notably (1) garrison[3]

1 Please note that all names of people and places have been changed.

2 This point was reinforced during the summer of 2010 when the Tivoli Gardens area of Kingston erupted into violence against state officials after Christopher "Dudus" Coke, their patron and an organized crime boss, was sought for extradition to the United States on weapons and narcotics trafficking charges.

3 *Garrison* is a term applied to areas with uniform voting patterns and a "militarized" power structure historically supported by either the People's National Party or the Jamaica Labour Party.

politics and a growing distrust of agents of the state as alien and inefficient, and (2) the shift away from Democratic Socialism in favor of currently popular models of neoliberal governance—have provided a platform for the further entrenchment of community-based practices that appear to operate outside the purview of the state. These include the solidification of informal power structures based on the provision of goods and services and a concomitant reliance on these informal power structures for the meting out of a "fair" and swift version of community justice. These power structures are deeply rooted in the *local moral economy*, the set of economic practices extant throughout Jamaica that consist of normative acts of giving, deeply impacted by Christian values and decades of democratic socialist policies marked by a state-led, mixed economy, and state-sponsored efforts to encourage egalitarianism and social inclusion (Stephens and Stephens 1986).

Though embedded in marginal communities, the governance provided by these local power structures has been notably recognized both in popular consciousness and among social scientists as a new form of social power that threatens the legitimacy of the state and undermines the attempted monopolization of power by the nation's political elite (Gray 2004). Alarmingly, this new form of social power is wielded by persons who have gained wealth and notoriety through transnational drug and firearms trafficking, and who are no longer beholden for resources to either the People's National Party (PNP) or the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) (Robotham 2010). It is now often the case that community power structures are able to supply residents with spoils that reach well beyond government means.

It is not only community members who have come to rely on the workings of power structures populated by organized crime bosses and their henchmen.[4] Indeed, the state itself has "willed over" some of its jurisdiction over the legitimate use of violence to these same organized criminal networks (Weber 2004). This happens when officers of the state either actively collaborate with powerful local stakeholders or strategically look the other way when the extrajudicial acts or elicit economic ends match the needs of the state. Local structures of governance are therefore not entirely separable from the Jamaican state; while they sometimes operate outside the realm of legality, they nevertheless receive the tacit approval of state agents. In fact, local power structures are now required by the state to maintain control over

"marginal" populations whose presence threatens to interrupt public order and national development.

By treating this system of justice as a tenuous extension of the state, rather than as solely resistant to state strategies promoting law and order, it is possible to understand how informal community justice has become an essential part of the functioning of the Jamaican state itself. This is a space where, as Das and Poole put it, "the persons who embody law, bureaucracy, and violence that together constitute the state move beyond the realm of myth to become joined in the reality of everyday life" (2004:14). Marginal spaces like Perry Town, where the state depends upon local justice to govern, represent zones where the ideal, theoretical state (which, according to Weber's famous theorization, enjoys exclusive domain over the legitimate use of violence), meets the day-to-day challenges of governance.

This messier version of the state, the "everyday" version, is harder to conceal during election years when long-standing intercommunity political conflicts and the relationship between marginal urban zones and the state are particularly pronounced. This was certainly the case during the 2002 election season. Guy Town, the community with which this research is primarily concerned, is a small neighborhood within West Kingston that is encircled by a larger area named Perry Town. Perry Town covers only one quarter of a square mile but it is densely populated. According to the 2001 Census, Perry Town houses approximately thirteen thousand residents.

During the two months leading up to the October 16 election, the environment within Guy Town, which is politically affiliated with the PNP, began to palpably change. At the end of August, Mita, a Guy Town resident in her early fifties with short, finely plaited hair, commented that she wished I did not have to be around for the upcoming election because sometimes "it's not nice." However, she assured me that problems would arise only out on the main roads and that we were all safe within the borders of the neighborhood because "the men bleach." *Bleaching* indicates engagement in intense conversation, usually an activity undertaken specifically by men. In this case, Mita was assuring me that the men unofficially in control of securing the area had negotiated agreements with other armed and organized groups of men in order to enact plans for defending the borders of the community from potentially dangerous outsiders.[5] Gray has described the training

---

4 For an excellent account of the development of organized crime in Kingston from both a historical and political perspective see Obika Gray's *Demeaned But Empowered: The Social Power of the Urban Poor in Jamaica*. Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2004.

5 Mita's assurances turned out to be largely correct. She and two of my closest associates from the area, having dropped me off after an outing one night in a van owned by their friend, were shot at along the main road entering the community because the van happened to be painted green, the color of the

received by these groups of armed men, in the context of the organized political violence that has historically been orchestrated by political parties themselves, as akin to training in "guerilla warfare," in which the responsibilities of the most heavily utilized local participants "required leadership, communication, and organizational skills as well as political acumen" (Gray 2004:289). This state-provided "apprenticeship in organization and a species of 'management training' and leadership" was clearly observable during this election period and in residents' descriptions of the Area Leader's role in governing Perry Town more generally (Gray 2004:289).

The first real change I noticed, having been ensconced in Guy Town for nearly a year, was the tight monitoring of people's comings and goings. Cars entering the community were closely scrutinized, particularly if they were unfamiliar. The second change I noticed was the increased number of vehicles carrying visitors to a corner occupied by a group of men known to serve as community "security," the same men who would have orchestrated the regulation of the area's borders. In addition, there was a preponderance of residents wearing the color orange, which is associated with the PNP, and pro-PNP graffiti was scrawled on the normally pristine, painted cinderblock walls.

One evening as I sat with Alesha, a brown-skinned mother of three in her mid-thirties, watching the cars driving in and pulling out, she commented that they were full of gunmen. It was about two weeks before the elections were to be held, and Alesha explained that a section of the PNP constituency containing Guy Town was "warring" with a neighboring JLP area. She told me that Guy Town, while not directly involved, "backs up" the embattled section since they are all PNP supporters. She said that earlier in the week Guy Town had been "pure tall up tall up and short up short up" and that a bullet had hit the painted mural featuring popular dancehall performers that decorated the cinder block wall framing Guy Town Square.[6] She proceeded to describe, in great detail and with a great deal of vibrato, a new gun fitted with a spotting scope that had arrived in the neighborhood. Communities with particularly impressive weaponry become noted for that. Alesha and Krystal,

Mita's younger cousin, discussed one well-known gun nicknamed "bammers" that was owned by another community. Bammers was said to be so large it had to be transported in a wheelbarrow. They also mentioned that certain prized firearms would be lent between communities fighting for the same party. Krystal added that women in bordering conflict areas often contribute to the "war" by standing opposite each other dancing suggestively, yelling, and hurling rocks and underwear.[7]

During the months following the announcement of the October election, the presence of PNP representatives in the community increased dramatically. Most notably, the party made significant infrastructural improvements, including fresh paving of the crumbling asphalt streets adjacent to locations associated with prominent community members. In Guy Town, these improvements included the repaving of the corner associated with the Community Youth Organization, which is strongly identified with a record producer who served as Guy Town's key patron. The suddenness of these improvements was no mystery to community members who somewhat cynically indicated that the projects were yet another sign that election time had come, acknowledging that they felt largely forgotten by the state until they were needed for their votes.

In addition to carrying out physical improvements, PNP representatives had arrived to distribute work to constituents.[8] Alesha, gossiping with Martin, explained that a PNP representative had arrived with $250,000 in Jamaican currency and identified an area of long-vacant land that suddenly needed to be cleared of brush. According to Alesha's story, the PNP representative had entrusted a local shopkeeper with the entire sum to distribute to residents for the ground clearing. Alesha explained that this was basically a way of paying people to vote: workers would have money and "food run," meaning there would be a period of relative abundance, and they would not have grounds to complain that the PNP had never done anything for them. As it turned out, the shopkeeper kept the money for himself, purchasing new stock, appliances, and a gun. This irritated Martin, one of the major figures in the Community Youth Organization, who commented that he never expects anything of the PNP's "scarce benefits and spoils" anyway.

Jamaican Labour Party. Luckily, no one was injured and they later recounted the incident with humor, but it served as a reminder that even a relatively peaceful election year is prone to an escalation in random violence.

6 Here "tall up tall up" and "short up short up" are being used in reference to large and small guns, the terminology coming from a dancehall song and accompanying dance, popular at the time, called the "tall up tall up."

---

7 Women's underwear is considered to be polluting to men, who avoid contact with it in any non-sexual context.

8 The distribution of work is a common strategy for patrons wanting to infuse money into the area. This strategy is popular with politicians and criminal patrons alike, who will award construction contracts as well as other kinds of manual labor in exchange for various demonstrations of loyalty.

The issue of PNP "not doing anything" for residents is one that came up often in conversations and meetings in which I took part. When asked who takes care of them, residents usually indicated the local record producer–community patron, rather than politicians or any other person or group active in the area. This is a clear indication of the slippage between a deeply held community value of abstract "party loyalty" and the openly expressed dissatisfaction with what the party, which is often blamed for the overall reduction in services on the part of the neoliberal state, has provided for them.[9]

While the sudden and strategic visibility of the PNP could not rival the much more intimate and sustained interactions between community residents and their local patrons, elected party officials themselves were markedly more visible during this period. Two weeks prior to Election Day, Minister Oliver, a Member of Parliament (MP) visited the area with a group that included his special assistant, bodyguard, and several other supporters. Residents gathered in the street around the MP and collectively followed the movements of his entourage. The aim of the visit was to evaluate the condition of a gully, which carried wastewater runoff out of Guy Town. Gullies are known to fall into disrepair, becoming refuse repositories that can develop into hazards to public health.

Upon arrival, Minister Oliver and his entourage immediately recognized me. The sight of a North American white woman "cotching" on a low wooden stool on a street corner adjacent to Guy Town Square, in the familiar pose of a community resident taking a break from her daily domestic tasks, was observably jarring, particularly to the MP's Special Assistant. It was he who had taken me on an early morning tour of the area in a government-issued SUV when I arrived in Guy Town nearly a year before. Their recognition of me, and my position as a clear outsider, inspired some joking among the women around me. Krystal laughed about the MP knowing me and requested that I ask him to fix the roof of a house belonging to my friend's elderly father. Alesha noted that, of all the people living in Guy Town, the MP only recognized me. She added that she was not going to vote for him because she had asked him for money and he had not provided any. When I told them that the first thing Minister Oliver said to me was that I looked comfortable, Krystal

replied, "yeah because he's afraid to come down here. He doesn't come down without all of his bodyguards."

The women's reaction betrayed feelings of alienation from the MP, who they felt was not serving them adequately, and indicated a gap between their expectations and the level of care that the Jamaican state provides for its poorest citizens. It also reveals among the urban poor an aspect of the local moral economy in which, ideally, social bonds (such as the hyperbolic one between the MP and me) translate into mutual obligation. Here mutual obligation is not reciprocal but is based upon an understanding of unequal access to resources. People sharing a social bond are expected to give in any capacity they can, whether it be through their time and labor or through financial contribution. In contrast to the direct, face-to-face transfer of resources and favors that marks the relationship between many community members and their local patrons, the acquisition of state resources requires an abstract process of petitioning, which may include filling out forms that ask how many television sets you have in your residence. Such a count among members of the urban poor will inevitably include the hand-me-down appliances that have been wired and rewired to maintain marginal functionality—hardly an indication of access to resources or a useful measure of real need. This seemingly arbitrary petitioning process and the time lag between the request for and notification of benefits stand in stark contrast to the local appeals process. When approaching a local patron, an individual will typically address that patron directly during a designated time, plead their case, and often receive immediate assistance or an explanation of why the request is inappropriate or impossible. This practice is more attuned to local sociality and the moral economy expected among friends or kin. Community residents' reaction to the contrast in these two approaches revealed the dangers that the state, with its entrenched bureaucracy, faces in its attempt to compete for the loyalty of residents with the agile guerilla tactics of the local power structure.

Though residents would often grumble that they would not vote for the incumbent MP, I never heard anyone say they would rather vote for the JLP candidate. This fissure highlights the nature of garrison politics and party loyalty. The uniform voting pattern does not indicate uniform consent for the particular candidate, but instead indicates a deep party loyalty related to people's racial and class affiliations, personal identities, a sense of belonging in the community, and a fear of the repercussions associated with dissent.

The issue of personal and party loyalty was brought to my attention during a Community Youth Organization meeting, which was sparsely attended by four or five members. Flava, a slight man in his fifties, had come to meet me in Guy Town prior to the meeting and was invited to join in, even though he was a resident of Perry Town. Within Guy Town, it is popularly asserted that Perry Town seems to be more solidly affiliated with and supported by the MP than Guy Town. A few club members took the opportunity to discuss problems they found with the MP, since Flava, an active supporter of Oliver, was there as both a sounding board and a "devil's advocate."

Loyalty issues were particularly well-articulated in this context: the CEO of a dancehall production company, a record producer whose patronage activities support Guy Town, had announced that he would be entering politics for the first time, running for MP as a PNP candidate in another low-income section of Kingston. Guy Town residents made their support for their patron clear by wearing *his* campaign t-shirts, rather than MP Oliver's, and marching more than a mile to appoint him on Nomination Day, even though his candidacy would not have direct political implications for their community. Tensions arose in the meeting when Mary, a club member also in her fifties, suggested that she wanted to transfer her vote to the record producer's potential constituency rather than vote for Minister Oliver. She and other club members agreed that they would not vote at all. Flava tried to clarify Mary's position by explaining that she wanted her vote to support the person she received actual benefits from. Another young man intervened, agreeing with Flava and insisting that they could not let the JLP candidate for Prime Minister be elected; while their choice of MP was not perfect, electing Edward Seaga, the infamous and longstanding JLP candidate, to serve as Prime Minister again would be much worse. Mary complained that it was impossible for certain people to meet with the current MP; if Minister Oliver received a letter from Guy Town and a letter from Perry Town, the one from Guy Town would be thrown away, she explained, dramatizing her claim by throwing the leaf of paper in her hand to the floor of the club house.

It was a widely held belief that Minister Oliver felt less responsibility for Guy Town because of the record producer's patronage activities. Though not articulated in these terms, meeting participants on that night were indexing, with their resentment toward the MP, the fact that private funders like the record producer were being heavily utilized as an extension of state resources, rather than as a supplement

to them, thereby shifting the burden of care for citizens from the public to the private sector.[10] With that shift came a concomitant shift in community loyalty. However, it was also the case that even projects that were instituted as public–private partnerships were often solely attributed to the beneficence of the highly visible and familiar record producer, as opposed to the alien MP or any other state source. Flava mischievously retorted that if people felt so strongly that the MP was failing to meet their needs, they should "vote Labourite." The Vice President of the Youth Organization, a man in his early thirties who worked as an administrator at the local high school became indignant, yelling, "Never do that! I'm born PNP!"

This complex relationship between the Jamaican state and marginal urban areas like Guy Town became clear when I visited Minister Oliver's office and met Perry Town's Area Leader. The term *area leader* is a euphemistic retooling of the popular term *don* derived from the Italian Mafia. *Area leader* is a term carefully deployed by agents of the state who often have significant dealings with such figures. The term cleverly conceals the illicit character of the personages they describe by swapping clearly identifiable organized crime terminology for a quasi-political sounding one.

On the day I met Perry Town's powerful Area Leader, he agitatedly approached Minister Oliver's Special Assistant with a complaint. The MP had acquired a number of wheelchairs to distribute, one per person, to disabled residents in his constituency. The perfectly mobile Area Leader complained that he had received only one wheelchair in Minister Oliver's giveaway. In other words, the MP had treated him the same as any ordinary community resident, with the exception that he had been given a chair despite lacking any physical limitation. Luckily, the Special Assistant had kept some wheelchairs aside and was able to supply the Area Leader with a few additional ones to give out as he chose. This was my first clue that the Area Leader was, indeed, someone who needed to be "managed" by Minster Oliver in order for things to run smoothly within the constituency. Their relationship was one of negotiation, not one in which the state's authority was clearly differentiated from the area leader's authority. In addition, the Area Leader's presence and power within the government office building, the officially sanctioned

---

10 It is important to note that the Jamaican political climate might be better characterized as a continuum ranging from a high level of involvement in illicit behavior to little or no involvement in illicit behavior. I would characterize Guy Town's primary patron as inhabiting the range between these two poles, as many Kingston-based business people do. He does, necessarily, participate in Guy Town's illicit economy and power structure, but should not be characterized as primarily an organized criminal. This position in relation to his role in the dancehall music industry requires further exploration elsewhere.

domain of the MP, quite literally, demonstrated how populations considered marginal in terms of space and influence, can also be quite mobile and central in relation to the operations of the state.

Martin, a resident of Perry Town in his mid-twenties, explained the role of the area leader to me during an interview. His description highlights the ambiguous relationship between the "official" state and the private "community-based" power structures. When I asked him who has power in Perry Town and Guy Town, he responded:

> Basically those who have power in the area, you have the dons who are the local representatives, so to speak, for the whole governing of the areas, then you have the politicians, who are basically the people who interact with the public, with the outside. The rules of the community are set down by that don or area leader and with that comes some semblance of community justice. Whenever certain rules are broken, now we see that instead of being taken to the police station whereby justice through the normal means is… wayward, takes a long time. With the inner city justice system […] people might say it's fair, but surely though it's swift… It's swift and decisive.

The acceptance of these "alternative" power structures ironically coheres with the neoliberal tenet that local settings should be the primary sites for the care and regulation of populations. From the perspective of citizens, however, these arrangements are often read as a betrayal on the part of the state, which they cannot depend upon for the provision of basic services or the administration of incorruptible justice. Martin continued:

> Most communities like [Perry Town] have their own little prisons, not the police station jails as such, it might range from a strapping to being imprisoned for a couple of days, you know being fed like crackers and bread and water, and to extreme you might be shot. If they think it warrant that you, you will be killed. So basically that's that. And with that, because it's so swift and in some ways, just, just in a certain kind of way, because what you might find is the don and his cronies might beat a man for having a relationship with a teenager, and they themselves are doing the same, but because they are the instigators of that law and they then do the same thing it doesn't do much, but then again, you find the people feeling powerless to change that because they don't have the power. They have support of the

Member of Parliament, but they don't have the financial backative and they don't have the power of guns that these dons have. So therefore they succumb and they continue to will over their power not to the police, but to the dons and their cronies.

His description of the community justice system demonstrates that it has many of the same features of the state justice system: for example, there are set punishments for particular infractions. Martin refers to community members' participation in this system as a "willing over" of their power to the don rather than to the police because the don's justice system is more efficient than the state's system in many ways and because community members regularly see direct benefits from the don's web of influence, whereas the benefits of the state power structure appear more intermittent as well as distant from the daily lives of residents. In the context of the inner city, the don becomes a figure who is trusted and depended upon for immediate results and support, whereas the state, its representatives, and its bureaucratic processes are largely seen as inefficient. Martin went on to describe how the don wins the trust, approval, and respect of community members so that he may successfully operate within the area. This relationship is multi-faceted and based upon the don's fulfillment of basic financial needs, in addition to residents' "willing over" of their trust based on expectations of fairness and familiarity.

> Whenever the don might have certain financial clout and kids are able to go to school, kids are able to receive uniform and stuff like that, you know treats are held and stuff. An old lady might be unable to go to hospital and she might beg a taximan fi carry her or beg somebody to carry her and they refuse! Now with the dons, the don just tell the man seh, "yo, carry that woman go to the hospital!" and she is taken and nothing is said about it. So you cannot tell that woman that he is a bad man, though he will execute somebody just like that. You know, so they have negatives and some positives about them.

Local power hierarchies and state structures are necessarily interwoven given the origin of local justice systems in party politics and the "disruptive" nature of inner city communities to the operations of the state. Tourism and foreign investment are crucial to the Jamaican economy, so the appearance of safety and stability

is a key component of national development. The apparent "chaos" emanating from ghetto communities in the form of crime, violence, and "idle" bodies creates an impediment to both images of the island as a vacation "paradise" and as a hospitable business environment. Income generated through international trade in firearms and drugs provides dons with additional tools for brokering power relations with politicians. Dons can now provide goods and services to their communities without access to state resources. Members of Parliament are forced into more subtle negotiations with local power brokers during election periods because the resources they used to dangle in front of their constituents in exchange for cooperation are now abundantly available through other channels. Local justice and the distribution of illicit benefits (that, as in the case of the wheelchairs, may have originated within the state itself) have become only tenuously manipulable as an extension of state power.

When I asked Minister Oliver what his role was in maintaining order in his potentially volatile constituency, the MP indicated that rather than attempting to dismantle the local justice system, he uses it to his benefit. This is a controversial position that has left the MP open to public criticism in the past, particularly after he attended the funeral of the previous area leader. He explained:

> My disadvantage is that there are certain things, which I don't condone, or support, or allow. But at the same time, if there are persons who have influence, the critical task is to move them towards using their influence positively. That's part of the formula in terms of the community's interaction and also their methods of problem solving are very primitive.

Though violence is often isolated within particular poor communities, and for that reason has little effect on the rest of the city, intercommunity conflicts are not easily quelled, even with police intervention. This has required the MP to design particular dispute-resolution techniques that conform to the established power structures of the conflicting communities. When asked about dismantling the "don system," Minister Oliver responded:

> It needn't. It can be utilized. If he buys into what you're doing. The difficulty of faith, well, let me tell you where my approach is weakened, because my approach doesn't support violence in any form. It weakens when you

have dictated this process and then somebody violates it with violence because you can't tell them that the police will take care of it, because you know it's not true. I know of specific instances where the police have a problem and they send it to the area leader because they know his review and intervention is much more swift than the formal justice system. No, it is not necessarily a bad thing. The bad thing is that if he is also corrupt or involved in illegal activities. That is a bad thing.

These comments confirm Martin's assertion about relations between MPs and area leaders. Oliver indicates that, even as an agent of the state, he recognizes the efficacy of community justice and is reluctant to suggest to community residents that they can rely on the police for protection. His statement reveals the slippage between the state and the private. By suggesting the area leader's "review and intervention" is legitimate due to its efficiency, he demonstrates the ways in which these local power structures are, in actuality, state-sanctioned, if not entirely controllable by the state. He is one of the few Members of Parliament who are willing to openly acknowledge this "public secret," though the details of this arrangement remain relatively opaque. What does become clear through his statements is that the power relations between the MP and the area leader must be carefully negotiated. Area leaders are more intimate with community members, frequently having grown up in the neighborhood and sharing their class background. In addition, area leaders wield power over resources and community justice; they often command pivotal influence over community activities and therefore can be crucial allies for an MP or impediments to an MP's implementation of the state's plan.

There is a delicate balance that must be maintained here: state agents must request the assistance of local power structures, often grounded in organized criminal activities, but must not publicly condone "lawlessness" as a mode of governance. At the same time, as both Martin and the MP suggest, lawlessness has become a critical tool for maintaining poor communities. Local patronage systems redistribute wealth, create a level of trust and respect, and provide an admittedly delicate local order to marginal spaces. These "unruly" zones have been significantly disenfranchised by the state due to both limited resources and neoliberal logic, but they also seem to exist just beyond the state's imperfect grasp.

Within the small space of Guy Town we can observe a process that is taking place throughout the world as nations such as Jamaica, Brazil, and South Africa, which occupy the lower ranks of global racial and economic hierarchies, urbanize

under the constraints of neoliberal social policies and selectively deregulated markets. Here residents of marginal communities are expected to behave as citizens, acting in ways that contribute to the construction of the nation, while simultaneously being denied the care they require from the state for basic survival. In these margins, the state has tenuously extended its reach as its officers negotiate with powerful brokers in organized criminal networks in order to maintain a grasp on "law and order." In Jamaica, this nexus has fostered flourishing private patronage arrangements that push the boundaries of legality through their frequent links to drug and firearms trafficking and their use of "community justice" to contend with disorder. In addition, local patrons have earned a degree of trust and respect through the culturally familiar strategies of offering care in exchange for loyalty and favors. These tactics further alienate community members from state agents whose affiliations, personae, and methods are all viewed with suspicion. This shifting burden of care places the Jamaican state in a precarious position. State agents have struggled and negotiated with community hierarchies, solidifying private patronage and tacitly approving of illegal activities in the name of maintaining order. In doing so, they are supplying citizens with even greater cause to call the state's legitimacy into question.

REFERENCES

Chevannes, Barry
 1992 The Formation of Garrison Communities. Paper presented at Symposium, Grassroots Development and the State of the Nation, University of the West Indies, Mona, November 16–17.

Das, Veena and Deborah Poole
 2004 State and Its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies. *In* Anthropology in the Margins of the State. Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds. Pp. 3–33. Santa Fe: School for American Research Press.

Figueroa, Mark
 1994 Garrison Communities in Jamaica 1962–1993: Their Growth and Impact on Political Culture. Paper presented at Symposium, Democracy and Democratization in Jamaica: Fifty Years of Adult Suffrage, University of West Indies, Mona, December 6–7.

Gray, Obika
 2004 Demeaned but Empowered: The Social Power of the Urban Poor in Jamaica. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press.

Robotham, Don
 2010 Belly of the Beast: Tense Relationship between Dons, Politicians. Gleaner, May 23, 2010. http://mobile.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20100523/lead /lead3.php on (accessed May 23, 2010).

Rose, Nikolas
 1999 Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stephens, Evelyne Huber and John D. Stephens
 1986 Democratic Socialism in Jamaica: The Political Movement and Social Transformation in Dependent Capitalism. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Stone, Carl
 1985 Democracy and Clientelism in Jamaica. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.

Weber, Max
 2004 The Vocation Lectures: Science as a Vocation, Politics as a Vocation. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

WHAT WOULD KRISHNA SAY TO SHAKESPEARE?

INTERCULTURALISM AND PERFORMANCE IN INDIA

William Landon, Independent Researcher

I want to stay as close to the edge as I can without going over.
Out on the edge you can see all kinds of things you can't see from the center.
—KURT VONNEGUT JR., Player Piano

Intercultural vs. Intracultural

Theatre bridging the cultures of India and the Western world must create a dynamic relationship that draws from, and finds tension and space between, elements of each culture (Daugherty 2005:53). There have been many attempts at an intercultural theatrical experience that bridges the cultures of India and the West. Practitioners like English director Peter Brook have attempted such a bridge by immersing themselves in Indian cultural forms and studying elements of *rasa*[1] (Daugherty 2005:55). However a truly intercultural exchange requires a reciprocal dialogue, like "the swing of a pendulum," between the cultures involved (Bharucha 1990:241; Daugherty 2005:52).

This swinging pendulum involves what I refer to in this essay as processes of "intercultural" and "intracultural." *Intercultural* refers to the exchange of ideas and cultural commodities between two larger groups, in this case India and foils in Western nation-states. *Intracultural* refers to exchanges that occur within a culture, in this case among the regional provinces of India. As I will explain, intracultural identities played a major role in a formation of India's new "national" face, and tensions within India's borders often pose the same concerns as do those between India

---

1 Rasa, in this instance, is not the performance act itself, but the energy or emotion transferred between performer and audience during a performance.

and the West. It is this give and take between cultures, and within Indian culture itself, that renders it impossible to discuss Indian theatre from a restrictive perspective; Indian theatre must be defined in a global sense, and as a macrocosmic reflection of the differing artistic influences, performance styles, and subject matter that have occurred between its internal regional cultures (Bharucha 2000).

This essay draws upon on Arjun Appadurai's ideas of "ethnoscapes," landscapes created by groups of people who shift between borders, such as tourists, immigrants, and refugees; and "mediascapes," landscapes created by the movement of electronic and print media that dictate the scriptings of new "imagined worlds" (1990:32–34). I stage these concepts against the ideas of "cultural translation" and "diaspora" to explore the adaptations of Indian theatre in modern times, as theatre artists negotiate not only the changing conditions of politics and mass media but also the separate cultural identities defined by national borders. Most importantly, these ideological landscapes do not attempt to describe

> objectively given relations which look the same from every angle of vision, but rather … deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors such as diasporic communities and multinationals, as well as subnational groupings and movements. [Appadurai 1990:31]

I will argue that global Indian theatre can only truly be successful when, despite a potentially inherent Orientalist framing, the cultures within and beyond India's borders have a strong understanding and appreciation of one another. Otherwise, as is often the case when culture is treated as a commodity, processes of cultural disruption and ethnoscapes framed in "tourism" can cloud the exchange, resulting in negative repercussions for the audience as well as performers (Bharucha 2000:53–55). One example is the piece *The Woman in Us*, which brought together performers from a variety of theatrical traditions across India to explore the "feminine principle" in the arts (Bharucha 2000:47). Performed at a festival in Mumbai in the 1990s, this work attempted to redefine the relationship between femininity and masculinity, but its ideas were lost on non-Indian audiences when the production was exported globally (Bharucha 2000:51–52). Instead, the production followed a pattern similar to other exported Indian cultural practices: through its performance, the concept

and essence of "India" was "displayed and consumed" (Bharucha 2000:48). This use of culture as spectacle has spread throughout Europe and has been legitimized in terms of what Bharucha (2000) labels *global patronage and recognition*. Intercultural works such as this are not much more than cultural spectacle—a presentation of culture for its face value.

Language translation often arises as an issue in intercultural theatre, as represented by the relative lack of translation of Indian plays among Hindi, Tamil, English, or other native tongues (Richmond 1990:405). The translation of culture is at the heart of this issue: "How does a director prepare if he or she is working in another cultural context without an adequate knowledge of its language?" (Bharucha 2000:71). It is this problem with which director Peter Brook struggled, as he attempted to draw from an "othered" cultural source, the literature of *The Mahabharata* and Kathakali dance (both of which are very traditional), without a fully formed emic perspective or a dialogue that would allow for free adaptation (Daugherty 2005:54).

Finally, theatre, perhaps now more than ever, must be understood as an extension of cultural and political life. In the case of postmodern India, issues of diversity and cultural differentiation are at stake (Bharucha 2000:63–66). In Appadurai's view, cultural identity is embroiled in a constant power struggle, in "the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization" (1990:30). India's modern performance forms must be viewed within this context of tension between the solidarity of individual cultures and the cultural differentiation of various internal cultures, all blanketed under India's mantra of unity. The Indian government may recognize traditional dance forms on the whole, but it does not fully appreciate the differences between performances in eastern Odissi, southern Kathakali, and other regions. In the diaspora, traditional forms are interpreted and performed in yet other ways. While traditional forms are often grouped together, they really exist as different cultural entities, each with a particular past and set of aesthetic elements; as Rustom Bharucha (2000) has suggested, there is no truly national Indian theatre.

To explore the scope of modern Indian theatre, I will view it through several lenses including (1) Orientalist interpretations and adaptations by artists in the West, (2) the history and reality of commercial and amateur theatre in modern India, and the cultural, social, and political implications of each, and (3) the ways in which Indians use theatre to frame identities and ground themselves within the diaspora.

Schechner's *Rasaesthetics*

Some attempts at intercultural dialogue have been successful while others have not. Richard Schechner's theory of "rasaesthetics" and the practice of rasaboxes have been successful because he worked from within the Indian perspective. Developed in the 1990s with the Wooster Group in New York City, *rasaesthetics* is Schechner's theoretical term for a hybrid Indian-American approach to live performance. Many of his concepts and ideas came from his study in Kerala (Daugherty 2005:55), through which he was able to create a genuinely hybrid theatrical exercise. With rasaesthetics, Schechner blends Western ideas of spatial relationships and transitions with uniquely Indian ideas of breath and body positioning. Rasaboxes is an exercise intended to allow the actor to transition through representational "boxes," each of which denotes a specific rasa represented by a *sthayi bhava*, or emotional state. Schechner proposes eight main rasas, plus a ninth, the product of all rasas: (1) *sringara* (desire, sensual love), (2) *hasya* (humor and laughter), (3) *karuna–kaurna* (pity, grief), (4) *raudra* (anger), (5) *vira* (energy, vigor, pride), (6) *bhayanaka* (fear, shame), (7) *bibhatsa* (disgust), (8) *adbhuta* (surprise, wonder); and (9) *shanta* (product of all rasas).

Using physically marked spaces, this exercise works to improve an actor's relationship with his or her physicality and breath within each emotional state. While this confinement to a particular space is based on Western ways of understanding a physical approach to theatre (Schechner 2003), rasaboxes does approach the Indian in its language, its breath and body positioning, and its emphasis on the actor's relationship to the environment. It also recognizes rasa as an outward force; in all Indian forms, the importance of the emotions conveyed by the rasas lies not within the performer but in whether the audience receives, or "tastes," the rasa through the performance (Schechner 2003:342).

Rasaboxes is based on philosophies of the origins of theatrical energy and on guidelines in the text of the *Natyasastra*. It is also clear that Schechner has developed his practices with a clear understanding of how Eastern ideas of the body and its relationships are understood through a more Western-oriented approach using marked zones on the rehearsal floor (Schechner 2003:351–354). Schechner defends his adaptation by reminding us of the lack of any definitive interpretation of the Natyasastra text in India: "The *Natyasastra* comes to Indians not directly and not as a single text… it comes down in performance practice and as a series of inter-

pretations" (Schechner 2003:335). Schechner embraces the reality that, because it is an interpretation, it may be at once accurate and inaccurate.

These concepts approach the notion of ritual as part of performance: "Within every traditional Indian performance genre, whether primarily classical, folk-popular, ritual, or devotional, there exists specific rituals which serve to punctuate, set off, and frame the performance" (Richmond 1990:123). Much of modern Indian performance has its roots in tradition, including Kathakali, Odissi, and other regional dance-theatre forms. A too-great emphasis on this perspective, however, resigns this country's theatrical forms to the realm of the "traditional," and detracts from the reality of a modern Indian theatre. Despite this danger, many modern Indian artists continue to subscribe to the overwhelming importance of ritual and the integration of all elements of drama, dance, and music into theatre (Schechner 2003:336). Indian directors, playwrights, and producers have mined the performance traditions of their regions of origin (Richmond 1990:404). What often matters is their treatment of this idea of "tradition."

Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*

One Western production in particular has brought the issue of an effective, or appropriate, artistic dialogue to the forefront of this discussion: Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*. Artistic conflict often arises when Western directors and actors take on projects from a non-Western culture, but this production of the epic Indian classical text has incited critiques through both postcolonial and deconstructivist lenses. India's history reveals that "the episodes of *The Mahabharata* are performed throughout India in theatrical forms that range from the classical Kathakali to the rural Jatra" (Dasgupta 1987:11). However, even Dasgupta agrees that there is doubt whether any of these productions "lie any closer to the originary intent of the poem" than the others (1987:11). Despite its historical and specific cultural importance, *The Mahabharata* is not tied directly to one specific Indian region. Even so, in a postcolonial context, is it possible for a Westerner or other cultural outsider to successfully produce such a traditional Indian work? Many theatre critics and anthropologists have argued that the answer is no.

Based on centuries of Brahmanic lore and originally published sometime between 400 BC and 200 AD (Dasgupta 1987:9–10), *The Mahabharata* is an epic poem based on the saga of Vyasa, to whom, along with countless priests, it is at-

tributed. Its resultant cultural message has done much to shape the personal and social interactions of Indians for centuries, just as Western mythologies have shaped Western culture. Some argue that its status as a cultural doctrine is threatened as non-Indian theatre-makers analyze its structural elements and evaluate it as a piece to be produced (Dasgupta 1987:10). In this context, notions of plot, motivation, structure, and other components that constitute a "well-made play" necessarily take precedence. Some critics argue that Brook, writer Carriere, and their band of international–intercultural artists at the International Centre for Theatre Research (ICTR) missed the mark with their production of *Mahabharata*. Unlike other practitioners who channeled energy through the core Indian values the epic is meant to induce, Brook may have been most concerned with the *Mahabharata*'s worthiness as a staged piece.

At the heart of Indian and Western criticism of the script and staged production may be Brook's attempt at intertextualism. His interpretations of the main characters, ranging from mortals to Krishna, do not entirely hold up in their constructed Homeric and Shakespearean contexts (Dasgupta 1987:13). In this respect, Dasgupta and others argue that Brook and Carriere have removed much of the philosophy, theology, themes, and even the individual stories within the poem that have been so important to Indian audiences over the centuries. What Indian audiences consider to be the most crucial scene, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, was shortened in scale and content and was given a controversially hushed interpretation, in which most of the dialogue was delivered in a stage whisper.

These attempts at intercultural dialogue resulted, perhaps unintentionally, in a dilution of the piece's identity as something wholly Indian. Because of its lack of faith to the original work in its entirety and to specific elements such as accents, in addition to the necessity to condense and abridge the material, critics argue that Brook's piece achieves, at best, mixed results: "Brook's *Mahabharata* falls short of the essential Indianness of the epic by staging predominantly its major incidents and failing to adequately emphasize its coterminous philosophical precepts, it does however raise the specter… of the fate that awaits us" (Dasgupta 1987:15).

The international theatrical experiment has left us with just that: something that drives a central message but remains essentially incomplete. Without a true dialogue and understanding of the "Indianness" of the *Mahabharata*, in all its incarnations, the ICTR missed the essential traits of their story and its characters.

Brook and his critics would agree that the attempt to connect the characters to counterparts in Greek and English drama was in part aimed at achieving a universal dramatic truth. Doing so, however, invariably skews the play toward a Western reading. While this approach does its best to avoid the perpetuation of "otherness," to apply Edward Said's (1979) concept of Orientalism, this Western framing of *The Mahabharata* renders the production itself "Orientalist."

Richard Schechner (2003) addresses this issue in his discussion of the *Natyasastra*. He suggests that in examining a classic piece such as this, it is necessary to understand its contemporary intracultural importance and not treat it simply as a relic from a traditional civilization, existing only at the level of doctrine. The piece's text does not carry the principle importance though. In the interest of stageworthiness, Brook's interpretation cuts much of the original text, thereby distorting its full context. This abridging of the original content, Dasgupta (1987) agrees, is not the central issue; the issue is that in doing so, Brook may have missed much of what makes the tale essentially Indian.

Shakespeare as Weapon in the Indian Voice

As argued earlier in this paper, it may not be possible for a cultural outsider to remain true to a historical work's intended meaning. This translation does not occur without some form of cultural appropriation, as the interpreter views the work through his or her own cultural lens. This is the case with postcolonial Indian interpretations of the Western theatrical canon. Shakespeare has a solid historical presence in the Indian theatre and adaptations of his plays are still produced commercially (Kapur et al. 2009). Indian and English theatrical relationships on the global level have been complicated and shaped through processes described by Appadurai's (1990) "ethnoscapes" and "mediascapes." Through these processes, Shakespearean productions have been able to cross over geographic and cultural boundaries.

Indian Shakespearean actors have had a presence on the British stage (first appearing in a production of *Othello*) since the 18th century, when attending theatre in a European-style theatrical venue was still a novelty in India (Kasbekar 2006:50). British colonials relied on English institutions such as the university system (Richmond 1990) to improve their social life as well as to instill a sense of cultural dominance; print and media, which required literacy, were among the most effec-

tive tools to this end (Appadurai 1990). Despite vigilant efforts, English hold remained fragmented and allowed for some flux in the level of colonial influence:

> Cultural dealings between socially and spatially separated groups have until the last few centuries been bridged at great cost and sustained over time only with great effort. The forces of cultural gravity seemed always to pull away from the formation of large-scale ecumenes… towards smaller-scale accretions of intimacy and interest. [Appadurai 1990:296]

While the Raj produced Shakespeare as a means of perpetuating hegemony, the bard took on a different role among Indians. As Indian artists created their own translations, "indigenous performances of the plays produced different, vernacular Shakespeares, mediated by the heterogeneous forces of race, language, and native culture" (Kapur et al. 2009:79). In doing so, actors and other artists not only produced intracultural works but also engaged in both mimicry and differentiation.

Production of Shakespeare in the Empire reached its peak in the mid–19th century and eventually died out by the end of the 1920s. Indian art regained influence in the struggle for independence with the massive political influence of actor–director Utpal Dutt. Originally in violent conflict with the English cultural institution, he took a radical approach to Shakespeare in his productions with the Indian People's Theater Association (IPTA) and the Little Theatre Group. His ideals, when put into practice, appropriated the classic works to the native cultural ground and contested the West's claim on the material. His "roots" approach coincided with a belief that the classics should be brought to the masses or else they would "cease to exist" (Kapur et al. 2009:91).

Despite the various Indian Shakespearean realities produced, an extreme minority of Indian students today still read Shakespeare at higher academic levels. In Indian critiques and publications, the image of the venerated, "universal" Shakespeare still persists, but it has a less pervasive presence. Hegemonic connotations of the English theatre are largely rejected, and when Shakespeare is produced it is done with a drive for the different—on India's terms—and often in light of public taste (Kapur et al. 2009). This is not to say that Indians have not found parallels between their theatre and Shakespeare; one classic play in particular, Kalisada's *Shakuntal*, parallels the struggle at the center of *King Lear* (Bhagwat 1990:33). A common interest in the drama of nobility and the degrada-

tion of a king's moral character have rung true for both Shakespeare and Kalisada to such an extent that several practitioners, including poet and playwright Rabindranath Tagore, have been prompted to explore the subject and its meanings for both cultures (Bhagwat 1990:32). Even comparison yields difference: while the European Renaissance writer saw human challenges as the result of inner *and* outer forces, Indian play crafters saw the human dilemma in terms of psychoethical conflicts (Bhagwat 1990:33–34).

In Appadurai's (1990) view, India's relationship to Shakespeare is unique: despite a historical relationship to the English theatrical canon and a familiarity with its subject matter, Indians have been able to hold Shakespeare's plays at the distance of unshared culture. Until recent times this postcolonial rift has been generated by ethnic division. As Appadurai points out though, mass literacy has also exerted power by generating non-innate ethnic affiliations. While Appadurai (1990) highlights the role of "print capitalism" in his essay, he cites Chatterjee (1986) in acknowledging that in a complex postcolonial relationship there is "a great deal else that is involved in the story of colonialism and of its dialectically generated nationalisms, but the issue of constructed ethnicities is surely a crucial strand in this tale" (Appadurai 1990:27).

Roots: Finding a National Theatre

Theatrical works produced from within the Indian perspective have, over the decades, dealt with shifting artistic values and the lingering effects of postcolonial tensions. European theatre, and English theatre in particular, has had a great but only temporary impact on the performing arts as a whole here. It is a tribute to the cultural strength of traditional forms that, even as "postcolonial" theatre emerged as a powerful force in India, Indian theatre did not lose touch with its roots:

> Modern Indian theatre appeared to epitomize the conditions of colonial dominance… but in practice the new form was absorbed quickly into the material, social, and ideological structures of a complex and literate culture with long-standing theatrical traditions in many indigenous languages. [Dharwadker 2005:3]

Due to a lingering notion of the East as stuck in antiquity, however, the dynamic nature of stage literature during the postcolonial period has often been

ignored or glossed over in Indian books and essays on the topic (Dharwadker 2005:5). Despite India's forays into modern theatre and film, live performance is often perceived only in traditional terms.

Arts and politics in India are intricately intertwined, as evidenced by the dogma of Indian theatre that emerged in the 1950s. The postcolonial theatre movement in India was not an isolated movement, but part of a larger political and artistic whole; it was contemporaneous with other reformations in visual arts and dance at the end of the English colonial period and the beginning of Indian Independence (Mee 2008:19) These artistic movements occurred alongside Gandhi's *Swadeshi* movement—a national call to draw strength in the face of adversity from one's sense of being Indian (Mee 2008; Dharwadker 2005). As a result, the emergence of the new Indian theatre could be considered a "roots" movement— an artists' call to return to traditional and folk roots in a response that was at once reactionary and revolutionary. This "Theatre of Roots" was a direct result of a postcolonial desire to retrieve "those forms that were seen to be lost under the hegemonic pressures of the colonial regime …[Those] uncontaminated by 'Western influences' are affirmed and put to use" (Kapur et al. 2009).

These ideas for cultural revolution came at a time when modern theatre was thought of as strictly three-act plays "on contemporary reality with a credible plot, realistic characters, natural dialogue and acting, women playing women, and most significantly, no songs" (Kasbekar 2006:55). Commercial Parsi, Bengali, and Marathi theatre had already attempted to "modernize" professional Indian performance by adopting such exotic conventions as a fly loft and proscenium staging. Theatre was moving away from Hindu epics and Sanskrit plays as the theatre industry redefined its post-Independence self. Musical forms such as *sangeet natak* (opera favored by the upper classes) and rural *jatra* (musical folk comedy seen as crude by upper castes) that had risen to popularity through the late 1800s rapidly waned with the advent of modern British drama (Kasbekar 2006:59–60). Even after Independence, the economic pillars of the theatre industry were shaken by intracultural interests.

According to Mee, the Swadeshi movement inspired three stages of change within Indian theatre: departure, maneuver, and arrival. (2008:16). *Departure* involved a movement away from the English theatrical norms set up during colonization, and a recognition of "essential cultural differences." *Maneuver* dealt with the re-labeling and reorganization of historical and traditional forms under the blanket of "Indian culture." According to the Sangeet Natak Akademi (Mee 2008), *arrival* was a sort

of culmination of all of these elements united into a single artistic voice.

These stages took on different incarnations. Even before post-Independence playwrights began producing written texts in the 1950s and 1960s, prominent Indian directors, already at work and established in their field, developed theories of performance that were a departure from the West. Many credit these directors with shaping Indian theatre's postcolonial relationship with European forms. Sombhu Mitra, for example, established the first non-commercial theatre in the post-Independence period in response to dissatisfaction with a commercial form that was still strongly tied to the West (Dharwadker 2005:86–87). Other notable directors—Utpal Dutt, Alkazi, and Habib Tanvir—worked in both Kolkata commercial theatre and non-commercial venues (Dharwadker 2005: 86–87). Many works throughout this period focus on getting back in touch with what is essentially "Indian." Tanvir's work focused on the radical voices of the common people in the streets, which he accomplished while simultaneously betraying the Western proscenium form. This new independence prompted some reactionary artistic choices as well. After touring Europe, Tanvir concluded that "the future of Indian theatre lay in indigenous performance forms" (Dharwadker 2005:87), a sentiment echoed by others. His ideals led him to, among other things, combine forces with the major street theatre collective, Jana Natya Manch.

Others credit the writers, including Bengali playwright Rabindranath Tagore and Girish Karnad. In fact, collaboration was often instrumental in shaping distinctions between a theatre that was uniquely Indian and one rooted in the colonial past. Examples include reformed commercial theatres such as the Sans Souci Theatre in Kolkata and others in Delhi and Mumbai, many of which originally served a colonial purpose for the English (Kapur et al. 2009; Richmond 1990). Other collaborative experiments can be found in the work of Janam and the IPTA (Kapur et al. 2009), which formed collectives through which many of the most influential artists produced their work. These artists, from all over India, brought different philosophies to the process, ranging from support for the Roots Movement, to Marxist leanings, to a simple recognition of the need to move beyond commercial theatre. Dutt's Marxist leanings as director and writer earned him the support of the party, but the values expressed in his work remained constant even as those of the party changed (Richmond 1990:403).

Still others can be credited with major contributions to the re-shaping of Indian theatre. Playwright Vijay Tendulkar introduced a new vocabulary to the Marathi

stage as part of a movement in the 1970s to introduce more "intellectual" drama (Kasbekar 2006:56–57). Badal Sircar, performance theorist and artist, was instrumental in forming new identities for a modern theatre influenced by his work with Jerzy Grotowsky, a proponent of "poor theatre," and Richard Schechner. Sircar's work changed Indian perceptions of what modern theatre should be while simultaneously re-forging a connection with traditional forms: his "poor theatre" diverted from the commercial industry by focusing on the power of the actor onstage (Kasbekar 2006:64). During these later decades (from the 1970s through the 1980s), modern Indian theatre focused on these tenets: movement in the direction of more experimental works and an artistic referencing to cultural identities in traditional forms. As a result, Bharucha's (2000) call for an intercultural theatrical dialogue in production has been pushed to the forefront, as evidenced in the efforts of theatrical groups to bring together Hindustani, Marathi, Bengali, and various other artists to produce plays in alternative languages and venues (Ghosh 2007; Kapur et al. 2009).

Still others defied the "modern" commercial tradition. Like many Western countries, India's experimentation with alternate theatrical styles has even touched on "theatre of the absurd." This style seems uniquely suited to Indian experience as writers like Vaze try to find new meaning in their changing world (Kasbekar 2006:58). Mahesh Elkunchwar's plays focused on identity in relation to daily life, adopting a Chekhovian approach to viewing life through everyday "brutalities" (Kasbekar 2006:58). Perhaps Indian theatre connected to the ideas of Westerners like Anton Chekhov and German playwright–theorist Bertolt Brecht because their themes of social discord mirrored the postcolonial Indian experience. Brecht's trademark distancing of the audience from the action onstage, thereby forcing a more intellectual reading of his work, may have echoed the late–20th century sentiment of many Indians who were attempting to slough off the long-lasting impacts of British rule. As theatre-makers strove to break away from commercially imposed creative restraints, they also practiced resistance. Politically motivated appropriations of musical themes and folk conventions, such as those found in sangeet natak and jatra, were often plundered to this end by directors such as Dutt (Kasbekar 2006:69).

As Bharucha's focus on interculturalism seems to suggest, a successful world of modern theatre relies (in part) on a realization that the performing arts go hand-in-hand with politics and with the negotiation of a collective Indian history, despite independent cultural identities (Dharwadker 2005:23–25). For this reason, as well

as for its merits as an important artistic force, the Indian People's Theatre Association struck a powerful chord when it emerged out of a movement in the 1930s for a national theatrical identity, holding its first major conference in 1943 (Kapur et al. 2009:159). It was the first national-level theatre movement in India, initially aligned as a cultural front for the Indian Communist Party (Dharwadker 2005:25-26). In addition to shaping early Bengali modern theatre, it also produced many energetic playwrights, directors, and actors (Kasbekar 2006:63). Its calls for a national or "united" India under communism are still addressed in the Indian canon, despite a relatively quick loss in popularity by 1947. Its actions arguably paved the way for the real emergence of modern Hindi theatre in the 1960s and 1970s (Kasbekar 2006:65).

Many problems plague Indian theatre today, including struggles over language and the further encroachment of television (Kasbekar 2006:54). Currently, India's home nation suffers a dearth of good plays for stage actors and directors. The absence of a defined history of realistic modern drama is still deeply felt—even after the arrival on the scene of Tendulkar, Sircar, Karnad, Rakesh, and others—due to what some argue is an overpopulation of "mythological pieces" (Kasbekar 2006:69). The lack of literature can also be attributed to an unwillingness to translate between different Indian languages; there is a shortage of talented writers well versed in more than one regional linguistic tradition (Kasbekar 2006:69-70) and a further lack of translated female voices (Dharwadker: 2005).

Other common problems include re-appropriation (plagiarism) and competition with secular Hindu marriages for venue space (Kasbekar 2006:71). Most of the country's English language theatre depends on financial sponsorship, meaning indigenous scripts are often not backed. Savvy financiers prefer the stability of musicals, comedies, and foreign classics (Kasbekar 2006:68). Directors and actors who work solely in the Indian theatre are a rarity; since the early 20th century, the call of cinema has proved more alluring (Richmond 1991:390). Despite these obstacles, modern Indian theatre remains strong—through its collage of a total urban experience given layers of unique voices defined by a given region's qualifying theatrical styles and ideologies. Thanks to the shifting landscapes of immigrants and tourists, "Indian theatre" now spans borders and oceans.

Diaspora and Acculturating Performance
As Indian theatre continues to evolve along with India's myriad national identities, another dialogue is taking place within the Indian diaspora. Theatre in the diaspora

faces translational obstacles similar to those facing Indian theatrical representations by Westerners. The fluid nature of transnational migration, occurring as it does in fragmented stages, results in a constantly changing landscape of ethnicity and identity. These landscapes are the main elements of Appadurai's "imagined worlds," constituted by the historically separated imaginations people develop through distance. Many in the diaspora are able to contest and sometimes subvert the imagined worlds of the "official mind²" (Appadurai 1990:301) so that the constantly shifting global culture of the diaspora renders traditional borders obsolete.

Here, writing and performance critique issues in the "culture of origin" as well as problems in the host country through a postcolonial mode of migration. Mass immigration to Europe and North America coincided with Indian Independence. Diasporic theatre has developed among older immigrant groups in Canada and within the younger diasporic communities of the United States, but very few Indian American authors have produced significant bodies of work for the stage (Dharwadker 2003:304). The notion of a "drama of the diaspora" is still more of a metaphorical ideal than anything else. Much of this problem relates to the refusal by prolific Indian directors and playwrights to consider departure (Dharwadker 2003:305), instead choosing to work from within the Indian theatre scene.

While theatrical literature within the South Asian diaspora is second in popularity and production to other forms of written work, these differences in appeal and practice are not the only variations. As Dharwadker states, "novelists often employ diaspora as the enabling condition but not the subject of narrative," in contrast to theatre makers, who must represent the "here and now" of their culture (2003:302). Theatre's material dependency and reliance on collaboration, combined with its non-permanent nature, hinder its ability to translate easily across the same distances. It is unable to engage in original dialogues without distancing itself from the culture of origin (Dharwader 2005:305). Indian American theatre makers face the unique problem of a form that must adapt through the influence of both hegemonic and minority cultures at play.

Diasporic theatre makers often identify themselves in a double sense through live performance. The idea of things "Indian," manifested in nostalgia or tradition, becomes a standard to set against the struggles of acculturation and cultural assimilation (Dharwadker 2003:312). On the other hand, these artists are able to

_____
2 This term, as used by Appadurai, references the accepted ideology of a given country'shegemonic culture.

set themselves apart from the dominant home culture *and* the dominant adopted culture, creating an entirely new cultural dialogue. Even though a theatrical expression like dance may lose its original meaning through time and across distances, many in the South Asian diaspora use dance and its rituals as a way of maintaining a perceived link to the homeland (Kumar 2006:73). Perceived links are further changed as cultural constructs—for instance, the iconic Indian "mother" or "father" figures—take on a new meaning when struggles of cultural agreement necessitate reinterpretations of that role (Dharwadker 2003:318). Without these reinterpretations, Indian theatre in America, whether sponsored or academic, risks losing all meaning for either Western or Eastern audiences.

Many playwrights such as Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar are advertised as "theatre from India," but while their plays are translated from native Kannada or Marathi into English, they are also translated by place. Recalling the issue of diasporic theatre having to distance itself from the culture of origin, works risk "re-presenting" the India of memory and legend (Dharwadker 2003:305).

Indo-American theatre troupes organized into non-professional groups in metropolitan centers are the paradigm (Dharwadker 2003:309). Holistically, though, organized diasporic theatre occurs on multiple levels, as localized student and community works, as touring productions from India funded by entrepreneurs and financiers aware of the desire for exposure to "things Indian," and as theatre funded by cultural organizations such as the Indo-American Arts Council (Dharwadker 2003:320). At all of these levels, diasporic theatre is united not only by its distance from a perceived original identity, but also through its explorations of the diaspora experience, specifically struggles to combat institutionalized racism, oppression, and cultural assimilation. This unique voice provides a much different perspective than those produced within the borders of India.

Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*

A discussion of India's theatre in a global venue would be incomplete without an examination of the work of Girish Karnad. Karnad, one of India's best known modern playwrights, has been instrumental in gaining international recognition of India's new theatre. His plays have touched audiences from different cultures by drawing on a theme I will term *politics of identity*.

Karnad's pivotal post-Independence work, *Hayavadana* (*Man With the Face of a Horse*), was originally published in 1971 (Dharwadker 2005: 391,418). Through a

classic tale, it provides a modern perspective on Indian "tradition" and spirituality. It was a powerfully unique piece in that it blended Western and Indian literary tradition; besides borrowing from the Sanskrit *Kathasaritasagara,* it also borrowed in theme from a German novella entitled *The Transposed Heads* (Mee 2008; Gleitman 2009). It is structurally unique in that while it dealt with uniquely Indian themes, issues, and theatrical conventions, it adopted the Western dramaturgical approach of a linear story structure and script. This hybrid approach achieves a delicate syncretism and succeeds in drawing attention to its theme's universality in the theatrical world.

In the play, the main characters, Kapila and Devadatta, both dear friends, vie for the love of the same woman, Padmini, who realizes she desires what together they offer—Kapila's athletic body and Devadatta's stunning mind. When both commit suicide through a somewhat Shakespearean misunderstanding, Padmini (at the bidding of Kali) attempts to reattach their heads and, in doing so, switches them. All are left with a strange and frightening dilemma: how does one determine identity, by body or mind? Padmini's search for her own identity set against this conflict has been examined as a challenge to the patriarchal norm. The character of Hayavadana, with the head of a horse and body of a man, suffers a similar problem. Is he determined by his patriotism, or by his physical state? He, like the others, comically struggles through a philosophical nightmare in the flesh that shatters his conceptions of the natural order. This characteristic sets the play apart from its origins, as it takes the story further and explores the intellectual and emotional aftermath of such events—in this world, he argues, to have one's identity intact is impossible.

Intertwined in this plot is a marriage of Indian folklore and themes of the Indian socialist movement of the 1960s. Karnad, in a talkback following a 2009 reading of the play, mentioned that part of his goal in writing was to explore the importance of this revolution as it arose alongside the Roots Movement, and in doing so parody the politics and social struggles of that time (Karnad 2009). *Hayavadana* populates the classic story with modern narrators Bhagavatha and Hayavadana in order to comment on the social and political structures of Indian life, and show how religion and folk tradition have influenced social and political developments. It also attempts to defy accepted norms in its parody of nationalism and patriotism, and in Padmini's rejection of patriarchal values in the exercise of her own desires and independence. It is at once fiercely and playfully experimental in its call for a rebellious rejection of the status quo in exchange for something new.

It is also a play about the hybridity of life and culture; by creating a physical representation of one's identity struggle, Karnad explores vivid contradictions in the post-Independence national mindset and invites his audience to seek out a truth between the modern and the "traditional." Ultimately, it is decided that, for Kapila and Devadatta, and for nationalistic Hayavadana, one's "self" resides in one's head—a literal nod to the prevailing necessity of identity.

Conclusion

The importance of a study of Indian theatre's global context lies not just in the frame of postcolonial theory, but also in the reflexive nature of the relationship between India and the West and in the shifting tides of people and information. In noticing stylistic and ideological commonalities as well as differences, we deconstruct certain cultural boundaries. We understand that theatrical performance "seems to be a peculiar human activity in which there is a high arousal of both ergotropic and trophotropic while some of the center—the "normal I"—is held back as an observing–controlling self" (Schechner 2003:320). All theatre makers, actors in particular, share the commonly precise and unnerving process of becoming the character—allowing it to become something removed from the self (Zarrilli 1990:133). The question has been posed, and it remains: Can a universal truth be found in the essence—the very act of performing—which avoids the trappings of Orientalism and a postcolonial frame?

There are also such unfamiliar cultural elements at play through spirituality and ritualism in performance that outside audiences miss their impact. Cultural and ethnic framing can translate into a lack of understanding of modern Indian works. The push to better understand modern Indian works has resulted in an intercultural dialogue about the roots and practice of Indian theatre, but it has also provided for internal dialogue about the nature of art in relation to social and political realities, as captured in works like *Hayavadana.* In a financial sense, these modern works have flourished, and traditional forms like Kathakali have survived with aid from government funding and donor giving (Daugherty 2000:241). Many practitioners and facilities in the state of Kerala have received government funding (Daugherty 2000:243). On a wider level, the National Centre for the Performing Arts offers resources for struggling theatres. Likewise, prominent groups in Mumbai, Kolkata, and other metropolitan areas were receiving government grants at last century's end (Richmond 1990:435), but these often constituted only temporary measures to en-

sure the continuation of theatre as a business venture—much of Indian theatre still suffered, due in part to lasting impacts of the film industry. The live form, in a modern context, must continue to reinvent itself in such tight media competition.

Much of the global theatre's modern issues stem from a need to negotiate the transforming senses of a "national identity" through shifting landscapes and deterritorialized politics. A modern Indian theatre, through its drama and dance, lets Krishna speak with Shakespeare about the hopes and fears of the human condition in words that translate across cultures. In the global artistic economy of today, all ask the same question: where does my identity lie?

REFERENCES

Appadurai, Arjun
    1990   Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. Theory, Culture & Society. 7(2):295–310.

Baghwat, Arun A.
    1990   Shakuntal and King Lear as Studies in the King's Moral Orientation. *In* Contemporary Indian Drama. Sudhakar Pandey, Freya Taraporewala, ed. New Delhi: Mehra Offset Press, Prestige.

Bharucha, Rustom
    2000   The Politics of Cultural Practice. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England.

    1990   Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture. London: Routledge.

Brook, Peter
    2005   The Open Door: Thoughts on Acting and Theatre. New York: Anchor Books.

Daugherty, Diana
    2005   The Pendulum of Intercultural Performance. Asian Theatre Journal 22(1):52–72.

    2000   Fifty Years On: Arts Funding in Kerala Today. Asian Theatre Journal 17(2):237–252.

Dasgupta, Gautam
    1987   "The Mahabharata": Peter Brook's "Orientalism." Performing Arts Journal 10(3):9–16.

Dharwadker, Aparna Bhargava
    2005   Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory and Urban Performance in India since 1947. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

    2003   Diaspora and the Theatre of the Nation. Theatre Research International 28(3):303–325.

Fortier, Mark
    2002. Theory/Theatre. London: Routledge.

Ghosh, Arjun
    2007   Theatre of the Streets: The Jana Natya Manch Experience. Sudhanva Deshpande and Jana Natya Mañca, eds. New Delhi: Jana Natya Manch.

Kapur, Anuradha, with Jyotsna Singh, Malini Bhattacharya,
    Suresh Awasthi, and Utpal Dutt
    2009   Modern Indian Theatre: A Reader. Nandi Bhatia, ed. Oxford: Oxford
    University Press.

Karnad, Girish with Claire Gleitman
    2009   Staged reading of Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* and subsequent talkback
    with the playwright. Ithaca College, November.

Kasbekar, Asha
    2006   Pop Culture, India! Media Arts and Lifestyle. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.

Kumar, Anita
    2006   What's The Matter?: Shakti's (Re)Collection of Race, Nationhood, and
    Gender. TDR: The Drama Review 50(4):72–95.

Kumaramangalam, Shibi
    2010   Dramatic Twist: Taking the City's Theatre Stage by Storm, These
    Groups Prove That Fresh Scripts and Innovations Are the Way to Enthrall the
    Audience. India Today. Retrieved March 27, 2011, from International Module.

Mee, Erin B
    2008   Theatre of Roots: Redirecting the Modern Indian Stage. Oxford:
    Seagull Books.

Narayanan, Mundoli Vasudevan
    2006   Over-Ritualization of Performance: Western Discourses on Kutiyattam.
    TDR: The Drama Review 50(2):136–153.

Richmond, Farley P.
    1990   Characteristics of the Modern Theatre. *In* Indian Theatre: Traditions of
    Performance. Farley P. Richmond, Darius L. Swann, and Phillip B. Zarrilli, eds.
    Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Said, Edward W.
    1979 Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books.

Schechner, Richard
    2003   Performance Theory. New York: Routledge.

Vonnegut Jr., Kurt.
    1988   Player Piano. New York: Deli Publishing Co.

Zarrilli, Phillip B.
    1990   What Does it Mean to "Become the Character": Power, Presence, and Tran-
    scendence in Asian *In*-Body Disciplines of Practice. In By Means of Performance:
    Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel,
    eds. New York: Cambridge University Press

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR *NEAA BULLETIN*