

Sebastian Jobs
Gesa Mackenthun (eds.)

Embodiments of Cultural Encounters

Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship

Edited by
Gesa Mackenthun

Volume 3

This series seeks to stimulate fresh and critical perspectives on the interpretation of phenomena of cultural contact in both transhistorical and transdisciplinary ways. It brings together the research results of the graduate school „Cultural Encounters and the Discourses of Scholarship,“ located at Rostock University and sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG). One of the concerns of the volumes published in this series is to test and explore contemporary theoretical concepts and analytical tools used for the study of intercultural relations, from antiquity to the present. Aware of significant recent changes in the ways in which other cultures are represented, and „culture“ as such is defined and described, the series seeks to promote a dialogical over a monological theoretical paradigm and advocates approaches to the study of cultural alterity that are conscious of the representational character of our knowledge about other cultures. It wants to strengthen a recognition of the interdependencies between the production of knowledge about unfamiliar peoples and societies in various scholarly disciplines and ideologies of nationality, empire, and globalization. In critically investigating the analytical potential of postcolonial key terms such as „hybridity,“ „contact zone,“ and „transculturation,“ the series contributes to international scholarly debates in various fields oriented at finding more balanced and reciprocal ways of studying and writing about intercultural relations both past and present.

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Contents

Introduction

SEBASTIAN JOBS AND GESA MACKENTHUN 7

BODIES: A MATTER OF COLONIAL ENCOUNTER

CHAPTER ONE

“As in a Mirror”:

Reflections on Bodies and Cultural Encounters in Seventeenth-Century New England

MARTHA L. FINCH 21

CHAPTER TWO

“A Mark Indelible”:

Herman Melville and the Cross-Cultural History of Tattooing in the Nineteenth Century

MICHAEL C. FRANK 41

CHAPTER THREE

Outside History:

Same-Sex Sexuality and the Colonial Archive

LEE WALLACE 61

CHAPTER FOUR

Sex as a Transcultural Event?

Sexualities in the French Foreign Legion and Their Representations in Autobiographical Writing

CHRISTIAN KOLLER 75

BODIES AS MEDIA – MEDIA OF BODIES: TEXTS, IMAGES, PERFORMANCES

CHAPTER FIVE

The Embodiment of Sin and Virtue.

Visual Representations of a Religious Concept in a Colonial Andean Contact Zone

ASTRID WINDUS 93

CHAPTER SIX

“Put on God’s Armour Now!”:

the Embattled Body in African Pentecostal-type Christianity

ANDREAS HEUSER 115

CHAPTER SEVEN

**Exotic Humans on Display:
Representations of Cultural Differences in German Ethnic Shows**

HILKE THODE-ARORA 141

CHAPTER EIGHT

**Dreamlands of Culture:
Ethnographic Dioramas and their Prospects**

ANDREA ZITTLAU 161

MAPPED AND MEASURED: SCHOLARS IN THE FIELD

CHAPTER NINE

**The 'Colonial Body' as Object of Knowledge in
Ethnological Museums**

ANJA LAUKÖTTER 181

CHAPTER TEN

**Mediterranean Medical Bodies and
the Ottoman Empire, 1517-1820**

RAINER BRÖMER 201

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Musical Bodies in Bali

ELLEN KOSKOFF 217

CHAPTER TWELVE

Telling Maya Tales: Points of View in Guatemala

W. GEORGE LOVELL 235

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

**Protein and Power.
Nutritional Recommendations and Daily Life in Oaxaca**

MARTINA KALLER-DIETRICH 255

Contributors 267

Introduction

SEBASTIAN JOBS AND GESA MACKENTHUN¹

The topic of cultural encounters is frequently theorized in abstract terms; it is included in concepts of diasporic movements, globalization, metaphors of multiculturalism, and dynamics of collective identity in cultural contact zones. Yet, cultural encounters, as anthropologist Johannes Fabian reminds us, take place not between anonymous collectivities but between individual people (“You Meet” 32). Among the various media employed in organizing cross-cultural human encounters, language – preserved in written texts – is generally regarded as the predominant one; certainly it has received the most attention from scholars. However, some have also pointed out the limits of this approach in repeatedly pondering the question: “Is all the World a Text?” (Eley). This volume addresses the problematic of materiality vs. representation by focusing on the human body as an agent and mediator of cross-cultural communication. In doing so, the contributors to this volume are fully aware of the inescapability of representation and the problems it presents for any attempt to make reliable statements about physical interactions, especially if they are remote in time and space.

At first glance, even the *idea* of an encounter between the concepts ‘culture’ and ‘body’ is theoretically problematic for researchers: the two notions seem to be at different ends of the analytical spectrum. While the former refers to a collective phenomenon, the latter appears to be a natural given that can feel, and sometimes suffer, on an individual level. While one highlights the structural elements of a situation, the other focuses more on its subjectivity and felt materiality; but in the humanities the interaction between these two extremes has proven to be as problematic as thought-provoking and productive. Take, for instance, immigration history. When Eastern European Jews in the late nineteenth century arrived on Ellis Island in New York City, crossing the ocean and then the American political border were at the very least movements of bodies. And the arrival of those bodies was rarely greeted with exulting cheers: immigration officials thoroughly scrutinized these migratory bodies, which were seen as potentially infectious, likely sources for spreading disease and illness. Bureaucrats and medical personnel developed an elaborate set of scientific practices in order to gather information about these liminal and precarious bodies. They checked eyelids for trachoma, chests for heart disease, and heads for mental illness. Eastern Euro-

1 We would like to thank our copy-editor Paula Ross of *WordsByDesign* (Berlin) for her critical suggestions that – as always – far surpassed the limits of mere copy-editing.

pean immigrants were especially suspected of being contagious: laziness, chronic pauperism, and cultural retardation were considered to be part of their biological constitution – making them a threat to the imaginary American body politic (Birn; Lüthi). The human physique was not just an accumulation of flesh and liquids; it also assumed a symbolic and metaphorical quality that went beyond the biological body. In this interaction and encounter of individuals, the body served as a cultural contact zone and came to represent a situation of fear and risk for American society in general. Against this background, it seems that the boundaries of the American body politic would, to adopt Mary Douglas’s statement, “be well mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity, and purity of the physical body” (*Purity* 126). Physical and cultural encounters become indistinguishable from each other and, even more, the contact itself literally becomes a sensation, as actors struggle with their experiences and emotions. This sensation is, however, not an unadulterated one. In 1844, Karl Marx had already pointed out that the human senses are not a natural given, but “a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present” (Marx, section 4). Consequently, all physical experiences refer to meanings that go beyond the individual body, since they are culturally and historically conditioned and encoded.

So the question arises: through which concrete practices and discourses is it possible to view a body as representative of ‘culture’? To assess this question it is helpful to turn to anthropologist Mary Douglas who has described two different body conceptions that had a bearing on each other: a constructivist and a performative one (*Natural Symbols* 87). First, there is the body as a *social* entity, which is shaped and invested in a web of multiple meanings depending on the specificities of place and time. As such, it guides the ways in which the *physical* body is looked at, experienced, controlled, and interpreted within the boundaries of cultural categories, such as race or gender. The cultural codes of bodies become apparent through discourses and practices that are closely connected to the idea of the modern Western physique. Beginning in the eighteenth century, Enlightenment physicians were scientifically trained to dissect the body and direct their medical gaze to its different systems and anatomic parts in order to be able to fix what they regarded as the human machine. At the same time, army commanders, slaveholders, and factory owners measured corporal behavior and developed technologies of surveillance and techniques of body discipline in order to organize groups and masses and make them more efficient and productive (as well as destructive). These projects were in turn accompanied by specific judgments about individual and collective cleanliness that resulted in elaborate practices of personal hygiene (Foucault, *History*; Foucault, *Discipline*; Sarasin). In his studies about the historical changes in Western attitudes concerning the human body, philosopher-historian Michel Foucault has suggested that bodies are shaped in fields-of-force, as they are both empowered and subjugated through systems and practices of power and knowledge. On the basis of these considerations about the historicity of the human physique, Foucault and others have rejected assump-

tions about ‘the body’ as an essential anthropological constant directly accessible to scholarly analysis. They argue, following a poststructuralist logic, that even the physical body is only accessible in textual form and through the mediation of texts and artifacts (see the essay by Lee Wallace in this volume for an assessment of the theoretical complexities involved). Hence, “bodies do matter,” as it becomes obvious that seemingly natural qualities like gender or race are not simple givens, but the results of cultural processes and practices of labeling and interpreting (Butler).

But in Douglas’s eyes the body is much more than a social construct. Like other scholars, as will be argued below, she offers convincing reasons to support their discontent with extreme forms of constructivism. Thus – secondly – Douglas does not understand the relationship between social and physical body as a mere one-way street, but as a reciprocal co-dependency. As the individual physique is shaped by discourses, it also comes to embody social categories and meanings – it is the very arena in which they gain a palpable reality (Foucault, *Discipline*; Foucault, *History*; Mauss; Sewell). Since the early modern period, bodies have presented an intriguing object of research, as they are the place at which cultural concepts are not only represented, but acted out. Otherwise abstract ideas as diverse as discipline, beauty, hygiene, and sexuality, become visible and tangible through their embodiments; they live “in so far as they are performed” (Turner 48). The recent scholarship about bodies that has mainly been informed by constructivist and performance theories has led to the notion of the body as being both the product and the source of numerous cultural processes. The body is at the same time the result of cultural values, sentiments, and discursive inscriptions and the original site of cultural imaginings and representations.

For the respective actors, as well as for savvy academics, this oscillating movement between the social and the physical body creates a resonant research space that can both amplify and aggravate our thinking about cultural constructs. This situation grows even more complex when representatives from different cultural backgrounds come face to face with each other. As we know from a myriad of accounts of cultural contact, from antiquity to the present, cultural difference is often expressed in terms of physical difference or in conventions closely connected with the body: classical sites and practices of alterity are facial features, food, cleansing practices, clothing, dance, and burial rites. Added to the distorting effects of the prejudices, xenophobia, and stereotypical knowledge(s) usually evident in representations of unfamiliar cultures is the general elusiveness of the material body due to its necessarily mediated availability to the critical observer.

Cultural encounters are, moreover, often highly performative and pantomimic due to the linguistic incompetence of the involved agents. One temporary outcome of such a misunderstanding was the naming of Virginia as “Wincandacoa” by the British explorers Arthur Barlow and Philip Amadas in the late sixteenth century – before the area became inscribed with the symbolic sexual status of Britain’s imperial ruler, Queen Elizabeth I, the ‘Virgin Queen’. In the language

of the Roanoke Indians the word literally translates as “You wear funny clothes” – which allows us to construe the scene of communication between the group of explorers sent by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1584 (who asked for the name of the country) and the local inhabitants (who, instead of answering the incomprehensible question, pointed out the strangeness of the sailors’ clothes). The misnomer nicely illustrates the kind of communication problem that can arise in cross-cultural encounters, as well as the special notice paid to external, bodily appearances in such situations. In a second example, Greg Dening, the great historian of Polynesian intercultural performativity, writes about the very different performances that took place in Tahiti while Captain Cook’s men were setting up instruments with which to observe the transit of Venus in 1769 – the goal being to measure “the size of the universe from the solar parallax.” By erecting a palisade around the observatory, so Dening, the explorers carefully safeguarded the technology that would enable them to acquire knowledge about the impending natural spectacle, while perhaps similarly seeking to invest the place with an aura of magic and power to fend off curious natives. Securely blocked from native view and access,

Cook’s tent observatory is behind the palisades. He has his Sheldon pendulum clock there, his Bird quadrant, his Ramsden sextant – the finest astronomical instruments in existence. Fort Venus is more theater than fort, though – theater in the round. The English dance with their military exercises, their flag raising, and their church services. They display their uniforms, their colors, their order, their violence. The didactics of their theater are always about power and trade, how the power of empire can reach out over distance, can have permanence even without presence. (22)

While the British are translating their corporeality into a cognition afforded them through their magical devices, the Tahitians are employed in straightforward pantomimic comment. They

dance with their mocking mime, translating the silences they have no word for, reading new body postures and looks. The Tahitians use the very gateway of the fort as a stage to display their otherness. They choreograph copulations there. They show what wealth and power mean to them, what gender and class. (22)

Another form of ritualized encounter involving bodily performance was the common consumption of food, drink, and intoxicating products. The latter in particular, as Fabian notes, occasionally led to distorted perceptions of reality on the part of the European travelers. In their various states of mental derangement, these Westerners compiled reports that added questionable information to the stock of European knowledge concerning the cultural groups they had visited (Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*). Another aspect of the physical dimensions of cultural encounters was the effect of those invisible and lethal agents of empire: germs (Crosby).

When the Puritans first landed in New England, they described the ground of former native settlements as being strewn with the bones of victims of epidemics (thanking God for his providence in killing potential competitors for resources and real estate). The influence of contagious diseases on cultural encounters can hardly be overestimated. Yellow fever played a role in helping Haitian revolutionaries defeat the French and British forces sent to quell their rebellion. Huge numbers of people fell victim to epidemics that resulted from both scientific ignorance and the economically motivated rejection of disease prevention measures (through quarantine) whenever the interests of health competed with those of commerce (Watts). Economic globalization was achieved at the price of countless lives lost to cholera and other epidemic diseases. It is little wonder, then, that cultural anxiety vis-à-vis unfamiliar cultures and their representatives was frequently articulated in terms of a fear of bodily infection, disfigurement (tattooing), or dissolution through hostile ingestion (cannibalism).

The contributions in this collection engage with and utilize a kind of ‘corporeal’ lens for analyzing situations of cultural encounter and exchange. Instead of foregrounding the gentlemanly contact of diplomatic elites, the movement of entire armies or fleets, or the structural dynamics of cultural systems, the focus here is on bodies as an arena in which the microphysics of power become effective and visible. In doing so, the texts consider three different aspects of physical (and cultural) encounters. First, there is the materiality of bodies and the role they play in cultural contacts. Second, the authors reflect upon the media and performances in which and through which people encounter and express their physical experiences. Third, each chapter reflects on the scholarly challenge of finding terms and concepts that can appropriately express or describe cultural *and* physical encounters.

Bodies: A Matter of Cultural Encounter

Both the immediacy and the ways in which physical encounters can be articulated provide a fruitful ground for finding a dynamics and an understanding of categories like ‘self’ and ‘other’ or precepts of public and private. Physical contact opens up an imaginative space in which actors are forced to constantly reexamine, reinterpret or, sometimes, even overthrow their knowledge about bodies – both their own and those of others. Such bodily experiences can both reinforce and call into question knowledges and techniques of the body, such as eating or washing (Mauss), and differences often become even more obvious in settings of ‘cultural encounter’. As such, the physical facts and theories that actors often take for granted and on which they base their actions are put to the test.

For instance, cultural historian *Martha Finch* explicates how in seventeenth-century New England the colonial contact of English settlers and Native Americans was both a reaffirmation and a challenge to Western ideas of a superior

European physique: on the one hand, settlers despised the savage bodies for their seeming lack of civilization. On the other hand, they were impressed (and intimidated) by the physical strength and mental faculties of Native Americans. Finch's analysis of the colonists' journals, chronicles, and letters explores the ways in which both settlers and Indians were forced to accommodate and to invent new tactics of physical (and cultural) encounter in order to adapt to new situations. Furthermore, she shows how different concepts of the body influenced each other: Native Americans developed an interest in the colonists' knowledge of the human body and even asked them for medical advice. The colonists, for their part, struggled with Indian notions of hygiene and nudity, and the colonial perspective on the Indian body remained mainly a negative one: the New Englanders took the 'savage' bodies as a mirror that exposed a crooked image of what Europeans might become if they left the path of Western civilization.

Michael C. Frank looks at physical images on another level, addressing the notion of cultural irritation that is literally skin-deep. He approaches tattoos as a practice of encounter and exchange by dwelling upon cases from the colonial Americas and the Pacific. Through the examination of personal letters and (fictionalized) travelogues, his text attests to how images imprinted on the body took on diverse implications depending on the cultural context. In Pacific Island societies tattooing was a sign of association with specific communities or tribes, and had to be earned by participation in military campaigns or through marriage. Tattooed images therefore became signs of social incorporation. But what was seen as a sign of honor and achievement in one cultural context assumed a very different meaning in another. Those Europeans who had traveled abroad and returned with marks covering their entire bodies, even their faces, became strangers to their former countrymen and women. Since tattoos were permanent, the images on (and of) their bodies became sites of vexation and the bearers of those images became social nobodies – they had literally lost face. Furthermore, in the eyes of their contemporaries, those 'Westerners' who had the images of the exotic 'other' engraved onto their bodies were thus lost to civilization, having now been claimed by the culture of the savage – once back home, they were destined to living a life at the periphery.

In her essay about sexuality in colonial New Zealand, *Lee Wallace* investigates a colonial encounter located at another periphery: she addresses the issue of cultural otherness through the specific lens of the (non-)representation of homosexuality in colonial archival materials and historical narratives. While many have stressed the close connection between colonial desire and sexual conquest (McClintock), Wallace's text seriously questions the heteronormative coherence and clarity that underlie these interpretations. She argues that sexual imperialism struggled much more with the understanding of homosexuality than archival documents initially reveal. The archival ephemerality and cultural invisibility of same-sex relations in everyday colonial encounters led to absences and gaps in the documentation that scholars have to take into account when doing research.

Thus, Wallace demands that archival traces be viewed not only as documents of past events, but of what others have called the production of knowledge: as traces of how people – at the time – tried to make sense of and interpret homosexuality. She demonstrates that physical experiences in general and sexuality in particular refuse to be easily captured by simple administrative or textual categories: there always remains a ‘translational gap’ of speechlessness and silences surrounding the body.

Christian Koller’s chapter on French Foreign Legionnaires speaks to similar questions of colonial encounter, revolving around the subjects of physical discipline, sexuality, and the archive. In exploring how soldiers experienced what to them appeared to be the margins of Western civilization, he explores images of the ‘other’ body from different angles. First, he analyzes how concepts of race and gender were tested and reshaped when Legionnaires and non-European women engaged in sexual relations, often living together in quasi-marital relationships (so-called ‘limited term liaisons’). From the perspectives of most African and Asian men, these intimate couplings were experienced as threats to their masculinity, since they reinforced images of colonial inferiority on a very palpable level. Second, Koller focuses on the care superiors took to protect the health of the soldiers under their command in regard to prostitution. Fears of venereal diseases in particular led military officials to semi-legalize and administer prostitution, thereby locating practices of sexuality within the limits of a medical and bureaucratic authority. Finally, this chapter deals with perceived physical and mental ‘abnormality’: the practices and discourses of homosexuality that took place within the borders of strict military discipline and hierarchy. By concentrating on memoirs and autobiographies Koller also queries issues of genre and the textual representations of physical experiences. This last point leads to the second emphasis of this compilation: the role of media in the many embodiments of cultural encounters.

Media of Bodies – Bodies as Media

Bodies leave traces (Ginzburg), though sometimes those traces are rather fragile and can be difficult to decipher: a blood stain on an archival document or the shaky handwriting on an official form – these are manifestations of the body that reach beyond words but do not telegraph clear messages to researchers. Just as straightforward essentialism would be too limited a location from which the formation of bodies could be understood, so would a complacent constructivism. Therefore, some scholars have been eager to point out the challenges of getting epistemologically/intellectually closer to the body by taking into account *all* surviving evidence and subjecting it to systematic scrutiny. There is something profoundly irritating and unruly about bodies that goes beyond mere discourse. In certain situations the body evades the slickness of words: colonists who catch

diseases in an unknown setting, travelers who fall in love with the ‘other’, ethnologists who are disgusted with the details of indigenous life – we will rarely find their experiences ‘objectively’, or even adequately, represented in texts and graphs. Moreover, emotions like pain, love, or hate never occur as pure sensations, neither for the respective actors nor for the researchers who try to grasp them: internal feelings cannot be separated from the various modes of their expression – both are inextricably intertwined with each other (Reddy, “Against”; Reddy, “Sentimentalism”; Scarry). Physical as well as emotional perceptions are not universal, but rather bound to specific times and places. As complex acts of cultural translation, they are also subject to the rules and laws of the media and genres through which they are articulated. Where there is articulation and translation, there will also be blind spots and silences. Thus, the physicality of cultural encounters is not only linguistically reflected but also linguistically produced. Media are not empty vessels that are merely filled with content, but have their own history and *Herkunft*, which makes them crucial factors in studying situations of cultural contact (Crivellari 29).

Astrid Windus’s contribution demonstrates this productive aspect of representations of the body in colonial contexts with an example from the field of visual media. It takes us back to the late seventeenth-century Andes under Spanish colonial rule. Her analysis of a 1684 church painting called *Infierno* (“Hell”) by José López de los Ríos uncovers different layers of intercultural signification. In this colossal work, the artist contended with key components of Catholic theology, including the Seven Deadly Sins and punishment in Hell for those guilty of worldly trespasses. The transfer of these imaginings into an ensemble of images bears witness to the ways in which theology was represented in and through bodily performances and the ways in which the painting was embedded within the local context of the Lake Titicaca region. Windus argues that the work of art was not a mere representation of Christian belief, but a materialization of knowledge transfer and, thus, an arena of cultural encounter. Whereas the main messages of the painting are grounded in the beliefs of European Christianity, the depicted scenes were borrowed from the reservoirs of both Spanish and indigenous pictorial traditions, functioning as links between the two different knowledge systems. The painting in itself performed the hybrid role of colonial rule and religion.

In general, religion and its performances are subjects that can be productively analyzed for cultural encounters. And in his essay about Pentecostal-type Christianity, *Andreas Heuser* takes on an altogether different kind of bodily enactment. Based on his observations of religious practices in contemporary Africa, the author locates the believers’ bodies at the center of the rituals he witnessed, and those bodies become the battleground on which the war between good and evil is carried out. He analyzes a religious discourse that draws its power from two poles: the roles demons play in everyday African life, and an intense “devil complex,” that is, the omnipresence of the devil as God’s antagonist. Both phenomena are the result of intercultural transfer and translation processes that have their

roots in the continent's colonial heritage – which includes the crucial impact missionaries had on its religious landscape. But Heuser's chapter also demonstrates how Christian communities in Africa are part of an ongoing global exchange of traditional Christian suppositions with other ideological groups, the Western Charismatics and Pentecostal communities in America being two such examples. While inferring the idea of agency and indigenization processes, Heuser also stresses the question of media, underscoring the performativity of the bodies in question.

Hilke Thode-Arora expands this aspect of performance in her essay about ethnic spectacles in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany. During this period, non-European people were hired to incarnate the civilizational 'other' under the gaze of paying audiences. In zoos and parks they acted out seemingly indigenous lives with their actual bodies in front of 'authentic' sceneries, embodying foreign worlds and cultures for German spectators. In such settings, audience members attempted to satisfy their zest for exotic encounters as well as their appetite for scientific knowledge. Anthropological claims and assumptions of the existence of distinctly identifiable and separate human races were performatively constructed, and cultural difference became tangible for those who watched. Because these shows were elaborately marketed through picture postcards, posters, and newspaper articles, they produced a cultural effect far beyond their respective theatrical sites and stages, including the then newly popular cultural form of movies. In these modes of representation the exotic human body was both a means and a result of cultural encounter and exchange. Thus, ethnic shows were enmeshed with different media and could only succeed within this ensemble of visual, textual, and performative representations of ethnic stereotypes.

The delusive 'authenticity' of the visual is also at the heart of *Andrea Zittlau's* contribution on ethnographic dioramas. She compares this presentation format with ethnic shows and museum exhibitions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which audiences are invited to learn about the cultures of Native Americans and indigenous people in colonized areas like South Africa. But these stagings, no matter how objective they tried to appear, also had their own ideological trajectories. When, for instance, one diorama portrayed 'typical' everyday lives of so-called Bushmen, audiences were actually witnessing a romanticized depiction of the 'other'. More to the point, the body and facial shapes of these alleged Bushmen were an aggregation of biological presumptions of (physical and cultural) inferiority and, thus, of scientific racism. In her critical assessment of the audience centeredness and the ways in which the appeal of these artificial scenes of cultural alterity were structured, Zittlau's text addresses a third academic research question posed in this volume: the practices and discourses of scholarship regarding cultural encounters.

Mapped and Measured: Scholars in the Field

How do scholars develop appropriate categories to organize and present their findings? Translation is an issue that faces anyone who grapples with the task of scientifically describing the human body. Physicians (and patients) who describe a ‘burning’ pain rely on a metaphor that translates a physical reality into language that is able to communicate the individual experience of physical pain to others. In a similar vein, scholars who form hypotheses and models of the human body in more general terms necessarily tap their culture’s symbolic repertoire of knowledge about the body. Thus, this knowledge can never be objective or academically innocent, but is interlaced with configurations of power. It is no coincidence that nineteenth-century Western colonialism proceeded hand in hand with the development of modern ethnology and anthropology as academic disciplines. When scholars traveled to Africa to study local tribes and customs, they were firmly convinced of Western civilization’s superiority and more advanced state. With their gaze turned toward the African presence, they believed that they were observing their own past – the past of humankind. Their teleological worldview deemed Africans “not [there] yet,” still existing in the “night of first ages” (Chakrabarty 8; Conrad 69). Implicated in these discourses, academic research also provided a rationale for the “white man’s burden,” that is, the obligation to bring ‘civilization’ to the rest of the world’s cultures: control over categories and research was empirically grounded in control over bodies.

Anja Laukötter’s essay “The ‘Colonial Body’ as Object of Knowledge in Ethnological Museums” picks up this point in its analysis of early twentieth-century German ethnological museums. It explores the close connections between the production of scientific knowledge about other ‘races’ and the establishment of these monumental structures and institutions – such temples of racial science as the Berlin Ethnological Museum and the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology. Laukötter argues that the systematic acquisition of human remains and body data – with the help of innovative apparatuses, goniometers and craniophores, for example, and a specialized vocabulary – was a direct result of Germany’s burgeoning imperialism during the *Kaiserreich*, whose discourse spilled over into the Weimar Republic. Moreover, the resulting knowledge determined the attitudes toward and treatment of the inhabitants of the German colonies and imperial interest zones, especially in Africa and in the Pacific. The project of scientific collecting was deeply entangled with the entertainment-oriented exhibition of non-Europeans in Germany’s ethnic shows, serving two purposes simultaneously, entertainment and scientific advancement – a liaison that is perhaps reflected in the jocular tone of some of the scientific correspondence concerning field work and collecting. Arguably, the scientific data collection, explicitly conducted to salvage the skeletal remains and artifacts of dying peoples, seemed to have served no other end than that of accumulation on the part of the collectors. Even so, their diligently gathered samples and data were used by theorists of scientific racism as evidence to support their

ideologies of racial and cultural superiority. As imperial scientists were patiently and painstakingly ‘salvaging’ cultural objects, imperial armies were concurrently destroying the very same people to whom these objects belonged, the infamous Herero Revolt of 1907 in Namibia being just one instance that comes to mind.

Knowledge of the human body was not always such a one-sided affair, as *Rainer Brömer* delineates in “Mediterranean Medical Bodies and the Ottoman Empire, 1517-1820.” Contrary to the monological scientific machine of the imperial powers, medical and anatomical knowledge had frequently crossed cultural boundaries since antiquity. Brömer explores the translations and adaptations that ancient anatomical knowledge underwent in both Arabic and Christian contexts, as well as the later mutual influences that Arabic and European theories exerted on each other. A pervasive theme in both Christian and Islamic scientific writing was the impact of religious attitudes toward the human body, especially the relationship between body and spirit, but also with regard to the morally problematic techniques of dissection and vivisection. The transfer of knowledge across cultural and linguistic lines is also likely to produce mistranslations and misunderstandings. As a result, certain theories, for example that of the pulmonary passage of blood, were misread and mistranslated due to linguistic and ideological inconsistencies. Medical knowledge, once acquired, could also be forgotten, only to be re(dis)covered by Western science which, from the Early Modern period on, increasingly monopolized information channels and controlled the communication between different cultures and their respective stores of knowledge and intelligence. Under these circumstances, medical practitioners frequently functioned as cultural mediators and go-betweens. Brömer’s essay tries to capture the world of medical knowledge and its concepts in the Mediterranean at a point in time when Ottoman physicians were dealing with different systems of knowledge about the human body. This conjunction occurred just before Western medical practices – assisted by early nineteenth-century imperial campaigns such as Napoleon’s African expedition – became the dominant approach in the Ottoman Empire, at least in the state-sponsored medical profession.

However, the search for the means to interpret bodies does not stop with finding objective terms and images to describe them. In certain situations the texture of culture goes skin-deep and beyond mere text, especially when the researcher is physically exposed to experiences in an unfamiliar environment. *Ellen Koskoff*’s carefully drafted thick description and analysis of Balinese “bodies of music” shows, on the one hand, how images of Western musical professionalization have shaped the ways in which local musicians market and practice their arts and crafts. It also takes into account another aspect of academic scholarship: fieldwork as a situation of cultural and physical encounter. Koskoff’s characterization of her experiences of performing music with a traditional Balinese ensemble (*gamelan*) is a reminder of the fact that research itself is an operation that constantly approaches (and reaches) the limits of understanding, requiring the crossing of mental and physical boundaries. In recounting how she joined one particu-

lar *gamelan* and began to perform with it, the presence of Koskoff's participating body becomes part of the observations she makes about the object of her anthropological research. Koskoff herself acted both as participant observer and as an observed: while she watched and listened to her fellow musicians, their gazes and ears were also turned to her and her musical abilities.

In a similar vein, in his piece about memorial practices in Guatemala following that country's civil war (1960 to 1996), *W. George Lovell* addresses his complex relationship with a local family, one in which the power trajectories in the field of research cannot be explained solely in terms of passive research objects and active research scholar. In his work with an indigenous community Lovell unearthed "Mayan" stories of power and resistance that extend from the sixteenth-century colonial era to the twentieth-century's almost forty years of bloodshed and conflict, which claimed so many lives and caused great divisions within Guatemalan society. Implicitly drawing on the colonial trope of the "talking book" – the Native Americans' fascination with, but also rejection of, European 'superior' communications technology – he explicates the ways in which his own books and the publicity that they entail may give those who were marginalized a sense that there were important stories to be told about their community, and that their public dissemination would help make visible those who were most marginalized in Guatemalan society. Although the residents of San José could hardly read his (academic) writings, they appreciated the books as personal and social artifacts and mementos of their social (and academic) importance. Lovell's work, 'embodied' in his book, had an effect on the community that extended beyond the borders of the academy.

Martina Kaller-Dietrich considers how Western food products and nutritional science have affected the ways in which people in the State of Oaxaca (Mexico) consume and perceive food. In this southern part of the country, the human body is shaped by a complex web of Western capitalism, trade relations, dietary standards, and local preferences and practices. While Mexicans may criticize Western dietary doctrines (such as the emphasis on protein) and by returning to local ways of eating refuse to simply adapt international food recommendations, it would be naïve to describe these interactions purely as Western imposition encountering Mexican resistance. When Oaxaca cook Doña Sofía adds milk powder to her traditional maize drink, because "we like Nestlé's milk," her behavior evades clear categorizations and antagonisms of 'modern' versus 'traditional', or 'Western' versus 'non-Western' ways of coping with bodily experiences. Doña Sofía celebrates Oaxacan cuisine and adds a little Western flavor to it, literally creating a cultural hybrid.

In the aggregate, all the work here raises a general question concerning the character of both cultural and corporal encounter. When analyzing colonial and intercultural settings one problem seems unavoidable: how can we, as researchers, encompass the various perspectives and dynamics of cultural encounter when

basically all materials seem to come from a Western point of view? Obviously, Europeans had the power to categorize, to label, and to archive the traces available to researchers today of what has occurred in the past. Is it not, then, almost inevitable that the proverbial ‘subaltern’ remains the silent figure in this constellation of power?

When the everyday practices of bodies become a part of the equation, the playing field becomes much more level and ambiguous. This is not to say that the ‘subaltern’ can suddenly speak through statistics and other data, but the essays presented here demonstrate that even silence can be a powerful instrument, one not limited to the colonizers alone but also available to the colonized as well. Many examples, be it an instance of same-sex encounter in New Zealand or the diet of a cook in Oaxaca, demonstrate how physical and social bodies coalesce; but they also reveal that ‘body’ is not only a category of cultural knowledge but also an arena of ambiguous practices in which physical discipline and categorizations can be both suppressive and empowering (Foucault, *History* 123). Thus, the focus on bodies opens up perspectives on the dynamics and functionalities of cultural encounters that cannot be explained through hierarchical and static models of culture and power alone.

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CHAPTER ONE

“As in a Mirror”: Reflections on Bodies and Cultural Encounters in Seventeenth-Century New England

MARTHA L. FINCH

In his *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England* (1674) Daniel Gookin, the Massachusetts Superintendent of the Praying Indians (Indians who had converted to Christianity), imagined Indian bodies as ‘mirrors’ reflecting godly colonists’ own shadows: what the English might become if they abandoned ‘civilized’ and ‘moral’ behaviors. The native people, Gookin claimed, were “poor brutish barbarians” who lived in the wilderness with no means to cultivate or civilize either the natural environment or themselves. In fact, they were barely human, being “like unto the wild ass’s colt, and not many degrees above beasts in matters of fact.” For Gookin and other New England Puritans, one’s environment made all the difference, for it shaped a person’s body and thus one’s soul; the only distinction that God had ordained between English and Indian, but a critical one, was that the English had been “born and bred among civilized and christian nations” (Gookin 223). God’s grace, according to English Calvinist theology, entered a person’s soul only through the physical senses; thus, missionaries required the Praying Indians first to ‘civilize’ their bodies through English dress, hairstyles, house design, and so on, so that their hearts might then be open to Christ.

Gookin’s image of the Indians as ‘corrupt’ mirrors for the English was more than a metaphor; for New England Puritans it was a literal reality, based on common early modern English ideas about the human body. Anticipating Pierre Bourdieu’s much more recent concept of the *habitus* and its inscription on the body in everyday life, such as in “*dress, bearing, and physical and verbal manners,*” and Michel de Certeau’s claim that the surrounding environment becomes “encysted” in one’s body, many colonists feared that engaging the New England wilderness, not yet cultivated and domesticated according to English models of land use, and its ‘wild’ inhabitants would alter them physically and thus morally (Bourdieu 94-95; de Certeau 108). But engage them they did, and in extraordinarily physical ways, sometimes greeting native Algonkians with a knife to the throat

and other times with a kiss on the hand. Indeed, not all colonists saw in Indian bodies a reverse reflection of godliness and civility; Rhode Island's Roger Williams, Plymouth's Edward Winslow, Thomas Morton, who established his camp at Ma-re Mount near the village of New Plymouth, and others also held up the Indians as mirrors, but mirrors in which the colonists might see their own shortcomings. The natives, they claimed, were in many ways superior to the English, both physically – they were taller, stronger, better adapted to the indigenous environment – and morally – they were more modest and hospitable.

When Indians and English met, it was always in deeply embodied ways. In the early years of contact, a language barrier required both groups to learn to read the other's bodies: size, bearing, gestures, and adornment. They exchanged artifacts and clothing, healed or treated each others' illnesses, shared meals and beds together, and engaged in sexual relations. Some male colonists 'went native', growing their hair, wearing animal skins, greasing their bodies, and painting their faces as they physically conformed to native modes of embodied life; likewise, some Indians reshaped their bodies, altering their dress, hairstyles, and so on, to adopt elements of a 'civilized' English Christian life. On occasion, both Indians and English purposely misled and often misread each other's behaviors, which sometimes had disastrous results, and colonists and Indians fought, sometimes to the death. Indians attacked English settlements, and colonists attacked native villages, at times burning Indian men, women, and children alive, and in other instances beheading particularly 'brutish' Indian leaders, displaying their heads in the center of the village of New Plymouth.

This chapter looks closely at the embodied details of cultural encounters in southern New England, primarily in Plymouth, the first colony established in New England, during the seventeenth century. It considers moments of contact across a range of settings, from public displays such as treaty ceremonies and violent combat, to domestic spaces, where the activities of daily life occurred. In all cases, encounters were simultaneously both intimate interpersonal exchanges and collective, political transactions, as natives and colonists continuously negotiated new contact situations. Mirroring developments in England at the time, colonists moved toward a greater privatization of domestic life and the individual person over the course of the seventeenth century. Such a growing separation between private and public life, between the individual and the community, ran counter to New England Indians' traditional patterns of social organization, where, for example, more than one family often shared a single, one-room dwelling and everyone in the village contributed to procuring food and raising children. Indeed, Puritan missionaries attempted to 'reduce' such 'savage' lifeways by altering natives' domestic spaces and the bodies that inhabited them as the primary means of 'civilizing' and Christianizing the Indians. Nevertheless, such moves to create the 'private' as synonymous with 'civilized' always carried broader social and political ramifications. Before considering specific moments in which colonists and natives engaged in cultural contact and change and to develop a sense of why those par-

ticular moments played out in various ways both personal and social, this chapter turns first to models by which colonists and, to a degree, Indians conceived of their own and others' bodies.

Models of Human Embodiment

Native and English models of embodiment formed the lenses through which colonists and Indians viewed each other, producing distinct kinds of interactions and exchanges. In some ways, such as wearing particular clothing and hairstyles to mark social status, Indians and English were similar, but in others, such as imagining the human relationship to the natural environment, they were quite different. It is difficult to elaborate a complete and detailed understanding of native conceptions of the human body, but through descriptions by colonists who observed Indians and interpreted their behaviors, a sense of native embodiment takes shape. Indeed, those descriptions reveal much about colonists' own ideas. The Puritans who colonized New England brought with them medical, philosophical, and theological conceptions of the human body, conceptions that were widespread and commonly understood and accepted in early modern England.

Colonists inherited their medical understandings of the body and its functioning from the ancient Galenic system of the four humors, which corresponded to numerous other systems of four, such as the four elements – earth, water, fire, and air – which constituted everything in the physical world. The human body was continuously concocting, ingesting, digesting, and excreting humoral fluids, particles, and qualities; the humors determined a person's temperament and behavior, and physical, mental, and moral health depended upon maintaining a balance among them. Balance and imbalance, health and sickness, were generated by any number of things, including food, exercise, environment, air quality, and climate (Eden; Lovejoy; Sirasi). Thus, as Karen Ordahl Kupperman has noted, early colonists both feared and reveled in their encounters with the North American “wilderness” and its inhabitants (*Indians and English* 20). Before setting sail for New England, William Bradford, who would serve as governor of Plymouth Colony between 1621 and 1656, imagined North America as dreadfully dangerous. “The change of air, diet and drinking of water would infect [English] bodies with sore sicknesses and grievous diseases,” he wrote, and the Indians were:

savage people who are cruel, barbarous and most treacherous, [...] furious in their rage and merciless, [...] delight[ing] to torment men in the most bloody manner that may be; flaying some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting off the members and joints of others by piecemeal and broiling on the coals, eat[ing] the collops of their flesh in their sight whilst they live, with other cruelties horrible to be related. (25-26)

The realities, however, were otherwise. According to Edward Winslow, who arrived on the *Mayflower* with Bradford in 1620, colonists' first encounters with New England, though physically challenging, caused them to exult. They discovered rich soil, park-like woods cleared by the Indians, wild strawberries, walnut trees, delicious fresh water, native stores of corn – and the Indians they saw quickly ran away from them (“Relation or Iournall” 117-19, 123-33). Although half of those who arrived on the *Mayflower* soon became ill and died due to “the searching sharpness of that purer climate creeping in at the crannies of their crazed bodies,” as one observer explained, those who survived the first year did so only because they had met Tisquantum, or Squanto, a Patuxet, who taught them to fish, cultivate corn, and procure other foods (Wood 28; Bradford 81).

Indeed, Indians' “lusty and healthful bodies,” greased for protection and lightly clothed for ease of movement, were, according to humoral theory, well adapted to ‘wilderness’ living. They were far better able to manipulate the New England environment to their benefit than were those early colonists, whose heavy clothing and armor slowed them down (Wood 110). Native men could swim and run faster and further than English men, and they were better marksmen and fishermen (Wood 103-08). The colonists marveled at Tisquantum's ability to catch fat, sweet eels by treading on them with his feet and then grasping them with his bare hands (“Relation or Iournall” 196). According to Thomas Morton, Indians' sensory perceptions far excelled those of any English person; their eyes were jet black, which humoral theory indicated was the color “strongest for sight,” and their sense of smell was so acute that “they could distinguish between a Spaniard and a Frenchman by the s[c]ent of the hand onely” (40-41). Overall, natives had “better scill to catch such things [Fish fowle and deare] then Einglish men haue,” proclaimed Phineas Pratt from Wessagusset, an English settlement to the north of Plymouth (477). On the other hand, Indian bodies were extraordinarily susceptible to European diseases, such as small pox, which colonists carried across the Atlantic, and Plymouth leaders employed medical practices based on humoral theory to treat native people who became ill.

In addition to the humoral medical model, colonists brought with them pre-Enlightenment philosophical and English Puritan theological conceptions of the human body. In early modern England a direct linkage presumably inhered between one's private inner character and one's public outer self, “between physical and moral qualities, [...] between outer appearance and inner reality, or between being and seeming” (Vincent 129, 158). A person's dress, manners, and other outward characteristics were to correctly display his or her inward ‘properties’, such as social rank, level of education, and gender. Likewise, for New England's Puritan civil and church leadership, soul and body, one's inner and outer selves, were intimately interconnected. The body was fundamentally good, created in the image of God: only through the physical senses did divine grace enter the soul, and only through physical behaviors was one's soul revealed. Ideally, a person accurately demonstrated his or her inner moral state through vis-

ible actions; the goal of the religiously devout was outer modesty and ‘plainness’, that is, lack of either extreme ostentation or extreme asceticism, to indicate a ‘moderate’ rather than a ‘prideful’ heart. Yet, by the early seventeenth century there was a growing awareness in England that self-identity could be manipulated through choice of dress and other external behaviors, which many believed posed a serious threat to social order. The devout also feared outward expressions of hypocrisy and deception, which, they believed, were motivated by the deadliest of sins, pride (in contrast to the most desirable of virtues, modesty). Pride caused the masking of one’s inner state by visibly dissembling, by appearing other than one’s ‘true’ self (Finch 4-13).

Thus, the ways that Indians and English presented themselves to each other, as well as their ability to ‘read’ each other’s bodies, were of critical importance. Colonists described in great detail, and usually in glowingly positive terms, the bodies – gestures, facial expressions, clothing, and other observable characteristics – of the native people they encountered. Implying that the scantily clad Indians were far more honest and straightforward in their self-presentations than were elaborately decked-out English gents, William Wood, who visited New England in 1633, observed of native men:

First of their stature, most of them being between five and six foot high, straight bodied, strongly composed, smooth-skinned, merry countenanced, of complexion something more swarthy than Spaniards, black haired, high foreheaded, black eyed, out-nosed, broad shouldered, brawny armed, long and slender handed, out breasted, small waisted, lank bellied, well thighed, flat kneed, handsome grown legs, and small feet. In a word, [...] they are more amiable to behold (though only in Adam’s livery) than many a compounded fantastic in the newest fashion. (82)

Winslow similarly praised native women he encountered, for they carefully covered their bodies with “great shamefacedness, for indeed they are more modest than some of our English women are” (“Relation or Iournall” 228). Wood provided some insights into how Indians, in turn, viewed English bodies; for example, Algonkian men, who plucked out their whiskers, thought of English men’s beards, which sometimes were in the “staring fashion like the beard of a cat,” as “unuseful, cumbersome, and approbrious excrement” (83). But there is little in the written record directly indicating the native point of view; Kathleen J. Bragdon has noted that, instead, “native commentary on the English generally took [...] a subtle form – in gesture, in the construction and definition of social space, in folklore, and in cultural style” (30).

The three English models of embodiment – the humoral medical, the early modern philosophical, and the Puritan theological – worked together, sometimes consciously but more often unconsciously, as colonists encountered native people. Likewise, native models of the body, revealed in their practices of hospitality,

modesty, formal speech, domestic life, and so on, shaped their relations with colonists. Moments of contact and exchange occurred in both political and domestic spaces – in peaceful or violent social negotiations and in Indian and English homes – yet political and domestic always converged; intimate encounters within a native *wetu*, or wigwam, for example, directly influenced broader social exchanges, while political negotiations affecting entire communities might be strengthened by the negotiators sharing a bed at night. In some cases, encounters were friendly and beneficial to both parties, yet in others, they ended adversely for one or both.

Political Encounters

The first sustained contact between Indians and English at Plymouth occurred in mid-March, 1621, four months after the arrival of the *Mayflower*, when Samoset, an Abenaki from Monhiggon (Maine), “very boldly” walked into the colonists’ camp. He had learned some broken English from fishermen off the coast of Maine and was “of a seemly carriage,” that is, physically well formed and pleasantly mannered. To English eyes he was “stark naked” but, in fact, was clothed in typical native dress, wearing only a leather string with fringe around his waist; when a chilly breeze came up, the colonists threw an English cloak over his shoulders. Winslow described Samoset as “a tall, straight man, the hair of his head black, long behind, only short before, none on his face at all.” The colonists gave him some duck meat and English victuals: “strong water, and biscuit, and butter, and cheese, and pudding,” which the Indian said he liked very well. They conversed throughout the afternoon, Samoset explaining the recent history of the region and its inhabitants. When evening fell the colonists would have liked to send their guest on his way, but they agreed to lodge him overnight in the home of Steven Hopkins – although they “watched him” closely. Samoset left the next day, only to return a few days later with five “tall, proper” Pokanoket men from the village of Sowams, forty miles to the west of New Plymouth. These men were more fully clothed than Samoset, wearing leather leggings and animal skins around their shoulders. They were dark complexioned and beardless, some with faces painted black in various patterns. Their hair was shoulder-length and short in front, and some wore in their hair “a feather, broad-wise, like a fan; another a fox tail hanging out” (“Relation or Iournall” 182-88).

The Pokanoket men spoke no English but used gestures to communicate, which the English strove to comprehend, concluding, “They made semblance unto us of friendship and amity.” The Indians acted out characteristic native expressions of social engagement and hospitality: they had brought ground corn and tobacco to share (although none of the English partook) and skins to trade (which the English refused to do because it was the Sabbath), and they entertained their hosts by singing and dancing “after their manner” (which appeared grotesque and

ludicrous to the English). By the end of the day, wanting to rid themselves of the Pokanoket men, the colonists gave them some trinkets, likely small knives or pieces of cheap jewelry like they had given Samoset a few days earlier, and for which the Indians profusely thanked them. The Pokanokets then left. Samoset, however, “was either sick or feigned himself so” and stayed on in New Plymouth three more days, presumably again sharing a bed with Hopkins. Finally, after providing him with items of English clothing (“a hat, a pair of stockings and shoes, a shirt”) and “a piece of cloth to tie about his waist,” the colonists sent Samoset on his way as well (“Relation or Iournall” 187-89).

In these initial cross-cultural exchanges, the colonists were far more suspicious and fearful than were the native people, who seemed confident in their approaches to the newcomers, perhaps because Samoset had conveyed to the Pokanokets the colonists’ generosity with food and gifts. The English concerns, however, are understandable. Before Samoset’s arrival at Plymouth, there had been threatening encounters with Indians. A few months earlier an Indian party, with a “great and strange cry” that was “dreadful” to hear, had attacked an English scouting party, letting fly with arrows while the colonists retaliated with musket shots; neither Indian nor English was wounded, and the Indians quickly ran away (“Relation or Iournall” 156-58). In mid-February colonists hunting in the woods had seen Indians approaching the English plantation and at night they saw fires burning nearby, which “gave us occasion to keep more strict watch” and prepare their weapons. The next day “two savages presented themselves” at the top of a hill about a quarter of a mile away “and made signs unto us to come unto them; we likewise made signs unto them to come to us.” The English sent Captain Myles Standish and Steven Hopkins, who laid their musket on the ground “in sign of peace and to parley with them.” Standish and Hopkins then heard “a noise of a great many more [Indians] behind the hill,” which caused the English to mount weapons around their camp for protection (180-81). Samoset would explain that these more elusive encounters were with Nausets, who were “much incensed and provoked against the English” because one Captain Hunt several years earlier had kidnapped about twenty of them and carried them off to Spain (185-86). The same day Samoset left Plymouth for the second time, it was likely that it was again two or three Nausets who appeared at the top of the hill and whose gestures the English interpreted as “daring us”: when Standish and three other English men approached them, the Indians “whetted and rubbed their arrows and strings, and made show of defiance” and again ran away (189-90).

Through these early encounters, embodied primarily in nonverbal mannerisms, gestures, and other actions, the colonists were learning to distinguish among Indian groups: those who were “friendly” and with whom they might engage in trade and those who were “unfriendly” and against whom they would need to protect themselves. The Nausets were learning that the English would defend themselves against attack but hoped to “parley,” and the Pokanokets were beginning to establish friendly relations with Plymouth. Indeed, Samoset proved him-

self an invaluable intermediary, for the day after Nausets “defied” the English from the hilltop, he arrived in Plymouth for the third time, now bringing four Indians, including Tisquantum, a Patuxet who had been among those kidnapped by Captain Hunt and, like Samoset, could speak a small amount of English (190-91).

That day the first political treaty between Indians and colonists would be sealed in a formal ceremony. Massasoit, Pokanoket ‘king’ (chief sachem) of the Wampanoags, his brother Quadequina, and sixty men soon appeared at the top of the hill near the English camp. As colonists and Indians tentatively observed each other from afar, Tisquantum and Winslow approached Massasoit and his men, bringing knives, some jewelry, and food and drink. Massasoit “willingly accepted” these tokens of “peace.” Winslow spoke of love, friendship, and trade, inviting Massasoit to establish a treaty between Sowams and Plymouth. The sachem listened attentively and “liked well” Winslow’s speech, although, Winslow complained, “the interpreters [Tisquantum and Samoset] did not well express it.” After enjoying the English food, Massasoit and twenty of his men continued on to the settlement at New Plymouth. Captain Standish conducted the sachem to a building still under construction, and Governor William Bradford ceremoniously appeared, followed by a drummer, trumpeter, and musketeers. Bradford kissed Massasoit’s hand, the sachem kissed the governor in return, and they sat down. Bradford called for some fresh meat and strong water (alcohol), and the two leaders drank to each other, though the unfamiliar alcohol caused Massasoit “to sweat all the while after.” While they established the peace treaty, promising to ally against their common enemies, Winslow thought the sachem “trembled for fear,” apparently in response to the colonists’ weapons – Quadequina, when he arrived, asked them to remove the muskets, which they did (“Relation or Iournall” 191-95). Even so, Winslow’s description of the physiques of Massasoit and his men reflected his admiration and respect for them:

In his person [Massasoit] is a very lusty man, in his best years, an able body, grave of countenance, and spare of speech; in his attire little or nothing differing from the rest of his followers, only in a great chain of white bone beads about his neck; and at it, behind his neck, hangs a little bag of tobacco, which he drank [smoked], and gave us to drink. His face was painted with a sad [dark] red, like murrey, and oiled both head and face, that he looked greasily. All his followers likewise were in their faces, in part or in whole, painted, some black, some red, some yellow, and some white, some with crosses, and other antic works; some had skins on them, and some naked; all strong, tall men in appearance. (194)

Likewise, Quadequina was “a very proper, tall young man, of a very modest and seemly countenance” (195). Another observer also remarked on the Wampanoags’ physical attributes: “The savages in this place are very strong and are men of very able bodies” (Altham 27).

At the end of the day, two of the Pokanoket men hoped to lodge with the English, “but we would not suffer it,” although Samoset and Tisquantum did spend the night with them. Massasoit and his men, with their wives, camped nearby in the woods, and the following morning there were more exchanges of food and tobacco before the Indians left to return to their village (“Relation or Journall” 195-96). Indeed, the English and the Pokanokets had established a firm friendship, which would be reinforced over the following years as they visited each other in their respective villages and gathered at least twice for festive occasions: a three-day harvest festival of shared food and recreation in the fall of 1621, which would become memorialized as the “First Thanksgiving,” and the wedding of William Bradford and Alice Southworth in August of 1623 (Winslow, “A Letter” 231). English visitor Emmanuel Altham, who attended the wedding, wrote to his brother in England that Massasoit, his five wives, and 130 more Indians arrived, bringing “four bucks and a turkey.” Indians and colonists feasted on “twelve pasty venisons” and other savory pies, “pieces of roasted venison, and other such good cheer in such quantity that I could wish you some of our share” (Altham 29). This public display of commensalism was a fundamental nonverbal expression of hospitality recognized by both Indians and English and a crucial means by which they embodied their pact of mutual friendship and support. As I have noted elsewhere, “eating together in a communal meal grounded social exchanges in participants’ bodies, more effectively cementing relationships than through words representing abstract notions of friendship” (Finch 206).

Yet, as we have already seen, relations between Indians and colonists were not always so friendly, and individuals could embody their encounters in ways difficult to interpret, sometimes resulting in physical violence. Indeed, the colonists were particularly sensitive to this, especially because they often could not communicate verbally with native people, and some Indians attempted to take advantage of the language barrier. In August of 1621, for example, Corbitant, petty sachem of the Pocassets, who hoped to replace Massasoit as chief sachem, wanted to undermine the close alliance between Massasoit and Plymouth. He captured the colonists’ interpreter, Tisquantum, saying, “If he were dead, the English had lost their tongue” (“Relation or Journall” 220). Bradford sent Captain Standish and several men to attack Corbitant at night and, if they found he had killed Tisquantum, to “cut off Corbitant’s head.” Corbitant escaped before the arrival of the English, who found Tisquantum unhurt. Although Corbitant “was shy to come near them a long while after,” he and Plymouth later would mend their relationship and he would entertain the colonists in his home (Bradford 88).

Both Indians and English knew how to lead each other astray through facial expressions, gestures, and other actions. Plymouth colonists, especially the devout leadership, viewed dissembling – pretending to mean one thing when one actually intended something else – as a serious problem. Their pastor in England and the Netherlands, John Robinson, wrote that “outward appearances” have such “force” that “they bind us [...] to that which indeed is not true, [...] but wherein we are

altogether deceived.” Truly godly people must strive “to be, as they appear, for their own comfort; and to appear, as they are, to the glory of God, and good of men” (184-85). The colonists feared that Indians would deceive them intentionally; Myles Standish seemed particularly suspicious. In March of 1623 Standish was in Manomet to pick up a store of corn. While he was visiting with the sachem, Canacum, in his *wetu*, two Massachusetts men walked in, one of them sachem Wituwamat, “a notable insulting villain.” Wituwamat presented a dagger to Canacum and made a long speech, which Standish was unable to understand but assumed it expressed threats toward the English because Canacum then entertained the Massachusetts men more generously than he had Standish. Furthermore, a Paomet Indian who was also there and had always “demeaned himself well toward us, being in his general carriage very affable, courteous, and loving,” now, according to Standish, “entered into confederacy with the rest; yet, to avoid suspicion, made many signs of his continued affections.” Standish, sure he could read the truth behind the Paomet’s allegedly deceptive gestures, planned to kill the Indian that night in his sleep. But because they were sleeping together, Standish was quite restless and kept the Indian awake, and so Captain Standish “missed his opportunity” (Winslow, “A Letter” 310-12). Later, when another Massachusetts Indian approached Standish with furs for trade purposes, Standish believed the Indian was “pretend[ing]” because he “saw by his eyes that he was angry in his heart” (Winslow, “Good Newes” 337). How Standish knew, or thought he knew, that these two Indians were shamming is unclear. Perhaps, as Kupperman has argued about English colonists in general, Standish read hidden treachery in friendly Indian behavior because he was so likely to employ deceit himself in order to gain the upper hand (“English Perceptions”).

Standish did indeed engage in intentional deception later that March, deception that resulted in several Indian deaths. Hearing that the Massachusetts, led by Wituwamat, intended to attack Wessagusset, a failing English settlement to the north, Plymouth decided to send Standish and several men to quell the conspiracy. The ‘ungodly’ Wessagusset men were living among the Massachusetts Indians; both groups were stealing food and blankets from each other and the English were engaging in sexual relations with Massachusetts women. One Englishman had ‘gone savage’, meaning he now went “naked” like an Indian, painting his face, greasing his body, and growing his hair long. Standish was to “pretend trade” with the Indians at Wessagusset in order to “trap [...] that bloody and bold villain” Wituwamat, bringing his head back to Plymouth so “that he might be a warning and terror to all of that [same] disposition.” Plymouth justified such a ploy by proclaiming that, as everyone who had anything to do with the Massachusetts knew, “it is impossible to deal with them upon open defiance, but to take them in such traps as they lay for others” (Winslow, “Good Newes” 331-32). Standish and his men did indeed fool the Indians into thinking they had come to Wessagusset to discuss trade relations and attacked them instead. The encounter between Standish’s party and Wituwamat’s men was bloody, as the English,

in hand-to-hand combat, killed seven Massachusetts, including Wituwamat himself. Colonist Thomas Morton, no friend of Plymouth, revealed that when the Plymouth men arrived in Wessagusset, they “pretended to feast the Salvages of those partes, bringing with them Porke, and thinges for the purpose, which they sett before the Salvages,” and the hungry Indians ate the food “without suspicion of any mischiefe.” After the massacre, the Massachusetts named the English at Plymouth “Wotawquenange,” meaning “stabbers or Cutthroates,” suggesting both the colonists’ bloody attack and their treachery. For anyone who failed to recognize how “sharp-witted” Plymouth’s godly men were, Morton clarified: “the Brethren could dissemble” (110-11, 115).

As charged, Standish severed Wituwamat’s head from his dead body and triumphantly carried it back to New Plymouth, where he impaled the head on a pike at the top of the meetinghouse fort, the heart of civil and religious life in the colony. There it remained for at least six months, and probably longer, striking fear in the hearts of the Indians who saw it and evoking jubilant celebration among the English (Winslow, “Good Newes” 343; Pratt 418; Bradford and Allerton 299). Fifty-four years later, in 1677, colonists again created a public display of an Indian’s severed head when they hunted down and killed Metacom (whom the English called “King Philip”), son of Massasoit and provoker of a bloody rebellion, and erected his head on a pike in the center of the village of New Plymouth. John Cotton, Jr., New Plymouth’s pastor, exulted: “[Philip’s] Head was brought into Plymouth in great triumph, [...] soe that in the day of our praises our eyes saw the salvation of God” (*Plymouth Church Records* 152-53). Colonial leaders explicitly linked the destruction of these native bodies and erection of their heads in the midst of the civil and religious community with divine blessing. As both colonists and Indians viewed the heads, they “read” them as multivalent signs: for colonists, signs of God’s mercy, and for Indians, signs of colonial power. “A detached head is a sign that we privilege,” historian Regina Janes has explained about beheadings. “As a sign, it can enter into a variety of discourses, and its meanings will derive from the discourse(s) of which it forms a part” (31). In Plymouth, the dynamic act of seeing and reading, the sensory engagement and exchange between viewer and head, continuously generated and perpetuated multiple meanings. Wituwamat’s body was dead, but his head – his face (his distinct identity) and “pate” (the seat of intellect and reason) – lived on in the day-to-day lives of Plymouth’s inhabitants and visitors, evoking passionate responses. Likewise, Metacom’s head continued to “speak” long after it had been severed from his body. Several years after Philip’s death, Boston minister Cotton Mather visited New Plymouth, where, perhaps hoping to end once and for all the Indian’s power to communicate, he reached up his hand and wrenched “the Jaw from the exposed *Skull* of that blasphemous *Leviathan*” (Mather 199; Lepore 174).

Such gruesome displays of embodied cultural contact, in which Indians and English beheld severed native body parts, were intentionally public, political demonstrations of colonial authority. Far less public – yet also carrying broader

social and political implications – exchanges also occurred between Indians and English when they entered each other’s homes, shared food and beds, as when Samoset shared a bed with colonist John Hopkins, and treated each other’s illnesses. Ultimately, missionaries to the Indians of New England would attempt to inscribe colonial power directly onto living native bodies within the most intimate of spaces, the home.

Domestic Encounters

Earlier in the same month that Standish and his party attacked the Massachusetts at Wessagusset and beheaded Wituwamat – March of 1623 – there had been a far more benevolent though also intensely embodied encounter between colonists and Indians. Governor Bradford received word that his closest ally, Massasoit, usually of “lusty” and “able” body, was very sick, perhaps already dead. Aware that when great Indian leaders like Massasoit became seriously ill their friends and allies would travel great distances, sometimes more than a hundred miles, to “resort unto them for their comfort, and continue with them oftentimes till their death or recovery,” Plymouth determined also to observe this “laudable custom” (Winslow, “Good Newes” 362). Thus, three men from the plantation – Edward Winslow, John Hamden, a gentleman visiting from London, and Hobbamock, a Pokanoket who lived at New Plymouth and frequently served as interpreter and negotiator – journeyed on foot to visit Massasoit at Sowams. When they arrived, they discovered the sachem’s house crowded with people “in the midst of their charms for him, making [...] a hellish noise,” while several women were gathered around Massasoit, rubbing his body “to keep heat in him.” Winslow pushed his way to Massasoit’s side and greeted the sachem, who could no longer see and scarcely speak but grasped Winslow’s hand, expressing his pleasure that the Englishman had come to visit him. Massasoit had not eaten or drunk anything in two days but was able to swallow a bit of fruit preserves Winslow fed him on the tip of a knife, although he “could scarce get [it] through his teeth.” Looking into the sachem’s mouth, Winslow saw that it was “exceedingly furred” and his tongue was so swollen that his throat was “stopped up.” So Winslow washed his mouth and scraped his tongue, removing an “abundance of corruption.” Feeling a bit better, Massasoit ate some more preserves, which brought on a great improvement, and his sight returned. Winslow asked when the sachem last had slept or had a bowel movement and learned that he had not slept in two days and “had not had a stool in five,” a sure sign that his body was not evacuating corrupt humors as it should (Winslow, “Good Newes” 317-20).

The next day Winslow further employed his layman’s knowledge of humoral medicine to concoct a “physick,” or medicinal potion. With the help of a Pokanoket woman, he boiled up a broth of corn grits (considered the most nourishing of foods), a handful of strawberry leaves (good for stomach ailments, sore

mouths, and catarrhs), and a sliced sassafras root (believed to cleanse the kidneys and remove phlegm), which they strained through a handkerchief (Winslow, “Good Newes” 320-21; Finch 42). Upon drinking the tonic, the sachem’s sight further improved and “he had three moderate stools.” After resting for a bit, Massasoit gulped down a large portion of duck broth that Winslow had prepared for him, but its greasiness caused a frightening setback of vomiting and nosebleeds. Afterwards, however, the sachem slept for several hours and awakened cured, “his body so much altered” for the better since the colonists’ arrival. In a tender and intimate exchange, Winslow “washed [Massasoit’s] face, and bathed and suppled his beard and nose with a linen cloth.” The sachem declared, “Now I see the English are my friends and love me; and whilst I live, I will never forget this kindness they have showed me.” Massasoit then revealed to Winslow that the Massachusetts planned to attack Wessagusset, this disclosure demonstrating how such an intimate encounter could shape much larger, political events. Massasoit also implored Winslow to minister to others in the village who were ill, so the Englishman willingly washed out the mouths of the sick, though the “poisonous savours” rather disgusted him (Winslow, “Good Newes” 321-23).

On their return trip to Plymouth, Winslow and Hamden stopped at Mattapuyst for the night, lodging with Corbitant, previously Plymouth’s “bitter enemy” but now “full of merry jests and squibs, and never better pleased than when the like are returned again upon him.” Corbitant asked whether, if he too were “dangerously sick” and requested a *maskiet* (physick) from Plymouth, the governor would send Winslow to his bedside. Winslow answered, yes, he would, and Corbitant expressed “many joyful thanks” (324-25). Yet, as Joyce E. Chaplin has noted, “nursing involved intimate bodily contact” and most colonists were leery of contagion, both physical and spiritual (183). Plymouth’s leadership, however, seemed willing to provide medical assistance to whoever needed it, especially those with whom they hoped to strengthen political alliances. In 1621, for example, after a skirmish with a few Narragansetts, the colonists apologized for wounding some of them and carried a man and a woman back to Plymouth, lodging the two in their homes, where their physician attended to them (“Relation or Journall” 222-23). In 1635 the Indians who lived near Plymouth’s trading outpost on the Connecticut River “fell sick of the small pox and died most miserably.” Bradford felt compelled to enumerate the horrific effects of the disease on susceptible native bodies: “the pox breaking and mattering and running one into another, their skin cleaving” to the mats they lay on, so that “when they turn them, a whole side will flay off at once, [...] and they will be all of a gore blood.” The English, “seeing their woeful and sad condition and hearing their pitiful cries and lamentations, [...] daily fetched them wood and water and made them fires, got them victuals whilst they lived; and buried them when they died,” though they feared becoming infected themselves. However, unlike the Indians, the English carried immunities so that none became “tainted with this disease”; Bradford attributed their good fortune to “the marvelous goodness and providence of God” (Bradford 270-71).

Indians and colonists in the Plymouth region regularly lodged in each other's homes, sharing food – “Wee [...] haue them [Indians] in our houses eating and drinking, and warming themselves,” wrote English visitor Robert Cushman – and beds (Winslow, “Letter” 233; Cushman [n. pag.]). New England Indians and most colonists lived in one-room dwellings, Indians in moveable, round *wetus* made of bent saplings covered with tightly woven rush mats and the English in permanent, square, wood frame houses. All of the activities of everyday domestic life occurred within the confines of these small, simple structures, and family members and visitors came in frequent intimate physical contact with each other. Winslow minutely described his first visit to Massasoit at Sowams, during the summer of 1621, as he and Stephen Hopkins, with Tisquantum as their guide, made the forty-mile journey on foot, encountering various native groups along the way. The first evening they stopped at Namasket, where “the inhabitants entertain[ed] us with joy, in the best manner they could, giving us a kind of bread called by them *maizium* [cornbread], and the spawn of shads, which then they got in abundance, insomuch as they gave us spoons to eat them” (“Relation or Journall” 205). The Namaskets gave the English men more fish, and the colonists shared their own victuals with the Indians, “not doubting but we should have enough where’er we came” (206). That first night, Winslow’s party “lodged in the open fields” with the Namaskets, for the Indians had not deemed it necessary to assemble their *wetus* at their fishing site. If they had, however, they surely would have invited the travelers to spend the night in them, for it was well known that Indians “are much given to hospitality in their way. If any strangers come to their house, they will give him the best lodging and diet they have; and the strangers must be first served, by themselves” (Gookin 153). Wood likewise proclaimed: “These Indians be very hospitable, insomuch that when the English have traveled forty, fifty, or threescore miles into the country, they have entertained them into their houses, quartered them by themselves in the best rooms, providing the best victuals they could, expressing their welcome in as good terms as could be expected from their slender breeding” (89). In spite of their allegedly “slender breeding,” the Indians Winslow and Hopkins encountered throughout their eighty-mile journey from New Plymouth to Sowams and back again generously shared their food: roasted crab, fresh oysters, dried shellfish, various other kinds of fish, parched corn, squirrels, and tobacco.

When they reached Sowams, Massasoit “kindly welcomed us, and took us into his house, and set us down by him.” Winslow offered the sachem gifts – an English coat and a chain to wear around his neck – which rendered Massasoit “not a little proud to behold himself [...] so bravely attired.” Massasoit lit tobacco for his guests and they smoked and talked late into the evening. When the English men wanted to retire for the night, the sachem “laid us on the bed with himself and his wife, they at the one end and we at the other, it being only planks laid a foot from the ground and a thin mat upon them.” Winslow and Hopkins uncomfortably shared the bed with not only Massasoit and his wife: “two more of his

chief men, for want of room, pressed by and upon us.” The next day, Massasoit boiled two large fish and Winslow provided a partridge and they ate together. The sachem implored the colonists to stay longer with him, but they wanted to be back at Plymouth for the Sabbath. More to the point, they found it difficult to get any rest in Sowams: “[We] feared we should either be light-headed for want of sleep, for what with bad lodging, the savages’ barbarous singing, (for they use to sing themselves asleep,) lice and fleas within doors, and mosquitoes without, we could hardly sleep all the time of our being there.” Massasoit was “grieved and ashamed that he could no better entertain us” (“Relation or Journall” 209-11).

Winslow and Hopkins likely would not have agreed with the assessment of Roger Williams that two Indian families slept “comfortably and lovingly in a little round house” (33). Gookin, who “often lodged in their wigwams,” described Indian beds and sleeping arrangements as consisting of wooden sleeping platforms, raised one or two feet off the ground and six to eight feet wide, circling the inside wall of wigwams; covered with rush mats and animal skins, the platforms were shared by three or four household members (150). According to Bragdon, “[t]he undivided interiors of the wigwams imparted a sense of sociability, even as they lay sleepy in the darkness; one, then another, would sing to themselves” (106). Indians often gave up their own beds to visitors and slept outdoors, or they shared their beds with them, as Massasoit had done. Because a central fire rendered their *wetus* warmer than English homes, Indians used few “bedcloaths. And so, themselves and any that have occasion to lodge with them, must be content to turne often to the Fire, if the night be cold” (Williams 19). Williams highlighted the differences between natives’ and colonists’ sleeping arrangements; in defense of Indians’ “hard lodgings” he argued, “Nature and Custom gives sound sleep to these Americans on the Earth, on a Boord or Mat” (21). While Winslow experienced Indian accommodations as far less desirable than English ones, Williams composed a ditty that employed the figure of hospitable Indians at sleep to criticize Englishmen’s overblown notions of their own civility and godliness:

God gives them [Indians] sleep on Ground, on Straw,
on Sedgie Mats or Boord:
When English softest Beds of Downe,
sometimes no sleep affoord.
I have knowne them leave their House and Mat
to lodge a Friend or stranger,
When Jewes and Christians oft have sent
Christ Jesus to the Manger. (21)

Williams, however, was an exception among New England colonists in his often generous praise of native domestic life. Winslow and Hopkins’s attitude regarding their intimate bodily encounters with Massasoit and his people characterized the more typical views of Indians as ‘savage’, as lacking the ‘civility’ of a godly lifestyle. Because, Puritan missionaries believed, God’s grace entered one’s soul

through the physical senses, they set out to alter native life in concrete ways by inserting their ideals into Indian homes and inscribing directly onto Indian bodies signs of English culture in order to ‘prepare’ them for Christian salvation. The goal was to “reduce them from barbarism to civility [...] and bring them to salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gookin 147).

The civilizing process began with attempts to reconfigure Praying Indians’ embodied sense of domestic space. Missionaries expected Indians who had converted to Christianity to build and inhabit permanent, English-style houses in order to undermine the indigenous pattern of seasonal migrations that were organized around hunting, fishing, and growing crops. However, many of the Indians continued to live in *wetus*, for they discovered that English homes were less comfortable than their wigwams, more difficult to heat, and more expensive to build, requiring lumber, nails, and other specialized materials. Inside their *wetus*, however, some Praying Indians organized their domestic spaces in ways that reflected the growing English tendency to equate the privatization of individual family members with notions of increased civility. They built larger wigwams in order “that they may have their partitions in them for husbands and wives together, and their children and servants in their places also, who formerly were never private in what nature is ashamed of, either for the sun or any man to see” (Shepard 62). Massachusetts minister Thomas Shepard viewed this Anglicized wigwam as the intermediary structure between a traditional native dwelling and a square English home with permanently walled rooms. Partitions encouraged the civilizing process, for they segregated activities, especially those ‘shameful’ for others to observe, such as sexual relations, and differentiated familial roles according to gender, age, and status, as in English dwellings. “A place for everyone, and everyone in his or her place,” John Holstun has noted; “this is the [missionaries’] spatial ideal ruling distribution of bodies” (124).

Civil codes, such as those established by Praying Indians at Noonanetum in 1647 and Concord in 1648, provided the necessary “instructions and directions, backed with penalties, for promoting and practicing morality, civility, industry, and diligence in their particular calling[s],” explained Gookin, “for idleness and improvidence are the Indians’ great sin, and is a kind of second nature to them, which by good example and wholesome laws, gradually applied, with God’s blessing, may be rooted out” (178; Eliot 20-21; Shepard 39-40). The codes regulated specific everyday practices, including outlawing idleness, lying, drunkenness, theft, wife-beating, fighting, murder, gambling, certain sexual activities (fornication, adultery, bestiality, and polygamy), and entering an English home without first knocking (which indicated a difference between Indian and English notions of domestic space as ‘private’); all of these were behaviors, colonists believed, in which Indians were particularly prone to indulge. Some regulations attempted to replace native religious practices with English ones: the codes forbade “Pawwowing” (Algonkian shamanistic trance ceremonies, during some of which the powwows had been “making charms” for Massasoit when he

was ill) as well as mourning rituals in which mourners paint their faces black and “keep a great noyse by howling” (Shepard 40; Gookin 154; Winslow, “Good Newes” 363). During harvest festivals, when native people gathered from miles around for week-long “dancings, and feasting, and revellings, [...] much impiety is committed [...] and] they use great vehemency in the motion of their bodies, in their dances”; yet, Gookin seemed relieved to report, “the civilized and Christian Indians do leave these customs” (153). In place of indigenous religious practices, which most colonists viewed as savage and “diabolical” but Indians feared abandoning, the Praying Indians’ codes required weekly Sabbath observance (avoiding “worldly” labor and attending church services on Sundays), daily family prayers before and after meals, and an awareness of “the wiles of Satan” and his temptations (Gookin 154; Shepard 39-40). Such regulations were an attempt to reshape Indian bodies, to inscribe them with English civilization and godliness, but in so doing to also reconfigure Indian minds, to accomplish a universal overhaul of a fundamental worldview.

Some laws focused even more directly on the indigenous body and its physiological processes, and many were gender-specific. The Concord Code, for example, abolished “the old Ceremony of the Maide walking alone and living apart so many dayes,” that is, a law that forbade the traditional use of menstrual huts, which separated native women from the rest of the community during their monthly periods (Shepard 40). Winslow described this practice of female isolation: “When a woman hath her monthly terms, she separateth herself from all other company, and liveth certain days in a house alone; after which, she washeth herself, and all that she hath touched or used, and is again received to her husband’s bed or family” (“Good Newes” 374). While an Indian woman was bleeding, she was considered to be embodying “special powers which could effect good or ill,” and her isolation from the rest of the community regulated and contained those powers (Plane 20). Using menstrual huts also allowed Indian women a reprieve from their domestic duties, which English colonists considered to be excessively laborious (Winslow, “Good Newes” 363). English women, however, and now Christian Indian women enjoyed no such regular periods of rest, for a civilized, godly lifestyle required continuous, diligent labor at one’s duties.

The codes also focused on hairstyles, forbidding Praying Indian women to let their hair “hang loose or be cut as mens haire”; instead, they were to tie it up on their heads, as did modest English women (Eliot 20). Men, on the other hand, were to cut their “long locks” and “will wear their *haire* comely, as the *English* do,” likely a close-cropped ‘roundhead’ hairstyle popular among English Puritans at the time (Eliot 20; Shepard 40). Implicitly related to hairstyle, the Concord Code stated that Christian Indians were to “labour after humility, and not be proud” (Shepard 40). Praying Indians learned to “discern the vanitie and pride which they placed in their haire”; “cutting their Haire in a modest manner as the New-English generally doe” reshaped native male bodies toward greater godliness (Gookin 152-53). Still, it was often difficult for Christian Indian men to cut

their long hair, a distress that they believed indicated that they indeed did place excessive importance on this embodied aspect of themselves.

The Praying Indians' codes regulated other specific bodily practices, as well. Indians apparently had a habit of eating their body lice, and the Concord Code stated that "there shall not be allowance to *pick Lice*, as formerly, and eat them, and whosoever shall offend in this case shall pay for every louse a penny" (Shepard 40). The Noonanetum Code warned, "If any shall kill their lice betweene their teeth, they shall pay five shillings. This Law though ridiculous to English eares yet tends to preserve cleanliness among *Indians*" (Eliot 20-21). Cleanliness implied civility and godliness, and, despite the fact that Indians regularly bathed in streams and lakes, unlike the English who only washed their faces and hands, missionaries viewed picking and eating lice as an unclean, savage practice. They thought the same about painting one's face and greasing one's body and hair with bear or pig fat, which Indians did to maintain body heat and repel mosquitoes and other biting insects (Gookin 153). When English colonists initially encountered native New Englanders, for example, when the Plymouth colonists met Samoset, they repeatedly described Indians' greased and painted bodies as 'naked', clothed only in wild animal skins and bird feathers. Following trade with colonists, Indians began wearing items of English dress, such as woolen blankets and coats, with "little pieces of [...] ordinary cotton, to cover their secret parts" (Gookin 152). Although Winslow and others remarked upon the great modesty of Indian women, the Christian Indian codes required that they not "goe with naked breasts" ("Relation or Iournall" 228; Wood 115; Eliot 20). By the 1670s, wrote Gookin, it was "rare to see any among them of the most barbarous, that are remiss or negligent in hiding those [private] parts." Indeed, "the Christian and civilized Indians do endeavour, many of them, to follow the English mode in their habit" (152).

Over three decades ago James P. Ronda observed, "[t]he Indian who embraced Christianity was compelled, in effect, to commit cultural suicide" (67); yet more recent scholarship has argued that, in fact, by the mid-1700s most New England native people had willingly embraced Christianity, but on their own terms. Douglas L. Winiarski notes that Christian Indians "participated in the creation of a distinctive religious culture marked by eclecticism, diversity, and hybridity"; they developed "an 'Indianized' form of Christianity," which seems, in fact, to have helped stabilize indigenous families and communities. Particularly in the Plymouth region, native people "were actively engaged in assembling a coherent worldview from diverse cultural resources," including Protestant theology, English occult practices, and native ancestral religion (148-49, 154). When Superintendent Daniel Gookin held up Indians as "a mirror, or looking glass," he wanted his readers to see reflected back what they themselves might have been or still could become: "the woful, miserable, and deplorable estate, that sin hath reduced mankind unto naturally" (223). Yet, as I hope this chapter has demonstrated, the immediate and ongoing embodied encounters between Indians and English

were far more complex than such a simplistic, unilateral view suggests. Images reflected both ways; Indians and English served as mirrors of and for each other.

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**“A Mark Indelible”:
Herman Melville and the Cross-Cultural
History of Tattooing in the
Nineteenth Century**

MICHAEL C. FRANK

1

In 1511, a Spanish caravel was shipwrecked on the voyage from Panama to the island of Santo Domingo. Of the twenty men and women who escaped in a row-boat, only half reached the coast of Yucatán alive. Captured by a cacique (native, in this case Mayan, chief), some were immediately sacrificed to the gods, or so the available sources claim, while a handful managed to flee. They became slaves to another Mayan chief, and only two survived. One, Jerónimo de Aguilar, was a Franciscan friar who would subsequently serve as an interpreter to Cortés. The other, Gonzalo Guerrero, was a sailor. His career is no less exceptional, as Diego de Landa, the later bishop of the district, reports in his *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*:

Guerrero learned the language and went to Checternal (Chetumal), which is Salamanca de Yucatan. Here he was received by a chief named Nachan Can, who placed in his charge his military affairs; in these he did well and conquered his master's enemies many times. He taught the Indians to fight, showing them how to make barricades and bastions. In this way, and living as an Indian, he gained a great reputation and married a woman of high quality, by whom he had children, and he made no attempt to escape with Aguilar. He decorated his body, let his hair grow, pierced his ears to wear rings like the Indians, and is believed to have become an idolater like them. (de Landa 4)

When Cortés reached Yucatán in 1519 and was informed about the presence of “bearded men” in the region (6), he promptly summoned the Spaniards to join his expedition. The native messengers who conveyed his letter were given beads to enable the captives to buy their freedom. But only Aguilar followed Cortés's order. According to Bernal Díaz's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, he arrived in a canoe, brown-skinned and naked save for a loincloth, san-

dals, and what remained of his coat, but carrying a book of hours which clearly identified him as a Christian (see Díaz 93). As he told Cortés, Guerrero was reluctant to return to his countrymen and could not be convinced to join the Spanish troops. The reasons for this reluctance appear to have been twofold. On the one hand, Guerrero felt strong ties to the native community, in which he enjoyed a respectable social status. On the other hand, the Indians had applied their practices of body modification to his face. According to Bernal Díaz, Aguilar had personally spoken to Guerrero, whose words are rendered in direct speech:

Brother Aguilar, I am married and have three children and the Indians look on me as a Cacique and captain in wartime – You go, and God be with you, but I have my face tattooed and my ears pierced, what would the Spaniards say should they see me in that guise? and look how handsome these boys of mine are [...]. (Díaz 90)¹

When Aguilar first introduced himself to Cortés's men, he had "his hair shorn like an Indian slave"; Díaz notes, moreover, that he "squatted down on his haunches as the Indians do" (93). Neither the movements nor the appearance of Aguilar's body were permanently altered, however. By contrast, Guerrero's facial tattoos were irreversible. Signaling his membership in the Mayan community, they would have made a full reintegration into the society of his compatriots difficult, if not impossible. For in the eyes of the conquistadors, what was once a mark of cultural assimilation would have turned into a mark of cultural alienation, belonging to one who – unlike Aguilar, "the good Christian" (de Landa 4) – had given up the beliefs and practices of his own superior culture, nation, and creed. This, at least, is what Guerrero appears to have feared, or what he believed was a convincing explanation for his decision, one that Aguilar was likely to accept (if Guerrero's speech was not made up by Bernal Díaz, as has recently been suggested).² What is certain, in any case, is that the received version of Guerrero's story emphasizes the fact that his body was permanently modified; it states that the sailor-turned-warrior had had his face "carved" (the word "tattooed" in the English translation being an anachronism, of course, since that term was not known in Europe until Cook's first visit to Tahiti in 1769). This is to say that Guerrero bore either facial scarification or what would later become known as tattoos.

Even if it is partly the product of early colonial discourse, Guerrero's now legendary tattooed body is – quite literally – an "embodiment of cultural contact." The person identified as "Guerrero" in Díaz's account is physically marked by a non-European society, bearing the stigma of the cultural renegade. His story constitutes an early instance of what the German anthropologist Karl-Heinz Kohl has

1 The original Spanish text reads: "que yo tengo labrada la cara y horadas las orejas" (quoted from Romero 352).

2 See the revisionist reading of the available sources in Romero 352-53. On the shifting interpretations and uses of the Guerrero story in colonial and postcolonial discourse, see also Mueller.

rightly described as an “arcane tradition” (8; my translation) within the vast corpus devoted to European overseas expansion. This tradition documents the long-overlooked phenomenon of “cultural defection,” first identified as such by the Swiss historian Urs Bitterli in his *Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte der europäisch-überseeischen Begegnung* (86-87). Anticipating the now common understanding of colonial space as a field of cross-cultural interactions – often one-sidedly associated with the name of Mary Louise Pratt and the concept of the “contact zone” – Bitterli’s 1976 study called for a reorientation of colonial history as a history of cultural encounters. Bitterli lays out a typology of four different kinds of encounter, distinguished primarily by the criteria of length and intensity, concluding that despite all differences between individual colonial powers, colonies, and historical epochs, one of the constants of European colonialism was the “dominance of the European cultural engagement” (Bitterli 173-74; my trans.). More recently, historian Jürgen Osterhammel has identified this dominance as one of the defining characteristics of modern colonialism. European expansion, Osterhammel writes, was characterized by a general “unwillingness” to acculturate (16): whereas “[e]xtensive acculturation to the values and customs of Europe was expected of the colonized [...], there was no significant counter-acculturation in which the colonizers borrowed on a large scale from the dominated civilizations” (15-16).

As Bitterli acknowledges, however, colonialism was not a unidirectional process of “Europeanizing” the natives. From the earliest contacts with the Americas, it was accompanied by a persistent countercurrent of Europeans “going native,” even if this dimension of the colonial encounter has been effectively marginalized and suppressed in imperialist versions of history. The examples discussed by Bitterli and Kohl indicate that in every century and on every continent, there have been registered cases of “cultural defection,” or as the authors also call it, “escape from civilization” – sailors or settlers leaving the society of their compatriots in order to live in indigenous communities and according to local customs. Traces of this tradition can be found in literary texts, both fictional and nonfictional – most notably, travel accounts, but also works of other descriptive genres, including private letters, for example, as well as short stories and novels. My own study, *Kulturelle Einflussangst*, maintains that the attitude toward non-European cultures that emerged from such writings suggests an “anxiety of cultural influence” rather than a simple reluctance to acculturate. This anxiety involves both attraction and repulsion and is thus more ambivalent than Osterhammel’s term “unwillingness” seems to imply. What I have termed the “taboos” of acculturation and miscegenation become most obvious not in the representation of the culturally and racially other, but in the depiction of individuals who have transgressed the imaginative boundary separating “us” – Christians, Europeans, white men – from that other.

In the following essay, I would like to continue this investigation by focusing more specifically on the role of the body in representations of cultural defectors. Such a perspective implies two premises. The first, more general premise, is that the colonial experience was “intensely physical,” as E. M. Collingham has

persuasively argued (1). In her study *Imperial Bodies*, Collingham demonstrates that in British India, the health and integrity of the body was at the center of governmental concerns regarding the consumption of indigenous food, physical contact with natives, interethnic sexual relations, as well as – first and foremost – the detrimental influences of the local climate. The case of Anglo-Indian contact is highly specific, of course, but Collingham’s findings are nevertheless more broadly relevant. They remind us that the colonial encounter was a physical as well as an epistemological challenge and that we should therefore attempt to do justice to both of these aspects.

Nineteenth-century representations of the Pacific encounter are an interesting case in point. They highlight the physical dimension of the encounter, usually contrasting the extreme hardships of the sea journey with the sensual, not to mention sexual pleasures afforded by the South Sea Islands. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European and American authors reiterated Bougainville’s paradoxical identification of Tahiti as both a New Eden (and hence a place of prelapsarian innocence) and a New Cythera (referring to the birthplace of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of beauty, love, and sexual rapture). In their emphasis on the attractions of island life, accounts of European- and American-Polynesian contact gave unprecedented prominence to the figure of the cultural renegade. By the close of the eighteenth century, the phenomenon of cultural defection had become so common in the Pacific region that it could no longer be ignored. And many of these defectors underwent the indigenous practice of tattooing. Almost three hundred years after the conquest of Mexico – and the apparently isolated instance of a tattooed Spaniard – the literature on the South Seas thus reintroduced the motif of the white sailor whose body had been modified in indigenous fashion. In this context, the body was conceived less as a site of physical *experience* (as Collingham phrases it) than as a site of physical *inscription*.

This, then, is the second premise of my study: in nineteenth-century texts, tattoos were frequently interpreted as corporal markings of an alien culture – and hence as bodily manifestations of cultural contact. As the following outline of the cross-cultural history of tattooing in the nineteenth century will demonstrate, Herman Melville was not alone in considering tattoos, and especially facial tattoos, as “marks of transgression” (White). Due to its self-reflexive engagement with the issue, however, Melville’s 1846 book *Typee* is particularly well-suited for my topic.

2

As countless examples illustrate, literary depictions of the colonial encounter lay great emphasis on the arrival scene. In its dramatization of the moment of first contact, this scene usually opposes two clearly distinct, geographically and culturally defined collectives. In some cases, a third element is introduced that can-

not be allocated to either of the two groups. Just as Cortés and his men were puzzled at the unexpected sight of an Indian speaking Spanish and carrying a book of hours, later conquerors, explorers, sailors, and colonists related structurally similar stories. One example may be found in the Polynesian arrival scene of Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff's *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World*, where the author – a German naturalist who accompanied the Russian scientific expedition under Captain Adam Krusenstern – describes the ships' arrival in the Marquesas. In the bay of Nuku Hiva, the largest island of the group, the Russians are greeted by what first looks like “a South Sea islander,” but soon turns out to be a European, “entirely in the costume of the country, with only a piece of cloth round the waist” (von Langsdorff, vol. 1, 90). The corresponding passage in the English translation of Langsdorff's travelogue, which appeared one year after the original, in 1813, reads as follows:

An English sailor of the name of Roberts, who had, God knows how, or on what occasion, come hither, now stood before us, and informed us that he had inhabited the island some years. Such had been the influence of the climate upon his exterior, that he was scarcely to be distinguished by his colour from the natives. Several testimonials, which he had from captains of ships who had touched here, of the services he had rendered them, gave us naturally great confidence in him, and we rejoiced not a little at having so unexpectedly found an European, from whom we should receive, according to his own promises, all the information we could desire relating to the island [...]. (90)

As we know today, the English sailor “Roberts” was really called Edward Robarts. Aged 27, Robarts had deserted from a whaler in 1797.³ Langsdorff says that he and the other members of the expedition were much “surprised” at the sight of a white man in such an unusual context and in such unwonted guise. Yet the history of Edward Robarts is by no means singular. Ever since the first contact with the South Pacific in the sixteenth century there had been cases of seamen becoming separated from the rest of their crews and subsequently living among the natives of the islands, either involuntarily (after a shipwreck) or voluntarily (as mutineers or deserters). After the advent of commercial shipping, the desertion from whalers, sealers, and trading ships became such a common phenomenon that a special word was coined to denote it: “beachcombing.” As the anthropologist H. E. Maude has shown in his pioneering study on the subject, the establishment of a British settlement at Port Jackson in 1788 was an important prerequisite for the “beachcombing boom” of the nineteenth century (137-38). The South Sea Islands, which had only rarely been visited by explorers during the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, were now regularly

3 After six years on the Marquesas, Robarts had married a chieftain's daughter with whom he left Nuku Hiva in 1806. In Calcutta, he later wrote an account of his island adventures in the form of a journal, the manuscript of which has survived in the National Library of Scotland. See Denning, “Introduction.”

frequented by European and American ships. Maude estimates that 75 per cent of the beachcombers were seamen, predominantly British but with an increasing number of Americans, whereas the second largest group (about 20 per cent) consisted of escaped convicts (160).

Although there are important differences between the individual histories of beachcombers, only few of which have been recorded, one can make several generalizations. The most important one concerns the exceptional relationship between the beachcombers and the local societies. “What really differentiated beachcombers from other immigrants,” Maude observes, “was the fact that they were essentially integrated into, and dependent for their livelihood on, the indigenous communities” (135). The island societies, Maude continues to explain, were generally highly receptive to immigrants, and beachcombers could be reasonably assured of their welcome, even though there were occasional exceptions to this rule – due either to a (well-grounded) fear of infectious disease or to the often aggressive behavior of the crews visiting the islands. The island world of Polynesia and Melanesia had already had a long history of immigration when the first European ships arrived there, so that in the heyday of beachcombing, the local communities could adapt previously existing customs – the integration of immigrants by formal adoption or marriage, for example – to a new historical situation (see Maude 149). The typical beachcomber was part of the indigenous community, in most of whose cultural and social practices he participated. Like the Englishman Edward Robarts, he dressed in native style and was tattooed, apparently under strong pressure from his hosts. At the same time, there were strict limitations to his inclusion, concerning, for instance, the application of the complex system of taboos. Hence, the beachcomber occupied a “peculiar position [...], in yet out of the indigenous society” (Maude 163), which made him an ideal mediator. As we saw, it is precisely this point that Langsdorff emphasizes in his first description of Robarts.

From Robarts, Krusenstern learned that there was a second European resident on Nuku Hiva: Jean-Baptiste Cabri from Bordeaux. Like Robarts, Cabri had already spent several years on the Marquesas. While Robarts’s interest in the local culture seemed very limited – as Langsdorff emphasizes, he “lived much more separate from the islanders,” and had only a restricted knowledge of their language, manners, and customs (von Langsdorff, vol. 1: 98) – Cabri had almost forgotten his native tongue when he first spoke with the Russians. In Langsdorff’s words, he “had so much lost the manners and habits of civilized life, that little difference was to be discerned between him and the natives, with regard to his habits and mode of living” (98). He swam as well as the natives, had married the daughter of a lower chief, and was on friendly terms with the other islanders. Moreover, he showed an unmistakable sign of his assimilation to Marquesan culture: “His whole figure, not excepting his face was tattooed” (98; see Fig. 1, left). In 1817, Cabri’s own account of his nine-year stay on the Marquesas appeared in Geneva (under the name of Joseph Kabris). Like Langsdorff’s travelogue, it has

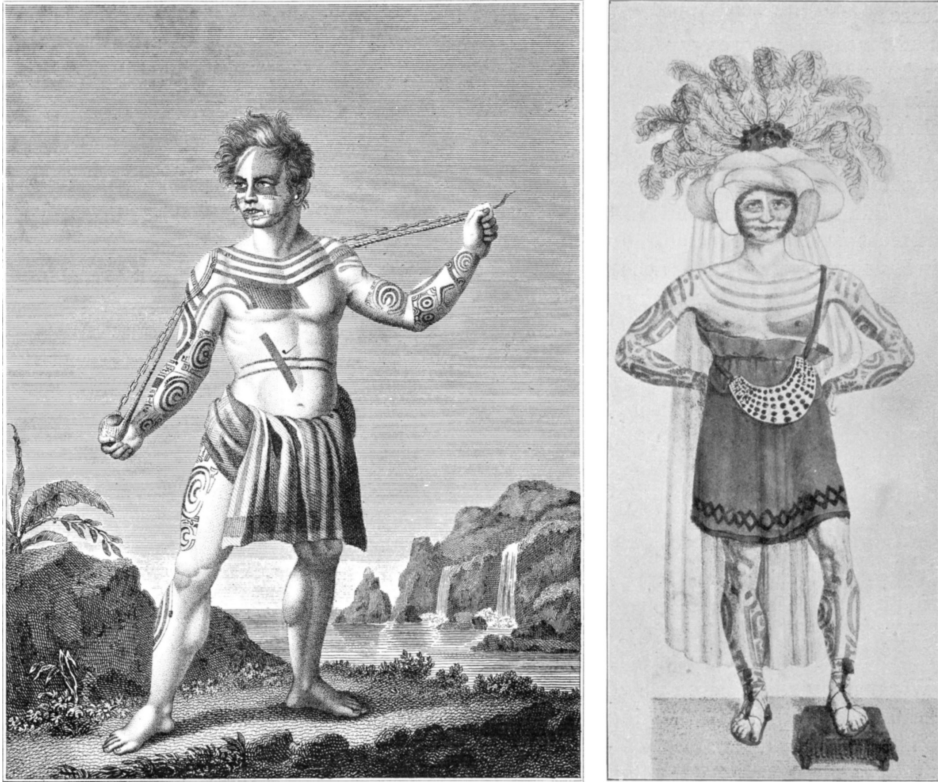


Fig. 1: Left: “Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Cabri, a Frenchman, found on the Island of Nukahiva, and there become half savage’.” Source: von Langsdorff, vol. 1, figure opposite 97. Right: “Kabris, Vice-roi et Grand Juge.” Source: von den Steinen 42.

become an important source for studies of the social significance of traditional Marquesan tattooing, which was seriously impeded and, indeed, almost obliterated by the double impact of disease (the radical decimation of the native populations due to exposure to European illnesses) and colonization (missionaries’ and colonial administrators’ deliberate attempts to eradicate the practice). When the German anthropologist Karl von den Steinen arrived at Nuku Hiva in 1897 to conduct field work for his monumental study *Die Marquesaner und ihre Kunst*, he realized that he had come “[h]alf a century too late!” (n. pag.; my trans.). To this day, anthropological studies have to rely on literature about and by beachcombers for their accounts of the cultural semantics of traditional Marquesan tattooing. Cabri’s text, though full of obvious exaggerations, is of particular value in this respect. In it Cabri states that he received the first tattoos from his father-in-law. A “quarter mask” showed his status as the son-in-law of the chief and a second tattoo, in the shape of the sun on his right eyelids, indicated his newly acquired position as a “judge” (Kabris 150; my trans.). In the following three days, Cabri was tattooed by another islander on his chest, arms, and legs. During a subsequent military raid to the island of Tahuata, Cabri boasts, he managed to

steal a canoe from the enemy, including the ten men who were sitting in it, and he was consequently made “viceroy” and commander, receiving another tattoo on his right chest as a sign of honor (Kabris 150; my trans.).

What Langsdorff describes as Cabri’s “black, or rather blue eye” (vol. 1: 122) appears to have had a less honorable meaning, however. In his 1993 study *Tattooing in Polynesia*, anthropologist Alfred Gell points out that the chiefs of the Marquesas Islands did not derive their privileged social status from religious authority; nor were they sufficiently legitimated through their genealogy (as sons of former chiefs). Instead, their position depended to a great extent on military success as well as on their ability to feed supporters in times of drought-induced famine (see Gell, 165-70). In “feasting societies,” the chiefs shared their food storage with their followers, who received a specific facial tattoo indicating both their membership in this elite circle as well as their commitment to the chief. From this fact, Gell infers “that the tattooing of the supporters [...] was a kind of honourable degradation: signaling both the access to power and wealth, but also the fact that this access was gained via dependency” (207). This thesis is corroborated by Langsdorff’s travelogue, in which Cabri is said to have received his eye-tattoo “upon one of these occasions,” and for the very same reason, even the Englishman Edward Roberts could not have avoided being tattooed:

Roberts, who had only a puncture on his breast, in the form of a long square, [...] assured us that he would never have submitted to the operation, if he had not been constrained by the scarcity in the preceding year to become one of the guests fed by the chief Katanuah. (von Langsdorff, vol. 1: 122)

At the end of the twelve-day sojourn of the Russian expedition on the island of Nuku Hiva, the tattooed Frenchman Cabri was (involuntarily) carried away from the Marquesas after having lingered on board one of the two ships. He was brought to Kamchatka in Russia, where “the novel appearance of his tattooed body attracted the attention of every one,” as Langsdorff notes in the explanation to the figure shown here (xiv; see Fig. 1, left). In Moscow and St. Petersburg, Cabri displayed his tattoos, performed native dances on stage, and played “cannibal charades” (see Dening, “Introduction” 8-9), until he was offered a post as a teacher of swimming to the corps of marine cadets at Cronstadt (see von Langsdorff, vol. 1: xiv). Having been presented to Louis XVIII and the King of Prussia, he returned to France, where he ended his days in the fairs of Paris and Brittany. The second extant portrait of Cabri, from his time in the *variété*, is entitled “Joseph Kabris, native of Bordeaux, viceroy and great judge of the Islands of Mendoça” (von den Steinen 43; my trans.). It shows Cabri in extravagant disguise, with a kiltlike skirt and ostrich feathers (see Fig. 1, right), the first of many tattooed “freaks” displayed in European and American fairs and circuses until well into the twentieth century. Interestingly, a comparison of this later portrait with the one included in Langsdorff’s 1812 travel account reveals that after

his return to Europe, Cabri had not only acquired various exotic props, but additional tattoos as well. When Cabri died in Valenciennes in 1822, a local museum thought about preserving his hide in the interest of scientists and other curious visitors (see Dening, “Introduction” 9).

One is reminded here of the words attributed to Gonzalo Guerrero, the Spanish-born Mayan warrior of the early sixteenth century. For Cabri, the cultural defector wearing a facial tattoo, the reintegration into his own native society ultimately proved more difficult than his previous integration into the Marquesan community, in which he had spent nine years as a beachcomber; as Greg Dening succinctly puts it, “the return was more costly than the venture” (*Islands* 149). In early nineteenth-century Europe, Cabri’s extensive tattoos clearly identified him as a cultural renegade who had temporarily abandoned European civilization and who had literally been marked by a faraway “savage” culture. Although his bodily marks made him a living fetish that could be scrutinized, touched, desired, and wondered at, they also stigmatized him as a social outcast who belonged to neither “us” nor “them.”

3

The greatest difference between the cases of Guerrero and Cabri is that in the early nineteenth century, Europeans were already aware of non-European forms of body modification and that they even had a specific word to denote them. Pre-Cook accounts of Polynesian tattooing still lacked a precise term to describe the practice, usually choosing the misleading verb “to paint,” as de Bougainville’s 1771 *Voyage autour du monde* illustrates. Although the French explorer was the first to emphasize that the Tahitian body ornaments left “indelible traces,” he still described them in terms of a transient “fashion,” drawing a comparison to the rouge worn by Parisian ladies (254; my trans.). As is well known, it was via the accounts of Captain Cook’s 1769 visit to Tahiti that the word “tattoo” entered the English lexicon (then still spelled “tattow,” which is closer to the Tahitian *tatau*), from where it migrated into other European languages. Apart from the word, Cook and his crews also introduced samples of the practice thus described: by getting their arms “marked” in Tahitian style, members of Cook’s first expedition inaugurated the tradition of the tattooed sailor (quoted by J. C. Beaglehole in Cook 125). In the decades following Cook’s first voyage, the practice of tattooing spread so rapidly among seamen that tattoos soon became a defining characteristic of “the” sailor. In the process, the Tahitian *tatau* was adapted rather than adopted, the original Polynesian motifs being almost entirely replaced by national and religious symbols with a long tradition in European iconography. Joseph Oettermann illustrates this point by citing a letter from the duchess Anna Amalie of Weimar to the German poet and writer Christoph Martin Wieland. The letter, which is dated Portici, 20 June 1789, indicates how early the tat-

toos worn by European sailors began to deviate from Polynesian patterns. “Only yesterday,” the duchess tells Wieland, “I saw a sailor at Chevalier Hamilton’s at the Barca, whose arms and legs were tattooed in Otahitian fashion, and as we inspected the figures, they turned out to be the crucifixion of Christ, the English coat of arms, the Holy Sacrament – il capo di Policinello” (quoted in Oettermann 45; my trans.). This example shows that despite the use of well-known symbols and motifs, some of which were already familiar from tattooed pilgrims to Jerusalem, as we shall see further on, the practice of tattooing remained inextricably linked with Tahiti.

In accordance with this traditional view of tattooing history, some scholars still maintain that “[t]attooing, as it is now practiced in western countries, originated as a consequence of European expansion into the Pacific, as is witnessed by the Polynesian origin of the word ‘tattoo’” (Gell 10). Joseph Oettermann was the first to use a more cautious formulation. As he phrased it, the Tahitian encounter provided an “impulse of revival” (21; my trans.) that led to a combination of Western tattooing traditions with the newly discovered Polynesian practice. More recently, this view has been taken up and developed by both historians and anthropologists. In her introduction to a collected volume on the extended, if discontinuous history of tattooing in Western culture, Jane Caplan asserts that “the Pacific encounter is not originary” (“Introduction” xvi). Archeological evidence of the practice dates back to the late fourth millennium BC, but the contributors to Caplan’s book are more interested in those historical instances of tattooing that are documented in written sources. Caplan’s *Written on the Body* addresses several isolated uses of tattooing in the Occident. The most important of these uses are, first, the “stigmatizing” of slaves or criminals among Greeks, Romans, and Celts, and second, the full-body tattooing of the ancient inhabitants of Britain described by several classical authors, including Julius Caesar. In the seventh century, St. Isidore of Seville reported that “[t]he Scots derive their name in their own language from their painted bodies [*scissi* = “cut”], because these are marked with various designs by being pricked with iron needles with ink on them [...] and the Picts [i.e., the inhabitants of Northern Britain] also are thus named because of the absurd marks produced on their bodies by craftsmen with tiny pin-pricks and juice extracted from their local grasses” (quoted in Gilbert 16).

Historically closer to the Pacific encounter was a third use of tattooing in Europe: the acquisition of commemorative tattoos among pilgrims to Palestine as well as to the shrine of Loreto in Italy. The picture shown in Figure 2 documents the tattoos of Ratge Stubbe from Hamburg, Germany, which were subsequently described by the pastor Johann Lund in his book *Die alten jüdischen Heiligthümer, Gottesdienste und Gewohnheiten* (1738; see Landfester 89-90). Stubbe received these tattoos while in Jerusalem in 1669, and they thus pre-date Cook’s first visit to Tahiti by exactly one hundred years. A comparison of this image with descriptions of sailors’ tattoos from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seems to confirm Caplan’s thesis that the adaptation of Polynesian tat-

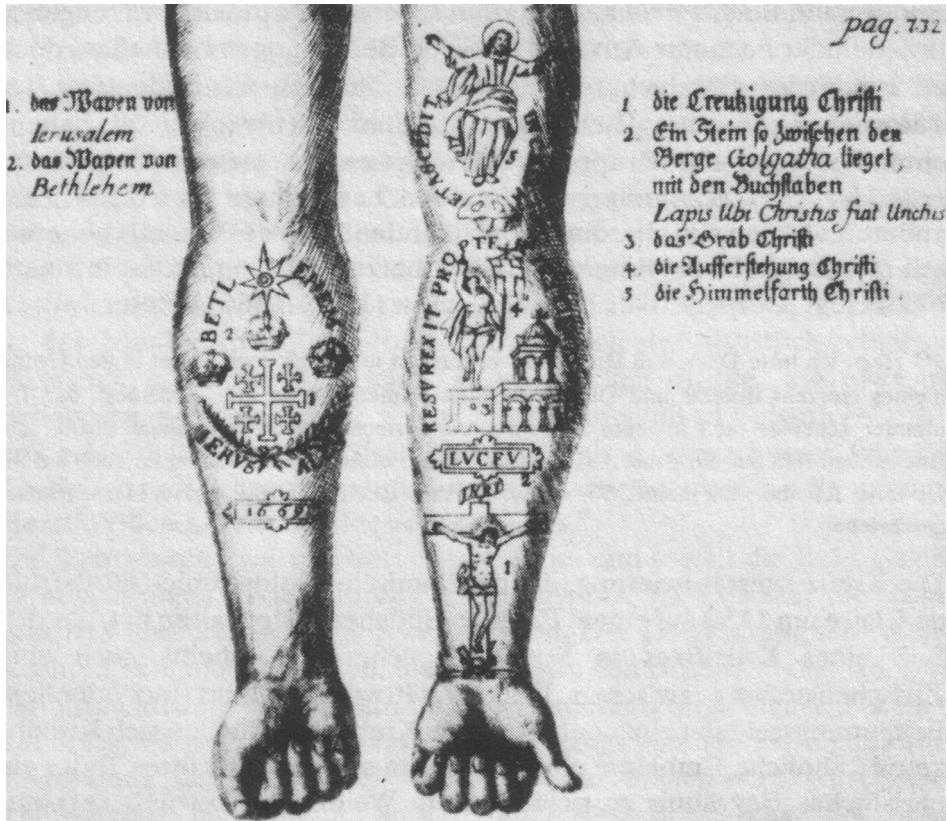


Fig. 2: Tattoos of Christian symbols and Biblical scenes, acquired by German pilgrim Ratge Stubbe in Jerusalem in 1669. Source: Oettermann 16.

toeing according to already existing Occidental practices has to be seen as “a process of convergence and reinforcement” (“Introduction” xx). In the latest publication dedicated to the topic – the volume *Tattoo: Bodies, Art, and Exchange in the Pacific and the West* – the anthropologist Nicholas Thomas consequently shifts the focus from the question of historical origin to that of “trans-cultural” exchange (11). What needs closer examination, according to Thomas, is “the role of cross-cultural interactions in shaping or influencing European body arts” (10).

In its focus on the various contact zones through which tattooing practices were shared, transformed, and disseminated, Thomas’s anthology is of great interest for the present study. Like its predecessors, however, it fails to mention one important aspect: the absence of *facial* tattooing – as it was common in Polynesia, and especially on the Marquesas – outside of circuses and fairs in the West. In 1876, Italian criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso observed that the practice of tattooing occurred “only among the lower classes – peasants, sailors, workers, shepherds, soldiers, and even more frequently among criminals” (*Criminal Man* 58); indeed, Lombroso continued, tattooing had become so common among criminals that it could be considered a sure indicator of delinquency. Strikingly,

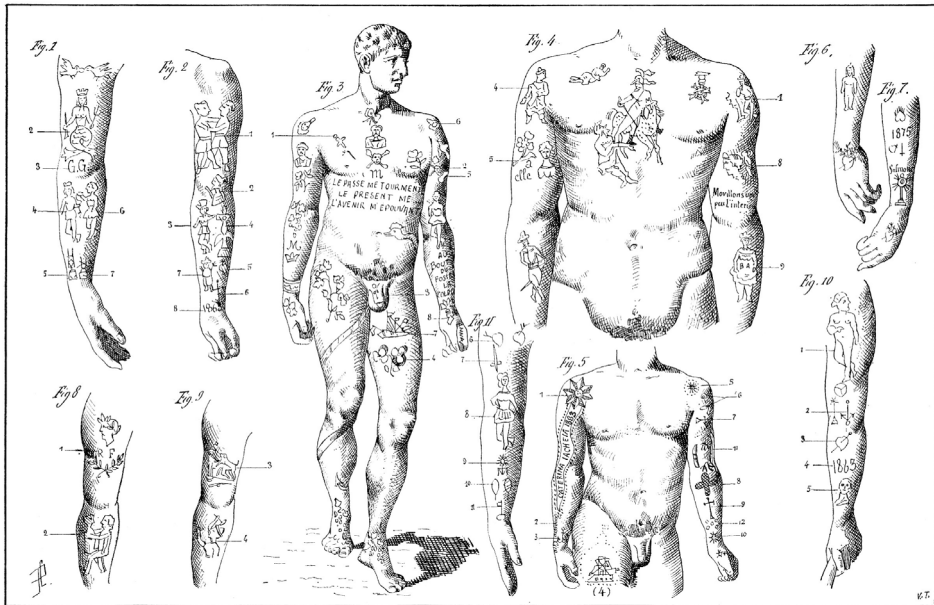


Fig. 3: “Tatuaggi di delinquentini.” Source: Lombroso, *L'uomo delinquente*. Fig. LXVIII.

however, even Lombroso’s representations of “criminal men” include not a single facial tattoo (see Fig. 3): the delinquents’ tattoos are concentrated on arms, legs, and chest, occasionally extending to the penis. During the Pacific encounter, it would seem, Europeans only adapted the Polynesian practice of tattooing insofar as it was compatible with earlier forms of permanent body marking.

4

The fact that facial tattoos signified the loss of one’s former position as an integrated member of European or U.S. American society has nowhere been addressed more explicitly than in Herman Melville’s first extended prose work, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*. In 1841, the son of an impoverished gentry family enlisted on the whaler *Acushnet*, deserting it on the same Marquesas island that had been inhabited by Robarts and Cabri forty years previously. Due to his great skills as a writer, Melville’s travelogue – considered to be authentic by early readers, as contemporary reviews indicate (see Branch 53-89) – has made him by far the most famous beachcomber, although he actually only spent four weeks on Nuku Hiva. In his account, Melville transforms those four weeks into four months and also takes some other liberties. Although the book is now usually classified as “fiction,” one may nevertheless speak of “ethnographic realism” with regard to Melville’s description of his Marquesan adventures. This realism derives not so much from the fact that Melville based his narrative on personal experi-

ences and observations but that he drew on various authoritative sources, including Langsdorff's travelogue, of which the influence on *Typee* is often overlooked by critics (with the exception of Charles Roberts Anderson, whose 1939 study *Melville in the South Seas* remains invaluable background reading).

Melville is an atypical beachcomber in at least two respects. To start with, the sophisticated and stylistically brilliant writer is "a very uncommon common sailor," as an early English critic remarked in a review published in the *Times* (quoted in Branch 78). This fact is made explicit in the passage in which Melville's semi-fictional alter ego, Tommo, explains his decision to desert his ship in order to escape the physical hardships on board: "To use the concise, point-blank phrase of the sailors, I had made my mind to 'run away'" (Melville, *Typee* 20). By underlining the fact that the language of the common sailors is not his original language, Melville establishes his autobiographical character as a "gentleman-beachcomber" (Herbert 158), distinguished from the ordinary "runaways." By the middle of the nineteenth century, beachcombers were commonly described in rather dark colors by both captains fearing the loss of their crews while anchored on Pacific island shores, and missionaries seeing their civilizing project undermined by white men "going native." Despite such biases, however, the bad reputation of beachcombers – which is confirmed by Melville in his description of a delinquent, drunken Englishman who comes on board the ship when it approaches Nuku Hiva (*Typee* 12-13) – was partly justified.

The second important difference between the well-educated American and other beachcombers is the fact that Melville's Tommo never intends to stay on the island permanently. From the moment he and his fellow deserter, Toby, enter the valley of the Taipi, the two young men appear as tourists looking for adventure rather than cultural renegades about to start careers as "viceroys" of an island tribe. During his four months' stay, Tommo grows "remarkably fond" (*Typee* 73) of the indigenous food, has a native companion who appears to be his mistress, and even agrees "to assume the *Typee* costume, a little altered, however, to suit my own views of propriety" (121). There are, however, clear limits to his acculturation:

When at Rome do as the Romans do, I held to be so good a proverb, that being in *Typee* I made a point of doing as the *Typees* did. Thus I ate poee-poe as they did; I walked about in a garb striking for its simplicity; and I reposed on a community of couches; besides doing many other things in conformity with their peculiar habits; but the farthest I ever went in the way of conformity, was on several occasions to regale myself with raw fish. (209)

When the Taipi try to take his integration one step further and offer to tattoo his face, Tommo's enjoyment of his leisurely island life turns into deep anxiety. Even before he describes this pivotal incident, Tommo repeatedly expresses his ambivalent attitude toward the Marquesan practice of tattooing. The tattoo-

ing style of the Marquesas Isles was the most elaborate and extensive of Polynesia; only here could one find the phenomenon of all-over tattooing, named *te patu tiki* – “wrapping in images” – by the natives (Gell 163; see also Ottino-Garanger/Ottino-Garanger). Tommo characterizes such tattooing as a “blemish,” which, at best, has a “ludicrous” and “grotesque” effect and which, at worst, seems “hideous” (Melville, *Typee* 7-8, 83, 86, 92, 134, 218, 236). It is striking that Tommo only uses such negative terms when speaking of tattooed *men*, or more precisely, men wearing *facial* tattoos. He points out that women were only tattooed on the lips, shoulders, arms, and feet. It would seem that as far as the practice corresponded with familiar forms of (nonpermanent) bodily ornamentation, it could be openly appreciated by Western observers (it should be added, however, that Marquesan women also wore tattoos on their thighs, buttocks, and genitalia, which Melville does not mention). In a passage charged with homoerotic undertones, Tommo describes the warrior Marnoo as a “Polynesian Apollo” because he is one of the rare men who do not have a tattooed face: “His cheek was of a feminine softness, and his face was free from the least blemish of tattooing, although the rest of his body was drawn all over with fanciful figures” (136).

The theme of facial tattooing is actually introduced before Melville’s narrator-protagonist “jumps ship.” Addressing the crew, the captain admonishes his sailors not to use their shore leave to desert, describing the destiny of other “runaways”:

There was the old Dido, she put in here about two years ago, and sent one watch off on liberty; they never were heard of again for a week – the natives swore they didn’t know where they were – and only three of them ever got back to the ship again, and one with his face damaged for life, for the cursed heathens tattooed a broad patch clean across his figure-head. (34)

Only after he has thus described the risk of having one’s “face damaged for life” does the captain mention that deserters may also fall prey to the native practice of cannibalism. What this implies is that the dangers associated with tattooing were considered an even more effective deterrent to desertion than the usual horror image of man-eating savages. Even though these warnings fail to daunt Melville’s hero, who escapes to the interior of the island, Tommo seems to remember his captain’s words when he is confronted with the Taipi’s desire to tattoo his face. He is “[h]orrified at the bare thought of being rendered hideous for life” (218). Because he suspects “that in some luckless hour I should be disfigured in such a manner as never more to have the *face* to return to my countrymen” (219), Tommo cannot enjoy his stay among the “noble savages” of the island any longer. His residence thus assumes the character of involuntary detention, in accordance with a long tradition of captivity narratives in American colonial literature.



Fig. 4: “An inhabitant of the island of Nukahiwa.” Source: von Langsdorff, vol. 1, figure opposite 117.

The novel’s association between facial tattooing and the idea of captivity is also evidenced in the earlier portrait of the hero’s “savage valet” Kory-Kory, whose face is marked by “three broad longitudinal stripes of tattooing, which [...] completely spanned his physiognomy; one extending in a line with his eyes, another crossing the face in the vicinity of the nose, and the third sweeping along his lips from ear to ear” (83). A comparison of this description with the visual representations provided by Langsdorff’s travelogue shows that Melville’s narrator does not exaggerate the quantity and quality of facial tattoos among certain Marquesan men: in Figure 4, the circular lines running across the face are clearly discernible. Yet the comparison Melville draws in the following observation is nevertheless idiosyncratic: “His countenance thus triply hooped, as it were, with tattooing, always reminded me of those unhappy wretches whom I have sometimes observed gazing out sentimentally from behind the grated bars of a prison window” (83). It has been suggested that Tommo’s connection of the tattooed lines in Kory-Kory’s face with a barred prison window indicates his own perceived cap-

tivity (see Samson 41; Edmond 93): in his eyes, a facial tattoo represents a form of confinement from which there is no release. In Tommo's own case, such a tattoo would signal his commitment to the society of the Taipi – and especially its leader, the “king” Mehevi, who feeds him – and thus a loss of self-determination (see Breitwieser 24). Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, it would bind him permanently to a non-European, “savage” culture.

The result of such an irreversible cultural defection is presented at the beginning of Melville's second book, *Omoo* (1847), in which the author fictionalizes his further South Sea adventures. *Omoo* opens with the protagonist's escape from Nuku Hiva on board an English whaler. When the ship approaches the Marquesas island of La Dominica (Hiva Oa), the narrator is confronted with a negative mirror image: an Englishman whose appearance demonstrates what happens to those beachcombers who acquiesce to having their faces tattooed.

Soon after, the canoe came alongside. In it were eight or ten natives, comely, vivacious-looking youths, all gesture and exclamation; the red feathers in their head – bands perpetually nodding. With them also came a stranger, a renegado from Christendom and humanity – a white man, in the South Sea girdle, and tattooed in the face. A broad blue band stretched across his face from ear to ear, and on his forehead was the taper figure of a blue shark, nothing but fins from head to tail. Some of us gazed upon this man with a feeling akin to horror, no ways abated when informed that he had voluntarily submitted to this embellishment of his countenance. What an impress! Far worse than Cain's – *his* was perhaps a wrinkle, or a freckle, which some of our modern cosmetics might have effaced; but the blue shark was a mark indelible, which all the waters of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, could never wash out. He was an Englishman, Lem Hardy he called himself, who had deserted from a trading brig touching at the island for wood and water some ten years previous. (Melville, *Omoo* 22-23)

As in other passages related to tattooing, Melville here uses ironic hyperbole. Despite the comic incongruity of its comparisons, however, the passage effectively drives home the point that tattooed defectors have signs of alterity written into their skin, and that they consequently become the object of discursive othering themselves. Melville leaves no doubt as to the status of tattoos as indelible bodily stigmas. As Joanna White notes:

Clothing could be replaced, but tattoos were a permanent marker of beachcombers' residence in the Pacific islands. They were interpreted by other Europeans as physical symbols of their transgression from and rejection of the values of their native culture. The more visible and irreversible the transformation, the more problematic the individual's reincorporation into his own native society. (86)

White's general reference to "tattoos" is slightly misleading, however, since most nineteenth-century sailors who received tattoos in Polynesia never lived in island communities. Facial tattooing, by contrast, remained a form of body modification that was clearly limited to cultural defectors, even after the advent of the tattooing fashion in Europe and the United States. In *Typee*, Tommo at first absolutely refuses to be tattooed. When the Taipi continue to urge him, he offers them both his arms from the shoulder to the wrist (Melville, *Typee* 220). For the gentleman-beachcomber, tattoos on the extremities – features characteristic of the common sailor – would signify a social decline, but they could easily be hidden beneath his clothes. A tattooed face, on the other hand, would be clearly visible to everyone but himself and it would symbolize the transgression of a cultural boundary. Such a bodily mark, Melville's narrator-protagonist is convinced, would make a return to his native country impossible. As Tommo revealingly phrases it, he would "never more [...] have the *face* to return to [his] countrymen" (see above). Echoing the words of Gonzalo Guerrero, which were quoted at the outset of this paper, this exclamation illustrates the dangers involved in beachcombing: if it leads to a permanent, and conspicuous, modification of the body, cultural defecation may be sanctioned by the colonial society, which is anxious to maintain visible difference between "civilization" and "savagery."

Having undergone irreversible change in the process of cultural encounter, the facially tattooed sailor carried home traces of a faraway culture, traces that remained perceptible on the surface of his body. In a culture obsessed with the visual, these enigmatic ornaments were read as marks of the inscrutable other. The case of Melville shows how great a fascination such a transgression possessed. A few years after the publication of *Omoo*, the author personified the ambivalent allure of Polynesian tattooing in the now famous figure of the checkered "cannibal" Queequeg. Even though Melville refused to have his own body tattooed, his South Sea narratives, from *Typee* to *Moby-Dick*, thus ensured that the Polynesian practice of tattooing left an indelible imprint on the body of Western travel writing. From there it continues to haunt the cultural imagination – as a potentially deceptive sign of alterity, a boundary marker that blurs rather than clarifies distinctions, indicating the possibilities of cross-cultural contact and exchange.

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CHAPTER THREE

Outside History: Same-Sex Sexuality and the Colonial Archive

LEE WALLACE

Research into embodiment, specifically the forms of embodiment engaged through cultural contact, has transformed the modes of scholarship that now comprise postcolonial studies. If this goes without saying for those who read the human body as the site and sign of intercultural conflict and exchange, it is nonetheless worth revisiting this proposition from the perspective of sexuality studies, an interdisciplinary field that has consolidated into something like a discipline insofar as it can now lay claim to dedicated journals and programs of study, although it still has trouble identifying a shared methodology or object of study.

Lacking a coherent corpus or body of writings around which its particularity could be defined, sexuality studies has perhaps always relied on bodies and embodiment as its foundational topos. The thematic centrality of the sexual body was certainly reflected in my own research into Pacific encounter, a series of readings of literary, artistic, and ethnographic texts that were uniform only insofar as they responded to erotic incommensurabilities emphasized in moments of cross-cultural exchange. In its simplest form, my work questioned the heterosexual presumption that underwrote two centuries of Pacific representation, investigating the ramifications of that presumption in Pacific historiography and theories of colonialism more generally, which then frequently used heterosexual rape as the paradigmatic trope for imperial invasion of new territory. I argued that the heterosexualization of Pacific encounter was frequently a result of secondary interpretation, whereas primary sources – the journals and logs compiled on Cook's voyages of exploration, for instance – often revealed a far less coherent or predictable response to displays of indigenous sexual behavior (Wallace 45-49). In particular, the legibility of same-sex sexual possibilities revealed in the primary documents, alongside the gesture to expunge it from the official published record, though not in itself evidence of any sexual event or intention, nonetheless enabled a different perspective on other undisputed versions of masculine sexuality loosely tied to the Pacific encounter. By extending rather than closing the interpretative gap between historical record and sexual event, the accepted version of Pacific sexual imperialism was altered.

The argument I made for the centrality of same-sex sexual possibilities in relation to Pacific encounter has also been made in relation to the conquest of the New World (Goldberg), the founding of the New England colony (Warner), British rule in India (Arondekar, *For the Record*), and the imperial scramble for Africa (Hoad), to identify just a few instances where sexuality studies and colonial studies have recently converged. This theoretical insistence on the need to include same-sex sexual relations within accounts of colonial power and the discursive management of subaltern populations, however, often obscures the continuing difficulty of elucidating those relationships via archival study. Although colonial regimes are associated with systems of bureaucracy designed to micro-manage highly differentiated populations, same-sex sexual arrangements, whether fleeting or sustained, tend to elude material documentation or statistical scrutiny and the forms of historical interpretation that have evolved in their wake. The way in which sexuality studies has risen to the methodological problem posed by archival research into same-sex sexuality in the cross-cultural zone is not without interest. Far from being an inhibition, the intractable difficulty of producing histories of same-sex sexuality is symptomatic of sexuality studies' evolving relation to the limitations and possibilities of archival study, which also has implications for postcolonial research across the board.

Consider an example from New Zealand colonial history: a minor scandal involving Reverend William Yate, an ambitious young English missionary working with the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at Waimate in the Bay of Islands in the mid 1830s. Yate's successful career among the Northern Maori was abruptly cut short when, during a voyage back to New Zealand on the *Prince Regent* after a sabbatical in England, allegations were raised by two other passengers that he had formed an inappropriate alliance with Edwin Denison, the third officer. While the Colonial Secretary's office investigated the allegations in Sydney, the CMS also looked into Yate's conduct in the Waimate mission school and found sufficient cause to formally dissolve all connection with him although the legal case against him seemed to fizzle out for lack of evidence. Initially regarded as the victim of professional jealousy and spite, critical opinion about Yate changed with the discovery in 1975 of four depositions taken from Maori youths in Waimate among the papers of the New South Wales Colonial Secretary held in the Archives Office of New South Wales (Waimate Depositions, 1836).¹

At a glance, the finding of the depositions, summary interview transcripts translated into English and signed by four young catechized men, who all

1 The affidavits were recovered by historian Judith Binney whose work on Yate remains the key point of dissemination for both versions of Yate. In her introduction to the 1970 facsimile edition of Yate's *An Account of New Zealand*, Binney initially argued that although Yate was innocent of any sexual activity with his native charges his evangelical outpourings of spiritual love may have been the outward manifestation of a latent homosexuality. Five years later, having read the statements gathered from the crew and passengers of the *Prince Regent* and the affidavits collected in New Zealand, she concluded that Yate did engage in physical acts with other men.

acknowledged that they had had sexual congress with Yate, seems the hallucinatory symptom of archival fever as diagnosed by Carolyn Steedman insofar as it seems to provide the documentary evidence that answers an already formed interpretative query: did Yate have sex with other men?² According to the young men involved he did: their statements record with candor the frequency with which Yate would invite each of them to join him in mutual masturbation or oral sex, sexual activities noted down by the missionary transcribers via Maori phrases, their jarring English transliterations, or the more familiar Latin equivalents. Sometimes followed by gifts of tobacco, sometimes not, these sexual activities take place around the ordinary transactions of mission life: Toataua recounts several instances of masturbating with Yate when sharing a tent while traveling together between mission stations. Samuel Kohe's statement recalls being shown a picture of Yate's sister before stripping naked in the upstairs bedroom in George Clarke's Waimate house. Kohe goes on to testify that he and Yate masturbated together three times before his baptism and since then "more than I can count." Philip Tohi also states that he has lost count of the number of times he and Yate have lain together and each taken hold of the other's penis, and Pehi's statement confirms these activities and recalls how "Once at Pateretere, when we went down to bathe [...] [Yate] pulled off his trousers. He called to me, Come down into the water, I'll break your head with *my penis*."³

As numerous as these incidents appear in the statements of those involved, they are more numerous still in the imaginations of their original audience, the missionaries Richard Davis, William Williams, and George Clarke, who had previously dismissed rumors about Yate's moral character as evidence of the Maori tendency to blaspheme. On the basis of the four statements from baptized young men in training to lead native mission schools, however, they revised their thinking. Writing to Samuel Marsden, Williams concluded that Yate had been with "no less than 50 Natives [...] and I doubt not that there are not fewer than 100" (Williams, 1836). Once apprised of the facts, Marsden similarly had no difficulty assuming that Yate had had such liaisons with all his Maori charges. James Busby, British Resident in New Zealand, in the letter that accompanied the affidavits to Governor Bourke's administration in New South Wales, mentions a figure of sixty or more but also points out that however many young men were involved the sexual connection "did not take place *per anum* but it would appear merely by the instrumentality of the thighs" (Busby, 1836). Since there is no testimony in either the New Zealand affidavits or the statements gathered from the crew and passengers of the *Prince Regent* indicating that any acts of anal sex had taken

2 Steedman's account of archival fever is a way of gaining critical perspective on the empiricism that has underwritten the writing of history since the middle of the nineteenth century. Modern history's investment in original sources and the archives and repositories in which they are physically collated thus provides Steedman with a material analogue to Jacques Derrida's meditations on the figurative process of archivization by which the drive to recover origins or beginnings is necessarily thwarted by the regime of representation.

3 Superscript in original.

place, the crown solicitor subsequently advised the colonial secretary to drop the matter since pursuing the case would invariably publicize “depravity” and at best draw down punishment for a misdemeanor (Fisher, 1836). Less hamstrung by the legal definition of sodomy, the New Zealand-based missionaries concluded matters to their own satisfaction, appointing a day for humiliation and prayer, expiations that culminated in the burning of Yate’s belongings and the shooting of his horse.

Leaving aside the missionary response, the more circumspect civil commentary generated by the inquiry into Yate’s conduct is not dissimilar to what Anjali Arondekar finds at work in the nineteenth-century Indian legal archive. Considering a number of sodomy cases brought to trial in British colonial India, Arondekar notes how within the colonial context “sexual excess is assumed, even if archival evidence of that excess is ostensibly unavailable” (Arondekar, “Without a Trace” 21, note 36). Discussion of sexual perversion, she concludes, is always “embedded in an evidentiary paradox”: it is known to prevail but also known to elude documentation. In this “everywhere / nowhere model of colonial governance,” adjudicants continue to employ “the language of ‘proof,’ ‘veracity,’ and certainty even while bemoaning the colonial state’s lack of official documentation” (19). As Arondekar points out, although there were numerous successful prosecutions for sodomy in the Indian penal system, legal precedent in this area still refers back to an 1884 case that failed to secure a conviction. The precedent setting case from Allahabad recalls the Yate case insofar as it falters “over critical issues of evidence, criminality, and legal codification” (21).⁴ Rather than being resolvable, this foundational inconclusiveness in same-sex sexual matters is something Arondekar also sees structuring contemporary forms of scholarship in sexuality studies wherein homosexuality is frequently discernable in literary forms and anecdote but rarely discoverable in official memoranda or files. This continuing contradiction, that same-sex sexuality is everywhere and nowhere at the same time, suggests to Arondekar the illusory basis of any archival endeavor founded on notions of sexual presence and recovery.

Acknowledging the inaccessibility of the sexual object, its refusal to straightforwardly yield to forensic inquiry, is valuable insofar as it requires the historian of sexuality to engage with the order of narration rather than the order of fact, pushing investigation past the evidential foundations of archival research

4 In the case that Arondekar considers, a sessions judge initially convicts the defendant Khairati on the grounds that, while none of the circumstances disclosed in the case (his wearing of women’s clothes, a subtended anus and the presence of syphilis) individually evidences criminality, when taken collectively they remove any “doubt that the accused had recently been the subject of sodomy.” When brought before the Allahabad High Court, however, the conviction is dismissed for lack of evidence concerning “the exact time, place, and persons with whom these offences were committed,” although the presiding judge concludes his remarks by restating that the “accused is clearly a habitual sodomite” (21). Reading the documents pertaining to Khairati’s case, Arondekar notes, does not bring the historical subject, Khairati, closer but merely involves the archivally minded critic in a “repetition” of the juridical gesture whereby “Khairati’s forensic embodiments” substitute for his personhood (22).

firmly into the realm of interpretation. Acting as a check on archival fever and the fantasy of empirical discovery, sexual inaccessibility forces critical attention toward the representational mechanisms through which sexual historiography takes shape. In some cases this leads to an interpretative freefall whereby imperial history is almost effortlessly made over as gay history. In Ronald Hyam's influential *Empire and Sexuality* (1990), for example, the argument is made that imperialism in general promoted opportunities for the expression of unsanctioned desires, and that the peculiar nature of British imperialism lay in its capacity to incite desire between men that in sublimated form could be harnessed to the disciplined practices of military and bureaucratic rule. Similarly, Robert Aldrich's more recent, and equally monumental, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (2003) argues that while its discursive erasure remains fundamental to colonial discipline the colonial situation frequently precipitates the enactment of homosexual desire. In these accounts, the colonial archive consistently exemplifies the closet structure that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has identified as governing the circulation of modern homosexual understanding more generally. Yet, insofar as they are driven to disclose the sexual secrets of the past, these historians tend to perpetuate the closet mechanism in presuming that their own reading strategy stands outside its continued operation. Paradoxically, this presumption of a discursive break in sexual understanding between the past and the present makes it easier to assume the historical continuity of sexual categories across time and culture.⁵

Within sexuality studies, another line of historical inquiry can also be traced that is less comfortable with broad-sweep accounts of either imperialism or homosexuality. Frequently advanced as case studies of specific colonial incidents or events where the critical ramifications outweigh the archival residue, these accounts are also attuned to the mechanism of the sexual closet but understand that this representational technology remains in place as one of many contemporary legacies of colonial power. Suspicious of the will to sexual knowledge, whether it is coupled with a refusal to disclose or the drive to disclosure, these historians of sexuality approach the colonial archive without presuming any continuity of sexual categories across time or place. In acknowledging the difficulty of retrieving past events for contemporary understandings of sexual identity they simultaneously multiply the usefulness of the archive for gaining critical purchase on present-day operations of sexual power.⁶ Instead of mastering the archive and

5 See, for example, Rudi Bleys' *The Geography of Perversion*, the encyclopaedic breadth of which makes the difference between sexual cultures and imperial epochs no difference at all. Leila J. Rupp has also addressed the problematic appeal of global accounts of same-sex sexuality.

6 An exemplary instance of this type of analysis can be found in Neville Hoad's recent discussion of the 1886 massacre of thirty royal pages in the Bugandan court for refusing to yield to their chief's unnatural desires, where he speculates that the order to execute the recently converted young men might have been an act of resistance to imperialism. This observation is less an attempt to settle historical interpretation than a way of gaining critical purchase on contemporary configurations of sexual politics in AIDS-torn South Africa. Critical leverage against the continued operation of the closet has also been achieved by scholars expanding the

raiding it for the sexual secrets of the past, emphasis falls on the strategic ability to deploy archival knowledge against extant formations of sexual understanding that have accrued their status – as history, as identity – in part through the uses to which archives have conventionally been put. Further, by concentrating on the partial nature of the colonial archive, both its incompleteness and its wavering preferences, the idea of the archive as the total consolidation of imperial power is revealed as a historical chimera. No more the depository of all things, the fantasy of colonial governance as a coherent organizational structure as predictable in its effects as in its official manifestations unravels, along with related fantasies of sexual continuity.⁷

Ann Laura Stoler's most recent monograph is, for instance, anchored by an eloquent meditation on the nature of the colonial archive as the repository of situated knowledges which, as well as revealing the force and extent of imperial power, record the hesitations and anxieties attendant on the decision-making processes of colonial governance. Rather than simply regarding the archive as an institutional resource to be mined for information that can be read against the grain in the service of anti-imperial revisionist histories, Stoler recommends scholars adopt an immersive approach that listens for the "pulse of the archive" as a complex system of responses to the demands of a spatially dispersed colonial present that was equally defined by metropolitan directives and local intelligence. The archive, in this account, records both the ideological imperatives of empire as they change over time and the equivalently mutable framework of colonial commonsense, which assessed and determined the practicalities of maintaining political power in situations in which objectivity of judgment was impossible to attain. Thus understood, archives and the bureaucracies that produced them are no longer monuments to an imperial machine but deeply personalized systems driven by standards of professional competence and more experience-based notions of colonial know-how.⁸

Constantly accountable yet often improvised, these systems are geared to the refinement and adaptation of colonial rule as changing circumstances and expect-

colonial archive to include indigenous sexual practices. See, for example, the essays anthologized by Pete Sigal pertaining to male homosexuality in colonial Latin America. See, too, Philip Holden's argument that the archives of colonial sexuality will be inadequate to the degree that they concentrate on texts by outsiders and exclude proto-nationalist texts produced by colonial elites (315).

7 For a discussion of the fantasmatic quality of accounts of colonial power, see Thomas Richards' book-length discussion of the imperial archive.

8 "In treating archival documents not as the historical ballast to ethnography, but as a charged site of it," Stoler recommends a methodological shift from regarding archival work "as an *extractive* exercise to an ethnographic one." Conceived in this way, "the archival turn" refers to a reflective mode of approaching the archive "as something in between a set of documents, their institutions, and a repository of memory – both a place and a cultural space that encompasses official documents but are not confined to them." If this is now an accepted figuration of the archive, Stoler – like Steedman – is keen to reinstate the role of material processes – the writing, sending, citing, filing, and cross-referencing of documents – in the production and "reduction" of subjugated knowledge (47-51).

tations dictate. Yet, as Stoler points out, the reduction of archives to depositories of empire often calcifies the categories through which power is understood to operate, mistaking the documentary protocols of colonial governance – the formal logics of official correspondence, much of which still determine the storage and retrieval mechanisms archivists rely on – for a wider operational coherence. Immersion in the archive, on the other hand, reveals a more complex process whereby the categories through which power operates mutate across time in response to local contingencies and more remote changes in political culture.⁹ Mutations in colonial power, for instance, are often detectable in minor colonial crises or incidents not usually thought to comprise historically significant events, such as when minor agents of empire are found guilty of flawed judgment or professional negligence. Rather than being peripheral to the hegemony of colonial governance, these ruined colonial careers often indicate fraught moments in imperial rule in which commonsense assessments and political appraisals of risk or significance are strategically misaligned, thereby disclosing the contradictions and anxieties that underwrite the colonial enterprise at work.

The correspondence generated by the inquiry into Yate's conduct provides an exemplar of "situated knowledge" as defined by Stoler. Within it the New South Wales officials debate the wisdom of drawing public attention to a case that cannot be resolved legally, preferring to leave the matter with the CMS, who have their own reasons for dousing the scandal. Though pointing to definitional opacity, everything in the Yate case nonetheless lines up to determine a low-key response that simply sends the young missionary back to England alongside Denison, with whom he then set up house. His CMS career may have been over, but with the support of several influential patrons Yate eventually resumed his role as a chaplain, as if events in Waimate were of no lasting consequence at all. The Yate archive, however, extends beyond the confidential letters and depositions held in New South Wales and New Zealand to include the personal letters from Maori youth that form part of *An Account of New Zealand*, which Yate published during his sabbatical in England in 1835 in order to publicize the success of the northern mission and thereby increase subscriptions to the CMS. Like the missionary-staged conflagration of Yate's belongings, a gesture made in his absence to remove any lingering trace of his presence, the published letters, composed in Maori then translated into English, are hard to read from the distance of the present. Far from secret or embargoed, the letters and the book in which they

9 An excellent example of this kind of archival wobble, where unexpected adjustments are made to accommodate changing circumstance, can be found in Ross Forman's discussion of a confidential British inquiry into unnatural vice among Portuguese African mine workers in the Transvaal in the early twentieth century. Confronted with testimony to the near endemic incidence of same-sex sexual activity among migrant workers in the mine compounds, the final recommendations issued from the inquiry served to keep intact the system of mine marriages, although scarcely a year earlier an inquiry into sodomy among Chinese indentured laborers had led to public outrage and calls for forced repatriation. Forman makes sense of this apparent contradiction with reference to the complex mesh of economic, political, and social agendas prevailing in South Africa on the eve of home rule.

appeared made Yate something of a minor celebrity in 1835, such that he had an audience with King William IV at the Brighton pavilion.

Bridging the privacy of Christian feeling and the publicity of Christian enterprise, the letters written to Yate by his Maori converts are freighted with a kind of doubled awkwardness from the beginning, applying the instructional forms of catechism to the epistolary posture itself: “God will teach us; but we want you to tell us every day about it; and to let us ask you, as we formerly did, the meaning of this and the meaning of that. This is all my saying to you. – How do you do, how do you do? and how do all your friends do?” (Henare Piripi Unahanga, quoted in Yate, *Account* 279). While Yate includes these letters in his book to testify to the wonders of native conversion, it is hard not to read their authors as energized by nothing so much as a frenzied joy in being letter writers at last, as fascinated by the material processes as the durational effects of writing. The letters seem to reveal the stress fractures between native forms of understanding, deeply embedded in the transactional forms of oral culture, and the new compulsion to literacy and its associated print technology, which the missionaries saw as the necessary means for the universal conversion of the native population:

I, Pahau, am now writing a Letter to you. Perhaps you will not be pleased with it, and send it back; and then, perhaps, my heart will be sad, and I shall cry. Now, then, I am going to write to you. Read it first, from the top to the bottom, on this side and on that side, before you say ‘Nonsense,’ and throw it away from you and tear it to pieces. Now, Mr Yate, listen to what I am going to say upon this paper. I have been thinking and thinking about what I am going to write; and now I am thinking you will shut your ears, and will not listen to me. This is what I am going to write: – Remember, that if you say ‘Nonsense,’ it was you who said we were to put down our wishes in a book.¹⁰

Published as evidence of native readiness for baptism, the letters testify less ambiguously to the process by which colonial power is being consolidated via archival methods that invest authority and permanence in documentation (letters, affidavits, deeds, bills-of-sale, treaties) and the legal conventions they support (citizenship, witness, property, sovereignty).¹¹

10 Initially published in the CMS periodical *Missionary Register* (April 1832), this letter and other written requests for baptism appeared in a subsequent equally successful collection, *Letters to the Rev. William Yate*. Cited in McKenzie 346.

11 In 1830, Yate delivered the first printing press to New Zealand, thereby accelerating Maori literacy through the mission school system. As D. F. McKenzie points out in his discussion of print culture in early New Zealand, the orally repeated and memorized elements engaged in elementary reading allowed the early missionaries to misread the evidence of Maori literacy. The missionaries gauged competency by the ability of their native students to follow a restricted number of scriptural texts, whereas the social utility of literacy to the Maori was “not reading books for their ideas, much less for the access they gave to divine truths, but letter writing. For them, the really miraculous point about writing was its portability; by annihilating distance, a letter allowed the person who wrote it to be in two places at once, his body in one, his thoughts in another. It was the spatial extension, not the temporal per-

This shift in sensibility from regarding archival documents as an hermetically sealed source of historical content to regarding them as part of the process by which power is actively exercised requires that we not only read the depositions gathered against Yate for traces of self-interest, coercion, or resistance engaged in by the historical participants in the inquiry, but also place ourselves under reflective scrutiny since we are similarly editing events for the purposes of the present. In returning to the Yate archive, for instance, I find that I have less interest in the points of law that meant a case was never taken against him than in everything the forensic method fails to catch.¹² In the legal depositions taken from the Maori youths, for instance, it is hard to find any sense of intimacy in the accounts given of sex. There is no trace of avowal that exceeds or falls short of the requirements of the situation, although the legal context was known only to the missionaries who were asking the questions not to those who they interrogated. This apparent lack or emptiness is familiar to those of us who work on the history of sexuality and cross-cultural encounter, where same-sex sexual relationships elude recognizable framings of affect, such as the conjugal, and are more commonly consigned – that is to say archived – to the register of the aberrant or perverse.

In her account of colonialism's archival pulse, Stoler argues that rather than concentrating its discursive energies on irrational or unbridled passions precipitated by cross-cultural experience (Yate's activities with young Maori men, say), colonial governance was more concerned with "durable emotions," expectations or resentments that expressed themselves as "critiques" of the established colonial order since these required careful political evaluation and management lest they become the basis for affective and economic investment in other cultural possibilities outside imperial norms and requirements (95-96).¹³ By this logic same-

manence, of writing that [became] politically potent" (345-46). Maori did not then, do not now, regard the truth of a text to be lodged in a temporally frozen document, howsoever signed and preserved, but in the consensus of understanding that is generated in its vicinity across time, an understanding of text that has implications for both legal interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi, the several English and Maori versions of which were signed in 1840, and critical bibliographic studies. For further discussion of this point, see McKenzie.

12 This fact also restricted Yate's avenues of formal redress. Throughout his life, Yate always maintained his innocence and petitioned several bodies for a fair hearing, although there having been no formal hearing to begin with, there was no civil or church tribunal before which he could appear. In this sense, administrative loopholes remain key to both the resolution and perpetuation of same-sex sexual scandals, providing yet another instance of the everywhere / nowhere logic of the homosexual closet. For my discussion of this effect as it keeps repeating through critical discussion of Yate's career and entangling other figures central to New Zealand's colonial / national imaginary, such as Samuel Butler and Frank Sargeson, see Wallace 90-93 and 106-08.

13 Stoler's key example of affective discontinuities in the colonial fabric are found in the policies and instructions generated around the management of the Inlandsche *kinderen*, the highly elastic category used to designate mixed-race, Indies-born Dutch and poor white orphans, the growing existence of which constituted one of many "colonial embarrassments" in the Dutch East Indies (2). This example confirms Stoler's long-standing interest in the domestic as a site of colonial discipline, the place in which patterns of racial affinity and exclusion are endorsed and adjusted. The centrality of reproductive heterosexuality to this system is clear, with the affective and identificatory relations established bet-

sex sexual relationships, while potentially scandalous, are ultimately of no consequence to the colonial order of things since they are indicatively ephemeral, and as such they cannot become the basis for change or transformations in ways of being. They are embodied relations, not relations of subjectivity, denied the status of social maturity in their moment of discovery and, again it seems, in their moment of archival recovery, which similarly hones in on the evidence of sex.¹⁴ Yet, as José Muñoz has pointed out, there is much to be said for the ephemeral, an effect that – like sexuality – is associated with the performative rather than the historically eventful (5-6). Because ephemeral, same-sex sexuality does not imprint the archive: it refuses to be collated in the official forms of history. It resides or remains outside history – neither fully lost nor fully recoverable – in a way that disrupts archival thinking.

Sexuality studies has always had a fraught relation to archival studies. Long notorious for leaving little evidence of subaltern political resistance, the colonial archive is equally withholding of dissident sexualities, even when they are the explicit object of interrogation. Far from constituting a problem, the sexually recalcitrant nature of archives, in combination with the ephemeral nature of same-sex sexuality, is what gives sexuality studies its critical edge. Constantly brought up against the role “archivization” plays in the flattening of sexual history into one continuous narrative, sexuality studies is necessarily invested in reading practices that are capable of disrupting the positivist logics of the archive.¹⁵ Such disruptive reading practices would include, for instance, Annamarie Jagose’s novelization of the Yate affair, which solicits the historical archive in order to both

ween parents and children, including mixed-race children, acting as both adhesive and solvent within the sentimental order of colonialism. The stability and longevity assumed of this relationship cannot be assumed of same-sex relationships since they make no claim to the generative persistence of reproduction and the ideology of futurity on which it is based. For further discussion of this issue from a queer theoretical – rather than postcolonial – perspective, see Lee Edelman.

- 14 Homosexuality is thereby both excluded from the project of colonial governmentality, which rests on the disciplinary formation of citizen-subjects who understand their hopes and dreams to be best served by the advancement of modernity, and the new proto-nationalist movements that emerged from within it. As Philip Holden writes, “Homosexuality and other non-normative sexualities became associated both with atavism – part of a decadent communal past so earnestly to be disavowed in the present – and also, paradoxically, with degeneration, as a marker of how the West has fallen away from the project of modernity” (313).
- 15 According to Arondekar these reading practices “must emerge not against the grain of archival work but from within it, except the imperative here is not about founding presence but more about *confounding* our understanding of how and why we do archival work” (“Without a Trace” 12). An exemplary instance of this imaginative reconceptualization of the archives and archival study is Ann Cvetkovich’s *An Archive of Feelings*, which, “from the unabashedly minoritarian perspective of lesbian cultures,” explores “texts as repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception.” Cvetkovich is specifically drawn to texts of trauma since “trauma puts pressure on conventional forms of documentation, representation, and commemoration, giving rise to new genres of expression, such as testimony, and new forms of monuments, rituals, and performances that can call into being collective witnesses and publics” (7).

court and evade notions of sexual anachronism.¹⁶ Jagose's novel, *Slow Water*, extends the possibilities of sexual historiography through the technical capacities of fiction, capturing Yate and his historical contemporaries through a system of free indirect narration that enables sexual description outside the rhetorical structures that juridical or procedural systems engage by default:

Of all his boys, Edward had been his best travelling companion. He took the place of Cosmo Gordon Pahau. Edward had a mild character, nearly shy, and a sharp intelligence that fed on everything [...] He was married but as yet had no children. The first night, travelling overland to Whangaruru, Yate had retired after prayers with his boys. He wasn't asleep when Edward came to him, his silhouette a moment in the tent flap, then the sound of his undressing, the neat folding of his clothes [...]

Outside, horse snort and the call of a night bird. Edward lay himself down beside Yate, sliding under the covers when he raised them on his arm. In the dark, he was more darkness. Hardly a weight, quick breath, the smell of crushed fern in his hair, buttocks cold to the touch but quickly warmed. He let Yate feel his piece, soon standing against his stomach, and handled Yate with fresh outdoor fingers. Yate straddled the boy's thighs, the blankets pulled high on his shoulders, the air chilling their stomachs. He sleeked his own yard and then lay on the boy, rubbing until the tent was frugged with their panting breath.

Mr Yate, said Edward at his crisis, his voice quieter than ever. I am going. He slept against Yate, back to belly, and in the morning knew what to do without being shown [...]

Edward Parry Hongi. Leaving his wife at home, he travelled with Yate all around the Bay of Islands and twice to New South Wales. Yate gave him a pipe and six figs of tobacco, a Bible, a red jacket, two blankets and a locket but he would as easily have had nothing. Not like Toataua who never unbuttoned his trousers for less than a pound of tobacco or Samuel Kohe only ever coming to his room on the pretence of looking again at the picture of Sarah who he planned to take for his wife. (Jagose 173-74)

I cite the novel here not as a fictional truth but as a reminder that there are alternatives to those critical methodologies and languages that arise in the vicinity of archives and that often share the same drive to the empirical, the demographic, the statistical, as if the process of history could only be measured by calibrating one truth-claim against another.

Beginning with the same archival sources available to the historian (Yate's *Account*, the legal depositions, the logs and journals of the *Prince Regent's* passengers), Jagose's process of creative reconstruction works not to iron out dis-

¹⁶ For a discussion of the utility of anachronism in reconceiving the history of homosexuality, see Ann Pellegrini.

crepancy and establish proof but to preserve the affective register and strangeness of sexual encounters, which even in their fictional iteration are difficult to record. Pressed in on all sides by sensual overload – scented air, cold skin, the noise of the bush – and magnified by an unfamiliar diction and syntax that seems both olden-time and immediate (“Outside, horse snort,” “frugged with their panting breath”), Jagose creates a representational framework that can move not only between objective and subjective perspectives but also preserves the oddly elliptical nature of sexual response in which bodily rhythms and escalations scarcely coalesce as narrative events, far less narrative events sturdy enough to pass as history. In this rendering, sexuality tends to slip the restraints of plot and is more closely associated with characterological effects that are themselves ephemeral – unrecoverable drifts of thought that have no permanence except in systems of writing marked as interior consciousness. Associated with feelings that have no reality except as captured by an utterly modern narrational system geared to producing certain kinds of historical effect, this mode of sexual representation draws attention to the absurdity of the attempts of certain characters (all of whom carry the burden of historical personage) to pin Yate to sexual actions as defined by law.

Rather than appropriating the sexual past for contemporary categories of sexual understanding, the novel renounces the drive to sexual knowledge. Instead, it applies the force of irony to those fictional agents who seek to establish the empirical truth of past sex acts, primarily the offended CMS missionaries and the colonial functionaries who have at their fingertips a legalese through which the often inarticulate forces of sexual motivation can be reduced to points of law. In pursuit of a rather different project, however, the novel asks its readers to identify less with romanticized characters (the gay clergyman, the handsome sailor) than with its own highly flexible point of view and faux-historical sensibility, which in large part derives from the frequent use of half-invented dialect and sexual slang. Part-East Anglian, part-Melvillean, this is not the language of period correctness though it effortlessly generates that salty effect, particularly in those chapters set at sea. Applied to male-male sex, this faux-historical language both foregrounds the physicality of sex and makes newly legible its inscrutability, not just to its outside observers but also to its uninhibited practitioners. In tracking back and forth between the literal and the figural, the sensual and the abstract, the novel unsettles and jams many complacently held understandings of both past and present sexualities and their neat corraling into the identitarian frameworks of sexual orientation.¹⁷

17 Scott Herring has recently argued for the value of literary forms and critical modalities – “close readings that fail to explicate, archives that crumble when opened, metropolitan lives that remain under wraps, and visuals that don’t appear” – as a means of confounding modernity’s drive to sexual knowledge and the rise of sexual subcultures with which it is associated (210).

Unlike marriage or birth rates or prosecutions for sodomy, sexuality refuses to be captured by quantification.¹⁸ Sexuality calls for a nonempirical encounter with the archive that can imaginatively expand the spectrum of sexual recognizability. Rather than replicating the colonial fantasy of total knowledge by attempting to secure a complete mapping of the sexual field, sexuality studies embraces the improvisational. In this instantiation, the turn to the archive involves historical slippage not penetration. Rather than fusing the sexual present and the colonial past into a single coherent narrative or imperial system, sexuality studies stages an encounter with the archive that is decisive in its open-endedness.

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18 Julian B. Carter and Marcia Klotz point out how even volumes dedicated to exploring the intersection of colonialism and sexuality tend to address sexuality obliquely, via discussions of motherhood or miscegenation, rather than interrogating sexuality "either as discursive field or erotic practice" (313).

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CHAPTER FOUR

Sex as a Transcultural Event? Sexualities in the French Foreign Legion and Their Representations in Autobiographical Writing

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The French Foreign Legion, founded in 1831, was once a crucial military instrument of French imperialism until the decolonization of Africa in the early 1960s. Legionnaires, in addition to the Carlist War in Spain (1835–1839), the Crimean War (1854–1856), the Italian War of Independence (1859), the Franco-Prussian War (1870/71), and the two World Wars, fought in numerous colonial struggles in North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Mexico, Indochina, and the Middle East. The Foreign Legion was part of the colonial *Armée d'Afrique* until 1962. Their home base was located in Sidi Bel-Abbès in Algeria and recruitment propaganda relied heavily on the power of exoticism, the use of posters evoking a safari atmosphere being among its tools. Only after the French colonial empire's demise did the unit undergo a substantial transformation, mutating into an elite corps for out-of-area operations. Thus, the pre-1962 Foreign Legion, composed of runaways, outlaws, and adventurers, but also, and even foremost, the unemployed and poor from across Europe, all of whom were deployed to numerous distant parts of the globe, is an ideal object for the study of all sorts of cultural contacts and 'embodied' encounters, ones in which people from all European nations not only met with each other, but also with Africans and Asians, both as enemies in colonial warfare and as civilians.

My contribution will focus on one crucial aspect of these encounters, namely on sexuality. On the one hand, the Foreign Legion was notorious as an alleged stronghold of homosexuality. Anti-Legion propaganda, which was widespread in the Foreign Legion's main recruiting areas such as Germany and Switzerland,¹ used to warn against joining the Legion not least with reference to the so-called *Legionslaster* (Legion's vice). Whereas this propaganda was obviously highly exaggerated, homoerotic relations and same-sex practices were indeed issues of concern in the Legion. On the other hand, several types of heterosexual relations with civilians in the areas of deployment were common among Legionnaires. As an attempt to prevent the spread of venereal diseases caused by contacts between

1 See Christadler; Egli.

Legionnaires and local prostitutes, the Foreign Legion would institutionalize brothels supervised by French army doctors. Another type of heterosexual relationship that occurred between Legionnaires and local women was the phenomenon of *Congai* in Indochina, which implied a sort of limited-term marriage.

All these and other types of sexual associations were also reflected in autobiographical writings of former Legionnaires. This essay will analyze several pieces of such writing by former German, Swiss, Austrian, and British Legionnaires. From a historian's point of view most of these texts need to be treated with care when analyzed as primary sources. First of all, they constitute a rather heterogeneous corpus, including memoirs, which had not been written for the purpose of publication, as well as texts with literary pretensions – most prominently Friedrich Glauser's autobiographical novel *Gourrama*, referring to his two years in the Legion in 1921/22, written in the early 1930s and published in 1937 – and memoirs written for the explicit purpose of publication. Glauser's novel has strong autobiographical traits, but remains fiction all the same. Nevertheless, it is arguably one of the best accounts of the overall climate in the Foreign Legion, written by someone who had experienced it himself. Many of the various memoirs of former Legionnaires published in German between the 1880s and the 1950s served the purpose of warning potential recruits against joining the Foreign Legion and have to be seen in the context of the aforementioned anti-Legion propaganda, which, as far as German pre-1914 writings are concerned, have been characterized as “sado-militaristic texts” (Christadler 64). In some cases we can guess that the texts written by authors with only basic education had been stylistically polished by a third person. Sometimes, the need to make money was another obvious motive for former Legionnaires to share their experiences with a wider audience. Both motives, propaganda and money, might have led to a tendency toward sensationalism, which in some cases is quite obvious.

Nevertheless, as far as the issues in question in this paper are concerned, comparisons between different texts, different types of primary sources, and the findings of previous research indicate that the memoirs seem to be quite reliable in terms of the factual basis of the varieties of sexual relations discussed. It is obvious that the previously noted as well as other contemporary discourses (such as the general ones on homosexuality) greatly influenced these writers' judgments of the sexual practices that they described, but then it would be rather naïve to expect that other sources would uncover an ‘unbiased’ image. Recent studies on military ego-documents have shown that the latter always present some sort of synthesis between individual experiences and their interpretations, both of which are shaped by the author's social and cultural background as well as contemporary discourses. Nevertheless, given an awareness of the necessary source criticism and the ability to sometimes read between the lines, they proved to be useful sources for the analysis of military history ‘from below’.²

2 See for instance Koller; Latzel; Schikorsky; Ulrich.

Even though this paper analyzes three topics, namely same-sex relations, limited-term liaisons between Legionnaires and African and Asian women, and open prostitution, I will concentrate on the modes of representation of sexuality as a transcultural encounter: do the writers use sexuality as a symbol for cultural transgression in general? Where are 'indigenous' sexual partners of Legionnaires located within the dialectics of exoticism and racism?³ And is, according to autobiographical representations, the sexuality of members of the French colonial force somehow linked to the processes of colonization and decolonization? Thus, this contribution ties into the field of gender relations and sexuality, which in the past two decades has more and more attracted the attention of colonial historians.⁴

Same-Sex Relations

As a masculine society, by the late nineteenth century the French Foreign Legion had become infamous as a supposed homosexual bastion. A popular song of German legionnaires ran:

Es war einmal einer Mutter Sohn,
 der ging in die Fremdenlegion,
 Französisch lernt er nicht verstehn',
 aber Arschficken und Zigarettdrehn.
 (quoted in Michels 32)⁵

The obviously widespread presence of same-sex relations in the Foreign Legion can be explained both as an expression of the repressed homosexual component of our allegedly innate bisexuality (as suggested, for instance, by the 1948 Kinsey Report) or as a manifestation of what some sociologists and psychologists have termed "situational homosexuality," "pseudo-homosexuality," or SMSM ("straight men who have sex with men"). The few scholarly works produced on the Foreign Legion usually mention these same-sex relations rather *en passant*. As much as autobiographical writing about same-sex relations in the Legion strongly reflected contemporary notions of and discourses about homosexuality, some scholars adopted these statements without further reflections. John Laffin, writing in 1974, stated that:

the Legion was always a breeding ground for abnormal sex behaviour.
 The legionnaire's environment, the circumstances surrounding him, were

3 On the relation between these two constructions see Erdheim.

4 See, e.g., Gouda; Bryder; Nandy; Stoler, *Race*; Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*; Burton, *Burdens*; Burton, *Gender*; Levine, "Battle Colors;" Levine, *Sexualities*; Levine, *Prostitution*; Aldrich; Koller; Mass.

5 "There was once a mother's son, who went to the Foreign Legion, he didn't learn to understand French, but ass-fucking and cigarette-rolling." All translations from French and German sources are mine.

such that a normal man's resistance to homosexual activity was easily broken down. Having to live in close proximity to scores of men of low moral standards only facilitated the process. The severe discipline, the adverse climate, deadly monotony, vicious influence and, above all, alcohol undermined the legionnaire's mental faculties and gradually weakened his moral standards. Homosexuality grew on him in easy stages. (42)

Douglas Porch, in his 1991 standard work on the history of the Foreign Legion, explained the presence of same-sex relations in the Legion as the consequence of the "absence of women," and further commented on the topic:

This was not a major problem in the Legion, but it contributed to the lower moral tone about which there were many complaints. Some confirmed homosexuals came into the Legion from the penal units after 1900, and these could be vicious. (310)

More recent books have made use of less homophobic language. Eckard Michels, writing in 1999 on the history of Germans in the Foreign Legion, implicitly adopted the concept of situational homosexuality, stating that due to being despised by both French and Muslim women in North Africa, as well as lacking the resources to regularly visit brothels, Legionnaires, "although mostly not homosexuals, had no other option than to seek sexual satisfaction by having intercourse amongst each other" (32). Mario Haldemann, analyzing in 1991 Swiss literature on the Foreign Legion, introduced the concept *zwischenmännliche Beziehungen* (intermasculine relationships) (202) and examined representations of same-sex relations in Glauser's and other Swiss Legionnaires' autobiographical writing in detail, relating it to contemporary discourses on homosexuality, and concluding that in Glauser's writing *zwischenmännliche Beziehungen* turn out to be tainted with the same problems as relationships between Legionnaires and women (*Gourrama* 210-40).

Though none of these former Legionnaires mentioned in their autobiographical writings any personal involvement in same-sex relations, many of them did discuss the issue in general and provided examples from their own units. Swiss Legionnaire Emil Wälti, for instance, who had served in West Africa in 1894/95, described in his memoirs, which were not written for the purpose of publication and were only discovered and published in the 1990s, a ship's voyage, during which Legionnaires waltzed in pairs. He did not, however, reflect further on the homoerotic component of this occurrence (78). More explicit discussion of the topic of same-sex relations mostly fell into one of the three following categories: relations between privates and officers involving career ambitions of the former or the abuse of power by the latter; relations between two privates in the formation of regular couples; and sexual intercourse in Legion prisons and penal units.

Former Swiss Legionnaire Paul Strupler, who was with the Legion in the 1920s, was outraged by the *Legionslaster* (Legion's vice), which, allegedly due to hunger and poverty, claimed many "victims." He declared that it was:

a shame for France that such a vice is not fought against by all means. However, as long as there are officers involved themselves and who even openly admit that, obviously no change will happen. In our company we had a comrade, a seventeen-year-old boy from a well-to-do family, who initially would have rejected even thinking about something like that with indignation. Later on, he would boast with his alleged popularity with some of the officers. (37)

Former German Legionnaire Franz Glienke, who had served in Africa in the 1920s and later became a communist, made a similar observation in his 1931 memoirs:

Here the most deplorable chapter of African soldiery starts: male prostitution. All senior members of the unit are homosexuals. No wonder. These troops sometimes are stationed for years in the lonesomeness of the desert. The few women who are visible are infected with venereal diseases to an extent that their appearance alone causes horror. Money is most often an issue as well. No wonder that eroticism has to look for other ways. It's a commonly known fact that a majority of the Foreign Legion's non-commissioned officers have been lovers of officers. The quickest way of promotion is via your superior's bed. (37)

Former Swiss Legionnaire Henry Stähli, assigned to the French colonies from 1925 to 1932, commented on the topic: "Of course, a young, lovely boy always had easier duties, if he, as we called it, entered an office backwards, or could be met by his superior of whatever rank in a dark corner in the evening" (20). Later on, Swiss Legionnaire Bruno Noli, who fought in the Indochina War in the 1950s, mentioned that after a brutal punishment exercise Legionnaires had beaten the mischievous orderly of a sergeant, "who was easily to be identified as a homosexual" (30). In Friedrich Glauser's autobiographical novel *Gourrama* same-sex relations shaped by hierarchical dependencies are mentioned as well; however, here the aspect of abuse by the superiors is more strongly emphasized (78-9, 233-34, 266).

While Paul Strupler stated that with the Legion's rank and file there was, unlike with the officer corps, a clear heterosexual homogeneity – "every Legionnaire involved in something like that was despised by the others; whenever he entered a room, he would be told to leave" (37) – other accounts limned the situation differently. Glauser's *Gourrama* includes several same-sex relationships. Legionnaires Patschuli and Paschke are portrayed as a "loving couple" (29). The same is true for Legionnaires Schilasky and Todd. Todd seems to have joined the Legion without any homosexual experiences, and although Schilasky had been

attracted to men since his youth, he continues to suffer because of his sexual orientation: “Can you tell me why I always feel remorse afterwards? After all, I’m not harming anybody. Maybe it’s because of my education. Who knows? But I always feel like I have committed a big sin” (122).

Marriages between individual Legionnaires, and modelled on the conventional heterosexual model were also remarked upon (and heavily criticized) in a letter of a German Legionnaire published by Fred Westphal in 1931:

We haven’t seen a single woman for months now. Horrible vices have emerged. Ho ho... we are marrying... It’s no longer kept secret. Thus a wedding is celebrated with all pomp, with a pastor and best men and the whole thing is a horrible blasphemy and it results in a crazy orgy. The freshly married then live together and there’s a cooing and caressing that one feels the urge to vomit. Where does it come from? Is it the heat, the horny atmosphere? Mercenary troops actually have never had the best morals and Legionnaires are no Sunday school pupils. And what does the state we are serving do about it? Nothing, nothing! (33)

Former Austrian Legionnaire Raimund Anton Premschitz, writing in 1904, reported such relationships as well: “Such couples, living together like husband and wife, can be seen daily. The older gives everything to the younger one he wants, even his food or at least the best parts of it. He provides him with tobacco, cleans for him and does his laundry, takes him out for promenades and protects him against all troubles” (116). These relationships between older and younger soldiers seemed to have been quite similar to the ones of the Sacred Band of Thebes, which consisted of 150 age-structured couples and formed the elite force of the Theban army in the fourth century BC (Davies 219). However, these associations between Legionnaires were not, unlike in the antiquity model, a constituent part of the army’s structure. The strong emotional involvement of many Legionnaires in such relationships is shown by Premschitz’s remark that he “saw the most unbelievable cases. For instance at Tiaret, a corporal shot himself because he had been betrayed by his boy” (116).

Former Swiss Legionnaire H. Seiler, who served in North Africa from 1896 to 1901 and published his memoirs, first as a series of articles in the newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in 1914, and subsequently as a booklet in 1921, discussed the topic of same-sex relations from another perspective. According to Seiler, the Legion’s fame as a bulwark of homosexuality was not due to the officers, nor the “ordinary” Legionnaires, but to the lowest strata of rank and file, namely prisoners and deserters. He commented on the Legion’s North African prisons:

It’s commonly known that some of those prisons are hotbeds of low-ermost vice. The horrible things that happen in these prisons, despite frequent controls, can’t be mentioned here even allusively. [...] When the *chaous* [guardians] approach unexpectedly, the first available prison-

er shouts “*vingtdeux*,” whereupon everybody proceeds to harmless inactivity. (36-37)

Seiler claimed that many prisoners even enjoyed their incarceration, which allowed them “to wallow in vice.” He also stated that for many deserters, the leitmotiv was “seduction in order to satisfy perverse inclinations” (58). Premschitz mentioned these practices in military prisons as well and added that the younger Legionnaires were forced to participate in them (116).

Some Legionnaires also discussed similar phenomena in the Legion’s penal units. Franz Glienke related the story of a young Legionnaire who had to serve five years of forced labor: “Thus, in a society that didn’t know anything else anymore than labor and young boys, he was supposed to become a better person. [...] As a plaything he was handed from one prisoner to the next one. After four weeks his body was ruined and he was no longer able to walk even one step” (75). A writer from Fritz Westphal’s letter collection discussed such situations as well:

The eldest of a barrack is called Kaid. [...] Young and beautiful prisoners are, without any exception, the Kaid’s sexual slaves. Rebellion is pointless: they either get his food or are raped outright. The Company Sergeants have their boys, whom they choose as soon as new prisoners are delivered and who serve them as toyboys at the same time. When these dehumanized swine are no longer interested in their victims, they turn them over to the Kaid, who before wasn’t allowed to touch them. He first takes them himself and then distributes them to his fellows. Horrible orgies take place quite often in which the young ones have to dance naked like Arab girls in the brothels. This hellish scene is accompanied by vile howling and uproar; however, the guardians are used to it and don’t intervene. All of the young ones bear girls’ names and live a horrible life from which they are only liberated by death [...] the overwhelming majority of the prisoners perished, 98 out of 100. (106-07)

Although different types of same-sex practices and relationships are discussed in many of the autobiographical writings of Legionnaires, homosexual contacts with people outside the Legion are scarcely mentioned. Yet, it does appear occasionally in fictional texts. In Glauser’s *Gourrama*, non-commissioned officer Cattaneo notes that his captain, for some time, had had a relationship with an Arab boy whose official responsibilities were to do the latter’s laundry (12).

To sum up, the topic of same-sex relations in Legionnaires’ autobiographical writing was hardly discussed as an element of cultural transgression itself, but rather as a result of cultural dislocation, as a phenomenon that mainly occurred within the Legion among European Legionnaires because of the exotic surroundings in which they were living. Unfortunately, these Legionnaires did not indicate whether the Legion experience had changed the sexual behavior of their comrades only temporarily or induced a sustainable turn to same-sex relations that extended

into their post-Legion lives. Same-sex relations were in many cases used to criticize the Legion's functioning or to show the alleged inferiority of many Legionnaires and officers. These comments must obviously be seen in the context of the anti-Legion propaganda described above and reflect contemporary discourses on homosexuality. The only former Legionnaire who did not condemn same-sex relations was Friedrich Glauser, who would subsequently face long discussions with his publisher regarding the topic.⁶ The corpus of Legionnaire writings being examined here contains only a few hints that homosexual contacts with civilians in the colonies also took place, and that structurally these differed very little from the different types of heterosexual contacts between Legionnaires and African and Asian women. Although one of the letter writers in Westphal's collection stated that in the Legion "pederasty is so common that hags are no longer able to make a profit from us" (151), there was actually a wide range of relationships between members of the Foreign Legion and Asian and African Women.

Limited-Term Liaisons with African and Asian Women

Sexual relations with African and Asian women were a difficult issue. Many former Legionnaires, especially those writing before the First World War, preferred not to mention them at all or, if they did, only in a roundabout way. Emil Wälti told the story of the conquest and destruction of a rebellious Senegalese village. After its male inhabitants had been killed, the French captain told his Legionnaires "to choose a woman each, who could do his laundry and cleaning." The remaining women, according to Wälti, were "taken with us as slaves" (65). When his unit, some weeks later, was relocated, they had, "some of them with a heavy heart," to depart from these women, by whom, as Wälti stated, "one was cared for so well, when one felt unwell" (69). A former British Legionnaire, however, having served in the Middle East in the 1920s and writing under the pseudonym John Harvey, explicitly mentioned some affairs between both himself and one of his comrades and local women at Beirut and Damascus (82-83, 193-94).

Carl Orphal, who after his return to Germany from the Foreign Legion was confronted with rumors about an alleged marriage to a black woman, stated in 1846 that "as far as the negro women are concerned whom I had the opportunity [...] to see, I have to say that I never saw one who would have impressed me by her beauty so much that I would have married her if marriage between a Christian and a Muslim would have been allowed in the Legion" (62). Raimund Aron Prenschtz claimed that "a relationship between Legionnaires and girls is a very rare thing; I for my part have never seen a Legionnaire dating a girl, although there are very many and quite beautiful girls here" (116). Franz Glienke reported the same situation and explained it as the consequence of the very low social sta-

6 See Glauser, *Gourrama* 317.

tus of Legionnaires in Africa: “Nobody is so despised as the Legionnaire. Nobody wants to have any contact with him because [...] he is so poor. And where money is lacking, love is rare as well. Which African girl would like to have a relationship with a poor guy who is here today and somewhere else tomorrow?” (31).

While Friedrich Glauser remained silent on this topic in his explicitly autobiographical accounts, *Im afrikanischen Felsental* and *Legion*, he obviously made the issue a subject of discussion in his fictional work. In *Gourrama*, both Corporal Lös, a figure which is closely based on Glauser himself, and Lieutenant Lartigue have relationships with Moroccan women, and the fictional narrative notes that this was a common practice with both officers and non-commissioned officers (12). After Lieutenant Lartigue is relocated, his girlfriend remains in Gourrama. She is introduced in the novel as “Lartigue’s wife,” speaks almost perfect French, and has adopted French habits to such a degree that Legionnaires address her as “Mademoiselle” – but, tellingly, not as “Madame” (190-91).

The liaison between Corporal Lös and the Moroccan girl Zeno is arranged through financial gifts to Zeno’s father:

Lös didn’t think about it long. It didn’t really matter whether he spent the money on alcohol or gave it to the old man, and nobody would monitor whether he spent the night in camp or not. The nights would be less lonesome, and after all, it made a difference whether it was his dog Türk who rested by his side or a girl. [...] Zeno sat up and looked at Lös eagerly. Thereupon he took two 100 franc bills out of his pocket and gave them to the old man. The latter said “*sachar*” and slapped Lös on the shoulder. The deal didn’t seem to excite him too much. (*Gourrama* 57-58)

The Arab girl also appears in Glauser’s short story “Zeno,” though here as Sergeant Sitnikoff’s girlfriend. In both stories, she is eventually resold to a comrade for a bottle of anisette after the relocation of her white boyfriend: “Zeno was sad at first, but then she laughed [...]: This laughter would cost Pierrard dearly. For Zeno would torment him and force him to sell her clothes and shoes and stockings [...]. He had to order clothes (European clothes!) from Fez” (*Gourrama* 278).

Similar practices of limited-term liaisons in Indochina were described at the beginning of the 1930s by August Riederer, who had just returned from Asia, in a series of articles in the magazine *Zürcher Illustrierte*. Riederer related that in Tonkin, it was a “custom” that “Legionnaires live together with Annamite women in concubinage.” Those Legionnaires had “to give about half of their pay to their wives, who, from this money, also had to pay the rent.” Riederer further stated that:

in view of all mutual liberties, these quickly arranged marriages are hardly ever unsuccessful. If one of the partners, be it the husband or the wife, no longer likes the relationship, they divorce and look for an-

other, more suitable partner. However, it's no rarity that such mix-raced couples are doing very well. If a young "soldier" is born, he counts as a French citizen and is baptized as a Christian. (1176)

When a Legionnaire was relocated to another garrison, according to Riederer, his family would often join him. If, however, his unit left Tonkin, "his wife would stay and wait until another soldier proposed to her. So it happens that many Annamite women get married up to ten times" (1176). After Riederer's quite frank account of sexual and domestic arrangements among Legionnaires in Indochina, his series of articles was immediately discontinued.

The practice of limited-term marriages between Legionnaires and Indochinese women referred to by Riederer was especially common in the northern part of French Indochina, where it was known as the *Congai* system ("young woman" in Vietnamese).⁷ These relationships were in many cases actually far less romantic than Riederer's description made them sound, for often, similar to Glauser's story about Zeno, fathers, or even local chiefs, were involved in negotiating the terms of these liaisons. Sometimes they were limited to a month or even just a week, and sometimes a *Congai* would literally become part of an outpost's stock, part of its supply of saleable goods.

The Legionnaires' side of such relationships is covered by some accounts, but it's difficult to judge how the women involved perceived these limited-term "marriages." Did they consider them to be emotional as well as economic relationships, or did they view them solely as financial transactions? Glauser's remarks on Zeno's behavior seem to suggest the latter, yet these are obviously no more than intimations given by a European novelist, although he was arguably one of the best commentators on conditions in and around the Foreign Legion at the time under discussion. A similar observation has been made by ethnological studies on relationships between European men and Thai women in the 1980s, which might, at least for the Indochinese case, further support the conjecture of a dramatically asymmetrical view of these "marriages."⁸

Apart from Legionnaires and the women with whom they were involved, the perceptions of these relationships by native men are also of interest. Many Indochinese men obviously considered the *Congai* system to be deeply humiliating. And interestingly enough, when about 49,000 Indochinese soldiers were deployed in the European theater of war during the First World War,⁹ many of them engaged in sexual relationships with French women, regarding such behavior as "conquests." Some, in letters back home, explicitly referred to sexual relations between French soldiers and Indochinese women. One wrote that he was proud to see that now there were mixed-race children produced by Indochinese men and French women in addition to those produced in the colonies by Indochi-

7 See Porch 221-22; Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable;" Bodin 10-13; Laffin 43-44, 132-33.

8 See Cohen, "Thai Girls;" Cohen, "Lovelong Farangs;" Cohen, "Dropout Expatriates."

9 See Duong.

nese women and European men (quoted in Fogarty 209). The head of the French office, charged with censoring the mail of Indochinese soldiers, complained that France was now paying for the sins of its sons who had built the colonial empire. For the “indigenes,” sex with French women was “like a revenge on the European [...] who down there causes old Indochina to blush and incites jealousy” (quoted in Fogarty 209).

On balance, Legionnaires’ relationships with African and Asian women outside of open prostitution appear as a culturally and socially complex phenomenon. They delineate a zone of acculturation around the Foreign Legion comparable to the one surrounding the colonial administration. The practice of purchasing and selling women seemed to be a mixture of traditional customs (such as the bride price) and human traffic close to prostitution, and shaped by the specific needs of mercenaries looking for a more stable and emotionally more satisfying alternative to spending their pay on prostitutes.

Processes of acculturation were manifold in these relationships. First, African and Asian women came in close contact with individual Europeans and came to adopt such European habits as use of the French language and currency and an appreciation of European clothing. Second, Legionnaires became in some ways part of Asian and African families, which, as can be deduced from the few autobiographical accounts on this topic, might have helped to disrupt the racist stereotypes and exoticized images these Europeans held about non-Europeans. Third, and perhaps foremost significantly, the production of children who would mainly grow up in Asian and African social and cultural structures, but nevertheless enjoyed the rights of French citizens, would create a group of “in-betweens” who were likely to act as cultural brokers between the colonizers and the colonized. However, Legionnaires’ autobiographical writing on this subject seems to neglect one crucial point, and one which might have jeopardized the process of acculturation, namely the jealousy of colonized men, whose chances on the marriage market were considerably diminished due to the presence of French soldiers and colonial administrators. Colonial rule obviously was not just about power politics, economic exploitation, and cultural imperialism, but also about gender relations and sexual dominance. However, racism and sexual violence, though clearly constituent elements of the relationships between Legionnaires and women of the native populations were barely reflected upon in Legionnaires’ autobiographical writing.

Prostitution

Aside from all the types of sexual configurations discussed above, open prostitution was also ubiquitous in the French Foreign Legion. Sometimes newly recruited Legionnaires familiarized themselves with this institution and its trans-

culturality even before they had left France. In his 1931 account, Franz Glienke said of his first stay at Marseille:

The street of the thousand joys was soon reached. Marseille is already very international. Italians and Greeks, Arabs and Negroes form a considerable part of this city's inhabitants. The same is true for its brothels. All nations were present, it was your choice. [...] *Mon Dieu*, so many beautiful ladies and no money. Somebody examined his purse, which was empty, but nevertheless, if one tried it... and he tried it and eventually found an old Arab woman who for this price was ready to satisfy his yearning. (19)

After the First World War the French army established official troop brothels in the colonies, mainly out of concerns over sanitation.¹⁰ In these institutions Legionnaires could engage in sex with European as well as African, Arab, and Asian women. Unlike in the brothels for non-white colonial troops, there was no "supply-side" racial segregation.¹¹ One type of these brothels was the so-called B. M. C. This abbreviation could mean *Bordel Militaire Contrôlé* as well as *Bordel Mobile de Campagne*. The B. M. C.s were staffed with European as well as local women and located in the garrisons, but prostitutes, who, like the Legionnaires, worked on a five-year contract basis, also joined maneuvers and military operations, similar to the set-up of early modern mercenary armies, which even used to designate a *Hurenweibel* (whore sergeant). While the French government declared brothels illegal in the early 1950s, the B. M. C.s continued to function.¹²

Furthermore, some regular brothel towns were established at the Foreign Legion's most important garrisons, such as the *Village Nègre* at Sidi-Bel-Abbès and the so-called *Quartier Réservé*, a brothel town in the northern Moroccan city of Meknès, headquarters of the 2nd Foreign Legion Regiment. Both red light districts were transcultural contact zones, not just because of meetings between Legionnaires and African prostitutes, but also because Arab men frequented these locations as well. French military authorities, however, tried to prevent encounters between Legionnaires and Arabs as much as possible. Up until the First World War, Legionnaires seem to have been completely forbidden to visit *Village Nègre*, and afterwards, only a few brothels (e.g., *Le Moulin Rouge*, *Au Palmier*, and *Le Chat Noir*), all of which were under medical supervision, were open to them.¹³ The brothel town at Meknès, which comprised approximately five hundred buildings, was supposedly the largest brothel in North Africa. It continued to operate until Moroccan independence in 1956 and was divided into sections called the north and the south villages. One day, the northern part was open for Legionnaires and the southern one for Arabs, the next day the situation was reversed.

10 See Laffin 38; Le Naour 1: 306.

11 See Le Naour 2: 402-07; Marks 303-05.

12 See Hardy; Comor, 39-42; Laffin 41-3; Porch 309-10.

13 See Porch 387; Laffin 39; Rosen 129-31; Thiriet.

This red light district also included cafés, restaurants, dance halls, and medical treatment rooms for men and women. In the Algerian capital of Algiers, a large brothel named The Sphinx offered the services of French, Spanish, Maltese, and Sicilian prostitutes, as well as those of other origins and nationalities.¹⁴

Autobiographical writing before the First World War generally avoided the issue of prostitution. In the interwar period, the writing of Legionnaires became more forthcoming, mentioning prostitution that took place in official military brothels as well as outside of them. In Glauser's novel *Gourrama* an entire chapter was devoted to the so-called "convent," a military brothel run by a Moroccan woman under the administrative and medical supervision of the Legion. It was only open to Legionnaires, but not to West African and Arab soldiers of the French colonial army. The black and Arab prostitutes of the "convent" also joined the Legionnaires during their various campaigns (157-70).

Franz Glienke reports that at the Algerian garrison of Saïda, Legionnaires would, after the distribution of their pay, usually visit nearby brothels, albeit supervised by their commanders (33). Bruno Noli notes that at the end of their basic training at Saïda the Legionnaires were allowed to visit an official brothel that contained four women – "three whites and a negro" – and he also provided a comparison of prices in official and nonofficial brothels: "That would cost you 120 francs. Arabs are cheaper: 50 francs. However, if you are caught with an Arab woman, you get fourteen days in prison. And if you catch a disease, you have to pay for the treatment yourself" (37). And John Harvey ironically praised the good organization of official military brothels in the Syrian capital:

The red lamp industry, of course, flourished in Damascus – it was the one thing that the French seemed capable of organizing efficiently. In the interests of discipline the various establishments were divided into three classes, their patrons being officers, N. C. O.s, and other ranks respectively. The first class undoubtedly looked the most inviting from the outside and presumably housed the most charming and accomplished ladies. [...] The medical inspection was made regularly once a week [...] (202-03)

None of these writers who commented on official brothels explicitly mentioned whether he had visited any of them himself. Former Swiss Legionnaire Marius Lottaz, however, who served in the Foreign Legion from 1936 to 1941 and published his memoirs in 1983, discussed his contacts with prostitutes outside of military brothels quite openly. According to Lottaz, the usual procedure for Legionnaires in Morocco after pay distribution was to look for a prostitute. Lottaz not only went to brothels (246), but also tells how he, together with a comrade, visited a slum where he had sex with a poor young Arab mother for two francs, and in which a little boy was also involved (272-73). Lottaz was obviously aware of the prostitute's social misery, however had no intentions of doing anything about

14 See Laffin 39-41.

it. His comment was: “Those young girls sell themselves for a box of sardines or tuna, for some cigarettes or a piece of pastry. Misery and hunger push them into prostitution. Sort one of them out of it? This would mean having to feed all her family, including remote cousins. It was desperate!” (273).

On the one hand, prostitution obviously reflected the mutual strengthening of colonial dependency and the asymmetrical gender order. On the other hand, it was also an agent of linguistic acculturation that operated in two directions. According to both Glauser’s and Lottaz’s accounts, preliminary negotiations in the brothel were held in Arabic, indicating Legionnaires’ basic knowledge of the necessary terms (Glauser, *Gourrama* 158; Lottaz 246). Lottaz’s liaison with the prostitute in the slums was facilitated by his ability to speak at least some words in Arabic (272). The Moroccan manager of the official brothel in *Gourrama* had basic knowledge of French, which served the purpose of communicating well enough with the Legionnaires, whose knowledge of French in many cases was also rather limited (Glauser, *Gourrama* 162). Thus, while individual relations were much looser with prostitutes than they were with the other types of limited-term relationships, and despite the fact that they were much less likely to challenge racist stereotypes, prostitution nevertheless also created a bridge of mutual acculturation between Legionnaires and the colonized. However, given the low, if any level of explicit reflection in the writings of these former Legionnaires concerning these processes of cultural exchange, there were also no speculations on or suggestions of how these exchanges could be sustained beyond the duration of the individual encounters.

Conclusion

If we return to the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter, we can see that many of the Legionnaires mention sexuality as an act of cultural transgression, and with no further thoughts on the topic, nor on the long-term impact of the encounters described. Regarding same-sex relations, most writers did not present the transgression as representing a category of cultural contact with extra-Europeans, but rather as a failure to uphold standards of (European) morality prompted by an exotic environment, as ‘abnormal’ behavior attributable to ‘abnormal’ conditions in an ‘abnormal’ institution. Thus, most authors located these sexual practices within a dichotomy of ‘normal’ patriotic behavior (including living in one’s fatherland, serving in a national army, and engaging in heterosexual relations) and ‘abnormal’, nonpatriotic behavior (including living in the colonies of a foreign nation, serving in a mercenary army, and being involved in same-sex relations).

The mostly heterosexual relationships with African and Asian civilians, both in the form of limited-term marriages and open prostitution, appear as a crucial part of a zone of mutual acculturation around the Foreign Legion’s barracks in the colonies, sites where the Legion’s military culture encountered both Euro-

pean as well as Africa and Asian cultural traditions, moral values, religious doctrines, and legal regulations regarding sexuality. Though Friedrich Glauser seems to be the only author to have really grasped the implications of these processes, other former Legionnaires made them explicit unconsciously. Their depictions of anonymous Africans and Asians were full of mainly racist, and to a lesser degree exoticized stereotypes, but individual sexual partners, even if they were prostitutes without names, at least were given faces in their descriptions. This individualization of the perceptions of extra-Europeans by Legionnaires was even more pronounced when those Legionnaires entered into limited-term relationships with African and Asian women. While these temporary alliances can hardly be considered as symmetrical, they nevertheless exercised an acculturating effect on the Legionnaires, whose initial racism seems to have been at least partially replaced by a complex mixture of emotional involvement and sexism. To a much lesser degree, this shift held true even toward women who were prostitutes.

On balance, the link between sexualities in the French Foreign Legion and their representation in autobiographical writing and the history of colonialism is without doubt a complex one. At first glance it seems to be, and indeed is overwhelmingly a story of imperialist domination, where race, gender, and proximity to the colonial power operate together in shaping asymmetrical sexual relationships. However, if we take a closer look, if we examine these issues at the micro level, other aspects and even reverse tendencies can be detected. Legionnaires as mercenaries can, only with reservations, be considered as representatives of the colonial power. Their status and the treatment they received are actually more closely comparable to that of colonial subjects serving in the French army. Their sexual practices, be they same-sex relations among themselves or liaisons with African and Asian civilians, were most often entered into not least for the purpose of escaping the conditions of their service, if only for brief periods of time. In these moments, different events of mutual acculturation took place, making, as outlined above, Legionnaires more “African” or “Asian” and their sexual partners more “European.” On the other hand, these very contacts also deepened the feelings of humiliation experienced by many colonial subjects, inflaming or at least increasing a desire for revenge, or even more extreme, the longing to get rid of the colonial system altogether. The texts considered in this contribution, however, devote little if any attention to this aspect of the dynamics examined here, thus demonstrating the topical limitations of their use as primary sources.

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The Embodiment of Sin and Virtue. Visual Representations of a Religious Concept in a Colonial Andean Contact Zone

ASTRID WINDUS

The search for “embodiments of cultural contact” is a search for traces of cultural transformation that transgress the boundaries of language. One facet of these embodiments is the visualization of cultural concepts through different forms and techniques of materialization such as images, statues, or objects for ritual or daily use. This article will look at an example from the colonial Andean contact zone, a monumental painting entitled *Hell (Infierno)* from 1684 (Fig. 1), by the artist José López de los Ríos and located in the church of Carabuco, on the eastern shores of Lake Titicaca in Bolivia.

The town of Carabuco, including its people, its church, and its paintings, is part of a contact zone which, according to Mary Louise Pratt’s concept, is considered a space of communication where historical actors of different ethnic and social backgrounds coexisted, interacted, and constituted themselves as subjects (7). I will therefore examine the processes of cultural transformation within this space as communications that at the same time represent *and* constitute the cultural and social orders of this zone.

As we will see, despite its title the image cannot be seen only as a representation of the Christian idea of hell. It visualizes the transfer of an abstract Christian order and categorization of human behavior – the scheme of human vices – to a material representation of bodies and bodily performances, which is embedded within the context of the Lake Titicaca region. The linkage to local and/or indigenous knowledge systems is realized through different visualization techniques and intermedial connections to cross-cultural narratives and performances typical for the colonial contact zone.

These first assumptions about the image raise a number of questions that serve as a guideline for my analysis: what are the ideas represented in this painting, and how are they represented? What kind of visual systems underlie these embodiments of sin and virtue? And how can we describe the cross-cultural and intermedial dimensions as well as the performative dimensions of such images? After

a short introduction to the role and impact of visual sources within the colonial contact zone as a space of communication, I will come back to these questions.

Communication and Representation in the Colonial Contact Zone

One possible approach for analyzing representational systems as elements of cultural transformation is using the methodology of communication theory. Following this path, we can consider the contact zone as a space constituted by and represented through communication that creates an internal representational order and demarcates its boundaries in relation to its environment and its particular representational systems.

In all cultures, communication processes take place through different kinds of media and the intermedial linkages between them. Classical communication theory and many of the historians working with these concepts roughly divide them into two groups: media of face-to-face communication and media used in forms of communication that exceed time and space (“secondary media”). Face-to-face communication is characterized by the presence of sender and receiver and achieved through media that are inseparable from the human body. Secondary media replace the direct social interaction between sender and receiver, detaching the communication process from its spatiotemporal attachment (Pross 10; Schwerhoff 138; Werlen 384).¹ In his description of this phenomenon, Marshall McLuhan denominates all kinds of media as extensions of the human body (McLuhan 17).

Communication processes in the colonial contact zone were significantly marked by the encounter of diverse (“European,” “indigenous,” “African”) stocks of knowledge and the narrative, visual, symbolic, and performative representational systems by which this knowledge was produced, communicated, and (re-)configured. Additionally, the “specific material conditions of medial configurations” must also be taken into account. Considering the fact that “the reception, storage, transmission, multiplication and reproduction of information, as well as its processing are based on materializations,” “the question of availability of equipments and technologies” is not only “of crucial importance for the historicity of medial configurations” (Schlögl 169). The material conditions of communication are also, in a more diachronic sense, a key factor for the production of

1 Few historical studies dare to go beyond the limits of textual analysis in order to explore the field of non-textual communication that exceeds time and space. In most publications on communication history, the analysis of secondary media is focused on two “classical” European forms of communication, i.e., printing and writing, without reference to other (e.g., non-European) media. Jörn Sieglerschmidt discusses this problem from a general point of view (439), and art historian Tom Cummins regarding the special case of Latin American cultural history (140 ff.). An exceptional and very helpful text for a further discussion of these questions is Rudolf Schlögl, “Kommunikation und Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden.”

meaning in cross-cultural contexts such as the Andean case. As a consequence, Eurocentric models of communication, along with their terminologies, have to be adapted to the contexts of cultural contact zones. This includes a broader understanding of media and the characteristics of intermedial entanglements, together with a closer consideration of the “customs and objects of tradition” instead of an exclusive attachment to the written word (Cummins 140).

In the case of the *Infierno* from Carabuco (and maybe also in a more general sense) the separation of face-to-face communication and communication that exceeds time and space seems to be problematic. Instead, I would like to propose two alternative categories: first, “performances of knowledge” through the body by such modes as mimicry, gesture, speech, dance, and music; and second, “materializations of knowledge.” In the cross-cultural context of the colonial Andes (a region without pre-Hispanic writing traditions), this second category embraces a variety of media mostly excluded from common models of communication, for example knotted strings (*quipu*), textiles, ritual objects, but also more ‘classical’ ones like pictograms, scriptures, or painted images. Despite their ‘material character’, these forms of representation cannot be understood outside their linkages to the performative aspect since they are intrinsically related to the spatiotemporal contexts in which they are located. This seems obvious with regard to mnemonic media² like *quipu*, textiles, pictographic texts, or ritual landscapes, which always need to be decoded and narratively communicated by an expert. But this is also the case with painted images such as the *Infierno*. In many ways these images follow European pictorial traditions but nevertheless are produced, staged, and received within an intermedial structure of (cross-cultural) knowledge.³ Considering these factors I will use a communication model that understands communication processes as a constant intermedial linkage between the performative and material levels of knowledge production. The image I will analyze – the visual embodiments of sin and virtue in José de los Ríos’s *Infierno* – is one plausible product of these dynamic structures.

For the Christianization of the native population of the Americas, visual representations played the most significant roles, though oral speech, written texts, and performative and auditive forms of expression were also part of the tools of conversion. Images opened multiple spheres of action for all historical actors and institutions involved in their production and reception.

The decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) regarding the use of religious images applied to the Spanish colonies as well. The corresponding paragraphs from the Second Council of Lima (1567) state that “the images of Christ, the virgin Mother of God and the Saints [...] shall be hung up in the churches, they shall be venerated and adored, but not because it is to believe that they for themselves may be virtuous or divine [...]. For these images are a kind of scrip-

2 Memory aids.

3 Without elaborating, it seems important to note that this hypothesis may apply not only to phenomena of the so-called contact zone, but also to other cultural contexts.

ture which represents something and insinuates whom it represents [...]” (Vargas Ugarte 1, 231).

Despite the overall presence of indigenous ‘idoltrous’ practices so desperately combated by Catholic authorities, the didactic potential of religious images for Christianization was believed to be of such importance that the possibility of their unsanctioned veneration by the natives was accepted. Nevertheless, the text from 1567 mentions the ambiguous relationship between the material image and the represented subject, which constituted a serious problem for the Catholic Church since early Christian times. Whereas Catholic doctrine regarded religious images as references to the *ideas* they represented, the Spaniards saw the native ‘idols’ (*huacas*) as venerated *objects*. Whereas the Catholic veneration of an image referred to the represented saint “through the act of remembering” (Baumgarten 37), the veneration of the ‘idol’ was directed, in the eyes of the Spaniards, to the object itself.

If we follow this distinction between ‘image’ and ‘idol’ such different understandings of material representations can be seen as markers of cultural order and, as art historian Hans Belting states, as central elements of collective identity (53). In addition, the distinction itself, as established by Catholic doctrine, represents a discursive element that delineated the boundaries of Christian and indigenous spaces of knowledge and power. Therefore, the Christian distinction between ‘image’ and ‘idol’ will be avoided in the further course of this essay.

To analyze representations appropriately, W. J. T. Mitchell states that “the question of the *relation* between the represented and the representing material is of crucial importance” (83). An object can represent something and be understood as a representation of something. But to recognize this relation does not mean that we comprehend the reasons for this successful collective understanding or that we can identify the common body of knowledge that underlies it. One conclusion to draw from these remarks is that the objective of our analysis should not be limited to the meanings of single representations, but that we should query the *structures of reference* on which these assignments of meaning are based – an ambitious goal to attain considering the complexity of the material. Nonetheless, it will serve as an orientation for my further comments about the *Infierno* of Carabuco, starting with a description and brief interpretation of its forms and contents.

The Image and Its Representations

The *Infierno* (Fig. 1) is one of four paintings representing the “Four Last Things” of human life: Purgatory (*Purgatorio*), Last Judgement (*Juicio Final*), Hell (*Infierno*), and Heaven (*Gloria*). All the paintings are of monumental size, the *Purgatorio* 4.12 x 4.94 m, *Juicio Final* 4.14 x 8.16 m, the *Infierno* 4.21 x 8.34 m, and the *Gloria* 4.12 x 5 m (Viceministerio de Cultura et. al., n.p.). They are located



Fig. 1: José López de los Ríos. *Inferno*. In: *El Purgatorio*. Courtesy of Carlos Rua.

on both sides of the church's lateral walls. The *Infierno* is divided horizontally into three levels.

1. Upper level

The *Infierno*'s upper level contains five genre scenes. The first four, starting on the left, are arranged side by side against the background of the Andean mountains with the sky stretching across them. The fifth scene, on the far right, is visually distinct from the other four. In the first scene from the left, a parish priest with a black beret preaches from a pulpit to groups of indigenous, Spanish and/or mestizo people, identifiable by their clothing. Indigenous women kneel on the floor on both sides of the pulpit, looking up at the priest. The two women on the left wear a sort of pointed cap or hood that is similar to those used by the indigenous chronicler Guaman Poma de Ayala from 1615/1616 to depict *colla* women (Poma de Ayala 326).⁴

The posture of the kneeling women indicates humility, and one of them is kissing the priest's shirt sleeve. Behind the priest stands a figure that can be identified by its clothes and beard as a Spaniard. His erectness and his look contrast with the god-fearing posture of the kneeling believers. He is being indoctrinated by a demon whispering in his ear. Standing next to the Spaniard are two other male figures, these of unknown ethnic origin, talking with each other instead of listening to the priest's words. These three figures can be seen as embodiments of the first and worst of the Seven Deadly Sins, the *superbia*, a synthesis of pride, vanity, arrogance, and soaring above God. They represent the vicious counterpart of kneeling humility, one of the main Christian virtues. This juxtaposition of sin and virtue represents a technique of visual communication that has appeared in European texts and images since antiquity (Bloomfield 69).

The representation from Carabuco resembles medieval European iconography in which *superbia*, as the worst of all Deadly Sins, was commonly placed first in the cycles of paintings representing the Seven Deadly Sins (Blöcker 58). The idea of *superbia* as the "original" sin that gave birth to all the others, can be traced back to Pope Gregory the Great (Angenendt 590-604). Visualized in ostensible "schemes of vices," it spread through catechisms and books of penitence during the Middle Ages (Angenendt 616-17). It was Gregory who defined the Seven Deadly Sins, classifying them within a strict order that followed the *siaagl* system: *superbia* (Pride), *ira* (Rage), *invidia* (Envy), *avaritia* (Avarice), *acedia* (Sloth), *gula* (Gluttony), and *luxuria* (Lust) (Bloomfield 72). Compared to other systems of classification, the Gregorian *siaagl* scheme was the most influential in shaping medieval bodies of knowledge (73).

4 The Inca Empire was divided into four sections, or *suyus*, with the ceremonial and political capital of Cuzco at its center: *Chinchaysuyu* to the north, *Collasuyu* to the south, *Cuntisuyu* to the west, and *Antisuyu* to the east. The inhabitants of *Collasuyu* (today's northwest Bolivia, northern and central Chile, and northwest Argentina, including the region covered by this study) were called *collas*.

The Christianization of the New World and the need for didactic support in the instruction of the natives brought this idea to the Americas. Schemes for the classification of vices were used as mnemonic tools in the indoctrination of the native populations. They were presented in combination with other religious concepts whose internal structure was also based on the number seven (Angenendt 617). Andrés Serrano for example, a Jesuit who worked during the sixteenth century as a priest in Mexico and the Philippines, used this strategy. Taking recourse to the medieval schemes, he created a system of correspondence (Table 1) that related divine and earthly phenomena with representations of good and evil, all of which were based on the number seven (Mujica Pinilla 229).

Planets	Angels	Cardinal Virtues	Virtues of the Holy Ghost	Demons	Deadly Sins	Heavenly virtues
Sun	Michael	Faith	Wisdom	Leviathan	Pride	Humility
Moon	Gabriel	Hope	Understanding	Mammon	Avarice	Kindness
Mars	Rafael	Love	Council	Asmodeus	Lust	Chastity
Mercury	Uriel	Prudence	Fortitude	Berith	Rage	Patience
Jupiter	Sealtiel	Temperance	Knowledge	Belphegor	Gluttony	Temperance
Venus	Jehudiel	Courage	Piety	Beelzebub	Envy	Charity
Saturn	Barachiel	Justice	Fear of the Lord	Astaroth	Sloth	Diligence

Table 1: Andrés Serrano's system of correspondence of good and evil forces (seventeenth century). (Mujica Pinilla 229)

Each planet of the geocentric model corresponds to a specific archangel, to one of the seven Cardinal Virtues, to one of the seven Virtues of the Holy Ghost, to a specific demon, and to one of the Deadly Sins. And each sin is countered by one of the seven Heavenly Virtues (Mujica Pinilla 228-29). Texts such as Guaman Poma de Ayala's *Nueva Corónica* indicate that this or a similar system of association was in use in colonial Peru (Mujica Pinilla 229).

The second scene from the left in *Infierno* shows a priest hearing the confession of a woman in a Spanish dress kneeling in front of him. Snakes seem to be emerging out of her mouth and are crawling down her body. Both figures are framed by an angel on the left, clad in a red dress with lace-embroidered sleeves, and on the right, in the back of the woman, by a winged demon. The demon besieges the woman, while the angel spreads his arms. The parallel composition of angel and demon corresponds to the idea of a symmetrical order of good and evil powers that engage in a constant struggle over human souls.

This scene does not necessarily have to be read as representing a specific sin, but can also be interpreted as depicting the practice of confession and exorcism. It

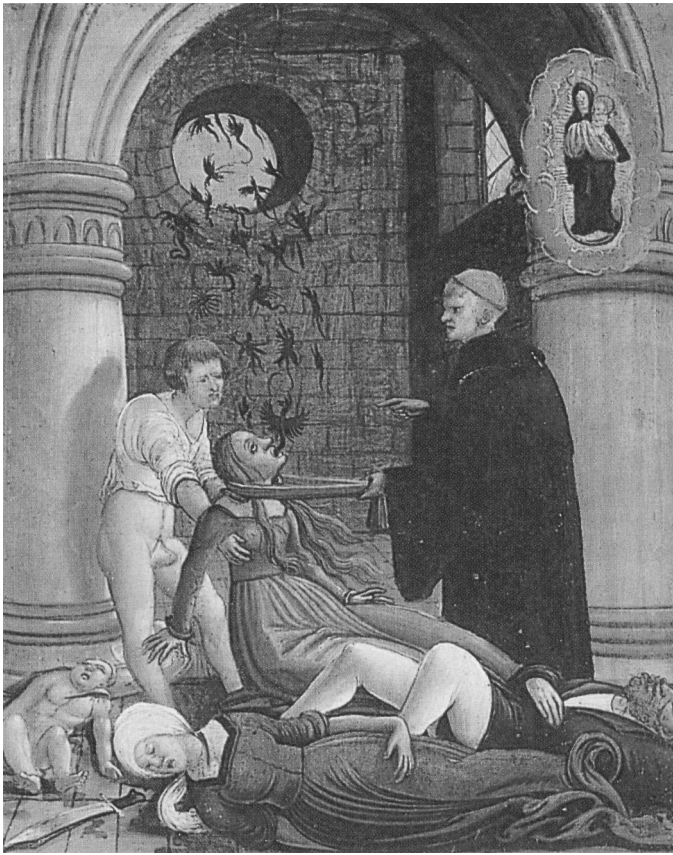


Fig. 2:
 “Exorcism performed
 on a woman who
 killed her child
 and parents.”
*Großer Marienzeller
 Wunderaltar.*

bears a striking resemblance to an “allegorical representation of exorcism” (Barbosa Falconí) from sixteenth/seventeenth-century Peru: a copper engraving entitled *La catequización de Tupac Amaru I* (*The Christianization of Tupac Amaru I*).⁵ Here, a figure of Inca royal descent kneels in front of a Jesuit priest in a posture of confession while snakes emerge from his mouth. A comparison with a testimonial text from the Jesuit Antonio de la Vega reveals that Tupac Amaru I, the last Inca leader, executed by the Spaniards in 1572, was converted to Christianity by the Jesuits in Cuzco before his death. Following Eduardo Barbosa Falconí’s interpretation of the image, receiving the Christian faith allowed Tupac Amaru to “expel the symbols of paganism and idolatry,” that is the snake, “from his body” (Barbosa Falconí). Considering the usually dramatic nature of written descriptions of exorcisms as fierce battles between exorcists and demons,⁶ as well as of other paintings dealing with the same topic (Fig. 2), the question arises of whether “exorcism” is the adequate term to describe the performances of the represented

5 Colección Barbosa-Stern. 1 March 2010 <<http://www.barbosa-stern.org/homepage.html>>
 The website indicates different datings of the work, sixteenth century and 1617.

6 See, for example, Ramos Gavilán 99 ff.

figures. It seems more appropriate to use the term “confession,” which indicates that the woman is voluntarily going to renounce the devil and do penance.

Referring to the same copperplate image, Estenssoro Fuchs exposes the Jesuit strategy of embodying the concept of sin through the visual representation of specific animals such as frogs, snakes, or spiders that might invade the body of the sinners. The only way to purify the body from this physical contamination is to expel the satanic incorporations, “to vomit the demons and ugly frogs,” as directed in the *Third Catechism* from 1585 (“Tercero Catecismo” 484). “The sin [...] took the shape of a living being, individualized, stressing its countable character, but also animated and able to act against the sinner” (Estenssoro Fuchs 212; translation by AW). These textual or visual embodiments of sin were part of doctrinal texts as well as visual representations of the practice of confession.

In the third scene of *Infierno*, two women in indigenous clothes kneel in front of a devil dressed in a traditional *uncu*.⁷ The women look up at the devil, raising with him a pair of ritual Andean drinking cups (*queros*). Four figures in traditional clothes, but two with European-style hats, stand on the devil’s right side. All four figures are barefoot, a typical visual marker of belonging to the group of *indios*. The two people in the center of the whole ensemble – one of them showing the devil’s attributes – are playing such autochthonous instruments as the pan-pipe and the tambourine. The figure with the devil horns is wearing bands made with shells on his calves.

An important detail of this ensemble is the needle (*tupu*) in the shape of a moon, which is worn by one of the two kneeling women. In Inca cosmology, the female moon was regarded as a divine principle, wife and sister of the male sun, and creator of all women (Silverblatt 47, 51). As a divine authority, the moon held control over all phenomena concerning women and the ritual practices associated with the female sphere (Silverblatt 50-51). This religious concept maintained its power under Spanish rule. The *queros* and the *tupu*, therefore, refer to the existence of those ritual practices that subverted the efforts of the missionaries to eradicate them. And veneration of the moon was not the only religious performance that continued to be carried out after the conquest. This raises a couple of questions: are we dealing with an aspect of Andean religiosity that was extraordinarily popular among the indigenous population? Should we read this practice as a symbol of female resistance against Christian indoctrination? Or should we interpret it as a sign that points to one of the most important sanctuaries of pre-Hispanic religiousness: the Moon temple situated on an island in Lake Titicaca located near the town of Carabuco?

The inclusion of the four people to the right of the devil allows still another reading. The combination of ritual drinking with music and dance (*taki*) was such a powerful cultural practice within the indigenous communities that the Spaniards never managed to abolish it. Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities sought to

7 *Uncu*: Andean men’s garment, similar to a tunic (Phipps 239).

root out the *taki* practices because of their “conspiratorial” and “idolatrous” character (Estenssoro Fuchs 161). They continued, however, to play an important role not only for Andean religiosity, but also for the oral and performative transmission of knowledge through music, chant, and the choreography of the *takis* (Abercrombie 52). And *queros* continued to serve as indispensable objects for all kinds of drinking rituals, religious as well as social (194).

Considering the discourse of the ecclesiastical authorities since the second half of the sixteenth century, when the idea of a “persistence of a pre-Hispanic idolatrous past” became the dominant motif in Catholic Andean texts (Estenssoro Fuchs 162), reading the ensemble as a visualization of idolatry seems the obvious one. Although idolatry was not part of the Gregorian scheme, it remained one of the main biblical sins (Angenendt 616)⁸ and, regarding the historical context, it is not surprising that it constituted part of the scheme of Deadly Sins visualized by de los Ríos’s painting.

The fourth scene shows a drinking session of another kind. The people involved are dressed in Spanish clothes; the first figure from the left is shown in a gesture of greeting and submission, bowing his knee, taking off his hat, and drinking from a glass. He and the woman beside him look up toward the sky. Their attention seems to be focused on something that is connected to the rope held by the horned figure (devil) next to them. Unfortunately whatever is at the other end of the rope isn’t visible to the viewer. Two figures sit to the right of the devil, one playing a guitar. Behind them, at the top of a tree, another figure in Spanish dress is sleeping.

On the right side of the tree we see the backs of two (apparently female) kneeling figures, naked and with long hair. A third naked person has just been cut in two by a skeleton’s scythe, a representation of death. At the foot of the tree sits a black and a white *viscacha*, a rodent related to the chinchilla and a typical inhabitant of the Andean Highland (*altiplano*).

This ensemble indicates three different kinds of sin: Gluttony (the kneeling man drinking from the cup), Sloth (the man sleeping in the top of the tree), and Lust (the three naked figures). It is interesting that despite the frequent occurrence of the topic ‘Indian drunkenness’ in the written sources, it is not the supposed indigenous ‘inclination’ to drink and celebrate that is visualized as Gluttony; Gluttony as well as Sloth are embodied by Spanish characters. With regard to the representation of Lust, it is difficult to make a statement about its supposed ‘ethnic’ classification. Perhaps the light-colored pigmentation of the three naked female bodies points to a European origin. But that would completely contradict the colonial demographics: immigration rates for female Europeans were very low. It was common practice for male Spaniards to engage in extramarital sexual relations and father illegitimate children with indigenous or Mestizo women

8 Angenendt refers to the first letter of John in the New Testament (1 John 5:16).

(Twinam 10). That makes it even more striking that the (male) artist decided to visualize Lust through the representation of ‘female’ bodies light in color.

While we can read the action of Death and his scythe as a clear reference to the transience of lustful life, the two *viscachas* escape the interpretations of classical iconography. Even so, a comparison with animal symbolism in European painting suggests that the Andean *viscacha* replaces the rabbit, whose extraordinary rates of reproduction were associated with the sin of lust (Dittrich and Dittrich 202-03).

Infierno's fifth and last scene, the image on the far right, shows a bearded man lying in a bed. His face expresses suffering; he holds a cross in his hand. He is being consoled by a figure on the far side of the bed who is holding a candle. At the foot of the bed stands an angel; from underneath the bed a demon tries to grab the recumbent figure. This scene refers to a pictorial tradition that goes back to the late medieval literary genre of *Ars moriendi* (the art of dying). These texts were used to prepare someone for a Christian death, helping the dying person to reflect on life after death, the Last Judgment, Heaven and Hell, his or her own sins and misdeeds, and the firmness of his or her own faith (Angenendt 663-64). They were often supplemented by visual representations, which illustrated the temptations and struggles of the dying person through images of devils and demons and the respective consolations by saints, angels, apostles, the Virgin Mary, or God himself (Jezler 262-63).

In this Bolivian version of an *Ars moriendi* scene the good elements predominate. The consolations by the figure on the far side of the bed, the cross, and the possible salvation offered by the angel seem to be winning the struggle for the soul of the dying figure against the devil, whose inferiority is shown by his position beneath the bed. A comparison with other *Ars moriendi* images suggests that the small ‘heavenly’ ensemble, located in the sky between the tree and the representation of death in the previous (fourth) scene, belongs to this scene as well. The previous scene shows a figure that resembles Jesus with a red cloak and encircled by light. A woman in a nun’s habit is kneeling in front of him, receiving her redemption. The dying figure in the final scene looks in the direction of this act of salvation, which represents the hope of the penitent sinner for deliverance after death.

2. Central level

The central level of the painting represents the Christian hell and is located below the earthly sphere. Despite the clear separation of the two levels, it is possible to identify two permeable areas (one beneath the confession ensemble and one beneath the tambourine player in the third scene), where the evil vapors of the underworld rise to the earthly realm.

The inscription between the two levels says: “Here we are, because we have sinned. They will be thrown into the fire. There is wailing and gnashing of teeth in hell. There is no salvation.” Below the text we see representations of the eter-

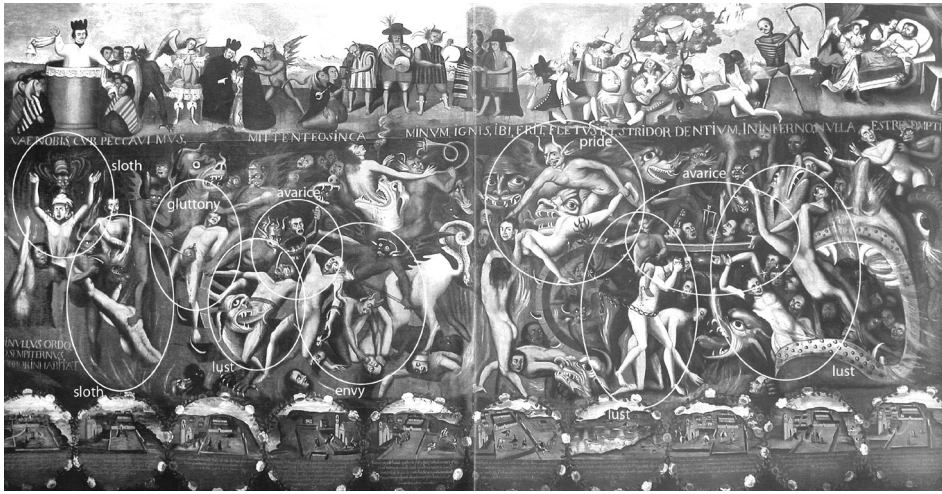


Fig. 3: Representations of the Deadly Sins in José López de los Ríos *Inferno*. Courtesy of Carlos Rua.

nal pains of hell that sinners can expect to suffer. Devils, demons, sinners, the whole environment are depicted in a style that closely follows medieval European versions of the topic. The visual contextualization between hell and the Deadly Sins also points to a European pictorial tradition in which every single sin committed on earth is penalized by a specific punishment in the underworld (Blöcker 26-27). Such a differentiation of the agonies of hell can be traced back to the end of the fifteenth century, for example to paintings such as *The Four Last Things* by Hieronymus Bosch (ca. 1490) or the pictorial representations of the Deadly Sins by Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1557) (Blöcker 26; Dixon 13-14; Klein 179 ff.).

Sloth is being punished by having a vise put on its head in one case, in another scene a demon is going to nail a horseshoe on it. Gluttony's bowels are being ripped out, Lust is ridden by a demon, thrown into a jaw of hell, and its genitals are being bitten off. Envy is having its tongue cut out, Pride is racked on a wheel; Avarice, in one instance, is forced to drink liquid metal, and in another case is thrown into a jaw of hell, and being cooked in a metal cauldron (Fig. 3).⁹

While the hellish agonies corresponding to Lust, Gluttony, Envy, and Sloth are represented several times, Rage cannot clearly be identified, and the practice of idolatry has no corresponding punishment in hell. The visualization of the Gregorian canon is, therefore, on both levels, neither consistent nor complete. The visualization of the sins and their commensurate punishments in the different spheres doesn't follow the kind of symmetrical order illustrated in Bosch's *Four Last Things*. The system of correspondences seems to be more chaotic and characterized by irregularities.

9 Iconographic analysis based on Blöcker 200 ff. and Viceministerio de Cultura, et. al., '*El Purgatorio*' n.p.

3. Lower level

On the lower level of the *Infierno* we can see ten medallions framed by garlands of flowers which portray the miracles of the *Cruz de Carabuco* (Cross of Carabuco). According to the legend of the *Cruz de Carabuco*, during the times before the conquest, an apostle (also known as Tunupa and associated with the Andean creator god Viracocha) appeared at Lake Titicaca to convert the indigenous population to the Catholic faith.¹⁰ He raised a cross at the top of a hill near Carabuco and went about fulfilling his mission, but the native people, under the influence of the devil, mistreated him and injured him seriously. They put him in a reed boat on the water and he was never seen again.

Subsequently, the devil ordered the native people to destroy the cross, but they were unable to even scratch it. To get rid of the cross, they had to bury it on the shores of the lake. Only after the arrival of the Spaniards was the cross recovered; it was excavated and began to perform miracles. Later, two crosses were fashioned out of the original, of which one copy was brought to the cathedral of the diocesan town of Chuquisaca (Sucre). The other copy serves as the central element of the Carabuco church's main altar. It is, in fact, not 'just' a cross but a crucifix (Fig. 4). Jesus is painted on its surface, with one saint on each side of the crossbeam and Maria Magdalena below Jesus' feet. It is framed and adorned by gold- and silverwork.¹¹

The medallions on the *Infierno*, identified by numerals from 21 to 30, count off the last part of the legend, that is, the performance of the miracles of the cross. Each medallion consists of an image and a textual element, with an explicit reference (in the medallion on the far right) to the written record of the Augustinian friar Antonio de la Calancha, who worked as a priest in the region. The images are mere comic-like illustrations of Calancha's text, painted in a schematic style. Important for the purpose of this essay is their function as spatial markers by locating not only the narrative of the legend of Tunupa, but also of the whole painting visually within the local geography of Carabuco, the *altiplano*, the mountain peaks of the *Cordillera Real*, and Lake Titicaca. The visual embodiment of the abstract Christian idea of sin and virtue, therefore, is not only shown within a more general context of 'indigenous' or 'Andean' cultural space but directly related to the specific *local* place of its material existence.

There is a striking contrast between *Infierno*'s central level, where the Christian God is absent, and the lower level, where the miracles of the cross represent

10 There are different narrations about the apostle Tunupa/Viracocha and the cross of Carabuco. The most important references are Alonso Ramos Gavilán's *Historia del Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana* (1589), Antonio de la Calancha's *Corónica Moralizada del Orden des San Agustín en el Perú* (1638), and Guaman Poma de Ayala's *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615). The short version of this essay goes back to what Veronica Salles-Reese called its master narrative (Salles Reese 137 ff.) and to Teresa Gisbert's summary (Gisbert 35 ff.).

11 At this point, I have no information either about the circumstances under which the crucifix was painted on the cross or about the dating of the image.



Fig. 4:
Cruz de Tunupa
 (Tulupa). Church of Car-
 abuco, Dept. La Paz,
 Bolivia.

the intervention of God on earth. The differences concerning the contents of the images are reinforced by their formal design. Hell is visualized as an exuberant chaos, which eclipses the rest of the painting and immediately draws the viewer's attention. The single scenes that describe the pains of the sinners in detail flow into each other. This rhetoric of simultaneity and movement is opposed to the small and static images and texts of the lower level. Meanwhile, the visualization of hell seems to be perfect in evoking emotional reactions of shock and fear in the viewer, it is more difficult to identify the representation of God's intervention on earth.

The visualization of the divine powers in the lower level is not designed to summon strong reactions such as religious ecstasy or divine veneration, even if either of those states were an adequate reaction to God's appearance. There is no emotional access to the message: the only way of understanding it is intellectually, either through knowledge of the facts stated in the text or oral transmission. The picture tells the story of the holy cross, but reverence for it cannot be found through contemplating the *Infierno* or the other three monumental paintings that recount the rest of the legend in the same style. What is venerated, especially on

the third of May, the “Feast of the Cross,” is the object itself, the cross of the main altar, which has become a relic, a carrier of the divine power of the Apostle.

The three levels of the image correspond to two different spheres of the cosmos. The scenes from the upper and the lower level represent the here and now. The visualization of the colonial world in the upper part allows the viewer to make direct associations with everyday’s life. The dominant central level represents the hereafter reserved for the sinners. Despite the fatalistic inscription between upper and central level, the painting offers alternatives that may represent an escape from the terrifying destiny in store for those who have transgressed. In the upper level, Jesus on his cloud is presented as the embodiment of hope for the sinners on earth. The lower level shows God’s intervention against evil through the miracles of the cross.

The extreme forms of staging and theatricalization of the central level are intended to engender in the viewer an immediate, almost physical perception of the horrors of hell. In contrast, the possibilities of escaping the sinner’s destiny and living a virtuous life can only be realized through meditation and inward reflection while contemplating the image.¹² The embodiment of sin in both spheres is realized through the representation of bodies. But with exception of the snakes and *viscachas*, the human bodies shown in the picture do not exhibit any attributes or physical deformations that can be interpreted as symbols for specific vices, as is often found in European paintings. It is not the physical appearance of the bodies themselves, but their *performance* that is used to symbolize the different kinds of human misbehavior.

The difference between the indigenous and the European figures on the upper level is represented not only by their clothes, but, in the case of the men, by their beards. In the central level, this difference is blurred. Some of the naked bodies have different pigmentations, but in most cases, with the exception of the Negro figure on the lower left and the men with the beards, the ethnic origin of the naked figures remains indeterminate.

The only example of embodiment of sin through the representation of indigenous bodies is the case of idolatry. The other sins are pictured as actions performed by Spaniards and Mestizos. In fact, the only Christian virtue shown in the painting, humility, is performed by the natives. This example demonstrates that the communication of Christian norms of behavior was realized through European pictorial traditions. However, they were transferred to the local space of communication and modified according to existing bodies of knowledge and visual systems. But how did these unidirectional forms of disseminating information lead to a multidirectional communication process between all the parties concerned? In other words, in which ways did the different historical actors (individuals as well as institutions) deal with this knowledge and its materializations on a practical and performative level?

¹² For more information about the practices of inward reflection, meditation, and contemplation as intended reactions to certain forms of visualization, see Blöcker 55.

The Sphere of Institutional Dominance

As I mentioned earlier, the production of religious images was subject to extensive and strict forms of control by the Catholic Church. But regulations applied not only to the motifs, forms, and contents of the pictures and objects. They also issued specific instructions regarding their proper *use* by the believers. The *Major Catechism* (*Catecismo Mayor*), published in 1584 as part of the official doctrine following the Third Council of Lima in 1583, described the proper ways of praying and using images during prayer. According to the text, every Christian should first make the sign of the cross with holy water, then kneel down and hold his hands “in a position of devotion.” The churches, it says, will provide ornaments and perform “holy ceremonies” to support the believers in their devotions. Everything should “stimulate the veneration of God, the will to believe in him and to serve him forever with one’s soul *and* body” (“Catecismo Mayor” 165-66; emphasis added).

The *Third Catechism* (*Tercero Catecismo*), published one year later in 1585, states that during their daily visits to church for the purpose of praying, indigenous people should kiss the cross, contemplate and venerate the images, and bow their heads while passing them (“Tercero Catecismo” 712-13).

Consequently, we are dealing with two forms of disciplining: first, the “disciplining of the view” of the indigenous population through the visual staging of a Christian rhetoric that was explicitly directed to create and manipulate emotions and to transfer ideas. This scenic staging of the image so typical of the (post-Tridentine) Baroque (de Véricourt 43) was not only aimed to facilitate the conveyance of knowledge and the ability to decipher Christian signs, symbols, and their structures in ways that supported church doctrine. In addition, the Christian claim to absoluteness regarding ‘the only true’ representational relationship between image and represented idea had to be asserted against Andean visual systems that comprised different structures of reference. Christian dogma defined the devotional picture as a representation of a transcendent and supernatural holiness:

Christians do not adore images of wood and metal for themselves, like heretics do; they do not think that they contain virtue and divinity, but while contemplating what they represent, they adore Jesus Christ on his cross, and they venerate the Virgin Mary through her image, and the other saints who are in heaven, begging for their favor, and they give reverence to the images, not for what they are, but for what they represent. (“Catecismo Mayor” 137-39; translation by AW)

In contrast, there was no strict separation between the sacral and the earthly sphere in Andean cosmology, a fact that was of crucial importance for indigenous systems of representation. Devotional images like the *huacas* were part of the sacralization of nature; they reflected the cosmological as well as the worldly and social order (de Véricourt 41).

The Catholic ‘disciplining of the view’ went hand in hand with regulations on the performative level. The close connection between images, Catholic theology and liturgy or cult – a set of ritual performances which are connected through collective beliefs and common institutional roots (Lang 474) – required a ‘disciplining of the bodies’ to control the ritual and symbolic practices linked to the image or object of devotion. One reason for this was to avoid the veneration of Christian images through indigenous ‘idolatrous’ performances. Another problem was the ‘anarchy of rites’ within the Catholic Church. The infrastructural problems and the cultural and linguistic difficulties during Christianization required a flexible handling of the doctrine and the accommodation of Christian norms and traditions to specific cultural environments. For that reason, the uniformity of the ritual order had been seriously threatened by representatives of the Church themselves. This situation is reflected in the texts of the *Doctrina Cristiana* and in manuals for priests published after the Third Council of Lima (Taylor 41).

The Sphere of the Historical Actor

Unfortunately, but also unsurprisingly, there are (still) no written sources available to provide information about the reception of the *Infierno* by its beholders. How the autochthonous population of Carabuco interacted with religious images, whether they followed the instructions of the Church regarding devotional practices, or whether they developed their own readings and performances remain open questions. We can, however, formulate some general hypotheses that conceivably might also apply to the case of Carabuco and the de los Ríos *Infierno*.

As Virginie de Véricourt explains, images support the cult, as well as stones, mountains, and meteorological phenomena, all of which had the same function in Andean religiosity. The image issues an invitation to see, and to see is to recognize. Therefore, the image inspires the seeing of what someone already knows (de Véricourt 49). And this knowledge differs greatly between and within the groups of Spaniards and Indians.

It is possible to read the representations of indigenous religious performance on the upper level of *Infierno* as embodiments of idolatry, but also as mnemonic aids for remembering how to carry out Andean cultural practice. Connecting the visual inscription of the Christian dogma to the reality of the Andean *altiplano* through the representation of local topographies such as the Andean mountains or Lake Titicaca served as a didactic strategy. Christian knowledge was ‘localized’ and indigenous actors were included in its narration. On the other hand, as Rolena Adorno observed, “the mountainous landscape that formed part of the Golden Age of the ancient Andeans becomes the universal emblem of Andean experience” (116). Moreover, while the Christian narration about the Apostles is continued by the inclusion of a local myth (the legend of Tunupa/Viracocha), the effects of this intermedial linkage may also have strengthened indigenous struc-

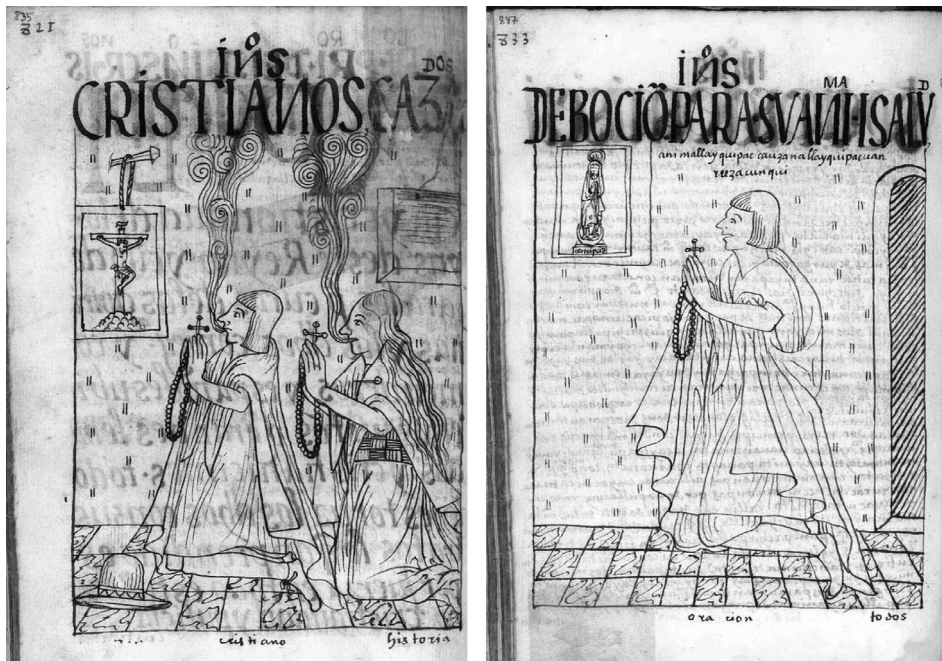


Fig. 5: Felipe Poma de Ayala, “Indios. Cristianos cazados” (left) & “Indios. Deboción para su anima y salud” (right). 1615. *El Primer Nueva Corónica* 835, 847.

tures of reference. Because, as Tom Cummins remarks, “the tactile and visual world in relation to oral discourse remained for Andeans the form through which Andeans ‘inscribed’ their existence” (94). Which means that Andean representational structures and practices continued to be valid and ‘in use’, even in the face of Christian visualizations (Cummins 94; de Véricourt 41).

Despite this strong ambiguity of possible readings of the painting, images like the *Infierno* supported the Catholic cult and were closely related to Catholic dogma. They represent a visual synthesis of the essences of Christian doctrine, written down in texts like the Catechisms cited above: the concept of sin and virtue, the seven Deadly Sins and their counterconcepts, the punishments in hell for earthly misbehavior, and the sacrament of penitence or confession during the different stages of human life. These were all closely related to the multiple forms of ritual performance that took place in the church every single day.

It is likely that toward the end of the seventeenth century indigenous people knew very well the ritual codes of conduct prescribed by Catholic doctrine. In his *Nueva Corónica*, Guaman Poma de Ayala visualizes these prescriptions. The drawings show indigenous people praying in front of religious images of Jesus Christ (Fig. 5, left) and the Virgin Mary (Fig. 5, right). The represented bodies seem to exactly fulfill all the above-cited regulations issued by the Council of Lima. The question is whether we are dealing here with a visual representation

of the official doctrine or an ‘illustration’ of the common behavior of indigenous Catholics.

Due to its size, the *Infierno* was visible from almost any place within the church. It was an essential part of the *Four Last Things* series, and of the entire visual program of the church, which included, in addition to other paintings, ornaments and objects of veneration, the main altar with the relic of the cross. The *Infierno* was a useful didactic instrument to refer to during confession or other parts of the liturgy. Those who confessed, as well as their confessors, could use it during their performances as a mnemonic aid and it served the priest as a source to illustrate his statements at any moment during the mass. It is obvious that an image of this monumental dimension and of such powerful, almost shocking visual language would originate a variety of communication processes and performative (re-)actions by those who were confronted with it.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the complexity of the intermedial dynamics and the superimposition of different representational systems are related closely to the contents and the formal design of de los Ríos’s *Infierno*, as well as to the use of the image by different historical actors. Consequently, the image is not only a *product* of the contact zone, which *represents* something – in this case the embodiment of the Christian concepts of Sin and Virtue. It also *constitutes* its own contact zone, creating a particular, plurimedial space of communication within a broader space of religious and cultural interaction.¹³

Our example illustrates that images represent an important source for gaining deeper insights into the complex mechanisms of the configuration of cultural orders. While the reception of oral speech or written text must follow the linear order of language structure with its succession of single elements, visual communication follows different principles. Images escape the grammars of language systems insofar as they present all their elements *simultaneously*. This allows a variety of receptions to occur, corresponding to and intertwining different visual systems, and actualizing them at the same time. Unlike, for example, the texts of Christian doctrine, images provide us with insights to this *asynchronous* form of communication. They embody two basic principles of human perception and configuration of the world: order and contingency. Thus, the analysis of images as historical sources is crucial to comprehending the complexity and simultaneity as well as the chaotic character of cultural transformation.

Images like the *Infierno* are embedded within a plurimedial framework of representation and meaning. To better understand the dynamics of these systems, we have to closely follow the links to other adaptations and materializations of the

13 I would like to thank Gesa Mackenthun and Sebastian Jobs for their idea of “the image as a contact zone.”

symbols, representational structures, objects, practices, and narrations visualized in the *Infierno*. This rather structural focus can help us to capture and to describe, at least to some extent, the hybridity of such objects as López de los Ríos's visual embodiment of a Christian idea.

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CHAPTER SIX

“Put on God’s Armour Now!”: the Embattled Body in African Pentecostal-type Christianity

ANDREAS HEUSER

“Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil’s evil tricks. For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, the authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. So put on God’s armour now!”

(Eph 6, 10-13a)¹

The extraordinary rise of Pentecostal-type Christianity² within the last three decades may be seen as the most significant innovation in the topography of religions in today’s Africa. A situation I experienced in January 2006 during the regular weekly meeting of an ecumenical prayer network for healing illustrates both the impact and design of this broad-based, heterogeneous movement of churches. This meeting took place in a backyard chapel on the old site of a Presbyterian mission station in central Kumasi, Ghana. The chapel of this well-respected historic church filled up in the afternoon with hundreds of Christians from a broad spectrum of mainline, Pentecostal, and charismatic denominations. Participants in the prayer for healing talked about curses and protection against demonic powers, and they practiced deliverance, a specific ritual technique of healing an individual body inhabited by a satanic presence. A gifted man, a Presbyterian catechist who was believed to be filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore credited with the ability to detect, name, and tame demonic forces, supervised the prayer meeting.

As a guest of honor, I was invited to give a short address. I tried to highlight some intercultural observations, and shared some differences in church life in Ghana and Germany. One issue caught my attention in a peculiar way. It was

1 Biblical quotes are from The United Bible Societies, eds. *Good News Bible*. 2nd ed. 1994.

2 The term “Pentecostal-type Christianity” is used here to denote a recent phenomenon in African church history that is characterized by a charismatization of diverse theological traditions. It crosses denominational boundaries and ranges from charismatic renewal groups within mainline churches, to classical and neo-Pentecostal churches and parachurch ministries. They vary in doctrinal frameworks and compete with each other by highlighting different aspects of their beliefs, but they all show certain affinities and exert reciprocal effects.

not so much the amazing range of ecumenism of churches, quite unusual in the German context from which I came, that seemed important to me. What I found disturbing was the fusion of theologies that emerged during this prayer meeting, and how strongly the Pentecostal experience has influenced the profile of historic churches in practice, doctrine, and spiritual life. But what really perplexed me was the “demon complex” around which the spiritual, diagnostic, and ritual activities were centered. This issue of demonic possession, of satanic causation of illness, and the image of a devil that holds power over people and exercises control over their bodies became the vantage point from which I spoke to the meeting: “This to me is really a big difference. Demons or Satan do not play a major role in our belief at all. People in Germany do not believe in demonic powers nowadays and they do not address Satan as the root cause for all evil.” One woman in the front row reacted instantly but politely: “Oh, the demonic agents are there. You certainly have them, too. Maybe you only have to discover them.”³

This incident exemplifies what has been termed a major shift of the gravity center of global Christianity from the Northern Atlantic to the global South. This shift, which has taken place within the last four decades, is insufficiently interpreted as a demographic phenomenon, applying statistical data to describe a decline in Christian adherence here, or a degree of growth there. However, this repositioning entails changes in the theological landscapes as well.⁴ Therefore, this episode is about an encounter between Western theology, which is substantially a product of the Enlightenment, and a Christian theology after “its return to a non-Western religion” (Walls 202). Here, the spiritual universe is much larger and more populated. The re-appropriation of Christianity deals “with constant activity across an open frontier between the empirical and the spirit worlds, and faces issues, for which Western theology has no resources” (203).⁵

One effect of the theological disparities in world Christianity is reductionist interpretations of African Pentecostal-type Christianity. Although this phenomenon has captured interdisciplinary attention, Paul Gifford, one of its pioneering researchers, deplores the strategy of avoidance employed in attempts to categorize, classify, and conceptualize it. He focuses on functional interpretations, and misses thorough worldview analyses. Therefore, Gifford directs his analytical view toward the spiritual imagery underlying this booming form of Christianity in Africa. Gifford specifically identifies the complex African spirit world and the reality of occult forces (such as witchcraft, possession experiences, and demonic forces) in the life of Africans as being woefully underestimated in Western representations of this religious movement. It took him a decade of participant obser-

3 I got involved in this prayer meeting, which took place in Kumasi on 25 January, 2006, by representing an ecumenical church partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

4 In a comparative analysis, Theo Ahrens (*Zur Zukunft*) discusses the major contributions to this shift in Christianity.

5 For Ahrens, the dominant Western approaches express a “tamed civil religion.” In such milieus, the idea that everybody, and in fact *every body*, is infected with evil and called to a new life in Christ signifies a high level of “wild Christianity” (“Satan” 81, my translation).

vation to arrive at this conclusion. During the 1990s, Gifford had observed that Pentecostal-type churches shaped a faith *ex negativo* in their spiritual lifestyle. He commented that against the expectation of an exuberant praise of the Holy Spirit inspired by the deeds of a victorious Christ, one encounters a face of Christianity in which Satan, much more than Jesus Christ, is in the center (Gifford, *African Christianity* 108). The satanic element, in fact, encodes a much wider sphere that concerns itself with the causes and agents of evil. Now, after another round of participant observation in the landscape of Ghanaian churches, Gifford insists that this cluster of occult forces has evolved as an essential element in the composition of African theology and deserves far more attention. Taking “witchcraft” as an example, he concludes: “It is [...] obvious that many scholarly treatments of Ghana’s or Africa’s Christianity give witchcraft only the most cursory mention. [...] But to avoid the real issues arising here would be to present a defective picture. It is because some are prepared to *avoid* them that Africa’s new Christianity is sometimes misrepresented” (*Ghana’s New Christianity* 112; emphasis added).

By addressing Gifford’s contention, I take into consideration two dimensions of African Pentecostal-type Christianity. One relates to the status of bodily experiences⁶ in the pneumatology of churches (i.e., the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit). The other emphasizes the discourse on the devil and satanic forces and traces an “enacted demonology.”⁷ Under scrutiny, both perspectives merge into a distinctive “theology of the embattled body,” one that I will try to profile through readings of selected, mostly Ghanaian authors from Africa’s new Christianity.

Spirit and Body

The first reductionist perception refers to a theological – more precisely a pneumatological – categorization of African Pentecostal-type Christianity. Here it is portrayed as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, thus conceptualizing its success as a dynamic expression of the Spirit. The belief in the personal encounter with the Spirit of God as a way to empower believers becomes the point of departure. It stresses the imminence of God as tangible in the spiritual life of every individual believer through the “gifts of the Spirit.” The “filling with the Spirit” stresses a set of beliefs and practices that are exemplified in New Testament passages as *charismata*, or charismatic gifts. Individual believers narrate the filling with the Spirit in terms of a conversion experience that demands a so-called born-

6 In his survey of approaches in religious studies, Udo Tworuschka has recently deplored a devaluation of the body. By contrast, he suggests departing from basic bodily experiences (56-58).

7 Usually, authors accentuate the attraction of Pentecostal-style worship as an “enacted theology” (Anderson, *African Reformation* 217-21). Ironically, at the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, it was labeled as heretical precisely because of the manifold bodily experiences of its believers, whose enthusiastic expressions of faith seemed to contain elements of demonization.

again identity, the periodization of a life before and after. Born-again experience expresses itself in the spiritual power of speaking or singing in tongues (*glossolalia*), i.e., the articulation of prayer and praises in a nonintelligible language, in visions and prophecies, or in miracles and extraordinary healings. As the Holy Spirit is seen as the root cause for all these phenomena, pneumatology evolves as the most essential layer in all Pentecostal-type theologizing.

The bodily experience of the encounter with the Spirit is stated, yet not explored. The Spirit-filled body is merely interpreted as the evidence of a supernatural empowerment of a sanctified life. The body appears as an epiphenomenon of the Spirit, as the carrier of specific, charismatic signs demonstrating the presence and the power of God in His Spirit.⁸ Hence, in academic discourses on the various expressions of Pentecostal-type Christianity the body does play its part, albeit a secondary or auxiliary one.

Strikingly different is the picture in popular African theology. Here, the body occupies a significantly elevated status. Pneumatology in African Pentecostal-type Christianity informs an expressive religious culture that stages the body as the sign of salvation. Born-again identity engages with the bodily phenomena of visions, dreams, and obscure prophetic communication, as well as with voices and ecstasy. But because it is still vulnerable and prone to “sin,” African Pentecostal-type theology stages a drama around the body – pneumatology is enacted in ritual performances both of miraculous healing and of exorcisms.

Because the body deserves protection, African Pentecostal-type Christianity provides exemplary methods for the control of affects and describes specific mechanisms of self-discipline. It defines the spiritual transformation by correct *habitus* and prescribes behavioral codes of avoidance to demonstrate holiness. As much, though, as insisting on a theology of the Holy Spirit, African Pentecostal-type pneumatology empowers the body as the genuine space of the Spirit.

Trajectories of a Devil Complex

Enacted demonology, the second reductionist interpretation of African Pentecostal-type Christianity, is concerned with the significance of “Satan” or the “devil” as an integral part of the belief systems of many African Christians. While the debate over the Africanization of Christianity has largely focused on contextual images of God and Jesus Christ, the expansion of Christianity in Africa has not only implied the conversion to a Christian God,⁹ but featured “Satan,” or the “devil,” as His powerful opponent. The African face of the “devil” has changed

8 Anderson defines Pentecostal theology as “a theology of the Spirit” (*Introduction* 187-98). Accordingly, Asamoah-Gyadu decodes African Pentecostal-type Christianity as basically the “democratisation of charisma” (96-131).

9 For Lamin Sanneh the essential category in mission history relates to the concepts of God: “The central premise of missionary preaching is the reality of God: Creator, Sustainer, Judge, and Redeemer. The specific Christian understanding of this is expressed in the

over time, or, to put it in other words, it has been Africanized and intensified in several stages. And this devil talk must be considered a constitutive element in the theological laboratory of today's African Christianity in general. In order to show different junctures in this process it makes sense to recall the two-level approach introduced by Robin Horton in a series of three articles on conversion to Christianity in Africa. In an effort to link historical processes and the changes in worldview Horton distinguished between the missionary activities of the colonial era and a subsequent, postcolonial era which saw a much broader movement of conversion to Christianity. The first stage is strongly characterized by intercultural encounter between Western missionaries and Africans and the development of large-scale societies. According to Horton, the local Gods that suited the needs of small-scale societies lost their attraction and were slowly replaced by a universal or High God concept. The second stage of African conversion gave rise to contextualizing efforts and allowed for closer correlations between Christian and African worldviews. To paraphrase, the birth of contextual African theology in its own right occurred at this level of conversion.

In my view, a comparable process as the one described by Horton can be used to examine imageries of the "devil" in Africa. We find diverse discourses that differ in the modality and intensity of the devil talk. A first discursive field comes close to an intellectualist approach favored by Horton. The High God concept, it states, was seconded by the introduction of the "devil" in African maps of the universe. These arguments about the "devil" derive from an intercultural communication and are intimately connected with certain forms of Western Christianity. One common feature seems to be essential in view of our discussion here: the intercultural roots of the devil talk in today's African Christianity present the "devil" as a personal embodiment of evil and malign forces.

The second discursive field takes recourse in an African vocabulary of devil talk. This more recent layer of arguments, developed in the postcolonial period and intensified in the era of globalization, bears a ritualistic texture and reaches far beyond dogmatic or intellectual adaptations of the "devil," in which African Christianity creates an array of counteractions against these satanic forces. It reaches a level of intensification with characteristic rituals of disengagement from the world of the "devil." One is left with the conviction that any expression in the devil discourse poses an ultimate question, that of power.¹⁰ Let us consider in more detail the two main trajectories of devil talk, its intercultural imports and the Africanized ritual version.

The identification of the causes of evil with a personified antipode to God formed part of a dialectic process of conversion in Africa. Within this represen-

understanding of Jesus Christ as the historical and personal manifestation of God's power" (*Translating* 158).

10 In a very rough analysis, this fight against satanic forces becomes virulent in the era of globalizing modernity. As I argue in this essay, such devil talk is far from disappearing but seems to relate as a 'hard cultural form' to specific processes in society (see the concluding remarks below).

tation of the “devil” as embodied evil we can identify two main pools of arguments. One relates to the pietistic tradition of the missionary movement in Africa, and the other points to the impact of predominantly Western Charismatics and Pentecostals on the African scene in the last few decades. Thus, the overall discourse around the “devil” as embodiment of evil is connected to types of theology that took critical positions against the Enlightenment paradigm in Western theology.

The global fight against the devil was one source of motivation for certain missionary initiatives of pietistic origin in the nineteenth century. The fight against the devil appeared sometimes in the apocalyptic design as the fight against Antichrist characteristic for end time scenarios. In her monograph *Translating the Devil*, Birgit Meyer describes a dialectics of rejection and incorporation of the African world of spirits and gods in the recent mission history of Ghana. In the initial phase of modern mission history, German pietistic Protestant missionaries transferred their worldview, which was characterized by a dualistic mental mapping, to the African landscape of religions. In their perception of the world, the Kingdom of God was placed in opposition to the realm of Satan. Applying biblical imagery, they squeezed African religious expressions and ritual praxis as a whole into this confrontational construction. Rooted in their initial endeavor to save the “dark continent” for Christ, they created a demonology discourse. African religious traditions were translated into a previously unknown biblical terminology of evil. One decisive element in this discourse about evil is the emergence of a quasi-divine counter-instance, Satan.¹¹ In this version of early missionary imagination, African religion encoded a single complex of “demons” and “evil spirits,” and “Satan” as an embodiment of evil became the key category to explain African “paganism” *in toto*.¹² Paradoxically, the translation of the devil from its Western pietistic context to an African one conserves the power of African religious expressions despised as repository of the demonic; it cannot disrupt their existence. On the one hand, the missionary strategy of “othering” exposed the African religious topography as part of the satanic universe. On the other hand, it embraced and reintegrated the African deities and spirits in satanic disguise into Christianity. Consequently, the preoccupation with Satan and demonic spirits evolved as a structural component in the belief system and spiritual practice of most Christian churches.¹³ African Pentecostal-type Christianity today traces the same path cleared by that earlier pietistic missionary movement. Referring to the biblical position that a personalized entity intervenes in God’s creation by causing disruption, evil and affliction, this aspect of Christian

11 Protestant mission theology stood in the tradition of Augustine’s explanation of evil as an expression of free will. According to Augustine Satan is a fallen angel who desired to be like God.

12 African religion does consider the human embodiment of evil, but identifies it with “witchcraft” (see Magesa 165-73).

13 The invention of “fetishism” in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, marks a historically earlier prototype of the European perception of African religion as satanic.

tradition has emerged as a dominant theme in African Pentecostal-type Christianity. But the aspect of continuity shows a radicalizing effect, too. In the recent discourse Satan appears in more elaborate contours. The casting of the devil as the root cause of evil was mere theological rhetoric in Mission Christianity. The image of the devil served as a vehicle that enabled a spiritual world inhabited by a plethora of demonic agents and occult forces to be abandoned. On the one hand, the new Christian response inherits this confrontational approach to African (and other) religions. On the other hand, it is more dynamic in its theological scope and much more refined in its practical shape. The aspect of a power contest surfaces more strongly than ever within African Christian theology and also renews the scope of devil talk within African Pentecostal-type Christianity.

A fresh inspiration to continue the translational process in this respect came from the presence of Western, mostly American “crusaders” on the continent, a phenomenon that started to gain momentum in the postcolonial era, from the 1980s on (Heuser). In this milieu we find popular evangelical preachers, as well as the big names of the “Word of Faith” movement, who founded independent ministries. For most of them, the reality of Satan and the deeds of demonic forces featured prominently in their theological weapons of spiritual warfare. Billy Graham, pioneer crusader in West Africa, describes the reality of the devil in terms of a paradigm shift: “The greatest catastrophe in the history of the universal creation was Lucifer’s defiance of God and the consequent fall of perhaps one-third of the angels who joined him in his wickedness” (60).

In this vein, beginning in the mid 1960s, a literary genre began to develop that was organized around reflecting upon the devil. Some of these works inspired the new Western enterprises of church planting that took shape in postcolonial Africa. This time, the missionary endeavor carried a charismatic, evangelical, and Pentecostal signature. Robert Blaschke’s *Quest for Power*, a survey of almost half a century of missionary work in post-independent West Africa, is an illustration of this. Blaschke’s material originates from Benin, but he seeks to offer a general model of approach to “animists” worldwide. Whether or not his method seems sensitive enough to interpret intercultural encounters, what we find is that Christian salvation stands in opposition to the power of Satan. The question of power is lodged solidly at the heart of any missionary strategy.

The religious bipolarity of Christian faith and Satan receives an additional inventory: compared with the first, early missionary apprehension, this time the activity of God’s great enemy was embedded in a stronger eschatological texture. The generation of crusaders that influenced African Pentecostal-type Christianity advocated a particular type of “realized eschatology.” Their eschatological hope was no longer directed toward an afterlife but focused on the concerns of today. The spectacular material results of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit – signs, miracles, and wonders – were identified as “the tangible evidence that the ‘last days’ had already come” (Anderson, *Introduction* 220). This shift in the eschatological texture was fused with a reading of history inspired by dispensationalist interpre-

tations of the Bible.¹⁴ According to dispensationalism, history is divided into distinct periods or ‘dispensations’ in which God works in a particular way. The present dispensation is considered the age of the church. This age is a pre-millennial stage entrenched with apocalyptic visions and it will end with the Second Coming of Christ to initiate a thousand-year Kingdom of God on earth. This pre-millennial dispensationalism has dominated much of North American Pentecostalism since its beginnings in the early twentieth century. In the course of that time it developed into a systematic formula of Pentecostal eschatology once the apocalyptic signature blurred with the fabulous signs of the ‘last days.’¹⁵

Through the activities of the “crusaders” this eschatological framework became popular on the African continent. African Pentecostal-type Christianity propagates the same mix of realized eschatology, pre-millennial, and dispensationalist concepts that are known from the American context of Pentecostal theology. Charles Agyin-Asare, founder of Word Miracle Church International, Ghana, whose so-called miracle crusades are very popular in the whole of West Africa, gives voice to such eschatological consciousness: “We are living in the very last days of this age. The prophecies which are to be fulfilled only in the last days are being fulfilled before our eyes” (438).¹⁶

Yet, the African version of the end-time does not predict divine action alone; it also registers an intensified activity on the part of the devil. For Agyin-Asare this present age is marked by “evil,” the “dominion of Satan,” and by “darkness, ungodliness and lusts” (435). Emmanuel Kingsley Dadebo, a high-ranking representative of Deeper Christian Life Ministry in Ghana, is convinced that “the devil also battles through his agents, false prophets, demons, cults, etc. to frustrate the plan of God for all people” (v). Other contemporary authors dramatize the power contest as a militant, warlike scenario. Nyerrinya John Norago (Church of Pentecost, Ghana) outrightly defines Christian life as warfare: “This war continues till our Saviour descends in His glory, and Satan and his troops would be totally defeated” (35).¹⁷ Here, the eschatological imagery defining this present moment

14 Dispensationalism was formulated by John Nelson Darby in the nineteenth century. Darby, leader of the Plymouth Brethren, identified six different dispensations in history. His biblical hermeneutics were popularized by the early twentieth-century edition of the Scofield Reference Bible with its elaborate referencing to those different stages of God’s action in the world.

15 Anderson (*Introduction* 217-19) provides a precise summary of Pentecostal pre-millennial eschatology.

16 The crucial figure in the transmission of American-derived Pentecostal eschatology to Africa was probably the Nigerian Benson Idahosa. In running a theological college, Idahosa built up a network comprising African students as well as leading figures of the American “Word of Faith” scene, such as Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborne, and Kenneth Copeland. Agyin-Asare was among Idahosa’s students and claims friendships with most of these icons of the American Pentecostal movement.

17 Such examples obscure commentators who observe an absence of eschatological messages within African Pentecostal-type Christianity (see Larbi 428; Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity* 81). What we find is a change in the eschatological grammar from the millennial expectations of the classical Pentecostal movement at the dawning of the twentieth century to a realized eschatology in a succeeding phase of Pentecostal history.

in history is colored by apocalyptic visions of an end-time battleground between Good and Evil.

The ubiquitous activity of the devil and his army in the “last days” incites the rapid spread of devil awareness. Since the battleground is located in the spiritual realm, the destructive work of Satan is easily identified in aspects of the African spiritual world. Joseph Amedvor of Redeemer’s Victory Church International (Ghana) categorizes the emanations of the devil into “gods, secret cults and the demonic societies,” and those “who practice witchcrafts, spiritism, ‘juju’ and magic [... and] are the people found in Satan’s palace” (ix-x). However, the “devil complex” that is being created contains the master code not only for constructing religious difference. It also potentially places political, economic, and cultural affairs under Satan’s mandate. The devil simultaneously becomes a cipher for reading history in general and for interpreting constellations of power in contemporary society. In his guidelines to Christian doctrines, Agyin-Asare declares satanic actions as encompassing and omnipresent: “They are behind every sin: for example, murder, adultery, violence, drunkenness, lying, homosexuality, smoking, witchcraft, star gazing, pornography, philosophies, cults, all heresies [...]” (271). As a result, the forces of evil are used interchangeably and synonymously in the theological language of today (Anderson, “Exorcism” 121), compiled under the sole hermeneutical category of satanic action.

Let us quickly summarize: in African Pentecostal-type Christianity we face a devil complex that has its roots in intercultural encounters with diverse forms of Western theology. Through various stages in a translational process the satanic causation and explanation of evil have become generic themes in African theology. In an initial phase, the devil served as a hermeneutical tool to invent simplified categorizations of African religious cosmologies. A subsequent phase of translating the devil into African Christian language continued with using notions of “othering.” However, at this point, the translational project raised the implicit question of power more directly. The more recent trajectories of devil talk have resulted in a wider scale and higher levels of intensity in the struggle against the great enemy. So far, the concept of the devil in African Pentecostal-type Christianity may be considered as continuous with ideas imported by intercultural encounters. However, the next step in the translational process takes African Pentecostal-type Christianity into a new phase. African Pentecostal-type Christianity finds itself at the front lines in the battle against the devil, with strategies evolving in this warfare that were by no means anticipated in the Christian history of intercultural encounter in Ghana. Infused with an urgency of counteraction, this new phase may be described as ‘enacted demonology’.

Enacted Demonology

‘Enacted demonology’ is a decisive step in the translation of the devil within African Pentecostal-type Christianity because it is now developing into a laboratory of anti-satanic theology. Compared with the earlier phases of demonization, there are distinct differences or specifications in the arguments against the devil. The initial scheme in the translational process reduced the complexity of intercultural encounters. Implementing a juxtaposition of good and bad, it made use of a sometimes aggressive theological language that incorporated African religious worldviews into the biblical cosmology of the devil.¹⁸ This recent point in the history of African Christianity diversifies the grammar of the conflict between the realm of God and the realm of Satan. Its strength lies in detecting, classifying, and fighting the pervasive forces of evil. Two criteria mark the specific contextuality of African Pentecostal-type Christianity: first, the battle against Satan is located in the individual body of the born-again believer, and, second, appropriate rituals of disengagement from the devil are provided. Let us again take a more detailed look.

The vantage point of this theological and ritual laboratory of fighting the devil is the body of the individual born-again believer. In other words, African Pentecostal-type Christianity reconsiders the classic spatial frame of demonology. Instead of dividing the world into two competing spheres of light and darkness, the new shape of Christianity localizes the satanic threat in the existential domain of troubled experience. If the satanic element was once, in the missionary diction, linked to an ideological concept in order to theorize evil in ‘the world’ at large, it now also affects the individual believer directly and primarily. It is the individual body that may fall victim to the “bondage of Satan,” a well-known phrase in African Christianity. As the devil causes disaster in the life of believers, it is the individual Christian who must be equipped with the right moral fiber to break Satan’s hold. This fact is brought out unmistakably by Agyin-Asare: “The Christian life is a battle against our great foe, Satan, called the devil. [...] The Bible teaches us to resist Satan, fight him, give him no place in our lives, to stand up to the devil and refuse him an inch into our lives” (263).

African Pentecostal-type Christianity supplements the uniform declaration of war against Satan and his agents with a *ritual* texture of church life. The pietistic and Western charismatic precursors perceived adherents of African religions as entangled in demonic actions. But by offering only prayers to fight the influence of the African spiritual world on the daily life of converts, the Missionary

18 This portrayal of African religion applies to the main strand of early missionary theology. However, Ahrens points out that compared to this replacement model, the range of religious theologies was much wider, notably in the generations that followed (“Satan” 88).

Christians' repertoire of coping functioned on a comparatively low level.¹⁹ African Pentecostal-type Christianity, loaded with its eschatological texture, presents a more complex scheme. In its theology, the forces of evil are described systematically and combine metaphors of satanic menace with detailed action to break satanic power through pastoral care and corresponding ritual practices. The ritual praxis of control and protection that is offered is believed to be commensurate with the multiple operations of Satan and his evil agents. The aim of any protective practice is the ritual breaking of any satanic powers that infringe upon the born-again believer.

African Pentecostal-type Christianity, in other words, offers a "thick description" (Clifford Geertz) of the devil by focusing ritual praxis on the individual body. More precisely, both the diagnostic diversity and the ritual complexity in African Pentecostal-type Christianity are directed toward the body. The anti-satanic imagery locates the body as its genuine discursive space – the human body stands as the embattled ground between God and Satan. Leonhard Soku (Radiant Life Christian Centre) gives credence to this assault against all the evil that is located in the individual body of a born-again believer: "We start the spiritual warfare from the womb and continue to the tomb" (*Spiritual Warfare* 1).

With a cluster of arguments that merges the classic notion of theological condemnation with an eschatological urgency of action, and a ritual repertoire of addressing satanic subversions in the embattled body, the image of the devil has gained an almost obsessive character in contemporary African Pentecostal-type discourse. Here, the power of the Holy Spirit not only demands that the body be transformed, but the body demarcates the genuine war zone in the spiritual battle between the realm of God and the sphere of Satan. The process of translating the devil now bears the complete imprint of what is called here the 'devil complex'. In the following, we will investigate the internal composition of this devil complex as it appears in the genre of theological literature on Satan that is widely spread throughout African Pentecostal-type Christianity. The actors in the ritual drama around the embattled body include both the saved ones as well as Satan.

Satanic Strategies of Embodiment

Enacted demonology introduces practical and ritual means of coping with the evil that affects the individual body. One main reason for this lies in the satanic imagery itself. The Africanization of the devil is marked by a variety of satanic strategies of embodiment. This aspect of the present devil complex has provoked a literary genre in African Pentecostal-type Christianity. Long before Western

¹⁹ This corresponds with the classic version of Protestant theology in which Satan fights the works of God, but Christ also fights the works of Satan (see Ahrens, "Satan" 84). This classic version was shared by generations of Lutheran missionaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

scholarship explored the satanic potential in African Christianity, the literature that inspired and reflected the African theological discourses, especially in West Africa, abounded with vivid descriptions of the deeds of Satan. In his chronicle *The Devil Exposed*, Nyerrinya John Norago reveals Satan's practice of manipulating the human body in order to gain ground against the realm of God. The basic strategy is to invade human bodies by operating through satanic actors who have anthropomorphic features; evil spirits do not live in inanimate objects. Norago imagines Satan and his demonic forces as personified evil, as beings with human bodily shapes and characteristic human traits such as "emotions and feelings" (7). This satanic politics of embodiment is the result of the expulsion of the "fallen angels" from heaven who turned into demons, an event that necessitated their loss of a physical constitution. "All the spiritual beings who had been disembodied and casted [sic] out [from heaven; A.H.] with their leader are called DEMONS. [...] These spirits like to live in bodies" (17).

Demonic strategies include moving from spiritual beings into inhabiting human bodies, inciting the transformation of the dead into the living, and instigating a reverse action, that is, the metamorphosis of humans into demons. These strategies are often linked to mimicry, which can even dupe a saved body. Satanic mimicry involves the imitation both of human behavior as well as bodily appearance and the possession of experiences, visions, and dreams. Sometimes the spirits are believed to take a body-like shape in the form of different kinds of hybrids.²⁰ All of these demonic operations have one goal, which is to overcome the people of God by occupying the human body. The most vulnerable objects of satanic desire are born-again Christians, i.e., the constituency of Pentecostal-type churches. "Many claim to be Christians," states Norago, but they are still being "controlled by the devil" (v). Satan and his devilish forces are continually making every effort to lead the true believers into temptation and attack them "by binding their minds" (4). The vicious repertoire of satanic comportment and gestures enables them to don disguises of such accomplishment that they are able to infiltrate the inner circle of born-again Christianity. The strategic asset of mimicry finds its perfection in the imitation of charismatic gifts, an identity marker of Pentecostal-type Christianity:

[They] can speak. Their voices can be heard by human beings. They are very good at copying a person's voice. They will learn and speak like him. In the world of spiritualism, Satan has been able to blind millions of people, especially in the area of speaking in tongues. They manage to take over the person who will start speaking in fake tongues. This has been the most active area of operation in the church today. (6-7)

Under these circumstances, body politics have become a crucial battleground for churches that preach empowerment through the Holy Spirit. But the satanic threat

20 The most popular hybrid along the West and Central African coast is the Sphinx-shaped Mami Water.

is not restricted to the drama of evil spirits adapting the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The dismantling of the inner codes of charismatic identity contains a worst-case scenario in which even the church hierarchies are corrupted by satanic aspirations. “The devil has given power to his appointed evil spirits as ministers and they portray themselves as righteous men of God. [...] By this means, people communicate with spirits which are evil, for help in times of trouble” (11).

These “false prophets” depend on Satan, even receiving one of the most sought after charismatic talents, the gift of healing. “Even though they claim to be Christians, they are controlled by Satan. The deceiver sometimes performs miracles through them” (Norago 30).²¹ Undoubtedly, for authors like Norago even the born-again community of believers is infested with satanic intrusions, unfolding a theatrics of aberrations and heresies. Mastering the art of mimicry, disguise, and camouflage, the devil is a powerful strategist of war against God and the saved ones. “The Christian life is a battleground and not a playground,” Norago affirms (35).

The great challenge is to develop effective counterstrategies in waging this war, another popular domain of literary production in African Pentecostal-type milieus. Some authors focus on leadership issues, others on the more spiritual and ritual sides of warfare against Satan, still others on techniques of detecting satanic undertakings in the lives of individuals as well as the church. Irrespective of the topic, most of the strategic arsenal implies the militarization of the saved body.

The Militarized Body of the Saved

The Spirit-filled body strives for power encounters with religious adversaries. One principal strategy in the warfare against the devil is to furnish the believer with insignia of militancy. The image of the obedient soldier is used to portray a Christian’s correct mental attitude, and the military-like organization provides key elements for defining church life. In a book titled *The Spiritual Warfare in the War Zone*, Leonhard Soku advocates the militarization of the individual and social structures. He antagonizes the powers of evil by using militaristic language. Soku heads a ministry known as Radiant Life Christian Centre; he has a classical Pentecostal church background and graduated from Trinity Theological Seminary in Legon, a renowned mainline church institution in Ghana. For him, “the church is a Military Academy where you learn both theory and practical strategies of spiritual warfare. In the church, you study the Word of God and put it into practice and then you will be victorious” (32).

An essential rhetorical element in this kind of literature is to situate believers in the actual bipolar world order, and to alert them to the fierce battle being waged: “The world consists of two spiritual worlds; that of the Almighty God and

21 In this regard, Norago presents a critique of the thriving religious market of individual miracle healers and miracle performers within this church movement.

that of the evil one. Note that there is no neutral ground” (1). In order to survive in this kind of revived cold war, the individual believer needs to be equipped with adequate weapons: “You must always carry the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God and put on the whole Armour of God and be ready for battle every day, every hour, every minute and every second, for the spiritual warfare is raging on” (37).

The militarization of church and individual faith is made material in various innovative structures within the churches’ organization, one of which is the office of “armour bearers.” Although this office is not yet common in many Pentecostal-type churches, Israel Owusu-Ansah, the General Overseer and an Apostle of Glorious Revival Church International in Ghana, suggests that such a position be created and filled as part of an efficient counterstrategy for fighting the devil. Armor bearers are vital, since the undercover agents of Satan, according to the popular discourse, “are in the system, doing what people think is the work of God” (Soku, *Spiritual Warfare* 48). Owusu-Ansah considers armor bearers to be instruments of church leadership, and describes their character as one of self-denial. They operate in a spirit of military submission to a leader, whose orders they must follow immediately and without question. “Armour bearers must selflessly submerge [themselves] deep in humility to promote their leaders” (86). They serve as a church leader’s shield, protecting “him against any enemy that might attack him” (84).²²

In sum, the incorporation of military-like logistics into church life extends beyond a selected group of people in special ministries. African Pentecostal-type Christianity postulates a faith that demands self-discipline and endurance from any single believer. A Christian who is convinced of being ‘saved’ dedicates his energy and potential to the warding off of evil. One result of this dedication is that born-again faith equips the body with military skills and discipline. It constructs a set of behavioral restrictions and prescriptions, forming a spiritual supracharacter of obedience, sacrifice, and austerity.

The Prayer Warrior

Soldiers of the faith can of course serve in other capacities in the war against Satan, and one is through an intense praxis of prayer. In this rather unexpected domain, both militant rhetoric and spiritual-ritual praxis translate into bodily experience. In Pentecostal-type Christianity, prayer deserves a significant amount of attention in congregational as well as in individual praxis. Intense prayer is seen as a praise of God and is an essential part of the victorious life of the born-again believer. Yet, it also functions as part of the strategies used to fight Satan. Joseph Amevor (Redeemer’s Victory Church International) emphasizes not only

²² In church history there are several examples of militarily organized church life, the Salvation Army being one of them.

the importance of prayer but postulates that prayers offered during particular times can be especially effective in fighting the battle against evil forces. Midnight is of particular interest to him because it offers challenges for the born-again believer. “Midnight has been the most chosen time for [...] devilish manipulations” (x). But it is also, as Amevor remarks, “the most efficient time to wage a spiritual warfare” (19), and he pleads for the use of midnight prayer as part of the master strategy in the waging of spiritual warfare. Despite an array of popular practices in numerous churches, Amevor maintains that demonic spirits “are not afraid of big Bibles, red or green candles, olive oil and Florida water. But they are certainly afraid of a believer’s prayer, especially the one said at midnight” (4).²³ He therefore calls on Christians to become “prayer warriors” and to “wear the armour of ‘midnight prayer’ at all seasons.” In his view, Christian prayer differs essentially from a meditative posture; he defines it as a “missile against Satan and his agents” (61). The prayer warrior, according to Amevor, despises the material conditions of human existence. Amevor relentlessly renounces regenerative existential needs in the name of the fierce battle against Satan:

Indeed, there is no human being on earth who sleeps for eight hours or more in twenty-four hours that is not prone to demonic attack. Those who sleep for less than six hours in every twenty-four hours are in a better position to overcome demonic manipulation, or may not even be manipulated as far as the sleep period is concerned. [...] Instead of sleeping and snoring during the night, spend your time watching and praying. (23-24)

Ideal prayer warriors dispense with bodily needs and discipline their emotions. The strengths of midnight prayer lie in “sleepless vigilance and a wakefulness that cannot be suppressed. It also requires a perseverance that knows neither halting, fainting, nor depression” (6). The hailed prayer warrior might be one who actually welcomes and applauds self-exploitation. The personal body is an enemy of the true believer. After all, the moralistic frame of belief in Pentecostal-type Christianity insists that it is through the body, or ‘the flesh’, that Satan evokes ‘fantasies’ and immoral desires.

According to Anglican theologian Kwaku Dua-Agyeman from Ghana, the body is subject to the agitation of allegedly “transferable spirits.” Transferable spirits are analogous to the transmission of contagious diseases; they infect the body by passing on evil spirits from one person to another. “Transferable spirits include spirits that bring all forms of diseases, lustful spirits,” and besides the “lust for sex” they are also responsible for behavioral variants like greed and anger (25). This particular moral discourse dovetails with a horror of sex. “The

23 Here, Amevor criticizes the reliance of African Independent Churches (AICs) on material objects known as the “Weapons of Zion,” which they use to oppose satanic action. Especially in the West African Aladura tradition, AICs have elaborated on prayer as an activating force against the enemy.

subject of sex and sexuality is one area least taught in the church and yet it is the one area that most are held in bondage” (22). This view is supported by Amevor’s prayer warrior, who complains about sexual immorality, and who smells “fornication, adultery, homosexuality and incest” (74) everywhere. This steep moral decline destroys the precious spiritual state of being saved. The body belongs to the material world and this fact raises doubts and suspicion. “Even though we are born [...] in the world, even though [...] we have made decisions based on what we see, hear, feel, smell or taste, we should not allow the material world to rule us” (112-13).²⁴ Rather, it is the spirit that shall rule the body.

The picture painted of the prayer warrior, again, is one of self-control and willpower. In comparison to the armor bearer portrayed above, the militarization of the body goes one step further. The prayer warrior is not exercising a rigid self-discipline, abstinence, and asceticism in order to protect the church as the community of the saved in the first place. Rather, he wants to protect the individual spiritual existence from the attacks of worldly experiences, emotions, and desires. The militarized body of the saved individual represents ultimate control over the seductions of physical existence.

Miracles of Deliverance

Oppression by evil spirits and demonic attacks are often assumed to be the main reasons why people are driven to African Pentecostal-type churches. More accurately, in the conversion narratives quoted by Mbinglo Mee Nsodu, a Cameroonian who became intimately involved in the Ghanaian scene of new churches, church members connect the need for spiritual relief with specific ritual activities. Pentecostal-type churches meet the expectation of getting rid of harassing evil spirits essentially by so-called deliverance ministries. In the words of one convert, “Africa is the Devil’s continent. Evil is so much [more present] here than in other places that we need miracles of deliverance” (57).

What does ‘deliverance’ mean in this context? Meyer defines it as “basically the discernment and symbolic untying of bonds, bondages and covenants with the satanic” (“Make a Complete Break” 192). Deliverance affirms that the experience of being born-again does not immediately break bonds with the satanic: the new covenant of the saved ones with God is constantly at stake. Deliverance rituals promise to renounce satanic influence in everyday life by ritual control of such wicked entanglements.

24 Amevor takes a New Testament quote (1 Peter 2: 11) as evidence that Christians are strangers in this world. This is the most explicit example of skepticism against “this world” that I have come across in contemporary African Pentecostal-type discourse, at least in Ghana. Up to this point this held true only for classical Pentecostalism and early Christianity, only to be heard in the classical Pentecostal movement (and in early Christianity).

The deliverance ministry is a relatively recent ritual innovation, entering African church life in the 1990s. Alongside other ritual purposes, deliverance became a popular rite of passage, especially for migrants-to-be to the West (van Dijk). It is, however, not a new phenomenon. It can be traced back to the origins of the Pentecostal movement when it was practiced in the inner circles of congregations and within the closed settings of intimate pastoral care. This deliverance praxis has declined in recent years in Western Pentecostalism. In contemporary African Pentecostal-type churches, however, deliverance is a public affair and instantly gained a prominent status. African deliverance theology may not only be considered a marker of identity but it has, in fact, reshaped the African Christian landscape (Gifford, “Complex Provenance”).

The ritual cleansing of demonic influences in daily life and in individual behavior is achieved using a broad range of deliverance practices. During deliverance sessions the powers of darkness manifest themselves in bodily movements, emotions, and gestures, and are exorcised by especially gifted members of a congregation. The acts of evil spirits taking possession of a person include screaming and shouting, falling down and writhing on the ground, ceaseless jumping, abruptly entering into a state of apathy, or moving around by performing bodily contortions. Such expressive reactions signify the presence of demonic forces that operate in an individual’s body and mind. Sometimes these intimate bonds with the devil cause people to sweat copiously as a way to help wash out the haunting spirits. During deliverance sessions evil spirits are ‘cried out’ or ‘burnt out by the Holy Spirit’, as believers also describe it. Indeed, it takes much energy to drive out demons. The deliverance of resisting spirits is exhausting and may require repeated efforts before believers can at last testify to their liberation from evil’s bondage.

The deliverer’s diagnostic abilities rely on methods of self-inquiry. Inflicted believers have to observe and examine themselves before seeking to be cured. A common method of acquiring information is by screening one’s private and social life through questionnaires. The questioners ask the person to carefully assess events that are presumed to be entry gates for the messengers of Satan. These inquiries cover diverse categories and scrutinize numerous possible areas of demonic contact. One set of questions shows interest in nonverbal manifestations of the devil, such as visions or dream images. Phenomenologically, the African worldview in general affirms the status of dreams and visionary experience. Visions, just like dreams, are seen as revelations from the invisible world, a link between the realm of spiritual beings and the realm of material existence. In present-day African Christianity they can be a trajectory for demonic powers, especially those involving sexual desire. While questionnaires usually distinguish all kinds of immoral sexual behavior and obsessions, in dreams specifically spiritual marriages with demons can be revealed. Other categories listed are more mundane, including criminal activities such as dream images about suicide or homi-

cide, visions about shopping, about misfortune in one's business life, as well as drug, alcohol, and smoking addictions.²⁵

The other substantial field of inquiry, next to the interest in moral conduct, centers around events related to African traditional religions. You find detailed questions about traditional rites of passage, rituals of initiation and of protection someone may have undergone, or family ceremonies that involved links to the ancestral world. Demonic manifestations also invade the territory of appearances by animals, for example snakes, that hold ritual importance in African religions. Evil forces are known to assume the guise of such animals, thus creating false visions that must be exposed. And so believers are asked to recall any body transformations into animals or birds, and to review any episodes of ancestor veneration.

In short, deliverance combines the investigation of intimate personal experiences with a certain memory practice. Deliverance procedures culminate in a decisive “rupture with the past.” On a personal level, this rupture facilitates a radical critique of one's biography. “Thus by breaking dramatically free from the past, believers can revisit it, experiencing forbidden desires without being responsible for them” (Martin 142). This memory practice is crucial from another perspective as well. It fuses the time aspect – the confrontation with one's personal history (which is essential for an uncompromising born-again) – with the spatial component in Pentecostal-type theology to erect a barrier between the spheres of darkness and light. The individual believer incorporates a discourse of ‘othering’ and denial with aspects of his or her past. Deliverance enables believers to simultaneously draw a line between ‘them’ and ‘us’ and between ‘then’ and ‘now’.

Breaking of Ancestral Curses

The breaking of demonic bonds identified with religions from the African past becomes necessary in connection with the meaning of curses. Afflictions caused by curses play a prominent role in the spiritual mindset of many Pentecostal believers. David Westerlund defines a curse as an “emphatic utterance, or command, made in the presence of the victim, in which the operator of the curse expresses which illness or other misfortune should befall the victim” (186). Westerlund's sources indicate an increase of phenomena related to curses over the last decades. And Pentecostal-type churches pay attention to the difficulties caused by curses. According to Leonhard Soku, curses are real and disruptive elements in interpersonal relationships, including in married life – they simply are “in the family.” Soku also blames curses as a cause of intergenerational conflicts. His

25 One such list, provided by Leonhard Soku, enumerates about thirty questions pointing at satanic activity in a person's body, more than half of them related to dreams. The largest single category of questions refers to sexual relationships (*From the Coven* 23-25).

advice to Christians is as short as it is determined: “Break these curses” (*Spiritual Warfare* 26).

Following Soku’s categories, curses are directly addressed to an individual but they have a basic social significance and they carry a time component. One specific form of curse refers to ancestral curses that are believed to affect family life over several generations.²⁶ Social relationships and family circles in particular are considered to be potentially dangerous for maintaining a born-again lifestyle. In many instances, African Pentecostal-type theology attributes the individual problems and conflicts one has to face to curses in the family history. Those curses are considered past contracts with the devil; they are not easy to trace, and if, they require strong intervention; yet, they are even more difficult to cancel.

In their effort to unveil such hidden memories of the past, deliverance services meticulously analyze the intimate social networks of which individuals are a part. Deliverance investigates these social relationships and networks and it demands that believers distance themselves from them if those relationships pose a threat to the believers’ well-being. Consequently, one basic element of deliverance sessions is separating individual believers from their conventional and long-standing social ties and making them independent of family expectations. By offering deliverance, African Pentecostal-type churches provide a model of how to conduct a search for new social orientations. The breaking of curses promises a higher degree of self-control. “Deliverance appears to emphasize a form of individuality whereby, on the level both of the immediate past and the *longue durée*, these ties are cut. There is a constant sealing off from those influences, circles and family ties that would make the individual prone to evil again” (van Dijk 226). With the social and religious roots of the past loosened, deliverance propagates an independent individual who can actively participate in the continuous shaping of a born-again consciousness.

Jezebel, or the Ambiguity Around the Female Body

Such a strong impulse to promote an individual by breaking with traditions of male gerontocratic societies seems to be highly attractive to women (as well as to the youth and to young, socially upward oriented, mobile adults) (Maxwell 209-10). Although the attraction of African Pentecostal-type Christianity for female members has been observed in various contexts, gender studies in this area are still rare. They appear, if at all, in a modernity discourse used to interpret the rampant rise of Pentecostal-type Christianity in Africa. David Martin, the most prominent advocate of this discourse, is convinced that “Pentecostalism in Africa is a collective raft pointed with determination towards modernity” (152). He goes on to say that African Pentecostal-type churches “offer empowerments in all the

²⁶ Curses became a standing theme in African theology beginning in the early 1990s. Dua-Agyeman provides detailed classifications and spiritual treatment of curses (126-201).

problems and griefs of everyday. These are especially potent for women no longer embedded in systems of bride wealth, polygamy, or assigned marriage partners. In this area of family and reproduction, the key is knowledge, and Christianity is a major source of it, as well as of new norms and individual choice” (136).

According to Martin, Pentecostal-type churches provide a discursive space to negotiate modernity. The key concepts in this modernity paradigm are that this new form of Christianity in Africa contains a transformative power with the capacity to facilitate an extension of individual options and to foster individual gains of freedom and notions of mobility. Wherever such potential is at work, it supports an important passage in the process of modernization. In line with this argument, it seems plausible that Pentecostal-type churches would be especially attractive for female members. From a gender perspective, actions such as breaking with the past can be seen as a prerequisite for building new alliances that do not reference family or community networks. Once these actions have been theologically approved as being born-again, women can slacken familial ties and reduce patriarchal dependencies in order to reconstruct their biographies and join in the formation of a voluntary community. Moreover, deliverance practice and intense counseling help them to cope with the insecurities that may arise with their new, independent status. “So what Pentecostalism offers are spiritual resources and the communal backing of the circle of believers to help them stand on their own feet” (Martin 143).²⁷

Another aspect of modernity refers to the social ethics in Pentecostal-type churches, which in fact places an emphasis on an ethics of family, regardless of the social setting of either the churches or their individual believers. Many Pentecostal-type churches insist on new family patterns. Born-again theology transforms the spheres of married life, family, and sexuality. The churches support the nuclear family structure but also allow, for instance, birth control (Martin 140). This change in family patterns is promising for (young) women, who perform the bulk of the productive work that sustains the family, and which becomes all the more relevant in times of crisis. In a discussion of conversion narratives of female members of Pentecostal-type churches from Northern Tanzania, Päivi Hasu observes a rural-urban divide. Her data confirm that born-again consciousness transforms individuals and restructures family life, with women gaining more from “being saved” than men. However, the modernity benefits assume different shapes depending on the social contexts. Hasu differentiates “rural mothers in need” from “urban sisters in search of profit” (119-23, 127-8). Women in rural and poorer congregations are concerned with issues of poverty and the health and education of their children, while mainly remaining in a state of hope, expectation, and promise that their situation will improve. Rural churches urge women to behave according to edicts about comportment and dress; they are expected to be modest and chaste, and to withdraw from economic activities. The picture

27 It needs to be mentioned that women in most Pentecostal-type churches are restricted in their access to formal, hierarchical power (see Hollenweger 268).

changes in urban and wealthier congregations: women acquire new options, predominantly in economic life. Here, congregations encourage women to seek out and explore avenues of upward mobility and to become financially autonomous by tapping into economic resources and running their own businesses.²⁸

Another layer of the family ethics promoted by African Pentecostal-type churches is related to the character formation of men, an aspect that has been stressed by David Maxwell (201). Men, too, are resocialized from engaging in 'sinful' worldly activities to those more appropriate to a family-orientated life. The new codes of conduct demand an ethos of hard work, fidelity, and a peaceful temper, the shunning of alcohol as well as extramarital relations. Wedding ceremonies are comparatively modest. Husbands are to treat their wives with consideration, and any infidelities are judged strictly according to a common moral standard, one that applies to husbands no less than it does to wives, and counseling to resolve marital disputes is provided regularly. All of these safeguards result in more well-managed household economies. Ogbu Kalu concludes that, "[i]n the midst of changing family patterns, the high rate of divorce, and social instability, [...] females find the certainties and securities of Pentecostal family ethics reassuring and attractive" (162).

These illustrations of a modernity paradigm do, however, contain a significant ambiguity. In view of body politics, women are (still) controlled by strict moral standards. The female body continues to be the object of self-observation and internalized shame, as much as an object of public honor as a moral bastion against the devil. In the ritual strategies of deliverance a female member must scrutinize her own behavior because it is precisely the female body that serves as the hot spot in the battle zone where Satan is confronted. And the sole masterminds behind these martial body images are men. From the perspective of male theologians, in order to fight the devil on the ground of the embattled female body, women must conform to long-standing gender stereotypes. Literary production on deliverance is obsessed with demonic possession of the female body, the body that most often experiences possession or madness, nightmares or witchcraft. In his book *Deliverance from Ungodly Soul-Ties*, which is basically a study of ethics in an African context, Kwaku Dua-Agyeman ponders demonic intrusions of the body roused by sexual in-/activities of women, which occur "during menses," and, among other things, manifest as "perversions," "fear of pregnancy," "ritualistic sex," or "frigidity" (36-43, 87-89, 102-23, 130, 169). Leonhard Soku also explores a wide range of contact options for demonic forces in relation to the female body, one of which is related to "witches" and "witchcraft." This issue covers a complex of confessions of young "witches" who were introduced into the spiritual realm by their grandmothers or other important female role models. His markers of satanic activities, especially in connection with childbirth, point to "spiritual marriages" between women and demons. Repeated mis-

28 The subtext in this argument of modernity comments on the gospel of prosperity, a form of born-again theology that identifies material expectations with spiritual salvation.

carriages or barrenness are caused by a certain demonic action conducted with “spiritual spouses,” that is, spirits enjoying sexual intercourse with women at night. The inability of women to enter into a happy marriage or maintain it, the end of a marriage, the cessation of monthly periods – all these afflictions are direct results of ancestral curses. Even the use of objects like the rings or earrings of others thought to be contaminated by evil spirits is high risk, primarily for female church members (Soku, *From the Coven* 39-49).

The negative discourse on women finds support in the biblical figure of Jezebel (who “seduced” her royal husband Ahab into idolatry, see 1 Kings 16). “Jezebels” are normally portrayed as ‘modern’, i.e., Western-style women, disguised perfectly as active believers in order to capture a ministry. Accusing women of being “Jezebels” exempts sexually immoral, ‘preying pastors’ from taking personal responsibility for their behavior. During deliverance procedures, identifying the seducing “Jezebel” as the locus of moral corruption has become the standing defense against and explanation for any demonic attacks on the churches’ male leadership (Kalu 153). Couching this defense in terms of a spiritual argument possibly intensifies the antagonizing forces arrayed against women.

This catalogue of misogyny provides sufficient evidence to conclude that both the demonic as well as the deliverance practices used to combat them target the female body. The ritual praxis in Pentecostal-type churches to detect and control demonic powers is preoccupied with experiences of female sexuality, reproduction, and family life. A negative gender discourse instrumentalizes the female body as a counterforce against the born-again community. The value judgments about the female body’s particular vulnerability to demonic intrusions tend to ‘rebalance’ gender relations, which in the sphere of African Pentecostal-type Christianity have just begun to open up in favor of patriarchal gender structures. As much as providing gains of individual freedom, though, fighting the devil demands the disciplining and domesticating especially of the female body.

Conclusion: Envisioning a “Hard” Cultural Form

Arjun Appadurai distinguishes “hard” from “soft” cultural forms by discussing processes of indigenization. Reviewing the history of Indian cricket, he argues that successful indigenization creates “hard” cultural forms that often relate to processes of modernity rather than addressing a traditional or premodern cultural heritage. Appadurai defines such “hard” patterns in the cultural repertoire as “a set of links between value, meaning, and embodied practice that are difficult to break and hard to transform” (90).²⁹ The argument I have presented here is that

29 Soft cultural forms are those that “permit relatively easy separation of embodied performance from meaning and value, and relatively successful transformation at each level” (Appadurai 90).

the ‘theology of the embattled body’ in African Pentecostal-type Christianity has developed into such a “hard cultural form.”

Pneumatology, the central theological dimension in African Pentecostal-type Christianity, revolves around the twin formula of an enacted demonology and an elaborated devil complex. The power of the Holy Spirit stands as an energizing force to militarize, protect, and purify the body of the saved. The indigenization of the devil in Africa, the process of which was aided by numerous external observations and opinions, gradually envisioned for and intensified the bodily experiences of born-again believers. Deriving from theological concepts of the spheres of good and evil, the devil complex has more and more become identified as operating in embodied practice and belief. The born-again believer feels under constant threat of demonic pollution, moral aberration, and spiritual heresy. This devil awareness demands rigid adherence to external moral codes as part of the born-again consciousness, and encapsulates those core values and beliefs in the individual body of the believer. In addition, alongside an expanding discourse on the devil, the born-again community continually discovers embodied counter-strategies in ritual and spiritual performances. As a hard cultural form, with all its moral, spiritual, and ritual virtues, the theology of the embattled body resists reinterpretation. In view of the gendered body politics in African Pentecostal-type churches, it changes those who are socialized in it more readily than it permits transformation of the established texture of the devil complex.

However, despite all its ambivalence, the theology of the embattled body can still position the saved ones within modernity. In their self-perception as born-again, advocating a moral life and stressing personal commitment, African believers are drifting toward the notion of individual responsibility. In their insistence on a rupture with the past, they imagine the advantages of social mobility, even including one with international dimensions. The African devil discourse itself possesses diverse transnational links. It is very dynamic, easily adapting to changing historical contexts. It is decidedly nontraditional, as it encodes the essential arguments for disrupting ties with the (religious) past. At the same time, this rupture carries the hope for a successful transition to what may be. The expansive nature of the devil complex, which enables it to comment on practically all phenomena in contemporary society, prepares the born-again believer for conceptualizing or critically addressing some of the processes of modernization. Even in its ambiguous concern about how to handle the “Jezebel” aesthetics, with provocative foreign concepts of fashion and beauty, the African born-again community is breaking a taboo by addressing sexual desire in public. The embattled body and the devil complex are the sometimes spectacular products of the “imagined community” (Benedict Anderson) of the born-again in its experiments with modernity.

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Exotic Humans on Display: Representations of Cultural Differences in German Ethnic Shows

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For a couple of decades, the social sciences, and anthropology among them, have accepted the paradigm that the material conditions of human bodies go beyond originary, objective qualities, and that illness and health, gender and phenotype are also socially and culturally constructed. Inalterable body traits have become subject to social interpretations that can cover a continuum from complete denial to heightened awareness. Thus, bodies are not so much the origin but rather the battleground of negotiating identity and ascription; they serve as carriers and markers of imputed difference. This is especially true for culture contacts; during the age of European expansion, physical characteristics described in terms of ‘racial’ – and, as an implicit or explicit deduction, behavioral or cultural – difference often made bodies the sites that served to explain and legitimate power relations. The “exotic” body with its immediate visibility served as a marker for popular and academic projections of ethnic difference that ranged from the “noble” to the “wild” savage (Platz; Shilling).

A late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century popular culture medium reinforcing these images was the phenomenon of ethnic shows,¹ a form of entertainment that was widespread throughout central Europe and North America: troupes of non-European² people were recruited for a few months or even several years

- 1 The German term *Völkerschauen* has connotations of ethnic entities, of gazing and spectacles, that are difficult to translate into an adequate English term. Although I have been actively involved in discussions among colleagues that resulted in the coining of terms such as the catchy *human zoos* (Blanchard et al., *Human Zoos*) and *commercial ethnographic exhibitions* (Poddar, Patke and Jensen 227), I prefer *ethnic shows*: in everyday (as opposed to social science) speech, the English term *ethnic* suggests folkloristic and primordial, life-long qualities, which no doubt were important elements of the kind of stereotyping connected with the *Völkerschauen*. While *displays* and *exhibitions* evoke immobile artifacts, *spectacles* and *shows* point to the fact that *Völkerschauen* were staged, even when the spectators seemed to witness the troupe members’ ‘everyday lives’ while roaming their ‘villages’ in the exhibition area. A catchy and emotionally appealing term like *human zoos* masks the fact that troupe members were not always dependant or passive victims, but in a number of cases strategically negotiated their roles in the spectacles, or acted as impresarios, recruiters and/or managers for their own shows.
- 2 A few ethnic shows did showcase troupes of Swedish and Breton peasants as well as gypsies (Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 176).



Fig. 1: Bullock cart drivers at the 'Indian Village', probably waiting to take spectators around the grounds. A dwelling or sales stall, with palms as part of the simulated scenery, is embedded in the European broadleaf tree landscape. Gustav Hagenbeck's Indien, postcard, 1906.³

and put on display for paying audiences. Often placed in 'characteristic' and at times very elaborate sceneries representing their native dwellings and landscapes, they were exhibited in parks and zoos. The spectators could roam the showground freely and observe the 'natives' going about their daily tasks in these 'villages'. Furthermore, the troupes played in performances that supposedly represented 'typical' scenes of their region of origin; these performances usually consisted of music, dances, and combat, enhanced by some other components. Many ethnic shows went on tour through several cities or even countries. In concert with academic research of that period, and reaching vast audiences, they drew on existing and (re-) invented metaphors and narratives of ethnic difference. These representations and their contexts, their scope, and the oscillation between bodily and cultural discourses will be the subject of this paper.

Show Business Traditions and Ramifications

Europe's tradition of putting on display people who were considered physically and culturally different or 'exotic' goes back to the early age of overseas discoveries. Africans, Native Americans, Inuit, and Pacific Islanders were presented as human 'specimens' at courts and country fairs by seafarers and explorers. While some individuals were lionized by the nobility and fashionable society, others acted out in front of painted sceneries or elaborately created settings what were

considered typical pursuits of their culture (Bitterli; Debrunner; Feest; Höpp; McCormick).

In Germany, up until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, ethnic shows remained a predominantly small-scale but common feature of country fairs. It was only beginning in the 1870s that some enterprises, for example the Hamburg-based Hagenbeck company, developed them into logistically sophisticated, highly mobile, ethnographically well-equipped spectacles with intricate background sceneries and dramaturgy, and incorporated influences from several sources: world fairs with their ‘native villages’; American circuses, such as P. T. Barnum’s, with their side shows; and towards the turn of the twentieth century, fun parks, Coney Island, for example, that exhibited human freaks and ‘exotic’ people, with or without culturally imposed body alterations;³ the large theater shows of London which filled big halls; German circus pantomimes with foreign, overseas themes, which gradually came to be staffed by non-Europeans; and professional, immensely successful open-air shows in the United States (like “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West”) that offered equestrian and marksmanship spectacles with Native American, African, and Asian protagonists (Altick; Beutler, Metken and Sembach; Burke; Fox and Parkinson; Honour; Saltarino; Scheugl and Adanos).

The central idea of ethnic shows consists of the playing up of ‘ethnic difference’: images of an ‘ethnic other’ can be constructed by drawing on (pseudo-) authenticity, fantasy, and cultural projections. In these early shows, the creation of ‘authenticity’ wavered between exotic bodies on one side and cultural props on the other. In the 1840s, for example, George Catlin, the U.S. painter famous for his portraits of American Indians, had taken home a number of Indian artifacts from his travels in the American West. In order to attract a greater audience to his painting exhibitions, he engaged a few men to dress in Native American clothing and perform mock war dances. But the gallery visitors were dissatisfied with this spectacle because the facial features of these dancers were not ‘real Indian’. As a consequence, Catlin soon began hiring actual Native Americans, who turned out to be a much bigger success (Altick 275-79; Honour 236-38). Similarly, a few decades later, the huge Wild West Shows of impresario Buffalo Bill drew immense crowds, both in the United States and on overseas tours, as they were perceived as ‘authentic’, not only in their performances but also due to the presence of American Indians (Sell and Weybright 98-105, 125-225). One of the Native Americans recalled: “Once a cowboy told him the show could not go on without him, and Buffalo Bill said, ‘I can put a pair of boots, a big hat and red shirt on any man, and call him a cowboy, but I cannot dress anyone up and call him an Indian’” (Burke 199).

3 For example, tattoos, filed teeth, or Burmese Kayan women’s necks (actually deformed pectoral girdles) optically elongated by heavy metal neck spirals.

“Characteristic Figures of Folk Life”: the Recruitment

In France, and to some degree in Britain, even small country fair ethnic shows seem to have been very much lodged in a colonial-propagandistic context (Blanchard et al., *L'Autre et Nous*; Bergougniou, Clignet, and David). By contrast, apart from perhaps a dozen colonial exhibitions with living people put on display, in Germany the majority of ethnic shows were predominantly commercial enterprises. With a few notable exceptions,⁴ troupe members were not recruited from the German colonies.⁵ When researching the organization of the shows produced by the Hagenbeck company, one of the market leaders in German ethnic show business, I had access to more than five thousand pieces of business correspondence and the unpublished diaries of one of the recruiters and impresarios, as well as hundreds of newspaper articles and advertisements (Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 14, 16). These materials allowed me to conduct a detailed analysis of the company's recruiting and exhibiting criteria. According to Carl Hagenbeck, in 1910 an average ethnic show cost approximately 60,000 Reichsmark, a considerable sum, and obviously one that box office takings had to exceed in order to realize a profit. Consequently, the planning was done very carefully: ethnic shows, although the organizers never failed to stress their educational value, were still business operations and needed, bottom line, to make money. Three main criteria for recruitment can be extracted from the sources I examined. First, the ethnic unit and the individuals selected had to be sufficiently different in culture and looks from Central Europeans; at best they could come from Europe's fringes, for example Lapland. Much more preferable was an overseas background. On the other hand, contact with Europeans in the fringe or non-European regions of origin had to be established to a certain degree so that the organization of the show could run smoothly: for example, efforts to recruit troupes among the reclusive Wedda in Ceylon or Andaman Islanders from India failed; there were just too few points of familiarity. Secondly, the physical appearance of potential recruits was of utmost importance: special beauty or ugliness in the eyes of the European beholder, or cultural deformations, were considered an asset since they promised to make an ethnic troupe more interesting for the paying crowds: the tall and slender Somali and Ethiopians with their Europoid features, the small-boned, gracefully built Sinhalese, Kwakiutl women with their artificially elongated heads, and Sara women with their huge lip plugs are among those discussed in the sources. Once an ethnic unit had been decided on, quality-minded recruiters took extra care to select only those individuals who looked most like the physical ideal of that group. Thus, one of the impresarios is known to have refused to offer contracts to Sioux Indians who had cut their long hair short, or to a red-haired Sami from Lapland. Thirdly, it was advantageous if the potential recruits' material cul-

4 Perhaps twenty shows between 1875 and 1933.

5 This is also true for the years after 1901, when recruiting in German colonies was forbidden (Sippel).

ture, e. g., clothes and dwellings, or their customs were potentially ‘picturesque’ or even ‘spectacular’, which again can be translated as ‘very different’ from the spectators’ everyday world. The alleged “guard of the King of Dahomey” or the “Dahomey Amazons” (Blier), reputedly consisting of female warriors, falls into this category, as do the many Indian-Ceylonese troupes made up of professional performers, including snake charmers, magicians, bamboo pole artistes, and bear trainers, all of whom recruiter and impresario John Hagenbeck claimed to be the “characteristic figures of folk life” (Hagenbeck, *Fünfundzwanzig Jahre* 49). Before signing a group of Inuit, one promoter is known to have tested their abilities by paying for a competition in doing the “Eskimo roll”⁶ (Jacobsen, *Meine erste Reise* 10-11).

Authenticity, Imagination, and Audience Expectations: Organization and Spectacle

While small-scale enterprises had to present their ethnic shows on theater and pub stages in front of painted coulisses, larger, more prominent ethnic show companies went to great lengths to create ‘authentic’ sceneries in which the ethnic show participants performed and often lived: raw materials for houses or mobile dwellings, e.g., tents, were brought from the region of recruitment; at Hagenbeck’s, landscapes with live plants and animals as well as with famous sights from the region being represented, e.g. temples from India, Egyptian pyramids, were even installed. A veritable sightseeing tour with numbered attractions, described in an accompanying program brochure, guided the spectators around the exhibition ground. The highlights might include houses of unusual design, food stalls where delicacies of the troupe’s region of origin could be sampled, artisans producing handicrafts in front of the audience’s eyes, magicians giving regular performances, or the dwelling of some famous warrior who had fought against the colonial powers in a well-known battle. During the showground’s opening hours, the spectators could freely stroll through these ‘villages’. Because troupe members often observed food and eating taboos or social and religious dietary rules, it was soon found practical to provide them with the ingredients they needed and have them prepare their own meals. This turned out to be a boon as far as the audiences were concerned: they could observe the troupe members cooking and eating, as well as engaging in other daily pursuits such as milking reindeer, weaving, and carving.

One practice was especially pronounced with the Hagenbeck shows, where extra care was taken with landscaping and providing live animals from the area, but not unknown with other large enterprises as well: creating slogans that adver-

6 This is a 360-degree flip of the kayak in which the occupant turns his boat upside down and himself headfirst into the water, and then brings himself and his kayak back into the starting position.



Fig. 2: Samoyeds having a meal in the open. Observing the troupe members during their “daily pursuits” was a special attraction for the audience, who could roam the ethnic show. Carl Hagenbeck’s Tierpark, undated postcard, possibly 1911/12.

tised an illusion, that is, risk-free and affordable travel: “Do not take a long trip to see Africa, but come to the 100 Somali in the Somali village. Hagenbeck’s Zoo” (*Hamburger Anzeiger*; my translation).⁷

Performances, given several times a day on a stage or in front of the simulated scenery, grew more elaborate over the years. Although they invariably encompassed dancing, music, and combat scenes, irrespective of the world’s region from which they originated, the Hagenbeck company and other ethnic show enterprises combined these tableaux into dramaturgical sequences, complete with fevered climaxes and happy endings. Here is a typical Hagenbeck performance, as described in this excerpt from a program brochure:⁸

Scene 1: In the oasis. Plaiting women, playing children, grazing goats in front of the huts.

Scene 2: A family of vagrant Habr Awal comes along with a captured zebra. Dromedaries carrying household items and raw material for huts. At the head, the chief on a white horse. Men, loose dromedaries, children herding a flock of goats. The caravan begins setting up camp.

Scene 3: A Hagenbeck animal transport on its way to the coast arrives. [...] Address of welcome by the Habr Awal chief. Camp life. Bargaining for zebras. After posting a guard, siesta.

7 In the original German: “Um Afrika zu sehen, macht keine lange Reise, sondern kommt zu den 100 Somali im Somalidorf. Hagenbeck’s Tierpark.”

8 My translation; for the original German text see Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 109-10.

Scene 4: The assault. Appearance of the reconnaissance scouts; creeping over and killing of the guards; theft of the animals; alarm; defense and distress. Relief by riders coming down from Gondar; fighting and retreat of the thieves, who leave behind the wounded and the dead, (who were killed by having their throats cut). Victory dance of the Habr Awal; amidst wild “Ooh-hoo-hoo,” throat cutting is simulated, spears are thrown in the air and then caught.

Scene 5: Negotiating and conclusion of peace. The peace envoy sent by the Isa and Danakil approaches and negotiates with the Habr Awal chief. They come to an agreement: the stolen cattle are returned and the Habr Awal pay two dromedaries and a girl as blood money. The Isa and Danakil arrive to make peace. The chief of the Habr Awal’s speech to them. [...] Shaking hands on the peace deal. Withdrawal of the Isa and Danakil.

Scene 6: Preparations for the wedding feast. Dance (*dshurba*) by the Habr Awal. Arrival of the wedding procession; at the head, Arabic musicians, one with a whistle, the other with a large harp or lyre, followed by women with drums; after them the bride, attended by her singing and dancing girlfriends. They are followed by the first dromedary, carrying the bridal hut, and the second, bearing the bridal meal, the dishes covered with colored cloths; after them the Isa and Danakil in full war attire, draped in leopard and *guereza* furs; finally the Habr Awal, on horseback and on foot. Procession continues along, singing.

Scene 7: Wedding dances.

Scene 8: Spear throwing.

Scene 9: *Haradjit*, a war game in which warriors shout encouragement at each other before they leave for battle. Clapping shields and spears together and pounding their feet, they jerkily file forward.

Scene 10: Decampment of the caravan. Big procession.

Scene 11: Fantasia on horse and dromedary back. (Flemming 4-5)

While creating ‘authentic’ looking backdrops for staged performances and visitors’ imagined journeys was one method of presenting an ‘ethnic other’, another – and sometimes competing – approach was to use ethnic markers with a high recognition value for the audiences. Sometimes this recognition value could be much more powerful than the ‘authentic’ original. This became very clear with a show that turned out to be a complete failure. The 1885/86 show of Bella Coola Indians from America’s Northwest coast was praised by all academics as meeting the highest standards of being ethnographically correct and authentic in performance, costumes, and equipment. German spectators, however, had their own ideas about North American Indians, one that was completely different from what was presented to them: they expected Plains Indians with feather headdresses, tomahawks, and the like. The mask dances, Hamatsa secret society ceremonies, and



Fig. 3: Battle scene of Carl Hagenbeck's "Ethiopia" show, correlating with Scene 4 in the program brochure. Behind the fence of the performance area, parts of the ethnic show 'village' with coulisse buildings of the depicted region can be seen. *Völkerschau Äthiopien*, postcard, 1909.

magic illusions as performed during the Bella Coola winter dances did not appeal to them. The show was a financial disaster for the organizers, who in newspaper accounts were even accused of presenting "hoax Indians" (Haberland 362).

Ethnic Shows and Academia

Although these spectacles were a phenomenon of popular culture, the connections between ethnic show organizations and academia were numerous and manifold. Still a young discipline, but haunted by the idea of vanishing 'races' and cultures, anthropology endeavored to compile a database encompassing all of humankind's physical and cultural characteristics, to which end it conducted extensive body measurement projects and carried on countless collection activities. It is no coincidence that large ethnic show enterprises went to great lengths to create what they saw as 'authenticity', achieved by employing 'authentic' human beings, artifacts, sceneries, animals, and plants from the regions relevant to the anthropologists' research concerns, an attitude and practice that were consistent with academic views of the time. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropology adhered to the paradigm that there not only existed a zoological and phenotypic inventory of every region of the world, but also a cultural inventory for every ethnic unit, including material objects as well as certain values and social structures, or typical configurations, patterns, and leitmotifs that combined



Fig. 4: The nine men of the Bella Coola show posing in a studio with their props and parts of the ethnographic collection that were presented as a side show. Although highly praised by academics and Northwest Coast travelers for its ‘authenticity’, this show was not accepted by German audiences, who expected Plains Indians with feather headdresses and tomahawks. Modern postcard after a photo taken 1885/86.

them (de Malefijt Waal 138-59, 256-92). Still in the 1970s, even anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote without any qualms that “it would take some thirty years of continuous observation to document the complete Manus repertoire” (202). The cultural inventory of an ethnic unit was thus considered to be finite and, as a consequence, *completely* collectible and depictable.

It is in this context that the tireless body measurement and collecting activities of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropologists have to be understood. Today’s anthropological paradigm, in stark contrast, understands ethnicity as a fluid concept, governed by highly negotiable and context-based ascriptions of self and others constructed by actors in social interaction: even if two ethnic units existed whose cultural inventory, from an outsider’s perspective, differed in not even a single detail, the members of each of those units could still define themselves as two distinct ethnic units by symbolically creating (perceived) differences between them. In the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, however, anthropology saw ethnicity as a rigid state, and research tried to establish factual instead of perceived differences in order to identify one ethnic group as opposed to another.

Most European academics during this period had few or no opportunities to travel overseas, so they welcomed the fact that ethnic show producers regularly organized extra performances for the benefit of academic societies, the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory being among them. After performances, the scholars were usually allowed to take body measurements of the troupe members. In return, the scientists' interest and appreciation was good advertisement for the show organizers. To systematically enhance their 'database', these societies would sometimes request ethnic show organizers to recruit their next show participants from a certain area or ethnic unit about which they wanted to learn more. Scholars of non-European languages, musicologists, and museum ethnologists interviewed the shows' participants about their traditions and artifacts, or taped their songs and myths. As many ethnic shows displayed artifacts in the form of side shows, museums often benefited by acquiring these pieces after the show season ended. Theodor Wilhelm Danzel, a German anthropologist, went so far as to claim that he had developed and proved one of his theories by interacting with a particular troupe's members; unfortunately he did not document to which of his theories this troupe contributed nor the content of their contribution. The most famous case of a scholar's close interaction with ethnic show organizations and troupe members is Franz Boas, one of the founding fathers of American anthropology. He became so fascinated with the Bella Coola show that he not only wrote and presented a number of papers based on inquiries he conducted with them during their tour in Germany, but for the rest of his life dedicated the greatest part of his research to the American Northwest Coast Indians, often relying on Native Americans he had come to know through the impresarios of the show (Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 108-16).

In return for the opportunity to study the non-Europeans recruited for these shows, anthropologists would at times provide the show producers with didactic materials, for example, maps or text panels, as educational background for the spectacles. Because anthropology's database of phenotypic and cultural inventories was small and insufficient at the time, academics faced a serious problem, however: ethnic show participants were not always from the area or ethnic unit that the impresarios claimed. In fact, to draw crowds, titles for ethnic shows were often chosen to relate them to countries or ethnic groups that were currently being mentioned in the press. For example, people from northeast Africa were frequently called "Abyssinians" since Abyssinia was a common newspaper topic of the period. The challenge for anthropologists working with ethnic show participants was to find out whether the troupes were actually from the area it was claimed they were from, and at the same time to learn more about the area by relying on those same troupe members. As a result, circular reasoning was a constant methodological danger.

Ethnic Shows as Mass Media

Ethnic shows were advertised by small newspaper announcements, usually without pictures, and by colored, painted placards. With the exception of a very few posters that simply rendered portrait heads of troupe members, for example, a Sioux chief in full feather headdress or Samoan beauties, most either showed peaceful village and everyday scenes, often in considerable ethnographic detail, or highly dramatic incidents, sometimes both in the same picture (Malhotra; Schmid-Linsenhoff). Dwellings, attire, and jewelry, family scenes as well as the herding, loading, or use of domesticated animals were topics that fell into the first category, although the background or a vignette might show a burning village as a hint of the excitements the actual performances would supply. The other category, that of high drama, focused in graphic detail on protruding eyes, open mouths, and tense bodies in tantalizing scenes, for example, the swaying abduction of a woman in full gallop, a bound prisoner forced to his knees and threatened by a circle of pointed spears, a spear being thrown in the air by a warrior at the exact moment he lifts off the ground in a jump, or a myriad of battle scenes. In numerous cases, however, the thrill of the posters had to make up for the excitement the performances themselves lacked. While the presentations of the “Dahomey Amazons” mentioned earlier, according to some newspaper reports, consisted of not much more than a few weapon drills, parades, and a mock fight with swords, the placards advertising the shows are among the most suggestive: scantily-clad women parade in front of skulls on stakes, massacre white colonial masters, who are outfitted in uniform and pith helmet, and the top warrior triumphantly waves a flag on a hill, reminiscent of Delacroix’ famous painting *Liberty Leading the People*, and thus evoking the victory of the oppressed in the French Revolution (Schmid-Linsenhoff 254; Thode-Arora, “Blutrünstige Kannibalen”).

Sold as accompaniments to the shows, the program brochures often contained a title page in color that was identical to the design of (one of) the poster(s) advertising the spectacle. Apart from the textual guided tour through the showground and the sequence in which the performances would take place, these program texts usually contained a sort of ethnographic description of the featured country and its people, as well as their customs and culture. Moreover, many of the brochures included black-and-white photographs, which often appeared again as motifs for the picture postcards sold during the show. Postcards⁹ either showed portraits of individuals or groups taken in the studio, or with their equipment at the showground, or they rendered scenes and sceneries from the show: e.g., dancers, musicians, craftspeople, and acrobats at work, rickshaw or bullock cart drivers, mahouts, dromedary or horse riders, ‘village’ streets, dwellings, mosques, or temples. Only a few cards showed staged dramatic scenes comparable to those

9 In many cases, the proceeds of the postcard sales seem to have gone to the troupe members who probably did the actual selling.

depicted on some of the posters. One example is the portrayal of a mock scalping on cards sold with a Sioux show.

Unfortunately, there are hardly any sources that would enable one to make an estimate of the print runs and circulation ranges of these ethnic show posters, program brochures, and postcards. Having analyzed hundreds of postcards in different collections and at auctions, I am convinced that the print runs, at least for the postcards for some shows, reached five- or even six-digit numbers and circulated not only in Germany, but abroad as well when the shows went on tour – the same picture motifs appear in English, French, Spanish, and Eastern European language reprints. As with postcards bought when traveling, the purchasers seem to have either kept them as souvenirs (a number of cards carry ethnic show troupe members' autographs in Arabic, Russian, or Sinhalese script), or used them to send specific greetings from the show (referring to it in their texts), or sent them with messages that had no connection at all with the spectacle.

The German ethnic show business peaked in the 1880s and 1890s, and, in spite of a consistently high number of competing impresarios and traveling shows, was successful until the beginning of World War I, which put an end to all recruitments from the colonial territories of the nation-states. While early or small-scale enterprises had no more than a dozen people on display, the largest troupes comprised up to four hundred individuals. In contrast to the huge, albeit few colonial exhibitions and colonial trade fairs confined to one city, commercial ethnic shows were highly mobile and toured all over Europe, often including small towns, and thereby reaching audiences of several hundred thousand or more spectators. I would therefore consider these commercial shows as an early form of mass entertainment, and argue that together with the images spread and perpetuated through their posters, brochures, and postcards, they had a much greater impact than the few stationary ethnic shows included as part of colonial exhibitions for educational and colonial propaganda purposes. Although ethnic show business regained momentum in the 1920s, the spectacles would not reach the same heights of grandeur they had had before the war. A competitor in creating exotic dream worlds and fantasies had come into existence: starting in the 1910s, German movies as a new form of mass media increasingly featured stories set in exotic places (Schöning).

With the rise of the Nazi regime, ethnic shows in their earlier form eventually came to an end. However, the government-sponsored Africa Show, featuring a cast solely of Black Africans and Black Germans, together with propaganda movies set in the former colonies, was intended to rekindle interest among the population in the recovery and alleged necessity of German overseas territories. For a number of reasons, the planning of the Africa Show dragged on over several years and had to be abandoned in the end. Even so, the show and the colonial propaganda films did help a number of Black Germans survive the era of National Socialism in the relatively safe haven of show surroundings and film

studios, where they were urgently needed to play characters in narratives set in Africa (Forgey; Michael).

Blurs, Overlaps, and Continuities

Although different in their aims and methods at first sight, ethnology museums, ethnic shows, and the movies of the 1910s and 1920s with their exotic settings all faced the task of presenting an ‘ethnic other’ to their audiences. As a consequence, when displaying material culture and human beings, allegedly ‘typical’ characteristics that made one ethnic unit differ from another and from what was perceived as Central European culture, had to be emphasized.

Ethnology museums of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century aspired to produce academic and encyclopedic exhibitions of artifacts, enhanced by informational texts and photographs. Additionally, as a holistic and audience-friendly technique of museum display, they often presented dioramas and ‘ethnographic groups’ – flexible mannequins whose faces had been modeled after wax casts of living people, clad in garments, and equipped with ethnographic artifacts from the area to be represented, and arranged into ‘typical’ scenes.

In the late 1910s and 1920s, the plots of more and more German silent movies were set partly or entirely in far-away places. But because most of these films were shot in Germany itself, non-European people, landscapes, artifacts, and other components had to be used to create the overseas sceneries: as with the ethnic shows, a number of film directors put great emphasis on ‘authentic’ sets. This desire was sometimes carried to extremes: a small scene in Joe May’s *Das indische Grabmal* [*The Indian Tomb*] required the heroine to exchange words with a talking parrot, and a long search was undertaken to find a real talking parrot – this for a scene in a silent movie! While the main characters were usually played by German actors, the extras and some minor roles were filled with non-Europeans, or those of partly non-European descent, who were of the requisite phenotypes. After World War I, and on into the present, these actors and extras were and are often Black Germans.

Because anthropology (as a discipline), anthropology museums, many ethnic shows, and a number of movies held to a similar ideal and method of creating ‘authenticity’, it is perhaps not too astonishing that there was collaboration and exchange among them to a certain degree. In the 1920s, the contracts of ethnic show participants with the Hagenbeck company contained a clause committing them to appear as extras in movies. Furthermore, beginning in 1919, Hagenbeck rented out a vast area of his zoo to a film company: a number of movies of this period, some by Fritz Lang, were filmed in the artificial landscape of Hagenbeck’s zoo. Film companies approached ethnological museums with requests to borrow items from their collections for use as stage props in order to create ‘authentic’ background scenery. The previously mentioned *Indian Tomb*, for example, was

completely equipped with an Indian collection that was assembled from holdings of the Hamburg Ethnological Museum.

The blurs and overlaps in creating representations of an ‘ethnic other’ for the academically-minded museums and anthropologists on the one hand and the entertainment business interests of ethnic shows and movies on the other were also reflected in their staffs: a number of experts in creating exotic ambiances worked for all of these media and made careers of swiftly and fluidly moving between the fulfillment of both academic and entertainment requirements when collecting and presenting artifacts and animals or when recruiting people from overseas. The well-known Hamburg-based dealers in ethnographic objects, the Umlauff company, for example, sold well-documented, high quality collections to museums, but at the same time equipped ethnic shows from its inventory of artifacts and constructed elaborate background sceneries for them. An even more superficial level of the entertainment business was providing fish tails for Egyptian mummies that were then sold as “mermaids” to traveling fairground showmen. Later, the Umlauff company also equipped films and created and sold “ethnographic groups” made up of paper maché mannequins to museums (Thode-Arora, “Familie”; Thode-Arora, “Herbeigeholte Ferne”).

Encountering the ‘Others’

Ethnic shows were different from non-live museum displays and movies, however, since they forced – or at least offered the opportunity for – the spectators to experience face-to-face contact with the performers. These kinds of situations could of course result in unexpected behavior, and of communications and images that the exhibition organizers did not intend to have conveyed. There are documented cases of show participants trying to relay their own messages about their own cultures, of others who wanted to change their hairstyles or put on European clothes, thus reducing the impression of an ‘ethnic other’. Some performers regularly went to pubs or dance halls where they engaged in flirtations and love affairs, some of which even led to marriages with spectators. Prince Samson Dido from Cameroon, a high-ranking man who came to Germany with one of the few shows from the German colonies, dressed in African attire and presided over the performances given by his countrymen but took no part in them. Outside performance hours, however, he made it a point to don a European dress coat and top hat along with his loin cloth. Abraham, a Christian Inuit from Labrador who kept a diary about his ethnic show tour through Central Europe, was shocked by the spectators’ ignorance concerning his native country and their indifference toward Christianity, which was such a central aspect of his life. As a consequence, he felt an urge to enlighten them:

I even answered some of them who were talking about us, as they could understand English. Some of them have been horrified by our Northlanders [a family of non-converted Inuit]. I have constant, daily work with drawing: human beings, Labrador and Nain [one of the mission stations in Labrador]. [...] Some days, I even played the violin in the open because the Kablunât [Europeans] wished it so greatly, being as it is that I cannot do it so perfectly well, they did not care about that.

I was constantly asked to write my name, at times there were so many [...] requests; one always took it away from the next person; it was impossible to fulfill the requirements of all. (Thode-Arora, "Abraham's Diary" 6-7)

As the quotation makes clear, spectators' expectations could be quite varied. The size of the crowds could also be considerable: in big cities such as Berlin or Paris, visitor numbers might reach thirty thousand to ninety thousand on a Sunday with fine weather or reduced entrance fees (Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 168-73). Although some ethnic show organizers, including Hagenbeck, saw to it that only a few troupe members were able to speak a European language, so that the spectacle could run smoothly but that contact with the audience would be difficult, his impresarios did observe that occasionally spectators evidenced little intention of leaving once the show was over. Many visitors, using their knowledge of European languages or resorting to gesturing and making hand signs, tried to establish communication between performers and themselves.

Apart from voyeurism, curiosity about, or fascination with the exotic, the attraction the ethnic show troupe members held often contained an erotic component as well. The "head warrior" of the "Dahomey Amazons" is known to have sold nude photographs of herself (Thinius 37), Carl Hagenbeck remembers "beautiful Hadjidje" from Somalia in his memoirs, and the women of the Samoa shows were advertised as "beauties." As early as the 1870s, producers and agents complained in their correspondence and diaries about European girls and women "caressing and touching the arms of such a brown Adonis for hours," or even following their troupe member boyfriends from one tour stop to the next (Jacobsen, *Notissen* 89-90). It became clear that social distancing through ethnic othering, as intended by the organizers and impresarios, could not always be maintained. In fact, it seems to be precisely the act of perceiving an 'ethnic other' that encouraged spectators to shed their inhibitions and establish communications with these 'ethnic others', including physical contact. Some German-language literary works also dealt with the issue of the erotic attraction troupe members posed (Altenberg; Jahn). In other texts, ethnic shows were just backdrops against which stories could be developed that provided the reader with something completely different (von Horváth; Scheurmann).

As a systematic survey of all Hamburg newspapers published between 1874 and 1932 revealed, as did a sampling of articles from other cities, press coverage of the shows was quite conventional; most journalists seem to have simply used

the press releases prepared by the show organizers, which were often identical to the ethnographic descriptions in the program brochures. A few articles describe journalists' visits to a particular show or mention some special incidents (Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 137-42). Apart from a few church-related papers, the *fact* of exhibiting human beings was not an object of criticism.

The Troupe Members

For those who were recruited for these ethnic shows, implied culture contacts occurred in a number of settings and with different categories of participants: the troupe members' countries of origin during recruitment, the administration of these countries and of the host countries during the actual tour, the showgrounds or theaters with their staffs and impresarios, as well as their audiences. Although turn-of-the-twentieth-century ethnic shows – as well as ethnology museums, academic anthropology, and movies – were located in a hierarchical colonial power structure, it would be too simplistic to assume that non-European actors were always powerless players in this setting. A wide range of constellations already resided in the circumstances under which recruitment took place. A number of Australian Aborigines were literally abducted and held captive by their impresario. Inuit Abraham and his companions among them had knowingly and voluntarily signed contracts, but despaired of the length and unfamiliar conditions of their tour, which eventually ended with all of them dying from small pox. Sioux Indians were much sought after as “show Indians” by ethnic show producers, and, although arguably acting from the standpoint of a reservation background full of deprivation, they negotiated respectable fees for themselves when faced with a number of agents who were competing to recruit them. Before signing contracts with agents, wealthy Sami demanded compensation payments so that their herds could be looked after during their absence from Lapland (Poignant; Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 89-90).

For those performers who knew what to expect, not to mention the organizers, agents, and producers, ethnic shows were primarily business. In a number of documented cases, individual troupe members repeatedly sought work in ethnic shows, or became ethnic show impresarios with their own companies. While some hoped to escape debts or depressing living conditions under colonial rule, others had motives that were primarily financial.

Especially in the ethnic shows' face-to-face encounters, culture contact could neither be controlled nor represented as efficiently as in the non-live media of museum displays or movies: non-European and non-white participants strategically and aptly used European forms of display, stereotypes, and expectations for their own purposes, thus taking an active part in negotiating the image of an ‘ethnic other’. Sinhalese elephant specialists ran their own small-scale shows as early as the 1880s. Hersi Egeh Gorseh from Somalia had come to Germany as a troupe

member in the 1880s, but soon seems to have taken on recruitment for and organizing of Somali shows for Hagenbeck and other companies. Moroccan artistes have always monopolized “Human Pyramid” acts, which continues to be the case, and included these performances in their own traveling ethnic shows in the 1920s. The years after World War I also saw a number of Black Germans running ethnic shows of their own (Escher; Michael; Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig* 163-65).

Constructing ‘Cultural Difference’

The central idea of ethnic shows is to highlight phenotypic and cultural difference between the performers on one side and the audience on the other: as with all kinds of entertainment, consumers would not have been satisfied with a spectacle too similar to their everyday lives and experiences. As German ethnic shows were primarily commercial undertakings, rather than engaging ethnographic or colonial propagandistic indoctrination, they had to allay the spectators’ hunger for the exotic in ways that met their expectations. Organizers and impresarios tried to meet this demand using different strategies. Backed by academic paradigms of non-ambiguous human races and a finite cultural inventory, with ethnicity as a primordial and immutable property, many of these entrepreneurs invested substantial time and effort in recruitment for and setup of the shows in order to provide an alleged ‘authenticity’ supported by detailed adherence to the criteria of those paradigms. At the same time, as the dramatic and catchy elements in the performances and the poster advertisements, as well as the narrative and performative structures of the shows demonstrate, the organizers in fact dispensed with any form of intended ‘authenticity’, but rather emphasized ethnic stereotypes in their presentations. These were usually not *created* through the shows, but drew on much older images, metaphors, narratives, and discourses in the European canon, for example the ‘savage’, the ‘noble savage’, or the alluring, but dangerous ‘exotic’ woman. Being highly mobile and reaching hundreds of thousands of spectators in cities and small towns, the shows and their accompanying print media were a form of mass entertainment that should neither be neglected nor underestimated when considering their influence in perpetuating images and stereotypes of non-Europeans. As recently as the 1950s, the races-of-the-world plates illustrating a corresponding article in the widely circulated German *Brockhaus* encyclopedia continued to show the occasional portrait photograph taken of an ethnic show participant. Facilitated by ethnic show organizers who also provided their expertise in creating ‘exotic’ sceneries and spectacles for the young film industry and for museum displays of ‘ethnic groups’, these images could smoothly glide from one form of mass entertainment to the next. Furthermore, some performances that had already been seen in ethnic shows seem to have survived as tourist spectacles through the present day. The medial relevance

of these shows in materializing and stabilizing representations of an ‘ethnic other’ thus cannot, therefore, be overstated.

Coda

Some ethnic show participants are known to have appropriated European fantasies and projections of ‘the other’ by producing and operating their own ethnic shows. Although some body traits as well as life histories cannot be changed, their sociocultural interpretations are clearly manipulable and negotiable, especially when invoking body concepts intertwined with cultural concepts: interviews with some Black German witnesses of history who performed in ethnic shows and movies as children, explain how they successfully used spectators’ stereotypes to create an image of an ‘ethnic other’. Born during or after World War I to Africans who had moved from the German colonies to live permanently in Germany, these young Black Germans had never been to Africa, grew up as Germans, and, according to their own testimony, completely fabricated their shows, complete with make-believe African cultural performances. When admiring white German audience members asked them about African customs and traditions, the Black German performers had to quickly invent them: apparently, even without ‘authentic’ cultural props, the mere presence of the ‘black body’ can suffice as an ethnic marker and can convincingly represent ‘authenticity’.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Dreamlands of Culture: Ethnographic Dioramas and their Prospects¹

ANDREA ZITTLAU

Now there can be no doubt that one of the most effective and least boring of didactic mechanisms is the diorama, the reduced-scale reproduction, the model, the crèche. (Eco 8)

Recently I came across a photograph that depicted a group of Native Americans canoeing. Although accustomed to a photograph freezing a moment of movement, something about the pictured performance struck me as odd. Only on second glance did I realize that the image had been taken of a museum diorama. The illusion of the ‘real’ was striking, stimulated by the medium of photography, which refers to a reality one can no longer touch (Barthes). In this case it seemingly referred to a performance – Native Americans canoeing – when in fact it portrayed only an *idea* of Native Americans canoeing, i.e. a diorama.

It is no coincidence that one of the pioneers of photography, Louis Daguerre, was also one of the first to develop the diorama as a mass medium in Paris in 1822, and in fact claimed it to be his invention.² The first dioramas were devoid of animals or human beings and basically involved complicated light shows. They offered “a quick and easy substitute for travel, almost as if they were not pictures of distant places but the distant places themselves” (Oettermann 79). Not surprisingly, these constructions soon became popular attractions.³ In natural history museums, dioramas depicted exotic wildlife as well as extinct animals in lost worlds, a purpose they continue to serve. At the same time, they introduced museum visitors to indigenous peoples in the form of mannequins dressed in (traditional) costumes, equipped with objects, engaged in some sort of (representa-

1 I am much obliged to Gesa Mackenthun for her critical comments on this article and to Paula Ross for the immense care with which she reviewed the manuscript.

2 The Swiss painter Franz Niklas König (1765-1832) became famous for the transparencies he painted and arranged in popular “slide shows” he called “diaphanorama.” Daguerre was probably familiar with König’s show, but shortened the term to “diorama” when applied to his own work (see also Gernsheim and Gernsheim 1968).

3 For an overview of the history of the diorama, including its numerous forerunners, see Oettermann 69-83.

tive) activity, and surrounded by (typical) scenery. Initially, these life-size casts were only used to present costumes, but eventually they were arranged in groups to represent traditional activities.⁴ The earliest ethnological mannequins to be documented in the United States were “Eskimo Joe and his wife Hanna” at the United States National Museum in Washington, D.C., in 1873 (Cole, *Captured* 135).

By this point, mannequins were already well established in Europe. Folklore museums in particular used groupings of figures to illustrate peasant life, Stockholm’s *Nordiska Museet* providing one well-known example (Sandberg). International audiences at the 1876 Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia were fascinated by the Swedish dioramas. Subsequently, at the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 in Chicago, American mannequins depicting the life of Powhatan, Navajo, Plains and Zuni Indians received significant attention. These dioramas had been supervised by anthropologists William Henry Holmes and Frank Hamilton Cushing, both of whom were also museum curators, and who recognized the promotional potential of this display technique.

But the actual success with audiences, the effect of the diorama, soon became its first point of criticism. Academics felt that visitors were paying too much attention to the life groups while overlooking important instructive sections of the museum tour. Franz Boas called it the “element of impressiveness,” which overshadowed “the scientific aim” (quoted in Jacknis 102) to educate the audience. This remains an issue in the form of charges of the “Disneyfication” of today’s museum exhibitions, a claim that accuses these educational institutions of valuing, or at least emphasizing fancy entertainment over information.

The idea and the actual existence of dioramas fueled heated debates when the discipline of anthropology began to reflect its methods and aims (see Ames; Fabian). And currently, museum professionals agree that life groups, though they seem to refer to the living, are really referring to the dead (Kalshoven 18), thus reconfirming the notion of “vanishing peoples.” Such displays embody the “denial of coevalness” (Fabian 25) because they present scenes of the past but suggest a contemporary reality, thereby denying indigenous peoples the capacity for and actualization of cultural development. Moreover, they foster physical stereotypes of ‘the other’ and help to create and solidify clichés.⁵

When Umberto Eco discusses the diorama “as a substitute for reality, as something even more real” (Eco 8), he speaks of it as the hyperreal, but he also illustrates the problem of the idea *and* the effect of the life group: the idea of each diorama is based on an individual vision that replaces an individual with a simulated experience – or with what Sandberg calls “effigy” (5). But in its effect it is “even more real,” not only referring to the perceptions of the audience but to

4 Mannequins conquered the world of museums and department stores almost simultaneously. For a discussion of dioramas in the context of commercialization, see Hennings (44-52).

5 The diorama has become the symbol for outdated representations of cultures inside ethnographic museums (see, for example, West Jr.).

the embodiment of a *concept* of culture that replaces the culture upon which it is based. Hence, the diorama becomes, in Donald Horne's terms, a dreamland, not only for the spectator, but also for its creator (1-7).

Anthropology and the Body

The body has long been understood as the ultimate proof of the existence of 'the other'. When Christopher Columbus paraded 'his Indians' after returning to Spain from the first voyage to the New World, they might have impressed their spectators with their acrobatic performances, but mainly they were marveled at for their physical appearance. In his Letter to Sanchez, Columbus confirmed that he "so far found no human monstrosities, as many expected, but on the contrary the whole population is very well formed" (quoted in Berkhofer 7). From then on, detailed descriptions and illustrations of physical difference became essential elements of modern travel accounts (see, for example, Hodgen).

These early, often fantastic images were replaced during the eighteenth century by 'scientific' attempts to classify the 'human races', a concern that was taken much to heart by physical anthropology, then still a young discipline. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was its most prominent scholar and based his studies on an impressive collection of human skulls. The scientific focus of the field remained on skeletons, but shifted in the nineteenth century to the living body and its detailed measurement. Physical anthropologists, including Rudolf Virchow and Franz Boas (in his early years), collected reams of data in this arena, with the intention of dividing human beings into different races and documenting them before some of them vanished.

This belief in the extinction of peoples was stimulated by the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* in 1859 and the propagation of the theory of evolution.⁶ Although Darwin did not examine human beings in detail, but concentrated on the natural environment, the concept of natural selection – popularized as the 'survival of the fittest' – was quickly transferred to the human race and to the discipline of anthropology, where it became the chief interest. Evolution here implied the extinction of all 'primitive peoples' and constructed indigenous populations as 'vanishing'.⁷ Anthropologists such as Edward Burnett Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan, as well as the sociologist Herbert Spencer, contributed significantly to the propagation of this notion, best expressed in the translation of Darwin's theory of natural selection to the realm

6 It is clear that Darwin was by no means the only scholar to propose the notion of evolution. A classic discussion of the topic can be found in Greene.

7 This discourse was not new in the nineteenth century but already present in the eighteenth century with the work of Denis Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Christoph Meiners.

of human interaction (see, for example, Hinsley 125-43; Stocking 114-15). Franz Boas, though a trained physical anthropologist, soon became an enthusiastic critic of evolutionism (see, for example, Stocking 195-233).

The critical debate about evolutionism became manifest in the museum concepts that were established between the 1840s and the 1890s, reflecting the scientific field of anthropology that for the most part had yet to be included in university curricula. Museums thus provided research environments, attracted funding, and enabled anthropologists to undertake field trips. But they also literally exhibited the fact that the then dominant focus of anthropology was the material world and evolutionism.

The human body quickly claimed a place in the representation of ‘the primitive’. Sarti’s Museum of Pathological Anatomy in London exhibited wax figures of Africans with tails, supposedly to illustrate the missing link between the human world and the animal kingdom. And the Gallery of All Nations in Reimer’s Anatomical and Ethnological Museum, also in London, featured a display called the “varied types of the Great Human Family,” presented in an order that suggested some kind of evolutionary progression (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 399). The (representation of the) body became a useful tool in the communication of ideas as well as a form of entertainment since it was popular among audiences.

Underlying displays like the two just mentioned were ethnographic showcases of living bodies – human displays – in several contexts (see for example Blanchard et. al.). World Fairs and the so called *Völkerschauen* dominated the nineteenth-century entertainment business, but the shows also served as study opportunities for anthropologists.⁸ A well-known example is the group of nine Bella Coola men who agreed to travel from British Columbia to Europe in 1885 and perform. Their show consisted of several dances, including the ones of the *Hamatsa* and the *Nutlamatla* (secret societies), a demonstration of the use of bows and arrows, diversions such as the gambling stick game, and a mock potlatch (Haberland 27). The Bella Coolas’s appearances particularly attracted the community of anthropologists. Virchow, the then head of the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Prehistory, expressed delight in their language, artistic abilities, and their facial features (von Kuenheim 114-15), and measured their bodies numerous times. Carl Stumpf recorded their music in long and patient sessions, and still others devoted themselves to the study of their language.

A member of this last group was none less than the German-American pioneer of modern anthropology, Franz Boas. His interest in Northwest Coast cultures was piqued by this particular group of performers. At the time he was working in Berlin’s ethnographic museum where he was classifying the artifacts Adrian Jacobsen had brought back from his trip to the Northwest Coast as well as those the Bella Coola visitors were crafting. Boas attended several of the Bella Coola shows and met with them repeatedly as part of his research. The outcome of his linguistic

8 Human displays have a long history as attractions at courts throughout Europe or as exhibitions at fairs and inns (see, for example, Corbey 2008).

surveys in Berlin was published the very same year in several journals.⁹ The field trip he subsequently planned, and which he made in the fall of 1886, determined the course of his career and its ethnographic focus on Northwest Coast cultures. It also influenced the dioramas he came to supervise as a result.¹⁰

The Cannibal Spirit

In the years following his first field trip to the Northwest Coast, Boas tried his best to find employment with an American museum. This proved to be difficult, probably because of his outspoken criticism of contemporary museum displays. A special target of his anger was Otis T. Mason, who worked at the United States National Museum, and was particularly fond of typological displays arranged by developmental sequences to illustrate the evolution of humanity. This arrangement was “based upon function” (Mason quoted in Cole, *Franz Boas* 113) and involved the presentation of object types, such as paddles, throwing sticks, basketry, and cradles to illustrate their evolution from the simplest to the “most perfect and elaborate objects of the same class which human effort had produced” (113). For Boas, this arrangement was unacceptable. Not only did he feel that “the marked character of the North-west American tribes is almost lost” (quoted in Cole, *Franz Boas* 114), he also discerned racist implications and cultural intolerance at the heart of the displays, which opposed the cultural relativism he promoted.¹¹ The outward appearance of two things might be similar, but their cultural function could be entirely different, he argued. His interest was the idea behind the object, not the materialization of the object as such.¹²

In the wake of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, the staff of the United States National Museum was motivated to add to its permanent ethnographic exhibition the life groups that had drawn such attention at the fair. Otis Mason opted for a Northwest Coast group, which was to be shown first at the Cotton State Atlanta Exposition in the fall of 1895. He assigned Boas to the project, who – notwithstanding his previous dissatisfaction with Mason’s display style – eagerly accepted the offer since the life group represented an oppor-

9 “Mittheilungen über die Lilxula-Indianer.” *Original-Mittheilungen aus der Ethnologischen Abtheilung der Königlichen Museen* 1 (1886): 177-82; “Sprache der Bella-Coola Indianer.” *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* 18 (1886): 202-06; “The Language of the Bilhoola in British Columbia.” *Science First Series* 7 (1886): 218.

10 For an account of the early years of Franz Boas’s career see Cole, *Franz Boas*.

11 Boas saw societies as complex and formed by their experiences rather than as racially determined.

12 The argument between Mason and Boas has been discussed in detail by Cole (113-17), who carefully evaluates both sides and points out Boas’s confusing and incoherent argument structure as well as Mason’s own flexibility toward his display strategy, which was in fact not entirely focused on typology. Hinsley (285-86) contextualized the argument within American history and the post-Civil War years.

tunity for him to display objects as well as demonstrate their actual use. At about the same time, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City also requested “models illustrating the different tribes [of the Northwest Coast] and dressed in the garments of the people, and arranged in groups so as to illustrate the life history of each tribe represented” (quoted in Jacknis 76) and asked Boas for assistance.

It was through these two projects that Boas hoped to finally gain access to a museum career. Together with his Kwakiutl assistant George Hunt, he went on a field trip for the first time seeing the winter ceremonies in their original context, which obviously impressed him.¹³ He thus decided that the United States National Museum would receive a life group engaged in the winter dance ceremony. The preparator, Theodore A. Mills, had Boas pose for a photographer and act as a model for the requisite casts, and a few negatives survive from this documentation of the project.¹⁴ In these shots, Boas is sometimes dressed in a suit, but most images show him in pants, barefoot, and mimicking some aspect of the ceremony (Fig. 1).¹⁵ In this particular example he represents a member of the Kwakiutl secret society Hamatsa “emerging from the mouth of the cannibal spirit” (Hinsley and Holm 306).

Boas based his poses on what he had observed during the winter ceremonies. His performance (which is a copy of the actual Kwakiutl performance) becomes materialized in the diorama, which then in turn represents the original event. “He had seen a lot,” write anthropologists Hinsley and Holm, “he certainly did catch the spirit of the occasion” (307). They also contend that “[h]e had a very good idea of what it felt like, and he clearly wanted to reproduce both actions and setting as accurately as possible for the museum display” (307). It is, however, puzzling that George Hunt, who was probably more familiar with the ceremony than Boas, who had just witnessed it for the first time, was not given the chance to pose for the life group casts, and that the figures were not modeled after photographs taken during the actual ceremony. In the end, the particular life group represents Franz Boas’s idea of the Hamatsa dance, including facial expressions, and the painting of the ceremonial screen seems to be a copy of the one used at a Kwakiutl life performance during the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 (Fig. 2).

Once completed, the Hamatsa life group installation proved to be a popular audience attraction for the museum.

13 On the use of masks, a museum text labels that was probably created under Boas’s supervision reads: “All these masks are striking even when motionless. When worn by actors dancing by firelight in the huge, shadowy Kwakiutl houses, the masks created startling and powerful dramatic effects” (American Museum of Natural History label).

14 The remaining photographs were discovered in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution in 1975. Hinsley and Holm published them in their article but interestingly read them only as evidence of Boas’s “early years of struggle and forced cooperation” (314).

15 In anthropology, even the original performance would be seen as mimetic (see Jackson). Boas’s imitation adds an intercultural interpretation to the initial mimetic act.



Fig. 1:
Franz Boas modeling for
the Hamatsa life group.
Source: Hinsley
and Holm 306.



Fig. 2: The diorama “Hamatsa coming out of secret room.” Source: Jacknis 82.

The diorama became the embodiment of Boas’s anthropology. Trained in physical anthropology, he came to read the body as a language, intentional in the linguistic sense. According to this view, cultural rituals are performable by anyone skilled at imitating the physical movements of the original. The body then becomes a vehicle (similar to the voice as a vehicle for language) for transporting meaning. Hence, Boas’s idea of the life group documents important tendencies in the history of anthropology. The concept of culture came to be increasingly separated

from the body (whereas it was connected to it during the beginnings of physical anthropology) and anthropological interests moved toward behavioral and kinship studies and away from a material focus. This shift also resulted in museums losing their monopoly in the academy as staging areas for the collection, interpretation, and distribution of disciplinary information. Given this academic move away from a body-centered approach within anthropological studies toward an approach based on the observation of cultural practices, it is ironic that Boas chose the human body to represent a “superorganic” (Jackson 322) understanding of culture.¹⁶

Boas continued to supervise life groups, particularly from the Northwest Coast. Most did not represent festive events such as the winter dance described above, but were rather a construction of artifacts and their use (confirming Boas’s idea of thinking beyond the material object). Boas was aware of the museum dynamics and used the life groups as “glorified stop signs” (Jacknis 100) instead of the manifestation of anthropological ideas, which he repeatedly criticized and supported at the same time. Thus he placed the mannequins close to the relevant educational material on the museum tour, but continued to be upset that the material was then often overlooked because the audience focused on the mannequins (Jacknis 100-03).

For Boas, the general obsession with the (other) body was realized through use of the body as a tool to illustrate culture. At the same time, he was dissatisfied with the diorama because it could neither represent nor imitate, let alone recreate cultural experiences; it was an illusion of culture at best:

No figure, however well it may have been gotten up, will look like man himself. If nothing else, the lack of motion will show at once that there is an attempt at copying nature, not nature itself. When the figure is absolutely lifelike the lack of motion causes a ghastly impression such as we notice in wax-figures. For this reason the artistic effect will be better when we bear in mind this fact and do not attempt too close an approach to nature; that is to say, since there is a line of demarcation between nature and plastic art, it is better to draw the line consciously than to try to hide it. (Quoted in Jacknis 102)

For Boas, the knowledge about culture (as the knowledge in culture) came through experience, something the diorama might encourage but not replace. The museum visitors then became observers of a cultural ritual represented through a diorama whose purpose was to remind them, in Boas’s opinion, that they lacked the experience of observing the documented scene. At the same time the diorama became a self-promotion for Boas, Horne’s dreamland of culture, because it represented (his) experience as the ultimate knowledge.

¹⁶ Jackson refers to Alfred Kroeber’s paper, “The Superorganic” (1917), in which Kroeber expands on Boas’s cultural relativism.

Miscast

The “Bushman diorama” in the South African Museum (SAM), Cape Town, excited perhaps the most famous diorama controversy due to its obvious racist and ideological representations of, in this case, Khoisan culture.



Fig. 3: The “Bushman diorama” in the South African Museum, ca. 1985
Source: Witz 116.

The South African Museum had been established in 1825. During the 1960s a new museum, the South African Cultural History Museum, was constructed and some of the cultural artifacts from the South African Museum were moved there. However, the “Bushman,” as well as artifacts from other African peoples, remained in the natural history section. The SAM’s “Bushman diorama” was installed in 1960 and “displayed plaster figures in an invented cultural world of Khoisan hunter-gatherers” (Witz 116). Visitors encountered a group of almost nude hunters at rest in a camp. The intended verisimilitude of the scene is heightened by a landscape panorama in the background, reflecting the traditions of the diorama display technique, which has a long history of being modeled after paintings.¹⁷ It is also obvious that the form of the diorama evolved from that of the panorama, a popular illusion of reality from centuries before (see for example

¹⁷ Sandberg claims that about half of the Swedish folk life groups exhibited at the Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 (and which catalyzed the popularity of the diorama) had been modeled after well-known genre paintings (quoted in Hennings 56).

Altick 128-97 and Oettermann). Richard Altick relates the panorama (and consequently the diorama) to “the history of entertainment rather than of art” (128) because of its effect and function. Both formats attracted mass audiences, which consisted not just of the working classes, “but rather the ever-increasing public that possessed a certain level of money and education but had always been excluded from the world of the arts patronized by aristocrats” (Oettermann 77).

The idea of the “Bushman diorama” was based on a nineteenth-century painting by Samuel Daniell (1775-1811). This British painter traveled to South Africa at the very beginning of the nineteenth century and depicted the “African scenery and animals,” romanticizing indigenous life and portraying it as part of an exotic environment. There is proof that Daniell’s paintings were read as ethnographic documents at the time of the Bushman diorama’s construction in the 1960s. Thomas Sutton, author of *The Daniells. Artists and Travellers*, in fact refers to them as “valuable records of early itinerant life in South Africa” (197), and the South African Museum life group came into existence with this kind of support.¹⁸

The mannequins of the diorama were modeled during a “body-casting project” that the South African Museum had undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century. Casts were made of farm workers and prisoners who were considered to be prototypes and to represent the physical racial type of “Bushman,”¹⁹ though they might not have belonged to any Khoisan cultural community at all. The approach is obviously connected to the concept of early physical anthropology and the scientific racism with which it was entangled. Thus, it comes as no surprise that throughout its display history the diorama has prompted many critical discussions that center on racism in museums and the representation of (indigenous) cultures within those institutions.

Among the most effective responses in these debates was the exhibition “Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture,” which opened in 1996 in the South African National Gallery, located near the South African Museum. It featured an installation of unpainted resin casts of farmers and prisoners, the same resources for which had been used for the “Bushman diorama” (Witz 118-19). The life group demonstrated that bodies do not speak for themselves, as the original diorama suggested, but that they are interpreted according to the context in which they are displayed or discussed. Consequently, “Miscast” stressed Boas’s concept that culture is linked to experience and not to physical appearance. But again, the exhibition accomplished this task by using the body. The controversies surrounding the “Bushman diorama” eventually led to its removal from public view in April 2001,²⁰ a difficult decision for the museum, since the diorama had proven to be one of its most popular displays.

18 It is likely that Daniell, as much as George Catlin half a century later in North America, tried to record indigenous life in its ‘purity’, believing that it might soon vanish.

19 This physical approach is not only linked to scientific racism, but also to Foucault’s concept of the body of the condemned (352-56).

20 This battle is the focus of Rassool, “Ethnographic Elaborations,” Witz, “Transforming Museums,” and Dubin, “Incivilities.”

Criticism was mostly aimed at the racist implications of the display, not just the body-casting project that had produced the mannequins but also the fact that tour guides, teachers, and visitors continued to use the figures to classify a particular race, and to exemplify a specific body type, causing outrage among the diorama's critics. The South African Museum's other life groups, which also carried racial implications, were only used to "explain aspects of ethnic culture such as initiation rituals, beadwork, hunting, dancing, and music" (Witz 117). This links them directly to the dioramas supervised by Franz Boas, whose main aim was the representation of cultural life. However, those scenes might be just as fictional, depending on the material or idea on which they were based, thus responding not to an actual cultural activity but to an imagined and simplified concept. In any case, the casts are a perfect vessel for racial fantasies. While Boas tried to be as realistic as possible in the reenactment of what he had observed, he also tried to collect original artifacts and clothing to accompany his life groups. And while those artifacts corresponded to the contemporary scene that he had witnessed, they quickly became objects in scenes of the past since dioramas, like all representations, necessarily always represent a single point in time. In the moment of their first display, they are already outdated.

Within a discussion of the diorama as a specific popular but also scientific format, it is significant that the "Bushman diorama" combined elements from a nineteenth-century romantic painting with data collected a hundred years after the painting had been completed but still half a century prior to the diorama's design. The measurements had been taken of farmers and prisoners who certainly wore different clothing from the figures depicted in the museum scene. Thus the amount of fictional energy involved in constructing this piece is a lot more complex than in the one supervised by Boas. The painting evinced a scene "as romanticized and pure" as possible because it was conceived as a scene of nature as opposed to a scene of civilization. Because it denied the existence of any intercultural contact (and its traces), it transported obsolete notions about African inhabitants. It was an artistic vision of the past. The casts made during the first quarter of the twentieth century of course corresponded neither to the painting nor to the idea the painting transported. They were based on biological assumptions generated by scientific racism – with body types and facial features that mirrored racist presumptions.

The diorama, then, constructed some fifty years later, is set in a completely different world. Neither Daniell's hunters nor the casts' models existed any longer (if they ever did). However, their conflation had the consequence of creating the museum's most successful exhibition, which continued to inspire the imaginations of numerous visitors, including the African art historian Sidney Kasfir, who confessed the powerful attraction the diorama held for him: "Utterly ahistorical and fictionalized, yes, but this is the kind of image everyone (including their present-day descendants, the museum-going public, the government, and this author) frankly loves" (quoted in Butler 83). What moves into the center here is the gaze

of the visitors. “It is the distance that allows museum visitors to view others from a voyeuristic, authoritative, and privileged position of power. The viewer sees, but is not seen” (Butler 83). This fact is certainly the basic appeal of life groups. As in Daniell’s painting, the observers are introduced to a/n (ethnographic) scene before which they can spend undisturbed time since they feel unnoticed by the observed. The South African Museum diorama became contested territory because of its presumed reference to reality (the body-casting project), but visitors seemed also to enjoy it in its fictive moment.

When the founder of Swedish folklife museums, Artur Hazelius, created dioramas, he intended to introduce museum visitors to an (educational) past. However, “many visitors seemed to enjoy the simulation as simulation, finding pleasure in the to-and-fro between deception and recognition” (Hennings 57). This can be contrasted to the diorama created by Boas, whose intention was mainly to attract the public in the hope they might also view the educational part of the exhibition. The idea of the South African Museum diorama, established half a century after Boas’s dioramas, was much more complex, confusing, and thus more controversial. Not only was it based on a nineteenth-century landscape painting, but the use of body casts, with their direct connections to scientific racism and the history and reality of racism in South Africa, produced a cultural and political overload. This finally led to the downfall of the diorama.

Inside the Teaching Lodge

Although the “Bushman diorama” has been removed from the South African Museum, ethnographic dioramas continue to be popular attractions in natural history museums, an example being the life group of a Blackfeet family in the American Museum of Natural History (Fig. 4).

The scene depicted is set inside a teepee with the women, men, and children engaged in leisure time activities. The mannequins have smooth brown skin, brown eyes, and black hair, all of which conform to racial stereotypes, just as the “Bushman diorama” exemplified a certain idea of a certain racial physique. The label text concentrates on the teepee, its function and traditional construction. On the opposite wall, the description focuses on the people portrayed: “In this scene an 1850s Blackfeet family relax in a tipi,” the text reads. Two women are engaged in a game of dice, which is explained, and the men are only described through their clothing, although their facial expressions suggest that they are involved in a discussion. The objects used for this diorama are entirely of Blackfeet origin. The teepee is devoid of material evidence of any cultural encounters. The scene takes place behind glass, so the museum visitors neither become part of the scene nor is their glance returned (the man standing in the diorama looks into the far distance, beyond them). Again, the visitors/observers become voyeurs,



Fig. 4: The Blackfeet diorama in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. Photograph by Andrea Zittlau (2009).

securely hidden, and the scene is not an embodiment of culture but an embodiment of an existing stereotype of culture.²¹

In this context, it might appear surprising that contemporary displays curated by indigenous communities make enthusiastic use of life groups. Petra Tjitske Kalshoven tries to make sense of the several life-size casts in the Mashantucket Pequot Museum (Mashantucket, CT), and Julia Harrison analyzes a Blackfoot display in the Glenbow Museum (Calgary, Alberta, Canada). Both struggle to relate the exhibits to the problematic history of the display technique and to life groups like the one in the American Museum of Natural History described above. But in both cases, according to Kalshoven (21) and Harrison (35), the indigenous communities seemed to be highly satisfied with how the dioramas turned out.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI; Washington, DC) in which several indigenous communities were invited to represent themselves as part of the NMAI's permanent exhibition. Several of them chose the device of the life group, including the Anishinaabe's

21 The history of the Western image of "the American Indian" has been described and discussed by many scholars. Considering that this diorama is from the 1960s, it is best to consult Berkhofer for a contemporary context.



Fig. 5: Three of the life-size casts in the Anishinaabe display in the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Andrea Zittlau (2009).

contribution in the museum gallery “Our Universes” which deals with indigenous philosophies.²²

The represented group consists of two elders, a man and a woman, a girl, a boy, and a baby. The casts were modeled after indigenous participants, with community curators supervising the construction of the scene. The three mannequins in the center are clearly involved in the preparation and offering of food inside a lodge. The description reads:

A feast in the teaching lodge is a celebration of thanks to the Creator and an appeal for times of plenty in the future. Sharing traditional foods – berries, meat, fish, wild rice, and bannock – binds people to one another. It also reminds Anishinaabe people to be thankful for the plants and animals that sustain them. (NMAI label, Mark Thompson, 2000)

The mannequins have their arms stretched out toward the visitors, who are separated from them by a wall of glass. So although the diorama involves the viewers in the tableau, inviting them to share a meal, at the same time it clearly marks the

²² The community curators of the exhibit were Garry Raven (elder, language instructor, environmentalist, herbalist, teacher of Anishinaabe traditions); Wilson Scott (elder, trapper); Conrad Spence (elder, storyteller, writer, specialist in the history of the First People); and Mark Thompson (elder, teacher of young people about traditions, ceremonies, and protecting the environment, herbalist, and traditional healer).

scene as an illusion. The label texts accompanying the display are concerned with women's and men's roles in Anishinaabe society, but they also label the objects with the year in which they might have been manufactured (which in this exhibit ranges between 1880 and 1940). Objects that are connected to food are accompanied by a description of food and feasting, illustrated with a photograph of the Bear Feast taken in the 1940s. The texts also cover such topics as clans, the teaching lodge, and rituals of purification.

At first glance the diorama appears to be familiar since it does not seem to differ from other life groups, employing life-size mannequins engaged in cultural activities. But the differences, which become apparent after a second glance, tell another story. The casts are constructed so that they are recognizably *casts* and not *people*: the material has been left white and rough to avoid the illusion of skin or skin color. The facial expressions, if visible at all, have been kept as neutral as possible, in contrast to Boas's models. There is no doubt that the group comprises casts that were created for the museum in order to represent traditional activities of the Anishinaabe. The mannequins gain their cultural identity from their clothes, which make them recognizable as Anishinaabe. This again refers to the history of the dioramic display technique since mannequins used in ethnographic museums were initially used to present traditional clothing (similar to their counterparts in department stores).

This diorama does not focus on the body but on the objects of the scene, which have been labeled in an ethnographic manner, for example objects concerning food preparation:

- 1) bowl with blueberries ca. 1880
- 2) ladle, ca. 1900
- 3) birchbark basket with wild rice, ca. 1935
- 4) spoon, ca. 1930
- 5) bowl with meat, ca. 1870
- 6) ladle, ca. 1920
- 7) bowl with bannock, ca. 1890
- 8) ladle, ca. 1910

Traditionally, objects are identified in museums by their overall categories (e.g., bowl, spoon); the location, as well as the time of use/collection are then given. An unusual aspect of this Anishinaabe exhibit is the fact that bowls are filled and the content is described, thus, the object is related to its function, which departs from the aesthetic discourse to which objects are often subjected in museums. The curators did not portray the Anishinaabe as an isolated cultural entity. Among the objects used for the preparation of food several items consist of brass, thus indicating the incorporation of "Western" materials into Anishinaabe material culture. Though the majority of objects stem from the nineteenth century, the diorama does not intend to suggest a culture frozen in the past and now vanished. Instead,

it becomes obvious to the careful observer that the different objects and clothing displayed vary significantly in temporal provenance which suggests a continuity of traditions and the inclusion of changing fashions into traditional ways of life.

The ways in which the Anishinaabe diorama represents a departure from more conventional uses of this medium, especially compared to the Blackfeet diorama, might have motivated Amanda Cobb to speak of the NMAI life groups as “built mock-ups or structures (but not dioramas) meant to describe a way of life or evoke a particular response” (342). She is opposed to the idea of calling the Anishinaabe scene a diorama because of the history the display technique embodies (as referred to in West). But dioramas are always mock-ups that often serve the purpose of representing scenes from a way of life, and the NMAI diorama is no exception. All objects included in the Anishinaabe diorama are included in conventional dioramas as well, and they are put to cultural use, as Franz Boas intended a diorama to do.

This reading of the life group turns it into a significant embodiment of cultural encounter and interaction. The exhibit refers to a display technique that has been used and abused over the course of a century to embody a Western idea of indigenous peoples. The Anishinaabe display makes use of the very same technique, but with the objective of self-representing a culture and critically commenting on this Western device of cultural representation. In subverting traditional exhibition methods (life-like appearance of the mannequins, the attempt to include only “culturally pure” objects, etc.), this diorama opposes persisting ideas of indigenous peoples as vanishing cultures of the nineteenth century, notions that are often continued inside museum walls. The whitened casts of the Anishinaabe appear ghostlike, as if to haunt Western ideas of cultural representation in places like museums that are often regarded as cemeteries by indigenous communities.

The Anishinaabe contribution to the museum gallery “Our Universes” invites visitors to the teaching lodge and offers to share culturally specific knowledge:

The gifts of the Seven Grandfathers were the Seven Teachings – honesty, love, courage, truth, wisdom, humility, and respect. These sacred teachings and an understanding of the four directions are passed on to members of the community in the teaching lodge. They help us live in harmony with nature and benefit everyone in the world.

For four days in the spring, people come in the teaching lodge to learn what their names represent, what medicines do, what the clans are, and what their responsibilities are as men, women, children, grandmothers, and grandfathers. Everybody can come in. (NMAI label, Garry Raven, community curator, 2000)

By directly facing museum visitors, the casts seek to transform their audience from spectators into participants and invite learning on another level.

Conclusion

The dioramas discussed in this essay document the use of the body in anthropology and the ethnographic approach to cultures. As such they not only represent frozen actions, but may also be read as embodiments of widespread ideas of ‘the other’. The discipline of anthropology began with an interest in physical appearance and difference. In the context of territorial expansion and the struggles over slavery, its findings spilled over into scientific racism, which continues to persist as a popular discourse about non-Western cultures.²³ This was particularly evident in the “Bushman diorama,” which was not only based on pseudo-scientific measurements of bodies, but continued to confirm and shape the idea of the physical other over an extensive period of time.

However, as soon as most colonial battles had been won, ethnographic diversity increasingly came to be determined by way of analyzing differences in social action and was no longer predominantly thought of in terms of biological difference – a functionalist approach that is captured by Franz Boas’s concept of ‘experience’ and that laid the foundations for the school of cultural relativism. In that sense, culture came to be imagined as a “superorganic” construct in which “the body is shown to be a neutral and ideographic means of embodying ideas” (Jackson 323-24). Thus Boas used the body, as shown in his Kwakiutl-group, as a vehicle of cultural tradition and not to show physical idiosyncrasies of an indigenous community. With his dioramas, he embodied cultural activities to illustrate diversity (and similarity) in cultural practices in contrast to earlier attempts to define ethnicity through physical appearance.

Both discourses, the one focused on physical difference and the one focused on cultural difference, continue to shape anthropology as a science, as well as museum discourse, as has been demonstrated by the Blackfeet and the Anishinaabe dioramas. In the history of the display technique, the diorama has always been popular among its audiences. As Umberto Eco states, “there can be no doubt that one of the most effective and least boring of didactic mechanisms is the diorama” (Eco 8). This does not only mean that dioramas have an entertainment value, but that – because of this – they have the potential to be effective teaching tools. They allow us a glimpse at earlier representational forms of popular anthropology. As such they reflect a colonial power constellation in which a dominant culture exhibits a subordinated culture by way of constructed oppositions. A critical reading of dioramas challenges those oppositions and reveals the “structure of domination and subjection.” According to Rancière, emancipation “begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions” (13). The diorama’s cultural value lies not only in teaching

23 Presently the discourse has found its manifestation in genetic arguments which, although turning away from physically visible difference, continue the argument of race as a biological category, including the idea of cultural determinism.

a changing perception of cultures, but also in its potential to challenge the spectator's inherited modes of seeing.

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The 'Colonial Body' as Object of Knowledge in Ethnological Museums

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Within the last two decades works informed by postcolonial theory have started to explore the legacies and consequences of European colonialism. From different disciplines (history, political science, ethnology, gender studies) it has been shown how colonization had an impact on various discourses (social, political, economic, scientific). Moreover, studies have hinted at the interdependencies and entanglements between the 'colonizers' and the 'colonized' in both past and present. In this context, the exploitation of the body has been a central category of analysis. The 'colonial body' will also be central in this essay, which will try to outline its role in German ethnological museums at the turn of the twentieth century. The primary focus here is not on the museums' exposure to ethnological objects but rather on 'anthropological material'. After introducing some of the structural elements of ethnological museums, I will demonstrate how and why certain changes in scientific discourse at the end of the nineteenth century led to a new emphasis on anthropological research. In an effort to provide insights into the strategies of collecting, evaluating, and exhibiting this 'anthropological material', I will argue that these techniques reproduced the same hegemonic structures. In the colonial world these technologies can be described as a 'conquest' of the colonial body: they were trained in a way that prepared them to later apply these methods to the bodies of the domestic population in Germany.

Structural Elements of Ethnological Museums at the End of the Nineteenth Century

By the end of the nineteenth century the production of ethnological and anthropological knowledge in Germany was closely connected with the establishment of multiple and internationally well-known ethnological museums. The colonial situation, the new potential for the acquisition of ethnological objects, and the increasing establishment of such sciences as ethnology and anthropology at German universities enforced these developments (Kudrass).¹ Additionally, the desire

1 In the beginning of the twentieth century the German terminological differentiation between ethnology and anthropology did not correspond to their use in the Anglo-American context.

of the ambitious bourgeoisie for social distinction created an accommodating environment for such places of knowledge as museums.²

Multiple museums and zoological gardens were founded during the time of the *Kaiserreich* and the Weimar Republic (Jahn; Köstering; Rieke-Müller and Dietrich). Furthermore, ethnological museums, which had been established in the second half of the nineteenth century, were often successful in obtaining monumental structures to house their endeavors. For instance, in 1873 the ethnological department of the Prussian Museums in Berlin was transformed into an independent museum, the Berlin Ethnological Museum, and moved into its new building in 1886. In the following years it became nationally and internationally renowned for its enormous collections. As one of the most important ethnological museums in Germany it was well placed in Berlin's city center and easily accessible to the public, thus making it an important part of the urban landscape.

These museums were often located in the vicinity of universities. The Berlin Ethnological Museum, whose 1886 move brought it into the same neighborhood as Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität (now Humboldt University Berlin), is one example.³ This proximity to the academy greatly enhanced the scientific reputation of ethnological museums that were trying to develop profiles as scientific institutions. They represented new protagonists in the structuring of ethnological knowledge – scientifically oriented organizations whose specific ideological perspective determined the communication between the colonial nation and its educated public. These museums drew on modes of perception that had already been established by the enormously popular ethnic shows (*Völkerschauen*) and in Worlds Fairs in which 'the other' was staged as one way to underline cultural differences (Bitterli; Staehelin; Thode-Arora). At the same time, they officially distanced themselves from ethnic shows and various related panoramas, which were classified as entertainment.

According to the understanding of their directors, ethnological museums were organized on two levels. On the one hand, as scientific sites they were strongly connected to the exclusive environment of the universities. On the other hand, as public places they had to address society at large (Thilenius, *Völkerkunde* 4). In this dual capacity, scientifically legitimated knowledge about the world was staged in a three-dimensional form – a "world as exhibition" (Mitchell 148-50) – under the pretense that 'Africa' could be decoded and understood by looking at

Thus the German term 'ethnology' is equivalent to the American term 'cultural anthropology' or the British term 'social anthropology', while the German term 'anthropology' refers to the Anglo-American term 'physical anthropology'. 'Ethnology' thus relates more to the social and cultural system while 'anthropology' refers more to the realm of the biological body. Although in some literature the German term 'ethnologisch' is translated into 'ethnographic', I do not use that translation in this text in order not to confuse it with the German term 'ethnographisch'. Instead, I use the term 'ethnological' as a synonym for 'ethnologisch'.

2 For a wider context, see: Penny; Zimmerman; Laukötter; Lipphardt.

3 This kind of spatial synergy was not unique to Germany, but also occurred in Great Britain, as Sophie Forgan has shown (142).



Fig. 1: Berlin Ethnological Museum, 1905. (Copyright Berlin Ethnological Museum, Photo-Archives)

its tools, weapons, and clothing. Within the context of the positivism of the late nineteenth century each exhibit functioned as a representative of the presented culture. Because each object was assumed to be authentic, they each seemed to be inscribed with some genuine truth – a truth that merely had to be deciphered in order to be apparent. These objects were supposed to give insights into the everyday life and culture of ‘foreign peoples’ and to lay the foundations for a comparison to Western culture. This form of cultural comparison was a transparent *modus operandi* of these museums and created a “basic operation of a colonial argumentation” in which nationalist tendencies and the claim to power became obvious (Kundrus, *Moderne* 174). According to Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, this distinctive use of the concept of “culture” was not only a “product of the colonial encounter” but also its precondition (29).

But to function as objects of knowledge these ethnological objects had to leave their original context both geographically and semantically.⁴ The museums organized adventurous expeditions to the overseas territories; other trips were state- or privately funded (Heesen 7-9). And it was in ethnological museums where the public could see the ‘results’ of these sojourns. In this sense the museums were a form of distribution center where actions were planned, the objects

4 To be part of the museum the objects had to undergo a process of transformation. For an account of how this process worked, see Laukötter, “Wissensobjekt.”

acquired, and the spoils exhibited (Jardine 216). While collecting strategies were aimed at the conservation of materials, their contemplation (*Anschauung*) can be understood as an aesthetic act, an act of world-appropriation, and an act of self-construction (Stagl 38). Additionally, this form of collecting divided the world into periphery (the colonized countries) and center (the museums of the Western world). In other words, the practice of collecting itself emphasized a division inherent in the power relationships of colonialism (Stagl 39).

These expeditions focused on two kinds of objects: the ethnological object (e.g., clothing, tools used in various trades, and weapons) and ‘anthropological material’. The term ‘anthropological material’, however, was a euphemism for skeletons, bones, and skulls, from all of which, it was commonly believed, knowledge could be derived. Based on this assumption, it followed that increasing the number of objects signified an enhancement of that knowledge. Therefore, it was one of the museums’ main strategies to increase their collections. These collections made no claim to be complete; such an assertion would have implied their death, as Baudrillard has argued. In other words: both the lack of and the striving for completeness were integral aspects of these collections (Baudrillard 7-9).

By collecting these objects and lodging them in museums, it seemed feasible to conserve the ‘naturalness’ of the ‘natural peoples’. In this sense these expeditions and museums presented themselves as ‘preservers’ – a rhetoric that was very much in vogue at the time (Crane 38-40). The notion was undergirded by assumptions of Western superiority, which was also part of the belief that humanity was divided between ‘cultural’ and ‘natural’ people. Thus, the European museums were an expression of ‘civilization’, of society that distanced itself from ‘natural people’, who were classified as underdeveloped and delayed in their cultural progression. Fabian describes this attitude as a “denial of coevalness” (31, *passim*). Ethnological museums partitioned the world into culturally distinct spaces (“Kulturräume”) and substantiated these separations by presenting representative objects for each space. In so doing, they structured the world as they imagined it to be and especially the world of the colonized. Utilizing ethnological objects and ‘anthropological material’ these museums stimulated “colonial fantasies” (Kundrus, *Phantasiereiche*).

Changes of Interest

With the arrival of a new generation of museum authorities, the orientation of ethnological museums changed in some respects at the beginning of the twentieth century. After having functioned mainly as a form of depository, they now began formulating concepts for aestheticizing the space of the museum. Influential museum directors, such as Georg Thilenius (1868-1937) of the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology, visited other European museums in order to gather ideas and gain

inspiration (Thilenius and Mayer). For Thilenius, the primary role of these “modern museums,” with their monumental buildings and impressive entrance halls, was to influence the “psyche of the public,” preparing it to respond appropriately to the exhibitions within (STA HH: CIIa16 Bd. II).

In addition to these reflections on the actual design and use of museum space, collecting strategies also changed. Although the demand for ethnological objects still existed, the demand for ‘anthropological material’ and data increased. This development was closely connected to the revival of the concept of ‘race’ at the end of the nineteenth century in such fields as politics, general cultural discourse, and the sciences (Schmuhl, “Eugenik” 147).

The theories of Arthur de Gobineau’s (1816-1882) *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-56) and of Charles Darwin’s (1809-1882) *The Origin of Species* (1859) in particular vitalized the principle of “natural selection.”⁵ While Gobineau assumed that the inequality of races would lead to a political and cultural decline, social Darwinists regarded cultural decline as the result of the incapacity of some groups and individuals to adapt to hostile conditions. Notwithstanding their contradictions, these ideas were connected and applied to social conditions. Consequently, the struggle of the different ‘races’ for hegemony was regarded as a natural and logical result of their different cultural qualities (El-Tayeb 22). Starting from that position, the natural scientist Francis Galton (1822-1911) developed the idea of racial hygiene in 1883 (Schmuhl, “Eugenik” 145). For him the racial enhancement of the people’s body (*Volkskörper*) was of major importance. He described society as an organic body that had to be protected against its ‘enemies’. The focus on the ‘enemies’ of society was further developed in Cesare Lombroso’s (1835-1909) *L'uomo delinquente* of 1886 in which he tried to prove the thesis that criminality was hereditary (Gould 129-31). Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s (1855-1927) book *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* can be regarded as further evidence of culturally pessimistic interpretations of modernity (Schmuhl, “Eugenik” 147), since for him the mixture of ‘races’ was socially dangerous. Chamberlain’s work was especially influential in dictating enforced discussions on ‘race’ in German salons and scientific circles.

In the sciences of ethnology and anthropology, the concept of ‘race’ and the question of heredity were growing in importance at a time when the concept of ‘culture’ as the core concept for the differentiation of humankind was losing its credibility (Daniel 66-69). Hence, ‘race’ functioned as an answer to the epistemological crisis in these sciences. So it is no surprise that anthropology and ethnology provided further theories for the public debate about ‘race’. A widely commented on work in this context was anatomist and anthropologist Eugen Fischer’s study, *Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardisierungsproblem beim Menschen* (*Rehoboth Bastards and the Problem of Bastardization among Humans*). Published in 1913, the book was his professional breakthrough. With

5 For a discussion of the term “natural selection,” see: Riess 71.

it he obtained the *Mies'schen Preis* from the *Deutsche Anthropologische Gesellschaft*, and in 1918 he received a full professorship at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg. Later on he became head of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Vererbungslehre und Eugenik* (Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics), which was founded in 1927 in Berlin. He also garnered a professorship in anthropology at Berlin's Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (Gessler 23-25). By examining the people in Rehoboth (near Windhoek in the colony of German South-West Africa, what is now Namibia) Fischer tried to prove through anthropometric measurements that Mendel's Laws applied to human beings as well as to plants and animals (Essner 518), maintaining that physiological characteristics (*Rassenmerkmale*) were hereditary (Gessler 518-19). In addition, he argued that so-called half-breeds were genetically inferior to and dangerous for the 'pure races' (Kaufmann, "Eugenik" 358-59). Fischer therefore suggested to the colonial administration that the different 'races' be separated (Schulte-Althoff 76-77), and it was this aspect of his work that was used by the colony's governor, Friedrich von Lindequist (1862-1945), to legitimate anti-miscegenation laws (El-Tayeb 92).

Researching Bodies

As a result of Fischer's work, the sciences of anthropology and ethnology achieved increasing recognition, and the construction of 'race' emerged as a central paradigm that assumed such mythological power that at the beginning of the twentieth century physical measurements and categorizations assumed more and more importance in German anthropology and ethnology (Lösch 155). Suddenly, it seemed possible through these measurements to fathom a person's core character (*innerste Wesen*) (El-Tayeb 18). In other words, the body came to be understood as a medium for gaining new insights into the history of mankind and its hereditary processes. By the use of anthropometric tests, for example, taking nose, head, hair, height, and weight measurements, the 'racial body' and its lineage should be able to be apprehended. Using empirical and statistical methods scientists expected to obtain 'objective facts' that were as precise as natural laws. And by scrutinizing complicated anthropological measurements they hoped to be able to draw conclusions about the ancestry and biological future of the human races. The approach of treating the human body as an object in the pursuit of knowledge was supported by the development of new tools and techniques, ranging from the craniometer and color charts to simplified methods in photography (Stichweh 101). The following quote by Georg Thilenius in 1920 illustrates the degree of faith that these measurements fostered:

General descriptions such as short, long, bright, dark, brown, grey, and so on, are too dependent on subjective feelings to provide comparable information. The scientific report rather demands that measures be made in millimeters (e.g., body length), grades, and minutes (that comprise angles), and cubic centimeters (cranial content), for which special measuring apparatuses were constructed (anthropometer, callipers, goniometer, and so on), whose use in part requires further apparatuses (such as craniophores) that allow exact adjustments of the measured object to be made. Also, for descriptive characteristics such as the color of the skin, the structure of the hair, or the shape of the nose one tries to find a numerical form of expression with the help of graduated norm charts. The processing of the objective observation material so acquired is conducted according to mathematic rules; the presentation of the results in the form of curves is popular because they show the differences between features in different areas (for example, the difference in the occurrence of long skulls in Germans and Negroes or the different ages of sexual maturity between Europe and Melanesia). (Thilenius, "Anthropometrie" 62)⁶

Even though expectations for what this information would reveal were high, scientists were faced with several problems in obtaining these 'facts'. The exact methods used in the colonies to collect these data are not well documented compared to other materials the museum acquired. However, the fact that ethnological objects were 'purchased' gives at least a partial indication of the attitude of researchers in the field. In some cases the 'purchases' were official, but it is impossible to judge if the exchange values were comparable. In other cases, we know that objects were taken without providing anything of equivalent worth in exchange. This form of acquisition is the so-called anonymous purchase of goods, meaning the privation of objects with neither prior agreement nor even a minimal deposit toward a final payment (Fischer, *Hamburger Südsee-Expedition* 121). In legal terms, this 'transaction' was straightforward theft.⁷ The renowned anthropologist and director of the Berlin Ethnological Museum, Felix von Luschan (1854-1924), anticipated that some ethnological objects could be purchased with money and others with "good words" (SMB-PK: IB 34 Afrika I/MV). In his letters to several of his expedition teams we very often find directives that the obtaining of these objects (especially 'anthropological material') should be conducted in "loyal ways" and should "not offend emotions of the native peoples"; he urged the collectors to avoid "causing waves." Offering this advice suggests that at least some of the "native people" reacted sceptically to the performance of these anthropological measurements, as illustrated by one example von Luschan cites: "The number of people who take their clothes off and stand in front of us to be fingered, tapped, painted, measured precisely for about half an hour is small." And

6 Translation of this and the other German texts is by Anja Laukötter and Gesa Mackenthun.

7 Sebastian Conrad points out that the injustice produced by colonial systems has not yet been thoroughly researched (Conrad, "Regime").

of problems with a few women from Togo he wrote: “[...] as a consequence it was impossible to measure their bodies with compass and measuring tapes. I had to be happy that I could photograph some of them” (5, 14). The South Sea Expedition (1908-1910) of the Ethnological Museum in Hamburg, headed by Georg Thilenius, which was one of the largest expeditions at that time, also experienced difficulties in obtaining ethnological objects, anthropological measurements, and research concerning living conditions (*Jahrbuch* 1910). Thilenius’ assistant Otto Reche (1879-1966), who was in charge of the anthropological measurements of the color of hair, eyes and skin on a color spectrum, also measured the forms of heads and faces and collected skulls and skeletons (*Jahrbuch* 1908, 153). At the trip’s end he had six hundred body parts to bring back to Hamburg (*Jahrbuch* 1910, 30). Although this undertaking greatly increased the museum’s stock of objects, the measurements could only be realized with threats and force of arms in the face of native resistance (Carstensen and Dörfel 97). On a site note, many years later, in 1927, Reche became professor of ethnology in Leipzig largely because of his position on eugenics and his anti-Semitic ideas (Geisenhainer 408).

Requiring meticulous details about the origin of body parts intended for inclusion in a museum’s collection was a given. And since they provided further information on the provenance of specimens, even the contents of graves were not off-limits. The following quote from Thilenius, in a letter to his collector Fric in 1906, shows how demanding museum directors could be to reach their goal:

It is necessary to acquire a reasonably large amount of skulls and whole skeletons. Yet they are only of value if you find out to which clan the skulls or skeletons belong, for example, Bona, Alakaluf. If the recovery of whole skeletons proves difficult, it will be sufficient to collect – besides the skull – the pelvis and the long hollow bones of the extremities. But this applies only in emergencies. Should you be able to open graves that are still only known by the aborigines, it will be absolutely necessary to ascertain by oral information if the skeleton is that of a man or of a woman. (VKM HH: D2. 36)

The skeletons of children were regarded as empirically useless since they were obviously not fully developed: “Child skeletons have no or very little value. Of course, grave goods should be taken” (VKM HH: D2. 36). Even Eugen Fischer was none too sensitive in his acquiring of objects:

My material now consisted of 310 anthropologically examined individuals, men, women and children, and of 300 photographs.[...] Unfortunately, skeleton material was impossible to obtain; to dig currently in the only Christian Cemetery for bastards was of course impossible. I dug twice on several desolate gravesites but the bone remains were completely useless, crumbling to little pieces. (57-58)

In other words: the efforts to avoid public protest of the “native peoples” (as mentioned by von Luschan) had their limits. It is also in this context of collecting ‘anthropological material’ that the rhetoric of ‘preservation’ was used. In 1908 von Luschan wrote to one of his collecting agents: “Whatever anthropological material you could secure and preserve and salvage for science, by correct and loyal means, of this race seemingly destined to extinction, would be of utmost importance to us” (SMB-PK, IB 44 Afrika I/MV).

What museums deemed indispensable in terms of the amount of ‘anthropological material’ were “series of skulls and skeletons,” not individual bodies and body parts. Researchers believed that analysis of at least one hundred skulls was required before they could draw valid conclusions (von Luschan, *Völker, Rassen* 368-69). How substantial these collections could be is revealed by von Luschan in a letter to his collector Jan Czekanowski: “Some weeks ago I let your skulls be displayed side by side. It is a stately series, almost a regiment. Nobody will easily match that” (SMB-PK, IB 70 Vol 2 I).

The broad empirical basis necessary for the grounding of research conclusions was explained by what von Luschan referred to as the “hunger” of the anthropologist for bigger series of skulls. His semantic paralleling of “hunger” with cannibalism – a prejudice the lay public still held against ‘natural people’ – expresses the sense of urgency that surrounded the collecting of this “material.” Scientists, von Luschan believed, not only had the desire but also the public obligation to research and explain racial relations.

Consequently, von Luschan, like other anthropologists, tried to survey ‘native people’ every chance he got. While traveling in South Africa as a guest of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1906, he had access to the pass office and to prisons (von Luschan, “Bericht” 873). He wrote enthusiastically: “On the 6th of September I devoted myself to the measurements of Bushmen, Hottentots, and Griquas in the prison of Kimberley” (864). In addition, he received permission to survey other ‘native people’, acquire skeletons, make phonographic recordings, and even do a plaster cast of a “Bushman” (863). A few years later, in 1914, the same Association invited von Luschan again to give a lecture on eugenics in Sydney, Australia (Smith 141). Because of the outbreak of war, he and his wife, Emma von Hochstetter, had to interrupt their research trip, fleeing to the United States where von Luschan began lecturing at several universities in order to make a living (SMB-PK, IIIc Vol. 21 I/MV 715). Although his situation was precarious, he took advantage of any opportunity to continue his research, in some cases at “negro schools”:

Because of the special kindness and amiability of a large number of white and colored directors of negro schools, my wife and I were able to measure and to examine precisely not only hundreds of older pupils but also to take notes on what thousands of schoolboys and schoolgirls look like. Usually we were able to make these observations at the end of a class or at the beginning of a morning break, and on some days we

were allowed to profile hundreds of pupils. In anticipation, I had prepared sheets with categories for the children we were studying: 1. apparently no white blood; 2. apparently a little white blood; 3. apparently no colored blood; 4. apparently a little colored blood; 5. apparently half-blood or mulatto; and 6. redheaded. (von Luschan, “Neger” 522-23)

After getting permission to conduct the studies, interrogating the data itself was far from easy as it had to follow complicated rules. To undertake a measurement of the head involved a detailed survey based on twelve variables, including “cubic content” (*Kubischer Inhalt*), the height of the upper part of the face (*Obergesichtshöhe*), and the “nose index” (*Nasenindex*). The procedure for measuring each indicator was scrupulously described. Such exacting methods were in the service of obtaining objective data that could be compared on an international level (Thilenius, “Anthropometrie” 62).

If we take into account that this form of research implied extravagant expenses in terms of time and effort, it is astonishing that the analysis performed on the basis of these data was pretty weak. Felix von Luschan’s article, “Über Pygmäen in Melanesien,” published in 1910, offers a case in point. In order to support his argument that people of short stature were especially frequent in Melanesia, he used his collections of ‘anthropological material’, anthropological data, and statistics but his analysis of this material was very superficial. Although he mentioned twelve different indices for the measurement of the head, he did not explain how they were determined, what they implied – what, for example, the relevance of a “cubic content” of 900 was compared with one of 1100 – or what conclusion could be drawn from different “nose indices.”

Similar observations can be made concerning von Luschan’s report on his research in “negro schools” in the United States. In his article “Die Neger in den Vereinigten Staaten,” he strongly challenged some general American stereotypes about “negroes” (e.g., strong sexual desire, inbreeding, brutality) (527-29). Moreover, he claimed that the “process of mixing between colored and white races” could not be stopped, and he disputed the assumption that with the exception of a few individuals “half-breeds” (*Mischlinge*) were generally inferior (532-34). He concluded that the “negro problem” was a social not a racial one (535). All that being said, even though he drew on his data collection, it did not provide an empirical basis for the “results” he claimed.

When considering these and other examples, the impression is that the accumulating of anthropological data was even more important for early twentieth-century scientists than their analysis of it. Like other scientists of his own and the previous generation, von Luschan’s research occurred within the framework of scientific positivism. In that sense we find a structural similarity with the collection of ethnological objects at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when the addition of these objects to the scientific archive seems to have been more important than to qualitatively examine them. The collection of anthropological

data was justified by the same rhetoric: it had to be 'rescued' before the 'natural' 'culture' or 'race' died out; subjecting the resulting data to testing was a project for the future. Thus the systematic and exact measurement of physical conditions appeared as constitutive for the science of anthropology but also as an occupation sufficient unto itself.

We can conclude that the colonial world was not only the source of material for potential museum exhibits but also a site for an increasingly anthropological practice, representing a perfect field for conducting experiments that yielded the much sought after physical measurements.

Anthropological examinations were of course not limited to colonial bodies in the colonies or other overseas areas of interest. One of the first systematic domestic surveys of this kind was the school statistics project carried out by Rudolf Virchow in Germany in the 1870s. Virchow, working within his own country, examined six million schoolchildren for the purpose of identifying 'racial types'. In this context, the color of the skin, the shape of the ears, and the structure of the hair were described (Geulen 155-56; Goschler; Massin 90; Zimmerman, *Anthropology* 135-36; Zimmerman, "Anti-Semitism" 409-11). Virchow's studies in this area were eventually used as a model for surveys that took place in Great Britain, Austria, Belgium, and the United States (Jacknis; Bunzl; Kaufmann, "Rasse").

An interesting variation on this process of anthropological examination was the self-appraisal undertaken by members of the Society for Racial Hygiene, which was founded in 1905 by Alfred Ploetz, Ernst Rüdin, and Richard Thurnwald (NL Luschan; Ploetz). The aim of this eugenics society was to fight the "degeneration" and the "racial death" of the "Germanic speaking people in Europe" (NL Luschan; Ploetz), and it soon counted such well-known men of science as Felix von Luschan, Eugen Fischer, Fritz Lenz, and Johannes Ranke among its members (Gessler 59). Racial hygiene was not the society's only interest: anyone who wished to join was obliged not only to submit their family tree and pedigree for scrutiny, but also to undergo a series of anthropological measurements (Becker 108).

Another example of domestic as opposed to overseas collection of measurements is the comprehensive anthropological research conducted in 1925 on the island of Finkenwerder, close to Hamburg. Under the lead of Walter Scheidt (1895-1976), professor for "racial and cultural biology" (*Rassen- und Kulturbio-logie*) at the University of Hamburg, and with the support of Georg Thilenius, 153 people were photographed and observed, and 143 were subjected to anthropometric measurements (Scheidt/Wriede 4).

Because of its isolation, Finkenwerder's inhabitants were regarded as "aboriginal" in a certain way as they were believed to have been little exposed to racial mixture. Therefore, the island provided a closed laboratory situation similar to that found in colonial contexts. Like von Luschan's "negro schools" study, we also find complex data collection methods here as well. To illustrate the elaborate measurements of anthropometric features two examples are described here.

For the indicator “length-height relation of the skull” (*Längenhöhenverhältnis des Kopfes*) the following measurement was required: “Vertical profile of the skull; ear-related height of skull expressed in percentage of the maximal skull length; in skulls to be calculated from the converted diameter.” The second indicator, “breadth-height relation of the skull,” required these measurements: “horizontal profile of the skull; ear-related height of skull expressed in percentage of the maximal skull breadth; in skulls to be calculated from the converted diameter” (110).

This new focus on the domestic body also moved to include anthropometric research on colonial bodies within the German state. In Hagenbeck’s *Ethnographic Performances* (*Hagenbecks Völkerschauen*) or in the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Primeval History (*Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*), ‘specific’ people, mainly from the colonies, were measured and classified on a regular basis. The anthropological measurements conducted in Wünsdorf and Zossen, prisoner-of-war camps near Berlin during the First World War provide another example of domestically based research (Lange; von Luschan, *Kriegsgefangene* 116-17). “In our prison camp,” von Luschan stated, by way of explaining the importance of such resources, “we have representatives of an enormous number of representatives from many different races, all continents and all colors ever observed among men. A visit to some of these camps will be as profitable for the expert as a journey around the world, and some of these human groups can be studied much better and more comfortably here than in their native country.” This was another opportunity to study what Luschan reductively (given the cosmopolitan composition of the POW community) called “European material” (NL Luschan, Fischer). Diplomatic obstacles the scientists faced on their home ground were easily overcome: although the researchers’ planned examinations of “Sikhs” had been criticized by the “Indian Independence Committee” (Kahleyss 33) for religious reasons, data were nevertheless collected and even published by Egon von Eickstedt as *Rassenelemente der Sikhs*.

From the perspective of the anthropologists discussed here, however, the colonies were much more ideal locations for providing ethnological objects and ‘anthropological material’ for experimentation and comparison, if only because these practices were aided by the legal imbalance between the hegemonic colonial powers and the territories they controlled. Moreover, the fact that the relationship between researcher and object of research was structured by an attitude of dominance that rested on the assumed cultural and biological superiority of the colonizing powers suggests the ethical dilemma involved in this research. First, the imbalance was underlined by the spatial separation of the survey and its later evaluation, and second, the objects of inquiry had no control whatsoever over the translation of their bodies into Western structures of knowledge. As these practices were integral to the ethnological museums and their scientific self-image, they demonstrate the complicity of ethnological science with colonial exploita-

tion and vice versa. Above all, anthropological measurements conducted overseas can be seen as a necessary precondition for a scientifically grounded self-examination whose purpose was to define Germany's position within the global consortium of nations.

Exhibiting Bodies

But what about the exhibition of these measured bodies? Did the public see these surveyed colonial bodies? In this last section we follow Felix von Luschan's numerous efforts to create a separate section for his extensive collection of 'anthropological material' within some of Germany's ethnological institutions. This case study of von Luschan's attempts to achieve this goal also provides insights into the workings of two important ethnological museums.

In 1905 von Luschan made a proposal to the Berlin Ethnological Museum to sell his considerable private collection of 'anthropological material', regarded as one of the largest in the world (SMB-PK, Vol. 15 I/MV 522) and comprising:

- 1) the scientific collection of skulls and skeletons, approximately 4600 in number, the personal property of *Geheimrat* (Privy Councillor) *von Luschan*; 2) anthropological collection of the Museum of Ethnology consisting of approximately 4300 pieces; 3) collection of the Berlin Anthropological Society from the bequest of Rudolf Virchow, approximately 2300 items; 4) old collection of the Berlin Anthropological Society, approximately 200 items; 5) collection of comparable anatomical and osteological specimens, including plasters, belonging to the collection of *Geheimrat von Luschan*, approximately 1500 items; 6) photographs and lantern pictures belonging to the collection of *Geheimrat von Luschan*, with approximately 10,000 items; and 7) a particularly precious special library built up over forty years by *Geheimrat von Luschan*. (GStA: I HA Rep. 151 I C, Bd. IV, Nr. 8257 [1906-1924])

After an ongoing debate over the expenses that would be entailed in maintaining the different collections, von Luschan's dream of establishing an anthropological institute and a specific anthropological exhibition department within the Berlin Museum of Ethnology died. Although he became director of the anthropological collection in 1911, he was not given the chance to exhibit his objects. Even his promise that the exhibition would explain questions of heredity and offer strategies for preventing 'degeneracy' was not enough to convince museum officials (GStA: I HA Rep. 151 I C, Bd. IV, Nr. 8257 [1906-1924]).

After these long and frustrating negotiations in Berlin, von Luschan tried in 1922 to sell his anthropological collection to the Ethnological Museum in Hamburg (NL Luschan, Reche). Not surprisingly, Georg Thilenius and his assistant Otto Reche were very much interested in his collection: "We have been employed

in gradually and systematically establishing an anthropological institute for many years during which we have succeeded in bringing together a quite pleasant collection of skulls and skeletons; together with your collection Hamburg would possess first-rate material!” (NL Luschan; Reche). But despite the enthusiastic support of Thilenius and Reche, this endeavor also failed. The museum was unable to pay von Luschan’s price of 150,000 Goldmark for the five thousand “racial skulls including skeletons” and for his comprehensive library (NL Luschan, Reche). Also the efforts of his wife to sell his collection after his death in 1924 failed.

Clearly, the issue of money featured prominently in von Luschan’s inability to strike a deal and find a home for his lifetime’s work. But another factor was also at play – a shift in the socio-political climate. Although scientists had been performing anthropological measurements on (colonial) bodies for decades, the exhibition of these bodies, including explanations on display boards, was by the beginning until the mid-1920s not yet socially acceptable. Even after an ongoing public debate on eugenics questions and after the establishment of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut* in Berlin in September 1927 (where Eugen Fischer did his eugenics research) it was not until 1928 that a ‘race’ department was established at the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology under the direction of Walter Scheidt.

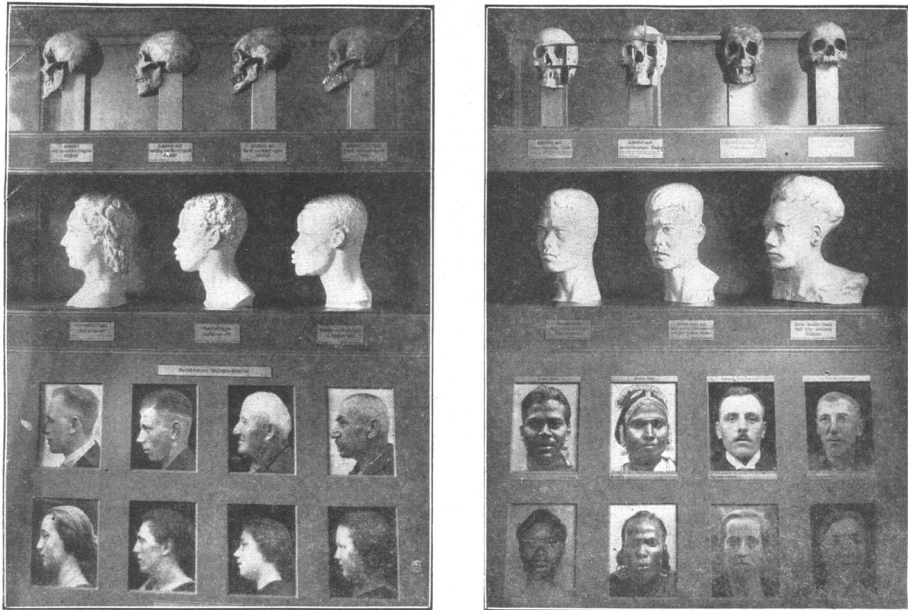
For the fiftieth anniversary of the museum and the fiftieth annual meeting of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* in Hamburg in August 1928, Thilenius wanted to offer conference participants “something special” (STA HH: Vol. 54). The newspaper *Hamburger Nachrichten* celebrated the meeting’s commencement with the following report:

In the Museum of Ethnology we have now opened a race-related scientific show collection [*rassenkundliche Schausammlung*]. The director of the museum, Professor Dr. Thilenius, has for a long time promoted the inclusion of race biology in the research and teaching scheme of ethnology museums and has now called into life the first race-related department [*rassenkundliche Abteilung*] at the Hamburg Museum. The Hamburg Museum, which takes a leading part in ethnological research, is in the vanguard of this special field of scientific research (STA HH: Zeitschriftenmappe).

The museum’s race department comprised two exhibition rooms. The first described racial theories and defined racial terms while the second explained their application to the human body, an example of which can be seen in Fig. 2. This description of the second exhibition space also appeared in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*:

The skulls in the upper row represent straight deep-set [*geradtiefrieger*], moderately deep-set [*mäßig vortiefrieger*], strongly deep-set [*stark vortiefrieger*], and very strongly deep-set [*sehr stark vortiefrieger*] faces. The middle row features the bust of Batamelata [sic] by Donatello as an example of a straight deep-set facial profile and two negro heads as ex-

Die erste rassenkundliche Schausammlung Deutschlands.



Aus der neueröffneten rassenkundlichen Schausammlung im Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg.

Fig. 2. Hamburg Museum of Ethnology, Race Department, 1928. (*Hamburger Nachrichten*, 15 May, 1928)

amples of deep-set and strongly deep-set facial profiles. The models of the negro heads show a broad nose with a deep, broad root, and a very broad nose with a very broad back. [...] (STA HH: Staatliche Pressestelle 5039).

In addition to the race department's two exhibition rooms there was an archive where, among other material, the anthropological research data collected on Finkenwerder in 1925 was stored. Although collections of 'anthropological material' and data had by the beginning of the twentieth century become of great importance for ethnological museums, they were not part of public exhibitions until the late 1920s when the issue of eugenics was the subject of general debate. This temporal gap underlines the division between the public display of human artifacts and their use for scientific research, a division that challenges the core of the self-definition of museums that aspired to combine both within one and the same site. This non-concurrence, moreover, shows that academic acceptance of research techniques might differ from the social acceptance of publicly displaying their results.

Conclusion

This essay has tried to analyze how and why ‘anthropological material’ elicited so much interest from ethnological museums at the beginning of the twentieth century. The acquisition of knowledge founded on the colonial body is part and parcel of the project of colonial conquest, and the techniques used to measure the ‘other’ body were applied to the ‘own’ body shortly after those techniques had been tested in the overseas territories. In that sense the colonies functioned not only as a ‘laboratory’ for Western Europe but were interdependent with anthropological practices performed on domestic populations. And when we look at ‘human remains’ collections that still exist in some museum cellars, or at anatomical collections (for example, those housed at Rostock University), we should realize how entangled domestic space is with the foreign and the past with the present.

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 Letter, 2 May 1919 from Otto Reche to Felix von Luschan.
 Letter, 19 April 1922 from Felix von Luschan to Otto Reche.
 Letter, 13 June 1922 from Otto Reche to Felix von Luschan.

VKM HH: Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg/Hamburg Museum of Ethnology:
 D2. 36: Letter, 10 December 1906 from the collector Alberto Vojtech Fric to Georg Thilenius.

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CHAPTER TEN

Mediterranean Medical Bodies and the Ottoman Empire, 1517-1820

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The Mediterranean region has been a privileged arena for cultural encounters throughout recorded history. In Greco-Roman culture, the sea was a far more concrete reality than the often inhospitable hinterland of the ports, and while ancient geographers did use still familiar names for the continental landmasses of Europe, Asia, and eventually Africa, these were not understood as cultural denominators – despite a few of Edward Said’s less compelling arguments about Hellenic Orientalism, or even Martin Bernal’s controversial claims that the Greeks plagiarized their culture from black Africans (Lefkowitz and Rogers). When the Roman Empire split, the border ran across the Mediterranean, as did the demarcation between Latin and Greek Christendom in the Middle Ages. Not until the expansion of Islam along the shores of northern Africa and into the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century did the Mediterranean represent, by and large, a frontier region between the three continents.

It has become a stereotype to assume that the juxtaposition of Islamic and Christian realms led to the creation of relatively tight borders that allowed for little exchange of people and cultural practices to occur, despite quite a lively trade in agricultural produce, South Asian spices, paper, and later bullion from the Spanish colonies. After World War II, Bernard Lewis appropriated Churchill’s metaphor of the ‘Iron Curtain’ to characterize the relationship between the Muslim World and Europe (411), a trope rejected by Faroqhi in 2004 (2). Just to consider one typical counterexample from an early period: Fatih Sultan Mehmet “the Conqueror,” who made Constantinople the Ottoman Empire’s capital after defeating the last Byzantine emperor in 1453, had been brought up by a Greek tutor, and he self-consciously styled himself after the Hellenic hero Alexander the Great; he also collected Venetian prints, preferably depictions of ancient nudes. He and his successors employed Italian painters, such as Gentile Bellini (Rogers), and collected Western scholarly books. Among those, in the century following the conquest, were illustrated anatomical atlases, including Andreas Vesalius’ *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (*Structure of the Human Body*) of 1543 or 1555, which will play a major role in the remainder of this chapter.

Body, Blood, and Spirit in Early Modern Arabic Anatomical Manuscripts

In 1517, the Ottoman armies conquered Syria and Egypt, ending eight centuries of Arab rule. This event presumably precipitated the departure of an Italian physician and orientalist, Andrea Alpago from Belluno (near Venice), who had spent a full three decades in Damascus, partly in the company of his nephew, Paolo Alpago, collecting Arabic medical manuscripts, which he discussed with local doctors, while making a living as a medical practitioner himself (Lucchetta). The importance of his activities cannot be overemphasized, as it clearly shows that Renaissance scholars took contemporary Arab learning very seriously indeed. Thus, this example contradicts the established master narrative in the history of science, which suggests that after the rediscovery of ancient Greek texts by fourteenth-century humanists, Europe had lost any interest in Arabic texts (Abdalla). As a matter of fact, the two Alpagos prepared an impressive number of Latin translations from the manuscripts collected in Syria, including a new and much improved version of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*, the epitome of classical healing knowledge, which had originally been translated in twelfth-century Spain.

Medical theories and practices in the Euro-Mediterranean and West Asian region developed with a remarkable degree of coherence and continuity, despite radical cultural and religious breaks brought about by the establishment of Christianity and Islam as state religions. In medical practice, priorities shifted between care for the ailing body and redemption of the immortal soul, though we should be careful not to exaggerate Christianity's hostility toward the mortal flesh. In theory, at least, attitudes held by Latinate and Arabic doctors concerning their patients' bodies were not radically different from those of their Greco-Roman predecessors, as the same line of literature was handed down and elaborated on for centuries, from Hippocrates and Galen, Paul of Aegina and Albucasis, reaching its canonical form with Avicenna in the early eleventh century (Siraisi).

The human body is the substrate of medical intervention, and today we take it for granted that a realistic representation of human anatomy is the basis of medical education and practice. Historically, the interior of human beings was cloaked in sacredness, inaccessible to the direct gaze of the anatomist, and surgical interventions were severely limited by the hazards of sepsis, though certain interventions were practiced throughout the millennia, such as cataract operations and the removal of bladder stones, not to mention traumatic surgery, especially in the context of warfare (Pormann and Savage-Smith 130-31). The second-century gladiator physician Galen gained some 'insights' (literally) into the living bodies of fighters brought back from the arena; otherwise, he had to resort to dissecting pigs, dogs, and – closest in appearance to the human form – Barbary apes and Rhesus monkeys, the only nonhuman primates common in the Roman Empire (Singer xxi-xxii). Some four centuries earlier, in Alexandria on the Egyptian coast, human dissection was briefly permitted under the early Ptolemies, and

even vivisection on slaves and convicted criminals was reported, but these procedures did not leave noticeable traces in the anatomical literature (von Staden). Later centuries were mainly limited to learning anatomy from authoritative texts (primarily Galen's). Thus, from the third century before Christ all the way to the fourteenth century AD, Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, and Islamic civilizations concurred in treating the human body as inviolable in medicine, if not in everyday life.

As early as the tenth century, Muslim scholars began to produce a genre of writings critical of ancient authorities, often titled "doubts about *such-and-such*," Alhacen's *Shukuk 'ala Batlamyus*, for example, an astronomical work analyzing logical contradictions in Ptolemy's *Almagest* (Saliba 74). Even earlier is Abu Bakr al-Razi's *Shukuk 'ala Jalinus*, "Doubts about Galen," from around the year 900, in which he assesses Galen's works, employing the tools of critical reason, only a few generations after the original translation of Galen into Arabic by Hunain ibn Ishaq and his associates (Razi; Strohmaier). In thirteenth-century Egypt, empirical criticism of Galen's authority appeared after the Syrian physician Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi observed decaying human bodies that had remained unburied after a famine around the year 1200, leading him to correct some of Galen's views regarding the fusion of bones in the lower jaw and lower back (Savage-Smith 104). In mid century, his fellow Syrian Ibn al-Nafis, also working in Egypt, also recommended the close inspection of abandoned corpses in order to learn more about their composition. He, however, rejected the actual performance of dissection in no uncertain terms, and he also considered vivisection of animals as "impractical," though he did not pronounce himself morally opposed to this particular practice:

The precepts¹ of Islamic law (*sharī'ah*) have discouraged us from the practice of dissection (*tashrīḥ*), along with whatever compassion is in our temperaments. [...] As for the dissection of the heart and arteries and diaphragm and lungs, etc., one [must] be informed about the manner of their movements and whether the motion of the arteries is synchronous with the movement of the heart or is different, and similarly, the movement of the lungs along with that of the diaphragm. It is a given fact that it can be learned only through dissection (*tashrīḥ*) of the living, but that is difficult because of the disturbance of the living due to its feeling of pain. (Savage-Smith 100-01)

This stance left room for the dissection of dead animals, but Ibn al-Nafis did not indicate whether he undertook any such projects, and certainly not in the con-

1 Savage-Smith provides a detailed discussion of the term "precepts," which is unclear in the manuscripts. She concludes by saying that "[t]his statement is the closest we come to a medieval assertion that Islamic law prohibited dissection. Yet there is here no clear sense of prohibition or interdiction, but only a general sentiment that the conventions, or perhaps rules, of the *sharī'ah* had discouraged or deterred them (*ṣaddān*) from the pursuit of dissection" (100).

text of his famous claim that the wall between the two main chambers of the heart was impermeable, a position that opposed Galen's assertion that some blood passed through this septum from right to left.

Ibn al-Nafis' writings about the structure of the heart, though having been discussed innumerable times during the last century, merit some particular attention. They record the one example of an Arab innovation in anatomy for which we have enough information to embark on a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which anatomical knowledge was derived, used, and transmitted to later generations of physicians, who would either make use of such a novel concept when preparing their own medical works or would exclude it.²

Without going into too much detail, we will briefly look at some aspects of ancient humoral theory that are relevant for our particular narrative.³ Blood, being one of the four constitutive humors of the body, was thought to be produced from the digested food processed in the intestine. The main location for this transformation was the liver, but the process began in the blood vessels between the gut and the liver. This newly generated blood, it was thought, was carried through the veins, non-pulsating vessels originating from the liver in the same way that (pulsating) arteries started in the heart and nerves in the brain. Blood moved through the body along different pathways, fulfilling various tasks (nutrition and animation of the parts of the body), and was eventually consumed by the organs. Therefore, and this point tends to be misunderstood to this day, prior to the seventeenth century there was never any suggestion that blood circulated at all, that is, that it returned to some location and then repeated its course through the organism (Brömer, "Nutzen" 207). The bloodstream was assumed to move in one direction, and extremely slowly: obviously, in a day no more blood can be produced than the amount of food and drink ingested, minus the waste matter removed through the feces. The stream, or rather trickle of dark, nutritious blood coming from the liver is then divided near the heart, where one portion moves on through the upper veins, while another part is aspirated by the right chamber of the heart. There, and this is the most complicated and crucial part of ancient blood physiology, a number of processes take place that are of central importance for the various physiological, physico-theological, and philosophical concepts posited by different cultures and religions.

Until the sixteenth century, most authors agreed that it was in the heart that the animal spirit (*ruh hayawani*) was generated – a hot, airy substance that spread through the arteries into each and every organ, where it would then be used up

- 2 We are, by and large, still limited to discussing written works of Arab and other Muslim doctors, while insights into the day-to-day application of their erudition still remain sketchy (Álvarez-Millán). Documented case notes are rare, but medical historians are now beginning to use a wider range of sources that are found outside the scholarly texts (Shefer-Mossensohn).
- 3 Even the original sources, from Hippocrates to Galen himself, are not unequivocal. Ullmann provides a very useful overview from the perspective of the Arab understanding of this debate from the tenth to the thirteenth century (64-69).

in producing vital functions. How exactly this transformation happened, however, gave rise to much controversy over the two millennia from Hippocrates to Harvey. Certainly the lungs played a role since the animal spirit required air as part of its composition. Two major blood vessels connect the lung to the right and the left chamber of the heart, respectively. The relative size of those vessels compared to the other two main conduits (the vena cava and the aorta) was not quite clear. The aorta in particular appears to be so prominent that Galen denied the possibility that the blood passed through the pulmonary ducts in its entirety before reaching the left ventricle, where the animal spirit was to be finalized. Therefore, he insisted that most of the blood actually seeped through the central wall between the ventricles – the septum – through pores too fine to be observed by the anatomist. Galen even surmised that the final convulsion in death actually closed those passages, making them in principle unobservable.

Ibn al-Nafis, by contrast, argued that it was impossible for the animal spirit to be corrupted by the unrefined blood produced in the liver. Instead, he explained, the dark and thick blood flowed into the lungs, which were nourished by the nutrients filtered out by their porous tissue, and only the finest, lightest components ran through the pulmonary vein into the left ventricle, together with air breathed in, producing the animal spirit in the heart, which would then, as was the case in Galen's model, be consumed by the living organism.⁴

It is crucial to note that Ibn al-Nafis' model rested entirely on theological assumptions, developed from an orthodox Muslim understanding of the relation between soul and body in life and of bodily resurrection (Fancy). This line of argument did not require empirical confirmation, which would have been hard to come by in the first place. Animal hearts were of course known from butchery, and in fact, it has been argued that what Galen described looked more like the hearts of cattle than the human heart (Siegel). Ibn al-Nafis, too, mentions animal hearts having very thick, solid tissue between their chambers. In his view, this observation made it implausible to postulate the existence of pores that allowed blood to pass. However, as we have seen (and what many twentieth-century contributors to the debate have conveniently overlooked), Galen had been fully aware of this problem, which he solved with the *ad hoc* hypothesis that assumed that the pores contracted upon death.

Thus, the only significant difference between Galen's and Ibn al-Nafis' systems is the pathway the blood takes from the right ventricle to the left: through both the lungs and the septum in the former and through the lungs only in the latter. Blood does not circulate in either theory since it does not return to its point of origin, but is used up in the workings of the body, as emphasized above. What seems to have made the difference for Ibn al-Nafis was the religious framework; he developed his hypothesis based on a theological argument about the interac-

4 The relevant passages have been edited, with a German translation, by Meyerhof, "Ibn an-Nafis und seine Theorie," followed by a detailed English article (Meyerhof "Ibn an-Nafis (XIIIth cent.)").

tion of the soul, through the animal spirit, with the body as a whole. This “hylomorphic” doctrine of the soul (Fancy 203 and *passim*) necessitated, even in the absence of new *observational* data, a new *interpretation* of empirical evidence identical to that which Galen possessed. This at least is what Ibn al-Nafis himself states categorically when he dismisses the possibility of performing dissection and vivisection, which would be required in order to reach beyond the Ancients’ empirical knowledge. If he deemed such distancing statements necessary, then he was clearly aware of the utility of these procedures. He may or may not have been tempted to use the knife, but the anatomical model he designed did not require dissection, and as we have seen in Galen, if dissection did not reveal the postulated septal pores, the problem could easily be explained away. And, lest we are tempted to believe that the seventeenth-century discovery of the circulation of the blood by William Harvey was more firmly based on evidence, the anatomy was not because it required a connection between arteries and veins that he and his contemporaries were not able to show; hence, he postulated the existence of invisible anastomoses in the periphery of the body instead of the equally invisible pores in the septum of the heart (Hwa and Aird).

Official attitudes toward the dead human body changed in Europe in the fourteenth century when public dissections were first performed in northern Italy, initially to illustrate the knowledge from ancient books, and only subsequently in a more inquisitive manner, when anatomists began to observe phenomena that contradicted Galen’s teachings (French). It was not until the sixteenth century that the anatomist Andreas Vesalius systematically examined Galen’s works for anatomical errors, of which he pointed out some two hundred in his *Structure of the Human Body*, which was published with lavish illustrations in 1543. The second edition of this magnificent book (1555) also carries critical remarks about Galen’s postulated pores in the interventricular septum. The fate of this construct is by then almost sealed, and Vesalius is by no means the only one to reject the idea. Much has been made of a brief passage in the ill-fated work of Miguel Servet (Michael Servetus) from Spain, *Restitution of Christianity*, which, as the title indicates, deals with an eminently theological issue, launching an ardent attack on the divine Trinity (Servetus). Servet’s Unitarianism led him to the stake twice: Jean Calvin had him burned alive in Geneva, while the Catholics burned him *in effigy* in the small town of Vienne, near Lyon, where the incriminating book had been published (Hillar 146-47).

What is interesting to note, though the issue still requires closer study, is the similarity of argument between Servet and Ibn al-Nafis regarding the seat of the soul and the role of blood in linking the soul to the body. The conclusions drawn by each author, however, were diametrically opposed: in Reformation age Christianity, Unitarianism’s denial of the Holy Trinity was considered a capital sin that required cleansing by fire, whereas Islam embraced the principle of the unity of creation, *tawhid*. And Ibn al-Nafis’ physiological interpretation was fully consonant with his expertise in religious law, of which he was also a renowned

expert. It is true that Servet, who had met and worked with anatomists like Winter von Andernach and Vesalius, had firsthand experience with dissection; but, as we have seen, the interventricular pores were not a matter of direct observation, and Vesalius himself, in the first edition of his *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, still accepted the Galenic view. Is there any chance that Servet had somehow come across Ibn al-Nafis' argument? From pure textual analysis, historians of medicine have reached conflicting verdicts (Temkin; Schacht). Circumstantial evidence actually supports some form of transmission, possibly in oral form, given that it is not until after World War I that printed references to the pulmonary passage theory of Ibn al-Nafis appear in Western sources.

We have now reached a point that returns us to the initial remarks about Andrea and Paolo Alpagio and their collection and translation of Arabic medical manuscripts from Damascus. Soon after returning to Italy after 1517, the two men began publishing their Latin translations in Padua, precisely the city where most of the leading Renaissance anatomists were either working or being trained. Since the Alpagio estate was dispersed some time during the seventeenth century, there is no way of knowing with certainty if they owned a copy of Ibn al-Nafis' anatomical commentary; however, shortly after the sale of their papers, a manuscript of this very text appeared in a private library in nearby Venice, the provenance of which is not recorded (Lucchetta 60, 66). The book does not carry and inscriptions from previous owners, so all we can say is that it is plausible that the Alpagios may have brought it from Damascus, right at the beginning of the 'anatomical Renaissance' of the sixteenth century. If we accept this vague evidence as a basis for a tentative analysis, we find ourselves faced with a curious situation where in thirteenth-century Cairo, through theological reasoning alone, Ibn al-Nafis reached the same result as a practicing anatomist in sixteenth-century Paris. Servet, too was motivated by theology – though of a different religion. However, in contrast to Ibn al-Nafis, the Spaniard had access to contemporary empirical work of anatomists such as Vesalius, whose explicit intention had been to challenge ancient medical authority, proving Galen wrong on as many counts as he could, rather than engaging in theological disputes.

Anatomy between Authority and Observation

Vesalius' atlas will now serve as a starting point for the next phase of our *parcours* through the cross-cultural history of anatomy. Naturalistic depictions of human bodies would seem an obvious device for the teaching of anatomy, but this tradition has not been traced back to the times of the ancients. In a manuscript culture, there are, of course, technological limitations since the anatomical images would have to be copied manually by scribes unschooled in the subject



Fig. 1: "Squatting figures." From a Latin manuscript, copied in 1158 at Präfeing Abbey near Regensburg, Bavaria. Anonymous, *Methodus varias aegritudines*.

matter;⁵ but this was common practice in other contexts, for instance in botanical treatises (Pormann and Savage-Smith 52). In addition, Islamic cultures evinced considerable concern over the depiction of living beings, the practice of which sometimes incurred suspicions of idolatry. At the same time, there were many periods and regions where elaborate miniature painting flourished, to the level that even the Prophet Muhammad's figure was shown, sometimes with a blank or veiled face, but occasionally even in portrait form (Naef). As a matter of fact, we do find drawings of anatomical figures from the late fourteenth century in Persian sources, showing a striking similarity to drawings from twelfth-century Germany, pictured in the same squatting position, using comparable techniques of schematization (Fig. 1). As it has not been possible to demonstrate direct transmission from Bavaria to Persia, some historians have postulated common ancestry, possibly going back as far as Hellenic times, though there is no positive evidence for any such precedents (Sudhoff 9-10; O'Neill 538-39).

The drawings of the main organ systems included in the anatomical work of the Persian anatomist Mansur ibn Ilyas are the earliest known examples of full-body anatomical renditions in medical texts from the Islamic world (Ibn Ilyas). What is striking about these renderings is their diagrammatic nature: Mansur provides a general orientation of the layout of the five main organ systems, namely, bones, nerves, muscles, veins, and arteries, each of which he describes in a separate chapter of his treatise. Karl Sudhoff, who first analyzed these images a century ago, both in the Latin version from Germany and the Persian counterparts, called this model the *Fünfbilderserie*, that is to say, the five-image series, even though there are often more items. For instance, in the final chapter on "compound organs," sometimes a drawing of a pregnant woman was added (Fig. 2). These diagrams can certainly serve as illustrations of the general relationships within the organ systems, but we may well doubt how helpful they were to a budding phlebotomist or surgeon in learning to "know anatomy and the parts of the human body, and the muscles, veins, arteries, and nerves that are in them, so that they will avoid them when opening abscesses or excising haemorrhoids," as was demanded in a twelfth-century examination manual from Syria (Savage-Smith 82).

Historians actually face a big problem in assessing surgical practices of the medieval period because, on the one hand, a wide range of interventions is described, in more or less detail, in the classical texts on surgery, while at the same time, we find numerous cautionary remarks to the effect that the author in question has never seen certain operations attempted, nor does he think they are practical. Yet the tradition of learnedness requires the writer to report traditional knowledge exhaustively and in as much detail as the sources provide (Pormann and Savage-Smith 62, 130). Thus, the single most influential surgical text in the Islamic world is actually an adaptation of the work by a pre-Islamic Byzantine

5 The tables in 'Itaqi and in Kâhya comparing different manuscripts of the same work dramatically illustrate these difficulties.

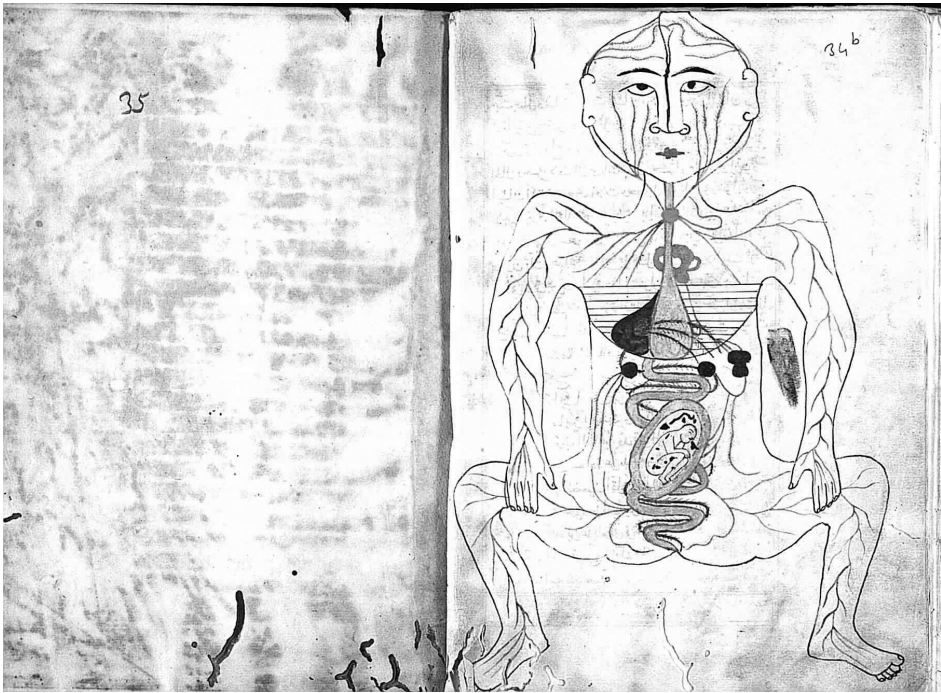


Fig. 2: Figure of a pregnant woman, addition to the “Fünfbilderserie” canon in a copy of Mansur ibn Ilyas’ *Anatomy of the Human Body* (14th century).

physician, Paul of Aegina, whose handbook from the mid-seventh century, *Pragmateia*, was adapted by the Andalusian doctor Abu ’l-Qasim al-Zahrawi around the year 1000 in Arabic (Albucasis), and this work was later edited in Turkish by the physician of Mehmet the Conqueror, Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu, in the mid-fifteenth century (Sabuncuoğlu).

Mansur’s diagrams were later adapted by other writers in the Islamic world, such as another Ottoman court physician in the first third of the seventeenth century, Şemseddin Itaki, whose anatomical handbook, written around 1632, is of particular interest, and not only for its highly eclectic iconography: alongside the Mansurian schematic drawings, Itaki includes pictorial references to recent Western European works, notably Vesalius’ atlas published in Basle in 1543, some ninety years earlier (Fig. 3).⁶ It is less surprising to see that Vesalius’ book was available in Istanbul, given the long-standing tradition of Ottoman book collecting, at least since the times of Mehmet, two hundred years before Itaki. However, the adaptation of Vesalius’ illustrations is a rare example of Western images being included in Turkish texts. Later Persian writers were less reluctant to use pictures:

6 This work is available in two different editions: a facsimile of one MS specimen with English translation (’Ita‘i) and a critical edition with modern Turkish translation (Kâhya), using different conventions for the Latin transliteration of the Ottoman Turkish, originally written in Arabic script.

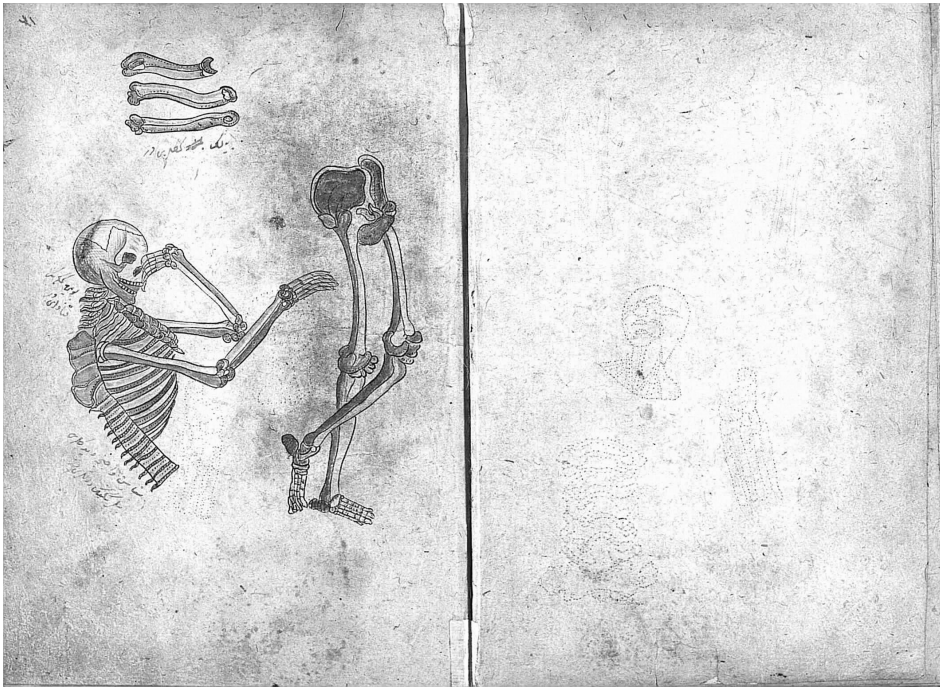


Fig. 3: Itaki's "Body Anatomy" (ca. 1632) contains several pictorial references to Vesal's atlas of the *Structure of the Human Body* (1543/1555).

a very different attitude toward the depiction of living beings prevailed among the Shia, one that apparently also included anatomy.

It is hard to determine the function of the Vesalian images in Itaki's work, given that the text is mainly traditionally Galenic, as was the book by Mansur, which Itaki drew on for the full-body figures. In one important detail, however, Itaki goes beyond both texts when he refers to Ibn al-Nafis' idea of the pulmonary passage of the blood, discussed earlier in this essay, while Mansur, writing just over a century after the death of Ibn al-Nafis, is silent on this point and Vesalius, though suspicious with regard to the invisible pores between the ventricles, does not acknowledge any sources for his tentative refutation of the bloodflow through the septum. Itaki, for his part, seriously misquotes Ibn al-Nafis, suggesting that the latter had assumed that the "flesh" between the ventricles of the heart was porous, allowing the blood to flow through quite freely, which is of course the exact opposite of what the doctor from Cairo had stated almost four centuries before.

In general, although Itaki prides himself for being the first author to have invested the ancient knowledge with "Turkish clothes and Anatolian covering" (Itaqi 13), there is a certain equivocation to be seen throughout his book regarding the finer terminological and anatomical detail contained in his sources. Yet, for all its philological flaws, Itaki's reference to Ibn al-Nafis can at least serve as a coun-

terexample to an opinion commonly found in historical literature to the effect that Ibn al-Nafis' anatomical commentary was no longer known in the Islamic world after the fourteenth century (Kâhya and Demirhan-Erdemir 29). This is easily disproved since the work was still being copied around the year 1737, the date of the manuscript held at the State Library in Berlin.⁷ While scholars in the West only rediscovered the text in 1922 (Meyerhof, "Ibn an-Nafis und seine Theorie"), Middle Eastern authors continued to comment on the idea of the pulmonary passage in the early nineteenth century, among them the Egyptian polymath Hasan al-'Attar, who was a fascinating figure in the transitional period after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt (Gran). This was a period when the ongoing revival of classical Arabic learning was being violently confronted with Western military technology, including military medicine; most casualties on both sides of the Napoleonic battles were the result of diseases rather than combat action. While the scientific displays staged by the French occupiers were meant to impress the Egyptian notables, they were only partially successful (Livingston). While several learned Egyptians publicly scorned the French efforts, al-'Attar allowed himself to become involved with the invaders, and therefore precipitously left the country shortly after the British evicted the French in 1801. He traveled to Istanbul and other parts of Anatolia and beyond, where he studied and practiced medicine. In the Ottoman capital, he stayed with the Empire's head physician, the *hekimbaşı*, and acquired profound knowledge in traditional medicine, but he later also wrote about and reflected upon his encounters with the European doctors whom he had met during his time in Istanbul. Al-'Attar, too, quoted Ibn al-Nafis' pulmonary passage – correctly – though how he reconciles this anatomical and physiological concept with the knowledge he had obtained both from the *hekimbaşı*'s coterie and the foreign doctors residing in Istanbul is an issue yet to be explored. We yet lack a better understanding of how Ottoman physicians juggled the different available systems of knowledge about the human body at the period just before Western medical practice became the dominant approach, at least in the provision of state-sponsored medical care, especially in the military, which itself was a new development after the trauma of the Napoleonic invasion (Brömer, "Kulturgeschichte").

The endpoint of this development was then reached, in a sense, around 1820, when dissection was introduced into medical training in Egypt by the French doctor Clot Bey, and Şanizade Ataullah in Istanbul published the first printed anatomical textbook written in Turkish, based on his studies conducted in Europe and on Western medical manuals (Şanizade). And yet, this is by no means the end of the story. Access to Western medicine in the Islamic world has remained restricted for large portions of that population, which has prevented Western attitudes to the human body from becoming hegemonic in large sections of Muslim culture, and the contemporary revival of Islam is contributing to the stabilization

7 The extant manuscripts are collated in the critical edition by Qatayah and Ghalyunji (Ibn al-Nafis).

of Avicennan and other systems of healing outside the bio-psycho-social paradigm of medicine established in the late twentieth century (Sax).

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Musical Bodies in Bali

ELLEN KOSKOFF

This paper explores the intricate, sometimes conflicting negotiations currently underway in Bali, Indonesia, as local, regional, and national musicians grapple with the tensions of postmodern life, with its drive toward a new global economic positioning, while at the same time protecting older, more sacred rituals, ceremonies, and ways of life. I examine these interactions primarily through the lens of musical performance and music's performativity, that is, its role in moving beyond its surface function as sounded entertainment, into the role, as Edward Schieffelin suggests, of structuring Balinese social reality.

Understanding the word 'body' in the title of this paper as signifying not only the physical body that actually performs the music, but also the collective social and political body that forms and disciplines the corporeal body, I examine some of the effects of modernization and westernization on Balinese musicians living in a variety of contexts. I suggest that various interactions between Bali and the West over many centuries have resulted in profound changes affecting not only the surface of the performing culture, as it is lived on the ground of everyday experience, but also the underlying conceptual framework that guides living within today's Indonesian nation.

Bodies in Contact

In 2007-08, I lived in Bali, Indonesia, conducting fieldwork and performing with a *gamelan angklung* group, an ensemble of older men that plays for Hindu cremations. I had previously been to Bali a few times and had heard a performance given by an especially good *angklung* group, *Gamelan Taman Sari*. It was this group that I hoped to work with during the year. While I was there, I lived in Banjar Wani and worked in Banjar Baturiti, neighborhoods in the village of Kerambitan, located in the Regency of Tabanan, a rural area near the southwest coast that produced mainly rice.

Musico-religious performances of all kinds occur in the *banjar* (neighborhood) almost daily, especially in the *puri* (palace), where the former raja rents out his space for tourist events or in the *pura* (temple) for ceremonies, such as *odalans*, marking special days in the Hindu calendar. Still other performances, such as the *calonerang*, are frequently performed for the protection of the village. Indone-

sia is the largest Muslim nation in the world, having converted to Islam centuries earlier, but Bali has retained an older layer of traditional Hindu practice.

Once a week or so, I would leave the village and travel to the city of Tabanan, the capital of the Regency where I lived. There, I could buy *kains* (pieces of beautifully colored fabric used to wrap the bottom part of the body for ritual occasions), and other *gamelan* and costuming paraphernalia in the many stores that catered to musicians, dancers, and, indeed, to anyone fulfilling a ceremonial duty. It was here that I got a sense of the time and money spent on preparing for the prestigious Bali Arts Festival, held in June every year in Denpasar.

Tabanan, which prides itself as the home of the famous dancer, I Ketut Maria (c. 1890–c. 1960), the original creator of *Gamelan Gong Kebyar* dancing, is quite well known for its master musicians and dancers, and often competes for, and wins, prizes at the festival. Occasionally, I would stay for a *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) performance or go to a restaurant, where I would hear *tingklik* music, a sort of light-entertainment music performed on bamboo instruments.

Every once in a while, I would venture to Denpasar, the capital of Bali. There, I would visit the *Institute Seni Indonesia* (the Institute of Indonesian Arts, or ISI), Bali's premiere school of music, dance, puppetry, and much else, where the best musicians and dancers on the island go to study before heading off to other parts of Asia, Europe, and the United States to teach and perform. While there, I would watch a concert of new music for *gamelan*, or a performance by a regional group vying for a coveted place in the Arts Festival, or, on occasion, attend a conference or government function where music and dance were performed for visiting dignitaries.

The number of musical performances that occur on Bali in any given year is enormous, far more than in most places in the world; and, indeed, Bali, in its present role as the jewel in the crown of Indonesian tourism, has, for more than a century, consciously promoted its musics and ceremonies for global consumption, while continuing an almost daily calendar of performances for local and regional Hindu ceremonies. I suggest here that the various musical performances I have been discussing can be thought of as existing in many multiple musical and conceptual spaces, all of them connected in one way or another through individual musicians who freely pass through and between their boundaries as they attempt to fulfill their obligations both as good Hindus as well as good citizens of a Muslim nation poised to enter a global market.

Contacts in Context

For readers to understand the enormity of social, political and economic changes that have affected Bali over approximately the past two hundred years, some preliminary background: the archipelago of Indonesia consists of about 12,000 islands, about 6,000 of which are inhabited and support more than three hun-

dred distinct ethno-linguistic groups. Until the twentieth century, Bali was one of many islands that marked stops along the lucrative European spice trade route, but as early as the nineteenth century, the Dutch, who had colonized the area, realized the potential of Bali as an icon of cultural exoticism, and handpicked various people (mainly from the previous ruling classes) to become educated in the West. These, and others, such as traders, provided the driving force behind the twentieth century New Order program of “Unity in Diversity,” whereby control entailed, as Verdery has written in 1996, “instituting homogeneity or commonality as normative” (quoted in: Hough 233). After independence from the Dutch in the late 1940s, the new government divided the new nation of Indonesia into twenty-seven provinces, of which Bali is one. However, because of Bali’s global position as a ‘tourist paradise’, it has become prominent in the construction of a more general ‘Indonesian culture’ and contributes to upwards of forty percent of the gross national income.

One of the ways the new government sought uniformity or standardization in music was, in the mid-twentieth century, to establish a network of schools in various provinces that would be devoted to Indonesian arts. These schools were modeled on schools of music found in the West, and involved new pedagogical tools, including music notation, music theory books, music histories, and classrooms, thus replacing the more local, intimate, and familial-based learning process that had operated for centuries in the villages.

The first secondary arts schools appeared in Bali in 1967. According to scholars Brett Hough (1999) and Philip Yampolsky (1995), who have studied the history and organization of these institutions, ISI and its forerunners have become the premiere sites for the development and dissemination of a standardized Indonesian culture, one that today interacts freely with the West. Acting as a mediator between the local, regional, national, and international spheres, its mission is “to promote the professionalism and modernization of the arts, the use of modern or scientific methods of teaching, and the growth of nationalism and development in Indonesia” (Hough 243). In short, ISI, KOKAR (the arts High School), and other institutions have become “sites for the cultural production of Indonesia within the regional context of Bali” (243). Officially sanctioned and supported by a centralized government, they set the artistic standards for Bali and for the many ensembles and teachers who travel outside Bali to the wider world.

Moving away from the national agenda to the social and musical structure on the local level, each village, or *desa*, is governed by two simultaneous systems of government: the official, national one called *desa dinas*, and another, older system, known as *desa adat*. Under the older, *desa adat* system, each village is further subdivided into smaller, loosely knit administrative neighborhood units, known as *banjars*. These are neighborhood organizations made up of a few interconnected families who help each other, especially at the time of a death, but also assist each other in many other temple, work, and household ceremonies, where extended planning and round-the-clock work takes place. The *balé banjar* (the

central meeting area of the *banjar*) is the social, economic, and religious hub of the community and provides a central place for religious activity, for commerce, and for daily socializing.

Whereas the newer, national *dinas* system is Muslim-based and official, the *adat* system is Hindu-based, local, and considered customary or traditional. Far older than the *dinas* system, it is felt to be more significant by the Balinese, who have at times resisted the Jakarta-based governmental efforts to unify local traditions. Developed over centuries, the *adat* system exercises almost complete control over local decisions, including selecting auspicious days for group ceremonies, deciding where to construct an irrigation system, and determining how much to charge a visitor for protection against government harassment, or against a malevolent demon world that causes havoc – especially for women – at night (\$50 in my case). In addition, the *banjar* provides the necessary structures to ensure an even flow of performances throughout the year. Fred Eisemann, who has written extensively about the *banjar*, states:

Banjars developed as organizations of [families and] neighbors who engaged in group projects for the welfare of the community, worshipped in the same temples, and sought social contacts in each other's company. Even today, among families who have spent several generations in an urban setting away from the rice fields, the *banjar* still plays an important role. (2: 73)

After marriage, all males must officially join the *banjar* on behalf of their families and fees are regularly charged for various services, such as *balé banjar* upkeep, work projects, purchase of temple festival paraphernalia, and so on. Meetings are held on a regular basis and all decisions are made collectively after much discussion. Although a *kepela banjar* (head of the *banjar*) is periodically elected, all members have an equal say in each decision. And, recognizing that they must depend on each other to maintain their cohesion, there is little evidence, at least on the surface, of any coercion or competition. Thus, the political structure of the *banjar*, unlike that of ISI, is generally nonhierarchical and decision-making power is more equally shared.

Musical and ritual performances are handled by local musicians and dancers who are known to all as experts within a specific tradition, and who are regarded not only as performers but also as master teachers. They teach the proper movements to the dancers, the correct ways to hold the *pangul* (small wooden hammer that strikes the keys) and to sit at one's instrument, often within the context of the performance itself. But musicians and dancers also rival for attention, for – as Philip Yampolsky suggests, satisfying the local cultural authorities “can lead to bigger events – competitions or festivals at the district, provincial, or even national level – or to a lucrative spot on the tourist circuit” (quoted in: Hough 240). Thus, in a way, even *banjar* musicians are tied into regional, national and global contexts.

Further, musicians in the *banjar*, even those who play for cremations, are paid today in cash for their performances. In the past, they would have been given rice or other foods as payment. Most of the money goes back into the *banjar* for the purchase and upkeep of instruments and costumes, but the men also take home a small amount of money for each performance. For example, we were each paid roughly 15,000 rupia, or about a dollar for every performance. Thus, a certain professionalism, much as we would define it in the West, also exists here.

Even more informal music learning occurs in the *banjar* during regular temple and house ceremonies. Sons, and sometimes, even young daughters today, come with their fathers and are encouraged to play. Many of these children take these opportunities to practice when their fathers are off smoking or eating, and by the age of eight or so, most boys are already part of a *gamelan* group.

My First Contacts

The men of *Gamelan Taman Sari*, although living in a rural village, are all aware of the acclaim showered on many Balinese *gamelan* groups who have toured the United States, Europe, and Asia; of the many recordings of traditional, modern, and fusion *gamelan* musics done in studios or as part of the competitive festivals sponsored by the centralized Jakarta-based government; and of the success of many of their neighbors and relatives who have left Banjar Baturiti over the years to participate in the construction, commodification, and dissemination of Balinese culture. Indeed, their local ‘hero’, Pak Nyoman Suadin (Banjar Wani, Kerambitan), was handpicked in the 1990s to go to KOKAR and is now teaching in the United States at the Eastman School of Music. But while the men of *Gamelan Taman Sari* understand their current role as preservers of an older, musico-ritual tradition, they are also hip to issues of musical ownership, protection, and the economic potential of their music.

My goal in this field project was to stay as far away from the city and from the more formal, government-run music academies and institutes as possible. I wanted to work with a village *gamelan* that did not necessarily see itself as performing music, with people who had not received any formal music training, who were not part of the vast tourist industry, and who would not expect the nice lady from New York to arrange an American tour or produce a CD.

So, imagine my surprise as I walked into the Baturiti *banjar* to meet the group for the first time. I saw all the men sitting formally at their instruments, wearing their *kains*, waiting calmly for the “Professor from America” to be formally introduced. Suddenly, one of them shouted out, “Hey! Can you arrange a concert tour for us?” “Oh, no!” I thought, “my worst nightmare come true!” Then I realized that everyone was laughing. Another man, looking up at me with a mock-serious face, called out: “If you get us a tour and we have to go to America, who will take care of my cows?” More laughter as the professor from New York got

an important lesson in the Balinese fine art of “teasing” and in the breaking down of status differences.

However, when it came to the specifics of our separate musical cultures, and what I was *really* doing there, problems arose. I had real trouble, over many months, simply explaining to everyone the nature of my research. One story, taken from my field notes at the beginning of my stay, highlights the particular cultural, social, and musical differences I encountered in my first contacts with musical bodies in Bali.

Negotiations July 23-24, 2007

Tonight Nyoman and I went to see the men of Gamelan Taman Sari to set up the ‘terms’ of our agreement. We went to the house of Pak Rideng, the head of the gamelan; Pak Wayan, the treasurer, was also there. We were all invited to sit in a circle on the floor while Nyoman discussed what I wanted to do and how I could do it. He explained that I wanted to write a book about them, that I wanted to go with them to all of their performances for one year, and maybe take some lessons on suling (end-blown flute) and learn some old ‘classic’ cremation pieces. Everyone spoke only in Balinese so I was pretty well out of it. I was reminded of an old movie or two, where the headman of the African, Indian, or whatever ‘other’ tribe sits with his cronies around a big circle while the white woman’s fate is decided (usually badly). It had that serious, guy feeling that means important business is going down.

After about an hour, we left and Nyoman told me what they had said: the group thought I wanted to hear a complete concert played exclusively for me each time I came over to the banjar (twice a week!) and that they would charge me \$40 a concert. What?!? Also: 1) these guys never rehearse; 2) they only know seven songs (according to Nyoman); 3) they never teach anyone because who would they teach? Everyone already knows the music and anyway, the younger generation doesn’t want to learn it because they think it’s lame; 4) there will be many temple celebrations and cremations while I’m here and we will all travel together ‘as a team’; 5) they have to ask the head of the village about whether or not this is OK because the village owns the gamelan, and everyone has to decide together; and 6) they are all overwhelmed because they don’t know if they can actually play a full concert for me twice a week.

Needless to say, all of this came as a shock to me. They only know seven pieces? They don’t rehearse? They want to travel as a ‘team’? Do they want me to play with them? How will I learn the music? Nyoman explained that they’ve never done anything like this before and they have no concept of teaching someone their music (why would they if they all know it?)

The next night

I was in my room and noticed Nyoman sitting on the floor of the big-screen TV pavilion with the three Paks: Pak Rideng, Pak Wayan, and Pak Made Suriana, the head of the village. They were already talking together, so I joined them. Nyoman was again explaining as best he could what I wanted to do and how paying for a complete concert each time (\$40, twice a week) was impossible for me. But soon, other, even more basic problems arose. I realized suddenly that Nyoman was not used to: 1) understanding how research is done in the West; 2) listening carefully to what I am saying (he was nervous, he told me later); or, 3) translating from Balinese and/or Indonesian to English and back again.

All of these problems were exacerbated by a general lack of understanding of my project, so the idea of 'interviewing' someone, or having someone 'teach' me music was totally strange to them. In fact, simply separating out an 'interview' from a 'rehearsal', a 'performance', and a 'concert' was pretty difficult; on the other hand, paying them to 'stage' a rehearsal just for me, although perfectly understandable to them, was pretty strange to me.

Everyone was hoping this would work, and we were all trying to understand and accommodate each other but it took a long time to actually articulate and work out the specifics (about three hours). Occasionally, I got a little impatient with Nyoman because I would ask him to ask the Paks something specific, like "How many pieces did they know," and a long conversation in Balinese would follow; at the end, Nyoman would smile and nod at me. So, I would ask, "How many pieces?" and he would say, "Oh, I forgot!" and then ask again, so I was never sure what was going on during those long conversations. He would eventually come up with an answer to the first question, but would go on for a long time without translating. When I pressed him to tell me what they were saying, he would say something like, "Oh, they were talking about the history of the group or something, but I wasn't really paying attention, so really I don't know what they said." I know he was doing his best and that this was difficult for him. I was totally grateful that he was there because I certainly couldn't have done this myself!

Eventually, all was worked out to everyone's satisfaction and we were all giving thumbs ups and smiling as they left. A formal induction ceremony for me was planned for the following week. What followed, though, was even more interesting! First, I gave Nyoman a big hug and told him how impressed I was with his ability to flip back and forth between three languages and to work out what seemed to everyone to be a pretty complex agreement. He was also happy ("I am proud of myself.") because he hadn't been sure that he could do this, and it had all turned out well, so he was relieved that everyone was OK with this. But, trouble was brewing:

Nyoman's father and a few others had also been present during this whole thing. Nyoman went over to his father and they started to talk. Their voices began to rise and become more and more intense and angry. Nyoman was talking loudly

and pointing at his father, making all sorts of gestures and his father was answering in angry monosyllables. Suddenly, Nyoman's father jumped up and quickly walked out of the yard. Nyoman explained to me that his father wanted to have his own separate gamelan induction ceremony for me at Nyoman's house. He had been the one who had originally brought me together with Gamelan Taman Sari four years ago and wanted to participate in the celebrations. Nyoman thought this was overdoing it. He was telling his father, "Why does she need two ceremonies? One is enough and it should be the banjar that does it, not you," etc., etc., etc. I am not used to being treated as a prize to be fought over and am trying not to let this go to my head. This seems to be a land of extreme contrasts.

Embedded Contacts, Contexts, and Tensions

It is tempting to see the social-musical contexts I have been describing as fixed, representing reified and bounded social and musical categories, but of course, life is not that simple. How this plays out in the everyday on-the-ground level is far more interesting. I suggest that the various musical-political spaces I have been discussing can be thought of as interconnected and embedded within one another, for individual musicians, throughout their lifetimes, freely pass through and between these boundaries. After all, it is often the same musicians performing ceremonies at home, or bringing their children to the temple, who (like Nyoman) also teach and study at ISI, perform for visiting dignitaries, on a stage at the Bali Arts Festival, on Bali TV, or move on to the wider world.

To get at some of the complexities of these embedded contexts, I pose the following questions. First, where do the musicians who attend the arts schools and eventually go off to teach and perform in other parts of Asia or the West come from? Young musicians and dancers who are selected to go to music schools have all come from a *banjar* somewhere in Bali; they all must return regularly to fulfill their familial and community duties and are thus never very far away from their villages. (Bali is only 90 miles wide and 60 miles from North to South, and almost everyone has a motorbike.) As they learn more and more about musical 'professionalism' (however defined), though, they change in their relationship to their many brothers, sisters, cousins, and other family members – often of equal or even greater musicianship and skill – whom they have left behind.

Second, how are these musicians selected? They most often come from families known in the village as musicians, and have been watched all of their lives by those returning to the region every so often from the city; thus, village/regional culture is also explicitly connected to the school system. Ensembles and performers play mainly ceremonial musics that lend themselves to modern performance practices, aesthetics, and standards. Much of the music performed here is partially regulated by the official culture; but it is also here that issues concerning standardization, professionalism, and musical excellence are the most contested.

For example, as Hough has reported, well-known village performers were once the main teachers, passing on their traditions in informal, everyday learning situations with their families and neighbors. Many achieved local and regional fame and frequently performed in lavish palaces for court ceremonies and rituals. Until the first generation of formally trained musicians appeared in the early 1970s, village artists were the acknowledged experts of the various local music, dance, and puppetry traditions that have enlivened Balinese life for centuries. Many are still acknowledged as the best performers in Bali. However, as they have not, for various reasons that may or may not be related to musical skill, passed through the formal training system, they are not officially hired by KOKAR or ISI, although they are often invited as guest artists for residencies. Further, in the old days, in their own villages, individual performers and teachers were given titles that designated them as experts of the art forms they taught, but now a new, general title, “village artist,” has replaced these earlier, more prestigious and specific ones.

Thus, a two-tiered system based on the values of formal education has developed that privileges one set of performers over the other, with a definite bias against *kambung*, the local, genre-specific tradition. Most of the regional musicians’ positions will be eventually taken over by their children, all of whom will have attended KOKAR and/or ISI, but much of the local difference between performers will be sacrificed by these institutions’ need for standardization and uniformity.

To help establish this new hierarchy of standardization, ISI instituted an outreach program, where as part of their training, students are sent out periodically to teach officially sanctioned and standardized versions of dance, music, puppetry, and so on, that they have learned at school. These versions, although nominally accepted by villagers, are often taught under strained circumstances. I became aware of this one night while attending an unusual meeting of the *gamelan luang*, a very old and rare *gamelan* in Bali, one that just happened to reside in Banjar Wani where I lived.

The Man with the Book

As I arrived at the rehearsal, I noticed a man I had never seen before sitting in the middle of the ensemble. This in itself is not unusual – people from all over the island often drop in and are invited to play. What was unusual was that in his lap was an open book that he used as a reference for the music. He was a teacher from KOKAR who had come back to his family banjar and was teaching a piece using this notation.

Curious, I walked over to him and looked down at the book. Inside was a musical transcription written in a notation system taught at KOKAR that uses a form of solfege based on the syllable names or vowels of the notes found in the two major Java-based scale systems (slendro and pelog). This classification system, virtually unknown and irrelevant in Bali before the twentieth century, has

now, at least in theory, replaced local names, such as *saih angklung* (*angklung scale*), or *saih luang* (*luang scale*) in favor of the central Javanese court modes of *pelog* and *slendro*.

The man sitting in the ensemble looked up and smiled at me, indicating that he would be glad to share these transcriptions with me. The next day, however, members of the gamelan luang group came over to my house to warn me not to take lessons from him – that he was from the city and would cheat me; they wanted me to have nothing to do with him and directed me, instead, to teachers in the banjar, where I would be more protected.

What of musicians in the smaller villages and *banjars*? They seem to be only marginally connected to the others, performing the everyday, often sacred ceremonies not seen exactly as music or performance in the standard Western or even modern Balinese sense, or even considered especially beautiful, virtuosic, or amenable to commodification. Somewhat under the radar, these ensembles play mainly for neighborhood, ritual purposes and for audiences that include local humans, spirits, and demons, some or all of whom may or may not be actively listening. This we might call the everyday ritual layer.

Thus, within the short span of a few decades, a number of changes have come about between these different layers and performers, as institutions such as KOKAR and ISI have developed and begun to displace the village as the most important site for cultural production, transmission, and dissemination. They have also begun to effect the everyday space of musical culture – that of the inner core of older, often sacred, Balinese music. Underlying these social-musical changes that are being played out on the ground in these musical spaces, are other, perhaps more subtle and profound changes, ones that have transformed basic assumptions about the very structure of Balinese life, culture, and art. In order for this to have taken place, a four-step process of transformation had to occur – a process that begins with self-consciousness.

Until recently, most Balinese did not regard musical performance, dance, painting, puppetry, or anything else they did, as a semantic category called art. Nor did they see what they were doing as culture, in the anthropological sense. They were just living according to Hindu principles – trying to do the right thing for their families, their banjar, and those human, demon, and godly forces that controlled their fates.

Notions of culture, music, art, and tradition as separate from simply ‘living’ were brought into Bali from outside colonizers, scholars, artists, and entrepreneurs, and taught to the Balinese, often through local royalty, under the guise of modernization. Ironically, this form of modernization created a Bali that was newly constructed as ‘old, pure, and locally exotic’ – in short, a sort of caricature of those very features that the modern ideas of the New Order were trying to dis-

A common Balinese axiom states: “In Bali there is no art; we just do everything as beautifully as we can.” To regard something as an art form one must be distanced from it, able to conceptualize it as separate from oneself, and to gaze upon it; one must be self-and-other-conscious. To do this, one must isolate and objectify what is essentially a flowing, ever-changing process into a thing. Once reified, anything can become commodified; once commodified, much of life can be reconfigured into a system of things that can be bought, sold, and used to position oneself in a new kind of modern economy. Thus, the four-step process of self-consciousness, reification, commodification, and reconfiguration has transformed much of Bali and all the richness of its ‘lived life’ into a new, yet also somehow timelessly old ‘culture’, a new semantic domain that has altered Balinese conceptions of themselves in relation to an outward, wider world.

If we examine the question of social and musical interactions between the situated musical spaces we have been discussing from the perspective of individual musicians, we see a great similarity between them: all ISI, village, and individual *banjar* musicians are acknowledged as expert performers; all are trained throughout their lives to take on musical and religious responsibilities, although the training itself is different, depending on the particular kind of space in which it occurs. All take pride in their distinct Balinese-ness and in the rich cultural and artistic traditions they have inherited; and most are more or less committed to the project of nation-building, tourism, and the export of at least some of their music.

If we examine the question from the perspective of the centralized, national government and its stake in modernizing, hierarchies of power emerge that position ISI, village, and *banjar* musical cultures in a hierarchy of values, with ISI on the top, village musicians in the middle, being helped along, and *banjar* musicians outside the system, somewhat like the Western paradigm of professional, amateur, and community (sometimes ‘folk’) musicians.

However, if we examine this question from the point of view of discourses surrounding ensembles and repertoires, a different picture emerges: if you *talk* to musicians who have been trained at KOKAR or ISI, they will refer to what they teach and play as *musiki* (an Arabic term, implying imported music), or *seni* (arts), words adopted from Bahasa Indonesia, a language related to Malay and introduced in the twentieth century. In addition, as newly trained in Western-style music schools, they compose new musical creations, much as composers do in the West, give performances on a stage for an audience, receive continuing economic support from the centralized government, and are associated with the young and vibrant energy of Indonesia as a new nation.

Musicians in the village are also intimately connected to ISI musicians; for example, as we have seen above, they frequently take lessons from ISI musicians who return home periodically for familial and religious purposes. Many village musicians want to go to ISI or to become part of the lucrative tourist circuit, and they often vie for the attention of local authorities, as I mentioned earlier.

The local, everyday space represented by the *gamelan angklung* and other ensembles, though, represents another conceptual domain. When performing for cremations or other Hindu-related community events, the men do not characterize what they do as performance or music, but, instead, use the Sanskrit and Balinese word *dharma*; they are not performing music, or an art, or a thing – rather, they are performing a righteous duty, one that will take them on a correct religious and moral path. Thus, the free flow of musicians from the context of the nation to *banjar* and back to nation, and, even more importantly, the spiritual value of these contexts, both confuse and reverse the hierarchies of standardization and formalism that I have been constructing.

Embodiments of Contact in Musical Performance

The anthropologist Edward L. Schieffelin, in an article entitled “Problematizing Performance,” makes a distinction between “performance” and “performativity” that can be useful here. Extending the work of Irving Goffman and the symbolic interactionist school, Schieffelin states that in a performance event, there is a sort of collusion or agreement between performer and audience in which a series of consciously made sounds and gestures is agreed upon to signify an enactment of a cultural value. Further, a performance is implicitly understood as being a special event, that is, something that is separated somewhat from everyday life. “Performance [...] refers to bounded, intentionally produced enactments which are (usually) marked and set off from ordinary activities, and which call attention to themselves in productions with special purposes or qualities for the people who observe or perform them” (Schieffelin 194-95).

A performative event, on the other hand, is generally an unconscious, or pre-conscious, performance where core values are communicated seamlessly through real-time social interactions. How we move, how we dress, how we defer to our elders, and thousands of other everyday, largely unconscious performances, constitute performativity in Schieffelin’s argument. Thus, performativity is an “expressive process of strategic impression management and unstructured improvisation through which human beings normally articulate their purposes, situations, and relationships in everyday social life” (195). Making the distinction between a performance event and a performative event allows us to examine what happens when these events are embedded within each other: what can we learn if we see an intentional performance event, such as a concert or a ritual, as a performative event as well – one that unconsciously performs other social, religious, and musical codes, not explicitly stated, but clearly understood as meaningful by participants and observers?

Let us return to the spaces of Balinese musical and conceptual reality considered above and look at them from the perspective of both performance and performativity. How are core Balinese values enacted in a performative sense within

the various contexts of musical performance we have been discussing? Here, I will concentrate on issues of professionalism as previously defined, and on deeply held gender ideologies that are embedded within notions of professionalism and often underlie performance events. Below are two pictures of performance events by ISI students, which took place in November 2007 at Sanur Beach in the presence of the Governor of Bali. Sanur and Kuta Beaches – and the heavily commercialized areas surrounding them (filled with dance clubs, McDonald's eateries, and stores, such as The Gap and Ralph Lauren) – are the most important tourist sites on Bali, attracting hundreds of thousands of people each year. As such, they provide natural sites for new, secularized performances, where tourism, commercialism, and nationalism come together in a powerful way.

Examining the pictures as performative events, what might they reveal? First, we can recognize a pronounced professionalism as one might define it in the West: each group is performing for an audience (the governor, other visiting dignitaries, tourists walking by, etc.); they are performing in a specific, set-aside space, much like a stage; within each group, each person is dressed alike; all are moving in synchrony, and so on. Second, they seem to convey, among many other things, traditional Balinese concepts of gender difference: the young men are playing in a *Gamelan Jegog*, a large bamboo ensemble, where performers must mount the larger instruments to play them. The constant beating on the large bamboo pipes causes much physical discomfort and only the strongest men can play them. To highlight the strength of the performers, the men's costumes do not include a shirt, so that their muscles and the perspiration produced by their strenuous playing are visible. In short, these performers, mostly young, unmarried men, are presented as quintessentially male, yet, at the same time, as quintessentially professional in a modern Bali.

The women, on the other hand, seem to be performing their own kind of professionalism, as well as two different and competing gender roles simultaneously: fully dressed in beautiful and colorful costumes, seated in the traditional, closed female posture (legs together or folded behind), with make-up highlighting their facial features, the women seem to be performing a modern version of the long-held stereotype of exotic female beauty in paradise (without, of course, the bare-breasted component). However, their very presence at this event attests to newer ideas about women's musical roles in Bali. Until the 1970s, women did not perform on *gamelan* instruments (especially drums), but were mainly singers and dancers. Following a visit by the San Francisco-based *Gamelan Sekar Jaya*, where men and women perform together, things began to change. Today, all-women gamelans exist in Bali, and women form an important, if small, percentage of the students at ISI.

Further, both the men and women in these pictures are performing in ensembles that are not especially connected to important ceremonial or ritual occasions. The *Gamelan Jegog*, found mostly in Jembrana (West Bali), where bamboo grows to be quite large, is mainly used for competitive events (Tenzer 91-92) and



Fig. 1: *Jegog* performance by male ISI students at Sanur Beach & *Gamelan Gong Kebayaran* performance by female ISI students at Sanur Beach¹

1 All photographs taken by the author.



Fig. 2: Women and priest of Banjar Wani dancing *pendet*

the *Gamelan Gong Kebyar*, established in the early twentieth century, is mainly associated with the growing nationalist movement that ultimately resulted in independence.

Moving to the *banjar* one sees entirely different performance and performative events. For example, the ceremonial dance, *pendet*, performed by a group of women led by a male priest from the village of Kerambitan, is pictured above. They are performing this dance as part of an *odalan* (purification ceremony) for their *banjar*. In this picture, they are dancing backwards from the *ponceran* (purification site) toward the temple. The priest is carrying holy water and the women hold small silver bowls with flowers. As they dance, they scatter the flowers on the path.

As a performance event, this dance seems to convey a certain lack of professionalism, as defined above; there is little self-consciousness and no audience, except, perhaps, local and familiar gods and neighbors. These performers are relating primarily to a spirit audience, one that is not concerned with physical beauty or gender performance. No one is dressed alike (although many are wearing white, considered to be an especially pure color), gestures are more individualized, the dance is fairly simple and passed on from mother to daughter, and no one seems to be competing, except perhaps the women among themselves, to produce the most graceful and youthful movements.

At a deeper level of performativity, however, the women are asserting their roles as the dominant ritual specialists. Within Balinese Hinduism, women can become village priests, freely conducting ceremonies in the many village temples. As they age, they become even more responsible for maintaining ritual spaces in their homes and at cremations, two especially spiritual sites. Ritual life is, in a sense, controlled by women, who take this responsibility seriously, and begin teaching its many facets to their daughters at an early age. The *pendet* thus provides the correct ceremonial performance event for an *odalan*, while at the same time validating the spiritual power of women through a performative event.

Finally, a picture of *Gamalan Taman Sari* (see below) performing at a *ngabén* (cremation), a supremely sacred event. Perhaps more than any other ceremony in Balinese ritual life, the *ngabén* performs core spiritual and social values. There is a special repertoire for cremations, comprising pieces with unusually fanciful titles, such as “Dragonfly Taking a Bath,” or “Green Eyebrow.” These pieces, described by Balinese as “sweetly melancholic,” are part of a larger soundscape that permeates Balinese cremations and regulates their emotional levels, from *ramé* (boisterousness, fullness) at one pole, to *sepi* (quiet, emptiness) at the other. Balinese believe that too much openly expressed sadness, even at a funeral, can lead to too much *ramé* (resulting in craziness) or to too much *sepi* (crying, betraying too much attachment to the deceased). States of craziness or sadness and inattention provide opportunities for demons to enter one’s body and, by extension, the body of the deceased (Gold), and must be avoided. Thus, the *gamelan angklung* and other ensembles performing at the *ngabén* have a profoundly important social and spiritual role.

Yes, there is a certain uniformity here, as in the more professional groups described above: the orange shirts that mark the men as a performing group, their physical closeness to each other in performance, but there is also a casualness or relaxation of the body, and a lack of focus on an audience or leader. Indeed, one of the performers is smoking and looking at me taking the picture, and another is looking at the ground, possibly studying a lottery form.

These all-male, older performers are reminding us, and perhaps themselves, that village life is traditional (however defined) and fundamentally different from city life, where experiments in modernization and gender role reversals are happening. Cremations are at once the most sacred and spiritually significant ceremonies *and* the most natural and everyday for the Balinese. Everyone dies, and it is the responsibility of the *banjar* and of the *gamelan angklung* to provide an environment of sound for the final passage of the dead. On the surface, these men are playing for their families and for the deceased, but even more importantly, for local gods and demons – but not in the sense of a performance (i.e., something set-off, calling attention to itself) but, rather, in the sense of performing humans being good neighbors, good Hindus, good people. Thus, as spiritual value rises, it seems to reverse notions of professionalism, commodification, and modern gender roles.



Fig. 3: *Gamelan Taman Sari*, at *kuburan* (cremation ground)

As performance events, the Balinese musicians at Sanur Beach, in the Village of Kerambitan, or in Banjar Baturiti are all performing music; but as performative events, they are performing opposite cultural values, values that are easily understood and carry much implicit meaning for others in their communities. Thus, the many musicians of Bali, situated in and between many performing bodies, and participating in an ever-changing nexus of negotiation, have had to become flexible and creative in playing with the many facets of their contemporary musical, social, and religious identities. In a way, the spaces I have outlined here essentially guard and protect each other, allowing the Balinese to both position themselves as active players in a new global economy and, at the same time, lovingly safeguard traditional practices that have sustained them for centuries.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Telling Maya Tales: Points of View in Guatemala

W. GEORGE LOVELL

We always did feel the same, we just saw it from a different point of view.

Bob Dylan, "Tangled Up in Blue" (1974)

Like many scholars of my generation, I have been aware of debates about point of view in the social sciences since my days as a graduate student in the 1970s. Back then our first palpable sense of the importance of perspective, of knowing something about who was telling the story and where they were coming from, arose from wrestling with the ideas of David Harvey, a courageous as well as critical thinker whose influence now reaches well beyond the confines of the discipline to which both of us acknowledge allegiance – geography. Harvey was in his formative thirties when he set new standards for the principles of geographical inquiry with his *Explanation in Geography* (1969). No sooner had he grounded us in positivist methodologies and scientific rationale, however, when he changed course and forced us to think again. His *Social Justice and the City* (1973) demolished the myth of objectivity, arguing in favor not just of engaged practice but of Marxist *praxis*. Geography in the English-speaking world, not sure how to get out of its “quantitative revolution,” and wondering how it got there in the first place, was suddenly invigorated, and has not been the same since. Nor, for that matter, have notions across the social sciences about the primacy of space in shaping everyday life, in no small measure thanks to Harvey’s trenchant analyses of the state of the world and the role of capital in creating it.¹ Meanwhile, as the bodies of the Vietnam dead piled up, the war in Southeast Asia wound down. These were heady, historic times, epitomized for me by Bob Dylan’s seminal album, *Blood on the Tracks* (1974), a vortex in which musicians of different persuasions than Dylan himself, ideological and otherwise, have since sought solace and succor, Brian Ferry and the Indigo Girls among them. “Tangled Up in Blue,” the opening cut of *Blood on the Tracks*, lends itself to a myriad of interpretations, but a potent mix of loss, yearning, and regret, of learning about life the hard way, charges

1 See Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity; Spaces of Capital; The New Imperialism; A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

Dylan's narrative, whether sung in heartfelt first person or delivered with a shift in perspective from a no less wounded third.

Views from Alexandria

Awed by Dylan's song-writing prowess and struck though I was by Harvey's volte-face, it was from reading Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* (1957-1960) that I learned most about the dynamics of viewpoint. The first book in the series, *Justine* (1957), captivated me with its dissection of people's lives in Alexandria (Egypt) on the eve, during, and in the immediate aftermath of World War II. However, the events and circumstances about which a young schoolteacher, Darley, informs us in *Justine* contrast starkly with how the very same episodes are recounted in *Balthazar* (1958) and *Mountolive* (1958, all three accounts narrated from quite distinct but nonetheless decidedly male perspectives. Not until *Clea* (1960), the final installment of the quartet and, in Durrell's own words, a "true sequel" as opposed to a "sibling," is one afforded a semblance of closure. After *Clea* attempts to set the record straight – she is by far, to my mind, the most sympathetic character we hear from – the author's stated goal then becomes that much clearer. "I have turned to science," Durrell (*Balthazar* 8) writes, "and am trying to complete a four-decker novel whose form is based on the relativity proposition." Albert Einstein, among others so engrossed, would emphatically have approved.

Views from the Archive

The relativity proposition was one that I turned to myself when a period of research in the Archive of the Indies in Seville (Lovell, "Not a City but a World") unearthed a fascinating array of documents pertaining to forced native resettlement by Spanish missionaries in sixteenth-century Guatemala. Enthralled though I was at finding a bounty of letters purporting to be eyewitness accounts, my joy was soon tempered when I discovered that the testimony of Dominican friars was at odds with that of their Franciscan counterparts (Lovell, "Mayans, Missionaries, Evidence, and Truth"). My attempts to make sense of the situation, if not resolve it, hinged on realizing that self-interest on both sides far outweighed their preoccupation about native welfare. Much of the antipathy so vehemently expressed is articulated in relation to Alonso de Zorita, a judge appointed by royal authority to impose order on the unlawful actions of Spaniards and what was perceived to be unruly if not seditious behavior on the part of the Indians. Two extracts from a thick dossier epitomize how difficult, if not impossible, it can be to reconcile evidence. We hear, first, from four Franciscans, and next from two Dominicans. One of the most striking features about delving into the docu-

ments is realizing how much the traumas of the twentieth century, from a Maya perspective, mirror those of the sixteenth.

On New Year's Day, 1556, friars Pedro de Betanzos, Alonso Mella, Antonio Quejada, and Juan de la Cruz wrote to the Crown protesting against Zorita's stubbornness and heavy-handedness, especially with respect to his bringing the natives to heel. In their eyes, Zorita "does not know [anything] about the peoples or the languages of this land," whereas the Franciscans consider themselves "well versed in the languages and conversion of these new peoples."² They point out that "for eight years we have rounded up Indians who used to live in the mountains and in caves and have grouped them in settlements so as to facilitate their indoctrination." The friars claim that, "things not being quite to the liking of Licenciado Zorita, he has forced many people to settle in lands very different in climate than those to which they are accustomed." They voice particular concern because Zorita insisted that people be moved "from cold lands to hot lands, on account of which many Indians died and others fell sick." The toll of an arduous forced march was even greater because it occurred "during the rainy season, and a very wet one at that." All this was carried out, furthermore, "without beforehand inspecting where people would be moved to, which for the most part are barren lands, in contrast to the fruitful, healthy, and pleasant ones from which they were removed." The situation was parlous, but worse was to come. Some Indians refused to yield to Zorita's dictates, considering themselves "wronged and offended." Zorita's response was to raze to the ground "[not only] their homes [and] places of residence [but also entire] towns." The Franciscans, in an aptly apocalyptic tone, allege that "the fire that raged resembled the Day of Judgment." Chaos reigned, with roads and trails thronged "with poor Indian women, tied as prisoners, carrying children on their backs," struggling to fend for themselves because "their husbands, through fear, took off for the mountains." Only during "the time that these people were conquered" could the friars recall such a painful spectacle. Two tragic incidents are singled out as an indictment of Zorita and his policies:

Your Majesty should know that one poor man was being forced by Licenciado Zorita to move from where he resided, and where he could support himself, to another place where he could no longer support himself, or his wife or children. He hanged himself, and died in despair. Another poor woman was being taken from her home to be settled in a

2 All direct quotes may be found, in the Spanish original, in the Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Audiencia de Guatemala (hereafter AG) 168, henceforth cited parenthetically. Extracts from documents in the Seville archive have been translated from Spanish into English with the assistance of the late Anthony Higgins, who as a graduate student at Queen's University in the 1980s helped me make better sense of the evidence at hand than I was able to on my own. The Franciscan viewpoint is articulated in a letter to the Crown dated January 1, 1556 (AGI, AG 168). Alonso de Zorita, a remarkable ethnographer as well as a distinguished civil servant, is afforded extended, more balanced scrutiny in the biography of him written by Ralph Vigil.

place six leagues away. Her husband fled to the hills after he saw that the town he inhabited had been set on fire. Her children, seeing their mother held captive, became frightened, and jumped from a cliff, killing themselves. All this we have witnessed first hand, without mentioning countless other injustices these miserable people have suffered and still endure.

No matter how strongly their words were conveyed, Franciscan appeals to Zorita fell on deaf ears, as indeed did those of native leaders, whom “through ignorance” Zorita had stripped of the authority bestowed on them “by their ancient laws.” So widespread and vociferous was indigenous dissent that “great unrest” wracked the land, leading the friars to request of the King, “in the name of our Order, and also on behalf of many native leaders,” that Zorita be removed from an office in which they deemed him unfit to serve.

The Dominicans, whose spokesmen were Fray Tomás de Cárdenas and Fray Juan de Torres, saw things differently. Torres considered Zorita “one of the best judges that Your Majesty has in [all] the Indies”;³ he and Cárdenas urge the King not to be duped by “false information” spread about Zorita by Spaniards whose “worldly interests” were threatened by the judge’s convictions.⁴ One polemical ruling of Zorita’s was to exempt Indians from paying tribute for a year while they constructed living quarters and planted crops in and around the new settlements to which they had been required to move. Local *encomenderos* whose privileges were affected, to whom “a year without tribute seems intolerable,” were primarily those responsible for stirring things up. They found support for their views among the Franciscans, a monastic order that competed with the Dominicans in the battle to save Indian souls. Cárdenas and Torres are careful to state that what they have to say pertains to the mountains, or *serranía*, surrounding their spiritual base in Sacapulas. Writing from there, part of their defense of Zorita runs:

In March 1555 Zorita visited the Serranía of Sacapulas where, with the counsel of the High Court, the Bishop, and the Provincial of our Order, he brought together some settlements as a way of ensuring the more effective conversion of the Indians. With respect to this relocation, we feel, as would any objective observer, that Zorita acted as both a good Christian and a good agent of Your Majesty, that what he did was justified, far more worthy of honor than of reproach. This part of the country is among the most rugged and broken in all Guatemala, where there used to be groupings of eight, six, and even four houses or huts, tucked and hidden away in gullies in which, until the arrival of one of us, no other Spaniard had ventured. Because native settlements were so scattered, it was well-nigh impossible to instruct their inhabitants in matters that concern our Holy Faith, for the Indians remain attached not only to

3 Fray Juan de Torres to the Crown, November 11, 1555 (AGI, AG 168).

4 Fray Tomás de Cárdenas and Fray Juan de Torres to the Crown, December 6, 1555 (AGI, AG 168)

their homes but also to the practice of superstitions and idolatry. Now that they are housed together they will have less opportunity to resort to their evil living, and ourselves be better placed to watch over them, and ensure their proper human conduct. No Christian will consider the manifold advantages of relocation and indoctrination, on balance, to be a bad thing. They may only say that it was carried out against the will of the Indians, in response to which we assert that there is no sick person who does not find the taste of medicine unpleasant. Not even Your Majesty could execute something successfully if he had to guarantee the happiness and secure the consent of all.

As to what we hear are the consequences of Zorita's actions – that some Indians hurled themselves from cliffs in despair at being resettled – we say this: of other parts of Guatemala we know nothing, but regarding Sacapulas and surrounding areas we assure Your Majesty that no such thing has occurred, that it must be the dreams and inventions of those who are angered at the creation of new settlements. Zorita has carried out his tour of inspection with the greatest diligence, placing under guard Your Majesty's decrees, favoring and defending the Indians with all his strength, seeing that *encomenderos* are punished for their excesses and tyranny. Thus they feel themselves to be slighted, and proceed to make things up, readily finding witnesses to corroborate what they allege, so that they can strike down or elevate whomever they wish, if one is not aware of their actions. In a life in which death comes to all, we see with what little remorse and with how few scruples people imagine what they want to about whomever they want to, and how they then believe what they have imagined, without fear of God. We therefore beseech Your Majesty to be on the highest alert, so that the malice of such people does not sully the reputation of good men who endeavor only to serve God and your Majesty.

Cárdenas and Torres give us much to ponder. Why *encomenderos* hated Zorita is clear enough, but the documents sent to Seville are inconclusive as to what Franciscan motives were in opposing him. What might Zorita have done, or ordered be done, that would so enrage the Franciscans yet earn Dominican approval? His reformist tendencies conflicted with the material concerns of *encomenderos* and upset them no end. Their hostility is understandable. The negative attitude of the Franciscans is more difficult to fathom. Perhaps Zorita's family, back in Spain, belonged to the lesser nobility that supported the brothers of Santo Domingo, as is evidenced by the judge having been schooled at the University of Salamanca, historically the seat of Dominican instruction. Certainly Zorita had a reputation for being strict and uncompromising; once he made up his mind he stuck to it. If, then, he decreed that Indians already living in one place be moved to another, such a move would not be welcomed by Franciscans who wanted native charges to remain where they had grouped them together. What would incense Franciscans even more, however, would be if Indians were told not just to relocate but

relocate to a site that saw them enter Dominican-administered territory and take up residence in settlements there. Though it is impossible to determine from the documents exactly what took place, this scenario is the most likely cause of Franciscan resentment – a sense of being undermined, and usurped, by rulings that benefited a rival faction. “Man may embody truth,” Franz Kafka contends, “but he cannot know it.”⁵ Truth in this instance, or so the balance of evidence suggests, was a casualty of ecclesiastical feuding and the desire for territorial aggrandizement in which competing monastic goals proved as disruptive of native welfare as the repercussions of conquest (Lovell, *Conquest and Survival*).

Entrapped four centuries later between guerrilla insurgents and a lethal counter-insurgency unleashed to eliminate them, Maya communities in Guatemala paid a similar high price for being caught in the crossfire, not just metaphorically, but literally (Lovell, *A Beauty That Hurts*).

A Postmodern Perspective

In the meantime, while trying to link archival evidence with conceptual musing, in relating the challenges of ethnohistory to the demands of ethnography, I found discussions about the ‘crisis of representation’ strategically helpful.⁶ The best of these discussions call for us to grapple, as scholars and teachers, with how knowledge is constructed and whose interests it best serves. I see no guaranteed solutions, but acknowledge that if the goal of social science is critical engagement in the pursuit of learning, then it is imperative that interpretation of data be tight, creative, and contextualized, and that ambiguity, contradiction, divergence, and incompatibility be recognized and dealt with. This holds as much for textual sources as oral testimony: people lie, embellish, or distort what has befallen them, and so do the documents they leave behind. Figuring out how to proceed is therefore no easy matter and can trigger what to my mind constitutes little more than indulgent soul searching, misguided hand wringing, and (at worse) investigative paralysis. For me, anthropologist Clifford Geertz proved the most judicious of postmodern commentators in this regard. He cuts to the heart of the matter thus:

What once seemed only technically difficult, getting “their” lives into “our” works, has turned morally, politically, even epistemologically, delicate [...] The end of colonialism altered radically the nature of the rela-

- 5 Kafka’s words serve Josef Skvorecky as his epigraph to *Dvorak in Love* (1986), a novel that the Czech writer, a long-time exile in Canada, himself describes as “a light-hearted dream.” Kafka’s maxim fits the contents of the Seville archive discussed here perfectly, even if Skvorecky’s description of his novel does not. There is nothing “light-hearted” about how Maya peoples in Guatemala have been treated, from the sixteenth century on, by Spaniards and their criollo descendents, as a reading of Severo Martínez Peláez makes abundantly clear.
- 6 See particularly Marcus and Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, and Duncan and Ley, *Place/Culture/Representation*.

tionship between those who ask and look and those who are asked and looked at. The decline of faith in brute fact, set procedure, and unsituated knowledge in the human sciences, and indeed in scholarship generally, altered no less radically the askers' and lookers' conception of what it was they were trying to do. Imperialism in its classical form, metropolises and possessions, and Scientism in its, impusions and billiard balls, fell at more or less the same time. Things have been less simple since, on both the Being There and Being Here sides of the anthropological equation [...] But it has been [like] that before and found a direction. What it hasn't been, and [...] hasn't so much had to be, is aware of the sources of its power. (*Works and Lives* 130-32, 148-49)

Anthropology at its best, Geertz believed, should strive to see the world “from the native’s point of view,” the title of one of his most celebrated essays. In the context of Guatemala, given the ability of Maya peoples to develop writing systems and record their own versions of events from around 250 AD on, we are fortunate to be able to elicit “the native’s point of view” directly. It was expressed textually in pre-Columbian times, often to dazzling aesthetic effect, on the surface of alabaster, bone, jade, obsidian, onyx, parchment, pottery, shell, stone, and wood (Brotherston). Conquest by imperial Spain resulted in Maya peoples adapting their ways of writing to European conventions, which involved learning how to use the Latin alphabet and producing such pivotal works as the *Popol Vuh* and the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, two noted examples of a vast indigenous output (see Carmack). Oral tradition also runs deep among the Maya, tapped by modern-day researchers not only to record “the native’s point of view” but also to authenticate and enrich their own (B. Tedlock; D. Tedlock). As Geertz asserts, however, the undertaking can be decidedly ‘delicate’, as the controversy generated by the testimony of Rigoberta Menchú attests.

A Nobel Cause

First given a voice in Spanish by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, then in French, English, and a dozen or so languages thereafter, the K’iche’ Maya woman already enjoyed worldwide recognition by the time she was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. Menchú’s global appeal is certainly not lost in translation; it hinges on what she stresses at the outset of her narrative, that her story “is the story of all poor Guatemalans.” On this she is perfectly clear:

This is my testimony. I didn’t learn it from a book and I didn’t learn it alone. I’d like to stress that it’s not only *my* life; it’s also the testimony of my people. It’s hard for me to remember everything in my life that’s happened to me since there have been many very bad times but, yes, moments of joy as well. The important thing is that what happened to me has happened to many other people too [...]. My personal experience is the reality of a whole people. (Menchú 1)

The text that Burgos-Debray created from twenty-four hours of taped conversations with Menchú, conducted over the course of a week spent together in Paris, is not without its flaws. As with most such testimonies, Menchú is often repetitious, vague, obscure, and inconsistent. Discrete episodes are collapsed to become a single event, time and place juxtaposed in ways that irritate academic purists. Empowering “an Indian woman in Guatemala” to speak for “a whole people” inevitably triggered unease and suspicions concerning the veracity and legitimacy of such a claim, indeed questioning the existential basis upon which it rested and was articulated. An “exposé” by David Stoll in turn sparked a rejoinder to his lugubrious postmortem (Arias), a forum to which a colleague and I contributed. We concluded that Stoll “could easily have arranged his findings to support what Menchú has to say as much as criticize her for how she goes about saying it” (Lovell and Lutz 195). Stoll appears not the least bit interested in such reconciliation, instead believing that, unless Menchú’s narrative can withstand the test of social science norms, imperfections revealed in the course of the exercise tarnish her testimony, cast doubt over its factual accuracy, and thus render it suspect if not spurious. It is then a logical next step to denounce the entire narrative as mere fabrication or perhaps even lies, grist to the mill of Menchú’s detractors and political adversaries, of whom there are many, both inside Guatemala and beyond its borders (Grandin).

Having served as a translator for Menchú during one of her North American solidarity tours before she became a Nobel laureate (Lovell, *A Beauty*), I was well aware of the difficulties of cross-cultural communication. Menchú, however, relayed her message to one packed church hall after another with such dignified assurance that questioning her authority or authenticity was not an issue. Neither, for that matter, was the thorny business of power, as Menchú made it clear at the outset that my job was to concentrate on putting her words into English. She alone, in terms of our relationship, would shape her narrative, be its sole architect, influence its texture, and assume responsibility for audience reaction by drawing upon her skills as a seasoned orator.

The Story of Magdalena González

Magdalena González had none of Menchú’s attributes and acumen, but her story too is one shared, if not by “all Guatemalans,” then by a good many, especially those who lived (and died) in K’iche’ country during the ravages of civil war. I met Doña Magdalena while again serving as a translator, on this occasion for a documentary film series shot on location in Guatemala (Cambridge Studios 1996). Two camera crews were dispatched to film the segment that also featured my research activities. The first was headed by Lance Wisniewski, the second by Patricia (Pat) Gouvdis, who had earlier incorporated Doña Magdalena into a documentary she had made about the impact of war on children in Central Amer-

ica, *If the Mango Tree Could Speak* (1993). Though I was pleased to participate in a film project, and respect very much what both Pat and Lance achieved, I felt that something was missing in their portrayals, something that only textual narration could make up for. I wanted Doña Magdalena to be more than a face and a voice; I wanted her words, albeit articulated by me, to be heard while being read from the printed page. With her approval, and that also of surviving members of her family, I set about the task of gathering information with the goal of writing about their experiences. The book I envisioned arising from such an engagement, though drawing on my academic background and training as a cultural geographer, was one that I hoped would appeal to the general public while at the same time also having something to offer an audience with more erudite, scholarly tastes.

After several visits and interviews I considered I had sufficient material to put pen to paper. When I did so I relied on how other colleagues, Marilyn Anderson and Jonathan Garlock, Margaret Hooks, and Emilie Smith-Ayala among them, had tackled similar objectives while conducting research on Guatemalan women. I ruled out a ‘direct voice’ approach, as Burgos-Debray had opted for with Menchú, since Doña Magdalena had neither the temperament nor the inclination to be recorded with a handheld microphone for long periods. Aware that control of narration would be in my hands, I sought to clarify and check what was told me as much as possible, asking the same questions time and again, which surely tried people’s patience. In the end, it all came down to mutual trust and confidence, as Linda Green and Judith Zur emphasize in their in-depth work on Maya women made widows by civil strife in Guatemala.

Is it possible, under any circumstances, to tell someone else’s story? Perhaps not, at least without becoming overtly self-conscious and stymied by some of the issues raised above. I was most fortunate to get to know a remarkable Maya woman who confided in me and who shared with me, as our relationship evolved, memories that scarred her life. What follows, then, is someone else’s story narrated by me, in which I cannot deny imbalances of privilege and power but in which a very unusual field experience nagged at me to be told.

At Peace in the Corn

“My grandmother says we did nothing wrong and so have nothing to hide. Use her real name, if you wish, and take a photograph of her. Tell people what happened to us.”

Paulino (Figure 1) relayed the old lady’s words with no hint of emotion. His grandmother, Magdalena González, sat on a wooden bench weaving *trenzas*, narrow palm bands used in Guatemala to line the inside of hats. The fingers of her hands moved dextrously. One of Paulino’s daughters, Lucía, stuck as close to

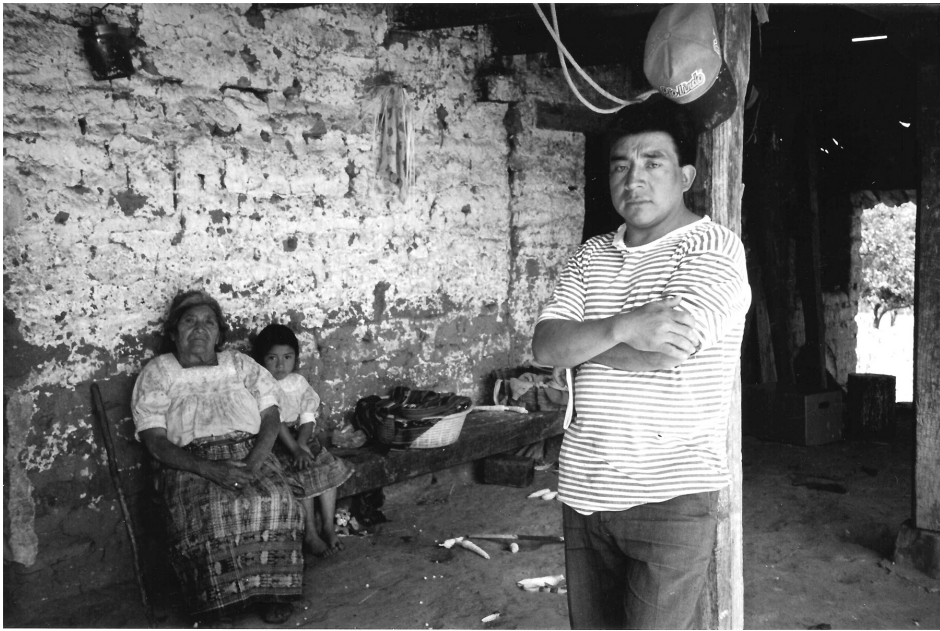


Fig. 1: Paulino López, foreground, with his grandmother and daughter on the bench behind him. (Photograph by W. George Lovell)

Doña Magdalena as the art of *trenza* production allowed. Though eighty years or more separated them, young girl and family matriarch wore identical clothing: wraparound skirts made of tie-dyed fabric and cotton blouses whose rosy hue was set off smartly by embroidered collars. Two Maya women spanning four generations, they were a perfect match.

“Fine, then,” I said to Paulino. “Why don’t I start by taking some shots of your grandmother with her *trenzas*?” Paulino translated my Spanish into K’iche’. Doña Magdalena worked away, glancing up occasionally as I moved about the patio. All around me I could hear people engaged in household chores – firewood being split, corn husked, clothes washed. Everyone was doing something, even little Lucía, arranging palm strands neatly in a row.

“I’d like some close-ups. Can you ask your grandmother to stop weaving and look directly at the camera?”

Paulino served as go-between once more. His grandmother laid down a *trenza* and gestured to Lucía, who slid along the wooden bench toward her, snuggling tight. Doña Magdalena stared at me, her eyes focused and unwavering, her gaze penetrating the lens in such a way that I knew I had a photograph I could use (Figure 2). I clicked the shutter and signaled my thanks. “Let your grandmother know that when I write about your family next time, I will do as she agrees. I won’t make up a name for her. She’ll be herself.”

Paulino nodded. I gathered up my equipment and made my way back to the jeep. Doña Magdalena stood watching from the entrance to the family compound, where she’d hobbled to with the help of her walking stick. Paulino’s wife, María,



Fig. 2: Magdalena González, left, with her great-granddaughter, Lucía López. (Photograph by W. George Lovell)

managed to wave goodbye even with a baby in her arms. She would give birth to another by the time I was able to return.

The story of Doña Magdalena is the story of untold thousands of indigenous Guatemalans. Born and raised in the highlands around Santa Cruz del Quiché, she married in the 1930s while still in her teens, moving from her home in San Sebastián to that of her husband's in San José, a few kilometers away. Poor even by local standards when they started out, the young couple saw their situation improve over the years when, instead of giving birth to six or eight or ten children, Doña Magdalena only had one.

Diego was Doña Magdalena's pride and joy. Seeing how hard his mother and father worked, and with no other siblings to compete for their attention, Diego knew he was far more fortunate than other children in San José. Shipped off to school in Santa Cruz each day and growing up in a household where the needs of a mere three people had to be satisfied, much was expected of him. Favorable family circumstances never spoiled him. He learned to read and write, but not at the expense of knowing how to work the land, for Diego became a good farmer who well understood that the ten acres his parents had sweated to own was an asset not to be squandered. In the 1960s he got involved with Catholic Action, whose development initiatives he was able to channel to the betterment of San José. A school got built, running water installed, and a road constructed that linked San José more conveniently to Santa Cruz. After the earthquake struck in 1976, Diego rallied the villagers and coordinated efforts to restore their ruined

church. He emerged as a community leader, respected by most but not by all, for there were some in San José jealous of Diego's success, scornful of his industry and energetic ways.

The children that his parents never had Diego had for them, four boys and three girls. Feeding more mouths taxed family resources, but Diego labored to ensure that his offspring had the same opportunities he had received, the rudiments of an education foremost of all. What a family of three once enjoyed now had to be shared among eleven. Survival, not prosperity, was the goal. With Diego at the helm there was enough to make ends meet until the repression hit.

His social conscience and concern for the community made him an easy target. In the fear-filled years of the 1980s, Diego's "Catholic Action" was construed as "communist subversion" by neighbors who did not like him. Rumors began to circulate, fueled by the bitterness of envy. During the worst of the killings, in 1981 and 1982, Diego thought it best to leave San José and hide out in Guatemala City. He was in the capital when word reached him that the civil defense patrol in San José had murdered his father for refusing to reveal Diego's whereabouts. When Diego returned home to deal with the matter, the civil defense patrol pounced and killed him too. Doña Magdalena and Diego's wife were widows, his seven children – Paulino, the second oldest, was barely eleven at the time – without a father. They were victims of a civil war perpetrated in the guise of anti-communism, a civil war in which unarmed civilians, Diego and his father among them, were the bulk of a quarter of a million casualties. It would be a decade before Doña Magdalena summoned the resolve to tell her story.

I got to know Doña Magdalena while working with colleagues on a documentary film series about countries in crisis, for which Guatemala was chosen as a pilot study. By the time we first met, Paulino had assumed the role of bread winner, staying on in San José to look after his grandmother as he and María started a family of their own. In 1995, I published a book with a version of the events that had so affected Doña Magdalena and her grandchildren, believing it prudent not to disclose her true identity. After a peace accord was signed in 1996 by the Guatemalan government and guerrilla forces that had fought for thirty-six years to change a brutal social order, human rights initiatives launched by the Catholic Church and the United Nations encouraged people to speak out, even if no guarantees could be made for their safety. It was then that I contacted Paulino, to see if he would talk with his grandmother and seek her approval for me to narrate what took place in San José without resorting to pseudonyms. My desire to include photographs of key protagonists in a new edition of my book made the use of pseudonyms pointless. Agreement on both counts enabled me to feature Doña Magdalena under her own name (Lovell, *A Beauty That Hurts*).

In 2001, I traveled to San José a week before Christmas, reflecting en route that no season of goodwill ever prevailed in Guatemala. The signing of the peace accord marked a formal end to hostilities, but terror lurked and violence still

flared up. Bishop Juan Gerardi, who headed the Catholic Church's investigation into the causes and consequences of conflict, had been beaten to death two days after he presented a report that attributed the majority of killings during the war to the national armed forces, with civil defense patrols organized and controlled by the military also implicated. If a high-profile figure like Gerardi could be eliminated and his assassins allowed to elude justice, then ordinary citizens like Doña Magdalena had to be wary. In San José, I learned later, members of the civil defense patrol, the very men responsible for the deaths of Doña Magdalena's husband and son, were not only at large but held positions of authority, placed in charge of community projects that Diego had once supervised.

Arriving unannounced, I walked along the trail that led from the school toward the family compound. A dog barked as I drew near. Two children peered from behind a line of washing to see who was approaching. I recognized little Lucía, who had not grown by much in over a year. She ran to fetch her father. Paulino wiped some dirt from his hand before he extended it in welcome.

"*Buenos días, Jorge.* You've come back to visit us. We wondered when you would."

He invited me to sit down and offered me a cup of *atol*, a hot drink made of cornmeal and spiced with peppers. I sipped it while saying hello to family of all ages who joined us on the patio. Out of a room adjacent to the compound entrance stepped Doña Magdalena, not looking any older than when I last saw her but limping more noticeably. Paulino helped her to a chair. I smiled at her as she made herself comfortable. Doña Magdalena smiled back.

"I have a present for you."

Paulino translated as I handed her a gift.

"These are for you to share among the children," I said to Paulino.

The bag he took from me was one I had filled with crayons, notepads, candy, and chewing gum. A couple of youngsters rushed to Paulino. Doña Magdalena, meanwhile, held the small package as if she didn't quite know what to do, looking at it quizzically until Paulino's wife helped her undo the wrapping.

"It's a book. A book with photographs for you to look at," I said.

Since neither woman could read, and certainly not in English, I took the book and opened it at the section containing photographs. I pointed to the image on the upper right of the first page.

"*Es la abuela!*" Paulino's wife exclaimed. "*Es la abuela con Lucía!*"

The youngsters dipping their hands into the bag I'd given Paulino scurried to their mother's side to see for themselves. Their shouts brought more children gathering around. Doña Magdalena joined in with her own cries. Then she fell quiet, examined the photograph below the one of herself and Lucía, and let out the loudest cry of all.

"What's she saying?" I asked Paulino.

Beneath the image of Doña Magdalena and her great-granddaughter was a photograph of Rigoberta Menchú (Figure 3). It was Menchú's testimony, before



Fig. 3: Rigoberta Menchú, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1992. (Courtesy of Fototeca Guatemala, Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, La Antigua Guatemala)

any fact-finding missions were feasible and revelations about atrocities widely known, that alerted the outside world to the horrors of civil war in Guatemala. Doña Magdalena brandished the book over her head.

“I won’t be as famous,” she declared in a voice tinged with sadness. “But people will see me in a book with Rigoberta Menchú and know that we share the same experiences.”

When I visited San José two years later I found out from the woman who tends the village store that Doña Magdalena had died. The storekeeper had watched me park the jeep and thought to tell me before I took the path to the family compound. I thanked her and cursed myself for not having made the trip sooner.

Even so, I made my way to the compound, which was eerily empty. Not even a dog barked in warning. I called aloud several times but nobody replied. A radio had been left on. The drone of *marimba* music was a fitting lament.

Knowing that the children were still in school – I had heard a class chant a multiplication table as I walked past – I returned to wait in the playground. During recess I asked a teacher if he could help me identify one of Paulino’s boys or girls. “I’ve been out to the house,” I explained, “but no one’s home. I’d like to pay my respects. Someone in the family I knew is dead.”

The teacher helped me locate the eldest of Paulino’s daughters, who recognized me.



Fig. 4: The burial site of Magdalena González. (Photograph by W. George Lovell)



Fig. 5: Where Doña Magdalena lies “at peace in the corn.” (Photograph by W. George Lovell)

“My father is working in Santa Cruz and won’t be back until dark. My mother is at my aunt’s. I’ll get her for you.”

The girl crossed the playground to a house that lay behind the village store. I followed her. Paulino’s wife, María, appeared and greeted me.

“I’m sorry to hear about Doña Magdalena,” I said. “I understand that Paulino won’t be back until later this evening. Would it be possible for you to take me to see her grave?”

María agreed. She led me to a plot of ground two kilometers away. The family had buried Doña Magdalena not in the local cemetery, where the killers of her husband and her son one day would be, but in a clearing we walked to through fields of towering corn.

A wooden cross, painted red, distinguishes Doña Magdalena’s grave from a handful of others. María approached and stood over it (Figure 4). A baby peered out from the shawl tied to her back. A barefoot toddler held on to her mother’s skirt. Laid to rest in a clearing by a cornfield, Doña Magdalena’s struggle is over (Figure 5).

We returned in silence to San José. The school that Diego helped to build was emptying out. Hordes of children ran and yelled and larked about, several of Paulino and María’s among them. The sight of so much life cheered me up.

When it was time for me to leave, María asked if she could have a copy of my book. Fortunately, I’d thought to bring one with me. “Here you are, María. But remember, I left a book with Doña Magdalena when I passed through a couple of visits ago. We all admired the photograph of her sitting next to one of your little girls.”

María looked at me and said, “*El libro está en la caja, Jorge. Está en la caja con la abuela.*”

The family had buried Doña Magdalena with the book.

Acknowledgments

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journey there I share now in memory of Finola Shankar, who I trust is also at peace in the corn.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Protein and Power. Nutritional Recommendations and Daily Life in Oaxaca

MARTINA KALLER-DIETRICH

In the 1990s I conducted field studies on eating habits in Oaxaca, Southern Mexico. As a trained historian I considered my interviews on food and eating with women in Oaxacan villages as local narratives equally relevant to the economic and cultural history of Mexico in the so called era of development (1949-1989). Insights into nutritional anthropology became less interesting for me than the reply to or the absence of development discourse in my talks with female villagers. I learned to profoundly respect their understanding of *comida* (to be explained below), which often contradicted standardized theories about food intake. As no one can remain separate from eating, my own involvement as a scholar in the field can, more than anything else, be referred to one of sharing – meals, tastes, knowledge, understandings, and life stories: to my great surprise my bodily learning process about food through cultural contact involved a step by step “unthinking” of nutritional sciences (see Wallerstein). One fact I learned to accept is that my interviewees placed little importance on the physiological aspect of food and eating, that is, to a scientifically based consent about what constituted the appropriate or inappropriate balance of ingredients and the material-physical consequences of the foods they ate. Neither were the concept of scarcity nor the periodic experience of hunger terms of reference they used in relating their life stories. On the contrary, the women I talked with preferred to share with me their manifold experiences, creative practices, and artful dealing with plenty. Thanks to their insistence on these emotionally and culturally nourishing aspects of *comida*, I developed a radical cultural approach to my question concerning power relations around the production and consumption of food in a Mexican rural context. And as can be observed in the following account of my latest investigation, I consciously continue to apply that approach.

Milk in San Pablo Etla, Oaxaca

Individual subjects can be fed. Communities share farming, cooking, and eating – in mostly rural Mexico, *comida* is the center of people’s lives and it is their

commonly shared way of understanding social relations. There is nothing natural around *comida*. Hence, to speak about *comida* means to speak about what people do, how, when, and why. Gustavo Esteva, the well-known Mexican critic of development and recognized voice of post-development is clear on this point. Concerning food questions, he argues in favor of a cultural perspective and states: “There is no English word for *comida*. Meal is a cultural word, like *comida*, but it seems to refer only to the time and condition of taking food. *Comida* instead is something like food in context. The context is necessarily the social context, the whole human world which *comida* embeds and entails, the very heart and soul of *comida*” (“Re-embedding” 69).

By emphasizing the cultural context Esteva proposes a position that goes far beyond the familiar reductive notions of the developmental food security discourse and is evidently no longer linked to them. It is worthwhile to ground such a statement empirically to highlight the postdevelopment argument about the importance of cultural representation. This is one of the main goals of my research. To talk about *comida* without arguing from the conceptual standpoint of the food/scarcity discourse was the challenge for my oral history study on women in the semi-proletarianized village San Pablo Etlá, Oaxaca, during the late 1990s (Kaller-Dietrich, *Macht über Mägen*). Relying on this earlier research, my paper here addresses the notably different discourses related to *comida*, as seen from the perspective of the communities in contemporary Oaxaca.

Daily food is no longer all we need to know about San Pablo Etlá. As I underlined in my earlier work, being cultural hybrids in a “global consuming culture” (Brewer and Trentmann 2), neither I nor the female farmers I interviewed in Southern Mexico know much about the food we consume. By addressing milk-based protein consumption patterns in San Pablo Etlá, Oaxaca, I will try to explain that in spite of what the women call “modern food,” in order to distinguish it from *comida*, a concept culturally rooted in dishes and cultural practices around food and eating, my interviewees have reconnected the bodily experience of eating and sharing to their daily cooking practice. They do so even though they are adapting ingredients from the *Weltmarktsstrukturküche*, or in English the “structural world market based cuisine,” as Rolf Schwendters describes the eating conditions in a globalized economy. Moreover, all repercussions and contradictions of nutritional dogmas as they were established around 1850 can also be encountered in San Pablo Etlá, Oaxaca. What I call the “modern nutrition system” (Kaller-Dietrich, *Macht über Mägen*) did not manifest itself equally in all parts of the world, although its characteristics can be identified everywhere, and there is probably nothing wild outside of its reach anywhere on this planet.

I will introduce two examples from my research in San Pablo Etlá in order to ground my statements empirically. The first example deals with parents’ concerns regarding milk consumption during childhood. Doña Marcela is an experienced mother of several well brought up children. With her current husband, Don Felipe, she only had one child, a daughter, Jasmin, who attends elementary

school. The parents' attention is very much focused on the welfare of their only child. Don Felipe works as a temporary laborer in the surrounding fields. Doña Marcela farms a small field, her *milpa*. Its yield supplies maize, beans, and pumpkins for up to nine months out of the year at most. Doña Marcela's two goats and three to five sheep serve as hidden reserves to be used if necessary. An urgent appendix surgery, for example, was paid for by selling the mother animal and two of the three lambs. Doña Marcela does not milk her animals. Still, she emphasizes the importance for her daughter of drinking milk.

In our talks I asked her how she obtained the milk for her daughter. She complained about the high cost of dried milk in the village shop and at the market in the nearby regional capital of Oaxaca: in these days of ongoing crisis, she has been priced out of being able to buy dried milk products. But – good news! – she does not have to buy the expensive milk anymore. Her daughter gets a glass of milk each day in school. As part of a health program for children established by the Governor's wife, children of destitute parents in San Pablo Etla get milk in elementary school for free.¹

Doña Marcela and Don Felipe themselves do not drink milk at all. They do not like milk. They would never think about milking their goats or sheep, and they only eat meat on festive occasions. Neither of them consumes the officially regarded 'normal' – or rather what was defined as 'normal' – amount of animal-derived protein, although the daily consumption of beans, which are a fixed part of every meal, compensates for some of the protein shortage. Nevertheless, they want their daughter to drink milk on a daily basis.

Doña Marcela and Don Felipe integrated the ideas of this protein propaganda into their own mindset. They make a distinction between the needs that have to be satisfied according to the protein doctrine, thereby almost exhausting their limited financial abilities, and disregarding their customs and local food habits which do not include drinking milk. When the development critic Gustavo Esteva writes about the "titanic socio-cultural dismantling" and the "authoritarian techniques" of development, he implicitly refers to what Doña Marcela and Don Felipe are experiencing (*Fiesta*). The attempt to fulfill needs that exceed personal financial resources inevitably leads to dependence. This dependence justifies outside interference, either through the market or through institutionalized help. The steps toward dependency are externally imposed. Products and definitions that originate in developed industrial countries make claims of universal relevance. Like the term development they connect vernacular and everyday life experiences with the image of backwardness.

1 Since the 1970s Leche Industrializada CONASUPO (LICONSA), the para-statal company, has been charged with regularly distributing subsidized milk to lower income Mexicans. Of LICONSA's total milk usage, 92.2 percent derives mainly from imported milk powder. In 2007, Jeff Nawn and Sal Trejo stated on behalf of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service that: "Consumption of fresh fluid milk continues to be hampered by problems with sanitation, transportation, and processing capacity, but supplies and quality are improving" ("Mexico. Dairy and Products" 11).

Although the promises of development have been followed by a lot of disappointments, in the Section Three of the municipality of San Pablo Etla with its almost two thousand inhabitants, development is still on the agenda and still functions as a magic word. Development is associated with building a new elementary school, repairing the graveled main road, chemical fertilizers for maize farming, mountain reforestation, running water in homes, measles vaccination, refrigerated Coke, and the installation of metal doors that have become more and more popular in the construction of workers' houses. "Personal property," such as a television set or a housewife, is kept behind these doors. All of these things are connected with the magic word *desarrollo* – development. And dried milk powder from cans is also regarded as development.

Protein Consumption Habits in Mexico

Contrary to tourist misinformation and folklore, eating in Mexico has become an industrial routine and shows all the markers of the modern food system. The changes in eating habits in Mexico occurred as a process that paralleled the country's intensive urbanization during the twentieth century. Increasingly larger segments of the urban population were confronted with the innovations of industrially produced and pre-processed food. This was also true for the eating patterns in rural areas, the Mexican *campo*. Since 1975, when the *Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto*, a subdivision of the planning ministry, conducted its famous study on consumption habits in Mexican households (1979), both the proportional and the relational poverty of food intake among the rural population has been emphasized. The study revealed that 33% of the population in rural areas do not eat meat at all, 32% never eat eggs, 37% do not consume bread, and 59% have never drunk milk before. For the early 1980s, Oaxaca-specific data from a study conducted by the same government entity showed that 65.3% (the national average is 61.1%) of *oaxaqueños* eat meat less than three times a week, 40.4% (the national average is 20.8%) drink milk less than three times a week, and 46.8% (the national average is 33.6%) eat hen's eggs less than three times a week. Fifteen years later, official national statistics published by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Geografía e Informática* (INEGI) showed no significant changes.

Since 1994 when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) began implementation, Mexican consumers, in contrast to their Northern neighbors, bought only twelve percent of the U.S. average in milk and milk products (Index Mundi). Evidently Mexico lags behind U.S. patterns of dairy and milk consumption. As a result, the Southern partner in NAFTA is considered a major market for U.S. nonfat dry milk, butter, cheese, and fluid milk. "In addition to milk powders, Mexico has become a major importer of U.S. dairy blends, lactose, and whey powder" (Nawn and Trejo 3).

The model in all these studies was the consumption of animal protein (meat, eggs, milk) and wheat bread as traditionally conceived by a European, but also a U.S., “wheat culture.” While they did not want to obscure the issue of hunger, it seems obvious that the results of studies like these are distorted. In federal states like Oaxaca, where 53% of the population depend on the profits of maize cultivation, it is inappropriate to use protein models whose parameters are orientated around the consumption of meat, wheat, eggs, and milk. Along with the emphasis on the expansion of protein dominant consumption habits, these studies neglect Mexican eating patterns that are mainly based on legumes, seasonally on insects, and on integral corn *tortillas*. Since the time of colonial control over local Indian peoples and their cultures in Mesoamerica, the maize tortilla has been condemned as a minor and disgusting “bread of the Indians.” – What consequences did such denigration of locally rooted food patterns have over the centuries?

Protein and Power

Foucault argued that power’s control of the body, which is at the same time constructed by that power, was historically normalized in what we could call the Atlantic culture of the West, that is, it was accepted as given. In the context of that constructed and controlled body, terms like ‘normal’, ‘tolerable’, and ‘intolerable deviations’ from the human norm are arbitrary concepts that must be understood within the historical and cultural context in which they are being defined. According to Carole M. Counihan, “one of the most significant domains of meaning” is “embodied in food.” It “centres on the relation between the sexes, their gender definitions, and their sexuality” (9). I would explicitly add that food also centers on cultural relations, and constantly finds itself, together with its “eaters,” in permanent cultural contact, impressing cultural hybridization within an international discursive formation of what Saskia Sassen calls “global cities,” along with what Roland Robertson and Zygmunt Bauman refer to as “glocalization” or “glocalities.”

Because of our dire need for it, David Arnold suggests that “food was, and continues to be, power in a most basic, tangible and inescapable form” (3). Jack Goody’s work on the topic, approaching it from the perspectives of class, caste, race, and gender hierarchies – structures that were established and often maintained through differential control over and access to food – notes that “the hierarchy between ranks and class takes a culinary form” (13). And Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins remind us of the fact that the very sign of powerlessness is hunger.

Within the framework of so-called food policies or food security programs, the facts are obvious: when local governments undertake charity efforts, regional food supplying systems operate more effectively. According to NAFTA, national food security policies and the international aid machine are effectively being

coordinated between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. And these policies exactly match the first goal of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), that is, to eradicate poverty and hunger. Target 3 of Goal 1 calls for cutting by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015. Eight years earlier, the 1996 World Food Summit had also called for cutting by half the number of hungry people by 2015 – a goal reaffirmed at the 2002 World Food Summit five years later. At the 2003 World Food Day, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reminded the global community that “the goals will be met only if we forge a true ‘International Alliance against Hunger’ – an alliance encompassing governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, religious groups and individuals. Indeed, such a global partnership for development is itself one of the Millennium Development Goals” (*UN Press Releases 2003*). In August 2008, the yearly UN report on MDGs lowered expectations of hitting this decisive target by naming the major global concerns affecting it: oil prices, climate change, and increased areas under cultivation of crops for agro-fuels have led to higher food prices, aggravated by the worldwide financial crisis (*Millennium Development Goals Report*).

Relating these concerns to power and food consumption, feminist vegetarian Carol G. Adams states that the consumption of protein, especially of meat protein, reveals “the white Western world’s enactment of racism” by appropriating thousands of acres of land for grazing cattle to produce meat for rich people, and by also claiming the choicest cuts and largest quantities of meat (30).

Most of the accurate information now available concerning the nutritional requirements of humans and animals was acquired in the twentieth century, beginning with Russell H. Chittenden’s work on proteins in 1907 and Casimir Funk’s research on vitamins in 1922 (see also Harow). Yet many of the most pervasive ideas about good diets derive from an earlier period, when little was known but numerous speculations were advanced. Science historian Kenneth J. Carpenter recounts a series of narratives about arrogant scientists and physicians who jumped to the wrong conclusions but asserted them anyway, even in the face of conflicting evidence. He points to “the protein dogma,” which started to accelerate about 150 years ago, almost at the same time that the modern food system began to fall into place. This era was also marked by the industrial and urban shift from taste-based food decisions to the health-based adoption of industrial food into local diets. Given the economic relevance of this data it made sense when Carl von Voit (1831-1908) decided in the 1860s that active adults require a minimum of 118 g of complete protein a day to avoid bodily deterioration, even though his experiments in measuring nitrogen loss in dogs and humans on set diets could be interpreted in several ways. Voit maintained the validity of his position despite the fact that vegetarians had been shown to have balanced levels of nitrogen. In sticking to this “protein dogma,” he helped establish the erroneous view that diets rich in complete protein were essential for people who were physically active.

As Voit established his recommendations on the basis of chemical analysis carried on by his famous predecessor Justus von Liebig (1803-1873), his opinion carried very much weight. Liebig advocated the theory that protein is a chemical product and identified it as the alleged source of flexible and mechanical power, as needed, for example, for conducting hard physical labor in factories or in the agrarian production. Due to Liebig's far-reaching authority, and the ruthlessness of his successors, his scientific findings remained influential, even after being refuted and considered antiquated. Nevertheless, on the occasion of its founding in 1949, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, asserted that one of its major concerns was the fight against the protein deficiency in so-called development countries. By the late 1960s, international agencies were warning of the "impending protein crisis." Yet continuing studies presented confusing and controversial results. A growing number of researchers reappraising the problem found insufficient caloric as well as protein intake in cases of kwashiorkor, a disease considered to result from a protein deficiency in African children. Such conclusions motivated other studies on the relationship between protein and health. By the 1990s, scientists studying the diets of adults concluded that much of the world's population is consuming *too much* protein.

All these findings remained undisputed, at least in the field of development policies. In the years from 1955 to the beginning of the 1970s the explicit focus of developmental activities was on the design of possible distribution strategies for medicine as well as for food rich in meat- or milk-based protein. High hopes were held for defeating infant mortality rates through the use of a product that had carried the Nestlé company to the number one position in sales of processed food. In his recent book, Paul Roberts reviews the details of the incident, later called the "Nestlé scandal," by pointing out a crucial invention made in 1867 in the Swiss town of Vevey: Henri Nestlé, a chemist and manufacturer of fertilizer, mixed wheat meal and wholesome cow's milk to prepare *Kindermehl*, "infant cereal," which he marketed to working class Swiss mothers whose new factory jobs prevented them from breastfeeding their babies (Roberts 48-49, 55-56). In the 1980s, Nestlé and many of its rivals were excoriated for aggressively marketing *infant formula* in developing countries. The companies worked assiduously to persuade mothers to switch from breastfeeding to formula – handing out free samples and paying local doctors to recommend the formula and disparage breastfeeding – even as evidence mounted that the practice could be deadly. In Africa, in particular, many mothers prepared the formula using contaminated local water; others, hoping to save money, so diluted the formula that their babies essentially starved to death. Despite widespread knowledge of this worldwide scandal, Nestlé continues to aggressively promote its formula and other milk-based products, and in Asia in particular, it pays doctors and nurses to tell new mothers that breast milk alone cannot meet an infant's nutritional needs. By the 1960s it turned out that the packing and transport of the new *infant formulas* was too expensive for parents of children with protein deficiency. Therefore, the FAO started promoting

and supporting the intensification of milk production in the developing countries. Accompanied by projects on health, mothers in these areas were taught how to handle dried milk powder from cans. This is how dried milk products and infant formula reached rural Mexico, even though the majority of people living there are Indians. And Indians, like the Chinese, never developed the enzyme needed to digest fresh dairy ingredients: this lactose intolerance originates from the simple fact that consuming milk from mammals had not been part of the cultural evolution of either American Indian or East Asian cultures.

But times are changing. Nestlé's researchers found out that lactose intolerance due to a historically permanent lack of cow's milk in East Asian and Native American diets (Rosado et al.) can be reduced by the early introduction of milk products to Chinese and Indian children. "They may get a little sick from it for a little while, but they get used to it," Paul Roberts quotes a Nestlé expert (55).

***Comida* in San Pablo Etla**

Let us return to *comida* and how it is related to milk consumption in Oaxaca State. What the famous Zapatista Movement defines as autonomy is by most communities in Southern rural Mexico called and understood as communality (*comunalidad*). Communality is intrinsically linked to community. Communality, like autonomy, must constantly be strived for. It is not an unchangeable, inherent characteristic of communities.

The specific communities in Southern Mexico to which I refer are usually identified as indigenous. However, regarding issues of food and eating, non-indigenous villages also successfully rely on the same matrilocally organized ways of dealing with food employed by mainly indigenous communities. Genevieve Vaughan's analysis of the gift economy and its rules of reciprocity offers a plausible contextualization of Oaxacan women's attitudes toward food. For women, reciprocity is based on caring for each other and the members of their respective communities, and food preparation is seen to be at the very core of those caring activities.

Comida encompasses not only the way of eating or what people eat, but the way in which a community defines itself. The political struggles of communities in Southern Mexico are not about the needs of individuals but rather those of the social body. At the same time, while being a "we" matters, to be a "we" does not mean that every/body is the same. People say: "We are similar and we are different." As seen from outside, community members may seem to be the same; however, internally they recognize their differences. These nuances are also reflected in language. In central Oaxaca, the region where I conducted my research, indigenous people are bilingual. Besides Spanish, they speak Zapotec, in which there exists no word for "I" but for which there are three different ways to express "we."

The consciousness-raising activities of the past decades made these Oaxacan villagers realize that life in a community is richer than as usually described by anthropologists, who often only focus on visible expressions of communal-ity. Belonging to a community means more than being represented in institutions. Individual identity is expressed through belonging to that community, and this belonging is constantly renewed through culturally rooted, economically viable, and politically practicable activities. From the perspective of the community, culture is therefore not static, nor does its economy consist solely of following the capitalist rule of profit making. Policy making directly affects the people of a community, and nothing exists that can be considered outside of or beyond daily life. *Comida* not only expresses this worldview but is also the being and living of it. *Comida* means constantly renewing one's belonging to a community. Belonging includes and expresses acts of living, working, and eating together, and in all of these actions, food is obviously a key.

Now, moving on from milk, let me briefly introduce my second example: *atole*, a drink reportedly as old as the Mesoamerican cultures themselves. *Atole* is made with maize and water: the maize is boiled in water, then washed, husked and ground, either by hand with a porous millstone called a *metate*, or in a mechanical hand mill. After grinding, the maize is put into a special *atole* pot together with water and stirred with a special cooking spoon made of wood in order to produce liquid maize porridge. The cooking spoon must not come in contact with any kind of fat because otherwise the *atole* will not bind properly. Moreover, I was told that the cooking spoon also must not be new or it might give the *atole* a different taste. The strict avoidance of fat or objects that have been in contact with fat relates back to the pre-colonial cuisine that contained no animal or vegetable oil.

"We still like the *atole* better than, for example, coffee," Doña Sofía shares with me. "Many people add a lot of sugar to the *atole* because they like it. I prefer adding milk. With milk the *atole* tastes delicious," she says. Doña Sofía had given me the impression that she tried hard to continue keep on cooking according to the locally known recipes. I therefore thought that she would refuse to use industrially produced foodstuffs and asked her which kind of milk she puts in her *atole*. As we sat in her kitchen with the open fireplace and plenty of clay jars and bowls, I drifted into a romantic idyll of self-sufficiency. I assumed that Doña Sofía would say that she milks one of her sheep or goats in order to get milk. However, I could not have been more wrong! Doña Sofía uses dried milk powder from Nestlé. I asked her why she did not milk her animals. She stared at me as if I were not quite right in the head and answered: "I have never milked an animal and I have never drunk sheep or goat milk before. Besides, we like Nestlé's milk." Doña Sofía is sixty-two years old and famous for her cuisine. She knows how to prepare "traditional" food and people order dishes from her for the many official and social occasions called *compromisos* (commitments). And while she only cooks with maize from her own harvest, both the tender young maize and

the dried maize that can be stored, the powdered milk from the factory is only used because people like the way it tastes.

This example made me realize that it is not only possible but also considered desirable to mix ingredients with different origins, as well as to combine culturally different eating habits, without risking the loss of their affiliations. *Atole*, significant for Mesoamerica's maize culture, has been consumed with milk and sometimes even with chocolate since the colonial period. In Spanish convents, special desserts based on maize, called *repostería*, were created. The nuns added a lot of milk, butter, and sugar to the maize. As a precursor of hot chocolate, *atole* was prepared with milk, chocolate, and sugar and evolved into a sweet pleasure for Europeans.

Nowadays female farmers in Oaxaca use powdered milk. In the face of this reality, the intellectual exercise of separating food into culturally specific/regional and industrially produced/global categories, as well as assuming the exclusive use of one over the other, cannot be supported. For Doña Sofía, it is a fact that she prepares a delicious *atole* and that people like it, share it, and consider it part of *comida*. This is the only thing that matters. She is not interested in supplying the body with proteins and vitamins (although the text on the Nestlé's cans of milk powder trumpets the contents' ability to do so). This attitude toward food, the decision to cook what she and the eaters around her like, makes her actions unique and self-determined, and it embodies a particular regional culture that is both hybrid and modern. Even given the matchless quality of what she cooks, she does not claim it to be right, healthy, or even exemplary. Doña Sofía uses dried milk for her *atole* because it tastes nice. That is the only justification she needs. If, as feminist historian Gadi Algazi observes, "culture is *how to do what*" (105), Doña Sofía's adoption of factory produced milk for preparing local *atole* is an appropriating act of cultural practice as well as a product of cultural contact. Her cup of *atole* proves to be a culturally expressed symbol and practice of the good life in San Pablo Etla. To be 'embodied' through *atole*, which is evidently a form of *comida*, means, more than anything else, to belong to a group and to be part of what forms this very dynamic culture, experiences that are primarily shaped by sharing food. Living and eating together have one and the same meaning. So, *comida* cannot be separated from the community's life itself. And this is exactly what distinguishes *comida* from the culturally indifferent and almost aseptic consumption patterns that take place when the modern food system is accepted completely, exclusively, and uncritically.

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