

**'The nation's valiant fighters against illiteracy':
Locating the cultural politics of 'development'
in 1990's Uganda**

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Abstract

This dissertation is a partial account of the cultural politics of 'development' in contemporary Uganda, focusing particularly on educational institutions as sites of negotiation of modernity's gendered meanings. Utilising media representations and ethnographic research carried out in both Makerere University and in a rural secondary school, I describe how senses of the 'modern' are produced within colonial and postcolonial discourses on gender, education and the nation. Drawing on theoretical dialogues between cultural geography, social history and anthropology, I argue that historical and spatial relationships are often invoked to locate or contest the moral hierarchies that these understandings of 'progress' or 'development' depend on. By shifting position, perspective and scale, I attempt to make visible the relational production of multiple and cross-cutting Ugandan localities.

Recognising the legacies of war, nationalism and religion that shape understandings of 'development' in Uganda today, this thesis is also an attempt at a 'history of the present', describing the way these turbulent pasts are retold and relived. After a brief introduction to anthropology's own troubled history of ethical debate, I discuss the influence of European ethnographies and 'Ganda' oral and textual narratives on Ugandan politics. I describe how, in the bitter aftermath of rural neglect and isolation stemming from the 1980s liberation war, monarchical idioms from Buganda's past have been suddenly reinvigorated within new Buganda nationalisms. Subsequently I interweave transnational and national media imageries with everyday lived experiences - rural school life, a speech day, urban popular music, staffroom gossip and university student romances - to create a sense of the multiple localities within which people create a sense of themselves as being both 'Ugandan' and 'modern'. Exploring the contested and political negotiations of culture in this way reveals both the material and symbolic aspects of the discursive practices of 'development'.

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CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter One

In this first chapter I introduce my thesis and its style of presentation by relating it to the often tempestuous argument within anthropology over the politics and ethics of ethnographic research. Beginning with a conversation I had whilst in Uganda, I go on to suggest that the discipline's current 'crisis' is partly due to its attachment to this 'ethnographic method', however minimally defined. I provide a short history of ethical and political debates throughout twentieth century anthropology, showing the continued relevance of these debates for anthropological practice today. Aware that by itself a theoretical/political critique might seem detached from the complexities of ethnographic practice, I ground this history with examples from ethnographic writing on Buganda throughout this century. In particular, I look at the way power is represented in anthropological work carried out by John Roscoe, Lucy Mair, Lloyd Fallers and Audrey Richards.

I then turn to the question of research ethics, often presented solely as a personal and moral concern for the individual ethnographer. Introducing the discussion with brief examples of the dilemmas I experienced in adopting ethnographic methods, especially over 'covert' research, I go on to show the difficulty of composing 'ethical' research guidelines. I argue that focusing only on ethics can also be a way of de-emphasising and downplaying the power relations that structure every aspect of the ethnographic encounter. Ethics talk can be a way of separating and 'purifying' (Latour 1993) one area of thought from another. By showing that ethical debate cannot be separated from questions of power, I argue that ethnographic research cannot be justified - in and of itself - as an ethical practice. Social research is an engagement with power. I end by exploring the possibilities and limits of an ethnographic practice shaped through and within the tensions of the 'political'. It is my sense of the constraints on and limits to anthropological translation that shapes my presentation of subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two

Much of this thesis focuses on the experiences and imageries of being modern, on popular and national understandings of 'development'. Yet I begin in this second chapter by looking at the legacies of war, nationalisms and religion that inevitably shape such understandings of progress in Uganda today. I attempt a 'history of the present', showing how these turbulent pasts are always being retold and relived anew, focusing particularly on the Luwero war and its aftermath.

I begin in mid-1990s East London, describing a 'cultural' organisation formed by Baganda living in Britain, so to reveal the ambiguous, gendered and multiple form of all narrations of the nation. From here I turn first to a brief history of Museveni's liberation struggle against Milton Obote from 1981 to 1985, linking it with other work on the social history of guerrilla wars in Africa. I then go back much further to explore early possible histories of pre-colonial Buganda and also the writing and use of such histories in anti-colonial movements in the 1930s and 1940s. Finally I come back to the 1990s, to describe how, in the bitter aftermath of rural neglect and isolation stemming from the liberation war, monarchical idioms from Buganda's past have suddenly been reinvigorated within new Baganda nationalisms. I tuck from individual memories and the way they are used to justify claims for 'ebyaffe' ('our things') to national debates over the country's new constitution, and Buganda's status within it. Through a mixture of media articles and interviews I try to capture the tension and anxiety within which imaginings and understandings of the nation take on such importance and force.

Chapter Three

In this chapter I look at how people invoke spatial hierarchies to support, contest and subvert moral narratives of 'development' and progress. Drawing upon the theoretical dialogue between anthropology and cultural geography, I explore how a 'rural' Ugandan 'Third World' school becomes positioned and produced as such within colonial, national and transnational discourses on learning and education. Situating the cultural politics of the 'modern' within the complexity of exam results and teachers' salaries is a way of emphasising both the material and symbolic aspects of the discursive practice of development.

The chapter questions the explanatory power of the global/local dichotomy in understanding these dynamics, and in particular the conflation of a narrow understanding of the 'local' with the face-to-face immediacies of everyday life. Whilst aware of the radical asymmetries of power being negotiated, I try to use my ethnography to work in and against the 'local', describing the always mediated immediacies of both staffroom politics and national media representations, parental chat and trans-national schooling practices, in rural Uganda and West London. By shifting perspective, position and scale, I attempt an ethnography of the multiple and cross-cutting productions of educational and developmental localities.

Chapter Four

The occasion: the inauguration of the Kiboga Development Foundation, a new educational NGO. The event: a parade and five hours of speech-making, both illuminating and interminable. It begins with a grand procession of elegantly be-gowned and mortar-boarded university alumnae twirling itchily through a small district centre. The rural sun and dust scour the immaculate pin-stripes and make-up of Kampala's high life, but do not scratch the 'developmental' facade.

Unpacking the complex micro-politics within such a spectacle can reveal much about the power dynamics of 'development', and its imbrication within regional, national and international politics. In this chapter I use an ethnography of the inauguration day speeches to show the many different ways in which the practices of 'development' are inhabited, imagined and re-interpreted, by both 'practitioners' and 'recipients'. Linguistic and cultural studies reveal a constant reformulation of meaning, questioning any over-simplified reduction of power relations to a 'Eurocentric' development agenda.

As well as rethinking the word and its meanings, I also explore different possible intellectual representations of the process, drawing particularly on Marx, Foucault and Baudrillard. I engage with the debate which tries to perceive what might come 'after development' - whether it be the voluntarist imagery of a global consumption society, or the equally utopian vision of an egalitarian, non-capitalist world. I question the teleological assumptions of both narratives. Instead I suggest that we cannot be outside of the narratives we hope to engage. I argue that the day's audience and speechifiers are reformulating and re-naming development from within, and that scholarly representations do likewise, even when speculating on what is likely to come next, 'after' development.

Chapter Five

How is the new sense of a globalising modern age gendered in Uganda? Whether because of the affirmative-action policies of government, 'gender-sensitive' practices of numerous NGOs (non-governmental organisations), or media representations, people are inevitably compelled to renegotiate relationships between men and women, along with their understandings and performances of masculinities and feminities.

In this chapter I argue that trans-national discourses on gender, and popular reactions to them, are equally central to this contestation. In opposition to the gender-oriented development projects of many non-governmental and governmental agencies, I show how the Kampala media constructs these gender and feminist issues as a Euro-American and aggressively 'anti-Ugandan' agenda, often mobilising a cultural nationalism in response. Drawing on the transcripts of interviews with University lecturers and discussions with Makerere students, I demonstrate how middle-class men and women are not only positioned by this discourse, but are also contesting and appropriating it in order to forge a sense of being both modern and Ugandan. In so doing, I suggest that masculinities and feminities are being re-located within this larger political context, allowing for reflective (if fraught) reformulations of gender relations

Chapter Six

In this last chapter, based primarily on a number of informal discussion groups held with Makerere students, I describe the tense and conflictual inter-relationship of 'love' and 'money' in young people's lives. Drawing on academic debates about the cultural construction of commodities and also on representations of sexuality within Ugandan popular culture, I attempt to demonstrate the materiality of relationships and the sociality of things.

I begin with a discussion of a rap song that captured the popular imagination during 1995. Using further examples of media articles and gossip columns, I show the central place that 'money' and 'commodities' have in mediating intimate relationships between male and female students at Makerere. Never simply understood as neutral units of exchange, I describe how wealth is culturally interpreted and equilibrated to signify 'love'. Using quotations from the discussion groups, I argue that emotional sentiments and material commodities are thoroughly intertwined but never reducible to each other. In this way I try to capture the confusing tangle of things, emotions and power that makes up the lived everyday experiences of relationships. This is a cultural truth that applies well beyond this particular case-study, but I end by hinting at the way that it might enable a more nuanced approach to challenging oppressive gender relations and the spread of STDs.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	American Anthropological Association
ASA	Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth
CA	Constituent Assembly
DP	Democratic Party
EAISR	East African Institute for Social Research
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
KDF	Kiboga Development Foundation
KY	Kabaka Yekka ('The King Alone')
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RC	Resistance Council
SCUSA	Standing Committee of University Studies of Africa
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
UN	United Nations
UPC	Uganda People's Congress

PROLOGUE

MARKETING A BEGINNING

Marketing a beginning

How does one begin a thesis? With a sense of occasion perhaps. But how is one constructed, what does it require? How many people does it take to make a buzz, a feeling that this is the place to be? Or are these the wrong questions, such that the moment and situation itself stirs up those present, contagious in its anticipation? Whichever way the answer lies, I was constantly caught unawares by the fortnightly market day in Kikomera, a one petrol-pump town about fifty miles north-west of Kampala. Perhaps it was my own long-ingrained prejudices about the rhythms (or lack of them) of English rural life, but each market day I was hustled anew into a world of vibrancy and zest. The high-speed dust clouds of taxis flying through to more exciting places now slowed and stopped, bringing the culture and the cultural capital of the city with them. In the field below the maternity ward, the skeletal ghost town of rickety stalls and untended shelters would once again be reincarnated and transformed. For a glorious 12 hours, Kikomera was indeed 'the' place to be, at least for those living in town and surrounding countryside. It was a scene far removed from that which in 1985 filled the pages of the international media. Piles of silent, screaming skulls, bearing impossible witness to the rapacity of a war that had engulfed and destroyed Kikomera. Some memories are best left alone.

The market day would begin late the previous evening, as a singing lorry-load would sway to a stop by the roadside bars, amidst swirling clouds of blackness. The traders crammed inside would slowly clamber out, their high spirits protection against the dust and the bruising journey from the previous day's market. Many had a regular weekly circuit of different markets in the area that they frequented with their goods; peripatetic pedlars who knew and looked out for each other. This was no small matter given that they had to sleep outside with voluminous bundles of merchandise and cash, where rumours of special talismans protecting their stalls would be of little use against professional rogues or jealous fellow-travellers. A sassy bunch, often with bases in Kampala in order to sniff out the good deals and the best wholesalers, many were women, and they could easily hold their own against men when it came to beer-drinking, able as strangers to

flout the rules of someone else's 'local'.

Other folk, less well connected into such privileged commodity circulation, might also start arriving the previous night, especially if they had travelled a long distance on foot in order to sell a cow or to prepare a stall. But most of the traders would arrive in the early morning, either in numerous jammed taxis from Kampala or on equally overladen bicycles, swaying dangerously as they tried to negotiate a dirt road whilst hanging onto 3 or 4 bunches of *matooke* (bananas). Some would have risen well before dawn to walk over the hills or across the plain, arriving in time to sell their onions, their goat, their 50 shilling (3 pence) sachets of artificial sweetener. Some were opportunists, hoping to get a good price for some spare produce, whilst others would regularly do petty-commodity trading on the fringes of markets within a ten mile distance, trying to dodge the stall-holders' levy and yet also hang onto their patch. Again, the majority were women. It was as much a way of life, a social community, as a way of making a living. A neighbour of mine often arose at 3 am to fry bananas and doughnuts to sell as snacks in such places, a painstakingly slow way of raising money for school-fees. She would then suffer the further ignominy of being laughed at by men for her un-ladylike audacity in riding a bicycle.

Sure enough, by dawn there would be huge streams of people, animals, plants and things heading for the innocuous patch of hillside by the hospital, turning it into an alfresco department store at the height of the sales. Lingerie, fashion, shoes, hardware, kitchenware and crockery, cane furniture, fresh food, medicine, refreshments - overwhelming the eye and clamouring for a sale. Displays of luxuriant dress fabrics created psychedelic parlours for seamstresses working furiously within, trying to ignore the crowds surrounding the adjacent mountains of cheap used clothing. Sloganned T-shirts from a bloated North puffed long-forgotten pop-stars, charity events or scout groups, or celebrated corporate logos since abandoned in a capitalism on speed. Thousands of items from the last British Airways uniform, withdrawn and sent en bloc to Uganda.

Much of this thesis is concerned with the relationships between culture, power and space, and is an attempt to challenge 'spatially territorialised notions of culture' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Malkki's (1992) critique of the 'ethnographic incarceration' that occurs through scholarly use of what she calls a 'sedentary metaphysics' is an important influence on my work. Through a reading of the 'refugee studies' literature, she shows how anthropology has often naturalised the relationship between peoples and 'their' places. Power relations are constantly shaping spaces and places, not only in academic writings but also in the identity politics of everyday life. The

imagined geographies of academic practices have rather different effects from those of Ugandan market authorities or city police, demolishing unlicensed stalls or arresting pedlars. On the other hand, a sweeping portrayal of Kikomera's negotiation with a globalised, deterritorialised modernity could easily lead one to forget how in Uganda, as everywhere, boundaries and identities depend on the exclusions of race, gender, sexuality and class. Why were all traders suddenly expelled from Kampala's streets? Why were female pupil boarders at Kikomera school never allowed out from the barbed wire compound surrounding their dormitory? Why was a Ugandan friend enroute to India not even allowed to leave Heathrow for the day? The boundaries of places and identities are constantly struggled over and renegotiated.

My **first** aim in this thesis is to present a partial and momentary mapping of a Ugandan present, a glimpse of the links and flows between diverse and discordant places that make up and subvert the nation-space. In doing so I focus on the power relations that shape spaces without attempting an over-systematised geography. Throughout I evoke and describe social localities, not just as static backdrops for the performance of identities, but produced through spatial practices and relationships, making places and identities. I was originally inspired by Raymond Williams' ovarian text 'The country and the city' (1973) to write about the seeming resilience of a rural-urban imagery in Uganda. I now find the very dichotomy unhelpful. As always, one framing question seems to beg another, with the result that 'seemingly discrete realms of knowledge feed on and over-determine each other at particular times' (Moore and Vaughan 1994, xxv). A casual street-side conversation about '*eby'ekyalo*' (things of the village) might invoke strong feelings about '*eby'okukulakulanya*' (development) and even about '*eggwanga lyaffe*' (our nation). The categories fall apart.

Markets are both high days and holidays, yet my interest is also in the everyday conversations and practices that make up a sense of place. In chapter three for example I describe staffroom gossip and politics at Kikomera Senior Secondary School. In particular, I show how the teachers' descriptions of it as a '*Third World*' school position it within colonial, national and transnational discourses on learning and education. As Koptiuch (1997, 236) points out, 'the 'third world' is a name, representation, not a place'. In that chapter I also question the glib use of the 'global/local' phrase in understanding these articulations. All too often 'local' is narrowly conflated with the face-to-face immediacies of everyday life. What about the often far-flung, always mediated intimacies that make up social worlds?

The market day was a long and hot one. If the ethnographer is doomed to making mental

notes, there are innumerable less vicarious pleasures to be had from the occasion. Many would complete their business early, and retire to a spot of profit-sharing in the shaded beer-stalls that took up more than half of the market, drinking and drumming till sunset. Others would visit the solitary diviner, or chance their luck on out-of date Chinese pharmaceuticals left baking in the sun. Late afternoon would bring lorry-loads of already filleted Nile perch from Lake Victoria, and crowds would gather in the hope of a cheap fish dinner. The paradox here was that the fillets themselves had already been spirited away to Europe on the previous day's flight, such that the best one could hope for was fish-bone soup. Watching even the scraps off the North's table being sold for a price, I was initially shocked - until my school-teacher companions jolted me out of my piety. *'Do you know why Ugandans call those fish bones 'phillies'?' asked Sam with a glint in his eye. 'No idea,' I replied - not daring to suggest that it was a sophisticated and cynical reference to the bit of the fish that they didn't get. 'They're named after Philly Lutaaya!' came the response, amidst sniggers of laughter from the others. Philly Lutaaya was a well-loved Ugandan pop star. More importantly, he was one of the first to openly admit that he had AIDS, and constantly sang about his experiences, as a way of both warning others and encouraging an openness about the disease. Stigmatised at first, he later spearheaded an important movement challenging Ugandans' prejudices towards the virus. He died in 1992, and the emaciated fish skeletons were to be a witty and poignant memorial.*

Such moments of reflection and remembrance remind me that my **second** aim in this thesis is to provide one possible history of a Ugandan present. The parade-ground approach to history, with past events lined up one after another, is of little use in understanding the bewildering entanglements of genealogies and memories that we all find ourselves recounting and reliving. Yet this immediately begs some questions. Which 'present'? Whose 'present'? If ethnographies have long been haunted by their 'presents', or the lack of them, then in this thesis I try to locate myself and you, the reader, firmly within a particular time and set of spaces. The time is mid-decade, the last of the second Christian millenium (Haraway 1991), whilst the spaces range transnationally across two continents. They include a rural school and market town in Uganda, a mixture of London's community centres and sports grounds, the public culture of Kampala's bars and drinking places, and finally the lecture halls and student residences of Uganda's oldest University - Makerere. Yet in order to write this history of the present, one can but range across very different scales of time, attending to the intense legacies and consequences of the past. From ancient pre-colonial Buganda to post-colonial diasporas, from 1930s anti-colonial protests to 1990s nationalisms, from brutal civil war to the sweet nothings of contemporary campus lovers, I attempt a partial narration of localities and memories, ranging across continents and yet

intimately shaping lives.

As dusk fell, people began their long return trip home, some more steady on their feet than others. Taxis revved impatiently, and the bar that I sat in with my fellow teachers grew less crowded. The video shack would start up in the yard behind us, drowning the valley in Schwarzenegger's grunts and gunfire. One of the speakers was set up on the roof, giving the film a good half-mile publicity range. The video-tapes were often badly dubbed into Luganda, though the dubbers often sounded a bit dismissive of Hollywood's high-speed subtleties, occasionally having a good laugh at something quite extraneous to the original script, or giving us their breathless version of events rather than narrating the lines themselves. Two performances for the price of one. The rapid cut'n'mix between AK47 sound effects and Luganda spin produced what sounded to me like a hip garage rap, but my mates were scathing about such videos, arguing that they'd seen them all as kids, and were used to much better quality pirate copies in Kampala. So it was only me who would crawl under the heavy canvas tarpaulin that ensured a private screening, sitting with the likely lads for my introductory course in American popular culture, gripped by the impossible antics of filmic hyper-masculinity. Some of Kikomera's lads had also been recruited into a new populist security force, entitled the Local Defence Units, and so had their very own Kalashnikov rifles to hand. I would shrink to the other end of the bench.

All sorts of readings of the cultural dynamics associated with market day are possible, but there is a danger in celebrating the unpredictable, the carnivalesque, the Rabelaisian defacement of the pastoral by the modern, with the return of rural 'normality' expected on the following day. If the description is unsettling, then perhaps it is for the reader to question their own presumptions that make it so. Where should one expect to find a sense of 'the modern', of 'development', and why?

Perhaps it is to be found in Crystal Palace, South London, on a bright July Day, as the newly recrowned Kabaka arrives in a black limousine to inspect a parade of 'Ebika bya Buganda e Bungereza'.¹ It is the annual sports-day of the Buganda clans in Britain, described in chapter two, a recently invented Ugandan tradition intended to boost the popularity of things Kiganda. Perhaps an engagement with the modern is to be found in the blaring mixture of rap and *kadongo kamu*,² seducing passers-by to the tape-stall in Kikomera market. Or perhaps it is to be found for

¹ Clans of Buganda in Britain

² Kadongo Kamu - 'One Guitar Music'- is a popular Ugandan musical genre, mixing lilting rhythms with lyrics full of moral blandishments.

sale on the pavements of Kampala, where this week's copies of Time and Newsweek proclaim the latest saga of American racial politics. Similarly transnational discourses on gender equality also spill out from women's magazines and from the local press. This is one possible reason for the success and politicisation of the women's movement in Uganda, as I suggest in chapter five.

Where indeed should one find 'modernity' or 'development', and why? Part of the problem comes from the teleological resonances that echo within the two words, such that by using them one inevitably presumes that some places are more 'modern' or 'developed' than others. There is inevitably a Eurocentrism contained within the words, that a (white) West ultimately defines what counts as 'progress'. Writing in English from within a Euro-American academic setting, this is perhaps unavoidable. But words can always be given new meanings or inhabited differently. This is shown in work which has argued that there is a constant reworking of a 'multiply experienced modernity' (Pred and Watts 1992) occurring within every national public culture (Breckenridge and Appadurai 1995). The terms, these critics suggest, imply a constant debate *with* the present, *in* the present. Their strategic use can challenge Euro-American development hierarchies, showing how all senses of being 'at the cutting edge' or 'up to the minute' are culturally constructed, even if people do not use the 'modern' word to describe this experience.

A **third** aim in this thesis then is to pay attention to understandings of the 'modern' and of 'development' visible within Ugandan public culture. Yet using the words too much can result in them becoming ciphers, indicating little more than an awareness of the contemporaneity (if not simultaneity) of all societies within a transnational economy. In so doing, they can become fashionable but rather meaningless, discouraging consideration of the way in which people mobilise the terms to instantiate particular relationships of inequality. How is it that London is inevitably seen as more 'modern' than Kampala, and Kampala more modern than Kikomera? I explore some of these problems by looking at ways in which 'development' is mobilised and represented in chapter four. Depending on who is doing the invoking, 'development' can be a frame for interpreting or understanding some practices as having less kudos or status than others. Questions of language are never separable from those of materiality, and I try to show both the material and symbolic consequences of negotiating such harsh inequalities.

The enabling power of money is a concern throughout this thesis. In contests over what counts as 'fashion' or 'progress', one's perceived cultural status and social position are closely linked to one's material wealth. This is particularly visible amongst the young social elite to be

found at Makerere University in Kampala. In chapter six, drawing on a number of informal discussion groups held with students, I look at the way understandings of masculine status shape expectations of gender performance. I describe the seeming indivisibility of 'love' and 'money' in Makerere students' emotional and sexual relationships, and the resultant exclusion of those without financial or cultural capital.

I return to the bar, and the discussion that continued that very evening, as us regulars peered out from behind a decorous net curtain at the passing stragglers. All at once a blaring tape-player whizzed past, audible if not visible in the sudden gloaming of a Ugandan dusk. Again, there was much mirth and backslapping, this time aimed at the 'backward peasant' who was cycling proudly home with his new possession, determined to show it off as loudly as possible. *'He's from deep in the village,'* Richard smirked, *'a real peasant.'* The young teachers were from outside the area. With no land here, they could afford to be scathing of those who depended on it. *'As they used to say at University,'* chirped up another, *'very L.'* I tried to hide my lack of comprehension of the joke. He noticed. *'Very Local!'* he finished. The irony here is that such positioning always works both ways. Despite the brave talk, the teachers were aware that they were teaching in what throughout Uganda was described as a *'Third World'* school, to be laughed at and despised by those in the best schools. Perhaps everyone is having to negotiate 'being modern', but some have more of it to negotiate with than others. Despite people's very different positions within relations of power, many of my conversations would collapse these differences into a fatalistic shrug. *'Ffe, ab'ekyalo, tuli emabega nnyo. Tewali eky'akukola' - 'Here in the village we're just really backward. There's nothing we can do.'*

Shouldering the 'lubengo'

In early 1996 Uganda was caught up within the excitement of the first democratic election campaign for many years. The electioneering and campaigning was countrywide, but there was one particular idiom that attracted my attention. Yoweri Museveni made a repeated appeal for people to share the *'lubengo'* (*grindstone*) in working for progress. A persistent campaign theme for him was African backwardness, which he suggested was due to Africans' inability to master technology. Yet in the same speeches he would suggest that sharing the weight of a heavy and roughly-hewn grinding stone was the only way forward. He was given several of the stones during the four-week campaign, and occasionally posed, grinning, balancing one on his head.

Should one shoulder the weight of the past? With all the brave talk about 'modernity' and

the future, it is easy to presume that the past has receded over the horizon, and matters little. Nothing could be more dangerous - for the politics of memory, the re-editing and revisioning of history, ensure that it is still a potent political force in the present. If the '*lubengo*' serves as a useful Ugandan reminder of the weight of past words and actions, then I have a **fourth** aim in this thesis: to shoulder two of my own symbolic grindstones. They are of very different provenance, but the success of my attempt to write about the contemporaneity of modern Uganda also depends on my ability to continue to remember to attend to and hold onto these *lubengos*, to keep them in mind.

What are these two grindstones? One is the compromised history of anthropology. It is a discipline which inevitably became imbricated in many ways with the colonial endeavour. This is a history that requires constant vigilant attention. Indeed, I began with a bout of ethnography, 'worlding' a place in a way familiar to those scholars who measure truth claims by the quality of such close-grained and seemingly transparent social realism. However the discipline still has many questions to ask itself about the ethics and power relations of a methodology which presumes the study of every aspect of human social life is within its remit. Its mixture of intellectual voyeurism and frequent representational ventriloquism is troubling, and its racialising origins still persist in shaping the forms of knowledge about 'others' that are produced. In chapter one I argue that ethnographic ambitions must be set clear limits, the limits being the political agendas and principles that ultimately also determine intellectual work. I attempt to write a history of the disciplines' engagements with ethics, exploring the possible ethical foundations for an anthropological methodology. Institutional and disciplinary legacies however compel a textual performance which perhaps breaks such limits and risks ignoring this *lubengo*.

If this seems a little harsh, I should add that I have equally strong criticisms of other disciplines and other intellectual agendas. Anthropology is far from being a unitary discipline, and many have struggled with these issues and questions. Edward Said (1993) comments that an intellectual's role is to challenge orthodoxy and dogma, to unsettle conventional wisdoms. Perhaps all disciplines, all institutional positions, are both *flawed and enabling, limiting and empowering*.

For these reasons I attend closely to the pioneering examples provided by Donna Haraway in her feminist cultural studies of science. She points out that studying technoscience requires 'an immersion....where the analysts, as well as the humans and non-humans studied, are all at risk - morally, politically, technically and technologically' (Haraway 1997, 190). She argues that

ethnography in this extended sense 'is not so much a specific procedure in anthropology as it is a method of being at risk in the face of the practices and discourses into which one inquires' (ibid). If an ethnographic attitude was indeed solely a 'mode of practical and theoretical attention, a way of remaining mindful and accountable, and of not about taking sides in a predetermined way' (ibid), then it would have much to recommend it. Much of this thesis is motivated by such ideas and political ideals, exploring their potential within the disciplines of anthropology and African studies.

The other *lubengo* I carry is the racialised history of colonialism in Uganda. The Buganda kingdom was described by early missionaries and visitors as a superior and 'civilised' nation, and such attitudes shaped subsequent political relationships between Buganda, the rest of Uganda, and the colonial power. Baganda nationalism, supported also by early assumptions about the ancient and regal provenance of Buganda, has become a prominent aspect in contemporary national politics. Here one realises the impossibility of writing the nation without re-writing it. Far too much scholarship on identity, ethnicity or the nation, tries to exactly define and delimit such terms and their political effects, using dry prose and carefully chosen words. In so doing it denies the endlessly resonating and multiplying quality of words and the emotions that go with them. By discussing Ganda-ness tangentially, through an account in chapter two of historical narratives and a discussion of the politics of the Luwero war, I try to avoid closing down the debate. That is not to say that I can drop or ignore the grindstone of colonialism. I give but a partial perspective on the divisiveness of such pasts, and their central force within national and transnational cultural politics, in Britain as much as in Uganda.

These then are the symbolic pasts I attempt to carry and attend to in this ethnography of a contested present, of mid-1990s Uganda. Perhaps these *lubengos* (grindstones) are the material, grain-crushing incarnations of the Derridean concept of 'paleonymy', the sedimented and historical force of words, that one has to work within and yet attempt to challenge. Throughout this thesis I keep them in mind as I analyse the reinterpretations and contestations of 'modernity' and 'development', within and beyond the Ugandan nation-state.

A brief word on style and presentation

Metaphor gets piled on imagery on top of ornamentation. Perhaps now is a moment to refrain from my indulgent troping and explain the approach and appearance of this thesis. At one level, I am attempting to describe the contested and political nature of all cultural practice, so to open

up a conversation within Anthropology and African Studies. The critically important insight coming out of much work within Cultural studies,³ that 'the cultural has become a crucial ground for political struggle' (Gilroy 1987), is one that I keep in focus throughout this thesis. Yet if culture is never separable from power, then nor is any attempt to describe such cultural politics. This not only makes 'neutral' scholarship impossible, but also demands of the writer to think through the consequences of their work, to reflect on their political project as much as on their theoretical aims. This partly explains my self-reflective and occasionally ironic prose style, as I seek to find different and provocative ways of engaging with academia whilst also recognising the limits to theory. We have to mark ourselves in the stories we tell, and to recognise that our retelling of them is always interested and partial. If 'power is about whose metaphor brings worlds together' (Star quoted in Haraway 1997, 39), then where to begin and which language to use are critical questions.

Given the politicised moment of reflective post-colonial questioning that I find myself in solidarity with, why do I persist with an engagement with anthropology? In answer I suggest that there may be a value in finding new ways of writing ethnography that try and take up the political demands of cultural studies and post-colonial literary theory. Such writing would work through anthropology's complicity with the inequalities of colonialism, would acknowledge the discursive power of textuality, but would also try to engage with the specifics of everyday life practices and histories of post-colonial worlds. The dialogue is more than overdue.

If less visible to colonial anthropologists, it is clear now that in this new globalising moment, constantly reworked understandings of affinity, difference and exclusion require new methods of study and new genres of writing. There may still be a place for the 'monograph', for single location studies, but increasingly these are harder to combine with a larger sense of the multiple and cross-cutting power dynamics that shape the worlds we live within. This thesis is an engagement with the discipline of African Studies, but it is one that constantly seeks to open the conversation out more broadly. What can anthropologists and students of Africa learn from those writing about post-coloniality? Where does Africa begin and end? Can one write about contemporary Africa without writing about diasporas and cosmopolitan racisms, without writing about black contributions to a supposedly 'European' modernity, without writing about the

³ I refer particularly here to the germinal work of Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, amongst others, in engaging Althusserian Marxism with social history and psychoanalysis so to write about popular culture and 'cultural politics'. In his Phd dissertation, Moore (1995) deftly summarises their work, and opens up the possibility of a dialogue between cultural studies and anthropology.

transnational flows of ideas, ideologies and things that so shape political culture and everyday life?

These questions, like many others, will remain unanswered in this thesis. I hope only to hint at possible answers, to evoke viable alternatives. If the places, metaphors and times we live in are fleeting, fragile but always intertwined, then we have to find a genre of writing to match.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ANTHROPOLOGIST'S NEW CLOTHES?

RETHINKING THE POLITICS AND ETHICS OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Abstract

In this first chapter I introduce my thesis and its style of presentation by relating it to the often tempestuous argument within anthropology over the politics and ethics of ethnographic research. Beginning with a conversation I had whilst in Uganda, I go on to suggest that the discipline's contemporary 'crisis' is partly due to its attachment to this 'ethnographic method', however minimally defined. I provide a short history of ethical and political debates throughout twentieth century anthropology, showing the continued relevance of these debates for anthropological practice today. Aware that by itself a theoretical/political critique might seem detached from the complexities of ethnographic practice, I ground this history with examples from ethnographic writing on Buganda throughout this century. In particular, I look at the way power is represented in anthropological work carried out by John Roscoe, Lucy Mair, Lloyd Fallers and Audrey Richards.

I then turn to the question of research ethics, often presented as a personal and moral concern for the individual ethnographer. Introducing the discussion with brief examples of the dilemmas I experienced in adopting ethnographic methods, especially over 'covert' research, I go on to show the difficulty of composing 'ethical' research guidelines. I argue that focusing only on ethics can also be a way of de-emphasising and downplaying the power relations that structure every aspect of the ethnographic encounter. Ethics talk can be a way of separating and 'purifying' (Latour 1993) one area of thought from another. By showing that ethical debate cannot be separated from questions of power, I argue that ethnographic research cannot be justified - in and of itself - as an ethical practice. Social research *is* an engagement with power. I end by exploring the possibilities and limits of an ethnographic practice shaped through and within the tensions of the 'political'. It is my sense of the constraints on and limits to anthropological translation that shapes my presentation of subsequent chapters.

The anthropologist's new clothes?

Rethinking the politics and ethics of ethnography

*' the historical moment of political action must be
thought of as part of the history of the form of its writing'*

Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*

A Ugandan mise-en-scene

The backdrop: February 1995, a cloudless day in Kikomera, a small town in the Ugandan countryside. The vivid greens of the nearby vegetation are regularly resprayed dusty orange by high-speed minibuses hurtling by on the murram road. A filling station stands complicit; a brusque brick building, fortified with a roughly-welded inch-thick iron door and bars on the windows. The scene is softened by a jaunty sign hanging from the scalding tin roof, 'WE SERVE COLD DRINKS....TO MAKE YOU FEEL COOL'. The simplest of wooden benches in front of the building seats two men deep in conversation.

The characters: Nathan Mulindwa, a Ugandan filling-station manager and part-time critical commentator on global politics. His attitude to the present capitalist world system is one of furious ambivalence, mixing a desire for the 'high life' with anger about Uganda's structural poverty and the continuing effects of neo-colonialism. David Mills, from the Euro-American metropolis and a neophyte student of anthropology, is more solipsistic, filled instead with qualms about the ethnographic project.

The conversation: Broad-ranging, from the Newt Gingrich phenomenon to Shell's support for the Nigerian regime, via the life of Malcolm X. As usual, the conversation has ended up focusing on international racial politics, and the way that the 'West' colonised and continues to exploit Africa. On this particular day it focuses still further on the presence of the white anthropologist in this particular place. Unlike most conversations in Kikomera, it is conducted in English.

The script:

N: You know, David, people are often talking about what exactly you are doing here. They see you with me and ask me why I am friends with the white man.

D: (Intensely curious, though frightened to hear the answer) And what do they say about me?

N: Well... Some say that you are a poor person, and cannot afford to live in Europe, so you have to live here. Others say that you are actually very rich, but don't like showing that you have money. And others.....well others say that you are here to spy on us.

D: (Half-stunned, half-relieved that his position is so obvious) And you...what do you say about me?

N: I say that you are a friend, and that you are different from many whites because you want to learn from Ugandans. I say that you have come to do research on the war and on the hard life we have here, and that you have read many books on Uganda, and that you are studying us....

D: ...so you do you think too that I am..I am a....

N: (smiling broadly) yes.... that you are a spy!

(At this moment conversation is broken by two packed taxis roaring into the station at frightening speed to fill up with petrol)

Rich, Poor, Beggar, Spy?

This conversation was a formative moment of the 18 months spent in Uganda doing social research some still call 'fieldwork'. I was almost thankful that my mate the petrol station manager had spelt it out for me so bluntly. No matter how I justified my role, be it the value of an engaged scholarship, of documenting harsh material inequalities, or even of collaborating in the 'fight' against AIDS, it made little difference. For the rural Ugandans I attempted to live amongst there was a sneaking suspicion that I was no more than, and no less than, a spy. Too often they had been courted by others struggling for political power, and they had little reason to trust me.

It was not that 'research' in itself was a completely alien concept. Rural Ugandans were increasingly coming across it in the various manifestations of the 'participatory development' jingle that trilled across every NGO's village meeting. They had joined in with social mapping sessions and 'needs assessment baseline surveys', filled in agency questionnaires and government censuses. Too often they got little in return. Research was often something done by rich urban types, coming to the village in shiny large four-wheel drive Mitsubishi Pajeros, staying for as

short a time as possible, pausing only to collect their *'per diems'*. No wonder then that the folks at the receiving end were also brushing up on their development-speak, ensuring they got their 'facilitation' costs and the possibility of attending more remunerative seminars. This they could make sense of. But I did not seem to fit into such a scenario. I knew that I didn't 'fit' in any other way either, being neither a missionary nor a full-time teacher. The racial divide, the economic polarities and the complex power relations structuring all our engagements were too glaring to be ignored. So what was I doing there, both they and I asked ourselves?

Ironically this dilemma - albeit at a more rarefied level - has long been one of the motivating questions for anthropology. The experience of radical difference, together with attempts to come to terms with it, has long been grist for anthropology's grindstone. Once shrouded in scientism, it is now discussed more openly, yet anthropologists still have much work to do in recognising the seductive and often racialised lure of 'otherness', wherever it might be found. Acknowledging this desire, or even celebrating its lodestone status in enabling a better understanding of 'self/us' and the possibilities of translation, does little to counter the power relations contained within it. Thinking through the implications of this desire (my own included) has led me to reflect on the politics of anthropology, the subject of this first chapter.

The talk in recent years about ethnographic reflexivity can lull one into a sense that the dilemmas have been left behind, a sense that the unequal power relations within research disappear if one talks about them enough. I would demur. The issues remain. They are perhaps inherent within a research methodology that privileges, even with caveats, the 'lived experience' of the ethnographic/existential encounter. A great deal has been written (Clifford 1988; Geertz 1988, Marcus and Fischer 1986, Clifford and Marcus 1986 etc) on the techniques of textualising this encounter, and the authoritative truth claims that result. Less time has been spent thinking about the politics and dynamics of the research encounter itself. I intend to re-address the balance. I do so by first presenting a history of anthropology's debates over politics and ethics, before turning to ethnographies of Uganda as specific examples. Finally I look at the possibility of doing ethical research, thinking about possible ethical groundings for ethnography. In these different ways I attempt to negotiate that always immanent issue - power.

Crisis as Usual?

There is a delicious terror to be had in knowing that an intellectual discipline apparently proclaimed dead 30 years ago is still alive, gaining strength from every reading of the last rites.

First Peter Worsley, who in the context of the demise of the all-powerful functionalist paradigm, gave a trenchant speech entitled 'The End of Anthropology' at the 6th World Congress of Sociology (1966). Then came the impassioned debates about anthropology's implicit (and not so implicit) involvement with colonial and neo-colonial rule (Asad, 1973, Scholte 1972). Next came postmodernism and the 'literary turn'. Three decades and many polemics later, one begins to realise that it is the very millenarianism of such invocations and incantations that keep the whole anthropological ritual alive. The material aspects of an academic discipline - prestigious journals, lecturers with tenure, courses with students - also ensure that the worst prognosis is that of recurrent fever; debilitating but also strangely restorative.

Debates over the values and principles of the discipline are important to anthropology's history, along with the ways in which such crises are resolved or silenced. Each time the debate is positioned or polarised differently, a new - if fragile - consensus can be constructed. I want to begin by trying to outline the history of this conflict and self-criticism, and to think about why the polemical counterpoints continue to rumble. Too often they have played out the unproductive Kantian dichotomies of fact versus value, scientific objectivity versus moral principle. There is value in these confrontations, even if (and perhaps because) they are never resolved. Contextualising and condensing 30 years of clenched fists, I am under no delusion that I rise above the debate. This too is my own small contribution towards repositioning the argument.

Before I begin, a caveat is needed. Anthropology has never been one thing, and it is not about to become one. Questions of 'kinship' and social structure may have served once upon a time to unify a national social anthropology, but they do so no longer. There are numerous different practitioners of anthropology, with probably an equal number of divergent - and diverging - views on the subject. Many have developed dialogues with neighbouring subject areas. Subfields and specialisations appear at dizzying speeds, particularly in the extensive institutional context of U.S academia. I am thus wary of homogenising histories and bowdlerising beliefs. Yet the power of a single word to conjure up a community and an outlook is unavoidable. Recent efforts to make a seemingly de-politicised 'Anthropology' (in the singular) 'relevant' to the 'contemporary world' (Ahmed and Shore 1995, Bennett 1995) exemplify this. Some of the critiques that I discuss explicitly contest this imagined - if fractious - community. I shall do likewise.

What then unites the practitioners of this 'uncomfortable science' (Firth quoted in Wright 1995) today? Beyond the ancestral fathers, the founding fables and the compelling institutional

legacies, is it just the textual power of the 'Anthropology' label? Can one define an 'anthropological' research practice? Methodologically and theoretically (if not politically) contemporary anthropological research has much in common with sociological research and even with cultural studies. Qualitative 'ethnographic' research has been adopted by all the social sciences, despite the turn to textuality that many have also followed. Anthropology's fascination with 'difference' isn't unique either. So does anthropological practice still have any distinguishing features, beyond the specificity of its disciplinary and institutional history? Identities may well be multiple, burdensome and conflicting, but that doesn't mean one can do without them. I suggest that the discipline has long been sustained by a belief that *ethnographic research* involves *prolonged lived engagement* with the subjects/places of one's research.

What lies behind this desire for 'prolonged lived engagement', and the resultant 'ethnographic richness' that so delights the anthropological academy? Critical here seems to be the anthropological emphasis on the establishing and exploring of social relationships. Whether with people, places or things, the view is still that cultural practice is best explored through relationships, the more intensely 'social' the better. There is a tautology here that Strathern points out (1995), yet on the whole there is little doubting the value of this bodily and experiential knowledge, and the value of experiencing the 'practice of everyday life' (De Certeau 1984). The embodied richness of life may well be a mystery, but it is not to be deciphered, the argument goes, through merely reading texts (though this may be an equally social act). There is also an implicit notion of scale here - that it is the localised intimacy of face-to-face sociality that is important, with the further presumption that one has to remain in one 'cultural place'¹ in order to create and nurture such relationships.

This immediately brings up some questions. Quite apart from the ontological problems of presuming a relationship in order to know one, the emphasis on relationships entails a moral dilemma. The dilemma is this: social relationships are always moral ones - whether 'good' or 'bad' - but the values/morals of anthropology are not necessarily those of social life. Can one suspend one's own values in a social relationship oriented towards learning about those of someone else? Does it matter that one's own values clash with one's professional principles and responsibilities? Can an intellectual discipline committed to understanding different social values maintain its own? Even without raising the question of power, these questions provide a clue to the

¹ People, ideas and things are moving all the time. The culture-garden presumption that cultures inhere naturally within 'their' appropriate places - what Malkki calls a 'sedentarist metaphysics' (1992) - can make it very difficult to follow these movements and flows (see Marcus 1993).

persistence of the discipline's seeming existential crisis.

If 'prolonged lived engagement' is seen as a qualifying criterion for successful ethnographic research, then time as well as space is key. There is a view that only over an extended period of time can one get a sense of the rhythms of life in any particular social world. Sociological research might well be similar in focus, but rarely is so much stress laid on the long duration of the experience. Only such a ritualistic discipline could have recognised the power of rites of passage. Anthropologists use the length of their 'fieldwork' experience and the depth of their interpretations as the currency of their cultural capital within academe. The problem is this - the longer and more intense the social engagement, the greater the moral obligations laid upon the individual researcher. The questions of one's responsibilities and commitments become ever more pressing, especially as one's visibility as a 'researcher' becomes less obvious. Value-laden and always reciprocal relationships develop. The apogee seems to come on 'leaving' (and most do leave, even if they later return) the social world of which one has become a part, for then one has to suddenly remove oneself from all these social and moral relationships. In moral and existential terms this would seem to be a moment of crisis, an abrupt severing of ways of being, a decisive rupturing of idioms of sociality.

Worse, one subsequently has to think about how to utilise these relationships - or their memories - in another context, that of the academy. Whilst the rupturing may have been gradual and comprehensible to all, this new and necessarily instrumentalist attitude to social life requires of the researcher a rather different set of values, even if the utilitarian ethnographer is convinced some 'good' will come from the academic representations. So both the leave-taking and the subsequent re-presentation/representation of relationships are morally loaded actions, but often in a contradictory and antagonistic sense. They inevitably challenge the values previously shared, confidences gained, and communications opened up. Even if one sees writing as an amoral and value-free process, that still means effacing or remaining silent about values once held to be important. Perhaps some ethnographers never develop a sense of moral relationality during research, so avoiding this dilemma. By the standards of the discipline they would be judged to have failed. This dilemma has troubled me throughout my research. I develop and explore it throughout this chapter, but do not attempt to resolve it. This one will run and run.

This notion of 'prolonged lived engagement' is of course a trope, a rhetorical claim to authenticity that many will mock; like Geertz who wickedly teases the whole invocation of 'being there' (1988). Yet ethnographic accounts are written within a genre, and they have to achieve

recognition therein. Credit is now given to those who make explicit their own location and positioning, but the anthropological representation of other peoples' lives is ultimately what matters. Ethnographic 'experience' does count in anthropology, no matter what critiques have been made of its false transparency and unproblematic claims to legitimacy (Scott 1992, Mohanty 1992). How can you write about a social world if you haven't 'been there' yourself? So perhaps my minimal depiction *is* a dominant, if unvoiced, assumption in anthropology. Some, like Adam Kuper (1992, 1994), are more explicit in their attempt to 'beat the bounds' in defining what counts as contemporary social anthropology. Most are prepared to leave Evans-Pritchard's nationalised view of anthropology relatively untouched; the 'tradition of intensive field work through the native languages and for long periods of time, such as we have in England' (1950, quoted in Stocking 1996). For some the 'prolonged lived engagement' rhetoric has been useful to counter the primacy accorded the text by those theorists with a more 'post-structuralist' worldview. As a shared belief and practice, it strengthens anthropological resolve that 'engaging with the real world' is what counts. Post-structuralist critics don't always reduce everything to the text, nor do all anthropologists unthinkingly privilege lived experience, but the caricatures have their own power.

Throughout this chapter I use my 'prolonged lived engagement' depiction to think about the ethical and political implications of ethnographic research practice. I am not trying to prove it right or wrong, but rather to think about the values and positions it necessitates, both for the discipline and for individual researchers. It may well be anthropology's distinguishing feature, though I am suspicious of any attempt to elaborate disciplinary boundaries in the increasingly hybridised field of the social sciences. Nevertheless, the discipline's material history and institutional emphasis placed on 'fieldwork' has a coercive momentum and power of its own, and it is this that I recognise and negotiate.

In the sections that follow I attempt several things. I begin with the larger history of ethical and political debates within the discipline of anthropology, and the relevance of these older debates for anthropological practice today. I am aware that by itself a theoretical/political critique might seem unengaged with the complexities of ethnographic practice. So I situate this more general history with examples both from my own research and from ethnographic representations of the Buganda polity throughout this century. In particular, I explore the political positions and significant absences in the anthropological work carried out by John Roscoe, Lucy Mair, Lloyd Fallers and Audrey Richards. I then scale down, moving from disciplinary histories to the specifics of an individual researcher's ethics. I explore the possibility

of an ethical 'grounding' for an ethnographic research methodology. By showing that ethics cannot be separated from questions of power, I argue that ethnographic practice cannot be seen - in and of itself - as an ethical practice. I conclude that it can only be justified politically. I end by exploring the possibilities of an ethnographic practice shaped through and within the tensions of the political.

The politics of research I - a short history of anthropology

'Anthropology should go forward, like a horse in blinkers, neither looking to the right hand nor to the left' Edmund Tylor 1885 (quoted in Stocking 1996)

Any history of anthropology's engagement with politics and ethics starts on firm ground. This is the set of moral principles invoked in the 1838 founding of the anti-slavery 'Aboriginal Protection Society' (Stocking 1971), for it is to this society that the origins of the Royal Anthropology Institute of the United Kingdom (R.A.I.) can be traced. Yet my own interest is in the institutional development and professionalisation of the discipline in *this* century. I hope to trace the first rumblings of moral doubt and political discontent in a discipline that had initially proceeded so confidently, secure in the certainties of science.

I begin by comparing the institutional histories of American and British anthropology. The immediate notable difference is in their respective size, and the degree to which professionalisation took place. The American Anthropological Association (AAA) was only founded at the turn of this century, its antecedents notwithstanding. Yet perhaps because of its larger size, it was the first association to develop a sense of professional responsibilities. Franz Boas, committed pacifist and anti-racist (and now an honourable anthropological ancestor), made a public protest in 1919 with a letter to the Nation newsletter, protesting about four colleagues who had combined intelligence-gathering for the U.S. Government with their research. For his trouble, he was publicly censured by the Anthropological Society of Washington for bringing science into disrepute (Fluehr-Lobban 1991).

In Britain a sense of a distinct professional identity was longer in coming, perhaps due to the diverse interests of its practitioners, but this did not stop the anthropological section of the British Association from appealing for government sponsorship as early as 1896 (Stocking 1996, 372). It heralded a long history of attempts to make anthropology valuable to the practice of British colonial government, and an implicit acceptance of colonial values. This is a difficult relationship to chart. I do not want to simply resuscitate the caricature of anthropology as the

'handmaiden of colonialism'; but there is certainly an ambivalence and ambiguity in disciplinary attitudes that is important to explore. Wendy James (1973) suggests that Malinowski and Evans Pritchard were 'reluctant imperialists', moral (if not political) radicals. Yet their appeals to scientific impartiality to avoid being asked for advice by colonial administrations hardly exonerate them, nor does Evans-Pritchard's record as a colonial administrator and soldier. In the same volume, one of the first critiques of the colonial past, Feuchtwang (1973) and Asad (1973) are less prepared to compromise over anthropology's complicity in the colonial project, focusing on its inseparability from the larger imperial context. Whilst treading carefully around such polemics in his important history of the discipline, Stocking has no doubt 'that colonialism was a critically important context for the development of anthropology, and that the "colonial situations" of particular ethnographic episodes or ethnographic traditions are issues worthy of systematic historical investigation' (1996, p368).

A symbolic moment in this history would seem to be the forming of the I.A.I. (International African Institute) with its intention of 'improving the education of the natives "on modern lines" in the situation of contact' (Feuchtwang 1973, 83). Beginning as a meeting in 1924 between missionaries, scholars and academics, it was subsequently established in 1926 as an International Bureau to promote 'an understanding of African languages and social institutions with a view to their protection and use as instruments of education' (quoted in Stocking 1996, 397). Supported by the Rockefeller foundation, it soon developed into a formidable research institution. Through it, Malinowski developed the idea of a 'practical anthropology' that would study the problems of culture-change around the world, and, amongst other topics, 'the changing native' and 'what might be called black bolshevism' (ibid, 399)! If there was any doubt about the racialised foundations of anthropology, Malinowski makes it all too clear. Just in case this might be interpreted wrongly, Malinowski insisted that 'by the constitution of the institution all political activities are eliminated from its activities' (Malinowski 1929, 23). He was the first of many to invoke the theory/applied dichotomy by calling for 'concentration upon the study of the facts and processes' (ibid, 23). Certainly the first generation of British social anthropologists had no problem with assisting. Under this plan, many colonial administrators and missionaries were taught applied anthropology at the L.S.E. (London School of Economics) by the likes of Raymond Firth, Meyer Fortes, Lucy Mair, Bronislaw Malinowski and Audrey Richards. One could either study the whole course in Colonial Administration for the sum of 12 pounds and 12 shillings, or take individual courses, paying per instalment. One such course was Malinowski's 'Anthropology and Administration', 'intended to bring together administrative officers from the colonial services as well as missionaries and students of anthropology, and to establish the

importance of Anthropology for administration, as well as the value of practical interest in the theoretical study of native races' (Malinowski, quoted in Wakin 1992).

Increasingly anthropologists were both trained and employed by colonial administrators, and some even worked together (Brown 1973). There seem to have been no misgivings in Britain of the kind that Kroeber felt in America over maintaining one's research independence (Beals 1969). If anthropology was not simply a 'handmaiden', it hardly raised much dust either. The fact/value distinction was thoroughly enforced. Evans-Pritchard made it very clear that scientific research was 'bound to exclude moral values because they are methodologically irrelevant' (1946, 92), so obscuring the morality of the whole colonial enterprise from his particular intellectual 'field'. Yet he also bemoaned the way that he had never been consulted by the Sudanese Government for his expertise. He concludes his lecture by saying that, if anthropologists were to be employed by colonial administrations, it should at least be on decent terms!

The second world war was hardly the place for a discussion around ethics, and three weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the AAA placed 'itself and its resources at the disposal of the country for the successful prosecution of the war' (Fluehr-Lobban 1991). This is not as ridiculous as it sounds. There has been much controversy since over the involvement of anthropologists in the administration of the ten internment camps for people of Japanese descent (two-thirds of them American citizens) in California during World War Two (Starn 1989). Radcliffe-Brown's period at the University of Chicago from 1931 to 1937 provided this first whole generation of American 'applied anthropologists' with the theoretical paradigm of structural-functionalism, which was put to use in making recommendations as to the smooth running and harmony of the internee camps. Many of them subsequently participated in establishing a 'Society for Applied Anthropology' and publishing articles on their research in its journal, with some - like Elizabeth Colson - building a career out of studying the resettlement process. To their credit, it was this organisation which first put forward a statement of anthropological ethics in 1948, because of the very dilemmas they felt as to where their professional responsibilities lay when working outside academia. Not that they exactly resolved it in their statement on ethics, with one line reading 'The specific area of responsibility of the applied anthropologist is to promote a state of dynamic equilibrium within systems of human relationships' (1948, quoted in Adams 1981). The Anthropological Studies Association of the British 'Commonwealth' (ASA) took another 40 years to write its own statement.

At the same post-war moment in the UK, there was a distancing of theoretical anthropology

from its earlier interest in applied issues. In Evans-Pritchard's 1945 presentation to the Oxford Anthropological Society on 'Applied Anthropology', he distinguished very clearly between value-free scientific work and the 'common-sense' practical advice anthropologists could offer. Famously he commented that 'We are not social cobblers and plumbers but men of science on whom rests the responsibility of our time to record what cannot be recorded after us' (1946, 94). This, like the earlier appointment of women such as Lucy Mair to study 'less rigorous' topics like social change (Kuper 1996), served to demean any subsequent 'practical' analysis. This is not to say that anthropologists were consigning themselves to irrelevance, for according to Fortes ((1949) quoted in Asad 1973), the war had provoked a lively interest in Britain's Asian and African dependencies. The plans for post-war economic development would necessitate a good deal of social science research, and Asad (1973) notes how the ASA was founded in 1946 as a professional organisation to take advantage of such possibilities. Evans-Pritchard and Radcliffe-Brown were seemingly tired of the net-bag intellectual atmosphere of the Royal Anthropological Institute - having to share discussion space with outdated evolutionists and dusty archaeologists. Membership of the ASA was to be by invitation and unanimous approval of the members. Stocking (1996) portrays this new association as a 'very effective professional group, part trade-union, part debating society', confirming Leach's original portrayal of it as 'preventing the Universities from employing unqualified refugees from the disappearing Colonial service to teach applied anthropology' (quoted in Wright 1996). Given that most of its leading lights contributed to the 1950 volume 'African Systems of Kinship and Marriage' edited by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, with its extravagantly narrow focus on social structure, it is perhaps not surprising that broader debates about the profession's values and ethics had no space in this scientific world. How could one consider the interests of one's ethnographic subjects if the self-same subjects didn't feature as subject matter at all? A researcher's ethics were his or her own concern. In this atmosphere, there could be little consideration that the interests of these (invisible) subjects might include the final dismantling of the whole colonial system (Feuchtwang 1973).² This association, according to Asad (1973), was the undoing of anthropology, for it meant that professional distinctiveness could be maintained through an established network of vested interests, rather than through any particular commitments or doctrine. Expansion (by 1968, the ASA had 240 members) and diversification were best managed by an espousal of professional neutrality, an agenda that was to have lasting

² Stocking (1996, 412) also notes that the 'value-free' ideology of anthropology was partly enforced by the British Government's denial of a visa to one of Malinowski's students. It was refused on the grounds that he was a Communist. After this Malinowski urged his students that they had to choose between 'radical politics and scientific anthropology'.

consequences.

So the 'winds of change' in Africa and elsewhere seemed not to ruffle anthropology departments throughout the 1950s and 1960s. A prescient exception to this fusty calm is found in Australia, where a special volume of 'Anthropological Forum' was devoted to the issue of anthropological ethics (Tugby 1964) and political commitment (Jaspan 1964). Perhaps Australia's rather different relationship to the colonial metropolis, together with the immediacy of Aboriginal political challenges, made these issues more pressing. It has also been argued recently that the Manchester school, Gluckman notwithstanding, took a more consistently political perspective than other departments (Werbner 1991, see also Brown 1973). Yet over in America, despite the work of Sol Tax and the Society for Applied Anthropology, a 1963 AAA volume on teaching anthropology hardly mentions ethics and politics. A discussion of ethics refers only to people's values in the community of study, and not to anthropological responsibilities (Fluehr-Lobban 1991). Project Camelot changed all that, marking the start of a very different sort of debate about anthropology's 'applications'.

In the early 1960s in America, President Kennedy's inauguration promise to 'oppose any foe' was a very real one, exacerbating the feverish tremblings over the spectral plague of communism. He poured money into any form of social science research which might seem to have strategic uses. Some social scientists concurred with this whole new spin on applied anthropology, with one contributor to a volume entitled 'Social Science Research and National Security' noting that: 'Without question social science research is in a strong position to contribute useful knowledge in designing and developing internal security forces' (Pye 1963 quoted in Wakin 1992). Appropriately enough, US research and development funding increased rapidly during the Kennedy presidency, with Wakin (1992) estimating that between 6 and 10 million dollars were spent annually on counter-insurgency social science research by the end of the 1960s. Project Camelot was the first spook to be revealed.

For all the rumpus that surrounded 'Camelot', it is ironic that it was never actually carried out. A research project proposed by the Army Research Office, it was intended as a large-scale 4 million dollar study of the 'procedures for assessing the potential for internal war within national societies.....(and) to identify those actions which a government might take to relieve conditions which are assessed as giving rise to a potential for internal war' (document from the Army's 'Special Operations Research Office' published in Horowitz 1967). This document goes on to point out the linguistic inexpediency of the term 'counter-insurgency' in describing US

Government programmes, and suggests the unforgettable alternative '*insurgency prophylaxis*'. The high-ranking social scientists initially used as consultants did not view it as an undercover operation, and despite some misgivings over army involvement most justified it on the grounds that it would influence militarist thinking for the better and/or enable 'applied' research on a large scale (Horowitz 1967). Things had got to the stage of attempting to recruit Latin American academics when a Norwegian sociologist got word of the plans, and spread word in Chile of what he called the 'imperialist features' of the research design. The Chilean press exploded with outrage: this was in the same month when United States troops had once again occupied the Dominican republic. The ramifications of widespread Chilean protest quickly spread to the U.S., and within a week there was a congressional hearing. The project was cancelled.

Yet the damage had already been done, with anthropology having lost any innocence that it had ever disingenuously proclaimed. Debates began over what constituted scientific 'impartiality', over researchers' responsibilities to their funding bodies, and even over the very possibility of doing research in the ever-spookier climate of the cold war. Marshall Sahlins and others spoke up at the 1965 AAA meeting in Denver, arguing against any further involvement of anthropologists in such strategic contract research. As a result an AAA committee was set up to explore the issues. Headed by Ralph Beals, a 'Statement on the Problems of Anthropological Research and Ethics' was drawn up and adopted by the membership in 1967 (reprinted in Wakin 1992). This statement emphasised the AAA's earlier commitment to scientific freedom, but also delimits anthropologist's responsibilities towards his or her sponsors, in particular prohibiting them from clandestine government research....except in cases of declaration of war by Congress. The Camelot furore stirred up all the other social science conferences that same year. There were endless justifications and denunciations of and by those involved (Horowitz 1967). Suddenly people began to consider their own positions as intellectuals, recognising that 'academic authority' did not absolve one from ethical or political responsibilities.

Next came the Vietnam war, ensuring that the issues were not going to disappear. At the AAA meeting in the following year, a resolution was narrowly passed condemning the use of napalm and chemical defoliants. Initially the chair had proclaimed that the resolution was political, and hence irrelevant to the Association's stated purpose to further the professional interests of American anthropologists. At this point someone from the floor shouted, 'But genocide is not in the professional interests of anthropologists' (Gough 1968 quoted in Gledhill 1994, 211). The chair was over-ruled, yet as Gough points out, anthropologists were ready, under pressure, to condemn mass slaughter, but not their own government. The letter pages of the AAA

newsletter in the late 1960s were full of impassioned debates over the importance of values (or lack of) in the association. Things were not helped by the appearance of an advertisement in the *Anthropology Newsletter* for an anthropologist to work in Vietnam with the Psychological Operations Headquarters in Vietnam (Fluehr-Lobban 1991). As the political struggle appeared irresolvable, the AAA executive agreed to compromise by setting up a committee to explore such ethical issues, chaired by Eric Wolf.

It is no coincidence that a number of articles on the ethics and politics of research appeared at this time (Sjoberg et al 1967, Gjessing 1968, Berreman 1968, Gough 1968), with a debate developing within anthropology (and the other social sciences) about a possible code of ethics. The strength of Gough's feelings about the Vietnam war are no surprise. She left the US in 1967 in protest at the anti-communist witch-hunt against her, and in particular at the way the academic grades she gave to her students were being used as selection criteria by Vietnam draftboards. In her article she calls for a serious engagement and study of revolutionary theorists and movements, rather than for the escape option into 'the remotest, least unstable tribe or village' that they can find (1968, 405). Articles by Gjessing and Berreman, also written in the shadow of war, show an equally explicit commitment to a politicised anthropology. Berreman notes that to say nothing is not to be neutral, arguing that the notion of value-free social sciences may well have been valuable in maintaining the cohesion of the modern University, but was also a dangerous myth that could again lead to the gate at Auschwitz. The abstract of Gjessing's article concludes with a flourish: 'The idea that science can be disinterested is, furthermore, a delusion...anthropology is to a considerable extent an outgrowth of colonialism, and it cannot become relevant to the modern world, no longer colonial, unless anthropologists first recognise and then neutralise this bias and then choose problems and develop theories more appropriate to everyday reality' (Gjessing 1968, 402). These then were explicitly politicised appeals, justified by ethical principles. As Berreman (1991) remembers, it was a time when 'The virtuous and villainous were unambiguously defined no matter which side one was on, with few who were neutral or undecided.'

The 'Thailand Controversy' (Wakin 1992) proved a fitting finale to five years of increasing professional turmoil. In early 1970, the issue of counter-insurgency reappeared as a student group sent Eric Wolf a series of leaked documents detailing the relationship between US Government officials and social scientists working in South East Asia. Eric Wolf mishandled his position as chair of the ethics committee by publicly condemning those involved, and the fractiousness continued fortissimo all year. Wolf was accused of McCarthyite tactics, and

eventually forced to resign, but the AAA was still in danger of splitting down the middle. A new committee headed by Margaret Mead exonerated those involved, declaring that the Thailand researchers were 'well within the traditional canons of acceptable behaviour for the applied anthropologist' (Davenport et al 1971, reprinted in Wakin 1992). Belatedly and rather half-heartedly, this report did acknowledge that a new ethical imperative had emerged from the Thailand case, yet it immediately retreated to the suggestion that the ethics committee should 'confine its attention to matters of scholarly and scientific ethics'. Their attempt at exoneration was later rejected by the AAA membership at their annual meeting, a meeting at which Eric Wolf read out a graphic description of a napalm bombing, and the matter was left unresolved. The report's depoliticising recommendations inevitably signalled the future frame in which ethics would be discussed.

The details of all this are less important here than the issues involved, namely the confused relationship of ethical responsibility to political commitment. At one level these are clearly linked, with one's political beliefs inevitably influencing one's ethical views (and vice-versa). Yet to talk about 'ethico-political' issues is of little help, for given the contested forms of peoples' politics, there would inevitably be no common ground on which to base a set of anthropological research principles or ethics. Seemingly the only solution, so the argument goes, is to stress the importance of the *profession* of anthropology as a shared commonality, so to codify a set of ethics related solely to that profession, leaving its members free to hold their own political views. This depoliticisation and decontextualisation of ethics reinforces the notion of a value-free science to which its members are expected to aspire (no matter what they think in private), and assumes a liberal notion of ethics as an autonomous region to be agreed upon in rational debate. Yet this can also result in the interminable and ungrounded 'emotivism' that MacIntyre identifies in contemporary moral discourse (1985), where the notion of an enlightenment rationality presumes an ethereal sphere of reason and rational debate above any particular historical or social context. It also presumes, as MacIntyre points out, that there is some specialist set of virtues needed for this profession, rather than recognising that the 'moral considerations which are crucial for fieldworkers are moral considerations for all human beings' (1993, 5).

The politicised heat of the Vietnam war provided the context for the drafting of the AAA code of ethics (entitled 'The Principles of Professional Responsibility'), finally approved in 1971. Passions ran high in the academy over its content, and whether Wolf's ethics committee (which had positioned itself in opposition to the Executive) would have any adjudicatory role. The code was a powerful statement, declaring in no uncertain terms that 'Anthropologists' paramount

responsibility is to those they study. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first' (AAA 1971). It also states that no secret research should be agreed to or carried out, and insists on accountability, including even the possibility of sanctions on those who jeopardise peoples studied or betray their professional commitment. It was these principles that anthropologists like Berreman, Wolf and Jorgensen fought for in the early 1970s, and again protected against dilution in the mid-1980s when a watery modification was proposed (Berremann 1991).

Given this lengthy political struggle, one cannot dismiss this anthropological code of ethics as the interminable emotivism of MacIntyre's caricature. Yet the question of sanctions was a crucial one. The debates in the pages of *Current Anthropology* at that time revolved around whether such a code could ever be enforceable, and what the consequences of punitive measures might be. A first test case came up with Colin Turnbull's degrading description of the Ik in 'Mountain People' (1972). Fredrik Barth condemned Turnbull in vitriolic and impassioned terms (Barth 1974), calling for sanctions to be brought against him. The subsequent debate revealed a divergence of views, with several anthropologists arguing that the account was not to be taken too literally, as it revealed more about the limits of humanity than about the Ik. Turnbull was informally ostracised but never professionally sanctioned. The episode revealed the ambiguity and paradox of having an unenforceable moral code. In subsequent years, only a couple of cases were brought to the Ethics Committee, usually over accusations of plagiarism.

Given this trans-Atlantic noise, why were there no similar debates in British anthropology over responsibilities to one's sponsors, namely the Colonial government? One can contrast the political energy of America's public sphere during the Vietnam war with a seeming lack of British scholarly engagement with anti-colonial independence movements and the end of Empire. Perhaps it was the result of the small size of the anthropological establishment in Britain, and its insular theoretical remit. Few of the anthropologists working in Uganda touched on the heated politics of Buganda nationalism or anti-colonialism, as I discuss below. Audrey Richards (1977) indicated the efforts made by the East African Institute of Social Research to stay neutral throughout these disputes, refusing to make any public pronouncements. Writing 15 years after independence, she was still quite prepared to justify this position on purely anthropological grounds, arguing instead for the 'fascinating field of comparative work' (1977, 48) that the Institute was pursuing. At that moment, comparative work of a rather different sort was going on in Amin's Uganda, as any individual or group deemed to be a threat to his rule was killed.

An exception to this silence was found in the work of Peter Worsley, though his Marxist critiques of colonialism never received prominence within anthropology. More visible were a number of subsequent leftist critiques of British anthropology (Goddard 1969, Banaji 1970). Coming from those outside the discipline, these critiques did not precipitate the kind of ethico-political debate that had divided the AAA. It was not till much later that Anne Akeroyd campaigned to get the ASA to accept a code of ethics, finally ratified in 1987 (Akeroyd 1984). It was a rather ambiguous affair, aiming to provoke thought as much as to provide guidance. There was no mention of sanctions. It received little attention.

The ratification of the AAA's ethical code in the US did little to solve these ethical questions. The debate continued, with Asad's (1973) edited volume 'Anthropology and Colonialism' providing the first British contribution, though most of its contributors focused on the ambivalences of past colonial involvements rather than the politics of neo-colonialism. Hyme's (1972) volume 'Reinventing Anthropology' took the spotlight in America, with the editor suggesting that if anthropology did not exist, it would not need to be invented!. Contained within it were strong statements of personal politics (Berremann 1972), as well as some prescient thoughts on the importance of a reflexive and critical anthropology (Scholte 1972), predicting a trend that would catch on almost 15 years later. Pels and Nencel (1991) trace this intrusion of politics back to Kuhn's work on paradigms, not mentioning the previous five years of political and intellectual tumult that the contributors had experienced.

With the increasing theoretical importance of marxist ideas, academic contributions began to move away from a focus solely on the researchers' politics to a more totalising attempt to understand social life in terms of modes of production or world systems. The heady days of either being for or against global liberation gave way to a routinisation and co-option of Marxist positions, demonstrable in the increasingly formalised debates in Althusserian Marxism. A lonely yet refreshing rejoinder was found in Huizer and Mannheim's volume entitled 'The Politics of Anthropology' (1979). It again provided a wide-ranging and radical set of projects, summed up by the position that 'anthropology is politics, generally the politics of domination' (Huizer 1979, 15). Few agreed. Raymond Firth suggested in 1972 that, far from Marxism providing a fundamental challenge to anthropology, it actually could be deployed as just another tool in the anthropologists' explanatory armoury. The defensiveness and lack of experimentation that seemed to define the 1970s British anthropology are unflatteringly evoked by Adam Kuper (1996).

In this cursory history, I have chosen to focus on that troubled object 'anthropology' itself, and can but acknowledge other more politicised intellectual histories existing contemporaneously. One would be the feminist theorising that increasingly challenged anthropology's patriarchs in the 1980s. Strathern carefully captures the tensions between the two (1987), but by so doing inevitably downplays the way that each had transformed the other. Yet the teaching of anthropology in many places remained determined by institutional histories and disciplinary legacies. This is exemplified by the seeming continuing lack of engagement with the theories and politics of Cultural Studies.

Any comprehensive tale of anthropology's politics would need to tell other stories too, and in particular the increasing influence of Derrida and Foucault in the social sciences, popularised by Edward Said's work 'Orientalism' (1978). Yet the implosion of various strands of theorising, loosely characterised as postmodernism and poststructuralism, is often seen as impinging on the anthropological consciousness only in 1986 with the publication of Clifford and Marcus' valuable 'Writing Culture' (1986). Singling out one such influence is disingenuous, but there is little doubt that this book did serve to trigger off a whole new display of anthropological anxiety, this time set within textual parameters. The book's contributors, influenced by the dominance of the 'linguistic turn', concentrate on the textuality of the ethnographic project. Despite its challenge to all writers to 'rethink the politics of cultural invention', it was the politics of textual production that primarily interested them, and the power of writing to create worlds and envision cultures. Fascinating and productive though the subsequent debate has been, their focus on writing has tended to narrow down social analyses of power. Writing within a similar genre, Marcus and Fischer (1986, 34) even criticised the earlier radicalism of Hyme's (1972) work, calling it a document of the moment which was 'too immoderate and ungrounded in practice to have much effect'. This denial of solidarity with such a insightful antecedent is unfortunate, but also revealing. With the new emphasis on writing and language, experimental ethnographies proceeded apace, but in doing so often diverted attention from thinking about the practices and positionality of researchers themselves. An important exception here was the work of Johannes Fabian (1983) which focussed on anthropology's 'denial of coevalness', its inability to make connections between the worlds of researcher and researched. The 'prolonged lived engagement' that anthropology celebrated continued to pose difficult political questions. What sort of engagement could one achieve? How could one write about power relations when writing was in itself a move to power? As the discursive nature of lived experience (Scott 1992) was difficult to comprehend, people focused on the interpretation of literal texts, particularly those of older anthropologists (Geertz 1988). Textual politics in this sense are important, but by themselves

have an unhappy penchant for ending up on the shelf. Caricatures of post-structuralism as 'reducing everything to text' gave others an excuse for not engaging with the debates at all.

Another consequence of Derrida's influence is the increasing recognition of the problematic history of anthropology's 'passion for difference' (Moore 1993). The role of the ontological category of the 'other', seemingly the object of the discipline's categorising desire, also needs to be challenged. It is not an aspect of anthropology's politics that I explore here, but it has been thoroughly criticised, from Said's (1978) view of Orientalist desire to Spivak's (1987) recognition of the 'epistemic violence' to the 'other' that such discourses involve. Inverting the fashionable potency of the term 'hybridity', Young (1995) describes the history of this urge in the colonial desire to cross boundaries and get 'a bit of the other' (Hall 1992b, 23). Such critiques now make impossible a definition of anthropology's project in relation to any imagined 'other'.

Ending this truncated history of struggle, it would seem that the polemics continue. Oddly enough, it is the same debates that get replayed: objectivity versus principles, neutrality versus commitment; and this despite an awareness that the constitutive power of language reveals the artificiality of such dichotomies. A dominant position in British anthropology would seem to be represented by Adam Kuper's attack on the politics of American anthropology, which he caricatures as nativism (1994). His answer, cosmopolitanism, is envisaged as a conversation with other social scientists on the comparative dimension of the enlightenment project (1994, 551). This is not a political project; or so he argues. 'It cannot be bound in the service of any political programme' (ibid). To ensure his point is made clearly he also makes it in his increasingly influential history of British anthropology (1973, revised 1983 and 1996), and in the initial articles (Kuper 1992) and editorials of the European Anthropological Association which he was pivotal in setting up. He is helped in this regard by Gellner (1992).

Across the much-travelled Atlantic, Kuper's caricature of 'nativism' appears unfair in light of the subtlety and complexity of anthropological debates over contemporary cultural politics, which extend well beyond the politics of writing. The pages of *Current Anthropology* are still crisp with controversy, most recently a replaying of the older objectivity/militancy debate (D'Andrade 1995, Scheper-Hughes 1995). Framing the dichotomy in that way produces a rather stale division, but several of the subsequent commentators succeed in contextualising and synthesising it. Other writers such as Starn (1991, 1994) and Swedenburg (1989, 1992) emphasise the importance of an anthropology attentive to power, whilst many more demonstrate their politics in their choice of subject or theoretical approach. Annual AAA conferences are still

the disciplines' public sphere - with the political economy of the academy and the accumulation of intellectual cultural capital often the cause for anger and debate. One example from the 1992 AAA conference in San Francisco was an 'elite' session with six top US anthropologists, injudiciously entitled 'AIDS and the social imaginary'. The combination of this title in this location, an exclusive invited panel, and the visible discrimination of gay and lesbian academics in the discipline provoked a good deal of protest and the unforgettable T-shirt caption: 'These natives can speak for themselves'. The politics of textual criticism may be important, but so too are all aspects of power within academic practice.

The politics of research II - Historicising ethnographies of Uganda

Important as this broad disciplinary history may be, I am also aware that in itself a theoretical/political critique might seem unlocated or unengaged with the complexities of ethnographic practice. So I want to ground this more general history of anthropological ethics and politics with a consideration of ethnographic representations of the Buganda polity throughout the twentieth century. Throughout this chapter, I have argued that an attention solely to ethics can be a way of depoliticising and 'purifying' (Latour 1993) debates over power. As Donna Haraway comments with regard to science, 'The power to define what counts as technical or political is very much at the heart of technoscience. To produce belief that the boundary between the technical and the political, and so between nature and society, is a real one, grounded in matters of fact, is a central function of narratives of the Scientific Revolution and progress' (1997, 89). In this vein it seems appropriate to consider how boundaries between the historical and the political are defined and represented in three generations of ethnographic writing on Buganda, both with regard to dynamics within 'Ganda' society, and to relations with the world beyond Buganda.

In particular, I wish to explore the important work of researchers like John Roscoe, Lucy Mair and Audrey Richards, with particular attention to the 'significant absences' in their writing. Given my focus thus far on the politics and responsibilities of anthropology, it seems only reasonable to assess anthropological engagement with not only the specifics of Buganda nationalism and monarchism, but also the larger political debates in Uganda over the anti-colonial independence struggle. Isolating European intellectual endeavour in this way enables an exploration of its impact, both on theorising in the academy and on the Ugandan public sphere.

I begin with the work of the first absent presence in Ugandan ethnographic endeavours, the divine (but short-lived) anthropological kingship of Sir James Frazer. A prodigious writer and tireless textual traveller, Frazer's writings had grand evolutionary plots and a constant search for the presumably rationalist motives behind customs and beliefs (Stocking 1996). His work and ideas have recently been revisited (Feeley-Harnik 1985, Geertz 1983). Frazer figures in this narrative not only because of his influential writing on the rites and images of kingship (*The Golden Bough* 1911-1915), but also because he was Reverend John Roscoe's mentor and intellectual guide.

Roscoe was one of the early representatives of the CMS (Church Missionary Society) in Uganda, but after meeting Frazer in Cambridge whilst on leave in the late 1890s he also became an amateur ethnographer (Ray 1991). He made the best of the enforced confinement of European missionaries within the Buganda capital and wrote about Baganda customs, responding at length to Frazer's lengthy 'armchair' questionnaires - the second edition of which had 507 questions! Frazer's guidance and interest in the monarchy were ideal for Roscoe's attempts at an ethnography of kingship. His endeavours were rewarded by a subsequent close working relationship with the *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister) of Buganda, Apolo Kagawa, and the publication of 'The Baganda' (Roscoe 1911). Given the intellectual context of its writing, it has stood the test of time well, described by Ray (1991, 23) as 'an anthropological classic'. Rowe, describing it as 'a solid, near definitive study' (Rowe 1967, 165), praises its lack of an evolutionist framework, and its thankfully short section on kinship.

Describing it as a monograph belies the fruitful and supportive collaboration of Kagawa and Roscoe, and their joint efforts challenge some of the easy truisms made about the lone-ranger ethnographic hero. Kagawa worked hard to provide elderly and important interviewees for Roscoe, whilst Kagawa seemingly drew on the same transcripts for his own work (Rowe 1967). Kagawa was a prolific gentleman of letters as well as being a skilful statesman and shrewd politician, and yet he is also notable for having produced the first African-language ethnography - the respected 1907 *Empiza za Baganda* (Customs of the Baganda). This followed on from '*Basekabaka be Buganda*' (The Kabakas of Buganda), a record of the oral traditions of kingship, completed as early as 1897. Such scholarship - even if motivated partly by a desire for Buganda political autonomy - heralded a strong Ganda tradition of research and scholarship. The importation of numerous printing presses enabled Buganda's own literary Golden age, with social historians like James Miti (1938) and Hamu Mukasa (1938, 1946), litterateur Kabakas (Daudi Chwa 1928, 1932), travel writers (Mugwanya 1914) and folklorists (Michael Nsimbi 1971, 1956)

to name but a few. Several of these and subsequent writers contributed numerous scholarly articles to the Uganda Journal, and the legacy of this vibrant intellectual public sphere still continues today. These fascinating texts deserve closer attention, particularly given their ambivalent accounts of colonial power.

This effusion of memoirs, letters, newspapers, pamphlets and much else is comprehensively reviewed by Rowe, who notes that 'there is a rich vein of Luganda written sources, both unpublished and published, which has only begun to be mined' (Rowe 1969, 18). Commenting on the implicit political agendas that lie behind much of the work, Rowe argues that a common theme in the writings is one of moral exhortation, and the importance of protecting 'Ganda-ness' against European influence. The extravagant myth-making displayed by some of the clan historians will be discussed in chapter two, along with the sudden efflorescence of an anti-colonial Ganda nationalism that occurred subsequently.

This then was the vibrant intellectual context in which European anthropologists came to work. Given that Buganda differed from the predominantly oral cultures that had become the standard focus of the ethnographic gaze, it is intriguing to see how different generations of British researchers dealt with such a productive and literary public culture. Predictably, they pay it little attention. From Roscoe through to Audrey Richards and the work of the East African Institute for Social Research (EAISR), Baganda and Ugandan scholarship is rarely mentioned.

John Roscoe's agendas are shaped more by Frazer's brand of urgent 'salvage' anthropology, a genre that is still extant a century later. He writes that 'if we had begun work earlier we should have been able to get old people who would have given reasons for some of the customs' (Roscoe 1901, 117). As always, unsullied purity is to be found fifty years previously. The relationship between the two blossomed, but Frazer's theoretical voyeurism was declining in favour, and the numerous subsequent ethnographic works published by Roscoe were of little consequence - save providing sensationalist exotica for the British press (Ray 1991). That said, his ethnographic description was sensitive, comprehensive and ahead of its time, despite the suspicions cast by 'professionals' over the work of an 'unrepentant missionary' (Rowe 1967).

Roscoe was no different from other turn-of-the-century European writers, fascinated by the might and complexity of Buganda political culture. He commented that 'of the Great Bantu family, (they) are perhaps the most advanced and cultured tribe' (1911, 6). Such comments can be found throughout the travelogues and missionary accounts, and are hardly surprising. They

would have been written in semi-imprisonment, close to the centre of what was, at its zenith, a stunning display of Imperial power. The grand vistas afforded by the immense straight roads cutting through the countryside to the capital, the stories of battles won and sacrifices made, the pomp and pageantry of court life, all contributed to the imagery. Such accounts, I suggest, greatly shaped not only subsequent European attitudes towards the Buganda polity, but also Baganda views about their seemingly effortless political and social superiority. Taken together, these ideas were to constantly shape political struggles within Uganda itself throughout the twentieth century. As Fallers (1964, 14) comments over 50 years later, 'the Baganda are an intensely self-assured people, certain of their identity and their place in the world'. Social identities weren't simply created through and within the modernist project of state-formation (cf Vail 1989, Ranger and Hobsbawm 1983), but colonial rule did enable whole new understandings of the nation. Despite Kabaka Mutesa's failed efforts to maintain a regional hegemony and the subsequent upheaval of conquest and the religious wars, Buganda still negotiated itself a privileged position within colonial hierarchies.

Such disruption and conflict get only a few paragraphs at the beginning of Roscoe's book, part of an arrival trope in which he acknowledges the changes that now exist in Buganda. He describes the 'comfortable railway' (1911, 1) that has replaced the 'wearisome plodding' of times past required to reach the region. This is an honest way to begin, even if somewhat motivated by his nostalgia for the cruel certainties of an older Ganda regime and its belief that their kings 'were the most powerful of all the sovereigns..in the world' (1911, 3). After the first few pages no further mention is made of the major upheavals - civil wars, Kabaka Mwanga's forced exile to the Seychelles, the British ascendancy - that would have so shaped the previous twenty-five years of his informants' lives. At least his account is written in the past tense!

Reading Apolo Kagwa's work gives one a similarly dislocating experience, especially in *Basekabaka* (1901), an unbroken and dense retelling of oral histories about Kabakas long dead. Its role in legitimating Ganda claims to political autonomy will be discussed in chapter two, but Kagwa's interest in historicising Ganda culture and his determination to record such narratives can only be applauded. His grandly Cartesian maps of the *Kibuga* (capital) and *Lubiri* (Kabaka's palace), drawn with accompanying compass points and included in Roscoe's monograph, just add to the impression of imperial grandeur.

Between Roscoe and the next anthropologists to visit Buganda there was a palace coup of a rather different sort, as Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown separately strove to re-orient British

social anthropology away from its Tylorian evolutionist bent (Stocking 1996). This change of guard was far from tidy and is perhaps less complete than one might imagine,³ but by the 1930s the anthropological gaze envisioned an impossibly synchronic landscape, a demand that shaped subsequent theoretical 'developments'.

The next student to arrive in Buganda was Lucy Mair, sent by Malinowski as part of his campaign to found and direct a new anthropology, that of the 'changing native' (Malinowski 1929, 22), studying issues of labour, taxation and indirect rule, 'not in a political, but merely in an analytical spirit' (ibid 53). This was a gendered principle, for Malinowski seemingly felt that abstract theorising was too much for women. Mair's 'An African people in the twentieth Century' (1934) acknowledges the comprehensiveness of Roscoe's work, but points out that 'it does not envisage Baganda society as a mechanism of co-operation, and the links which should connect the structure of kindred and clan, of political and religious authorities, with the normal organisation of daily life are missing' (1934, xiii). Her account is very much organised - as the title suggests, and as prompted by Malinowski - around the 'effect of European contact'. Yet it is always in reference to 'a coherent reconstruction of the Baganda system as Europeans first found it' (ibid, 10). In an intriguing anticipation of globalisation theory, she recounts with some dismay a village in Masaka district where village gossip was almost non-existent, and instead she was asked, much to her dismay, searching questions about constitutional changes in Britain and the power of the Prince of Wales (ibid, 29). The result of her applied focus is the enumeration of a whole new set of problems - such as the loss of tradition and the dangers of what she describes as 'economic individualism'. She states her views strongly:

Ties of kinship outside the household - never so strong with the Baganda as among the Bantu tribes (sic) - have lost much of their importance, while the household itself is a much smaller unit than it used to be..nor is village community any longer linked together by a bond of common loyalty to a chief...success in life is now directly dependent upon individual economic effort. (Mair 1934, 275)

Written in a jarring mixture of ethnographic present ('in modern times') and imagined past tense ('traditional native life' etc), Mair's work seems an early example of the genre of 'the modernising African'. The loss of 'synchronicity' is seen as regrettable but inevitable, colonial rule is portrayed as a 'process of scientifically controlled adaptation' (ibid, xi) and the analytical aim is to 'estimate the degree of success or failure with which the newly introduced elements

³ Ferguson (n.d.) suggests that development is anthropology's 'evil twin', because both still define themselves in relationship to the evolutionary paradigm that, in its various forms, structured nearly all Victorian social science (Stocking 1985).

have been assimilated and the reasons for this success or failure'. Similar in approach, her account is much less comprehensive than Roscoe's, and she seems rather frustrated by her inability to spot the 'mechanisms of co-operation' that were central to Malinowski's theoretical project. This is exemplified by quotes like 'there is altogether much less of such co-operation (kinship) now than there seems to have been in the past' (ibid, 126). Such opinions seem closely tied to the way that the 1900 Uganda agreement was represented in scholarly work as having introduced all the worst excesses of European individualised land tenure and 'commodity logic' (Strathern 1988). Either the 'African' was too native or was too western - they lost out either way. If Malinowski's work sought to understand the 'social function of institutions' (Stocking 1996) Mair seemed rather embarrassed by the 'modern system', where nearly all the institutions she described were seemingly so thoroughly shaped by British colonial influence. It is possibly not unconnected that her bibliography makes no mention of the by then numerous Ganda scholars writing on vernacular customs and history.

The same tensions are far more prevalent for the next generation of scholars clustered around Audrey Richards at the East African Institute for Social Research (EAISR) in the 1950s. The story of the development of Makerere University is told elsewhere (MacPherson 1964), but by the late 1950s it had become one of the most important intellectual centres in sub-Saharan Africa, attracting big names and big money. Richards, having been a pupil (and close friend) of Malinowski, arrived at the newly-established EAISR in 1950 as Director, and quickly attracted a strong British and American research team to the centre. As Gladstone (1992) notes, a substantial body of research was generated, African scholars were supported, and a locally published research series begun. Yet her earlier careful attempts to reconstruct the 'social relations of production and consumption' (Moore and Vaughan 1994) in Bemba society (Richards 1932, 1939) seem to have been replaced by a much more distanced writing about 'modernisation' and changing political structures in Buganda. Moore and Vaughan's re-study (1994) does however describe Richard's insistence on also seeing the Bemba as a bounded polity, united around the germinal metaphor of *citimene* (slash-and-burn agriculture). Throughout Richard's 'Land, Labour and Diet' (1939) - as in Mair's work - there is an implied danger of societal breakdown (and individual malnutrition) caused by the disruptions of wage-labour and the decline of ritual practice. Little surprise then that she encountered similar prejudices on arrival in Buganda, being told that 'you feel you are dealing with a set of individuals and not a community', and 'that kinship was no more important as a principle of residence than it is in a new housing estate in Great Britain' (1966, 16). Her one individually published study, a short history of a Buganda village (1966), tries to qualify such viewpoints. Yet she concludes that the

1900 introduction of individual land tenure was such a major change 'that the term "village structure" is hardly applicable' (ibid, 105), and argues instead that 'there is a wide variety of individual choice' over residence. She also admits that she never stayed in the village. Her emphasis on historical contingency and variability would seem to challenge many of the anthropological generalisations of the time, but she makes nothing more of it, save presuming Buganda to be an exception in some way. This possibly explains her attitudes towards research in Uganda. Her ultimate aim was to contribute to cumulative comparative studies, which would serve as a basis for a science of society. Ironically, any similarities in the supposedly centralised pattern of kingship amongst the Bemba and the Ganda would have been greatly overshadowed by the specific context of monarchist and nationalist protest in 1950s Buganda.

Audrey Richards edited two substantial research publications on development and 'change' in Buganda (1954, 1973), contributed centrally to another (Fallers 1964), and also published numerous articles and essays. The theme throughout the work carried out at EAISR was not so much the dangers of modernisation, but rather about how it might be enacted most effectively. Writing about economic migrants into Buganda (1954) or 'modern' farmers (1973), her work does provide a strong and nuanced sense of late-colonial economic life amongst the Ganda, even if there is inevitably less sensitivity to the gendered power dynamics (Moore and Vaughan 1994) within 'development'. Instead the focus is on the 'changing roles of traditional rulers' in Buganda' and on enduring Ganda political values and patterns of social mobility. The work carried out under Richard's direction from 1950 to 1956 is remarkable, to a contemporary reader, for its oblique engagement with the vigorous anti-colonial movements and nationalist politics of the period. Kampala was riven by the cotton riots in 1945 and 1949, whilst the expulsion of the Kabaka in 1953 simply hastened the forthcoming political crisis. Yet little of this appears in Lloyd Fallers' introduction to 'The King's Men' (1964), an edited collection researched during the early 1950s. Instead the reader is told that the Baganda are 'extremely acculturated', and that 'the new (Western) culture tends to have universal influence' (ibid, 9). The only hint of political tension comes from such throwaway prejudices as 'One may find the Baganda uncongenial' and 'they have also remained intensely chauvinistic'. Fallers has his own answers for this situation: 'They must cease to be Baganda first and last and accept a new identity in the company of their neighbours' (ibid, 12).

The contributions to 'The King's Men' range widely. Wrigley's chapter on Buganda's changing economy is grounded in the political economy of colonial cotton and coffee agriculture, whilst Audrey Richard's epilogue, written on the eve of Ugandan independence in

1962, is a potted history of 10 years of constitutional negotiations. In a chapter entitled 'Traditional Values and Current Political Behaviour', she details 1950's nationalist and oppositional politics, but these are always seen as 'following traditional Ganda patterns' (1964, 318). She points out that 'the political values of (Buganda's) people have been the main stumbling block in these negotiations' (1964, 357). In this way the main focus of the volume seems to be on transcending the context of the 1950s and attempting to define Buganda's 'core' political culture.

In doing so, the contributors to the book seize upon authority and respect - in Luganda '*obuyinza*' and '*ekitiibwa*' - as central (and clearly gendered, as women are hardly mentioned) organising metaphors in Ugandan society. Fallers argues that the authors are primarily concerned with 'the underlying features of culture and social structure which condition the way in which Government and politics can operate in contemporary Buganda' (1964, 12). By doing so he cleverly reduces the anti-colonial independence struggle to a cultural epiphenomenon. Seven out of the eight chapters focus on leadership and social status, using a mixture of political anthropology and behavioural psychology to write about attitudes towards authority. Given the power of anthropological representations, Baganda *ekitiibwa* (respect/honour) rapidly became an ethnographic shibboleth. It is hard to see the justification for this. Power and status would seem to structure all societies, and whilst '*ekitiibwa*' was (and is) one dominant cultural idiom, that does not necessarily make it an organising metaphor. It presumes a singular and uncontested moral hierarchy, rather than acknowledging the constant presence of both symbolic and material struggle.

The problem perhaps lies in the contributors' attempts to reconstruct an imagined synchronic past, replete with a cultural logic that overdetermines contemporary politics. The 'then' and 'now' dichotomising snapshot approach ends up once again reifying Ganda political culture, using a series of stereotypes about a status-obsessed society of social climbers. This is partly the consequence of metaphorical overload. Any attempt to make one word explain a whole society ignores the different possible interpretations of the word, and also that the very contest over the meaning of cultural idioms is central to understanding material and political transformations. For example, the contributors to the book make little of the very direct conflict between the *bataka* (clan heads) and the newly-appointed *batongole* chiefs, either in pre-colonial Buganda, during the conflicts over the 1900 agreement, or during the anti-colonial resistance. Instead all Ganda politics seems to be reduced to 'rivalry for the Kabaka's favour' (Richards, 1964, 308), a revisionist understanding of the complexities of the Kabaka's political position at different

moments in history. At the time of the 1900 agreement, for example, Kabaka Daudi Chwa was still a small child. By dehistoricising and downplaying conflictual pasts, one equally purifies the present.

I cannot help wondering about the role of the King in all this. In Victorian scholarship, Kingship was the ultimate symbol of centralising power, and inevitably early British visitors drew comparisons with their own monarchy. Richards writes of a 'mutual admiration society' (ibid, 309) amongst notable Ganda Christians and their British advisors. For James Frazer divine kingship was, following Robertson Smith, the central ritual of antiquity, where sacrificial communion enabled humans to face the divine. The slaying of the (divine) priest-representative of God in the Greek grove was an act that supposedly fertilised and guaranteed new life, and Frazer sought to find mimetic comparisons everywhere. It did not work in Buganda, as Roscoe discovered, for the Kabaka was only too willing to order the sacrifices of others as a way of reinforcing his own power. This has not stopped numerous subsequent authors writing about the significance of the kingship in Buganda. From Audrey Richards comparative papers on kingship (1960, 1961, 1968) to Roland Oliver's careful research on royal tombs and clan mythologies (1955, 1959) up to contemporary discussions of kingship (Kenny 1988, Ray 1991, Wrigley 1996), the focus still remains on the symbolic and material power of one figure, much as in Roscoe's account. Whilst these accounts are very different in form and focus, they inevitably revolve around the balance of symbolic as opposed to material power at the King's disposal. Richards, like Evans-Pritchard, looks at the political sociology of the ruling clans, whilst writers like Ray and Wrigley look primarily at the symbolic power invested in the King. As Kenny (1988) notes, the debate is a rather unproductive one, for power is at once material and symbolic. The long debate on sacred kingship just serves to reinforce the Kabaka's prominence in the debate, and to put him at the centre of what were surely multiple and cross-cutting power relations within pre-colonial Uganda.

For this reason the work of historians such as Low and Pratt (1960), Low (1971), Twaddle (1969, 1974, 1993) and Rowe (1966, 1969) is more nuanced and sensitive to culture, power *and* history in precolonial and colonial Buganda. Low and Pratt became involved in Fallers' study of 'new forms of leadership' (Fallers in Low and Pratt 1960) in the late 1950s. Whilst they admit that it is 'perhaps foolhardy' to assess the events of the Kabaka's expulsion only 5 years later, they insist that these have 'an intrinsic interest for a political scientist' (ibid, x). For all the anthropological rhetoric about leadership and political structures, the anthropological gaze was actively constructing an understanding of politics that excluded most of the new social

movements of the 1940s and 1950s. It was left to political scientists like Raymond Apter (1961) to carefully and convincingly document Buganda nationalism and burgeoning anti-colonial protest, as I describe in chapter two. Pratt's contribution (in Low and Pratt 1960) is entitled 'The politics of indirect rule', again something that gets little mention in Fallers' work. The anthropological endeavour to reconstruct the past so as to define the present, whether in terms of social relations or Ganda kingship, inevitably leaves out far more than it can include, and it is the effects of such representations that concern me here.

I would argue that anthropologists have to take responsibility for their depictions, rather than blame the disciplinary legacies of functionalism or its successors. The work at EAISR in the 1950s and 1960s is noteworthy for its significant absences. Late colonial Uganda was clearly a tense and difficult inter-regnum, but Richards' later claim to follow Malinowskian precepts 'as to the complete neutrality that was desirable for a fieldworker' (Richards 1977, 33) disingenuously avoids engaging with 'a country alive with political and religious disputes' (ibid). Two questions remain unanswered - how was it that the politics of colonialism could be so separated from discussions of modernisation, and how could 'politics' be defined so narrowly? If a 'purifying' (Latour 1993) focus on ethical questions can distract one's attention from power, then so too can a narrow focus on modernisation or kingship.

Anthropological ethics today I - The writing of research guidelines

After discussing the way that ethnographers and disciplinary associations have dealt with the 'political', I now want to turn more specifically to questions of ethics. How are ethical issues viewed within the anthropological profession today? Compared to - or perhaps because of - the contentious debates over anthropological politics, debates in the ethical arena have seemed increasingly disenchanted and marginal. I speak of anthropology here, for in many other professional settings, 'ethics speak' is acquiring a new legitimating function (Strathern 1996). Contemporary theoretical debates have given the 'Enlightenment' quite a knock in recent years, and with it the belief that ethical codes could act as a restraining guide to moral conduct in research. The political context of their formation no longer seemed to matter. No matter that the guidelines were often hesitant and hardly authoritarian, they smacked of universalising regulations, and their very limitations meant that they received little attention. Debates in the philosophy of science over rationality and relativism meant that the possibility of universal values was already being questioned (Wilson 1970, Overing 1985). As the untenability of either



side of the polarity became clear, so too did the flawed presumption that one could search for a universal morality. This was never the intention of the principles, as they were intended as rough guides for the researcher only, but they became tainted by association.

Ironically, ethics has now returned as a topic in political philosophy, yet is rarely mentioned in anthropology. The militancy exhibited in the struggle over the initial AAA code of ethics soon dissipated. There was the threat of sanctions in the 1971 AAA code, but they were never imposed, and paradoxically the ethics committee ended up adjudicating on petty conflicts between colleagues. The code, further and further removed from first context, seemed less like a set of hard-won principles and more like an episode of liberal hand-wringing. The famous first line of the 1971 Principles of Professional Responsibility (P.P.R.) that 'Anthropologists' paramount responsibility is to those they study....Anthropologists must do everything in their power to protect the physical, social and psychological welfare and to honour the dignity and privacy of those studied' began to look increasingly paternalistic and unrealistic. Which subjects were being invoked? Were their interests the same? How did one deal with a conflict in such interests? Debates over methodology, and especially over the ethics of the research process, received less and less prominence in the discipline.

It is this disillusionment that seems to be behind the AAA's recent decision to abandon its 1971 code of ethics (AAA newsletter March 1996, Fluehr-Lobban 1995), and to adopt instead the modest aim of 'ethics education'. It is their second attempt to revise their code, the first being defeated in the mid-1980s. A response to a postmodern scepticism suspicious of the AAA's moral authority to create a code of ethics (AAA 1996), the new approach emphasises the importance of socialisation, discussion and education. Yet they do ultimately hedge their bets by keeping a (much shorn) set of ethical guidelines. The ASA still has its own ethical guidelines, published in 1987, but there was resistance at the European Association of Social Anthropology (E.A.S.A.) meeting in 1996 to any attempt at drawing up a similar set of guidelines. Contradictions abounded at an EASA session devoted to issues of ethics. Some were concerned to explore once again the possibility of constructing a more universal ethics (Ulrich 1996), whilst others advocated a postmodern morality of endless doubt (van Meijl 1996). Pels (1996) advocated the promotion of a new 'ethics network' to discuss these issues, yet also pointed out the duplicity of ethnography, given the inevitability of the anthropologists' divided loyalties. On the whole, however, the topic attracted little interest. Yet whilst people might not be talking about ethics, there is still great interest in questions of value and agency. The importance of

'revealing multiple voices' and 'acknowledging people's agency' is widely accepted in contemporary texts. Are such principled positions another way of talking about ethics, or recognition that the language of ethics is seen as inappropriate in today's discipline?

Outside anthropology more and more institutions are creating professional and ethical codes as a way of legitimating their activities. Bio-medical research proposals have long had to pass through institutional research boards and hospital ethics committees, as has any psychological or physiological research. There is evidence that these external review bodies are increasingly looking at anthropological research proposals (Pels 1994, Amit-Talai 1996, Murphy and Johannsen 1990), often with uncomfortable consequences. Amit-Talai recounts how an ethics committee insisted that she obtain informed consent in writing from all her research subjects before doing research, as demanded by a provision in the Quebec civil code. If such a demand were more generally applied it would make most anthropological research impossible. It also highlights the confused and reticent nature of the discussion around anthropological ethics. The current mood in anthropology encourages a concern with responsibility, position, partiality and reflexivity, but this is primarily a consideration for the individual researcher, rather than for any larger grouping or community (if one exists).

So we are left with the curious paradox. An anthropology - or rather those anthropologists interested in such debates - which once fought to compose ethical codes in order to demonstrate its political commitment is now thinking of abandoning them, in the name of a critical autonomy and a still self-conscious, if rather different, politics. Part of this comes from a change in the conception of the 'political' to include every aspect of human life. This still leaves anthropology with the dilemma of whether ethical questions still matter. Ethics and politics have always to be historicised. As the Socratic philosophers pointed out, they are inseparable aspects of human behaviour, and ignoring ethical questions - which are questions of value, after all - won't make them go away.

My question is simple - should we still be talking about the 'ethics' of social research? If ethnographic research by definition must involve questions of personal value, I want to explore the different possible ethical frameworks one could adopt at a more individual level to 'ground' or justify research practice. I introduce this discussion through brief examples of some of the dilemmas I faced in Uganda. I then go on to consider in turn how 'deontological', 'Marxist', 'feminist' or 'postmodern' positions might serve to ground one's research ethics. I conclude that I am at risk of doing exactly what I have criticised so far, of 'purifying' and separating off one

form of knowledge from another. If one cannot talk about ethics without paying attention to power, then there cannot be a purely 'ethical' justification for a particular research project. The two have to be kept in tension.

Anthropological ethics today II - Research dilemmas and the search for pure ground

James: I first met James, an English teacher at the rural secondary school in Uganda where I taught for 9 months, in a discussion under the much-needed shade of a mango tree. It was my first day there, and I was on my guard, but I quickly warmed to him as we discussed books - he asked me to get him the latest Frederick Forsyth thriller. James also raved about the game 'Monopoly', and I promised that I would try and get him a set, which I did the following weekend in Kampala, bought off a hawker for a few pounds.

Full of energy and a committed teacher, James was great company. We spent a good deal of time together in the local bars, often discussing school politics, Uganda's troubled past and his money-making plans. He was fully aware of my plans to do research on masculine identities, and there would often be jokes in the staffroom about me being a feminist and therefore the harbinger of the 'women problems' that men faced these days. He even read two research papers that I prepared whilst in Uganda, and thought they were fair, if embarrassingly close to the bone. I did not directly quote him, but he enjoyed trying to guess who had made the other comments. Whether wary or uninterested in academic writing styles, he did not comment further.

We developed a very close friendship, often talking about all sorts of issues late into the night after rather too many bottles of beer. There were few taboos, and we would occasionally half-argue over homosexuality, which supposedly never existed in Uganda and is seen as a 'Western' trait, but has been clearly documented in the pre-colonial Kabaka's court. I learnt a great deal from discussions of our personal relationships, and we even got involved in several money-making ventures together. We are still regularly in touch. He always knew that our friendship gave me many research insights, and at one point even joked that I should go away and write down a particularly insightful conversation! I have always put our friendship before the demands of my research, yet this same research was ultimately the reason for our friendship. It is hard to see what a purely 'ethical' research relationship might consist of in such a situation. Our social and emotional relationship extended far beyond the presumed bounds of the research encounter, and it would be impossible to codify or legislate for such intimacies.

Rose: I was introduced to Rose, a senior and respected Ugandan academic at Makerere University, when I visited her house whilst looking for a room to rent. I ended up staying 18 months. She has published a great deal herself, and was well aware of what the research process involved - even if she was surprised when I never resorted to questionnaires. She used to joke about the way that Ugandans had got much more aware of the exploitative aspect of research - such that even her mother, from an old-established Ganda family and well-versed in social history, would always establish her fees before ever agreeing to be interviewed.

Despite her upper middle-class Ganda identity, Rose was unusual amongst Kampala dwellers in having a white lodger. Intended partly to familiarise her children with difference, it was no big deal, and she ensured that the dividing line between the rest of her family and myself was kept intact. Nevertheless, I inevitably spent a good deal of time participating in the household, and learnt a great deal about Ugandan social life from so doing. She had many visitors, and even nights sitting around the TV were filled with fascinating insight into and commentary upon political intrigues (both in the University and at the national political level) that I would never have otherwise heard about.

Given the way that the 'field' was understood even by Ugandan academics as typically comprising a rural area (as ever, the power of metaphor), she occasionally asked when I would start my 'real' research, perhaps not appreciating how much I learnt from living in her home. Given the shared knowledge and solidarity that comes from sharing a household, asking for consent to listen to conversation at breakfast would have been non-sensical. I often acknowledged how much I learnt from our discussions, and she in turn admitted that she enjoyed a good chat. Such moments were supposedly not part of my 'formal' research, but there is little chance of separating the things I learnt about Ugandan social discourse outside as opposed to inside that household. I benefitted from the sociality of our relationship and the knowledges we constructed within it in ways that constantly overflowed any notion of ethics that one might try to introduce to judge it. An ethical principle like 'informed consent' has little meaning if one is trying to write about the complexity and depth of all social relationships.

Richard: I noticed Richard, a postgraduate student, when he stood up to protest at a caricature of feminism as 'female chauvinism' made by another speaker at a conference on women's issues. His bravery at speaking out as a man was striking, and soon enough we got chatting about the tense and conflictual nature of gender relations at the campus. We soon became involved in

research together, interviewing male academics about their attitudes to gender issues, and later still organising discussion groups with students.

Richard and I ended up presenting papers at three conferences together. His own knowledge was invaluable, and indeed one of our research topics derived from an evening out together we had with two of his female friends who, though earning more than him, expected him to treat them all evening and then pay for a taxi home. On one occasion, one even asked him for some more money so she could buy herself another kebab!

As well as working together, our friendship also helped me understand much about Ugandan social mores. He was not only a friend and colleague but also a prime example of the pressures facing young men socially and financially. He acknowledged as much, and even joked that his story should be included in a paper we wrote together. He was both co-researcher and case-study. He of course benefitted from our relationship too, and I spent time helping him prepare an MA dissertation. We still plan to publish articles together. I imagine that he saw me as another white researcher benefitting from Ugandan research assistance, but I tried to make the exchange a reciprocal one. This doubling-up of social responsibility, the combination of the demands of friendship and research, is impossible to either reconcile or avoid.

The above examples are limited and superficial, momentary thumb-nail sketches that hint at some of the questions that were troubling me whilst in Uganda. To develop them in their specific context could be intriguing, but would be difficult to link into my subsequent discussion of possible ethical positions. I use them primarily to flag the lived experiences and exigencies of any particular research project, experiences that are central to, but often sidelined within, more general debate.

Despite their limitations, such examples hint at the dilemmas that filled my social relationships in Uganda, and perhaps those of many other researchers. It is a truism that all social relationships are also moral ones, and all are full of dilemmas, and yet this universality seems to be an anthropological excuse for skirting over those political and ethical dilemmas that anthropologists experience as **particular** to their research practice. I want to argue that the 'prolonged lived engagement' that I presented as characteristic of anthropology results in social relationships and friendships that extend beyond the situations and categories envisioned in research ethics guidelines.

For example, reciprocal and equal friendships involve the sharing of many intimacies. Yet the ethnographic method is supposedly guided by the ethic of 'informed consent'. What to do? Informed consent is a relatively new concept, arising out of a 1972 Supreme Court case over the principles of biomedical research, yet its moral immediacy meant that it soon became a defining standard by which to judge biomedical research (Fluehr-Lobban 1994). It is now a centrepiece of many ethics guidelines. Yet it has not been adopted wholeheartedly in the social sciences, and is often hedged with carefully clipped compromises and qualifications. Anthropologists have long documented the ethical contradictions research presents, (Sjoberg 1968, Barnes 1979, Bulmer 1982, Rynkiewich and Spradley 1976, to name but a few), but few have found satisfying answers to them. Even the ASA guidelines are sensitive to the impossibility of the demands for informed consent. I quote: 'It should be recognised that, even where no deception is intended, it is particularly difficult under the conditions of anthropological fieldwork for research participants to remember or even perhaps to realise that they are being studied all or most of the time' (ASA 1987, 4). It goes on, 'The most specific generic statement that can be made about adequate consent is that it falls short both of implied coercion and of full-hearted participation' (ibid, 3). One is left, at best, with an uneasy conscience. Later the guidelines acknowledge that covert observation and deception may both have methodological advantages, but suggest that consent be obtained post-hoc.

It is an example that compellingly brings out the dilemmas of transparency that all social researchers face. How secure is the space between coercion and participation? More than that, it begs all sorts of questions about one's epistemological and political assumptions - where, for example, does knowledge reside? Is knowledge created through interaction or possessed by individuals? What relationship do discourses and language bear to individuals? It is no wonder that ethics talk is so hard.

Faced with such dilemmas, one solution is to seek guidance from positions within the philosophy of ethics. Which ones? Whilst oversimplified for heuristic and comparative purposes, I suggest four possible alternatives. I describe the possibilities of 'deontological', 'feminist', 'postmodern' and 'marxist' ethical perspectives,⁴ to see how each epistemological position might be used to ground a research practice.

⁴ There are probably several more possibilities, though it would be hard to justify some forms of academia with a 'utilitarian' argument. For sake of discussion, these four will suffice.

Deontological Ethics

This is an argument that stresses duty and moral obligation, and is perhaps the position that 'orthodox' anthropology would use to justify its work. Most social science research is implicitly based on this principle, and is the conceptualisation of ethics I used in the above history. It focuses on the duties and responsibilities one has as part of a 'professional community', in particular as a member of a scientific community. Evans-Pritchard commented in 1946 that the anthropologist is best employing his knowledge when contributing to 'the solution of scientific problems'. It was his model that shaped a generation of anthropological scholars who 'strove to exclude moral values because they are methodologically irrelevant (1946, 82). Professional scientists work for scientific progress. Q.E.D. There is a strange tautology to the argument - professional ethics require responsibility but also commitment to the goals of the profession. The goal in this model is the contribution to scientific knowledge, with moral debates coming second. Yet this reasoning does reveal a set of value judgements at work - that neutral, value-free research contributes to an ultimate good, that which comes from the contribution to human knowledge by objective science. Objectivity could therefore also be seen as a value conception. The reasoning and the categories fall apart.

Despite the confused logic, there is little doubt here about the dominant ontology. There is a presumption that epistemology precedes ethics, that any moral judgement one might make depends upon one's objective understanding of the world, and it is always the process of understanding that comes first (D'Andrade 1995). As I will show below, not everyone would agree. Yet if value-free scientific knowledge is used for human benefit, then this would seem to justify its practice - the end being more important than the means. Or so it seems in anthropology research: one is aware of one's professional status and the concomitant obligations, but the results of one's research are usually deemed more important than the process of getting them. This is achieved to a great extent by the moral legitimacy that being part of a profession brings. As a professional, there is a commonly agreed standard of behaviour that one upholds, and that in turn legitimates one's own work.

This begs some difficult questions about the 'professional' status implicit in the ethical guidelines, and the worth of the aspiration to reach a professional standard of objectivity and neutrality. Does the very possession of 'professional' status enable a more principled way of behaving? From whence the power of the demeaning epithet 'unprofessional'?

As usual, the word thrives on its ambiguities. Alasdair MacIntyre's work exemplifies these ambivalences, as he both celebrates and condemns institutionalisation and professionalisation (1979, 1985). He has little time for his caricatured social roles of manager and therapist, whom he sees as characters of a rationalist modernity, unable to engage in moral discourse. He even argues that the truth/value distinction made by some social scientists corresponds closely with the concepts and needs of managers and bureaucrats, who desire law-like generalisations in order to predict and control society. Yet he also values the narrative traditions that professions such as medicine and law embody in their practice, sources of virtue in a world riven by futile, emotivist debates (MacIntyre 1985). Robbins (1993) focuses more specifically on the professionalisation of intellectual culture in recent years, but he too avoids simplistic condemnations of it; instead suggesting that professionalism is an ethical and political problem to be explored. As an example he takes feminism's equivocal relationship to the academy over the last 30 years. Both writers preclude any easy espousal of 'professionalism' as justification for one's actions.

I am particularly interested in the writing of ethical codes as a specific move towards professionalisation in anthropology. Whilst I earlier pointed out the politicised context in which they were written, one could also argue, after MacIntyre (1993), that these codes haunt anthropology, presenting it with hopelessly unattainable ideals, one of which is to be both insider and outsider, judge and participant professional and local (Pels 1996). MacIntyre suggests that academics are forced to mask their failure by adopting a certain form of practical relativism, which involves 'the suspension of the exercise of moral judgement itself concerning the activities of those who are the objects of inquiry' (1993, 5). He seems to be arguing that the professional codes prevent the recognition of moral difference that all genuine human social interaction involves.

Whilst I agree about the failure, I would demur from this strong relativist thesis. Instead I draw attention again to the issue of informed consent. There is no need for MacIntyre to invoke incommensurability to realise that anthropologists can't live up to these idealised principles. I would argue that if social research cannot abide by the ideals set for it within a deontological ethic of professional duty, then perhaps it is 'professional duty' rather than social research that is to blame. What then are the alternatives? In the following pages I discuss possible postmodern, feminist and Marxist ethical positions.

Postmodernism and ethics

Turning to postmodernism for ethical direction might seem oxymoronic, yet beyond the labels and the hype there is an extensive and provocative debate about ethics. 'Beyond' is the appropriate metaphor, for instead of providing a set of foundations, a postmodern ethics leaves one coping with infinite alterity and a respect for ungraspable otherness. The whole search is for a post-foundational ethics. This is the verdict of writers like Gilroy (1995) and Baumann (1993), who have reinvigorated debates over Levinasian ethics, re-positioning it within postmodernism. Writing from within the tradition of continental philosophy, Levinas argued that the dominance of epistemological questions within the history of Western philosophy has meant a failure to recognise the primacy of the ethical (Levinas 1969). He suggests that it is only thought which acknowledges the claim of the 'other' and its constant, unachievable ethical demands which can break down pre-existing knowledge categories. For Levinas questions of epistemology and ontology always come second - for first of all philosophy is an ethics, and moral relationships come before 'being'. As Baumann (1993) puts it, 'to be or not to be is not the question'. According to this formulation, there can be no foundations, no principles, and no grounds. A quest for an ethical code in this context is an impossibility, because human morality is always ambivalent, so 'no logically coherent ethical code can fit the essentially ambivalent condition of morality' (ibid, 8). There are few choices which are unambiguously good, for morality is inherently non-rational. Instead one is answerable to the Other and to moral self-consciousness. 'Morality is the absolute beginning' (ibid, 73).

Does this have any relevance for anthropological practice? Living with radical uncertainty and doubt, cultivating a 'practice of the self' (Foucault 1985, 1987) as a way of reconstructing oneself as an ethical subject, never feeling moral enough: these are all admirable aims but can begin to resemble a guilty liberalism. Too few answers to too many questions. And how about Levinas' concept of the ineffable 'Other' as an orienting moral force? A compelling moral principle, does it bear any resemblance at all to the anthropological subject? It seems not. After all, at one level, this 'Other' is little more than a 'rhetorical place-filler' (Norris 1994, 1995), a textual strategy rather than a realisable agenda. The importance of political positioning is made irrelevant here, effaced by an almost asphyxiating focus on the existential practice of morality. Placing the 'Other' always out of reach may even make one not bother to try. That ethical questions are also always questions about power can be conveniently forgotten. It is this conception of ethics as a master-discourse, preventing any hope of an emancipatory critique, that Norris (1994) criticises so powerfully.

The effort to imagine a postmodern ethics is an intriguing one, especially given modernity's flawed hope for a non-ambivalent ethical code. Yet the concepts of unbridgeable 'ineffable otherness' have little political or ethical utility in an anthropological practice, and indeed echo older relativist arguments. Anthropological research has more to do than the mere celebration of radical and incommensurable difference. Instead it surely involves the negotiation and bridging of different subjectivities, the attempt to create mutual knowledges and partial truths. I certainly sympathise with Scheper-Hughes's (1995) intentions in adopting a Levinasian notion of a 'pre-cultural' moral repugnance of all suffering as a way of justifying her research agenda in South Africa and Brazil. Yet it also presumes a great deal, making the moral anthropologist *the* central figure in an ethnographic account (Ong 1995). Gilroy (1995) also employs Levinas in his discussion of the politics of rap music, but in a textual rather than 'ethnographic' way. It is difficult to see how Levinasian ethics could be transformed to provide insights into the prosaics of research or interpretation, or to the dilemma presented by covert research. Ethnographic practice once again defies a simple ethical grounding.

Marxist Ethics?

A Marxist ethics might sound like a strange contradiction, but there has been a good deal of effort to try and explore the possible relationship between Marxism and a theory of morality (Nielsen and Patten 1983) or social justice (Geras 1985). This has sometimes proved hard work. After his early ethical humanism, Marx turned Hegel on his head, such that 'Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. Life is not determined by consciousness, consciousness by life' (Marx 1978, 154). This rejection of all ethical concerns would seem to leave little space for considerations of personal morality, and indeed is backed up by his bitter attacks on the 'utopian socialists' for their 'obsolete verbal rubbish' in talking about justice and rights (Marx, quoted in McLellan 1995). Althusser (1977) similarly rejected any recourse to ethics, relegating all value schema to the realm of ideology, best studied by 'objective' analysis.

Yet Marx, despite his scientising claims, was too prolific and sophisticated a writer to be framed in such a narrow way in the fact/value debate, and his writing is full of strong moral judgements, especially in the impassioned and fiery sections of Volume One of *Capital*. 'Accumulation of wealth at one pole is therefore at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality and mental degradation at the opposite pole' (Marx 1978, 431). Much of his writing also has vague but highly principled visions of what would replace bourgeois society and its class antagonisms, imagined in the *Communist Manifesto* as 'a free

association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all' (ibid, 491).

A good deal of intellectual effort has been put into resolving this paradox in his work over a question of values. Lukes (1985) suggests that there are actually two different types of morality in Marx's writing, that concerned with 'rights' which Marx condemns as ideological, and a concern for 'true' emancipation. Geras (1990) points out that this does not resolve the paradox, arguing instead that there is a genuine contradiction of belief. Others have tried to re-read him as being still strongly influenced by his early utopian humanism (Schacht 1988). Marx's project, whilst hardly value-free, was not one that can easily be re-interpreted as an ethical one. Any attempt by him to sketch what an emancipated society's morality might look like would have smacked of the very Hegelian idealism he had so successfully reversed. Anyway it would have made no sense outside the much larger context of his dialectical materialism where 'not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history' (The German Ideology, Marx 1978, 164).

This might explain the vehement reactions of contemporary Marxist writers towards the re-appearance of ethics as an autonomous field of inquiry within social theory. Jameson (1996, 52) comments that 'the return of ethics as a philosophical subdiscipline and its subsequent colonisation of political philosophy is one of the most regressive features and symptoms of the ideological climate of postmodernity.' A challenge to this chapter's focus on ethics, Jameson's statement and attitude reveals an uncompromising Marxism which would dismiss all talk of personal responsibility and intellectual positionality.

One begins to sense that the debate becomes framed around a question of scale. At what point does a question of ethics become a question of politics? Can the two be kept separate? Who is ensuring that separation, that 'purification', and why? Jameson demonstrates the weakness of a position which downplays these questions, and which is unreflective about the 'politics of the personal'.

Feminisms and Ethics

The diversity of feminist thought provides help in thinking about the entangled relationship between 'fact' and value, between objectivity and political principle. Feminist thinkers have long made connections between different types of experience, between the different scales of the political. From the fundamentals of an affirmatively empathetic feminist practice to the realms of

literary theory, interpretations of feminist ethics have often enabled a political critique. At stake has not only been the advance of theory but also the very presence of feminist thinking within the academic institution.

Turning to research methods, feminist epistemologies have thoroughly critiqued the objectifying and distancing power relations that characterise 'malestream' positivist research (Harding 1987, Williams 1990). Earlier commentaries suggested that the hierarchical relationship inherent in the research relationship could be broken down with the use of mutuality and empathy (Oakley 1981). Yet there was also a realisation that entering into 'deeper' and more intimate relationships with one's research subjects might be rewarding, but could also be exploitative (Stacey 1991). As Reinharz (1992, quoted in Wolf 1996) notes, 'Purported solidarity is often a fraud perpetuated by feminists with good intentions'. Paradoxically, the practice of a feminist ethic of care, responsibility and attention (Gilligan 1982) can make doing research infinitely harder, not easier.

Some feminist epistemologies responded to this by ensuring that the researcher's own position was visible, deflating masculinist truth claims by instead calling for 'partial knowledges' and 'situated objectivity' (Harding 1991, Haraway 1988). Rich's (1986) germinal essay on the 'politics of location', and its emphasis on working out 'just where one is coming from', has also shaped much subsequent feminist theorising. Along with allied debates in postmodernism and poststructuralism (Mani 1990, Caplan 1994), it has led to important debates in anthropology over positioning and accountability (Mackey 1991, Lindisfarne n.d.). Yet this is easier said than done. Mohanty and other women of colour bring home the impossibility of any easy congruence between a feminist researcher and her female research subjects, pointing out the racial and economic structuring of power. 'Who produces knowledge about colonised people and from what space/location? What are the politics of the production of this knowledge?' (Mohanty 1991, 3). Her important work brings the ever-present question of race into sustained focus (see also Alexander and Mohanty 1997). Similarly, Patai (1991) is critical of any simplistic acknowledgement of one's position as white/male/heterosexual/whatever. She points out that sometimes, 'these tropes sound like apologies...more often they are deployed as badges..either way they give off their own aroma of fraud, for the underlying assumption seems to be that by such identification one has paid one's respects to difference - and is now home free' (ibid, 149).

Such critical provocations have led others to explore the ethical and political dilemmas their research presents them, aware of the micro-politics of power that shape all social engagements

and research practice. Spivak (1996) has been exemplary in this respect, combining critique with an ethical relationship to the 'other', but her deconstructive attention to 'literal' texts has different priorities to those of a more anthropological feminism. Some feminist researchers respond to these dilemmas through more radical empowerment or participatory action research (Schrijvers 1995, Cancian 1992), others by writing experimental feminist ethnographies (eg Visweswaran 1994, Abu-Lughod 1993). Facing up to such questions requires bravery and commitment.

One consistently challenging feminist anthropologist is Nancy Scheper-Hughes, who both reflects on her own role as researcher as well as taking up courageous (and often lonely) political positions (1992, 1995). She suggests that a "womanly-hearted" anthropology demands a morally-committed "witnessing" of the desperately human situations that challenge comfortable assumptions and unthinking loyalties' (1995, 419). It is a powerful message, challenging the equally value-laden notion of detached non-involvement, of the anthropologist as spectator. Yet in her call for an ethically-grounded anthropology, she goes as far as to argue for the 'primacy of the ethical' as a transcendent, 'pre-cultural', first principle. It is a position that privileges a universal ethic over the always changing formations of power. As Ong notes (1995), it downplays the complexity of all trans-cultural political and moral engagements. In making this larger commitment, she also avoids more pressing questions about research methodology and ethics. Judging from protest both by her research subjects in Ireland (Scheper-Hughes 1987) and over her simplification of racial politics in South Africa (Ramphela 1996), it would seem that one has to try and pay attention to these different levels and scales simultaneously.

In a thorough review of feminist ethnographies, Wolf (1996) covers every side of these ethical quandaries, from the dilemmas of entering the 'field' (a term, incidentally, less subject to critique) via the dilemmas of friendship, reciprocity and 'empowerment' to the politics of writing. Perhaps inevitably, her comprehensiveness just lengthens the number of questions to be asked. She concludes that 'feminist fieldworkers have not found solutions to the ethical problems in field research, probably because no such solutions exist' (ibid, 25). Despite this dilemma, she does not call for the abandonment of fieldwork, but rather aims at 'underscoring and exemplifying dilemmas of power' (ibid, 38). Another alternative is offered by Katz (1996), who in her work on a project in Brooklyn argues for enlarging the context in which the research is carried out, seeing it as part of the larger politics of working for social change.

Others are more outspoken about the ethics of fieldwork. One is Judith Stacey (1991), in her powerful piece entitled 'Can there be a Feminist Ethnography?' She concludes that 'there cannot

be a fully feminist ethnography, there can (only) be partially feminist accounts' (ibid, 117). In the same volume, Patai gives an even more direct and succinct answer to Stacey's question. 'No'. Patai takes the position that 'we continue to function in an overdetermined universe in which our respective roles ensure that other people are always the subject of our research, almost never the reverse' (1991, 149). She reveals the deception that characterised her research to justify her view of research as intrinsically unethical. It is a strong and well-argued case, revealing once again the diversity of feminist thought. It also shows the impossibility of trying to characterise one single 'feminist' ethical position, or a singular 'Marxist' or 'postmodern' one.

Purifying the modern

Where has this taken us? My review of different intellectual traditions has not revealed a transparent ethical grounding for the ethnographic method. Yet perhaps it never could, and my very aim and approach were wrong. Why did I think it would be possible to isolate different 'ethical' positions in the first place? Did I imagine that I might be able to find some secure moral ground from which to bolster an ethnographic practice? Was I not falling into the same 'purifying' move, presuming an autonomous ethical realm? This is the move that Latour (1993) argues symbolises so much of the modern world, the separation and disjunction of different forms of knowledge.

Certainly this review reveals again to me the impossibility of talking about ethics without paying attention to power - a recognition that the realm of the ethical can never be outside power. Perhaps then I should talk about ethico-politics? But that does not help thinking through the relationship between the two. Instead I am left with two dilemmas. Is there any point in arguing that all anthropological research is 'unethical', if the 'ethical' category itself is not one which helps in comprehending the issues of value and principle that are at stake? Secondly, does suggesting that everything is 'political' just trivialise the term, or reduce it to some universal ontological category? What lies beyond the 'political'?

I'll respond to the second dilemma first. Brown (1995) defines politics as 'the place where our propensity to traffic in power is most explicit', taking up a Foucaultian position that focuses on the workings of power in every aspect of social life. There is of course a danger here of making the power/politics words meaningless, so one has to be specific - what sort of politicisation is important, and in what sort of context? My interest is in what gets counted as 'academic knowledge'. I hope that I have shown, through my diversion to talk about ethics, that

research practices **are** also practices of power. As Haraway puts it, 'admitted or not, politics and ethics ground struggles over knowledge projects in the exact, natural, social and human sciences...otherwise rationality is simply impossible, an optical illusion projected from nowhere comprehensively' (1991, 188).

This brings me back to the first dilemma. I suggest that my challenge to an autonomous realm of 'ethics' is also a challenge to anthropological professionalism. The very existence of utopian and impractical ethical codes acts to both legitimise and de-politicise anthropology's practice - referring conflict and struggle up to an abstract realm of ethical consideration. I am not challenging academic professionalism here, but rather the specific assumption that there can be a single community following the correct 'professional' ethnographic practice, regulated and supported by a set of guidelines. Despite themselves, the rule-books challenge this correct practice, emphasising that above all research should involve 'truthful and respectful' (ASA 1987) exchanges, because 'anthropological research is a human undertaking' (AAA, 1971). They appeal to a common human morality, and not to a specialised professional ethics. Perhaps this vague and woolly moral humanism is the only solution, as suggested by Alasdair MacIntyre:

'The requirements of morally acceptable fieldwork are not to be thought of as a set of external constraints imposed upon an activity which can be successful or unsuccessful in terms that are its own, and that are independent of morality. The outcome of successful fieldwork is achieved understanding and achieved understanding is defective as understanding, when it is not morally informed understanding' (MacIntyre 1993, 5)

A view from somewhere..

My own sympathies do not lie with such a gentle humanism. I am not confident that universal moral translation and understanding are so easily achievable. There are too many ways in which knowledges separate and divide people, rather than bring them together. There are too many risks that come from trying to close down and coolly define a culture or an identity for intellectual purposes. Spivak similarly questions the attempt of Indian historiography to represent people's lives, 'The assumption and construction of a consciousness or subject...coheres with the work of imperialist subject-constitution, mingling epistemic violence with the advancement of learning and civilisation' (1988, 295). Similar criticisms have been made of anthropology.

As is now obvious, my own solidarities lie with a much more explicit recognition of the power relations infusing the ethnographic encounter, and the way they lead into questions of academic knowledge more broadly. Debates on ethics are important, but they are deceptive if

they do not also engage with power. Yet how does one keep the tensions of the political in focus? My interest is still in questions of translation, but more in focusing on its limits, on its dangers. Despite her critique, such questions are vitally important to Spivak's work: 'It seems to me that finding the subaltern is not so hard, but actually entering into a responsibility structure with the subaltern, with responses flowing both ways; learning to learn without this quick-fix frenzy of doing good with an implicit assumption of cultural supremacy which is legitimised by unexamined romanticisation, that's the hard part' (Spivak 1996, 293). Attending to the limits of ethnographic method, and the risk of 'epistemic violence' that comes from crossing those limits, is something that concerns me throughout this thesis

Other feminist thinkers, from Adrienne Rich onwards, have also reflected on the 'politics of location' and how their always-changing location shapes what they write and say (Rich 1986, Frankenburg and Mani 1993, Caplan 1994, Mani 1990). Haraway stirringly challenges what she calls the 'God Trick' (1991, 195) of science, the 'view from nowhere'. Instead she calls for a 'feminist objectivity', seeing it as an 'accountability and responsibility for translations and solidarities linking the cacophonous visions and visionary voices that characterise the knowledges of the subjugated' (Haraway 1988, 196). In a more recent work she even adopts the term 'ethnography', seeing it in an extended sense as 'not so much a specific procedure in anthropology as....a method of being at risk in the face of the practices and discourses into which one inquires' (1997, 190).

Being at risk in the face of the practices into which one inquires. A challenging and provocative demand, it requires constantly situating oneself and one's project, at all the different levels of the political, whilst also attempting to translate and link different agendas and knowledges. It is not a project for which the narrower anthropological gaze is easily adapted. Yet in the chapters that follow I try to remain at risk, to reveal my own purposes in making these connections and translations. You are the best judge of my success.

CHAPTER TWO

'BUGANDA NYAFFE':

THE LUWERO WAR AND GANDA NATIONALISMS

Abstract

Much of this thesis focuses on the experiences and imageries of being modern, on popular and national understandings of 'development'. Yet I begin in this second chapter by looking at the legacies of war, nationalisms and religion that inevitably shape such understandings of progress in Uganda today. I attempt a 'history of the present', showing how these turbulent pasts are always being retold and relived anew, focusing particularly on the Luwero war and its aftermath.

I start in mid-1990s East London, describing a 'cultural' organisation organised by Baganda living in Britain, so to reveal the ambiguous, gendered and multiple form of all national narrations. From here I turn first to a brief history of Museveni's liberation struggle against Milton Obote from 1981 to 1985, linking it with other work on the social history of guerrilla wars in Africa. I then go back much further to explore early possible histories of pre-colonial Buganda and also the writing and use of such histories in anti-colonial movements in the 1930s and 1940s. Finally I come back to the 1990s, to describe how, in the bitter aftermath of rural neglect and isolation stemming from the liberation war, monarchical idioms from Buganda's past have suddenly been reinvigorated to enable new Ganda nationalisms. I tack from individual memories and the way they are used to justify claims for 'ebyaffe' ('our things') to national debates over the country's new constitution, and Buganda's status within it. Drawing on a mixture of media articles and personal interviews I try to capture the tensions and anxieties within which imaginings and understandings of the nation take on such importance and force.

'Buganda Nyaffe':

The Luwero War and Ganda Nationalisms

'Ekitiibwa kya Buganda'
The Honour of Buganda.

Twesiimye nnyo, twesiimye nnyo,
Olwa Buganda Yaffe
Ekitiibwa kya Buganda kyava dda
Naffe, tukikumenga

How lucky we are, how lucky indeed,
To have our Buganda
The honour of Buganda comes from ancient times
And we will always protect it.

**The Buganda Anthem, written by Reverend
Polycarp Kakooza 1939, adapted 1990 (Magoba n.d.)**

*Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time
and only fully realise their horizons in the mind's eye*
Homi Bhabha, The location of culture

The Clans of Buganda in Britain

Stratford Town Hall, Stratford, London E15, April 1994. The hall is full of pride, good humour and a cross-section of Buganda's diaspora in Britain. Men are in dark jackets and dignified white Kanzus,¹ women in expansively cut and stunningly rouched Gomesis.² The event is coming to the end and, loosened by a little alcohol, most people are heartily singing the Buganda national anthem, seemingly proud to be part of this new Baganda consciousness and community. The occasion is an event of the *'Ebika bya Buganda e Bongeresa'* (The clans of Buganda in Britain), a new organisation intended to promote Buganda culture. Yet this is not merely a new pressure group or NGO, this is a gathering of the clans. Set up in 1991 in anticipation of the return of the monarchy to Buganda and the coronation of *Kabaka* (King)

¹ Flowing white robe, introduced by Arab traders and now worn underneath a dark jacket as formal dress.

² Uniquely styled formal dress, with tucks and layers of fabric. Now seen as national dress.

Ronald Mutebi, the slogan of *Ebika bya Buganda* is '*Oguliko Aseesa*' (Keeping the fire burning). It began with a clan sports day in Walthamstow, but now the events - often held on Bank Holiday weekends at venues varying from Ealing to Croydon - include cultural quizzes, Luganda prose-reading competitions, Ugandan food, childrens' events and discos. Yet not everyone is singing, for there are some who don't know the words. Young teenagers in fashionably cut dresses wishing they were somewhere else, giggling about the get-up of their parents, gossiping about the TV they're missing tonight, eyeing up the talent. Little children, bewildered by these strange new rituals, but enjoying the games of tag up the aisles. Grannies on brandy, telling tales about Speke the explorer. Dudes in leather jackets, mooching at the back.

Nations provide a queer sort of belonging. Some people have far less desire or ability to narrate and inhabit them than others. Nations are never finished projects, but are instead constantly in a state of being retold, re-imagined, re-made (Anderson 1983, Chatterjee 1987, Bhabha 1990). These different forms of inhabitation and affiliation, often too compelling to resist, are to provide the storyline to this, my own, narration. I hope to describe the 'complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of "the people" or "the nation" and make them the immanent subjects and objects of a range of literary and social narratives' (Bhabha 1994, 140). Going from Stratford to Ssingoo, I shall attempt a description of different historical invocations and instantiations of that nation-space called Buganda, always attentive to McClintock's warning that 'All nations depend on powerful constructions of gender' (1995, 353, also Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989). Whether it be the enthusiastic inscription of clan histories and mythical charters at the turn of the century, or the attempts to imagine a Buganda state as well as a nation in the anti-colonial politics of the 1940s, the promises made during the bitter terror of the Luwero civil war, or finally the mid-1990s wrangles over political autonomy and calls for '*federo*' (Lug. federalism) for Buganda, *all* are attempts to narrate the nation, and many of the narrators are masculine. But the events do not flow together quite so easily. The challenge is to somehow convey in writing the 'non-sequential energy of lived historical memory' (McClintock 1995, 141) that makes up such a nation, whilst always paying attention to the limits set by the past. Predictably for an anthropological thesis, in this account I will privilege the ethnographic present, a space I know (and fear) the most. My focus is on the ramifying power of one personal pronoun: '*Ebyaffe*' (Our things). It seemed in this latest narration of Buganda that 300 years of conquest, imperial rule, colonial nostalgia and revisionism were being collapsed into this one word. '*Ebyaffe*' was the phrase on everyone's lips,

the word that folks in Buganda³ could not but hope for in the tense and confrontational stand-off during the negotiations for a new Ugandan constitution in 1994 and 1995. As such, its citation and recitation requires close attention.

It is always tempting to begin at the beginning. A once predictable order of things might lead me to trace chronologically the development of this nation over a period of historical time, as a way of providing a necessary context to the present. Yet this risks falling prey to the 'historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force' (McClintock, 140), unintentionally reinforcing notions of 'Baganda' or 'Buganda' as an 'empirical sociological category or holistic cultural entity' (ibid). This is the oldest anthropological trick in the book, and I will do my best to avoid it. I begin in a different time and space or chronotope (Bakhtin 1981) altogether, that of Dalston in East London, bringing another ambivalent narration, that of the diaspora, to bear. From there I discuss the Luwero war, which I had once presumed to be *the* formative influence on rural social life in post-war Buganda. I then return further in time, to the first texts of modern nationalism, produced at the turn of the century, before discussing the anti-colonial conflicts of the 1940s and 1950s. By providing some sense of the energy of memory, the politics of history, and the micro-politics of each particular contestation, I hope finally to make more narrative sense of the struggle over '*Federo*' (Federalism) and '*ebyaffe*' in 1994 and 1995.

Dalston, East London

A week before this gathering I met '*Ebika bya Buganda*' founder Mwami Fred Mutibwa⁴ in a lengthy council office on Kingsland Road. Working for Camden and Islington as a health educator, he ensured that the first clan meetings were also opportunities for health promotion, such that the events had often begun with facilitated discussions of the prevalence and tragic effects of HIV on the Ugandan community in Britain. Fred, perhaps unsurprisingly, has a BA in Social Anthropology. He explained, '*I was taught by Martin Southwold in Manchester after*

³ In all attempts to tell the story of, or narrate, a nation, there is the constant risk (or potential) of inscribing and naturalising categories and spaces. It is all too easy to slip from 'imagining Buganda' to 'performing Ganda-ness' to 'Bugandans'. I have tried to use strategic scare-quotes to signify aspects of national belonging, but there are inevitably moments of closure. Such categories require an equally vigilant reading.

⁴ Mwami is a respectful Luganda address - meaning 'Mr' in this context.

leaving Uganda in 1978, and got interested in African religion. He also taught me about the Sherpas, which fascinated me.'

We chatted about the situation of Ugandans in Britain today, about which Fred had impassioned views. *'The majority of Ugandans in London are Baganda,'* he began, *'but some are Ugandan by title alone. People were discarding it as unnecessary, or just taking bits of it. I would ask parents whether their child was Ugandan or British, and they'd say "Ugandan". I'd say "But what is it about your child which is Ugandan?" People were becoming complacent about staying here forever.'*

Questions about British racisms and the difficulties and potentials of negotiating multiple identities rushed into my mind. I decided to keep quiet. Fred went on. *'And so I said to people, why not go a mile further? The cornerstone of our culture is the clan system. So I have revised or created that system in the UK, as far as the conditions here allow. I wanted to revise the clan system, which all broke down in 1967 with the Kabaka's exile. Back at home it was dangerous to do this, but one is free in the U.K.'* I nodded sagely, dusting off my half-forgotten Ugandan history shelf, whisking through memory's catalogue to revisit the religious factionalism and torrid politics of 1960s Uganda. After a long and unsuccessful struggle for Buganda independence, popular opposition to a more pluralist Ugandan anti-colonial politics continued under the mantle of the monarchist *Kabaka Yekka* (The King Alone) party. Their opposition to the popular Catholic-led Democratic Party tempted them into an alliance with Milton Obote's Ugandan People's Congress (UPC) at independence. It was a Machiavellian deal, and one that soon rebounded on the Ganda traditionalists.

'I used to play football' Fred reminisced, *'and always wanted to play for the clan. But what chance did I have in 1967, being only seven?'* This was hardly the next conversational punt I expected. *'The Ssabataka* (Head of the clans) *revived the clan football competition, even before he was recrowned.'* Now I understood, and the sports day in Walthamstow made more sense. A clan football competition was begun in Uganda back in 1987, the re-invention of a tradition first begun in the 1950s to mobilise fading clan loyalties and affiliations. Despite a crisis of mismanagement in 1988, the *Bika* football still continues. *'The new government are more tolerant of traditional values - the Baganda had an instrumental role in Museveni coming to power, and he knows that.'* Popular support was pivotal to the National Resistance Army's (NRA) victory in the Luwero war of the early 1980s, and Fred neatly linked Museveni's sense of obligation to both the revival of the clan football tournaments and the return of the monarchy

itself.

Yet all this was yet to be understood by the ingenuous ethnographer sitting in Dalston, all the politicised memories, claims and counter-claims made on the acerbic conflict that was supposedly the focus of my research. I was still more concerned with the politics of representation than with the contested terrains of nations and nationalisms. I sat back and let Fred run with the ball. *'We always speak in Luganda, and make no apologies for it. Three hundred Baganda came to our first meeting. It was a quiz, with members from every clan, the largest cultural assembly of Baganda in Britain, despite fears that it was a bit tribalist. These seem to have quietened now.'* Like any cultural critic, Fred was sensitive also to fields of power, *'Some people had never heard of my clan and a tension developed, 'a struggle for power', as the role I had taken became attractive to others with the coronation, since they thought they could be heard in the Kabaka's palace. People thought they would get into the limelight. But most conflicts,'* he added reassuringly, *'were between 'opinion-leaders', and the people themselves weren't interested.'* *'And anyway',* he concluded, *'we talk about culture, not politics! You are born a Muganda, you know.'*

Whatever the benefits of such a demanding and often thankless task, and hobnobbing with the Kabaka is one of them, Fred has managed to keep people coming to the events, providing invaluable opportunities for people to talk about the stresses of living in multi-racist Britain. The burdens of isolation, illness, visa restrictions and harsh working conditions weigh heavily. The demands of bringing up children with a respect for their parents, their education and their past are also constantly on people's minds. HIV infection-rates are high amongst African communities in London, compounding the situation. Being able to create a partially stigma-free space to talk about sexuality, adoption and health-care issues was no small achievement.

The jealous accusations of Fred having come from a 'made-up' clan have not stuck, for last year came news of a new appointment. He was to be made Chair of the steering committee of *'Ebika bya Buganda mu Mawanga Ag'Ebweru'* (The Clans of Uganda in Overseas Countries), a group set up with the intention of *'ekigatta ebibiina by'Abaganda bonna ebweru wa Yuganda'* (joining all the Baganda Associations outside of Uganda). Fred had already told me that people from Germany regularly came to the meetings *'to feel at home'*. Now linking up with similar groups in Sweden, Germany, Denmark, South Africa, the USA and Canada, this was to be very much a globalising enterprise. But the names of each group were rather less encompassing. Titles such as *'Baana Ba Buganda'* (The Children of Buganda), *'Bulungi bwa Nsi'* (For the Good of the

Country), or '*Ggwanga Mujje*' (Come for the Nation) tell a different story of localised belonging and imaginings of home.

These developments are about much more than the objectification of culture that has been part of the modernist project (Strathern 1992). They are also whole new stories about the nation, new imaginings of 'home', new discourses that are at once material and symbolic. The content might be novel, but the form less so, for as Bhabha notes (1994), the emergence of the later phase of the modern nation was also one of the most sustained periods of mass migration within the West, '*The nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin, and turns that loss into the language of metaphor*' (ibid, 139). One can draw parallels between the migrations within nineteenth century Europe and those characterising these post-colonial times. Some of the people at the meeting may have left Uganda with the Kabaka in 1967 and now have but distant ties with their birthplace, others might be in Europe or Japan for a couple of years to make some money, others still trade across international borders, and are always on the move. These new narratives are as fragmented as the people within them. Nonetheless through their stories, they create yet another Uganda, another Buganda, and equally the world beyond, both in symbolism and materiality. Whilst the Kampala papers may dismiss Fred, as they did once, as '*the patriot from Croydon*', there is no doubt that overseas financial and political support was central to the Kabaka's return from exile and re-coronation in 1993. There is often gossip in the Kampala press about issues affecting the Ugandan expatriate community, reports of their experiences of racism, food or cultural isolation. The Monitor newspaper even occasionally runs a column made up of provocative extracts from the Ugandanet discussion group on the Internet. Electronic networking enables yet another new intensely imagined community, with understandings of race, culture and belonging mediated primarily by the nodes of American campus computer systems. Another narration, another nation.

In this partial narrative, I can not attempt to capture and describe all these different dynamics, the relationships between them, or the desires caught up within them. That does not stop me wondering at the effect of the rhetorics being mobilised in this setting. What emotions, for example, are captured by the Kabaka's plea for nation-building, in his speech to one of the biggest events, a sports day at Crystal Palace in 1995? In a letter in the day's programme he reminds everyone of the significance of the second anniversary of his coronation and of his 40th birthday. He goes on, capitalising the important sentence:

Kyokka ku mulundi guno nga tujaguzo tusaanye okujjukira ekifo ky'abantu baffe - nga gwe musingi gwe ggwanga, nga bwe kiri mu nsi endala. Eyo y'ensonga kwe twansizira

okuteesa nti omubala gwaffe omwaka guno gubeere 'ABAANA, ABAVUBUKA N'ABAKAYALA GWE MUSINGI GWE GGWANGA'.

At this time as we celebrate we should remember the place of our people, how they are foundations of the nation, as it is in other countries. For this reason we should ensure that our drum beat this year is 'CHILDREN, YOUTH AND WOMEN, THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE NATION'.

The letter continues in this vein, talking about valuing the role of women and youth in the nation's development and progress. This focus might be explained by the rhetoric of gender sensitivity so prevalent in contemporary Uganda. But it also helps to be reminded that 'Nationalism is constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse' (McClintock 1995, 355). Being excluded from direct action as national citizens, 'women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation.' McClintock goes on to suggest that the tensions within nationalism between nostalgia for history and the desire to discard the past are resolved by time being mapped onto gender, where women are repositories of tradition. This second argument is intriguing, if over-generalising, for in the Kabaka's letter women are pictured as the foundations enabling future peace and development in Uganda. Many of my conversations in rural Buganda often led women to describe their role as '*okuzala ggwanga*' - (birthing (and building) the nation), symbolic wombs certainly, but perhaps not repositories of the past. That said, McClintock's scrupulous attention to the disavowals and slippages of nationalist rhetorics, and their constitution on the grounds of gender, race and class, is one that I hope to mirror throughout this chapter.

The letter from the Kabaka finally concludes: '*Nga bulijjo, Njagala mwenna abasobola okudda, mukomewo ku butaka tukolere wamu byonna ebisoboka olw'obulungi bw'ensi yaffe*' - '*As always, I would like those of you who can to come home, to return to your (clan) land so that we can work together to do everything possible for the good of our country.*' Such voluntarist rhetoric wrapped in nostalgia shrouds the economic, political and lived exigencies of diaspora (Radhakrishnan 1996, Lavie and Swedenburg 1995, Bhabha 1994). The huge internal divisions within Ugandan communities in Britain make this a difficult and highly politicised topic to discuss - as if 'home' were ever a sweetly obvious location. That said, many of the first generation Ugandans in Britain do define their lives through at least the desire to return 'home', whilst some of the younger people who have arrived more recently face a precarious legal situation, with a few virtually living in hiding for lack of '*documents*'.

There are other aspects to these long-distance nationalisms that I could discuss, though equal attention would also be needed to ever-new constructions of 'Britishness' and 'race' that continue

to shape the everyday lives of black British people. The changing dynamics of 'globalisation' enable different versions of 'Buganda-ness' to be told and to take effect. Whilst they are not necessarily the same as those being told within Uganda, these different narrations are nevertheless linked by the 'symbolic force of the nation' (Anderson 1983). They can not be viewed in isolation.

The War in the Luwero Triangle

I now turn to discuss the liberation war waged in the hills and swamps of Buganda in the early 1980s. The atrocities and killings in Kiboga district may seem rather disconnected from clan celebrations in London, but recounting the bitterness of the war and the numbing extent of the terror is central to my argument in this chapter. After almost five years of fighting, the relief of Museveni's eventual victory, and his supposedly accompanying promise to restore the monarchy on gaining power, re-seeded Buganda national hopes and sentiments that were to subsequently germinate so powerfully.

The 1981-1986 Luwero war was, once upon a time, my main research focus. I had gone to Uganda to explore the effect of mass displacement and violence on a rural social landscape. My plan was to look at 'social memory' and collective responses to the war, as visible within new political structures and new conceptions of masculinity. If only cause-effect relationships were so straightforward.

I had my doubts. What would be the effects of wading in to quiz people about memories safer not revisited, to probe about atrocities better left unmentioned? The history of both sides' roles in the undoubted mass killings is still highly politicised and conflictual. Research ethics apart, there were theoretical questions too. Why privilege chronology by focusing only on the most recent historical events, as if their newness made them the most significant. As the contested terrain of a borderland, Ssinga has long known material conflict and symbolic disputation, with the region changing hands several times as the Bunyoro empire waxed and waned. And does not talk of 'social memory' create an image of an upswell of communal intensity, bearing down on the future? If past times, and the ways they are re-imagined and re-lived, are just as politicised, fragmented and disputed as those of the present, then one cannot regard social memory as an autonomous and structuring force. It is the practices of remembering and signifying the past that matter - who is turning to the past, where and how, why and with

what effect?

I'd done my best. I'd chosen a research site - Kikomera - on the dirt road leading north-west from Kampala to Hoima. It had been the focus of many of the earliest attacks and fighting. Many recruits to Museveni's guerrilla army in the heady days of 1981 had come from the area, and retaliation by government troops on the local communities had been harsh. If Mao talked about fish in water, then in 1981 Museveni and his band of 27 'historical members' were still mere sardines, and they had depended greatly on the support of the population, especially in the early days of the 'people's war'. Some historical context might help here. Museveni was in exile throughout Amin's government, forming a military front (Fronasa) to fight against Amin's rule. When Amin was finally toppled by the Tanzanian army in 1979, Museveni became involved in the political negotiations, and even formed a political party to contest the December 1980 elections, having been made Minister of State for Defence in the interim UNLF (Uganda National Liberation Front) government. As it became clear that the elections were to be rigged by Milton Obote's supporters, Museveni declared that he would 'go to the bush' and fight an illegitimate government. Two months later, on February 6th 1981, he led a raid on the Kabamba School of Infantry with his band of rebels/freedom fighters/guerrillas, managing to take a number of vehicles and supplies. The revolution had begun.

In his autobiography Yoweri Museveni (1997) describes his own background as a child of cattle-keeping nomads in south-west Uganda. Named after local people who had served in the Colonial regiment of the Seventh King's African Rifles (hence Mu'seven'i) in the Second World War, he became involved in the Democratic Party at the age of 16, before going to study at Dar es Salaam University. The late 1960s were heady days at Dar, and Museveni was exposed to lectures from revolutionary pan-African and anti-colonial thinkers and writers. He mentions being taught by Walter Rodney, and inviting Stokely Carmichael to come and speak.⁵ An undergraduate essay, 'Fanon's theory of violence: its verification in liberated Mozambique', was serialised in a Ugandan newspaper in 1995,⁶ revealing both a close familiarity with Fanon's ideas and an attempt to link them with his own experiences visiting Frelimo-controlled (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) areas of Mozambique in 1968. It was at Dar, or so he suggests in his

⁵ Museveni describes one tense moment when he publicly questioned Julius Nyerere on his 'ujamaa' policy, suggesting that it was '*simply primitive communalism and could not be used as a modern ideology for management*' (Museveni 1997, 27). He acknowledges Nyerere's generous and humorous response.

⁶ The Crusader December 15th, December 22nd, December 29th 1995.

autobiography, that he developed his modernist revolutionary zeal, challenging 'primitivism' and 'ignorance', and successfully agitating for a new course to be set up called 'Development Studies'. By publicly supporting Frelimo's liberation war whilst at University, he also learnt something of the tactics of the 'people's war', knowledge that he was to put into practice so effectively in Ssingoo and Luwero more than ten years later.

The story of the first raid on the Kabamba barracks has now entered Ugandan popular mythology, along with the 27 men who took part with Museveni. Even the Army magazine is called 'The 6th February' to commemorate the date. This is despite Museveni's admission (1997) that the raid failed to capture the armoury as planned, and that the first days of fighting were characterised by failures and low morale. Occasional stories in the national press describe the fate of some of these 'original members', especially those who have fallen from favour. The number is also often quoted as proof by bar-room dissidents that they too could 'go to the bush' and overthrow Museveni. Whether used in fear, jest or irony, '*going to the bush*' is now indelibly part of Ugandan public vernacular.

It is easy to reconstruct and over-estimate the initial popularity of that 'popular struggle' retrospectively. Initially Museveni's group was little more than a few soldiers with 17 guns, even if given prominence by their leader's political experience. They were only one of several groups to take up arms against Obote's government. The group was originally called the PRA (Popular Resistance Army), but after merging with the 'Uganda Freedom Fighters' of ex-President Yusuf Lule in June 1981 became known as the National Resistance Movement (NRM). The NRM immediately recognised the importance of the ideological aspects of guerrilla warfare. From 1981 an underground publicity section produced regular copies of 'The Uganda Resistance News' (republished as 'Mission to Freedom' in 1990) with interviews, refutations of Obote's propaganda, and reports of campaign successes. The first issue contains a dense discussion of military and political tactics by Museveni, outlining and justifying his strategy of a 'Protracted People's War'. He defines it in classically Maoist terms, '*This is the strategy whereby popular forces - ie those forces supported by the masses - wage a protracted war against unpopular elements in power*' (cf Mao Tse-Tung in Laquer 1978). Explaining how guerrilla units operate, with ambushes, attacks and executions of '*notoriously anti-people elements*', he suggests that '*provided the cause is popular*' then the enemy will be worn down and '*will lose control of territory and population to the popular forces*' (Mission to Freedom 1990, 9). Museveni describes how gradually, over the course of time, the balance of power will shift, such that the guerrilla forces can begin to fight mobile warfare, though at this juncture '*loss of territory is of*

no consequence' (ibid). The stress at this stage is on destroying the capacity of the opposing forces, before finally moving onto '*conventional warfare, the final stage of the people's war*'.

A review of events shows that Museveni's brave early words were, whether through luck or foresight, largely accurate. As I describe below, the war did begin as a guerrilla campaign, which Museveni shrewdly chose to wage in the forested hills of Ssinga and the swampy Buganda heartlands of Luwero and Busiro. Classic territory for such a fight, the region was strategic both for its proximity to Kampala and its poor road network. Museveni also knew that rural Buganda pride was still smarting from Obote's treatment of the Kabaka and prominent Ganda 15 years earlier, and that the treatment of the Democratic Party in the rigged 1980 elections had just rubbed humiliation into the wound. The particular area in which the rebels camped and organised operations was a triangle shape stretching out to the North and West of Kampala - subsequently named 'The Luwero Triangle'. As he predicted, Museveni's men (and women) were constantly on the move, and many people spoke to me of the endless marches that the soldiers would make by night. It began very slowly, with a crippling shortage of weapons. Gradually the soldiers organised a string of successful ambushes and sudden raids, making use of the dirt roads to plant land mines and surprise government convoys. The momentum built up, and the early days also ensured a good deal of recruitment into the fledgling army. By June 1982 the government was stung into retaliating more strongly, with a counter-insurgency operation - codenamed Operation Bonanza - which wreaked such havoc throughout 1983.⁷ There was large-scale internal displacement, the forced internment of villagers by Obote's UNLA forces, and atrocities committed on both sides. The bold rhetoric of a 'People's war' dodges the ricocheting effect of all wars on the 'people'.

Throughout Museveni's 1981 strategising manifesto, he insists that '*the basic weapon is the support of the people and their political consciousness*'. Sometimes this support seems to be assumed rather than needing to be sought. Explanation is simple: '*we are fighting a just cause*'. After a number of commitments on military discipline, Museveni cautions that the battle will be a long and harsh one, warning people to leave their villages or even the country if necessary. Museveni again reveals his trademark modernist rhetoric, attacking the '*backwardness*' of *tribalism, sectarianism, sycophancy, intrigue, corruption etc*' (Mission to Freedom 1990, 13) of

⁷ 'Uganda's unending blood' (Africa Confidential 8th June 1983) describes how the 'main guerrilla army has come under a great deal of pressure, including North Korean artillery instructors using 122mm Soviet artillery...The NRA have undoubtedly been greatly damaged, materially and psychologically'.

Ugandans. He argues that *'advanced' political elements, once in a position of leadership, 'have the duty to guide their people out of the quagmire of superstition, ignorance, primitive technologies of production, economic misery and other aspects of backwardness'* (ibid, 15).

'Backwardness' is a topic constantly decried by Museveni in his speeches. In an edited collection, *'What is Africa's Problem'* (1992), Museveni returns constantly to a pan-africanist theme and the possibility of united African endeavour to sort out African problems, yet always with the help of modern science and technology. He defines backwardness at one point as *'not being able to harness nature for our own benefit'* (ibid, 173), pointing out that despite *'people travelling to the moon and back, people in Uganda are still suffering from jiggers. If jiggers are free to enter your feet as they please, then I propose you accept my definition of backwardness.'* His consistently powerful oratory reveals that the discourses of development can hardly be seen as external to Uganda, and that he, as much as any UN agency, has thoroughly invoked and disseminated within Uganda a utilitarian narrative of progress, celebrating industrialisation, manufacturing and scientific knowledge. Museveni's rhetoric, whilst now a long way from his 1981 strategising, still has faint resonances of this combination of revolutionary populism and development utopianism.

Back in 1981 such political principles came second to the exigencies of military strategy and mere survival. Yet before detailing the Luwero war and people's experiences of it, I turn to briefly discuss academic debates about guerrilla warfare, and in particular the voluminous literature on the Zimbabwe liberation war. Mentioning Zimbabwe invokes powerful intellectual genealogies of struggle, resonating back to Mozambique and Angola, via Cuba and Vietnam, and so to Mao Tse Tung's long march in 1930s China. Mao's brand of pro-agrarian populism and revolutionary voluntarism always put a great deal of faith in the spontaneous energies of *'the people'*. His description of the perfect guerilla being like a *'fish in water'* allegorises the Leninist distinction between the vanguard and the masses. The big fish have to both swim undisturbed with *'the people'*, but also guide them, mobilise them, politicise them. This bi-polar division has long been the mark of Marxist intellectual writing on the dynamics of liberation wars (and in some Marxist thought more generally). Zimbabwe proved no exception. It is a division that has prevented more nuanced understandings of the cultural politics of armed struggle. Undifferentiated categories such as *'the peasantry'*, *'the people'*, *'the nation'* and *'the guerrillas'* hinder reflections on inevitably multiple and cross-cutting power relations. The brutal dynamics of war divide communities, complicate principles and reveal all sorts of contested agendas and fragile allegiances. These points are perhaps visible within some contemporary theories of

power, but have been revealed to social historians of Southern Africa through more than a decade of extensive collaborative research on the Zimbabwe liberation war.

Terence Ranger's work as a social historian (1985, Bhebe and Ranger 1995) has been consistently central to this debate. He is perhaps more than a commentator, as he taught at Dar in the optimistic moment of pan-African, anti-colonial socialism of the 1960s. His first history of the liberation war (1985) focuses on the formation and political consciousness of the 'Zimbabwean peasantry' throughout the twentieth century - 'a class in itself' (ibid, 289) - as a riposte both to Marxist analyses which dismissed the political agency of the peasantry, and to comparative analyses which suggested that the Mozambiquan revolution was somehow more 'pure' than that in Zimbabwe. Using oral history sources, he argues that the combination of a Shona cultural nationalism with peasant radicalism was central to the peasant support of the ZANU guerrillas, and that this was facilitated by the role of spirit mediums.⁸ David Lan's important 'Guns and Rain' (1985) develops this link between symbolic and physical struggle much further, suggesting that the guerrillas were forced to seek the authority of the ancestors of the Dande in order to ensure change and politicisation amongst the people. This focus on symbolic struggle added much to the Marxist debate about consciousness-raising, even if his description of Dande ideology ('it has risen above and overcome each wave of history' (ibid, 225)) seems to suggest the symbolic to be spiritually transcendental, above conflict and change.

Both books stimulated a good deal of further research, but both ensured that the debate began to be framed around whether the Zimbabwean war really was a 'popular' one, having the support of the 'people', the conscientised masses. It was a valuable and understandable debate, given the heavy legacy of suffering in all the African liberation wars. Challenge however came with Norma Kriger's (1992) intervention 'Peasant Voices', where she suggested that peasant support may not have been freely offered, and that 'peasant voices direct us to the potential for guerrilla coercion against peasants to co-exist with successful revolutions' (ibid, 9). She also demonstrates the extent of conflicts *within* communities, arguing that 'the peasant concept, with its external bias, vitiates against examining gender, lineage, generational and socio-economic differences as they affect internal peasant relations during a revolution (ibid, 240). Stirring up much controversy (Alexander 1992), her work did ensure that further work began to 'disaggregate the peasantry' (Maxwell 1993) and to break down existing categories. Since then

⁸ A provocative comparison can be drawn here with Museveni's rather disparaging comments about peasant religious rituals in Luwero, intended to support his struggle. He states, 'I could not allow the peasant ideology to gain the upper hand in the movement' (Museveni 1992, 117).

there have been more studies, focusing on rural nationalisms and ethnic identities (Alexander and McGregor 1997), on religious revival (Maxwell 1994) and on gender (Schmidt 1996). One might even suggest that Zimbabwe has become somewhat of a laboratory for the empirical study of Sub-Saharan African liberation wars, with a good deal of comparative work between Shona areas and Matabeleland (Ncube and Ranger 1995, Maxwell 1994, Werbner 1991). There has been an attempt to build up a 'better' and 'more detailed' picture of the war itself (Bhebe and Ranger 1995), with a long list of scholarly gaps still to be filled (ibid, 5).

It might seem churlish to ask whether such comprehensive coverage loses sight of the unspeakable terrors and inarticulate violence that war produces. I ask this because it is a question that looms over any attempt to represent the violence of war, and I face it in my own writing. In their introduction Bhebe and Ranger do acknowledge the 'much more realistic picture of an anti-colonial war which was characterised...also by coercion, terror and commandist politics' (1995, 21). Yet it can be difficult to keep in focus the terrifying ambivalence of violence whilst also writing about the 'weakness of guerrilla ideology' (Maxwell 1993). Is it really possible to separate the ideological from the material? When faced with the constancy of terror, academic conclusions about the relative importance of self-interest/voluntarism/coercion in people's attitudes towards a guerrilla struggle seem disingenuous (Kriger 1992). There is also the risk of accounts of violence taking on a 'prurient form' (Daniel 1996), the risk of an anthropology of violence becoming a pornography of violence. Every turn is fraught with risk.

How then to describe violence, neither aestheticising nor intellectualising it, but remaining vigilant to the effects of writing? If there is no easy way out, one place to start is with the languages and phrases commonly used to discuss war and conflict. There was one such common cultural idiom in the war-affected part of Ssingoo where I lived, a physical, non-verbal idiom at that. All too often I would see a gesture, in bars, in the staffroom, with friends. A gesture, often made in jest, always provoking laughter, yet it was hard to hide the unbearable experiences it made light of. The protagonist - it was nearly always a man - would bend their head forward, clench fists, bring their forearms up, and rapidly pump their arms up-and-down. It signified someone desperately running away. It might have been running from someone to whom they owed money, or from some *bayayi* (louts/thieves), but all too often it was evoked in the context of war. For too many Ugandans, especially in the surrounding Ssingoo hills, the liberation war of 1981-1986 meant running, fleeing, hiding, dodging, crouched in a swamp for hours or constantly on the move. In my discussions everyone had a different story to tell, but many were painful to listen to, let alone to recall. Each experience was unique in its detail, in its minute etchings of

fear and terror.

Running. A school-teacher mimics himself as a young school-boy, sprinting home from school on a forest path as shooting starts up around Kikomera *Ggombolola* (Sub-district headquarters). Running. An ex-soldier describes to me the 30-mile night expeditions in often fruitless searches for food. Running. A civilian who lived 'in the bush' under the protection of the guerrillas recounts the warning shot given to them to abandon all their possessions and to flee and seek cover. Running.

At first things went all too well for Museveni and his men. After resting on the day after the raid, Museveni and his men arrived at Kiboga district headquarters to what several people told me was an enthusiastic welcome - after an initial panic. '*Abamu gye bajja tebadukka, bo amagye nga'abazze, tebaduka*' (Some didn't run when they came, the brave ones, they didn't run) explained one elderly farmer who was also the secretary of the Kiboga district co-operative association. '*They attacked Kiboga town on the 8th February*', recalled Mukasa, an earnest and committed man who became the local Red Cross representative during the war. '*But it was no problem, there was no fighting, and no resistance from either the police or the prisons when they went there. They tore up the UPC flag that was flying and spoke to some people who had gathered there at the UPC station, promising to come back the next day. A businessman called Mbale agreed to write down the names of those who wanted to join the NRM.*' Museveni corroborates this story, '*the wananchi (the people) were not scared: rather they were enthusiastic and supportive*' (Museveni 1997, 128). Mukasa described how Museveni himself came to the local hospital at night to meet the senior staff, whilst the rebels injured in the Kabamba incident were already being treated there. Many still have vivid memories of conversations with '*Mzee*' (the big man/wise man, i.e. Museveni), and such meetings were clearly a critical opportunity for consciousness-raising and for gaining support. The support of medical staff would enable a supply of much-needed drugs and supplies. Nevertheless I would still suggest that the question of whether the Luwero was a 'popular war' is somewhat irrelevant, for the category of a 'people' and their singular collective consciousness is not particularly helpful, either theoretically or politically. If there is no such category as the 'people', there is also no doubt that many rural dwellers acted incredibly bravely to support the guerrilla army. Old men told me of cycle rides at night to bring maize meal to the rebel camps. Others acted as recruiters, disguising training camps as Banyarwanda cattle kraals. Those who didn't join directly were equally valuable in their support. As in the Zimbabwe war (Ranger 1985), young boys often acted as the eyes and ears of the campaign, and a young carpenter friend described - with perhaps a hint of jealousy -

seeing little boys riding up front as the guerrillas arrived by Landrover into Kikomera to spread the message.

The following days and weeks did not go quite so smoothly. News reached Kampala and a large Tanzanian troop contingent arrived on the 8th February. Museveni only just missed an ambush on the main road as he returned from Kikomera. In Kiboga the soldiers shot Mbale in the head, and began searching for the rebels. The wounded guerrillas were forced to leave their beds in the hospital and flee in disarray. Museveni recalls how his men were scattered and disheartened, and several decided to leave (1997). Meanwhile the Tanzanian soldiers set up a garrison next to the hospital. Later Ugandan troops of Obote's UNLF army were to replace them. They gradually began to harass local people and to loot the local shops and businesses. *'Bakoleyo ebibi, baatandika okunyaga enkoko, embuzi, ssente, ne nnyumba bazyoka. Bakwambadde abantu, eko kyaletera abantu okusuula ensiko'*. *'They did bad things'* recalled an elderly farmer called Lutakome, in a powerful understatement, *'they began to snatch hens, pigs and money, and burn houses. They left people naked, and that's what led people to go and hide in the bush'*.

At first the ambushes and raids by the rebels were sporadic, but as they gained in strength, arms and numbers, the government's counter-insurgency operations became ever fiercer. Villagers were not only caught in the cross-fire but became targets of suspicion themselves. Many took great risks to support the NRM. By 1983 most settlements in Luwero triangle were deserted, many having fled South to more peaceful areas. The Government troops began to enact a classic counter-insurgency campaign, forcing those who had not already fled the area into supposedly 'protected' camps. Anyone remaining outside was assumed to be a rebel.

Hiding. Mukasa began to hear rumours that his name was being mentioned in connection with that night meeting with Museveni in Kiboga - he decided to go to Kampala for a few months till the rumour had quietened down. I was struck by the bizarre first-name familiarity of violence, the chance conversations that condemned one to die. Hiding. The local DP (Democratic Party) chairman at Kiboga described sheltering for three months during the rainy season in the reedy swamp near the village, as the local UPC chairman appointed by Obote (after the first had been killed by the NRM) had a vendetta against him. Hiding. His wife would occasionally walk by, ostensibly on the way to farm, and throw a bundle of food into the reeds. They never met, fearing the mute treachery of footprints. Three hits of a hoe on a stone - *'Twa, twa, twa'* - signified that soldiers were searching for him, one for an all-clear *'Twa'*. Hiding. He had already been in the local jail for several months, and had escaped to Kampala. He came back, thinking

he was safe. In one of those freeze-frame silences he showed me his torture wounds, where molten plastic from a jerry-can had been poured onto his body.

Each story I heard re-lived fear in a different way. Many ordinary farmers told of the constantly gnawing fear of capture by government forces, of having to abandon meals at a moment's notice. But also of crippling dysentery and malaria, vain searches for food, biting insects and the ubiquitous lice. One teacher recounted the randomness of army raids on the 'refugee' camps. Young men suspected of collaboration would be dragged out of tents and shot at random. My mate Sayiga, Kikomera's local postman, preferred not to talk about his war, though the bullet-scars on his chest hinted at his own personal horror. Violence can only feed on itself. I heard few tales about Kikomera. Most of the residents fled after harassment and theft by the Government troops. The rich traders left first, whilst others were initially forced into a camp at the Parish church. Many just travelled South towards Mubende town, often having no idea of where they would end up. *'Ebintu byaffe bisingaddewo, byonna okujjako obw'okufumba, ne tupakasa ne tulime bulime'*. *'We left everything behind'*, explained the carpenter, *'everything except our kitchen things, and we just hired ourselves out to do digging'*. Uncovering the social memories of war was complicated by my realisation that many who left never returned. More than ten years on, Kikomera is now full of newcomers; traders and tenant farmers who have arrived from other places. Who then keeps alive the memories of pain?

In the archives of Save the Children and Oxfam I found that for a while in late 1983 there was a huge feeding centre in Kikomera, providing for more than 20,000 displaced people. The agency reports describe interviews with people. One man stated that *'he had personally witnessed the massacre of over a 100 people in a nearby forest.'* Another that *'he had seen many hundreds of bodies in the woods forests.'*⁹ People arriving in Kikomera were described as malnourished. These were people who had in turn fled from the Luwero district across the Mayanja river to escape government advances, and many had travelled in harsh conditions. Yet people in the village whom I talked to knew little about this migration, as by then nearly everyone had fled the area. Perhaps cultural memory is best found inscribed on the landscape itself. Derelict buildings, missing roofs and abandoned vehicles each tell their tale about lives past. Their stillness ensures a luxuriance of weeds, feeding off the silence.

Killings. By 1983 reports of large-scale massacres began to filter into the international

⁹ Situation Report *'Relief operations in Luwero district, Uganda'*, 13.8.83 - 23.9.83 File UGA 091, Oxfam archives, Kampala.

press.¹⁰ Neither side was innocent. As Lutakome the farmer recounted *'Nga omuntu akuba omuntu, nga bayekerera, bumuwosessa, nga bababuuzza 'Oyo, mumanyi, mulungi oba mubi?' Singa mubi, basiima obunya nga bamutuuka omu.'* *'If someone beat someone, the rebels would bring him to justice, and ask the others about this guy, is he good or bad, and if bad, they would dig a hole and bury him alive.'* For all the talk of disciplined armies, wars have few rules. Killings. Masaba, an Obote security operative, recounts an incident wherein two suspected rebels, having been tortured, were about to be shot in the grounds of the Nile Mansions in Kampala.¹¹ They were spotted by a Minister at a diplomatic reception in the block opposite. He quickly rang and ordered them to stop, or at least to be more discreet. Killings. By this stage the military barracks around Kampala were becoming notorious for their torture chambers and 'disappearances'. Makindye, Bombo, Mbuya. Killings. Stories also began to appear in the international press about forced encampments, as well as about the North Korean reinforcements brought in to fight the 'bandits'.¹² The counter-insurgency strategy was 'successful', and by late 1983 the NRM were forced to retreat out of the Luwero area, save for a few mobile squads. Killings.

The details can be pasted together, filling out the larger canvas of a war that lasted five years and involved the deaths of hundreds of thousands, and the displacement of many more. Innumerable repetitions make up the larger picture, but intense individual experiences are lost below the strategic brush-strokes of national politics, the to-and-fro fortunes on the frontline. There are even moments of colour and humour. Take the image of the Red Cross co-ordinator describing how he slipped through the front-line so that he could get married in a Cathedral in Kampala, or the description of life 'in the bush', where no money to buy cow's meat meant that people could only afford to eat the skin. Such moments of lightness are inevitably lost in the larger picture. Perhaps it is no surprise that few have attempted a social history of the whole war, despite the many articles and column inches since devoted to that period in the Ugandan press. Fragments have been contributed by Mutibwa (1992) on the unfolding of military events, by Tidemand (1993, 1994) on popular political structures during the struggle, and by Museveni

¹⁰ The Guardian, December 3rd 1983, 'Mysteries of thousands who "vanish" from Ugandan camps.'

¹¹ 'NRA killed some 40%, UNLA 50% in Luwero.'
Tony Masaba, The Monitor, January 24th 1996.

¹² Even the agency archives reveal a lack of support or understanding of guerrilla aims. I remember my shock on seeing a planning map of the region, with a large felt-tip circle around the northern Ssingoo hills. The one word caption inside was simple - 'Bandits'.

himself (1997) on the guerillas' experiences of the war. A comprehensive history is however being prepared by Frank Schubert (1993), looking not only at guerrilla-civilian-military interactions but also at the involvement of relief agencies and media representations of the war.

I have cut this account short. A social history of this war deserves much more attention. A more balanced picture of the struggle and the atrocities committed on all sides might enable some sort of reconciliation with the past. I leave that to others. My concern is with the present, and with the way the war is being kept alive, more than ten years after Museveni came to power. Histories do not just recede intact over the horizon, but are always being revisited, resignified and reinterpreted, so to be put to use in the present. The memories nurtured may not be salutary, but they are always infused with power. In the last sections of this chapter I will explore how the picture of the war has been constantly redrawn over this last decade, both by the NRM Government and the inhabitants of the Luwero Triangle. In particular I look at the versions of history used to bolster claims for 'Ganda' nationhood. First however I have to do two more stints of narration. I attempt my own brief historicisation of pre-colonial Buganda, as well as describing early tales told and written about Buganda. I then turn to the use of such narratives in anti-colonial struggles. Both periods presage the complexity of contemporary nationalist politics.

'Ekitiibwa kya Buganda kyava dda':¹³ Myths and other histories

In his adventurous recent account of pre-colonial history, Christopher Wrigley (1996) captures Buganda's significance for colonial explorers and scholars. He describes it as conforming 'more closely than almost any other system to the post-Renaissance European model of a state' (ibid, 1). Explorers like Speke (1863) and Stanley (1878) certainly encountered Buganda at the zenith of its imperial power. Whisked to the capital along fine roads, to be kept virtual prisoners within the impressive stockades of the palace, they were suitably awed by the organisational efficiency of the Buganda state. The despotic and seemingly total power of a quasi-divine king attracted particular admiration. Their reports back to the British newspapers sponsoring them were full of praise for this great 'civilisation', texts which undoubtedly shaped colonial attitudes towards the Ganda. However Wrigley goes beyond such exoticism in his account, deftly exploring the early history of Buganda through a close reading of Apolo

¹³ 'The glory of Buganda comes from long ago.'

Kaggwa's *Bakabaka be Buganda* (The Kings of Buganda). Kaggwa was the Prime Minister at the turn of the century, and a highly influential figure. Together with Roscoe, the early missionary-ethnographer, he produced what became the definitive version of royal history. Drawing on numerous interviews and oral histories, his book crystallised different oral traditions into a single reading of Buganda's royal history. Being one of the most powerful people in Buganda as well as a keen scholar, Kaggwa's text rapidly became the dominant version of the past.

Wrigley wrings a great deal of historical, linguistic, and narrative information from Kaggwa's account, and he uses all his background knowledge (plus a few of his own hypotheses) to reveal even more from the story. His is a modest project, his structuralist exegeses notwithstanding, arguing that in an oral society any account stretching back more than 150 years is likely to be more oral tradition than oral history. But his differentiation of 'myth' from 'history' can demean both, since it assumes the concrete existence of 'real' history beyond dispute, and makes the 'myths we live by' seem derivative and secondary. Wrigley's account is much more subtle than that, but it does make one cautious about the consequences of retelling a distant Buganda past, particularly if relying on a book that purports to provide a genealogy of all 21 generations of pre-colonial Kabakas, right back to Kintu, Buganda's founder-figure who came down from the sky, surviving by drinking only his cow's urine.

Wrigley is not the only one to face difficulties. From archaeological evidence of deforestation around 1000 AD ago in the Great Lakes area (Schmidt 1997), there would seem to be little doubt that there were highly advanced iron-smelting civilisations in the region. But the history of the Bantu peoples is one of constant movement and migration, and also of influence from Nile valley pastoralists. Yet any attempt to set up some sort of diffusionist genealogy based on extant linguistic and archaeological evidence can end up chasing categories. One such label is the 'Chwezi', a civilisation that supposedly lived in the period before the emergence of centralised kingdoms such as those of Buganda, Bunyoro, Nkore and Rwanda. Feierman (1995) notes that studies of the Chwezi tradition reveal a good deal about the development of centralised ritual and political authority, and he suggests that they related to the establishment of specialised herding. They are important for this tale because historians of Bunyoro trace the 'Chwezi' as the rulers that preceded the 'Bito' dynasty that governed Bunyoro. The importance of this for Buganda is that it determines whether Buganda can trace links back to such an ambiguous but mystical past, or whether Buganda expanded later at the expense of the Bunyoro empire, and so initially was just a colonised dependency. The former was the

influential thesis of the historian Mathias Kiwanuka (1971), whom Wrigley describes as a 'Ganda patriot'. Nationalist pride is at stake, even in the academic tales of Buganda origins.

Apolo Kagwa dwells very little on larger political history in his *'Bakabaka BeBuganda'*. Instead he provides a lengthy genealogy of Kings, spiced up with the tasty minutiae of clan and family intrigue. The first 14 (out of 21) generations of Kabakas only get about one fifth of his book. Wrigley's close analysis of the evidence is impeccable. He combines textual analysis of the book, written historical records, shrine remains and consideration of the context of its writing to suggest that, whilst it was not just compiled for European consumption, it is likely that the narrative tradition would have been formed in the early 19th century, 'a time of political consolidation after at least three generations of growth and turmoil' (ibid, 33). He suggests that the history of Buganda 'was the work of a committee...a compromise between the claims of the several contending groups that came together in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to make the Ganda state' (ibid, 41). Whilst there is archaeological evidence for the Chwezi and Bito dynasties in the pastoralist lands north of Buganda, it would seem that there was little ritual and political centralisation in Buganda until later. Feierman (1995) suggests that the beginning of intensive cultivation of bananas (from South Asia) in the fifteenth century in the hills around Lake Victoria may have resulted in a more densely settled agricultural population. Wrigley uses the corroborating evidence of a solar eclipse fleetingly mentioned in Kagwa's book, not to exactly date the rule of a king to AD 1680, but rather to show the possibility that there were very localised 'divine' kings/chiefs in the Busiro¹⁴ region of Buganda even earlier, perhaps also called Kabakas. There is no space here for the exact details of Wrigley's richly provocative account, but he does make a strong case for envisioning Buganda as originally a group of small independent chiefdoms clustered around the edge of the lake, gradually brought together by charismatic rulers.

After hesitating in the face of conflicting evidence, Wrigley eventually states that 'the political development of the area was decisively shaped by a period of Nyoro hegemony' (ibid 197). He is supported by others on this point (Twaddle 1974, Low and Pratt 1960), but this is not a sentiment that would be supported by 'Ganda patriots'. Mathias Kiwanuka argues, with perhaps unjustified certainty, that the Ganda polity never paid homage to a Nyoro overlord, and that instead an early Kabaka, Kimera, had supposedly come from the Chwezi kingdom (Kiwanuka 1971). Whilst there is a good deal of historical evidence of Nyoro cultural and

¹⁴ The county in the bottom right-hand corner of the Luwero triangle, and the ritual heartland of Buganda, with all the shrines of past Kings.

political influence on Ganda history, the work of Kiwanuka is still taken as definitive evidence by many in Buganda. As Wrigley (1996) notes generously, Kiwanuka was writing at a time when relations between the two kingdoms were severely strained by the dispute over the 'lost counties',¹⁵ despite the fact that this was land taken from Bunyoro in the 1900 agreement.

Searching for the exact origins of a centralised Ganda state is perhaps unproductive. More important is to recognise the effects of gradual centralisation and co-option of power by the King during Buganda's bellicose expansion in the 18th and 19th centuries (Wrigley 1996, Cox 1950, Gray 1935, Wright 1971). A series of pugnacious Kabakas managed to challenge the hereditary principles governing clan chieftaincy, and by appointing their own candidates were even able to bring the military under their sole command. Perhaps it was also the indiscriminate use of terror by the Kabakas - mass human sacrifice and rituals involving body parts - that bludgeoned their subjects and their enemies into a respect for Ganda imperial might and despotic power. Rowe (1966) punningly describes the Buganda of that time to be a 'warfare state'. Ganda pride in a glorious past tends to skip over such details, as do British nationalisms when faced with the sometimes frighteningly racialised excesses of empire. That a coronation ritual required the provision of bracelets for the King made out of human ankle tendons reveals the calculated effect of this legitimated violence. Perhaps such accounts were elaborated both to shock early European observers, or to bolster the authority of Kabaka Muteesa. Muteesa was the proud Kabaka who suddenly in the 1860s and 1870s found his domain less invincible than it had appeared. Again it is difficult to know how to write about such pre-meditated and casual violence, other than to acknowledge that it contributed to a sometimes voyeuristic interest by European scholars in the grandiose nature of Buganda's past.

There were however some benefits to this immodest despotism. By the 19th century, Buganda were ensured a degree of prosperity and security (the Kabaka's excessive whims notwithstanding), and Buganda had courts, councils, armies and public works. Its wealth was being secured as much through trade as through border raids and conquest. The empire was at the zenith of its power and cultural influence.....when suddenly the world grew much larger. The arrival of the first Muslim merchants in the 1840s and then Speke and Grant in 1862 foretold other empires and other struggles. Rowe (1966) writes vividly of the gradually increasing Islamic influence on Buganda during Kabaka Muteesa's rule, countered later by the arrival of Catholic and Protestant missionaries. The cultural politics of religious struggle that began at that time still

¹⁵ The 'lost counties' is a reference to six counties on the borders between Buganda and Bunyoro which were allotted to Buganda in the 1900 Land Agreement.

continue to shape Ugandan public culture, and Kabaka Muteesa's sudden display of indecision, with loyalty wavering between conflicting religious authorities, symbolised the end of an epoch, the end of empire. Amongst others, Low (1957), Taylor (1958), Wrigley (1959), and Rowe (1966) describe the religious revolutions, civil-wars and counter-revolutions of the late 19th century in rich detail. It was a time of pious martyrdoms, fragile treaties and constant battle.

Given its intense colonial symbolism, much has also been written on the history of delicate diplomatic negotiations and bullying leading up to the 1900 Uganda agreement (Pratt and Low 1960, Low 1971). The Christian ascendancy in the 1890s meant that Buganda was favourably inclined towards European influence. This combined with geo-political concerns to ensure that Buganda was viewed as an ever more favourable base for British interests in central Africa. Urged on by the CMS missionaries, and aware of the continuing Muslim/Bunyoro threat, Captain Lugard secured a treaty from Kabaka Mwanga in 1890 which acknowledged the Imperial British East Africa Company's 'protection' of Buganda. Shortly afterwards Lugard led the Kabaka's army out to defeat the Muslim rebels. There were several more agreements signed in the 1890s, but the last one in 1900 provided a political settlement for Buganda whose legacy is still felt a century later. Asking whether the Ganda chiefs or the British diplomats did best is a difficult question. Beinart (1995) argues that 'Buganda maintained a relatively high degree of autonomy during colonisation', suggesting that its political institutions remained 'fundamentally intact'. Certainly the Ganda chiefs did well from the agreement. Yet in the context of the far-reaching cultural and religious influence of Christian missionaries and colonial power it is hard to know how one would measure 'intact'.

It was during this time that Lugard and his successors attempted to placate religious rivalries by dividing up political offices between the Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. Kikomera and the Ssingoo hills, discussed above in relation to the Luwero war, were allocated to a Protestant chief. Ssingoo had long been border country for the Ganda empire, and Langlands (1967) describes it as the 'Ssingoo marches', with huge Ganda armies often ravaging the countryside for sustenance on their way north to fight Bunyoro. This appointment of a Protestant chief, and the later re-allocation of land from Bunyoro to Buganda in the 1900 agreement - now known as the 'lost counties' - reinforced the protestant ascendancy within Buganda. Such arbitrary divisions often led to large population movements, reinforcing political infighting and a sense of religious separatism.

Despite this, the Ganda chiefs managed to provide a united front in the tough negotiations

that surrounded the 1900 agreement. The focus was very much on land, both for its symbolic and moral value (Hansen 1994), and also its political importance for the chiefs. For the British negotiators its value was more straightforward - its economic potential. Pratt and Low (1960) describe the tortuous negotiations at length, noting disagreement over issues as diverse as hunting rights and whether to call the Kabaka 'His Highness'. The main consequence was the carving-up of all land in Buganda into private '*mailo*' (Lug. miles square) estates for the chiefs. It was agreed that the most fertile portions would be parcelled out amongst the Kabaka's family and prominent notables. Yet texts are never cut and dried. Whilst the treaty seemed to favour British interests, chiefly claims and interpretations of its terms meant that the allocated 'Crown lands' were eventually whittled down to be of little commercial value. The once-significant power of the clans and their symbolic attachment to their *butaka*¹⁶ (clan burial grounds) was also finally crushed by the emergence of this new Ganda oligarchy led by the Kabaka's regents. It was a momentous change to the Buganda political system. Yet despite another round of peasant dispossession and population upheaval as these chiefs staked their claims, there seems to have been little popular resistance. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the formidable alliance of Ganda chiefs and British administrators. Soon enough there was a burgeoning commercial market in land, leading to the stories of economic success and of Ganda individualism that I mentioned in Chapter One. Pratt and Low (1960) do not exaggerate in suggesting that the 1900 treaty was almost a 'charter of rights' for the Ganda elite, for it secured their land tenure in law, provided a workable political system, and ensured a sense of cultural superiority. The dynastic self-assurance that resulted still lives on today within a small Ganda aristocracy. Everyday folk - the landless, tenant farmers, clan heads - did much less well out of the agreement, planting seeds of discontent that surfaced more than thirty years later, as I describe below.

As well as making history in this tumultuous period, the Ganda elites were also writing it. As Twaddle (1974) and Rowe (1969) both describe, the prestige surrounding the '*abasomi*' (those who read), first in the Kabaka's court, and then throughout Ganda society more generally, ensured a huge popular interest in literacy. The power wielded by 'The Word' - or at least by pastors and sheikhs brandishing bibles and Korans - led to many prominent Baganda writing memoirs, publishing political pamphlets, and entering into lengthy correspondence. Most popular of all were religious texts, but historiographies also became fashionable (Rowe 1969). These were often moralistic and high-minded texts, reminiscing over a glorious past of military

¹⁶ Historically every clan had land associated with it, which was inherited by the clan head. Its symbolic value came from the burial ground that was often associated with it. These *butaka* were often completely disregarded by the new owners of *mailo* estates.

victories, but Rowe also mentions one Daudi Mukubira who published '*Olugendo Iwa Buganda Empya*' (The path of Modern Buganda), a 72-page paean to retail entrepreneurship. On a different note, Twaddle (1974) also discusses the numerous clan histories that were written during this period. Such treatises were later read as political charters. They elaborated the uniqueness and antiquity of clan chiefdoms, and so were used to justify royalist and '*butaka*' opposition to political change in the 1950s. The writing of histories can also be the making of them.

'Buganda Nyaffe' - Buganda, Our mother¹⁷

I turn now to the 1930s and 1940s. There was a growing popular unrest within Buganda at this time, directed against the dynastic Ganda political elite who continued to benefit from indirect rule and the legacy of the 1900 Agreement. The clan and monarchical histories written about a glorious Ganda past ensured the articulation of these tensions in the form of an anti-colonial nationalism. There were many reasons for dissatisfaction. These included frustration at tax demands and forced labour, opposition to growing British influence, and anger at the demeaning treatment of everyday folk by small-minded chiefs. In the 1920s this came to a surface in what is called the 'Bataka controversy'. *Bataka* in one sense means 'People of the land', but at the time it referred to clan heads who had hereditary rights over clan burial grounds. Mobilising the rhetoric of traditional custom and land rights, two senior Bataka (James Miti and the Mugema - a clan head with important ritual duties) attempted to challenge the 1900 Agreement and its effacement of Bataka land rights.

This was not a totally new political dynamic, for the Bataka, by virtue of kinship and clan, had long been able to claim a citizenship and cultural 'purity' quite independently from the Kabaka (Apter 1961, 99). Indeed, the cultural politics of many disputes within Buganda still revolve around whether one can prove, through naming one's descent line and knowing one's clan history, that one is a '*Muganda ggereggere*' (pure Muganda). The stake of these older ritual powers of clan heads in the new political settlement first became an issue at the investiture of the Kabaka in 1914 (Apter 1961), with the question of whether the coronation would be carried out according to 'foreign' (European/Christian) or 'Kiganda' protocol. In the end two ceremonies

¹⁷ 'Buganda Nyaffe' is the title of a political pamphlet published by Daudi Mukubira (Mengo 1944) which attacked British rule.

were held. Whilst it is difficult to define clear political groupings and agendas in a fluid and always changing political arena, it seems that this challenge enabled the Bataka to mobilise popular memory and nostalgia towards 'Old Buganda' with great effect. The 1922 challenge of the two Bataka leaders drew upon a similarly traditionalist clan discourse to challenge the chiefly power of the new Ganda aristocracy. Academic commentators are often critical of the Bataka movement - Low and Pratt argue that it mobilised 'tribal sentiments' (1960, 252) whilst Ingham (1958, 236) talks of 'extreme nationalism' - but neither seems to pay much attention to the wider context (Kenya, Ghana etc) of anti-colonial struggle of which this movement was a part. The use of older political idioms to galvanise new struggles is perhaps less problematic than the Bataka's disinterest in more inclusive anti-colonial solidarities. Buganda was all that mattered.

Once established, the Bataka Association continued to act as the fulcrum for Ganda opposition to the protectorate government. The term Bataka widened to refer to all 'true' Baganda, and whilst its main support came from rural peasant farmers, it saw itself as increasingly *the* Buganda nationalist grouping. 'Wronged, aggrieved, proud and traditionalist', as Apter (1967, 149) puts it. The grouping also began to influence attitudes amongst the Ganda political class. Throughout the 1930s both the Kabaka and the Lukiiko constantly took up positions against greater national integration, instead viewing Buganda as an autonomous political unit. In this they were often supported by the protectorate administration's kid-glove treatment of Buganda.

The 1920s and early 1930s signalled a cotton boom in Uganda. The cultivation of cotton became a source of wealth for farmers, and the income enabled the purchase of new consumer goods such as bicycles and clothes. Yet the Protectorate Government heavily taxed cotton-growing, and as prices fluctuated and fell through the 1930s, economic frustration grew. Asian and European middle-men, the large cotton companies, the ginneries and the Protectorate government were all blamed. Things were made worse by the lack of financial support provided for African small businesses and traders, whilst the institutionalised racism in the civil service frustrated those who felt that their secondary and college education had been to no purpose. Economic and political unrest mounted in the rural areas, and began to be crystallised in the form of more radical political organisations, such as the '*Bazzukulu wa Kintu*' (The Grandchildren of Kintu) formed in 1938 (Apter 1961). Its leaders were closely associated with the Bataka movement, but initially had the express aim of ejecting the Prime Minister from office. Canvassing for support in the rural areas, its founder was later jailed for forgery, but not before fomenting a fascinating mixture of seemingly contradictory anti-colonial alliances. The

combination of economic hardship, clan sentiment and nationalist pride was a potent brew.

One key factor was a strong popular hostility to any move towards federation of the East African territories. The sub-text to this was the constant fear of an influx of white Kenyan settlers. Already Kampala was beginning to feel to many Ugandans like a European or Asian town. A further series of incidents throughout the 1940s heightened political tensions and a sense of Ganda solidarity. All trust in the British - and in their Ugandan collaborators - seemed to be lost. Apter details the powerful rumours spreading throughout Buganda (often with the help of polemical pamphlets¹⁸) that the Europeans were trying to steal African blood and African children (see also White 1993, 1995), or attempting to kill off the African population with syphilis and sleeping sickness. The evidence of white Kenyan racism in the face of the Mau-Mau rebellion would have been of little reassurance. In such an atmosphere, it was not hard to incite violent protest, and large-scale riots in 1945 enabled the nationalist faction to remove a hated and corrupt *Omuwanika* (Buganda's Chief Treasurer). In another crisis, a Government proposal to expand Makerere college grounds was suspected to be a plot to secure land in Buganda for Europeans. Eventually, and under much pressure, the Buganda government passed the requisition law for the land, which just seemed to confirm the conspiracy theorists. The next day Buganda's *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister) was murdered on the steps of the Anglican Cathedral (Low and Pratt 1960).

The experiences of World War Two did nothing to dampen anti-colonial sentiment. Instead, military service politicised many more. In 1946 the Bataka Party reinvented itself as a political party and again became the main organised expression of this hostility. Always populists, the leaders were ever more successful at harnessing older discourses around the clan, using them as a cultural archive (James 1988) in order to fight a modern anti-colonial struggle. Soon many Kiganda dancing groups and traditional craft guilds affiliated. A new farmers union also attracted the support of young rural political activists, and again political pamphlets helped spread its message. A quotation from the founder of the Farmers' Union, I.K. Musazi, gives some sense of how populist protest was mobilised (quoted in Apter 1961, 258):

My opinion is that it would be very silly of us if we simply gave our cotton into the hands of robbers and thieves. As if we did not know that it is our own cotton for which we laboured so that it might get good profits to take us from the bonds of slavery of poverty. Therefore every African of Uganda should avow that it is better to die than give away

¹⁸ The provocation in this case, according to Apter (1967), was Daudi Mukubira's (1952) '*Buganda Nyaffe*' (Our Buganda).

the wealth of the country of their heredity.

Such stirring texts once again provoked massive protests throughout Buganda in 1949, sparked once more by economic discrimination and discussion of an East African federation. Draconian restrictions on press freedoms and on public gatherings in 1948 aggravated the issue. With a rallying cry of *BU! (Bataka Uganda)* the 1949 protest began with a challenge to the unelected nature of the *Lukiiko* (Buganda Parliament). After a number of meetings the farmers and the Bataka announced a mass petition to the Kabaka himself. They presented him with five demands (quoted in Low and Pratt 1960) :

- 1) *Your highness should open the rule of democracy to start giving people powers to choose their own Chiefs.*
- 2) *We want the number of 60 unofficials to be completed.*
- 3) *We demand the abolition of the present Government.*
- 4) *We want to gin our own cotton.*
- 5) *We want to sell one's produce in outside countries, that is free trade*

The Kabaka attempted to respond to the demands, but the next day the protest became more violent, and quickly spread throughout Buganda. Many chiefs' houses were burnt, almost 2,000 people were arrested, and a state of emergency was declared. The subsequent Kingdon report¹⁹ blatantly dismissed most of the farmers grievances. Instead it put the blame on the writings of one Semakula Malumba, a Muganda living in Hampstead who was the representative of the Butaka Party in Britain.

This slow amassing of discord and 'popular' protest receives less academic attention than the subsequent party-political manoeuvring over Ugandan self-rule, but it reveals some of the powerful ambivalences within national narratives, 'idea(s) whose cultural compulsion lie in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force' (Bhabha 1990, 1). The invocation of ancestral cultural purity through clanship and ritual was enabled partly by 19th century historical memoirs recalling a more glorious past (Twaddle 1974). Yet it was a selective reading, downplaying both the recent provenance of the Buganda polity through conquest and the forcefully centralising role of the Kabaka in creating such a state. The Kabaka himself became a contested and uncertain symbol during this time, once the unquestioned embodiment of Buganda imperial power but now in danger of seeming a colonial lackey. As Bhabha notes, 'the ambivalent figure of the nation is a problem of its transitional history' (ibid, 2), a theme I take up below in the parallel tensions and

¹⁹ 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in Uganda during April 1949' (quoted in Apter 1961).

transitions occurring almost 50 years later. The contradictions are multiple, but it seems to me that the symbolic strength of the call to nation lies in the closing down of possible meaning and the singularisation of attachment. In Buganda this was partly enabled in the 1930's through a gendering of the nation, through the intimate language of kinship. '*Buganda Nyaffe*' (literally 'Buganda, Our mother', but perhaps more appropriately translated as 'Buganda, Our Motherland') was the rallying cry.

'Ebyaffe' and 'Federo': New Narratives of the Buganda nation

Jumping from the ambivalence of anti-colonial nationalisms in the 1940s to post-colonial politics in the 1990s can make the history of the nation seem even more transitory. In so doing, I deliberately pass over the complex party-political intrigues of the 1950s and 1960s (Low 1971, Karugire 1980). These included efforts by Buganda leaders to create more inclusive anti-colonial alliances,²⁰ the Kabaka's attempt to call for Buganda independence,²¹ and the twisting and always divided fortunes of cultural nationalism. I also neglect to provide a fuller description of the 1961 populist monarchical political grouping (Kabaka Yekka - The King Alone) which challenged the 'anti-Kabaka' progressivism of the Democratic Party, instead entering a fragile electoral alliance with the UPC. After independence on October 9th 1962, the Kabaka was given the symbolic post of President by Prime Minister Obote. Finally, I also omit a discussion of the bloody nemesis of Ganda pride. In May 1966 Obote suspended the Independence constitution and, in response to a Buganda Lukiiko call to secede, ransacked the Kabaka's palace. Turmoil was predicted throughout the Buganda countryside, but commentators (Mutibwa 1992, Low 1971) record the lack of popular response. There were simmering protests, but nothing like those seen at earlier moments. Somehow the issue seemed less significant, or people felt more impotent, than at earlier times. Again then the ambivalence of calls to nation, at one moment inciting anger, at another resignation. Senior Baganda civil servants seemed to acquiesce in this un-palatial coup (Low 1971), whilst others realised that their future destiny had to lie within the Ugandan nation. For better or worse, the Buganda anthem came to an abrupt end. Some went into exile with the Kabaka in London, whilst others reconciled themselves to a new political order in which even

²⁰ Amongst the most significant of the political parties set up were the Uganda National Congress led by I.K. Musazi, the Progressive Party, and finally the Catholic-led Democratic Party.

²¹ Resulting in the King being expelled for two years from Buganda to London, from 1953 to 1955.

the name Buganda was removed from the maps. Kabaka Muteesa II died in 1967, a lonely and haunted man, and with him perhaps all hopes of restoring the monarchy. Sic transit gloria.

The King is dead, long live the King. Imagine then the re-awakening of joy at the coronation of a new Kabaka on 31st July 1993. Muteesa's son Ronald Muwenda Mutebi, long-time resident of South London, was crowned Kabaka Mutebi II. It was a day of great pomp, ceremony and re-invented tradition. The day also held much significance for President Museveni, and was attended by diplomats and the international media. With the organising committee turning to scholarly works to bolster their knowledge of the ritual's proceedings, the monarchy and the Bugandan nation found itself new references and a new vocabulary. *'The day Buganda was reborn'* proclaimed a pamphlet published in London.²²

The process leading to this coronation was a contested one. Some accused Museveni's government of populist opportunism in reinvigorating what are now called 'traditional rulers' (Gingyera-Pinyewa, quoted in Nsibambi 1995), others of a specific deal with the Buganda parliament to ensure the NRM's electoral success (Doornbos and Mwesigye 1995). Still others feared the consequences of re-kindling older narratives of belonging throughout Uganda. There were moments in 1994 and 1995 when Museveni must have had second thoughts. Buganda once again became full of talk of traitors and patriots, of rebels *'going to the bush'* to fight the NRM government, of the struggle for *'ebyaffe'* (our things) and *'federo'*. As I describe below, the history of this acrimonious and tense present is important, not only as a study of the sudden, intense efflorescence of nationalist narratives, but also as an example of the way disparate pasts are signified, re-lived and re-interpreted in new ways.²³

The two pasts at stake were the very ones I have already attempted to describe in this chapter, and both were very much alive in the heated quarrels of 1994 and 1995. The first was the Luwero war, and the question of exactly what Museveni and the NRM had said or promised to rural Baganda in return for their support during the guerrilla war.²⁴ The second was the much older history of Buganda's autonomy within Uganda, back to the 1955 and even the 1900

²² 'Anniversary Newsletter: A New Buganda. Published in 1994, with no named author.

²³ Obbo (1996) notes how the meanings of *'ebyaffe'* multiply as people apply it to different aspects of cultural heritage. The term was used first in the 1950s in connection with 'Kabaka Yekka', and then in the 1970s to refer to the return of Kabaka Muteesa's body for burial in Uganda, after he died in the London docklands of acute alcohol poisoning.

²⁴ This question of incentive or enticement again problematises the notion of a 'popular' war.

agreement, where the central political issue was always the relationship of Buganda to Uganda. The conflict over this relationship explained the renewed interest in the possibilities for federalism in a new constitution. The two pasts came together in an inflammatory combination during the long months of electioneering for a national constituent assembly (CA), and it is this combination that I explore and untangle in the remaining part of this chapter.

The Constituent Assembly (CA) was a very new thing, a democratically elected body mandated to make final decisions on contentious issues within the draft version of the new constitution. Museveni had originally promised *'the restoration of democracy'* in his swearing-in speech (Museveni 1992). It had been a long time coming. The heavy demands put upon the constitutional commission to take all opinions into account whilst drafting a new constitution (Waliggo 1995) meant that the process took four years, and even then the most difficult issues were left open for the CA to resolve. Agreement on whether the kingships should be restored was however pre-empted by monarchist pressure on Museveni to ensure that the coronation went ahead, and a last minute *'Traditional Rulers Statute'* in the same month as the coronation reversed the constitutional abolition of 1967. This sudden legalisation of the monarchy made the national debate about a federal as opposed to a unitary political system all too real. A debate that had last been held in the pre-independence negotiations in Lancaster House, London, was suddenly revived. At a NGO-sponsored *'Decentralisation Conference'* in September 1993 in Kampala, many politicians spoke about the value of the NRM's decentralised resistance council system, whilst Nsibambi (1995) proclaimed the merits of a federalist politics. With the help of such leading Ganda intellectuals, the idea of federalism was soon popularised and on everyone's lips. *'Federo'*, as people glossed it in Luganda. No matter that the last mention of East African federalism in the 1950s, and even initially of a federal Uganda in pre-independence manoeuvring, had been dismissed as selling-out Buganda. *'Ebyaffe'* and *'Federo'* were now what mattered. The acrid fumes of confrontation spread far beyond the *Lukiiko* (Buganda parliament) and what many called the (new) *'Mengo clique'*.²⁵

I begin with the war. How did the NRM government keep it alive in people's memories once they came to power? In 1986 Museveni had quickly presented a *'Ten-Point plan'* and a new *'movement'* political structure to the country, drawing on the example of the *'resistance councils'* (RCs) that they had set up in liberated areas. Yet apart from the publicity surrounding the Luwero skeletons and Museveni's occasional mention of tactics in his speeches, little state effort

²⁵ Mengo is the area in Kampala where the building of the *Lukiiko* (Buganda Government) is located.

went into using the discourse of a 'just war' to legitimate their rule. It is interesting to compare this with Latin American countries, where 'the liberation struggle', for all its contradictions, is often mythologised as a unifying national symbol. Even in Zimbabwe Raftopoulos (1996, 686) notes how 'one of the major sources of legitimacy for the ruling party in Zimbabwe has been its (selective) use of the history of the liberation struggle'. The difference was perhaps that the Luwero war pitted Ugandans against each other. Two years later, when the NRM in Northern Uganda used the very counter-subversive tactics that it had earlier fought against, it was too late to make such an appeal.

One central question was just what Museveni was deemed to have promised, or not promised Buganda whilst 'in the bush'. Interviews with war veterans, media reports, political speeches and popular debate all came back to this point. It seemed impossible to know precisely what Museveni might have said, especially given the politicised claims and counterclaims being made during 1994 and 1995.²⁶ People in Kiboga would often be cautious in expressing an opinion, hardly surprising given the ongoing confrontation between the Bugandan Lukiiko and the national government during the CA deliberations. More intriguing was the way political claims from the 1950s were reinvigorated in new forms. The most pressing issue was whether Museveni had offered some form of self-rule to Buganda as a reward for their part in the liberation war. I heard many, many different versions and opinions. Nearly everyone had an view on the matter, and wasted no time in telling me. Yet quickly the stories people told seemed to coalesce together. Some, especially those with NRM connections, either as recruiters or political cadres, would be vague²⁷ but cautiously optimistic. One political commissar had this to say:

He's given us those things. He (ie Museveni) used to sit down in council a lot, with four or five people, and we talked to see what there was. And those things, I know about them, like our Kabaka, the things of Buganda, they are there. There is nothing he has done which is bad. And with those things of the Kabaka, houses, land.....now we have those things.

²⁶ In his autobiography, written well after the events described in this chapter, Museveni notes that during the war he was forced to respond to the accusation of Dr Kayiira, the leader of a pro-Buganda rebel group called the Uganda Freedom Movement, that the NRM were merely fighting for the people of Western Uganda. Challenged to declare that he was also fighting to restore the Buganda monarchy, Museveni records hosting a big gathering in Kanyanda, telling the people that they were 'fighting to restore power and sovereignty to all the people of Uganda', and that it 'would be up to the people to decide how they used this freedom' (1997, 150). Even if these were his exact words, his speech was seemingly replete with metaphor, and it would have been easy to have interpreted it differently.

²⁷ Luganda's extensive use of pronouns makes unambiguous statements even less likely.

Others were less convinced. An elderly farmer from Kiboga expressed his more controversial opinions almost 'sotto voce', as if he could not be certain as to who was listening:

They told me that if we fought in this war then your King will be returned to you and your things will be returned to you. We, we don't want war again. We fought because then we got our Kabaka. We don't want war and that's why we ask you to return to tell your politicians that the Baganda want their Kabaka to be given his things. Like in Mengo, where the Lubiri is still full of soldiers, so the Kabaka has to sleep in Kololo there, when he should be in his palace.

I heard this rhetorical reduction to 'things' all too often. By linguistically collapsing the relief goods and survival necessities promised to Luwero Triangle residents in 1986 into the political promises made to Buganda by Museveni, people could make their claims for 'ebyaffe' both less specific and more vocal. This rhetorical connection also lent a good deal of popular legitimacy to the reinvigorated calls for Buganda political autonomy. He went on:

When the rebels came (he named an important rebel leader here) they slept on two mattresses and they told me 'You're a real Gentleman'. Yet ever since the war we haven't slept on mattresses. Now you find my children sleeping on one mat, with one blanket, down on the floor.

They used to send us things, (he said, lowering his voice to talk about the aftermath of war) but we never got them properly. The Government was good, the NRM tried to give us things, which was good but there were people who made it bad and who told lies and stole money. Now there are these countries and they give us help and money to use, so the Ministers say that they will give it to the people, and yet there is nothing. These outside countries give us help that we really need, but usually the help doesn't arrive. We were sent things to herd like cows, hens and other things, but they didn't reach us. These things were distributed to heal us, but in Kampala they got the motor-cars, the cows and the hens, but they weren't even in the war.

There is a good deal of evidence that, despite the promises made by Museveni to support relief efforts in the worst-affected areas, much of it did not reach the intended recipients (Kabera and Muyanja 1994). Whilst several international relief agencies were involved, there were soon stories about corruption in the Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation and in the co-ordination of the Office of the Prime Minister, Samson Kisekka. It was almost a decade later that investigations began to be carried out. Headlines such as '*Luwero Fund Enquiry Needed*',²⁸

²⁸ New Vision, January 24th 1995.

'Luwero has been betrayed',²⁹ 'Luwero donors reject Kisekka's report',³⁰ and '7,000 Luwero blankets missing'³¹ confirmed the bitter stories of the many veterans and NRM supporters who felt discarded and forgotten. As one editorial proclaimed, 'Luwero is still bushy'.³² Letters to the press with headings such as 'Was Buganda's sacrifice for nothing?',³³ and 'Crying for Compensation',³⁴ echoed the angry voices on the dusty streets of Kiboga. The Chairman of the local veteran's association in the town had this to say:

Now when the war ended I came home thinking "Now I can start to help people with a few things"....but they weren't enough, and there was nothing we could do, and our children were students, and they didn't study well, and the money ran out, and we went to borrow money, and they refused to give it to us, they refused many and these plans all collapsed. So look at the people that the Government wanted to stand on their feet, now look at them, they are still at the bottom, after five years.

Some Luwero war veterans even set up a permanent picket of the Minister's Offices,³⁵ and threatened to sue the Prime Minister. There was particular fury when a proposed 'Entandikwa' (Starting up) fund for the war-hit districts was turned into a soft-loan scheme not just for Luwero but for the whole country. The scarred mud-road, so long promised a renovation, was yet another sign to residents in Kiboga that political rhetoric counted for little. Public debate and media articles often focused on what the present political elite had done in the struggle, on whether they had fled to London or had gone to the swamps.³⁶ All of this fed the support for 'federero' that multiplied so quickly in late 1994 and 1995.

One particular symbolism that awoke older wounds was a series of ceremonial burials of skulls and skeletons of people killed in the Luwero Triangle. If there was one image of the

²⁹ Peter Mwesige, The Crusader, December 19th 1995.

³⁰ Sunday Vision, December 11th 1994. This headline article details the source of the 87 million US dollars donated, but finds very little written evidence of how these funds were used in Luwero.

³¹ New Vision February 27th, by Vision Reporter in Ziobwe, Luwero.

³² The New Vision, Tuesday January 24th 1995.

³³ Letters Forum, The Monitor 17th-20th March 1995.

³⁴ Letter written by Deo Kyakulagira, The Monitor June 2nd-5th, 1995.

³⁵ 'Luwero Veterans ask for Rewards' by John Kakande, New Vision, Jan 24th 1995.

³⁶ 'Politicians, Baganda, Who's using whom?' Frank Katusiime, New Vision, June 11th 1995.

Luwero war that the NRM used in order to gain a broader international legitimacy for their struggle, it was the piles of skeletons and skulls (Mutibwa 1992, 160) found near military barracks and camps in 1986. During the struggle there had been some stories of 'disappearances',³⁷ but others writing in the British media were unashamedly pro-Obote.³⁸ Only after the war did the full extent of the killings emerge. Museveni regularly used the skeletal imagery, such as in an early speech in Gulu: *'In one place called Kiboga, where there was a unit of the Obote army stationed, we collected 237 skulls from there alone. These people were in their trenches, eating and drinking with 237 skulls of their victims around them'* (1992, 28). An unfortunate portent for the subsequent events in Northern Uganda (Gingyera-Pinyawa 1992, Behrend 1991).

The construction of the memorials to those killed was promised back in 1987. The final burial ceremonies were not held until the last week of January 1995. Some remains had been sitting in store-rooms for nine years. Whilst the delay might well have been a NRA ploy to keep memories of the war alive, many of the area's residents saw the delay as another sign of having been forgotten. Again the skulls impaled everyday conversation, and again folk found themselves forced to recount the unspeakable violences of shootings, beatings and intimate, impossible tortures. Even a Luganda lesson turned into an astringent oral history as my teacher described exactly what had happened to suspected Government collaborators in the village of Kakiri. *'Do you think those skulls are just the responsibility of the UNLA?'* he asked resignedly, daring a response. It was too painful for him to continue. Once more the controversy filled the public sphere. *'No UNLA skulls says Kyaligonza'* was one headline,³⁹ as an NRM administrator responded to local accusations that some of the remains belonged to UNLA soldiers. *'NRA killed some 40%, UNLA 50% in Luwero'* screamed another,⁴⁰ admittedly written by an ex-Obote security operative. Contrary to Obote's UNLA, the NRM soldiers prided themselves on their reputation for discipline, but there are no angels in war. *'NRM after 9 years: singing same old songs'*⁴¹ was the headline to a third. It was a sullen, disillusioned article, suggesting that the

³⁷ 'Massacre in the camps of death' by Andrew Righter, Sunday Times, 5th June 1983; 'Mystery of thousands who 'vanish' from Ugandan camps', Guardian December 3rd 1983.

³⁸ 'UPC is spearheading the campaign to win over the population' by A.J. McIlroy, Daily Telegraph, 14th February 1982.

³⁹ 'NO UNLA skulls, says Kyaligonza' by Frederick Kiwanuka, New Vision, January 27th 1995.

⁴⁰ Patrick Masaba, The Monitor, Jan 24-26th 1995.

⁴¹ Kyazze Simwogerere, The Monitor, Jan 25th-27th 1995.

burials were '*a running macabre enterprise of the NRM government, to remind people of the past...it has become so grossly cynical that even the locals have started questioning (it)...the NRM insiders know that if you cannot invent a new idea, you just resurrect an old one*'. The same reasoning would seem to apply to a grand announcement of military medals for all those who fought in the Luwero war, with different medals for the different campaigns.⁴² But there were no medals for the dead, no gongs for civilians caught in the crossfire.

For better or worse, the immediacy of these memories played directly into the suddenly heated political arena. One development-minded Minister attempted to appropriate the significance of the final burials in his speech, '*warning the 'Baganda against treachery and unprincipled politicking, as this had frustrated development in the region*'.⁴³ Yet for many the skulls, the dirt road and the disappearing iron sheets all confirmed a feeling that Buganda deserved better.

If the war provides a backdrop to narratives about the nation, then the script's denouement is cued by the Kabaka's coronation and the 1994 CA (Constituent Assembly) election campaigns. Hypothetical questions about the role of '*Cultural rulers*' became more pressing with the Kabaka finally on-stage. The constitution was amended to 'allow the freedom to adhere to the culture and cultural institutions of the community' (Nsibambi 1995, 47). This immediately provoked a sophisticated debate as to just what counted as 'culture', and how that differed from politics (Doornbos and Mwesigye 1995). The central theme of this thesis, that 'culture' is always political, always to do with power, became a topic for every Uganda newspaper columnist and bar-room philosopher. Historical precedents hardly support a 'merely' cultural Kabaka, and soon enough the Lukiiko was calling for the Kabaka to be allowed to re-establish his government and administrative responsibilities. Even the Kabaka joined in.⁴⁴ In the Buganda parliament (*Lukiiko*) the clique of influential Baganda - based both in Uganda and Europe - who had managed his return were able to position themselves as patriots and true Baganda, so legitimating their 'cultural' claims for political power. With the initial support of Ganda intellectuals and historians, those in the *Lukiiko* became the most outspoken advocates for a federal Uganda.

⁴² Museveni ashamed about 1986. *The Monitor*, October 11-13th 1995

⁴³ 'Luwero War Victims Buried', *New Vision*, 20th January 1995.

⁴⁴ 'Traditional Rulers have a role' *New Vision*, 25th September 1994. In his speech Mutebi argued that traditional rulers have a role to play in enhancing development and unity.

Soon the F-word was on everybody's lips. *'Twagala Federo'* (We want federo) was the slogan I saw traced out in the dust of a taxi's rear window in Kampala. *'The Baganda have become totally self-serving and disorganised because they have lost their way'* insisted my highly-educated Luganda teacher. *'The old hierarchies they were used to have disappeared altogether,'* she subtly reasoned, *'so the people want federo so they can turn back to the traditional structures'.* *'The people need their federo'* whispered the Economics Master at Kikomera. Endless public debates and seminars stimulated this political appetite, such as those organised by the 'Uganda Think Tank Foundation'.⁴⁵ These were often insightful and reasoned, with one session including a speaker warning of the dangers of formulating political structures along ethnic lines,⁴⁶ whilst others pointed out the heterogeneity of the Buganda community, or deconstructed Ganda superiorities. But not everyone took such nuanced positions, and increasingly the newspapers revealed the struggles going on for Buganda's culture. *'Political Kabaka sought'* read one headline,⁴⁷ quoting the historian of Buganda, Professor Kiwanuka, who explained that this did not mean that the Kabaka would be partisan. *'The view that the Kabaka of Buganda should not be engaged in partisan politics is dominant in Buganda, but that doesn't mean that he can't make a political statement'* he said, amidst applause. Ganda proverbs such as *'Kamala Byonna'* (The Kabaka is above all) were used by people to justify positions increasingly antagonistic to the NRM.

As the constitutional debates ended, tensions mounted over the federo issue. *'Buganda federo activists plan to secede'* proclaimed one headline.⁴⁸ *'CA will not accept federo, says Kavuma'* responded another.⁴⁹ Museveni accused the partisans of *'trying to be more Baganda than others'*, and instead claimed that it was the NRM government which had returned the Kabakaship and *ebyaffe*.⁵⁰ Rumours increasingly spread of Ganda militants *'going to the bush'*

⁴⁵ An organisation facilitated and funded by the German pro-democracy lobby, the 'Fredrich Ebert Foundation'.

⁴⁶ 'Is Buganda always an issue in Uganda politics?' Paper presented by Patrick Kiggundu, New Vision, Friday October 14th 1994.

⁴⁷ By Francis Mutazindwa, New Vision, Tuesday October 18th 1994.

⁴⁸ Ofwono Opondo, Sunday Vision, December 18th 1994.

⁴⁹ By Richard Mutumba, New Vision, Saturday January 7th 1995.

⁵⁰ 'Museveni rejects 'federo' politicking'. By Ofwono-Opondo, New Vision, Friday December 23rd 1994.

to fight for *federo*,⁵¹ and every Buganda district and town was alive with gossip of rebel training camps and midnight conscientisation sessions. Each robbery and assault was claimed to be the work of rebels, and there seemed to be guerillas behind every tree. Knowing the history of the Luwero war, I wondered how seriously to take it. There was even a leader, a mysterious Major Itongwa, whom everyone claimed to have seen. A moment of national shock came with the three-day abduction of the Minister of Health by the rebels⁵² - though bar-room gossip suggested later that it was a cover for a menage-à-trois that had been found out. Tabloid excess and postmodern humour notwithstanding, a great deal of fear and suspicion milled around Buganda during these months. The state of anxiety was with good reason, for a group of disaffected ex-NRM soldiers calling themselves the '*National Democratic Alliance*' were eventually tracked down and captured by the army in a sizeable military operation.

Tensions rose also amongst the political elites, as a search for compromise led to infighting and accusations of betrayal. The education minister argued that *federo* really meant decentralisation, but others vilified the NRM, accusing them of twisting words and histories. The Buganda cause was hardly united either. The *Bataka* (Clan elders) were accused later in the year of going to Museveni's country ranch to ask for tractors and kanzus,⁵³ and the young '*Bazzukulu wa Kintu*' militants threatened to beat them up for their '*shameful actions*'. Then two members of the Buganda Lukiiko accused it of having been hijacked by the conservative pro-*federo* '*Mengo clique*',⁵⁴ and were consequently expelled as traitors. The representatives of that same clique were in turn condemned by more militant monarchists for their hypocrisy in holding talks with President Museveni and not pushing harder for 'full' *federo*.⁵⁵ This positioned the militant chairman of the *Bataka* (clan heads) directly against the Katikkiro (Prime Minister), echoing the dynamics of the 1940s and 1950s. Later gains touted by the Prime Minister were dismissed by the hard-line conservatives as '*ebyoya bya nswa*' (The wings of white ants). Tasty but ultimately insubstantial.

The constant round of accusation, spin and counter-spin revealed a region at war with itself.

⁵¹ 'Mukono disowns 'federo' militants'. By Edson Bagada, *New Vision*, Friday December 16th 1994.

⁵² 'Major Itongwa opposed to CA'. *The Sunday Vision*, April 9th 1995.

⁵³ 'Museveni meets with clan elders'. *New Vision*, October 4th 1995.

⁵⁴ 'Mengo clique hijacks Lukiiko'. *New Vision*, Wednesday 4th Jan 1995.

⁵⁵ 'Lukiiko ends 'federo' talks'. By Josephine Maseruka, *New Vision*, March 15th 1995.

But in the towns and villages outside Kampala, the search for compromise was not an easy message to communicate. Nationalisms are at their most frighteningly potent when they close down the possibilities of difference or consensus. The ambivalence of narration is suddenly lost in the containing of meaning. 'The fortunes of *federo* affect every Muganda' was the message; such that it was almost impossible to identify oneself as a Muganda and yet not support *federo*. The discursive link became inevitable, naturalised, and I met few who dared challenge the dominant consensus that quickly established itself. In a society where cultural identity and status are inevitably intertwined, challenging a pro-Buganda political position was tantamount to denying one's Ganda-ness. No surprise then that people became ever more vocal and defensive in their support for *federo* - in the doctor's surgery, in the taxi or in the staffroom, Ganda folk would be talking of little else. My mate the garage manager joked that people wanted '*federo conc*' (ie concentrated) and not '*kifedero-federo*' (little bits of federo)! It was a brave person who risked the consequences of exclusion from the national body politic.

One man did just that. His action on March 28th 1995 decisively brought the whole debate to a head, incurring the wrath of a kingdom spurned. His name was Besweri Mulondo, a *Ssabalangira* (Head of the Princes) and a treasurer to the Buganda parliament as well as a CA delegate - most certainly a Ganda patriot. Within the Constituent Assembly it was a time of ever more opportunistic alliances in the search to avoid a humbling compromise. The country was in the final critical days of the constitutional debate over the choice of political systems, either federalism or a (decentralised) unitary system. A federalist amendment was put forward by a UPC member of the 'Multi-party' caucus with which Buganda was supposedly now in alliance. Mulondo opposed it. A stunned silence in the Assembly was followed by national uproar. The subsequent confusion over his challenge meant that the federalist-multiparty alliance lost the debate. '*Mulondo has buried Buganda*' proclaimed *Ngabo* (The Shield), a conservative Luganda paper.⁵⁶ Hounded into hiding, Mulondo tried to explain what had happened, but it was too late. Treachery to the nation was unforgivable. He was a Judas, and had obviously betrayed Buganda for a price.⁵⁷ He was forced to apologise to the Kabaka, resign all his positions, and suffer the cruel humiliation of his farm being ransacked by angry tenants.

In the vilification that followed, *Ngabo* argued that Mulondo was really a Tanzanian, and had never been a Muganda prince. The biologising logic is such that a 'true' Ganda would not be

⁵⁶ *Ngabo*, March 29th 1995.

⁵⁷ 'Mulondo's treachery will live with him'. By Y. Gavamukulya, *The Monitor Newspaper*, April 3rd 1995.

able to betray the nation, so that anyone who did could not have been of proper stock. It was guaranteed to heap insult onto the wound. Challenging one's parentage and racial heritage has long been a common but powerful slur. Museveni was constantly accused of being a *Munyarwanda* (a Rwandan). It worked not only because the colonial state unsuccessfully tried to delimit and control ambiguous boundaries, but also because the 'Ganda' nation has constantly expanded. Roscoe (1911) lists 36 clans, a recent pamphlet mentions 52 (Magoba n.d.), whilst Wrigley (1996) suggests that perhaps there were six original clans.⁵⁸ In such a fluid situation, purity is always in doubt and open to contest, a symbolic challenge with intense material effect.

For all the furore, Mulondo's actions marked a turning-point in the racing tides of nationalism. In Kampala attention soon turned to the next big topic, the question of whether to allow political parties. The *'federo'* undertow certainly continued throughout 1995, with big rallies held by the multi-party caucus, and led by subsequent Presidential candidate Paul Ssemogerere. The influence of radical groups of *'young Baganda'* also continued to rise. Yet feelings in Kikomera gradually ebbed. The opportunistic alliances between Buganda and the multi-party caucus had reawoken bitter memories of the Kabaka Yekka/UPC alliance of 1962, whilst the endless (and highly-paid) semantic manoeuvring of the politicians in Kampala bored others. Being reminded of so much past turbulence seemed to make people appreciate the fragility of peace. The village pharmacist announced with a sigh that she didn't read the newspapers any more, *'They didn't give us federo, and there is nothing else that matters'*. No longer was there seemingly only one position for a *Muganda-wawu* (a true Muganda) to take.

Shortly afterwards, the MP for Kiboga, an astute senior female politician, reported back to Kikomera leaders on the draft constitution. Facing the challenge that she had failed to get *federo*, she rebuffed endless *'federo'* questions from all the assembled men in an impressive performance. She responded to persistent ethnicising questions about whether Kampala was really 'Buganda's city' with the example of a multi-racial London, owned by 'Arabs and Jews' as much as by the British. By the end some were even addressing her as *'Ssebo'* (Sir). Perhaps the realisation that women could fight for the nation, rather than just symbolise it, was a novel one. She cleverly mocked them, pointing out that she felt like a parent being asked by a child *'How is federo?'* with monotonous regularity, driving that parent mad because the child didn't understand the word. She insisted that she had fought for it, that they already had *'semi-federo'*, and would indeed get further concessions. She refused to let them get the better of her, and they

⁵⁸ The Lugandan term 'Banasangawaawo' ('They were found already there') is a powerful way of claiming originary ethnic purity, and it is sometimes used by members of these older clans.

eventually seemed to respect her for that.

The final verdict on *'federo'* was often to be heard during quiet conversations in bars and eating places, late of an evening. One wet night in Kikomera I too got into an intoxicating debate over *federo* with some drinkers. As usual I symbolised all things British, and a time when the colonial government respected Buganda and protected *'its things'*. Over a glass of waragi,⁵⁹ Dan, the RC3 Chairman, began to list the things 'they', the Baganda, had been promised - including land and the *Lubiri* (the Kabaka's palace) - but had still failed to get:

Us Baganda have always been peace-loving, we are the most determined and hard-working people' he began. 'We wouldn't dream of fighting, we are never prejudiced, but...but if we don't get our federo there is going to be trouble.

We have been milked dry, us Baganda, simply milked dry. We were promised our things, Museveni promised them for helping him in the war. But now look at those politicians in Kampala. Just look at them eating, eating 140,000 Shillings every day (~ £80). Even the ones who are boycotting proceedings (the multi-party alliance), even they just turn up to eat their allowance.

The conversation grew more passionate and more angry. Dan's drinking companions began to join in, vigorously overlapping and interrupting. Despite being rural farmers, they knew all about the cost of life in the capital. He went on:

Just look at those people in Kampala. They can afford to send their children to schools costing 400,000 Shillings a term, or to pay for a place at Makerere University. So what are we to do when we sweat all month, and yet a bag of onions only sells for 2,000 shillings' (~£1.50).

'And what are we to do when we have to bribe the doctor 7,000 shillings to give our children injections?' joined in the bar-tender, describing the cost of treating her daughter's malaria. So it went on, a powerful evocation and condemnation of the poverty in their lives, strengthened by reference to Buganda's past and the guerrilla war of the early 1980s. I knew that there was a little more to the story, as Dan's eloquence partly stemmed from his role as a local politician. He also owned some land with a mature coffee plantation. Compared to his tenant-farmer neighbours he could be seen as well-off. Yet his wealth was not easily converted into a monetary form, and his children were very unlikely to get to Makerere. I fell silent, aware of the multiple economic, political and cultural inequalities that separated us.

⁵⁹ Waragi is home-distilled gin.

I began this chapter in a hall in East London, and conclude it in a rural roadside bar in Uganda. I hope in the meantime to have captured some of the energy of national pasts and legacies constantly signified and re-written anew. This chapter, with its history of a Ugandan present, will hopefully provide some sense of context for the pedagogical and developmental practices described in the subsequent chapters. For now I end with the angry and yet fatalistic frustrations voiced by my fellow drinkers on that rainy evening.

'What is worse, those people, those politicians, they won't listen to us. We have no influence' Dan insisted. *'If I was a big businessman, or if I ran a gun factory, then I could be sure of the attention of those in power'*. I tried to point out that many of 'those people' were the Ganda elite, the politicians who were supposed to look after everyday folk, but often ended up trousering the nation's wealth. Weren't they just being mistreated by their own leaders? Only then did I realise the nationalistic sub-text to a seemingly economic debate. *'That's a socialist argument'*, snapped back Dan, *'it doesn't fit here. These are our things that we have lost. And those people in Kampala, they are our people'*. He stressed the 'our'. *'So is there no way out?'* I asked. *'Those big men have to survive too'*, explained Dan's mate. *'The reason for the corruption is that even the ministers are poor, and have to survive, so they have to eat well before they give out the teacher's salaries.'* *'It might be my turn to eat one day'*, said Dan, with a wry smile, *'Anyway, what's the point in struggling? Eventually we are all going to die. We are all going to die'*.

CHAPTER THREE

'THE NATION'S VALIANT FIGHTERS AGAINST ILLITERACY': LOCATIONS OF LEARNING AND PROGRESS

Abstract

This chapter explores how people invoke spatial hierarchies to support or contest moral narratives of 'development' and progress. Drawing upon the theoretical dialogue between anthropology and cultural geography, I ask how a rural Ugandan 'Third World' school becomes positioned and produced as such within colonial, national and transnational discourses on learning and education. Situating the cultural politics of modernity within the complexity of exam results and teachers' salaries is a way of emphasising both the material and symbolic aspects of the discursive practice of development.

The chapter questions the explanatory power of the global/local dichotomy in understanding these dynamics, and in particular the conflation of a narrow understanding of the 'local' with the face-to-face immediacies of everyday life. Whilst aware of the radical asymmetries of power being negotiated, I try to use my ethnography to work in and against the 'local', describing the always mediated immediacies of both staffroom politics and national media representations, parental chat and trans-national schooling practices, in rural Uganda and West London. By shifting perspective, position and scale, I attempt an ethnography of the multiple and cross-cutting productions of educational and developmental localities.

'The Nation's Valiant Fighters against Illiteracy':

Locations of learning and progress

Capitalism was built on the bones of African slaves....As a result, Europe and North America are now in the Nuclear and Space Ages, while we are still in the hand-hoe era.

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Sowing the mustard seed

Registration

Who doesn't remember their first day of school? In the anxious social worlds where education is a prized and convertible cultural commodity, first encounters with the strange smells and habits of knowledge institutions are a rite of passage for many. Across Uganda the first Monday of each February is no different, and pupils who have received the results of a nationwide Primary Leaving Exam (PLE) arrive at secondary schools in freshly-starched bewilderment. The school year at Kikomera Senior Secondary, a school in a small town 50 miles north-west of Kampala, may have already begun, but it is an apprehensive first day for the new Standard One pupils, and their new English teacher - me. I've had more than my fair share of first days, but am still nervous, for lesson plans and homework marking have been timetabled to clash with double ethnographic diary-writing. The new students might well have arrived to register with the requested 12 exercise books plus hoe; but I clutch my wittily perceptive letter of permission from the District Education Officer to the headmaster. *'He would like to teach in your school to familiarise himself with the cultural set up - please timetable him'*.

In this chapter I explore the creation and enactment of the 'rural Third World School' in Uganda within and despite contemporary national (and transnational) discourses and state practices which privilege education as a route to development and the modern. I focus on the way contrasting moral hierarchies are asserted and contested in this process of spatialising progress. The curriculum is predictable, but the learning methods somewhat less so. As in the rest of this thesis, my prose style is somewhat unfaithful to usual academic genres. It is intended to bring those genres into focus, provoking thought about the way ethnographic knowledges about places (and so places themselves) are produced. Giving a chalk-and-all sense of everyday Ugandan school lives is one way of grounding in the classroom the theoretical and political insights provided by anthropology's engagement with cultural studies and social geography.

All too often anthropology gets caught on the cusp, failing not only to relate its practices of theorising to the particularities of ethnographic locales, but also to realise that those same theoretical and ethnographic practices do indeed produce localities. If exploring the means of 'production of locality' (Appadurai 1996) is the pedagogic aim, then my extended lesson plan has therefore also to include the enactment and contestations of more national (and even transnational) syllabi. These include educational policies, departmental budgets and those dreaded practices so loved by state bureaucracies - examinations. Such institutional practices may seem to loom ominously from outside, but they are equally enacted in the very classrooms and staffrooms that I try to describe, in staffroom confrontations, everyday beatings, and examination gossip.

This leads me to suggest below that not only is the global/local heuristic an unhelpful one, but also perhaps that the currently fashionable notion of the 'local' as an organising trope for social relations is restricted and self-limiting. If, as Spivak (1996) suggests, we have to inhabit that which we desire to question, then perhaps we should focus on contemporary narratives of a globalising 'development', and the power relations it instantiates, rather than expecting too much explanatory or political power from the latest academic storyline.

A precis. In what follows I begin with the weekly assembly at Kikomera Senior Secondary, before going on to describe other prosaic yet productive aspects of school life. I intercut this account with two rather different locations in which to position myself and the school - one is a theoretical conversation over the explanatory utility of the 'global/local' articulation, and the other a brief history of the creation of colonial 'education' in Uganda. The central part of the paper is taken up with the teachers' struggle for a '*living wage*' and the staffroom conflicts that result, leading subsequently to a description of the rather different practices of exam invigilation and corporal punishment. All three examples are used to develop my argument that localities are produced through a mixture of 'face-to-face' and seemingly more mediated engagements with people, ideas and texts. Each of these may be equally 'live', intimate or immediate, and all of them create senses of location within the cross-cutting moral hierarchies of 'development.'

Assembly/ing Values

The shadows in the grassy school compound are still refreshingly long as the pupils stream in and begin the weekly performance of compound cleaning. This is an amusing double-act, a

scene of serenely chaotic choreography. Large gaggles of students drift gently around the compound, picking up the latest gossip rather than the rubbish, accompanied equally listlessly by the staff member on duty. His or her main role is to brandish a stick and shout encouragement when the inaction seems overwhelming. The teacher's often bleary-eyed manner is perhaps explained by having had to forego a morning mug of tea. Yet for many of the pupils it is more likely the result of having had more than an hour's walk to get to school. Some live up to seven miles away, either in the plains to the North or in the dramatic hills to the South. For many of them getting up at six, there's no possibility of even '*dry tea*' (no milk = less expense) if they are to arrive in time. The lucky ones have bicycles, especially since they double as money-making water-carrying machines in the evening and weekends.

At another level, all the students are the lucky ones, having the financial and moral support needed to even continue schooling at all. The 30,000 Shillings (approx £20) school fees a term is no small sum for many of the local smallholders and tenant-farmers, especially if the onion crop fails or a landlord wants his plot of land back. Whilst a greater proportion of children now get the chance to attend school for at least some period, there are equally also many more who drop out. If only 30% of the children who begin school reach Primary Seven to do the nationwide PLE (Primary Leaving Examination), and only 30% of them pass the exam, one begins to realise that even this seemingly deprived institution is actually home to only a privileged few. Yet the peak of this apex is out of Kikomera's sight. Uganda's top state schools are besieged for places, such that they can impose strict selection criteria, based both on the wealth and political clout of the pupil's parents as well as on academic performance. In an ironically Ugandan twist, the fifteen or so 'elite' schools, clustered mostly in and around Kampala, are known as '*First World Schools*.' It is probably not unconnected that some of the best of these schools still have a racialised institutional hierarchy, wherein the head is (or was until recently) a white missionary. Back at Kikomera Senior Secondary there are fewer parents clamouring at the gates. The head is unlikely to turn many away, even if they have no PLE Certificate. The purple certification of half a dozen Ugandan 5,000 Shilling (\$5) notes for school fees is hard to refuse.

As always, the week begins with an Assembly. Four hundred and fifty students are arranged in gendered lines on the sloping grass that goes up from the main building to the now shrinking shade of the mango trees. The lines begin neatly starched and pressed, but become increasingly creased and muddled over the rough ground that is the only memento of classrooms destroyed in the war. Safely out of sight at the back, the fruit trees provide a delicious opportunity for the

older students and prefects to gossip and linger. At the gate, latecomers are attempting to wheedle their way in without being punished. Meantime the teachers are arranged on the verandah in various states of disinterest, amusement or disciplinarian attentiveness - if not still doing the morning chores in the staff-quarters just down the hill. I feel noticeably under-dressed in comparison to the beautifully pressed trousers and neat ties of the other teachers - white but not quite, given my collarless T-shirts and less than gleaming shoes. This is to be a common feeling.

The scene is set for the next act of the weekly assembly performance. It is perhaps unfair to privilege this ritual over the rest of everyday educational practice, but it is the one public moment in which the ideology of community can be evoked and manipulated. It begins with the M.O.D. (Master on duty) making the usual Monday morning speech. The required tone for this particular genre is a judicious mix of cajoling and masculine hectoring, as the teacher concerned endeavours to set out the reformation of the school's moral character that she or he would like to see achieved in the week for which they are responsible. This week it is the Sports Master. *'Some of you people'*, he begins, *'are just totally unreliable with time, coming in when you like, missing assembly. The school rules say that you must remain in the compound from 7.45 am to 4 pm....'* This haranguing goes on for a good five minutes, before he moves on to the next item on his list: uniforms. *'Take a look around you at all those people wearing jumpers and jackets. This is totally against the school rules'*. This seems a little harsh on such a damp morning, but I also know that this is a narrative performance that does not depend on logic for its effect. Thirdly comes personal hygiene *'Some of you take no care with bathing, such that by Wednesday the classrooms smell so bad that us teachers can hardly enter..'* At this point the cajoling has become little more than ridicule, and the teachers smirk openly, knowing that their sometimes precarious place in the educational hierarchy is made more secure by such comments.

Next up to face the students is the headmaster, flanked by the deputy and chaplain. His gleaming shoes mirror the scrubbed first-day-of-term appearance of the new students. Greeting them politely, and asking after their health, his approach is rather more subtle. *'I'd like to welcome you'*, he continues, *'to the University of Kiboga, as everyone calls Kikomera Secondary school, being the oldest and best secondary school in the district'*. There is an irony to this label, especially given its juxtaposition to another, less flattering educational label that is also on everybody's lips, *'Third World schools'*. I first heard this term from the District Educational Officer, a virtual admission of defeat from a senior civil servant who instead strove to secure places in 'First World' schools for his children. But despite this, I'm unable to suppress a feeling

of vicarious pride at the 'University of Kiboga' description. This interpretation of the school's status in relation to other places, locating it firmly within one of the newest, poorest and most war-ravaged districts of Buganda, gave the school's identity a hopeful and loyal ring to it. Things could only get better.

But the warm rosy feeling does not last long. *'Now, about this late-coming. I'm seeing too many late-comers - it must stop'*. The moment has passed. *'You are all due here before 8am to work at cleaning the grounds. And the standard of dress is too bad - I have seen pupils coming to school without shoes, and this is not acceptable. We cannot have bare feet in the University of Kiboga'*. Apparently footwear had become the latest entry requirement. *'And the prefects, where are the prefects now?'* A subdued murmur from the back. *'Why are they not doing their duty, they are meant to be on duty now. And lunchtimes, people are going too far at lunchtime, so they are late back, and....., and.....'* On one occasion I too was cautioned for being late, and my embarrassment at the rebuke prevented me from seeing the exemplary status that whiteness still held in a racialised educational discourse. There were more than a few jokes in those first weeks of term at how enrolment had increased since word had spread that there was a *muzungu* (white person) on the staff. It was only a shame that more questions were not asked about the *muzungu's* teaching qualifications, his understanding of educational needs or the historical legacy of *muzungu* colonial educational policy.

Time for tea. I sit with the teachers on the verandah outside the staffroom, watching the world go by (an apt metaphor). It's a great spot, and not only because one gets a good view across the hill to the classrooms, so one can tell at a glance how much work is going on. More importantly, it faces the road, one of the prime sites for worlding Kikomera. We all know the view so well, as it is the one distraction from the often numbing regularity of the school day. Everyone has to use the road to go anywhere or do anything, and it is thus an instant conveyor of news, gossip and imagery. Anyone who walks or cycles past is inevitably subjected to a detailed biographical analysis, and much more so if it happens to be a woman. The first time I walked down across the yard to the staffroom I felt my whiteness (and tallness) etched into me - the arrival of anyone new is definitely cause for attention. I'd stumbled out of a Kampala taxi, taxis which are packed as full of signifiers as they are of people and luggage. They exude the frenetic pace of the capital as they skid to a halt outside the school-gate, disgorging parents, teachers and visiting officials. By the time the new arrival has made it down the sloping hillside to the administration block, their gait, dress and every mannerism has been scrutinised for later mimicry by the bar-room wits.

But today the wait is for the local milkman, whose arrival with the produce of the school cow is essential for a decent mug of tea. That same mug of tea is a central symbol of staffroom micropolitics, but that's another story. Whilst we wait I attempt to comprehend the chalked request visible on the staffroom board, *'Would the person responsible for spreading Coccidiosis in the staffroom please desist!'* I don't get the joke, and end up having to ask for an explanation. It turns out to be a witty, satirical comment on the chicken skeleton perched on top of the flimsy set of shelves at the back of the room, a skeleton sometimes used for agriculture or biology anatomy classes. Throughout this chapter I marvel at the resilience and subtlety of Ugandan genres of humour that thrive despite, and perhaps because of, the vicissitudes of 30 years of political crisis and civil war. Or as one of Uganda's leading playwrights - Alex Mukulu - titled his musical, *'30 years of Bananas'*. I do not wish to merely distract with anecdotes, but rather to recognise that wit and humour provide a valued perspective on, and reaction to, everyday struggles for survival. Hard times become, momentarily, a little less so. The chalkboard witticism has to compete in the self-reflective parody stakes with the slogan daubed on the door of the Standard 5 classroom, *'S5 - The nation's valiant fighters against illiteracy'*.

Assembling/Disassembling theoretical locations

Time for an intellectual tea-break. In reflecting on the 'local' as a currently fashionable intellectual prism through which to understand sociality,¹ we hardly need to be reminded of the importance of the recent 'spatialisation of social theory', as Featherstone and Lash (1995) describe it. I need a little more nudging to remember to also think historically, to recall that theorists like Lefebvre (1991(1974)) and Foucault (1975) have long been writing about power and the production of space. The reasons for the present interest in 'space' are to be found not only in the seductive texts of late modern academia, but also in the resonant stories that techno-science provides about the globalisation of planet 'Earth' (Haraway 1997). The all-new focus on the local is perhaps but one aspect of the rocket-propelled tale of globalisation.

Story-lines can never be complete. The jingoism of some versions of globalisation can make it harder to recall that globalisation began with the fraught encounters of 'New World' inhabitants

¹ This chapter is a revised version of a paper presented at the Third SCUSA (Standing Committee on University Studies of Africa) symposium in Keele, May 1997, entitled 'The Meanings of the Local'.

and Spanish explorers 500 years ago, subsequently etched on the miserable Middle Passage of Imperial advance. We have to remember the long histories and shifting configurations (Hall 1991) of the local and global, recognising that current debates about the 'local' are occurring in the particular spatial and historical context of the latest fêted rhythms of globalisation. There have been different locals - and different globals - before now. Yet despite the hype that surrounds them, the 'imploded time-space anomalies of late-twentieth-century transnational capitalism and technoscience' (Haraway 1997) do seem to be wreaking ferocious changes on everyday lives, and require engaged critical attention.

If we are agreed that something new is happening in this present conjecture, and that this is visible also in shifts in academic fashion, it is far less clear how we should be describing it. Is the 'global/local' phrase simply another spatial trope, another metaphorical strategy which is symptomatic rather than diagnostic of the present, as Fardon (1995) proposes? Reducing almost everything to metaphorical ideal types allows him to make the claim that 'local and global were problematic from the instant of their popularisation' (ibid, 3), as if words only make sense if they are kept under academic wraps. Similarly Strathern seems to bemoan the loss of culture as an explanatory concept, now that 'everybody has it' (Strathern 1995). Such viewpoints perhaps do not emphasise the political importance of inhabiting and destabilising the words and structures we wish to interrogate, rather than attempting to transcend them. The very fact that globalisation means different things to different people makes it imperative to trace out the material effects of such metaphors and their discursive power. If, as Haraway (1997, 12) suggests, the 'globalisation of the world is a semiotic-material production of some forms of life rather than others', then we have to work within the concrete consequences of such tale-telling, whether it be the free-market epistles of a new world disorder or the global bestseller 'development'.

For this reason I chose in this chapter to particularly depict rural-urban² and Uganda-Europe³ dynamics, and the variety of ways such words are interpreted and practised, both symbolically and materially. These seem the form in which 'local/global' articulations are primarily mediated, talked about and understood by people in Uganda. Whilst the 'local' may be theoretically fashionable, for many Ugandans 'city' and 'village', 'modern' and 'under-developed', 'Uganda' and

² In Luganda, the dominant vernacular in this region, *Ekyalo* (village/countryside) and *Ekibuga* (town/capital).

³ *Abweru* (outside) or *Bungeresa* (Britain/Europe/the West - this term is used with varying connotations in speech). International news in the Luganda press is headlined *Ageebweru* - Things from outside.

'outside' seem to be the resonant discursive dichotomies. Such terms would seem an appropriate place to begin thinking through relations of space and power.

First there are academic conversations to listen to. How has the global/local heuristic been written about? Strathern and Fardon are right to point out the relational inter-dependence of the global/local divide, since each provides an explanatory context for the other. As Robertson (1995, 124) notes, 'contemporary conceptions of locality are largely produced in global terms.' There are many other attempts to write about the impossibility of both the terms and the polarity itself, such as Massey's suggestion that now the 'global is inside the local', (Massey 94, 117), or Feierman's point that 'we cannot say what is local and what is larger' (1990, 34). Like the British on a pub-crawl, everyone knows where the 'local' is to begin with, but after a while things begin to spin around.

No amount of definitional cold-showers will clarify things. Instead I want to suggest that one way of 'grounding' these spinning ideal types is to ask what political purpose this signifying theoretical doublet (global/local) serves. Who invokes it and why? We cannot escape the powerful operations of spatial metaphors and spatial representations - both in 'theory' and outside - but we can remain vigilant about them. What are the effects of invoking one half of the global/local relationship without the other? What does it mean to be writing in London talking about the 'meanings of the local' in Africa?. Are we not in danger of 'spatially incarcerating' (Malkki 1992) culture once again, no matter how reflective and sensitive we are to place and power? The language might be new, but the issues are the same. Are we parading as cosmopolitan intellectual globals despite - or even because of - our positions within elite British and American Universities?

These tensions faced by Euro-American cultural critics are well captured by Featherstone. He points out that 'the drawing of a locality and a particular space is a relational act that depends upon the figuration of other localities' (Featherstone 1990, 25). This is a crucial insight, but one that is difficult to keep persistently in focus, as evidenced from the 'Call for Papers' at a SCUSA (Standing Committee for University Studies of Africa) Conference at which I first presented this chapter. The first paragraph, headed the '*Unbounded Locality*', suggested that we can no longer study closed organic communities. Yet subsequent paragraphs slip back into exactly those spatial presumptions, with unproblematised headings like '*Local Governance*' and '*Local Development*', and concepts such as the '*outside*'.

The L-word is a resonant and homely-sounding word, yet its cosy imagery weakens its analytical purchase. These sorts of slippage illustrate the difficulty and importance of keeping the term 'local' under vigilant attention. We can't escape (sic) from spatial metaphors - but does that mean we have to use still more to understand spatial processes? Is there not a danger of slapping on yet another over-interpreted coating of broad brush metaphors? What to do? Kaplan states that 'we have to ensure always that the 'local is contingent, historicised, and never separable from larger macro social forces' (Kaplan 1996). If this is really the case, then the L-word begins not to mean very much. So how do we write about places such as the secondary school, recognising that our textual representations are also relational acts, equally playing a role in the creation of localities? How do we talk about 'the local' in a way that keeps in view the key differences of power - of nation, class, race, gender and sexuality - between ourselves and those we write about? At the level of representation, who am I to presume 'localities' when many folk in Uganda have experienced a long history of forced and voluntary dis-location, for political safety or economic security, both inside and outside the nation-state? And at the level of material relations, what makes it possible for me to skip from one locality to another, aided only by a jumbo-jet, when my landlady in Kampala, a wealthy member of the Ganda upperclass, cannot get a visitor's visa to come to Britain to see her dying grand-daughter? At the very least, we have to recognise the 'radically different positions in a global political economy, in circuits of cultural capital, and in relation to histories of travel, mobility and colonisation' (Donald Moore, 1994) occupied by academics and those who inhabit their global/local research sites. Better still, we could think about letting go of the 'L-word' as an organising and analytical metaphor.

Space is thus an issue that poses particularly difficult questions for an anthropology that has been long attached to the 'local' as a site of study and political affiliation. Even localising metaphors such as 'grounding' theoretical insights have to be used with care, lest a metaphysics of earth and soil is invoked to justify 'field'work. Resorting to the magical power of empirical research as a solution in itself, 'tackling the problem of the construction of the Other *within* the postcolony' (Werbner 1996, 20 his italics), is no longer an answer either, if one cannot be sure what is 'within' any more. The rapidly multiplying inter-relationship of social localities demands new anthropological imaginaries and new ethnographic research methodologies (Marcus 1995).

How then do we imagine and practise anthropology in this new chronotope, this new space and time of the present, this new World (dis)order? How does social theory become as sensitive to the dynamics of space as it has been to time? At what scalar level do we position ourselves, in an age when the local is no more fixed or certain than the global? These are not questions

leading us simply back to the vexed soliloquies about ethnographic representation, so often experienced as the moral and ethical quandaries of the lone-ranger research. Rather this debate enables a different 'perspective', seeing contemporary ethnographic angst as a product of the 'larger' historical and political economies that enabled such encounters in the first place. This process of 'scaling up' (Strathern 1995) might seem to render 'the local' less immediately visible, but again that presumes a 'local' realm of relationships and sociality that is bounded and definable. Metaphors are powerful and problematic things, especially those as redolent and value-laden as 'local.' Perhaps changes of scale just bring into focus the multiple localities and historical trajectories we all find ourselves having to negotiate from within - engaging with the past and future, with the near and not-so-near. If all conversations and experiences are mediated, be it by speech or by satellite, they are all - at some point - also immediate to people, and it is this tongue-twisting oxymoron of 'mediated immediacy' that I suggest a new anthropology will have to engage.

The trick then is to try and make these conversations and their locations visible without relying on the 'local' as an organising metaphor or analytical tool. Here I am helped by the insights of feminist theory, and Haraway's argument that 'positioning is the key practice grounding knowledge organised around the imagery of vision' (1991, 193). Her call for an epistemology of 'location, positioning and situating' echoes other feminist writers who focus on a 'politics of location' (Rich 1986, Mani 1990). The etymological derivation is not - thankfully - a faithful one, for as King (1993) points out, ' "located" is not equivalent to local, even if it is appropriately partial.' Whilst we might not always be sure where we stand, our views are always from somewhere(s), and as critical scholars, we have a particular responsibility to acknowledge the embodied nature of our visions and the partiality of our knowledges. We have no choice but to work 'in and against the local' (Probyn, quoted in Kaplan 1996), yet that does not mean any celebratory promotion of location per se. As Kaplan (1996) notes, 'it is possible to engage in inquiries into positionality and location without commodifying or objectifying subjects if both temporal and spatial axes are acknowledged and investigated.'

Such observations break down any residual ethnographic romantic individualism, and also the presumption that the University is the sole *location* of cultural critique or principled politics. Reading too much Derrida can (amongst other things) lead one into presuming that 'the protocols of vigilance and radical self-reflexivity' (Derrida, quoted in Radhakrishnan 1996) themselves ensure that the academy by itself is an autonomous site of political agency. As Radhakrishnan (1996, 169) points out, what this misses is 'a sense of the university's relationality with other

sites.....in aligning 'location' obsessively with the micropolitical discourses of professional knowledge, Derrida and Spivak in fact end up immobilising locations and subject positions.' We're back down the local again; this time in the College bar!

Locations matter, and not just intellectual locations. We have to continue to historically and spatially situate ourselves and our institutional positions, without presuming that academic positions matter more, or that any one location affords a panoramic view. Haraway translates for anthropology her appeal for modest, partial and accountable knowledges, seeing the value of ethnography as 'being at risk in the face of the practices we study' (Haraway 1997). She asks that we are always visible and locatable, even if never just 'local.' How can we locate others if we don't position ourselves?

This theoretical diversion gives direction to the rest of this chapter. The ethnographer/narrator will constantly butt in, marking a racialised and gendered body to remind the reader of the discordant localities being constructed around and through my presence. Genres matter, and whilst my writing style is intended to gently subvert my academic authority, I also hope to reflect the practices of everyday life that, both humdrum and hilarious, localisable and trans-national, make up the ethnographic tale.

What's left of the initial essay plan? Attempting a history of the 'production of locality' (Appadurai 1996) within educational institutions is harder if locality is now a far from self-evident term. Appadurai's thoughtful essay on the fragility of a 'relational and contextual' sense of locality is however still important, particularly because it recognises anthropology's complicity in the creation of a 'sense of inertia' on which the 'local' relies. Less productive is Appadurai's unnecessary material/phenomenological dichotomy between neighborhoods as 'the actually existing social forms' and the 'structure of feeling' of 'locality' (ibid, 179). More valuable is his encouragement to shift from writing 'a history of neighbourhoods' to 'a history of the techniques for the production of locality' (ibid, 182). Unfortunately this point gets rapidly lost in the 'structure of contexts' and the 'translocal production of neighborhoods' that takes up much of his essay - perhaps the inevitable result of trying to bring nationalisms, urban violence, the South Asian diaspora and globalisation into dialogue within 10 pages.

Lines of influence and relationships can be drawn in complex ways - as exemplified by Appadurai's seeming insistence on the intercontextuality of everything. Yet I am wary of ending with 'flows' and 'scapes', rather than beginning with them. Blanket portrayals of a de-

territorialisation that subsumes everyone are of no help in portraying peoples' very different experiences of space within a radically unequal global political economy. They also discourage specific ethnographic descriptions of particular times and places. The task instead is to attempt to trace these flows - of ideas, commodities and power - as carefully and reflectively as possible. How do we write about the locations produced through the 'mediated immediacies' of streetside gossip, newspapers, radio and television, cable and satellite, locations which can nevertheless feel stubbornly isolated? *'Tukyali amabega nnyo' (We are still very behind)*, as the residents of Kikomera would often say to me in relation to Kampala. Ironically, the same would be said in Kampala about national politics in relation to the 'developed' world. The issue is not just mapping the contours of yet more translocal knowledges, but rather to understand how such knowledges and locations relate to globalising structures of political, cultural and economic power. Definitely a homework assignment.

The tea finally arrives, as sweet and chewy as the bread rolls served with it. For many it is the first sustenance of the day, and an appreciative silence descends on the staffroom. Right now it puts a halt to my greedy desires for 'theory', desires which often queasily arrive from Berkeley by Boeing rather than from the political immediacies of the ethnographic encounter. All too often, theoretical delicacies remain undigested in ethnographic works, leaving an uncomfortable feeling in the stomach. I hope that is not the case in the rest of this paper as I return to the 'posho-and-beans' prosaics of school life. I try to put the theoretical debates to productive use in describing the links between these multiple and always mediated localities, and why they matter.

I help myself to some more tea. As I chew I reflect on the history lessons - inscribed in bullet holes - over the staffroom walls, trying to put my next class into perspective. First though I make one more dislocation, this time to discuss a more national history of colonial and post-colonial educational policy. This is not a diversion of much interest to the teachers right now, for they are much more occupied with the maths of trying to reconcile their hard-earned skills and long hours of work with their parlous economic condition. So next on the timetable is history, followed by double economics.

History lessons:

In this section I attempt a history of educational endeavours in Uganda. I focus only on histories of 'education' as initially imagined by those great white hopes of the Victorian salvation narrative, the proselytisers of Christianity. I can but acknowledge that there are many other ways

of imagining 'knowledge' and its sharing. That said, this brief description of the rise of 'book learning' in late nineteenth century Uganda shows that the narrative of moral progress through educational betterment was a central and often under-recognised part of the colonial endeavour.

Colonialism's histories has many wry anecdotes, but there are few greater ironies than the letter written on behalf of Kabaka Mutesa to Queen Victoria by Dallington Muftaa, an ex-slave, asking for the hand of her daughter in marriage (Gray 1960). It needs no apologist for post-structuralism to note the fetishised power of the written text throughout the colonial encounter, whether it be Stanley's letter to the Daily Telegraph inviting in the first missionaries (Low 1971), the Christian printing presses used to spread 'the Word', or Ganda clan elders embellishing clan histories (Twaddle 1974). No surprise either that within a short time Ugandan 'gentlemen of letters' were proving just as prolific in their correspondence as their Victorian Missionary counterparts.⁴

Uganda's first school could be argued to have been established in the Kabaka's court at the end of the 1870s, as missionaries of the White Fathers and the CMS (Church Missionary Society) attempted to legitimise their precarious position as the guests of the Kabaka in Kampala. They began taking bible-reading classes for those of the Kabaka's courtiers interested. They had little else to do, given their treatment as virtual prisoners within the sturdy blockades of the Kabaka's enclosure. This left Kabaka Mutesa in an increasingly ambiguous position, unclear over which way to turn as the young pages became more fervent scholars (and followers) of these new religions. Soon enough the '*abasomi*' (those who read) became a powerful political group in their own right, adding yet another faction to the Ganda elite. The political, religious, generational and sexual intrigues of the King's court at that time are worthy of a blockbuster and not merely a PhD (Rowe 1966).

Much of the intrigue revolved around the increasing power and mystique that adherence to the Islamic or Christian scriptures provided. First came Islam, brought by numerous Arab traders travelling up from Zanzibar, bringing with them Korans as well as guns and spices. Rowe (1966) recounts some of the Kabaka Mutesa's more witty ambivalences: 'he built a mosque, and outside it stood a tall mast on which a flag flew each Friday to proclaim the day of prayer..casually combining a European political symbol with Islamic religious practice.' For a while in the 1860s he did indeed declare himself a convert to Islam, and forced his chiefs to 'read', but his

⁴ As evidenced by the huge volumes of correspondence and personal papers of luminaries such as Apolo Kagwa and Ham Mukasa, now deposited in Makerere's 'Africana' archive.

interpretations of the texts were perhaps deliberately idiosyncratic. The arrival of an 'orthodox' Egyptian sheik created many new tensions and divisions within the court. The young pages were encouraged to pay rather closer attention to the texts, and eventually these young scholars accused the Kabaka himself of eating 'kaffir' (infidel) meat, and by implication accusing the Kabaka of being a backward 'kaffir' (Rowe 1966). The King resorted to the idiom of monarchical invincibility that had developed within the Buganda conquest state, and in 1876 he sentenced seventy of the Islamic pages to death by burning.

Once a dynamic of modernisation begins, there is always the urge to keep up with the latest fashion, the newest text, and 1870s Buganda was no exception. One cannot compare the mood of the 1870s to contemporary rhetoric around 'modernity', but there are certainly important similarities. The mass execution triggered a countrywide backlash against the strictures of Islam. The previous year had seen a persecution of the 'Bakaffiri' as primitive and unwilling to keep up with the times, and many of them were keen to get their own back (Rowe 1968), showing that the clash of cosmologies was far from located solely within the capital.

Such rivalries and vendettas continued as Christian ideologies began to get the upper hand, with Muteesa - seemingly under prompting from the explorer Stanley - proclaiming grandly in 1875: *'I say that the white men are greatly superior to the Arabs, and I think, therefore, that their book must be a better book than Mohammed's'* (Stanley, quoted in Low 1971). Stanley was as much a canny journalist as an explorer, and his famously hyped letter in the Daily Telegraph has resonances with the development-speak that I encountered in Kiboga more than a century later: *'But oh that some pious practical missionary would come here! What a field and harvest ripe for the sickle of civilisation'* (ibid).

One can only wonder what 'Ganda' chiefs and courtiers would have made of the vehemently nationalistic theological contestations that the Catholic and Protestant zealots displayed during debates in the Kabaka's enclosure. As Low (1971) notes, one missionary presented the Kabaka with a bible, saying *'This book is the source of England's greatness.'* Inscribing the nation on the Word was a powerful combination. Unsurprising then that the Kabaka swung first one way then another in trying to deal with the multiplying religious constituencies that vied for power within (and outside) the ever-more-flammable stockades.

What is the relevance of all this for the subsequent practice of education in Uganda? Each group of missionaries found that the Ganda catechists they trained were the most effective

proselytisers for the faith, simultaneously realising that conversion was the key to political strength (Pirouet 1978). It was this that encouraged a Ganda aristocracy and missionaries to open up training-centres for catechists. These subsequently became the elite schools for each religious denomination, and there was a new and incessant demand for the sanctity (or was it status) that being '*musomi*' (a reader) brought. One history records that, during one week in 1893, 22,269 Luganda religious texts were sold by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) alone (Furley and Watson 1978). Roland Oliver described it as 'one of the most remarkable and spontaneous movements for literacy and new knowledge which the world has ever seen' (Oliver, quoted in Furley and Watson 1978). The CMS spokesman warned new missionaries that this desire for religion could result in 'reading for reading's sake' (ibid, 98). By so doing he neatly described the dangers of education more generally.

The history of this competitive evangelisation is well documented. The presence of denominations in particular areas was subsequently reified by a sectarian segmentation of the Buganda landscape (Langlands and Namirembe 1967). This was part of the British declaration of a Ugandan protectorate in 1893, where under Lugard's patronage the offices of the Buganda state were divided up between the denominations. Different districts of Buganda were declared to be the dominion either of Protestant or Catholic chiefs, with the Muslims getting but one county. An uneasy peace prevailed, despite the courtly revolts and ultimate deportation of Kabaka Mwanga in 1899 to the Seychelles. The missionaries and church hierarchies settled down to developing the educational and religious institutions that would strengthen their influence.

From the earliest arrival of the missionaries '*Alphabetarianism*' had been the court fashion, and by 1884 the first Luganda Grammar book had been produced. There was some technical instruction, but most teachers focused on literary education. As early as 1890 the White Fathers sent their most promising students to the University of Valetta, Malta, to study law and medicine (Furley and Watson 1978). By 1895, with the arrival of the White fathers, an increasingly secular education was being promoted, in Kampala if not in the more rural mission stations. There was a constant shortage of teachers, and the Ganda evangelists and educators played a crucial role in this history (Pirouet 1978). With the necessity of maintaining Christian hegemony on a shoe-string (Berry 1992), the British authorities were happy to provide the missions with grants enabling them to do the Government's work.

The success of these schools also has to be understood in the context of the local support

provided for them. The elite Protestant boarding school founded in 1906, King's College Budo, positioned itself as the school for the children of chiefs. The pupils described it as a '*kigalagala*', formerly the label describing the group of pages found within the Kabaka's enclosure. The school's large financial endorsement by the Government ensured its subsequent dominance of the educational scene. The Catholic equivalents, St Mary's Rubaga and St. Joseph's Namilyango, received less, necessitating large subsidies by the missions themselves. There is little doubt that these prestige schools, 'quite up to the requirements of a school in England' (Richards, quoted in Furley and Watson 1978), were influential in establishing the subsequent educational hierarchy that, in turn-of-the-millennium contemporary Uganda, has become ever more central to one's social aspirations and cultural capital. The willingness of wealthy influential parents to pay school fees and to provide other forms of political and financial support are as central to the power of the '*First world*' schools today as it ever was. Predictably, it is still the case that the best schools in Uganda are clustered around Kampala.

Educational historians (Furley and Watson 1978, Lugumba and Ssekamwa 1973) describe these hierarchies in some detail. Yet their occasionally evolutionist overtones, depicting simple 'bush' schools as leading to the development of elementary vernacular schools, and finally to the high/central schools at mission centres, inevitably simplify a complex dynamic. The sixty-five-year long debate - still going strong - over the use of English as a medium of instruction, and the dispute over the appropriate proportions of academic and technical education, demonstrate the contested history of educational policy. An important story is the demand for education by women, with early records showing that 40% of Catholic school enrolments were women. Prime Minister Apolo Kagwa in 1906 showed what Ugandans today would describe as 'gender sensitisation', whilst opening up a new CMS school for girls. '*God has opened our eyes in these days*' he said. '*Let us not have 28 or 30 girls in this school but 50*' (Furley and Watson 1978, 115). Thinking historically about gender politics in this way is both revealing and depressing. This school, called Gayaza High School, became the female equivalent to Budo in the eyes of the Protestant elite, and a measure of its influence is found in the extent of its 90th Birthday celebrations last year. As well as a grand function in Gayaza itself, a big alumnae party was also held in a club near King's Cross, London.

The colonial government was initially content to allow the religious communities to manage the burgeoning educational demand (Lugumba and Ssekamwa 1973). Yet by the end of World War One, pressure was being put on the authorities to do more than simply donate cash. Similar questions in neighbouring colonies led in 1924 to the Phelps-Stokes' commission being organised, with a mandate to report on education throughout Eastern and Southern Africa (Jones

1924). The Phelps-Stokes fund, in another of those complicating colonial moments, was an American philanthropic foundation dedicated to the education of Black Americans. The fund was commissioned by the British Church Missionary Society - and funded by the British Government - to investigate, as the report states, *'the educational needs of the people in the light of the religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions'* (Jones, 1924). It provided a comprehensive and well-respected review of education throughout Africa, but one which presumed that *'all education must be of a character to draw out the powers of the Native African and to fit him to meet the specific problems and needs of his individual and community life'* (Jones, 1924). The philosophy comes out of post-Civil War schools in the American South where the moral and mental educational value of a technical training was being emphasised. It also reflected a politicisation of attitudes to education amongst colonial administrators. The suggestion that education should be 'appropriate' to one's role and status in life had the accompanying presumption that academic opportunities were not appropriate for most. This sort of reasoning, along with the accompanying racialising sciences of hygiene, ecology and demography, rapidly became fashionable, and is in evidence throughout the 1924 report. The debate in Uganda over the role of the state in education led to the establishment of a state-run technical school on Makerere hill in 1919. This subsequently developed into the University, where similarly racialised debates about an 'African University education' were still occurring forty years later.

The Phelps-Stokes project is open to either more progressive or more reactionary readings. The report varies from an obsession with health, hygiene and character development to more pragmatic suggestions about the importance of agricultural education. In seeking to analyse and quantify every aspect of life in Africa, the report reminds me of the self-arrogating functionalism of some late-colonial British social anthropology, where the theory has little relationship to the extant political economy. Yet its more outspoken focus on the educational needs of women, together with its far-reaching policy suggestions, did have a significant impact. The commissioners recommended the appointment of a Director of Education, together with a civil service department. This was quickly organised. Their suggestion of having Ugandans on the Advisory Board was not. Soon enough the trappings of an ideal-type educational bureaucracy were put into place, with school inspections and gradings, exhaustive yearly departmental reports⁵ and handbooks, plus directives on language use and a focus on technical and agricultural education. Ironically, it seems that agriculture, once incorporated into the school curriculum,

⁵ Uganda Protectorate - Annual Report of the Education Department. Published 1925-1958.

became used as a way of punishing children, or of getting them to contribute to the school's food production (Lugumba and Ssekamwa 1973). Both ensured that the pupils saw the topic as unworthy and demeaning. As always, every moment of opportunity is also a moment of danger.

The subsequent policy history of the Ugandan Department of Education is not my special subject. Suffice it to acknowledge that through a series of official ordinances, primarily in 1927 and 1942, the management and governance of schools became far more regulated (Lugumba and Ssekamwa 1973). Rules regarding the status of the school, the duties of the Headmaster, the appointment of the Board of Governors, and the role of inspection began to be set down, rules which later impinged directly on the everyday practices of Kikomera Secondary School. The subsequent history is one of occasional Commissions and reports on the state of education, usually resulting in long-overdue pay rises (that hasn't changed). Independence in 1962 was seen as the critical moment for nation-building, and at that time the Castle Commission laid out the 'bleak facts' that 'less than 50% of her children in the primary school age group attend schools'. Given the hindsight of thirty years of 'development' interventions, this figure does not seem so bad. Massive expansion in the early post-colonial period was coupled with an attempt to bring all schools under Ministry control, a nationalisation that slowly (but successfully) attempted to challenge the Mission hegemony of a sectarian education system.

There are many other issues that could be brought into such a history, and in particular a contemporary legacy of educational elitism. But the bell has been rung: time for English with Standard One.

Classroom practice?

My first week at the front of the class, and all the innovative teaching techniques and lesson plans that I've spent weeks preparing suddenly count for very little, as I wonder how to motivate and teach 80 students who hardly understand my rapid speech. Oddly, the numbers keep increasing throughout the class, until eventually I realise that I'm being subjected to a witty form of educational tourism by the Standard Three students, who want to see what the new (and inexperienced) Muzungu teacher is like. I chase them out, and return to the rigours of the present continuous tense. What do the students think of me? Incomprehensible probably, as they struggle with my accent, or are cajoled into contributing. One might think that with a single class one at last has a definable social unit with coherent views. Alas no. The room is a cacophony of styles,

attitudes and beings - and that isn't just the result of my teaching style. Ages vary from very little 10-year-olds to strapping 16-year old men. So does confidence, with the boarders from Kampala being brash and over-assertive in the comforting aura of cosmopolitanism, whilst the teenage women who have walked in from outlying villages are equally consistent in their uncertain silence. The gender dynamics are complex, as too are the multiple identities and backgrounds of the pupils. There is a moment of ridicule for one youngster as the pupils call out their names during registration. He blurts out '*Joshua Oryema...er Mulindwa*', remembering halfway through that he now has (or parents now have) a Luganda family name, changed from one which revealed a Northern Ugandan background. Despite the heterogeneity of the area's population, Ganda signifiers still hold a powerfully dominant status, and it is sometimes easier to blend in than to stand out. Unfortunately, he'll have to live with that mistake for a while.

It's a scorching day, and the magnifying effect of a tin roof does not help class concentration. Rapidly I begin to appreciate the value of the traditionalist 'parts of speech' approach to teaching English Grammar recommended to me on arrival by the two other English teachers. They are soon to become my best friends, but at the moment they are still having to listen to me extol the virtues of a more participatory teaching practice. I am overly sensitive to classroom power dynamics, the banking metaphor for knowledge acquisition, and the political ramifications of teaching the language of the colonising power in the first place. I soon realise that with only five copies of the most recent textbook and no other teaching aids (save a half-legible blackboard) there is little practical choice but to go for the chalk-and-talk routine. Some teachers don't even bother with that - leaving students to copy out pages of notes for later digestion. This is not the place to bemoan the lack of group-work or role-playing at Kikomera Senior Secondary, but rather to think through the material conditions and social imaginations that constrain and construct educational practice.

A good place to do that is back in the staffroom. Here much of the preparation and marking of lessons goes on, together with lengthy discussions over particular pupils or classes. I know that I am worthy of gossip, as my habits, dress and attitudes provide a means to reassess the *muzungu*, differently marked from both the rich white Kampala dwellers and the scruffy travellers occasionally spotted in the taxis. My answers to questions about my reasons for choosing Kikomera are given close attention, though a healthy suspicion always remains. How could I be both teaching and doing research, staying in Kampala and Kikomera?

The headmaster's habits also get a good deal of conversational airtime - putting me in an

interesting position because I share a house with him. But he and I are not the only butt of staffroom jokes. A hasty supplement to my research plan comes with the recognition that much that goes on within the staffroom has nothing to do with education in itself. Far more entertaining are the arguments over national politics, the jokes over teachers' precarious economic situations, or joshing with the Muzungu. A long lunchbreak allows for all that. Anything to distract from the poor quality posho (maize meal porridge) and beans that today, as every day, are on the menu. With such a vibrant public sphere, the staffroom - with its new roof, replacing the one nicked by military bounty-hunters in the 1980s civil war - could stand as a metaphor for Uganda in its own right. The one thing that often doesn't get discussed is education in the narrow sense. Instead the conversation nearly always comes back to the teachers' bitter and constant frustration at the lack of a 'living wage.'

Double Economics: A living wage?

Time then for double economics, and in this section I look at the strategising that occupies the teachers' minds much of the time - the constant search for money and financial wellbeing. This might be the place to describe 'the facts' of rural poverty in Uganda. Yet this is not as simple as it might seem. People have claims on different forms of wealth, be they land or access to land, cattle, harvesting rights, personal connections, all of which may be as significant to one's livelihood chances as personal possessions or savings (Berry 1993, Shipton 1995). It may also be difficult to convert some forms of wealth to others, as Ferguson (1992) and Hutchinson (1996) demonstrate, such that reducing everything to a single linear scale of monetary wealth may not adequately represent the complex exigencies of livelihood struggles. Whilst quantifying and graphing poverty is important for communicating the harsh effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Uganda over the past ten years, in what follows I try to describe the harsh 'structures of feeling' (Williams 1965) of everyday lived experiences of poverty and vulnerability.

Some brass tacks are more secure than others. In 1995 a secondary school teacher with a teaching diploma was paid a basic salary of around 30,000 Shillings a month (£20), though this varied with experience and qualifications. For James, the English teacher who became my best mate, this was a laughable amount. It just covered a month's rent for a small room in Kampala for his wife and children, leaving nothing for food, clothing or even transport to see them. It was supplemented by what was called the PTA - named after the Parent and Teachers Association which most Ugandan schools now have - a similar sum given to all the teachers each month from parental contributions. Officially the schools are free, but the contribution to PTA expected from

the parents of each child was 25,000 Shillings. The students would also be expected to make a contribution in kind to the school (another way of ensuring that education was 'free') - being asked to bring a ream of paper or a dozen exercise books or pens. The teachers were vigorously bitter in reminding each other of the fact that the PTA contribution expected from the parents was one of the lowest in the country, meaning that their overall salary was one of the lowest too. Stories of the 200,000 Shilling PTA allowances given to teachers in Kampala did not improve matters. At least some could keep their sense of humour: *'Kyokka, tulya empewo wano!'* (*Huh, we just eat air here!*)

There is little point in trying to define objectively just what a 'living wage' might consist of - for economic 'needs' are difficult to separate from the contexts in which those needs are created. The teachers' own needs were inevitably different from those of the market traders down the road, even if cash-flow crises shaped everyone's lives. Part of the problem came from the very sense of place that the school exuded. The bold capitals of the school sign, a brand new cast-iron school gate, a new coat of paint on the outside of the buildings, together with disciplinary practices - dress codes, checking on cleanliness, insisting that the students did not go into the market with their uniform on - all served to isolate the school itself from the surrounding community. Of course this was a two-way process, as many of the residents felt very proud of such a school in their midst, but it also meant that the teachers were somewhat set apart, viewed as professionals and expected to act as such. As figures of authority, they had a certain demeanour and appearance to live up to; as salaried workers, they were also always being asked for money.

Some teachers had grown up in the area, and being well-known, could cross the gap easily. Others had been posted to the school, and so maintained a dismissive attitude towards the 'backwardness' of the place. It was very easy to sit in the moral shade of the staffroom verandah and dismiss the crude hustle of the market. Even village schools have ivory towers. The gap was exaggerated by the school's position on a hill above the strip of road that in recent years had become the town's commercial centre. The paradox of looking down on other people's entrepreneurship yet engaging in it oneself was gently avoided. The games teacher kept three large heifers, the agriculture mistress grew and sold tomatoes, whilst the economics master kept turkeys. Another baked the local bread, whilst several more had the good fortune to have land locally, and so were busy planting coffee in the hope of a quick bean. These teachers on the whole had either been around for a while, or had grown up here, either inheriting or buying land.

It was hardest for the new teachers to find opportunities, and easier for them as young bachelors to head out to the bar of an evening. I soon found myself buying more than a few rounds of drinks. Yet beer in Uganda is definitely a middle-class luxury, and regularly holding up the bar made one's moral ground rather more shaky. Whilst the 'blow-in' teachers could ridicule the backward authoritarianism of the village patriarchs (who were often highly successful farmers in their own right, seeing no need for education or books), the gossip in return would be about the low moral tone created by undedicated and slovenly teachers drinking in public. We eventually fixed up a small net-curtain in the doorway of the bar. Nor was the division just between the school and the village - there were also divisions within the small residential compound that housed a dozen of the teachers. As one might guess, the more compact and spatially bounded a group of homes appeared, the higher the likelihood of tensions and disagreement.

I often hung out with the other young male teachers who had been sent to the area, trying not to drown my day's ethnographic memories along with our joint sorrows. The dirt road, unpredictable electricity supply and lack of telephone connection were not only good for a moan, but could also be used by teachers like Richard and James to distance themselves from their present location, and instead to emphasise their links with other more 'developed' places. Pigg (1992, 1996) describes similar processes in Nepal. It was easy for them to write off Kikomera as backward, as not up with what they saw to be the trappings of modern urban life. Yet by the standards of a localised village propriety there were other things that mattered far more - being able to trace back one's Ganda ancestry, or being able to grow decent coffee plants, to name but two. And as far as Richard and James' rich and career-minded relatives in the capital were concerned, the fact that they were both rural teachers said it all.

James was born in a small town called Mbale in Eastern Uganda, the son of a wealthy and powerful doctor. James hardly knew his father, as his mother subsequently married another man, but his step-father had paid for his early education at St. Mary's Namilyango, the sort of elite school that would virtually secure a middle-class lifestyle. However things started to go wrong at home when his mother divorced her husband, and the stress messed up his 'O' level exams. Then he was forced to go to a cheaper, rural school for his 'A' levels, and the poorer teaching quality showed in his results. Thus he found himself at Teacher Training College whilst his childhood peers were all studying at Makerere or lining up well-connected '*eating*' jobs. In a society where money, relationships and social position are so closely linked, he rarely saw his former friends, or even his rich relatives. Money is always an issue, whether courting girlfriends,

helping a friend with his marriage fund-raising, or even buying graduation or wedding presents. He could not keep up, let alone compete, and so fell out of touch. Yet that was their problem, as he was one of the liveliest and most entertaining people I've ever met, and he rarely let his bad luck get him down. This despite the demands of looking after his wife and two young children in Kampala. Rent, food, milk for the baby, clothes..the list was ever-lengthening.

We would spend hours together scheming about ways of making money or getting him out of his present predicament. For several years he 'moonlighted' at another secondary school about 8 miles away, requiring him to dash by bicycle back and forth. The money was not bad, but the other headmaster exploited the illegality of the situation by not paying him for months on end. And the subterfuge necessary to dodge the headmaster at Kikomera began to exhaust him. So we came up with other plans - buying a video and creating a small cinema, charging people to come in and watch the latest action movie. Trouble was, there were already a couple of competitors, and school pupils hardly had money to burn. I wrote him endless reference letters, CVs and recommendations for private schools in Kampala, so that at least he could be with his family. It was - so far at least - to no avail. The recent expansion of Makerere University meant that there were many more degree-holders looking for jobs, such that his Teacher-Training diploma counted for very little. In the meantime, however, the only diversion was the bar-life down in the village centre. A place where one's masculinity and worth could be re-affirmed, a place where female comfort could be found, but a place where even joining the *malwa* gang for an evening of millet beer cost half-a-day's wages.

Richard was rather more nostalgic for the good life, often wistfully describing to me his privileged childhood in a grand house near Jinja. He was full of stories of trips to the cinema and late-night video parties. His description of fights over which film to watch made me feel, coming from a video-less childhood, rather jealous. His father was a prominent local businessman and Democratic Party politician, but this proved his downfall. During the civil war he was targeted by the local Obote boys, with his home and farm looted whilst he was imprisoned. From then on Richard had to earn his own school fees, and the pressure of this slowly began to get to him. He often talked about how confident and vocal he had been in school, but by the time he got to O level he was spending all his time worrying about how to make money. Again, he had only managed to get into a second-rate 'A' level school. Reminding me of my own past performances of masculinity, much of his conversation and thoughts revolved around what he called the '*chase*', but his seeming lack of success with women didn't help his self-confidence either. Nor were female pupils at the school a particularly wise target. Buying consumer goods was another

form of affirmation, and he had the biggest and most powerful portable stereo that I'd ever seen. Having been lent a good deal of money by a female teacher when he first arrived, he was now getting increasingly depressed at his inability to wriggle out of the financial and moral relationship that he'd created for himself. Relief came from books, and his minutes for the school meetings were full of glorious literary allusions from Dostoevsky and Kafka. We both had a textual extravaganza - together with a particularly potent lesson in the West's 'global localism' (Gregory 1994) - when one day WorldVision (US) donated more than a thousand books to the school. Amongst the literary gems were more than thirty copies of *'Interior Design with Feng Shui'*, closely followed up by eighteen copies of *'California Factory Outlet Guide'*, twelve copies of *'120 days out in and around Los Angeles'* (to paraphrase Soja (1989), perhaps 'it all comes together' in Kikomera), and most usefully of all, seven copies of *'No more hysterectomies'*.

Part of Richard and James' predicament, and perhaps the reason for our friendship, resulted from their differential sense of locality. They were constantly making comparisons with other parts of the country, with other ways of life. The first time I met James he asked me if I could get hold of a Monopoly set for him. Those teachers who were more settled in Kikomera could concentrate on weeding their fields and looking after the coffee plants, and so might have been less interested in national media discourses about teachers and their salaries. This is not to say that they weren't aware of these larger imageries, because nearly everyone had a radio, and several owned car-battery-powered televisions. Instead it was perhaps because they had greater material investment in local discursive concerns, be they rainfall, bovine cystitis or politicking in the district council. These national imageries do exist, and I want to give a few examples from the print media to show that they equally contribute to the tale of the 'poor teacher' that gets lived out in much of Uganda. One is from the 1996 election campaign, where Museveni called up his old teacher to give him an award for dedication.⁶ His appearance in a threadbare jacket and flip-flops made out of car tyres made teachers the object of both sympathy and derision. On another occasion, the Minister of Education took off his belt and gave it to a teacher who had stood up to speak at a seminar with an unbuttoned shirt hanging loosely over his trousers⁷. Both pictures reinforced the image of the rural teacher as poverty-stricken and incompetent; it is no wonder that James and Richard felt their plight all the more strongly.

I'm aware that merely juxtaposing national media discourses with local gossip does little to

⁶ 'Museveni praises Teachers dedication', New Vision March 1st 1996.

⁷ 'Mushega Dresses Teacher' New Vision April 24th 1995.

make the case for the dynamic inter-connections between spaces and places. It has to be done rather more carefully. In the next two sections I look at the way that national idioms and discourses around teaching get enacted and transformed in the staffroom. I focus first on salaries, and then on the controversies over examinations and corporal punishment. Again I try and pay attention to the localities being created, as much by my writing as by the practices of my friends.

Staff-meetings as sites of incipient rebellion?

Throughout 1995 feelings in the staffroom over wages became ever more embittered. Rumours of a big national wage increase (as recommended by a World Bank advisory committee) which then failed to materialise made things worse. So did a mid-year meeting of the Kikomera Parent-Teachers' Association (PTA), which agreed to put up teacher remuneration by only 2,000 Shillings, despite strong pressure from the two teachers' representatives. The micro-politics of the engagement were complex, but the predominance of elderly and rather conservative farmers on the committee ensured that their views won out. A subsequent government ruling that PTA contributions were not to be increased any further seemed to seal the teachers' fate. They became bitterly proud of the fact that their school had one of the lowest PTA contributions in the country. Things could not get much worse at the University of Kiboga.

One positive action in this period was the setting up of a teachers' support group called KITO A (Kikomera Integrated Teachers and Old Teachers Association), intended to encourage greater solidarity amongst the teachers in the area. The founding KITO A '*vigour*' was a resounding success, and seemed to achieve a great deal. On the appointed day, people gradually contributed enough money towards the two cases of beer that were the minimum logistical requirement for a party, and the afternoon was spent adorning the staffroom with flowers, greenery and gaudy streamers of pink toilet-paper. The hierarchies of space and power never end, for the founding event attracted few of the local primary school teachers, intimidated (or resentful) of the secondary school milieu. Part disco, part meeting, speeches were made and elections held between dances and beers. As the only person at the school with access to a printer, I was elected Publicity Secretary. As the event got more lively, people decided to write a founding constitution on the back of a cassette box. The aims were recorded as follows:

- 1) *To encourage solidarity amongst all past and present teachers and other affiliated members of KITO A in Kikomera Zone.*
- 2) *To work together to improve our economic situation through income-generating projects.*
- 3) *To enable social interaction through organising get-togethers and other events.*

The evening was a great success, even if things began to get rather out of hand when the third crate of beer arrived. But the moment of liminality passed, and it is hard to argue that the first two aims of the constitution were ever achieved. A month later a proper constitution was drawn up at a lengthy and formal general meeting. As with a previously drawn-out executive committee meeting, most of the time was spent arguing over the level of subscriptions that would be appropriate. Complicated systems of registration fees and termly subscriptions were debated, with the aim of raising some capital for the organisation. Others disagreed, arguing that no-one would join if the costs were too high. In hindsight, the debate was somewhat pointless, as the money was never collected anyway. In a situation where every shilling has to do its work, few were naive enough to see 5,000 Shillings gobbled up by some unproven committee.

The micropolitics of Kikomera staff-meetings were understood rather differently, the minutiae of bureaucracy notwithstanding. The teachers knew that there was much more at stake here, and as the one public sphere open to the teachers, the monthly staff-meeting became a site of open resistance, of material and symbolic contestation. Like all set-piece public rituals, the meetings had a certain pre-ordained dynamic to them, though there was always a sense that the confrontation could get out of hand, that administrative agency could be undermined. The Headmaster's insistence on having the meeting three days before term began was a particular source of antipathy, and on the one occasion when he did not arrive to act as Chair, an acerbic comment was chalked on the staffroom board. A long list of all *'Members present'* was written out, ending with a flourish *'Members absent without apology - Chairman and Secretary'*.

Let me take the minutes for one such meeting. On the ordained morning, everyone gradually drifts in, carefully dusting a spot on one of the flimsy school benches that make up the staffroom furniture, before waiting for the Headmaster, Mr Ddumba, to appear. By mutual agreement little teaching occurred on such mornings. Eventually he arrives, sleeves immaculately rolled up, ready for action (everyday dress habits and behaviours nearly always became grounds for humour). We begin with a prayer by one of the female teachers, calling upon the Almighty to bless the members of the meeting so that *'whatever we discuss is put into action for the benefit of the school and the nation at large'*. With the national stage on which to perform, the Headmaster could hardly stint on the moral magniloquence. As many of the teachers were not yet formally confirmed, he first explains that he is going to start making reports on everybody in preparation for the District Inspection of Schools. *'We are going to have to work really hard, especially when the inspectors come. Now latecoming, especially in the morning...this is really*

too much, too much, and I am going to throw you out, and you will suffer, and you will be deployed up in the far north, and when I throw you out of here you won't complain'. Some of this is aimed at the teachers who were also moonlighting at a nearby secondary school, whose headmaster had come to solicit for teachers. He'd been physically pushed out of the Headmaster's office.

The tone differs little from many of the school assemblies I'd heard. Worse is to come. *'I gave you all two prep. books last year, and I have found out that two of them have been sold, and so the person who sold them is amongst us'. The sullen, uneasy silence of the teachers echoes as the telling off continues. They are asked to produce classroom plans and work schemes. One teacher is accused of laziness, but protests his innocence of the crime by producing his prep. books. I am dragged in too, with my whiteness being marked with a moral hue, 'David has only just arrived, but look at how already he has started his plan of work'. I keep silent.*

Things begin to degenerate as the headmaster moves on to time-keeping, providing an inopportune cue for the late arrival of two teachers. *'And those people who have arrived late today, some of you seem to do it deliberately, to provoke me. Some of you arrive at your lessons 30 minutes late, and only teach for 10 minutes'. Worse still, according to him, are those teachers who gave their students notes to write on the blackboards for the class: 'this, this is against professional ethics'. Of particular focus is tea-time, and the problem of the teachers' tea only arriving at the end of morning break. He suggests that the teachers drink their tea without milk. This raises a general protest. The Headmaster refers everyone to the minutes of a previous meeting where this had been discussed, 'But it was resolved that you would go to class anyway, and come back to drink your tea'. The teachers, who by now are fed up with being treated as children, retort in a similar way. One gripes 'The problem is that if the tea comes at 5 minutes to 11, it takes 15 minutes to cool'. Another joins in, 'The tea is embarrassing us - several times I have come back from my lesson and the tea things have been swept'. Such protestations continue for a good 10 minutes, until Mr. Ddumba decides to have the final word, playing the communitarian card. 'Since we are members of the same family, it is better to talk about these things before something big happens to one of us - I would not like to malice you, but where you force me to do so, I will!'*

At another meeting later that term, the issue of wages became more central. Richard, acting as secretary, made a florid and impassioned speech. *'I wish to put across another lamentation, that salary is a sweat, and that the teachers get known as the people who don't pay. We all know*

that we are here at the University of Kiboga, but from what I know of Universities, the don's life is a very comfortable and sweet one, with development high on the agenda. But I suggest that the term is a misnomer, for I'm not convinced we have these conditions. So I suggest we get a new name'.

The headmaster dismissed this as merely a matter of 'grammatics', saying that they would have to wait for the PTA to 'sit' to see whether there would be any chance of salary rises. This did not lead him to any safer ground, for it was a cue for James' accusation that the headmaster 'stood alone in the PTA meetings, and not with the teachers and their demands'. This was a serious charge to lay, and a moment's ominous silence followed. Mr Ddumba nimbly dodged it, suggesting with a smile that perhaps James would like to be the teachers' representative on the PTA committee in future. The silence suggested a determined lack of support from everyone else in the room, each perhaps unwilling to position themselves too clearly in opposition to the headmaster. I sensed that James had little choice. Relieved that no worse fate had befallen them, the others were only too happy to elect him to the unrewarding and unrewarded task. Despite his efforts, this next PTA committee meeting was the one that proposed only a 2,000 shilling rise. 'Rich peasants, damn them' was James' only comment afterwards.

Throughout the year, Ddumba increasingly came under attack for his unsupportive attitude to the teachers' wage demands. One rainy night in the bar, conversation turned to the gilded lives led by the political elite: *'These ministers and education officers don't know what sort of lives we lead, they don't know the pressures we are under. Even HM (the Headmaster) doesn't read the papers....he just looks at the pictures!* The recent story of President Museveni dragging his reluctant Ministers in two small minibuses around the Luwero triangle to show them the reality and extent of rural poverty was joyfully retold by Richard, dwelling at length on how sweaty and dusty they got! It was a tale designed to reveal again the ignorance and disinterest of the Kampala elite. Here too I first heard about the School lorry, supposedly raising money for the school by being available for hire in Kampala, and also of the Headmaster's mansion apparently being built in the capital. The bitterness of the rumours began to outdo that of the beer. Several teachers started calculating just how much money was collected from the pupils' PTA contributions, and wondering how much the Headmaster could pocket each month. As one commented:

Running schools here is very profitable. Just look at all these new ka-schools (a derogatory reference to unlicensed private schools) opening up. Once you have got over the start-up fees, you can pocket up to a million a term. There are no running costs, because you don't

help out by buying books or whatever. You pay the teachers a pittance, its a way to get rich.

Yet people also acknowledged that even the Headmaster had a price to pay to keep his job. Someone explained to me how Ddumba had to keep in with the Ministry inspectors, so avoiding the dreaded school inspection, which would result in the school being closed down because of poor sanitary conditions. *'We are all just puppets on the Minister's string'* said one. Richard's view was simple, if hardly a solution, *'I am suffering now, but my one consolation is that one day my turn will come'*. For all the righteous anger, everyone knew how dependent they were on the headmaster, both for continued employment and for the odd favour when things got really tough. For all the staffroom bravado and solidarity, each person had their own more private history of petty deals and behind-closed-door compromises. Speaking out was a risky business.

As the year wore on, peoples' anger became ever harder to mollify, and a sense of defiance began to develop. Hushed conversations started to develop in the staffroom over how to present a united front to the Headmaster in demanding a pay-rise. One morning I found the teachers in the middle of calculating just how much money the school got from PTA contributions (supposedly 9 million Shillings (\$9,000) each term), and where exactly the money ended up. The school buildings had just been repainted bright yellow to attract new students, prompting one wag to comment, *'If they can afford to paint the school, why can't they afford to paint our pockets?'* Fighting talk was mixed with pragmatism, as discussion roamed over how much they could possibly ask for, and what they were most likely to get. The deputy head also contributed, explaining the procedural difficulties in passing any motion through the staff meeting, a PTA committee meeting and finally the Governors' meeting.

I joined in, suggesting that they could write the Headmaster a joint memo. But the teachers had learnt a good deal about tactics, and people knew of Mr Ddumba's 'divide and rule' tactics, where he would approach each member of the staff individually, and ask them what they needed, appealing to patriotism and school loyalty if necessary to prevent any collective bargaining position. As James noted wryly, *'everyone has their price'*. Someone sneaked into the school office, when the bursar was not looking, to get a discarded copy of the accounts presented to the PTA (as James commented, *'they are all in it together'*). It was easy to spot discrepancies within it. Next came an attempt to calculate just what a 'living wage' might be. In the laddish environment that typified the staffroom, the chalk board calculations were headed *'Survival wages for a bachelor teacher'*. Someone quipped that *'the woman teacher would need 4,000 Shillings more, because she would need her hair done'*. Not that this stopped the female teachers joining in the banter, and several could easily give as good as they got. Indeed, it was often the female teachers who were most financially savvy, and some even lent money to the men when times were hard. The maths teacher laid out elaborate sums on the

board, with monthly allowances for little details such as shoe polish and washing soap. The point was made again and again that this was only a survival income, and that it did not include clothes, school fees, entertainment, or the costs of supporting a family. The basic minimum demand finally agreed upon (60,000 Shillings (£40)) was roughly double their present salary, though some felt that they should initially petition for twice that. The rumoured 300,000 Shilling (£200) monthly salary of some Kampala teachers had left a bitter after-taste.

Strategies were discussed at length, with some advocating immediate strike action, and others calling for a more subtle 'go slow', turning up late to lessons, gradually opening up negotiations. The debate was inevitably gendered, with the performance of outspoken masculinities controlling much of the space, though I only heard a little of the endless planning and strategising. Some of the teachers risked a great deal in taking up strong positions. The militancy finally paid off. The Headmaster was under pressure from the Governors and the PTA to improve persistently poor exam grades, for they too read the national league tables. He in turn needed the teachers' support if he was not to be ousted by the Governors. The 1996 Presidential election campaign meant that there was rather more money around, and the Headmaster had his own electoral ambitions. He supported the teachers, and they received 30,000 Shillings (£20) more each month. Relief, at least in the short-term, was subsequently boosted by a decision to improve national pay scales. The showdown at Kikomera Secondary was certainly a localised one, but it was imagined and gained strength through a more national mood of militancy.

Examination Tales, Whipping Yarns:

Two last examples similarly illustrate the inter-linking role of local, national and trans-national discursive practices in shaping positions within the development hierarchy. First the tale of the examination questions. In this free-market age of the educational supermarket, with league tables and constant comparison, it is not surprising that exam results and school performance are newsworthy issues. In Uganda the release of exam results is front page headlines,⁸ with an increase in performance being taken as a symbol of national progress. The national league tables are dissected and discussed endlessly by the Kampala elite. In an economy where trade in the capital is seemingly quieter in the months when parents are trying to scrape together school fees, it is obvious that education is central to many people's concerns for the future. Exams become the central obstacle on the economic and social climbing race.

⁸ 'Babu releases PLE results.' *New Vision* 13th February 1995, Page 1.

Attitudes were similar at Kikomera. The last three weeks of every term were devoted solely to examinations and marking, instilling an omnipresent exam culture in the students. However, the yearly national Ugandan Certificate exams ('O' level) were the real academic highpoint of the year. In the months beforehand, the shady spot under the mango trees became the regular revision spot, as teachers began to organise after-school coaching, spending hours going through past exam papers and trying to question-spot likely topics. The Headmaster got as nervous as the rest of the teachers, knowing that his future depended on increasing the number of '1st Division' passes in the school each year. The teachers would jostle for position as exam invigilators, temporarily employed by the Ugandan National Examination Board (UNEB), as such work paid a healthy bonus.

Inevitably there were other ways of dealing with the exams, as James had long hinted in his mysterious references to *'the dark side of Kikomera Secondary'*. Amongst all the staffroom in-jokes, there had been one that I never understood. It involved the mimicry of an aerial somersault, dipping one's head forward and spinning one's hands and arms around each other in big circles. James finally revealed the answer to me in the middle of one exam period; it was an appreciative replay of one teacher who had dived through a classroom window to avoid being caught helping students by an approaching state invigilator. This was a source for much merriment amongst the teachers, mixed with frustration that even the students they helped did not necessarily pass the exams.

There were more ominous aspects. James had been appointed chief invigilator at a nearby school, but had a terrible time for the first week, after insisting on following exam regulations to the letter. He had found the headmaster, teachers and pupils all against him, to the extent that they even refused to provide food for him and the other visiting invigilators. Hungry, and weakening under the continuous offers of cash from the students, he eventually agreed to help them. Things changed overnight, starting with decent meals. Despite his good intentions, he was left with an unhappy conscience, and the strain of having to keep one eye constantly on the path that led to the examination hall.

The papers became increasingly full of news of leaks at the time of exams,⁹ with reports that even a Catholic Brother at the Mission responsible for printing UEB (Ugandan Examination Board) exams had been caught with a paper up his cassock. Such reports made perfect sense to the Kikomera teachers, as their pupils equally would spend fruitless hours and money trying to trace down copies of supposedly leaked papers. And who can blame them, given that the stakes were already so

⁹ 'Headmasters lose jobs over Exam scare'. The Monitor, Monday 13th-15th February 1995.

mounted against them. Richard invoked the city-country divide again to explain the difficulties, *'You see, it is so hard to do well at a rural school, because here we just teach the syllabus, whereas the big schools had perfected the art of coaching for exams. And the examiners are all teachers at these big places, and so they can afford to help their students.'* He talked about the huge sums that people would pay to get copies of exams, pointing out that, if you were a Minister, your child had to do well, whatever the cost. A lot of this was similar to the bitterness that came out in discussions over salaries, but once again he saw morality in terms of space: *'All this dirty business here, it's because of the effect of the road to town, which brings the corruption that is the norm in town. Deep in the villages people don't engage in such practices.'* They do not go to University either, as we both knew.

If I felt unable to engage in the exam debates, I managed to get thoroughly embroiled in the issue of corporal punishment. From my first encounter with it, horrified at seeing two female students writhing on the floor of the School Office whilst the Deputy Head gave them 4 lashes each, I gently tried to open up debate on the issue. The sexualisation of the violence struck me, especially given the sexual power relations between some male teachers and the female students. Students were always beaten on the ground, as a way perhaps of emphasising their wrong-doing, but there was certainly no pretence of putting on a brave face. Rather they exhibited a good deal of protest and resentment. Several of the teachers used a relativist argument to defend this, asking me what happened in the UK, and then invoking a sense of place to explain their actions. I explained that such beatings were now illegal. *'Ah well, in the UK you people want to study'*, said one, *'but here these students have no motivation, and so they need to be beaten occasionally in order to motivate them'*. Another added, *'We know about your gender-sensitivity Kayongo,¹⁰ but your European feminism doesn't work here'*. Once again a sense of location is produced through constant comparison and distancing as much as through 'face-to-face' sociality.

The issue came to a head in the following months, when a 9-year-old child in Masaka received 130 lashes from three different teachers, and subsequently died. The act was widely condemned in the press.¹¹ A few days later, the Minister for Education banned all corporal punishment whilst speaking at a child-abuse awareness workshop run by an NGO entitled 'Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN).¹² Moreover he insisted that teachers would be

¹⁰ Kayongo was the Luganda name I was given by the Headmaster, from whom I rented a room.

¹¹ 'Cases of Child Abuse on the Rise' New Vision, Monday 5th June 1995. 'NCC (National Council for Children) condemns Act' New Vision, Tuesday 6th June 1995.

¹² 'Caning Abolished in Schools - Babu' New Vision, 9th June 1995. Page 1.

prosecuted for such abuse. This news led to heated debate back in the Kikomera staffroom, not for the rights of the child, but for the possibility that they might be held responsible. Near universal resentment exuded at the diktats of a Ministry perceived as out-of-touch with the need for discipline. One teacher suggested, *'We should limit the number of strokes to three, and make the school administration responsible for their delivery'*. A rejoinder came swiftly: *'But then the students would know that only three strokes were coming, and so wouldn't care.'* *'So should we keep it a secret?'* *'Nothing in the staffroom ever stays a secret!'* The Art teacher joined in with a revealing concern - his own 'uncontrollable' masculinity: *'When I am beating, I can get hot-tempered, and get carried away, and hit harder than I mean to'*. It was finally agreed that the Duty Master or Mistress would be responsible for keeping a record of all disciplinary action in their weekly report, and that he or she would be responsible for the beatings. Comments about the female teachers not being strong enough to give a good beating were brushed aside. Legitimate authority was restored, but only just.

A transnational curriculum?

So far in this chapter I've been focusing on Ugandan institutions and educational practices. But if we are to take seriously the role of trans-national flows of people and ideas in the construction of relational locations and knowledges, then we shouldn't let the boundary enframing practices (Mitchell 1989) of the nation-state get in our way. Time for me to get on an overbooked plane, and not just on an overcrowded taxi. There are useful parallels to be drawn between the Ugandan and British contexts, despite the complex historical and material disjunctures that characterise the Ugandan diaspora in Britain, and the post-colonial political situation that makes labels such as 'black', 'African', 'Ugandan' or 'Buganda' so powerful and yet so difficult for me to engage with. Writing about London brings the dangerously objectifying politics of ethnography 'home' all too powerfully. Yet I also recognise that trans-national imaginings and practices do contribute to - and subvert - senses of 'national' places, with important political consequences. I proceed with great caution.

In doing so, my source is a debate over education held at a Ganda cultural gathering in Ealing Town Hall (*Ebika bya Buganda e Bungereza - The Clans of Buganda in Britain*) a year later. The topic for discussion is the situation of 'Baganda' children in Britain, and the dilemmas faced by people in their everyday lives. As discussed in chapter two, the tone and setting of the organisation seems designed to appeal to a certain constituency, a group of adults who had some sort of engagement with 'Gandaness' in its multiple forms. Given the problems of being young and black in today's multi-racist Britain, it is hardly surprising that many teenagers didn't readily find relief in

singing the praises of Buganda. Judging by the large numbers of Ugandans living in London who do not attend, they weren't the only ones. It is perhaps easier to remind oneself in the British context of the multiple and overlapping identifications people have in their everyday lives, such that tying folks down to their identities is politically and theoretically dangerous. This is a lesson that applies just as much in Uganda or elsewhere - that any depiction or representation of a social group excludes just as much as it includes.

The cultural organisation was set up back in 1992 with the help of sponsorship from local health authorities and AIDS charities, partly as a way of opening up a discussion about the devastating impact of AIDS on the Ugandan community. Conversation focused particularly on prevention strategies and on fostering programmes. From the start the depiction of a community in crisis proved a powerful organising tool. Mixing the seriousness of discussion groups with good 'Ugandan' food, a cheap bar and entertainment proved an effective marketing tool. Linking this with quizzes, games and competitions designed to test one's knowledge of Luganda proverbs or one's reading ability was a way of encouraging knowledge of things Kiganda. Those who came seemed to be a specific group of adults who identified themselves as Ugandans, and more specifically Baganda, feeling little need in their conversations to hybridise their identities or to acknowledge a sense of 'Britishness'.

The gatherings were usually publicised in advance by mailshot, initially occurring in East London but then subsequently all over the capital. One of the topics for discussion at a meeting in Ealing was education, outlined in an invitation replete with the baroque Luganda that signified a 'true' Muganda, full of phrases that would have posed problems for many of Kampala's youth.

Weewawo amasomero agasookerwamu agasinga obungi ga bwereere naye ebintu nga bwe biri ensangi zino abaana baffe boolekedde okumalako nga tebagannuddwa. Obudukkiro buli ludda wa? (It is true that nearly all the primary schools are free, but the way things are these days our children are finishing without having anything to show from them. Where do the solutions lie?)

Abaana b'akaco kano tweyolera mpiri, sinnakindi emiswaswangule gyennyini. Kino kyennyamiza. Ng'ogyeko owekubagiza, okutalina kye kuyamba, tusale magezi ki'? (Having our children in this bad place is like nursing a viper (a Luganda proverb meaning to court disaster), but without any chance of a finding a real solution. This is causing grief. So how do we find consolation, when there is no way of helping ourselves?)

On the appropriate day I battled through the Saturday shoppers on Ealing High Street to find the town hall a haven of calm. I joined one of the first groups assembled - a mixture of mostly middle-aged folk, the majority being men. Most were in the formal dress of either Kanzus or Gomezi. Even the dress code has an educational tale, for the elaborate womens' dress with all

its layers, folds and shoulder flaps was named after a Portuguese silk merchant (Gomes). It was he who supplied the Headmistress of Gayaza High school with material so she could make a suitably decorous and unrevealing school uniform for the girls. As Gayaza was the first school for the daughters of prominent chiefs, the uniform soon became the fashion. From Portugal to Ealing via Kampala. In the hall, apart from young children running around and causing evident consternation, there were few of the young people who were supposedly the object of the conversation. I had some sympathy with them, aware that discussions of moral rectitude and educational failure were likely to appeal primarily to a traditionalist parental generation.

I joined one of the 10-strong focus groups as it began. Initially people needed a few clarifications. Were we talking about education '*wano oba eka?*' (*here or at home?*) asked one of the women, so setting up the spatial opposition that many seemed to share. In this mostly undisputed order of things Uganda was the place of order and security, the place where children were brought up and educated properly, whilst Britain was a disordering destabilising place, where children had no respect or manners. '*Abaana baffe*', said one dignified woman, '*tebalina emisingi wano, nolwekyo tebasobola okuyiga*' (*Our children, they have no foundations here, so they can't learn*). There was a murmur of assent from everyone, though several may have had to fight to keep their children with them and to bring them up in London.

Next came a discussion of the reasons for this lack of foundation and support. Unfortunately the culturalist emphasis of the day meant that less attention was paid to the constraints of living in a racialised society than to peoples' responses to them. There was a general bemoaning of the fact that parents were not setting a good example by speaking Luganda with their children, so that the young had no chance to learn Luganda. The whole discussion was in Luganda, with only the occasional, quickly stifled exclamations 'Sure' or 'True' revealing the hybridity of everyday language use. Very quickly the tone became rather moralistic, resembling Ugandan 'development' debates in the use of self-denigrating comparisons. No-one directly talked about racism. Instead other ethnically marked communities in London set the standards, and a long conversation followed about the Asian community in nearby Southall. The '*Abayindi*' (Indians) were heralded for their unity, despite their diversity of religious communities, and for having their own courts. '*Do you remember how at home every clan has a court where problems can be sorted out?*' said someone. The NRM government introduced a system of local resistance councils in Uganda on coming to power, and given that these are now highly valued as dispute-solving forums, such a comment was perhaps a little nostalgic. It was made however in the context of finding ways to avoid involving local social services in domestic disputes and childcare issues. Such

interventions were seen as shameful and unnecessary. Again the conversation came back to the solidarity within the British Asian community, and the reasons for it. Someone suggested that it was because they had money, but others denied this strongly, saying instead that it was rather due to the way that the Indians met and talked together, always coming together on a Friday. Yet this admiration was tempered by another young man's recognition of the dilemmas that equally face Asian youth. *'If you know ten words of Hindi you are a man,'* he said, *'and some only speak Hindi in public and English at home'*. This gentle mockery of Hindi cultural authenticity was perhaps intended to make people feel better about their own children's lack of Luganda.

This discussion soon played back into reflections on the Buganda 'community' - or lack of it - in London. There were a number of comments about Upton Park, which became one of the centres for newly arrived Ugandans in East London. Someone joked that, walking down the streets there, one could see women peeling *matooke* (bananas) in every kitchen, and hear raucous calls of *'Emmere eyidde'* (*Food is ready*) resonating everywhere. Several West Londoners in the focus-group felt they had to justify not living there, and there was talk about being labelled or too closely identified with a group, with all the competition and gossip that resulted. Class differences were also asserted, where Upton Park was a place for traders and hustlers, some of whom couldn't even speak English. It took an article in a Kampala newspaper for me to become aware of the subtle class distinctions within the British Ganda community, based on histories of exile as much as on present-day occupations and values. Round and round the reasoning went in the discussion, with an increasingly reified and abstracted notion of a 'Ganda community' being created in each repetition. Some suggested Sunday schools as a way of giving their children a taste of their Ganda culture, whilst others insisted that, living all over London, the phone was the only way to keep in touch. For all the initial questions, people had few answers, save the disturbing sense, not unique to them alone, that the 'community' was not as it should be.

Visiting and speaking to Ugandan friends in London, I began to realise that one of their educational concerns was a desire for the 'traditionalism' privileged in Ugandan elite schools. People in London knew that these schools still exuded an authoritarian discipline (beatings and all), a classroom hierarchy and a version of knowledge acquisition that would be anathema to one of the capital's comprehensives. My experience of upper-class Ganda homes in Kampala was that children were usually expected not to be seen or heard in the home, and clearly Kampala parents had long relied on the boarding schools for this sort of disciplined socialisation. Another issue for British Ugandans was the antipathy felt by many towards what people described as the *'those Caribbeans'*, and the feeling that such people gave *'us Africans'* a bad name, and that their

children were poorly behaved, setting their own poor examples.

As if to complicate the moral hierarchies still further, it is worth remembering that many of the people who call themselves 'Ugandan' in Britain find themselves in a tenuous and difficult social and economic position in Uganda. Returning 'home' there will be many people who have high expectations of them, seeing them as '*been to's*'.¹³ Many will ask them to bring back money and gifts, expecting to see their kinfolk as successful cosmopolitan achievers whom they can now rely on. If the reality does not live up to the imagery - being an unmarried mother, or having an unsuitable partner - it can be hard to return, especially as London salaries and standards of living are hard to replicate in Kampala in a less open business environment. Many talk about returning on retirement, but even then there is the difficulty of dealing with the 'Ganda' aristocracy, the moneyed elite who look down on the supposed trading class who had aspirations to travel in the first place. I shared a room in Kampala with a friend who had spent five years studying and working in Britain. He had mixed feelings about coming back, but was guaranteed a good job with a Bank if he did. Yet he was still scathing about those who went there just to '*okukuba ekyeyo*' (*to beat the floor* i.e. do menial cleaning/packing jobs etc), dismissing them as '*Bayayi*' (good-for-nothing louts) from the streets. Again this is too simple, for it disregards those who were forced to flee Uganda with the Kabaka back in 1968, along with those who have either sought asylum or come for other reasons. But it does serve to challenge any simplistic assertion of a unilinear educational or social hierarchy. Inevitably educational experiences get shared and discussed, and it is no surprise that the Kampala middle class know all about British school curricula, often choosing instead to send their children abroad for degree programmes.

Some of the more the more mobile were able to negotiate the two systems, especially if they returned to Uganda regularly on business. Many sent their children to school in Uganda as a way of avoiding the complications of the British educational system. On the other hand, at least one middle-class Kampala mum I knew had managed to get her dyslexic child into a 'special needs' school in UK, as there were none in Uganda. Everyday conversations would discuss in great detail the relative merits of schools a whole continent away, not merely in the next town.

¹³ As in the crowing 'I've been to England/USA/Germany/Japan etc..'

Term Report Cards

I have attempted a partial description of the multiply-positioned and cross-cutting localities produced in the contemporary world, and yet at each stage 'could do better' looms ominously over the report card. The infinite complexities of social production perhaps explain why even Appadurai's (1996) attempt to map trans-national cultural flows remains at the level of generality and conjecture. Describing the cultural politics of one particular school, I have attempted to recount the effects of diverse and contradictory histories of educational practices. In particular I have tried to show how the 'mediated immediacies' of social relationships enable senses of localities to be created - both now and in the past, both within and across regional divides and international borders. Yet any such cultural study is itself equally caught up within such complex dynamics, and I find myself with a good deal of difficult cultural 'home' work still to do.

CHAPTER FOUR

'PROGRESS' AS DISCURSIVE SPECTACLE : BUT WHAT COMES AFTER DEVELOPMENT?

Abstract

The occasion: the inauguration of the Kiboga Development Foundation, a new educational NGO. The event: a parade and five hours of speech-making, both illuminating and interminable. It begins with a grand procession of elegantly be-gowned and mortar-boarded university alumnae twirling itchily through a small district centre. The rural sun and dust scours the immaculate pin-stripes and make-up of Kampala's high life, but does not scratch the 'developmental' facade.

Unpacking the complex micro-politics within such a spectacle can reveal much about the power dynamics of 'development', and its imbrication within regional, national and international politics. In this chapter I use an ethnography of the inauguration day speeches to show the many different ways in which the practices of 'development' are inhabited, imagined and re-interpreted, by both 'practitioners' and 'recipients'. Linguistic and cultural studies reveal a constant reformulation of meaning, questioning any over-simplified reduction of power relations to a 'Eurocentric' development agenda.

As well as rethinking the word and its meanings, I also explore different possible intellectual representations of the process, drawing particularly on Marx, Foucault and Baudrillard. I engage with the debate which tries to perceive what might come 'after development' - whether it be the voluntarist imagery of a global consumption society, or the equally utopian vision of an egalitarian, non-capitalist world. I question the teleological assumptions of both narratives. Instead I suggest that we cannot be outside of the narratives we desire to critique. I argue that the day's audience and speechifiers are reformulating and re-naming development from within, and that scholarly representations do likewise, even when speculating on what is likely to come next, 'after' development.

**'Progress' as discursive spectacle:
But what comes after development?**

*Bile burns my inside!
I feel like vomiting!
For all our young men
Were finished in the forest
Their manhood was finished
In the classrooms
Their testicles
Were smashed
With large books
Song of Lawino. Okot P'Bitek (1984)*

Getting there

I'm on a bus. It may well be the millenium minus five, but the bus is British Leyland, circa 1972, definitely pre-post-Fordism. We are careening through the Ugandan countryside. A tremendous wake of dust tails us closely, ensuring we can never quite escape. With the passing of other vehicles it outflanks and enwraps us, ensuring that bus and all the passengers are swallowed up by the translucent orange landscape that has replaced the lush roadside vegetation.

This is not then an unusual sight, of people incongruously huddled in scarves and cotton wraps against the earthy precipitation that accompanies February's sweltering skies. Not in comparison to what happens next. The bus hurls to a halt around the next corner, and we all dive out, me included, to perform involuntary ablutions and sprucing in some roadside *shamba* (garden). The unsuspecting householder can only laugh at the bizarre antics filling his banana garden. Off come the wrappings to reveal the manicured pinstripes and double-breasted bouffants of Kampala's business class. As the toilet continues, the passengers begin to look rather too grand to be everyday bus passengers. Some bemoan the state of their best clothes, whilst those who are more prepared have brought whole changes of clothing and elaborate shoeshine kits. There are frantic calls for water. Others grab and tear off banana fibres to brush away the worst of the dust. People are forced to strip between the '*matooke*' (banana) trees, resulting in cries of shock from those of a more prudish disposition.

The opportunity for free entertainment has by now attracted more than a few gawkers, and they are rewarded by yet another twist in the tale. My fellow-travellers pull out and don enveloping black gowns and mortarboards, the academic paraphernalia of degree ceremonies everywhere. This is no ordinary bus-ride.

If the onlookers, distracted from everyday tasks of weeding or water-carrying, find this all a little confusing, explanation is at hand around the next corner. Today is the occasion of the inauguration of the Kiboga Development Foundation, and we have all jointly rented a bus - a rather unfamiliar mode of transport for Kampala high-fliers - to be at the opening ceremony. There are other agendas too: showing solidarity with rural origins, showing off to village relatives and friends, a day out, shopping even. My presumptuous adoption of the area as a place in which to live and do research ensures that I too can construct a vicarious sense of home, having received the rather grand invitation-card a few weeks before. And the purpose of the glad rags and fancy dress? The Kampala delegation is scheduled to make a celebratory march through the district headquarters as a publicity stunt for the new development foundation. It is intended to impress the region's youth and encourage them to study, demonstrating to them the status and wealth that are possible through education. If only it were so simple.

Such public displays of belonging contain all sorts of complexly related identities and histories, suddenly and momentarily collapsed together for the sake of the day's spectacle. Paradoxically, that is what makes the occasion so useful to think with. Issues such as the politics of community, the negotiation of progress and modernity, access to education, and the widening rural/urban divide are all signified and cited, commented upon and re-thought, both in the speeches and the responses of the audience.

There are all sorts of possible intellectual openings and explanatory frameworks. 'Development', that ideological best-seller of the late twentieth century which much of the globe has no choice but to inhabit, can be written about and represented in many different ways. Yet that is also part of the problem. It is easy to adopt an 'ethnographic ventriloquism' (Geertz 1988), subsuming the complexities of power and history beneath an explanation of what it all *really* means, where things are really heading. In this chapter I therefore also want to think about 'our' (scholarly) involvement and complicity in the dynamics we try to describe. Before we focus on the collective identities of others we might want to ask about the implications of our own sense of collectivity as academics. This is not just to ask the dangerously seductive 'What can we do?' question. It is also to acknowledge the very force of writing, a recognition we tend to deny. How

can we 'just' engage intellectually when our engagement (textual or otherwise) changes the situation of which we are a part? If the ethnographic method is not outside power, as I showed in chapter one, then as well as attending to the texts and practices of the 'development' project in its many forms, we also have to reflect on our own intellectual texts. An earlier version of this chapter was originally given at a conference sub-titled 'What are collective identities for?'¹ One could equally ask what collectives of anthropologists are 'for', or 'against'? Does not the 'for' implicitly suggest a hoped-for voluntarism, a longing for a clear and unproblematic agency in which political groups and identities had definite purposes and aims? Perhaps it is anthropological hopes and longings that are really at issue! As always, intellectuals face the problem of both trying to describe these processes whilst also being positioned within and defined by them.

Aware of these challenges, and against the backdrop of the inauguration ceremony of the K.D.F., I attempt to do two things in this chapter. Through a discussion of the multiple and diversifying citations of 'development' occurring within this one event, I describe the different possible theoretical interpretations that could be made. Secondly, I reflect on the way these interpretations are used to predict what might come after development. I suggest that intellectual longings, and a lack of attention to questions of 'value', might explain the utopian teleology of much of the writing about a 'post-development' era. Optimistic predictions either of a global 'consumption society', or alternatively of a non-capitalist egalitarianism, do not acknowledge or engage with present structures of inequality. I end by suggesting that we cannot stand outside the narratives we want to question and challenge, and as such can only re-formulate 'development' from within.

Development as spectacle?

After the refreshment break we clambered back aboard the bus. Some folks had raided the surrounding vegetation to festoon the bus with greenery and leaves. It was always a sure signifier of a special occasion, and therefore occasionally also used by taxi-drivers to avoid police checks when they had too many passengers. We all gingerly returned to our seats, vigorously ineffective

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was presented at an EIDOS conference in Leiden, March 1997, entitled 'Globalisation, Development and the making of Consumers: what are collective identities for?'

in trying to whisk away the dust veneer that still remained. For many, a trip to the country, even if it was 'home', was not something one did very often, and I felt reassured by the middle-class men who had made a fuss about a journey that I made every week. Some of them had brought shawls and, to the jeers of the more hardy folks, wrapped themselves tightly against the thickening dust-clouds. 'Home' is of course a resonant and loaded term, and people would not describe their birth places or family residences as such, in case they were mistaken for country-dwellers. Few were born in the city where they now lived. Yet nearly all would talk about *'going up-country on safari'* or *'going back to the village for the weekend'*.

A friend of mine who was a university lecturer took pleasure in pointing out his own house as we went past. Then he was somewhat embarrassed as he wasn't sure which house was which. *'I have a plot of land by the road to develop,'* he confided in me, *'..once they rebuild the road to make it more accessible.'* The road was a constant focus for complaint and protest, both for 'locals' and city-types, a symbol of hardship, isolation and regional deprivation. The injustice the road represented was both material and symbolic. At a material level few traders, business people or travellers wanted to venture along it, and it symbolised a lack of political commitment to the area.

The bus driver took his precious cargo gently over the last hill, and we arrived at the District parade grounds, to the sight of gathering crowds and an ululant welcome. Such public occasions and their accompanying pomp provided a regular source of popular entertainment, which explained the number of people - as well as all the local school children - gathered under the trees. The etiquette of such occasions was designed to ensure that local, regional and state bureaucracies were all equally puffed. This meant a lengthy administrative hierarchy of speakers, though there were other rewards for the diligent spectator, such as cold drinks, fried meat interspersed with entertainment. The better the do the longer the VIP guest list, and to judge by the forest of wooden poles holding up a huge area of tarpaulins and palm leaves to shelter the guests, the Kiboga Development Foundation was not going to be outdone.

To get a sense of the occasion, an understanding of regional political history and the centrality of territory in Ugandan identity politics is worth noting. Kiboga only became a district in 1989, and is thus one of the newest of Uganda's 36 districts. It is part of the Luwero triangle which became infamous in the early 1980s as the site of Museveni's guerilla struggle to oust Obote. As I described in chapter two, the area's hilly landscape was ravaged by the fighting, and most of its residents fled. Even after Museveni came to power in 1986, it took time for popular

confidence to return, and the area received little economic investment or political support. Before the war it was part of the larger Mubende district. Inevitably most patronage and attention was given to those nearer the district headquarters in Mubende town, and there were few transport links or connections from these northern hills. Its poor communications infrastructure was the very reason that the fledgling National Resistance Army chose the area to launch its guerrilla war, reasoning that it was far easier to disrupt troop movements, lay ambushes or plant mines on gravel roads. When finally successful, Museveni promised a greater degree of local autonomy to the residents who had supported him throughout the bitter counter-insurgency campaign. Such a strategy fitted well with the National Resistance Movement's campaign for a more decentralised and people-centred democracy. This in turn gradually led to the devolution of administrative and financial decision-making to the districts, contestations over 'federalism' notwithstanding!

The designation of district status was a mixed blessing. Kiboga is regularly described as the '*Arua of Buganda*', the most economically underprivileged and isolated district in a wealthy and powerful region. The new status allowed new opportunities and new possibilities, yet these came with a growing popular awareness that Kiboga really did stand for backwardness and tradition. A popular Ugandan TV sitcom in the early 1990s (*'That's Life Mwattu'*) had as its protagonist a rural woman from Kiboga who had married a city-dweller and who had to adapt to her newly bourgeois position. The script mocked her gawkish manners and village gaucheness, a storyline that clearly appealed to the burgeoning population of city-dwellers. The ascription of modern is always relative but, as many residents of Southern Uganda have as little interest in or knowledge about the North of their country as their British counterparts, Kiboga is clearly posited as the exemplar of under-development.

At a material level, the district headquarters are important sites for the practice of government, and with it the distribution of patronage and the possibility of upward political mobility. They also become the focus for economic and educational aspiration, as the best schools are those containing the children of civil servants, and the best business opportunities are found in a captive salariat expecting city comfort. The gendered Ugandan metaphor '*A son of the soil*' both praises and makes a claim on successful public figures whose historical roots can be traced to a particular region. A true son of the soil (and now daughter, as female political advancement continues) knows where his or her roots and responsibilities lie. As a new district, Kiboga had to start all this from scratch, creating a sense of tradition and belonging. There had been a dismayed realisation that only two out of several thousand students at Makerere were

from the district, and that there were equally few high-ranking political figures people could call their 'own'. A sense of place and a sense of pride are bolstered by history and the past, but always have to be worked at and renewed.

The inauguration ceremony was intended to do exactly that, which was why the pomp, the marching and the bunting were so important. The Kiboga Development Foundation was to be launched as a Kampala-based NGO. It was intended to fund-raise for educational projects within the district, but also to act as a mobilising forum where the interests of the district could be lobbied for, and a sense of territorial and communal solidarity could be nurtured. All the older districts had similar associations, acting as old-boy networks where those working in Kampala could meet up. Some recruited the new students from their home areas who had arrived at Makerere. The gowns and the mortarboards were central to the whole spectacle, making a symbolic link between the status symbols of an elite tertiary education and the more prosaic educational practices of primary and secondary schooling.

The day began with a grand parade and march past of educational achievement. Long columns of school children arranged themselves next to the university graduates in a faintly chaotic fashion on the parade ground. Once assembled, they awaited an official inspection by the ministerial guest of honour, accompanied by a brass band and every other local politician who felt important enough to accompany the minister. The ambiguities of etiquette provided the opportunity for self-promotion. Then the graduates, diploma-holders and all the Kampala delegation marched after the band down to the town centre and back, ensuring that the spectacle reached well beyond the showground. The forty-five-minute march through the sweltering heat did little for their now-dripping collars and cuffs.

Meantime the speeches are about to begin, and I subtly prepare my notebook. But first we are treated to a song and mime rendition by a local 'a cappella' group called 'Nyange' ('A little white bird'). This is a group which has recently become nationally renowned for their amusingly respectful praise-songs of the Luwero war and Museveni's revolution. Their matching T-shirts display the slogan '*Cultural Promoters for dedication and efficiency*' printed around an image of the bird. Their tendency towards ironic social commentary is today suppressed as they praise the value of hard work and education in getting ahead in today's Uganda. They sing tales of the war, and of how much better things have got, and will get, as long as people work hard. Little white lies from the Little White Bird. Specially prepared for the occasion, their populist flourishes set the scene perfectly for what is to come, a showcase of development as moral

spectacle. The inaugural ceremony is scheduled with a total of 10 different speakers, gradually ascending in seniority. Many of them will dwell on similar topics, with the most popular being the moral commitment that a community has to have before it can develop. But before I describe the speeches, time for a theoretical aside.

Representing 'Development'

'Development'. A paradigm that 'one cannot not inhabit' (Spivak 1993), no matter how critical we may be of the term and its resonances. The word and its effects are everywhere in Uganda, visible on the side of agency pick-ups and on road-side sign-posts, overheard in casual conversation. It is suggested that the word was first invoked in this sense by Harry Truman at the end of the second world war as he announced the Marshall plan for European reconstruction (Sachs 1992, Cooper and Packard n.d.). But there are any number of important historical genealogies to the 'D' word', only one of which is this geo-political division of the post-war settlement, wherein much of the world was positioned in relation to America.

The word inevitably has a Eurocentric focus, and a historical imagery packed full of moral betterment and evolutionary progress (Ferguson n.d). This comes partly from the populist moral teleology derived from Darwin, but also from other nineteenth century European thinkers as diverse as Comte, Saint-Simon and JS Mill (Cowen and Shenton 1996) concerned with issues of order and progress. The language has a white European provenance, but it is constantly being appropriated and re-imagined in different ways in different places. As I described in chapter two, Museveni has long adopted a modernist and progressive rhetoric, condemning 'backwardness' and celebrating the moral potentials of 'progress' and science. Yet determining origins is always a risky endeavour, and instead in this chapter I focus on the discursive significations and practices of development in mid-1990s Uganda, especially those visible within this inauguration ceremony. Through a discussion of the multiply different ways in which 'development' is talked about or appropriated, and the social articulations achieved through its use, I try to show that it does not name a simple unilineal relation of power, of developer and developpee.

Why do I go into such detail in describing one event? It was no more special than the many other formal ceremonies, political anniversaries, weddings, speech-days and sports-days that I attended either in Uganda or amongst a diaspora community. One can equally learn about the cultural politics of development in Uganda from everyday conversations and practices, not just from five grandiose hours of speech-making. One cannot walk down a road in Uganda without

encountering development enunciated and emblazoned in some brave slogan on the side of a Toyota Landcruiser or Mitsubishi Pajero. *'Community Mobilisation for Mother and Child Health'* proclaims one, *'World Bank Poverty Adjustment Programme (PAPSCA) Phase II'* cries another, *'Action on Disability and Disease'* announces a third. There are innumerable examples of such emblems, of workshops, publicity materials and media reports, all 'worlding' Uganda (Spivak 1993) in a particular way. 'Development' was something anyone could do, and many people I knew had registered their own NGOs, or were looking for help to set one up. Casual conversations would be full of complex discussions about the most effective forms of fundraising and the procedures for getting registered. Several people asked me to become a co-founder or trustee. In a racialised social world, being white supposedly provided a guarantee of moral probity.

Another encounter with development is found in the Presidential elections of May 1996, when both candidates used the narrative of progress in their campaign slogans. For Yoweri Museveni the rallying cry was *'Peace, unity, democracy and modernisation'*. Paul Ssemogerere on the other hand called for *'Human Rights, democracy and development'*. The subtle distinction in the choice and order of words is highly significant given Uganda's recent political history, especially in the light of Ssemogere's rather different spin in the appeal underneath to Baganda voters *'Naawe, ogabane ebibala bya ggwanga lya'* (*You too should share in the fruits of your country*).

The whole development business was also a great source of humour for Ugandans. Near the house where I lived there was a farm project commonly known as *'The Pioneers'*. Each year groups of volunteers came over from Denmark, Germany and Britain to join a one-month work-camp and do *'Voluntary Service for Development'*. Formally entitled the *'Uganda Pioneers' Association'* (UPA), its 1995 newsletter has the image of abstract black and white figures - smiling with arms intertwined - riding together on the back of a zebra under an African sun. In the pamphlet the Chairman suggests that the UPA is *'an important organisation for the motivation and mobilisation of young people for the positive action in community service...striving to alleviate disease, poverty, ignorance, backwardness and to create social harmony for the rest of life'*.² One local resident simply responded, *'Those ones, those marijuana-smokers, they're useless, just messing around'*! Others were much more supportive of the ideals of cross-cultural exchange, but everyone managed to get a laugh out of seeing Europeans trying

² Uganda Pioneers' Association Newsletter. Volume 1, Number 2 January 1995; Five Years Anniversary Special

to fetch water, weed banana plantations or build a wall, and all in the name of 'development'.

Then there was the wickedly sharp insight of some of the newspaper columnists, in particularly the jokey style of the late Jimmi Combe. His regular contribution to the Sunday Vision newspaper recounted the semi-fictional adventures of two fast-talking, fast-drinking Kampala likely lads - Matt and LLK - in their open-top BMW. In one particularly memorable column he described a visit of some Swedes, representatives of a 'Northern' NGO funding some projects in Uganda. He recounted how Matt had to rapidly invent some suitable projects to show to the 'guests', having happened to have 'invested' the money in a new Mercedes in the meantime. The description of the resultant subterfuge and Matt's adoption of 'development-speak' was hilarious and accurate.³

I return to the speech-day. There are many cultural texts associated with 'development', yet I want to focus on what some would call the 'ethnographic richness' of this particular text. In attempting to describe and analyse it, I hope to show the risks inherent in any singular or overarching academic representation or explanation. In turn I want to suggest three different possible readings of the proceedings: 'Development as discourse', 'Development as commodity', and finally 'Development as spectacle'.

My first suggestion is that the day's events are best understood through some notion of 'Discourse', best developed in the influential work of French philosopher Michel Foucault. His ideas have become enormously influential in the social sciences, and since his death many people have tried to reinterpret and develop them. Seen as significant for attempting to displace the opposition between a determining structural Marxism and a meaning-focused hermeneutics, his work has nevertheless often been misrepresented or poorly understood. Whilst his thinking ranged over a variety of topics, there are a few passages in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* which have subsequently become key to dominant interpretations of his ideas. I quote: 'Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts or thematic choices, one can define a regularity, we will say for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*' (1972, 38). He goes on to insist that he is not merely discussing language, 'Of course discourses are composed of signs, but what they do is more than use those signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech' (ibid, 49).

³ 'Matt and his NGO'. By Jimmy Combe, Sunday Vision, July 2nd 1995.

It is this same *'more'* that has puzzled so many of his readers. Foucault's seeming refusal to separate an enunciation from its effects, to separate symbols from lived social relations, or ideology from material relations, perhaps explains his impact on social theorising. Foucault would appear to solve the contradictions he presents himself by focusing on discourse as constituted through practice, 'not to treat discourses as groups of signs but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (ibid, 49).

Whilst it is intriguing to trace the development of Foucault's ideas throughout his writing, my interest is more in how other scholars have taken up and developed them. In particular, I want to explore how his ideas have been used to write about the power relations immanent within the development encounter. Here Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism* is noteworthy, as it played a significant role in popularising Foucault's ideas. From this point, the idea of 'discursive power' was developed and applied not only to European imaginings of the Orient, but also to the 'development encounter' itself. Arturo Escobar's work (1984, 1988) was important to this debate, though much early writing (Sachs 1992 and Apthorpe 1986) often focused primarily on the 'texts' of development without exploring their effects within particular social worlds. Subsequent work, such as that of Ferguson (1990), Mitchell (1992) and Escobar (1995a), attempted to describe the links between institutional texts, such as World Bank project documents or IMF reports, and the actual practices of development, showing their effects on the social landscape. Their work, drawing both on Foucaultian theory and social research, provides a powerful critique of both the agencies and of dominant 'Northern' enactments of development.

There can be problems with the application of this type of theoretical analysis. In the same way that Foucault's (1977) description of the panoptical power of historical discourses on punishment can seem overwhelmingly determinist, some of these descriptions envisage a homogenising, overpowering and seemingly impermeable 'development discourse' inscribing the landscapes of the 'underdeveloped' world (Donald Moore 1995). There is a danger that such descriptions shore up a Eurocentrism, by seeing development as a solely white Euro-American project, imprinting its image across the 'Third World'. Such a reductionist and dichotomised view of power is not very helpful. It presumes one can identify the origins of a discourse, that there is a clear dividing line between those who hold power and those who do not, and that the observer can also find a standpoint innocent of power. On the contrary, Bhabha notes that 'there is no simple political or social truth to be learned, for there is no unitary representation of a political agency, no fixed hierarchy of political values and effects' (1994, 28). This literature often does not explain how oppositional subjectivities might be formed, or how people in diverse

social worlds might also take up, adapt or rework notions of 'development'. How are these different fields of power inter-related or intertwined? In what sorts of new contexts are people appropriating or reinterpreting these idioms - not just academics or so-called 'practitioners' (Gardner and Lewis 1996) but all those influenced by such discourses?

Even less totalising narratives still face the question of explaining how change occurs within discursive formations. Whilst at some moments Foucault writes about the 'capillary' nature of power, he also notes that 'there are no relations of power without resistances' and that 'the latter (ie resistances) are all the more effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised' (1982, 142). Wary of being too closely linked to a humanist or emancipatory project, he does not directly suggest how strategies of resistance might shape new relationships of power. Foucault's ambivalences towards power are however lost in some of these reinterpretations. In some of the 'Foucaultian' writing on development one instead senses an impasse, both in discussions of theory and politics (Sachs 1992, Schuurman 1993). There is a feeling that it has all been said before, and that there is no way of moving beyond the imagery of developer and developed, the North in the South, power and its resistance. Ferguson entitles his work 'The Anti-Politics Machine' (1990) but, despite a provocative and insightful reading of 'development', he offers few political strategies for resistance or challenge. Whilst challenging in many ways, there is little depiction of the multiplicity of power relations in Lesotho, beyond the project blue-prints and organisational structures of UN agencies.

Part of the problem comes from the 'Development' word itself, and the images and relationships it invokes. We are all inevitably trapped by the weight of the word, caught between naming and not-naming, forced to invoke a geopolitical imaginary of inequality. We should not presume that we can provide it with a long enough definition that will cover every eventuality and usage, but rather explore how its meanings and scope change and are remade anew. If we cannot escape the word, perhaps we should not ask too much of it, instead looking at where and how it is used, to what purpose or effect.

There are anthropological studies which do go beyond static oppositions and singular narratives to explore the many different and contested understandings of the D-word. Pigg (1992) focuses on the Nepali national context, relating development ideologies to images in school books and everyday conversations. She argues that there is a dominant national understanding of 'development', based on Nepal's relation to the rest of the world, with an inverse relationship between the rural areas and the degree of '*bikas*' (development) contained in a place.

Rather than trying to define the dominant 'development discourse', Pigg's work describes the everyday practices of rural people, recounting how carrying one's own load is seen as symbolising one's under-development and backwardness. Her discussions of walking to the bus or getting medical help (Pigg 1996) reveal people's constant engagement with - and reflection on - a sense of the 'modern'. The work of Watts (1995) and Gupta (n.d.) similarly provide examples of such dynamic reinterpretations.

My discussion of the day's events in Kiboga has many parallels with Pigg's work. In the same way that she describes the discursive negotiation of the 'developed' city as distinct from the 'underdeveloped' village, a similar set of divisions and inequalities is made visible and re-enacted by the speechifiers at this inauguration ceremony. In their speeches the Ugandan bureaucrats mobilise the rhetoric of rural backwardness, isolation and dependency in order to attract NGO involvement and injections of government money into the region.

Throughout this thesis I refer to the iterative, recurrent aspect of social action, emphasising the constant replaying and elaboration of cultural idioms. In so doing I am implicitly citing and borrowing from theorists of practice (Bourdieu 1979, De Certeau 1984). Yet I also want to acknowledge Butler's critically important work on the performance of gender (1990, 1993). Her careful re-reading of Derrida and Foucault leads her to focus on the 'reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names' (1993, 2). I draw a parallel to her work by focusing on the compelling recitations of 'development', an aim constantly reattempted but never quite materialised. Rather than look for origins or sources of such practices, I attend to the ways in which 'development' is constantly being invoked anew, but in each recitation slightly re-written, subtly subverted. In this way one can develop a theory of change within discursive practices, working within an earlier situation, yet avoiding the impasse of power and resistance described above.

Another possible theoretical perspective on the event, and indeed on 'development' itself, comes from the long history of Marxist critical thought. Important debates over world-system theories (Wallerstein 1974, Frank 1983, Stern 1993) provided interpretations of global capitalism that positioned third world countries in a position of 'dependency' in relation to European capitalist 'cores'. Whilst such grand theories are now somewhat out of academic fashion, Cooper and Packard (n.d.) note that their elaboration in the 1960s served to legitimate 'underdevelopment' (and therefore 'development') as a subject worthy of sustained critical engagement. Yoweri Museveni recalls campaigning in the late 1960s for the setting up of a

'Development Studies' course at Dar es Salaam University as part of a radical anti-colonial pedagogy (Museveni 1997).

Within academic studies of capitalism there has been a recent move away from a focus on relations of production to look at consumption, and indeed a recognition of the increasing centrality of consumption to capitalism itself. This shift has a number of sources, including analyses of a distinctive late capitalism (Mandel 1975, Lash and Urry 1987, Harvey 1989), post-modernism's challenge to a single Marxist production-based narrative (Jameson 1984, Hall and Jacques 1989), and debates about globalisation. Within anthropology, the work of Douglas (1979) and Miller (1987, 1995, 1997) has popularised the study of the cultural interpretations of commodities, seeing consumption as a creative and meaning-making activity. Some anthropologists have tried to link productive and consumptive processes, to reflect on the gendered processes of redistribution, within the household and beyond (Carney and Watts 1990, Moore H, 1992). Other recent writing has gone further still, trying to link up the five processes of production, consumption, regulation, representation and identity that they argue make up the 'circuit of culture' (du Gay et al. 1997). If consumption is not to be viewed in isolation from the other processes within the cultural economy, it is nevertheless a critical part of contemporary capitalism.

Given these sorts of argument, one could interpret 'development' as a commodity form, occurring primarily through a process of consumption, as was the case made in the 'Call for Papers' in the conference at which this chapter was first presented. There are a number of examples from the Kiboga Inauguration Event which might support such a hypothesis. The speakers regularly portray 'Development' as a set of desirable and quantifiable commodities, be they tractors, pick-ups or school-books, objects that could be brought into the area to benefit people, objects that one could not get enough of. They viewed education similarly, seeing one's possession of it as positioned along a linear scale, of more 'value', both morally and economically, the higher one got. Yet there are also serious problems with simply seeing development as a process of consumption, as I outline in the last section of this chapter. Simply replacing production with consumption as the key organising category repeats the Marxist move, again privileging economic forces. One cannot simply reduce everything to the 'privileged commodity form' without recognising that there are different forms of wealth which might not be readily convertible to money (Appadurai 1986, Hutchinson 1996, Ferguson 1992). Equally, forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) and status positions may be equally irreducible. Nor does everyone 'value' commodities in the same way. Moments from the ceremony make this

point. The Kampala-dwellers are excoriated for their love of wealth, with one speaker accusing them of a desire for consumption that blinds them to their responsibility to their 'home'. At another point the Minister for Education parades the white 'volunteer' teachers as a moral challenge to Ugandans' constant obsession with making money. The commodity-form is not so easily tied down and defined, its connotations are always both negative and positive, and often gendered or racialised.

The debate over capitalism as consumption can be taken one further step. This would be to describe the whole event in terms of Development as Spectacle, much in the manner that Guy Debord in the 1960s and Jean Baudrillard in the 1970s depicted capitalist society itself. This is a radical extension of the commodity debate, for in this version the commodity has colonised all of social life. As Debord puts it (1994), 'the spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image'. It is a seductive theory, as Baudrillard knows only too well. But it is one that leads down dangerous and unhelpful paths. Baudrillard's early work extended the critique of political economy to the sign, implicating use-value itself in the 'logic' of political economy, whereby 'the structure of the sign is at the very heart of the commodity form' (1981, 146). The object of this new political economy was, for Baudrillard, 'no longer today properly either commodity or sign, but indissolubly both, and both only in the sense that they are abolished as specific determinations' (ibid, 148). This semiotic/economic focus on the value of the sign was in turn displaced by his later argument about the tyranny of the sign in further orders of simulation, describing how image and reality implode in the hyper-real. Becoming increasingly fatalistic and extreme in his writing strategy, Baudrillard deliberately refuses the possibility of an engaged social critique.

One could argue that the days' events were little more than spectacle, a simulacrum of 'development' in which the same images of culture, dependency and isolation were once again recycled, where the medium (development-speak) was not only the message, but also the model. It would be the recycling of a constantly imagined - but always impossible - development dream. It might make for a powerful critique of 'development', thoroughly implicating 'we' academics within it. Baudrillard has consistently explored the impossible relationship of intellectual theorising to an imploding hyper-real capitalism, complicit within the prevailing order. Whilst his focus on the power of signification seems ever more appropriate in a world ever more mediated by media representations, Baudrillard's cynicism and pessimism make one unsure how and if one can put his ideas to use.

I have outlined these three different approaches to show the different possibilities for interpreting an 'ethnographic text', but also for its overinterpretation. Each explanation is coherent in itself, but each seems to over-determine and simplify the complex set of politics that it is trying to represent (Quine 1953). Even my privileging of 'Development' as the category to be explained might be misplaced, given that the word effaces so many of the other political dynamics (within the Education Ministry for example, or between the local dignitaries and visiting alumnae) being played out during the ceremony. Perhaps it is just another over-ambitious keyword which tries to encapsulate the spinning spaces and times we live within, akin to words like 'modernity' or 'postmodernity'. Choosing one intellectual model - whether it be Development as discourse, Development as commodity or Development as spectacle - as the 'answer' can be a way of containing or managing the power relations that the writer is inevitably imbricated within. Each of the above interpretations has some utility, each provides a slightly different understanding of power. But each model in itself can narrow the focus, ignoring the critic's own relationship to the unfolding events, so enabling a distancing vision that avoids thinking about the political effects of that representation.

The tensions revealed by such criticisms have partly led to my writing style in this thesis. I try to leave discussions open, exposing myself to debate and criticism, attempting to be 'at risk in the face of the practices' that I engage with and write about. This is not to say I am unwilling to take up positions. Following Butler I try to describe the multiply-repeated and reiterated discursive practices that we are all engaged within. These practices construct categories, the economic as much as the social, and reveal the way that 'language and materiality are fully embedded in each other...but never fully collapsed into one another' (Butler 1993, 69). This theoretical position does not in itself provide an answer to the tensions of overdetermination, but does provide one way of thinking about, engaging with and understanding power. My choice then is motivated as much by political interest as by theoretical preference, and I would further suggest that the two are difficult to separate.

By now, I have come a way from the grandstand in Kiboga, and the patient crowd waiting for the first of many politicians to take to the stand. In the following section I return to the rhetoric of the 'real', the nuances of regional pride, rural/urban inequalities and Ugandan educational politics. But perhaps this diversion has served a purpose, a caution against unwary readings or simplistic intellectual closures. Somehow we have to be vigilant in our work, attending to the stakes involved in choosing theoretical models, their distancing power, perhaps even their complicity with larger geo-political inequalities. I will conclude by describing two particular

theoretical debates within the academic study of 'development' that seem to make just these closures, in order to explore their possible political effects.

Reworking 'Development' in Kiboga

The Master of Ceremonies calls the day to order, and an expectant hush falls upon the gathering. By now the rows of suited and sweating dignitaries have taken their place for this auspicious spectacle. The audience has also assembled, with many local people hanging around and listening in, squashed in on the school benches at the back or standing in the open air. Some have nothing better to do, others want to see how their politicians perform, and what the day might bring. The treat for me is that it will be a publicly-practised politics, with all the frisson that such a live display entails. Status hierarchies, governmental patronage and local power struggles, not to mention 'development' and 'modernity' themselves, are likely to be taken up and talked about, affirmed and challenged. There is lots to do.

The first to speak is the jovial chair of Kiboga RC4, the second-highest tier of district government, and an important figure within the town. He is also a prominent local businessman, owning most of the buses that ply the route from Kampala. He shows he has little time for petty etiquette by donning a rather snappy pair of red braces. It has fallen on him to welcome the day's Guest of Honour - a necessary fixture at even the smallest gathering. Today we are privileged to have the Minister of State for Education, an able speaker and a powerfully vocal supporter of the NRM government. So the first speaker is appropriately profuse and grateful in his welcome, thankful also to the NRM government for bestowing district status on Kiboga. Speaking in Luganda, he also welcomes *'Our friends in Kampala who have come to help us'*, describing how the people are ready and willing to be 'mobilised', but that *'they lack NGOs, there are very few NGOs here to help us, we need some to come in'*. The engagement with 'development' has begun.

The next speaker is a serious-looking assistant district education officer, dressed in a self-pitying grey suit that looked as if it came with the job. For newly-qualified graduates, fresh to the civil service, such rural postings were more cul-de-sac than fast track. Yet his language was far from lacklustre. Speaking in English, his is the difficult task of describing the poor state of education in the district without implicating himself out of a job. He begins by describing the fifteen primary and ten secondary schools in the district, mentioning those with government grants and those without, noting academic successes and education projects, including *'an aids drama to sensitise the masses about the deadly disease.'* The 'masses' figure a good deal in the

day's proceedings, as such a populist trope has often done within the language of modernity. His description was directed at the Minister of Education, who responded by taking copious notes. One hoped that he knew some of it already.

'But', he continues, 'What this place really needs is a lot of mobilisation, it needs a lot of sensitisation. Our problem is transport, for transport is lacking, and the department only has one motorbike and one car'. The bidding has begun. He tactfully praises, of all the international agencies, the World Bank's PAPSCA (Poverty Alleviation Programme of Structural Adjustment) for their help in building seven schools in the district, but the compliments don't come free. 'You see, we also need a trailer and tractor to help us. In the school up the hill the parents are sweating, having to carry bricks on their shoulders to help build the school'. This populist invocation of parental involvement was a powerful one, representing rural folk as passively fertile, just needing that injection of technology that development can provide. 'So you see, we need some more NGOs to assist us, for the people, they are ready to help'. And hence to the punchline, 'So we are struggling, we are struggling the best we can, but with our sons and daughters joining us, there is a lot we can achieve'. This is of course aimed at the Makerere graduates and Kampala folk who are filling the first rows of the tarpaulin-covered enclosure. He is the first of several to reinforce the fact that by virtue of having once been in the area, no matter for how long or from what background, they have now become 'sons and daughters of the soil', with all the status and all the duties that such positions entail.

Before the Education Officer finishes, he has a few more requests to gently fire at the Minister. *'Now with respect to Office space...', he goes on. 'These are not on your side (i.e. the Ministry is not responsible?), but when you come to see us you think we are working in a classroom, though we are thankful for the Ministry of Local Government which gave us 50%, for which we are grateful. Also, since now we are coming up academically, we should be considered for our children to go to such good schools. As our Ambassador, we hope we shall be approaching you for help in these matters'.*

This last statement reveals much. By mentioning *'good schools'*, he is invoking the dichotomy that every teacher and pupil is aware of, between the 20 or so top schools in the country, usually mission-based and able to charge extremely high school fees, and the rest, popularly known as *'Third World Schools'*, with few resources and underpaid teachers. It is a dichotomy that is beginning to break down, as a burgeoning Kampala middle-class demands a better deal for their children, but everyone at the ceremony knows on which side Kiboga's

schools fall. The implications of his last request are that the only way forward is for the Education Ministry to help get the brightest pupils into the best schools, and not just in developing the local institutions. Perhaps he is being brutally honest about educational inequalities, but this is a truth that 'development' cannot hear, and it is not mentioned again, except to be condemned by the Minister himself.

Next to take the floor are the representatives of the Makerere University Kiboga Students Association, followed by the Chair of the new NGO, the Kiboga Development Association. The first speaker castigates the graduate doctors who went off to set up clinics in Kampala when the local hospital had none. For today at least, being a big shot high-earner in the capital was not something to be proud of. The second is a doctor who owned such a clinic in Kampala, and who nevertheless joins in the teasing of those folks who never came back to the village, saying '*Gundi, ali ludda wa ennaku zino?*' (*So and so, where is he these days?*). The irony seemed lost on him, and on others who were visiting today for the first time. Again and again there is the imagining and insisting on a rural-urban, country-city divide, where the countryside is a place of origins, of roots, of backwardness and dependence, whilst the city is somewhere people disappear in, a place of rootlessness and ambition. This echoes the thesis of Raymond Williams' 'The Country and the City' (1973), though the tension in Williams' work between the power of ideas within literature and the material forces of capitalism is never really resolved. More nuanced recent work (Moodie 1994, Ferguson 1997) insists on the material effects of these discursive and moral divisions between 'rural' and 'urban'. In the same way, the very rhetoric of these speeches equally shapes an ever larger political and economic divide. The dichotomies efface the huge differences amongst the Kampala 'graduates', some of whom have PhDs, whilst others boasted only certificates in home economics or the rank of police constable. Similarly, they ignore the gaps in economic and political power between Kiboga-based burghers boasting big coffee-fields and taxi-businesses, and vulnerable rural wage-labourers, eking a living working on other people's land. Many of the former would regularly travel to town on business or pleasure, often having an office or second home in the capital. The latter group might only be able to afford the cost of the taxi fare to Kampala in the case of a family illness or funeral.

Up next is the local Member of Parliament, a well-known and popular figure in the town. She is given an enthusiastic welcome by an audience beginning to tire of bureaucratic rhetoric. As befits a good politician, she gives a rousing performance. Unlike several of the others, she speaks in Luganda, revealing the subtle politics of language use in identifying with a speech community and demonstrating solidarities. She stresses her connection to the land and the area

through her primary schooling, and her brief autobiography is given visual power as she points out the very school at which she began on the hill opposite. Her message is of the value of education, bringing the audience to the central point of the occasion. She ranks and quantifies education, treating it almost as a commodity. *'Getting to Primary 4 and dropping out is useless'* she says. *'But getting to Senior 2 (S2) and S3, at least you get a certificate. Far better to get to S4 and get some O levels, which would help you get a proper job. But how much better still to work hard, concentrate on your books, and go on further to get to University!'* The school children who are still sitting squashed together in the sunshine outside the enclosure are to be left in no doubt about what their aim should be. I squirm as I realise how complicit I am with that agenda, embodying the privileges of a globalising academic elite. Have research grant, will travel. In a different way so too are all my schoolteacher mates down the road in Kikomera, who resort to ever more desperate measures each year in order to get into Makerere University as a mature student. Again she has a politician's knack with timing, and pulls out her degree certificates to prove her point - that she has made it. My identification with her narrative perhaps reveals her adoption of the moralising masculine rhetoric of hard work, denial and ambition espoused by the other speakers.

What goes unsaid is her own privileged family background. Being born into the Ganda aristocracy, her father owned large amounts of land in the region and in Kampala, and she was one of the first women to be accepted at the elitist Budo school run by English missionaries for the sons of Ganda chiefs. Even today 90% of Budo pupils get places at Makerere. But this is beside the point for those confused and bedazzled children whose parents find even the primary school fees almost out of reach. Spectacle it may be, but it's a spectacle that's rapidly becoming incomprehensible and monotonous. Occasionally the speakers do play to the schoolchildren, asking them whether they too would like to be wearing such grand gowns, arguing that they could if only they worked hard and didn't play around. The children are forced to agree, chorusing in response. I can't help wondering whether for the primary children the occasion is a bewildering one, and that the notion of a University, let alone a much over-played work ethic, is unlikely to make much sense. Unnoticed, some gradually creep away to play.

There is one side-show however which does have appeal, namely the distribution of sodas, according to one's rank and position on the benches. With immense politeness, everyone silent wills the soda crate to be carried their way. Those who know they are unlikely to receive one have a different diversion - watching the incredible rate at which one of the local dignitaries is gulping down Pepsis, not even pausing to swallow. I too am agog as he finishes five in a row -

an exemplar of spectacular consumption.

By now the speakers, let alone the audience, are beginning to wilt. The rhetoric is getting repetitive, even if there are always new twists to the tale. A local youth representative is up next, choosing to speak in Luganda so as to demonstrate to the local elders that he is a good Muganda. He then gets caught wordless at a crucial point: *'Naammwe, singa mulina digirii, kituufu nti mugenda okufuna personality...'* (If you have a degree, it is true that then you will have a personality, as that degree is part of you). He continued, *'You can start with a BA, but you may want to add another degree later on. But if you have a flat in Kampala then your degree in agriculture is not going to help show the people your skills through a demonstration farm.'* Again and again the language is morally over-loaded, focusing on the importance of creating Kiboga as a place in itself, a place desperately requiring support and investment. After all, the town was just another neglected *Ggombolola* (Sub-county headquarters) - to be passed through at speed - before its recent promotion. Repeatedly people tell the audience that *'Kiboga ewammwe'* (*'Kiboga is your home'*) - even though it is the first visit for the Kampala dwellers - as a way of instilling both moral pride and a sense of responsibility.

By now the line-up of speakers is getting shorter. The District Chairman is reflective and thoughtful about the country-city dichotomy. Talking partly in English, he points out the *'perceptions'* of Kiboga from Kampala, noting how town-dwellers always moan about the dust, the lack of electricity and the distance from Kampala, and yet Kiboga is closer to the capital than the supposedly more 'developed' towns of Masaka or Mbarara. There seems no avoiding the dirt road and its constant symbolisation of backwardness for urban folk, who always use the metaphor of *'going deep into the village'* to describe visits to the country. The *'deepness'* of the village is directly related to the distance from the tarmac road. By that measure, Kiboga is deep.

By talking about *'perceptions'*, the Chairman shows his awareness of the power of imagery and the constructed nature of the city/country divide. But that does not stop him from once again calling for the Kiboga *'diaspora'* to return home and help their under-developed relatives. Again and again, the rhetoric gets reshaped and rewritten in the hands of such witty speakers, but still threatens to collapse all sorts of different political and economic flows into ever-present dichotomies. He also made a tongue-in-cheek joke about how grateful we should all be to the first religious missionaries who 100 years ago had set up the first church schools here (*'Nabo, baalina foresight'...With them, they had foresight*), thus having set education going. The priests' arrival had also started the whole racialised dynamic of cultural and educational inequality.

At long last, the Minister for Education stands up. His is the most difficult task, especially given that most of the audience are fatigued by the heat. He has to negotiate all the demands made by local functionaries upon his good office, defend the NRM government's record, convince us that the so-called *'Third World'* schools of the District are worth fighting for, and give a morale-boosting speech. Identified with the Kampala Asian community (*Oyo Muyindi* ..*'That one's an Indian'*), he also has to win over his audience by using flawless Luganda. He promises that he won't speak for long.

Much of the day's rhetoric so far has focussed on the danger of the desire for money and commodities, leading anyone with education to make a life for themselves in Kampala. The Minister has to somehow better the position of the other speakers that wealth and fortune are not the only things that matter. He does so perfectly, by picking on the bunch of European volunteer teachers (myself included) who are sitting in the third row. Insisting that we stand up for applause, he asks rhetorically how these white people (*Bazungu*) are able to work for nothing here, *'Whilst we in Uganda have to do everything for money?'* Handily skipping over a racialised global political economy that enables *Bazungu* to come and 'do good' in the first place (often to their own benefit), he reinvokes the moral hierarchy once again, this time constructing Uganda as a whole as an ungrateful nation. *'Omuntu munaafu tewali'* (*There is not a lazy one among them*) he continues, celebrating whiteness whilst avoiding the fact that none of us, contrary to Ugandan law, has a formal teaching certificate.

As everyone has done before, he congratulates those who have *'returned'*, and disparages those who did not. In future, he suggests, when people get a holiday, they should not go to London, but rather come to Kiboga to work. This reference to holidays seemed to me to misinterpret many of those present, but perhaps it was a request that disaffected rural dwellers wanted to hear. They knew all about the *'been to'* conversations and could well imagine the shopping trips of the elite, so positing Kiboga as preferable to London was a powerful rhetorical move. In the light of subsequent events, when the Kampala organising committee of the new Kiboga Development Foundation seemed to get bogged down in internal dissensus, it perhaps seems like wishful thinking.

As Minister for Education, he has to stick to his lesson, and so he begins by hotly disputing the comparison made between Kiboga schools and the 'good' schools. *'I don't accept that Budo is the best school, I don't believe people who say that they have to go elsewhere to study. Schools in Kiboga can compare with the best.'* He continues, in perfect Luganda, and in a similarly 'feel-

good' style, convincing people that Kiboga does matter and can improve. *'There is no reason why Kiboga can't be as good as the top schools, there is nothing stopping Kiboga'*. At this point he uses the example of class-sizes and teacher-pupil ratios to prove his point, but even he gets stuck when trying to find a Luganda word that will approximate for the education buzz-word *'Target'*. He is unable to do so succinctly, and so the English word crops up again and again in his attempt to define target-setting as the sort of good practice that all schools should emulate .

It should be of no surprise that he uses much of the same educational rhetoric and discourse that one might find elsewhere at this globalising moment. But one should not presume too much by it, for it is a particularly Ugandan modernity that he is trying to outline, one that is viewed in different ways by different people. What is at stake is people's share in the prosperity that an education-mediated development supposedly brings, and whether these benefits can indeed be democratised. It is this that makes education so central to the debate over 'development'. It is perhaps not the appropriate point for the Minister to mention the huge numbers of unemployed Makerere graduates who trudge the streets of Kampala after graduation, hoping for a job that meets those very 'targets'. People might not be convinced by his dismissive rejection of any educational hierarchy, or his comments that *'the best schools in Uganda aren't the Government ones, they are the community and religious schools'*, but they have to be said nevertheless.⁴ Some in the audience want to get their offspring into the best school that their money can buy, others can only hope for a better reputation for Kiboga's schools. There is probably a further proportion, perhaps absent today, who don't care much about education. They are the taxi-owners, farmers and small business people who would rather the road from Kampala was tarmacked, that telephone lines were finally installed, or that mains electricity was available for more than three days a week.

It is easy to reduce everything to a single homogenizing 'development' discourse. Even the Minister realised that education and development weres not today's only lesson, for he too goes on to talk about the party politics that is currently the main conversational point in Kiboga's bars. From his somewhat utopian educational promises, he turns to lambasting all those who are dismissive of the current national constitution-making process, and also to the worrying talk of the resurgence of violent Ganda nationalism (discussed in chapter two). There are rebel groups of Ganda patriots supposedly forming in the hills and being trained in guerrilla techniques. The

⁴ This last comment is rather disingenuous, as nearly all of Uganda's top schools began (and continue) as religious foundations, yet are also Government-funded, receiving teachers' salaries and maintenance grants.

possibility of such a threat strikes fear into the many who saw the region torn apart throughout the 1980s. The nationalist mood is being led by conservative traditionalists who are calling for '*ebyaffe*' (Our things), a call which few villagers can dismiss without being accused of being unpatriotic or not 'real' Baganda. So it is a tense time for a non-Muganda politician to talk about such matters. The Minister finesses the issue in a beautifully deconstructive move, pointing out that the '*Federo*' (Federalism) that the Ganda nationalists are calling for is really just '*Decentralisation*' in another guise. Decentralisation of financial and administrative autonomy to the district level, which at the level of both social imagery and practical materiality is what the whole day has been about, is actually the Government's new policy. He points out that it is really about who gets access to the money, with decentralisation bringing money to Kiboga district, whilst federalism leaves it at the Buganda capital of Mengo. His mention of the '*people's money*' goes down well, and he is rewarded with rousing applause.

He ends with a powerful plea against the prejudices, divisiveness and separatism that have destroyed neighbouring Rwanda, a situation about which people are aware from the stories told by returning Banyarwanda. His final flourishes are enticing and enormously persuasive. Whilst in the bar afterwards people will continue to insist, as they do every night, that the politicians are word-twisters and manipulators, for now dissent seems to have evaporated. The air begins to cool, and the enclosure gradually empties. It is time to go home, and to drink those warm beers that we brought with us that morning on the bus.

What comes after development?

This public display reveals the complexity of issues and power relationships that are related to or caught up within 'development', even though I have touched on only a few of the issues discussed and invoked during the ceremony. There are many other opinions about 'education' and 'development' that I did not learn about or have time to record. Yet from within this brief ethnographic context, I want finally to question those theoretical approaches which try to stand outside development and predict what might come next, what a 'post-development era' might look like. In particular I am thinking about writings which predict an era of global consumption (Miller 1995, Fardon 1997), and those which call for a non-capitalist egalitarianism (Escobar 1995a, Sachs 1992, Rahnama and Bawtree 1997). Both sets of narrative contain a questionable moral teleology, presuming that some end-point 'after development' can indeed be reached.

In doing so, I again want to stress the seriousness of the question, 'What are intellectuals for?' Recognising academic production as just another iterative moment in the reworking and challenging of conceptual *and* lived relationships, we have to devote attention to our own interventions as well as to those we purport to study. The D-word names and instantiates a globalising dynamic that 'we', as much as the speakers at the Kiboga ceremony, are both part of and are seeking to transform and rework. Development in its manifold editions has been the best-seller of the late twentieth century, a best-seller that we all inhabit, a best-seller read in many different ways and for many different ends. We have to recognise our own desires for 'progress', development, well-being. We can not help adding values, taking sides. Perhaps all we can do is to recognise the resonances that words carry with them. It is not possible to be both aware of the power of language and yet to dismiss the dynamics that our own words and idioms enact. Perhaps we cannot come up with a model for development, or post-development, without reflecting both on our reasons for so doing, and on its likely effects. In taking up this position, I again repeat the deconstructivist injunction to question only from within the objects that 'we cannot not wish to inhabit' (Spivak 1996).

I begin by bringing attention to the way issues of time and value are visible within the ethnographic text above. Whilst somewhat optimistic, there is a clear sense of the moral and economic possibilities held by the future - that enough 'development' will one day turn Kiboga into a prestigious and morally better place. The communitarian morality invoked is not a backward-looking one, indeed 'backwardness' is scorned, yet holding out the possibility for greater solidarity and social responsibility in a 'modern' world seems a reasonable and pragmatic expectation. It is this sense of engagement with the complexity and constraints of power that I find lacking in the academic literatures which try to predict the possible shape of a post-development era.

I take the literature on consumption as an example. Whilst Miller does not write directly about development, his unabashed celebration of consumption has enabled others (Fardon n.d., EIDOS 1997) to suggest that development's production-led focus is about to be replaced by a consumption-led dynamic. Using one example of his work (Miller 1995), I demonstrate the risks inherent in pursuing theoretical trends without attending to their possible political consequences. In a more recent text, Miller (1997) acknowledges that perhaps the pendulum has swung too far towards consumption studies, to the exclusion of related processes. This does not exonerate him from being partly responsible for the effects of his earlier positions.

The gradual intellectual abandonment of the labour theory of value (as if that was the totality of Marx's legacy), connected or not to the demise of communist political systems, has led to celebratory dances on Marx's grave, and justifications of a theoretical focus on the anthropology of consumption. Ironically that leaves one with the commodity, that 'very queer thing', as Marx described it so presciently. But none of the ambivalences and differentials within Marx's own readings remain to haunt or disturb us in this new reading.⁵ Instead commodities are seen as transparent objects of desire and consumption. Miller (1995) makes the excited claim that the 'study of consumption and commodities may come to replace kinship as the core of anthropology.'

What sort of talking 'shop' is this new study of consumption? Marx gets little mention in Miller's work, and instead Miller's focus is on a different literature around objects and consumption (Mary Douglas and Marshall Sahlins). Miller may well be right to point out the absence of studies of consumption as indicative both of a romantic anthropological view of 'money as the root of all evil,' and of academics' own consumption desires producing 'ideological blindspots', but that hardly justifies his own wilful rewriting of theoretical and political histories. No mention is made of Lukacs' important description of the commodity 'penetrating society in all its aspects...and remoulding society in its image (Lukacs 1971, 85). Nor of Debord's discussion of the commodity 'completing its colonisation of social life' (Debord 1994). The important writings of Jean Baudrillard could also have been explored, rather than being dismissed as the product of the 'guru of postmodernism'. (Miller 1995, 143).

What is Miller 'for'? He sets out to 'provide a general theory of consumption'....'emphasising the potentially active role of consumers in resocialising commodities' (1995, 143). Defining consumption as 'an increasing reliance on commodities produced by others' (ibid 143), or further as 'people using goods that they did not produce and that they only experience as consumers' (ibid, 156), he tends to close down exploration of both terms, content merely to explore 'consumer...struggles to create social and cultural identities' (ibid, 156). Whilst aware of the Maussian legacy that demonstrates the links between commodities and gifts, he does not allow for the possibility that at any given time there may be many contrasting (and fetishising) ways in which objects mediate people's relationships. Whilst the revitalisation of material cultural studies is important, the exclusions from this focus have enabled some theorists of globalisation

⁵ Spivak's (1996) provocative re-reading of Marx's *Capital*, entitled 'Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value', argues for the impossibility of finally defining what 'value' is, and seems an important counter-point to Miller's approach.

to uncritically celebrate a voluntarist and homogenised consumption society, as Parkin (1993) points out.

A rather different approach to thinking about what might replace 'development' is found within the radical 'anti-development' position. This position is best characterised by the contributors to Wolfgang Sachs's 'The Development Dictionary' (1992) and Rahnema's 'Post-Development Reader' (1997). Outspoken and politically principled, contributors to both books dismiss 'development' as the failed mid-century arrogance of Western humanism. As Sachs concludes, 'Development, as a way of thinking, is on its way out' (1997, 292). Combining a revolutionary populism (cf Watts 1995) with a focus on the liberatory potentials of what have become called NSMs - New Social Movements (Escobar 1995, Guha 1989), the contributors make an unbridled attack on the dominant global financial and political institutions. Goodies and baddies are clearly drawn up against each other in this uni-polar model of power, with a celebration of the 'hidden transcripts' of resistance (Scott 1997) and of the moral potential that small-scale subsistence communities represent. Whilst many write from a highly politicised anti-colonialist position (eg Shiva 1989, Nandy 1994), the overall combination of exoticism, humanist utopianism and spirituality (eg Helena Norberg-Hodge plus Vaclav Havel plus Mahatma Gandhi in Rahnema 1997) weakens the impact of the books. In many ways calling for the exact opposite of the speechifiers in Kiboga, the contributors hardly seem to engage with the expectations and desires of, for example, rural Ugandan market-traders. There is no recognition of the huge desires for material well-being and financial security. Whilst providing important and much-needed challenges to the utopian excesses of development thinking itself, the lack of recognition of the immanence of power in *all* social relations weakens the theoretical *and* political impacts of both texts. As Watts (1995, 60) notes, 'some of the claims are so ambitious that they do not look too different from the totalising and essentialist visions of the old sort'.

In conclusion, I would argue that attempts to visualise a 'post-development' era face the problems of their own relation to current inequalities of power. Whether predicting a voluntarist world of consumption or a utopic egalitarianism, any theorisation has to justify its own position for, within, or against a current political moment. As Rangan (1996, 22) concludes in a study of livelihood struggles in Uttaranchal, Northern India:

It seems ironic that contemporary scholarly voices should clamour for a 'post-development' era, just when voices from the margins - so celebrated in discourses of difference and alternative culture - are demanding their rights to greater access to a more generous idea of development.

I suggest that, instead of a needed 'liberation of anthropology from the space mapped by the development encounter' (Escobar 1995, 17), we have no choice but to work within the power relations that the 'development' word puts into place, no choice but to engage with its multiple imaginaries and teleologies that the discourse enunciates, no choice but to recognise the 'productive and risky burden of paleonymy that must be persistently resisted as it enables practice' (Spivak 1996, 148). It is this engagement with the practices and signifiers of 'development' that I attempted in this chapter.

The last word goes to people who did not attend the opening ceremony, who had no time or money to travel to this centre of political patronage and watch such a developmental spectacle. I do not wish to fetishise 'voices from the margins' or presume a hierarchy of oppression, for, as Bhabha notes, 'there is no given community or body of people whose inherent, radical historicity emits the right signs' (1994, 27). Yet a rather different perspective comes from a discussion with a group of women small-holders in the hills south of Kiboga some weeks later. Their concerns were at once pragmatic and principled. '*Obwavu butulumye. Tuli wansi nnyo nnyo, wano mu kyalo (Poverty has crippled us. We are really behind, here in the village)*' commented one, as she described the constant search for money and school fees, her leaking roof and childrens' tattered clothes, and the lack of governmental and overseas help. Once again the development hierarchy was invoked, and despite my protestations I was seen as a possible channel for 'outside' support. As so often happened in my presence, the women unanimously praised development's potential and called for more assistance, seeing me as a possible source of financial backing.

The conversation continued. Given their calls for political action to bring more development, I asked what they thought of politicians. A different woman spoke up. Whilst wanting more 'development' to be brought to the area, she was much more bluntly outspoken about politicians, a contradiction borne perhaps of despair and frustration. Inevitably each must have had different experiences of political and developmental initiatives, some positive, some less so. This last woman did not mince her words. '*Bo, abannyafuuzi, balimba limba abantu. Tewali kintu kyonna kye balina okugasa abantu*' (*Those ones, those ones involved in politics, they just lie and confuse people. There is absolutely nothing at all that they do for people*).

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN ON TOP?

CONTESTING TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS IN KAMPALA.

Abstract

How is the new sense of a globalising modern age gendered in Uganda? Whether because of the affirmative-action policies of government, 'gender-sensitive' practices of numerous NGOs (non-governmental organisations), or media representations, people are inevitably compelled to renegotiate relationships between men and women, along with their understandings and performances of masculinities and feminities. In this chapter I argue that trans-national discourses on gender, and popular reactions to them, are equally central to this contestation. In opposition to the gender-oriented development projects of many non-governmental and governmental agencies, I show how the Kampala media construct these gender and feminist issues as a Euro-American and aggressively 'anti-Ugandan' agenda, often mobilising a cultural nationalism in response. Drawing on the transcripts of interviews with Kampala professionals and discussions within Makerere, I demonstrate how middle-class men and women are not only positioned by this discourse, but are also contesting and appropriating it in order to forge a sense of being both modern *and* Ugandan. In so doing, I suggest that masculinities and feminities are being re-located within this larger globalising political context, allowing for reflective (if fraught) reformulations of gender relations.

Women on top?

Contesting transnational feminisms in Kampala

'If gender is not an artifice to be taken on and off at will and, hence not an effect of choice, how are we to understand the constitutive and compelling status of gender norms without falling into the trap of cultural determinism'.

Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter

'Building the Nation'

International Women's Day headline, *New Vision*, 7th March 1995

Introduction

The setting: Kampala, early 1995. The topic: Sex. Sexuality, sexual conflicts and sexual violence dominate the media and everyday conversation. The latest rumours of gender trouble surround those women who supposedly pour acid over unfaithful husbands, or incite their lovers to do likewise. Often such stories appear first in the newspapers, but are then exaggerated in conspiratorial gossip by men in late-night drinking spots. Other headlines in the press play up the theme: '*Beware men! Law on wife rape is coming*',¹ '*Wife beating: a way of escape*',² '*The male instrument of domination*'³ and '*How to deal with his infidelity*.'⁴ Such dilemmas also cram the leisure columns and new 'Gender' sections of the papers, avidly read by many.⁵ Tensions seem high, perhaps due to the trans-national gender reverberations caused by the Lorena Bobbitt case, which many have heard about.

1 The Monitor, February 15th 1995.

2 The New Vision, May 2nd 1995.

3 The Monitor, May 8th 1995.

4 The Monitor, February 27th 1995.

5 Since I was in Uganda this phenomenon has snowballed into a plethora of 'life-style' magazines, with names like 'Chic', 'Chics', 'Bella' and 'Secrets'. Ostensibly marketed as women's magazines, the male contributors and now explicitly erotic genre of much of the writing suggests a rapid change in attitudes to sexuality and the female body in public culture, even in the space of two years.

Most intriguing of all - for this reader at least - was a gossip column one Friday.⁶ The writer perfectly captured male anxieties about their social position in years to come. It suggests that the Lorena Bobbitt case symbolises women's growing confidence and independence. Combining that with the inevitable commodification of everyday Kampalan life, he uses the genre of science fiction to create a potent fantasy of a frighteningly emasculated future:

Let's get back to the future. The year is 1998. Kampala looks only a bigger version of its present self except for one latest addition - the billboard. The advertising craze is everywhere but one particular billboard catches the reader's eye. It goes something like this:

Men, don't get caught! Protect yourself now. Thousands of irate women are contemplating some vicious action the next time you make unwanted sexual advances. Inquire now about our low cost organ protection plan. We register your genitals and label them with your Genital Identification Number (GIN). Remember the instrument you save could be your own!

Sounds fantastic huh? The truth of the matter is since Lorena Bobbitt accomplished that deed without a name, the English language got a new verb and women gained new courage. Right now I'm looking for a sexy young man who isn't worried!

This column captures the apparently combustible form of contemporary gender-politics within Kampala's public culture.⁷ This might well be the case, but paradoxically it will be the politics of gender consensus that I explore in this chapter. In particular I am interested in the increasing trans-national flow of ideas, images and discourses about gender and feminism. I will argue that, whilst these trans-national feminisms (Grewal and Kaplan 1994) can be used to stoke everyday gender conflicts, more significant in Uganda were the attempts to dampen down such inflammatory speculations. Certainly the types of gender awareness promoted by UN, state and non-governmental agencies have created and visibly politicised the 'woman' signifier. At the same time there seemed to be a strong consensus that the specific histories and cultural idioms of a Ugandan and African context made the antagonisms associated with such 'Western' models totally inappropriate. Instead most people supported a consensual and apparently non-conflictual model of change. Yet even this model was subtly manipulated and appropriated by different people to serve rather different agendas, as were the associated constructions of 'Ugandan-ness' that it depended on. I hope in this paper to describe the style and consequence of this subversion

6 Robert Kasozi, 'Campus Survivor', in *New Vision*, 12th March 1995.

7 My understanding of this term lies closer to the powerful formulation of Appadurai and Breckenridge (1995) than to a Habermasian notion of the public sphere.

and negotiation of supposed 'consensus politics', and its impact on popular understandings of the 'nation'.

In doing so, it will become clear that the conflictual character of this zone of public debate is not only to do with the 'contradictions between national sites and transnational processes' (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995, 5), but also the way that both relate to the realm of more intimate struggles over gendered subjectivities. The notion of 'public culture', broadly interpreted, has been a powerful one in indicating 'an arena of cultural contestation in which modernity can become a diversely appropriated experience' (ibid, 4). Yet it also shapes and is shaped by intense everyday encounters with gender politics, whether in the workplace, kitchen or bedroom. I am particularly concerned to note the representations and appropriations of these intimate zones within conversations and debates. It is there that normative discourses on gendered power get reiterated and reinterpreted, with consequences for masculinities and for equality.

Yet I also set myself a larger task. In documenting such a politicised issue, I want to mark my own commitment to a 'richer, better account of a world, in order to live in it well and in critical, reflexive relation to our own as well as others' practices of domination and the unequal parts of privilege and oppression that make up all positions' (Haraway 1991, 187). The dominations of 'race', 'gender', 'sexuality' and 'class' matter, and none of us is innocent. As throughout this thesis, I cannot deny my own perspectives and positionings, but equally I recognise the complexity and difficulty of a 'politics of location' (Rich 1986, Mani 1989, Frankenberg and Mani 1993, Grewal and Kaplan 1994). The researcher's positioning in multiple and often cross-cutting fields of power is never self-evident or fixed, but an awareness of 'location' is critical to making any sort of intervention.

In addressing gendered forms of power, there are several different institutional and societal settings within which I have to position myself. One is an unrepentant Euro-American discourse which seems to be celebrating masculinity in a deliberately provocative backlash (Faludi, 1991) against feminism. Another is that of a metropolitan academy which is often still unreflective of its own political positioning, especially around issues of representation and the research intervention itself. Ugandan debates cannot be separated from these other issues, but nor can they be reduced to them. More complicated still are the racialised dynamics of any attempt to engage as a European male with Ugandan debates over 'gender' as a site of contention, whilst recognising that doing so may misunderstand or efface other struggles. There are no easy

answers, and I try constantly to 'unlearn my privilege as my loss' (Spivak 1996).

This paper is part of a continuing engagement, and earlier versions have been presented several times to academics in Uganda, always provoking an amused and vocal response! Throughout this paper I try to keep questions over situation and location central, without presuming that these are fixed, or provide answers in themselves (Kaplan 1996). Whom can I speak with and about, and what might the effects be? One way of doing this is to strive for the partial, accountable and modest knowledges that Haraway (1991) advocates. Another is not to take myself too seriously!

Trans-national Feminisms:

Whether discussing American academic fashions or Ugandan cultural politics, one faces the same issue - that a term like 'gender' has all sorts of differing and conflicting meanings and connotations. In social theory it might be a highly refined concept, always subject to the latest deconstruction or reformulation. In UN planning documents, NGO rhetoric or Women's Conference programmes the term has a far more immediate resonance. In the male world of Kampalan bars, when the term is spat derogatorily into one's beer, '*this gender thing..katonda wange!*' (my god), it has yet another significance. In each case there is a politics behind its use. I am less interested in the meanings thus mobilised than in their possible consequences. Given the flow of words and actions across them, these spheres cannot be seen as separate worlds. I therefore attend to the appropriation of this same 'keyword' for rather different political agendas, exploring popular cultural interpretations of the debate.

There are risks that face anyone trying to write about oppositional reinterpretations of trans-national feminisms, quite apart from those facing a young, middle-class, white European man doing so. These include unproblematic, usually Western, assumptions of 'universal sisterhood', but also the appropriation and simplification of very different histories of oppression and struggle merely for the purposes of comparison. Alexander and Mohanty (1997, xv), in an important new feminist collection, capture this dilemma well:

One of the effects of globalisation over the last two decades has been a new visibility of women's issue on the world stage. Witness the large numbers of international conferences on topics like violence against women, women's health, reproductive politics, and 'population control'. At the same time feminism has been quantified for consumption within the global marketplace of ideas (we call this freemarket feminism). We take issue with this freemarket feminism in crafting our visions of democratic

futures.

I reveal my own solidarities in the title of this chapter, both recognising and challenging the dominant conception of 'gender' found in the practices of UN agencies, together with many international and Ugandan NGOs. Words and phrases like 'feminism', 'gender equality', 'affirmative action' and 'women's emancipation' have entered every aspect of Kampalan public culture. Yet people have thoroughly contested and reinterpreted such words and their meanings. My choice of the term 'trans-national feminisms' in my title comes from Grewal and Kaplan's (1994) insightful use of the term. Wanting to move beyond global-local and centre-periphery debates in writing about flows of information and ideas in a postmodern world, they focus on 'trans-national' processes. Asking 'what kinds of feminist practices engender theories that resist or question modernity?',⁸ they criticise certain forms of feminism for their 'willing participation in modernity with all its colonial discourses and hegemonic First World formations that wittingly or unwittingly lead to the oppression and exploitation of many women' (ibid, p2). This leads them to suggest that, 'if the world is structured by transnational economic and cultural asymmetries, locating feminist practices within those structures becomes imperative' (ibid, p3).

Whilst agreeing with their theoretical and political objectives, I would suggest that there are ambivalences within the term 'transnational' and 'feminism' that their positive interpretation chooses not to acknowledge. After all, are not 'freemarket feminisms' also transnational? Admittedly, their focus is on egalitarian transnational feminist alliances, but even then every moment of opportunity is also a moment of risk. I choose not to give the term a positive valence, but instead to look at how these transnational discourses on gender are being taken up or challenged within this specific Ugandan context. In doing so, there is equally a danger of implicitly shoring up the 'nation' form. By emphasising the 'boundary maintenance' practices that Kampala folk adopt to justify their own political viewpoints, I hope to show the continual practices of constructing and engendering the nation (Natarajan 1994, McClintock 1995).

With these challenges in mind, it becomes ever harder to try and disentangle the diverse institutional legacies and intellectual histories of transnational feminisms. There is the constant risk of falling into what Alexander and Mohanty (1997, xx) call the 'firmly embedded notion of

⁸ Interestingly they reject 'modernity' as a racially and colonially coded term in favour of 'postmodernity.' Throughout this thesis I have instead tried to attend to and demonstrate a sense of being 'modern', seeing it as a term we all have to negotiate and live within.

the originary status of Western feminism'. They insist that one cannot 'simply position Third-World feminism as a reaction to gaps in Western feminism' (ibid). I have great respect for their choice to instead map the paths by which 'feminist communities, organisations and movements call up and reflect upon moments in their own collective histories and struggles for autonomy' (ibid, xvi), particularly from within a 'paradigm of decolonisation'. As their contributors show, there are long histories of women's organising forming part of anti-colonial independence movements (Heng 1997, Alexander 1997). I do not wish to impose a singular Eurocentric narrative over the legacies of these much earlier social movements in different parts of the world. I do however think the history of feminist organising within international institutions both before and during colonialism is also an important one to tell, both for its limitations as much as its potentials. I use the word 'international' and not 'transnational' to signify its 'Western' provenance in an earlier historical moment. It is a history that seems to have shaped - along with diverse other histories of struggle - subsequent feminist contestations within the UN movement, so shaping the transnational discourses that Ugandans are having to negotiate today.

These early histories of women's internationalist organising, together with more recent histories of feminist activism within the UN system, have been written at length (Steinstra 1994, Snyder and Tadesse 1995, Wieringa 1995, Pietila and Vickers 1994). Whilst I am aware of the dangers of searching for 'original' moments, such narratives often trace back the first of such attempts to a meeting between American and British women who had been excluded from the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840 (Steinstra 1994), an exclusion which led eight years later to the writing of the 'Declaration of Sentiments' at the first women's rights convention held in Seneca falls (Wieringa 1995). From these early contacts the first suffrage organisations such as the ICW (International Congress of Women) developed, flourishing in the prescient and hopeful internationalism of the beginning of this century. There are important and valuable landmarks to be recorded here, including the first International Congress of Women held in the Hague in 1915.

From there, Steinstra (1994) documents the involvement of women's groups in the drafting of the Covenant of the League of Nations, struggling to establish a precedent for attention to gender in such protocols. The same battles were fought whilst lobbying over the drafting of the United Nations charter. Despite the predominantly Eurocentric constituency and focus of this narrative, it is an important history to recount, for it encouraged the subsequent flowering of women's internationalist organising of all kinds in the 1960s and 70s. This is recorded in accounts of the genealogies and links between the four UN Conferences on Women held over

the last 25 years, from Mexico City (1975), via Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985), to Beijing (1995) (Pietila and Vickers 1994, Snyder 1995).

With the increasing influence of such internationalist groupings came increasing dissent. With the meetings still predominantly dominated by white European and American women, attempts by such 'Western' feminists in the 1970s to link women's organising with more theoretical insights led to an increasing distrust of feminism, envisioning it as a new form of cultural imperialism. Opposition to a 1976 Conference in Wellesley was well-expressed, aiming 'to destroy the myth that the mere fact of being women will unite us' (El Sadaawi et al 1978). This critique has been well-developed in relation to academic feminism, and Mohanty (1991) points out the way feminist writings 'discursively colonise the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/representing a composite singular "third world woman" '(ibid, 53). Numerous other writers have powerfully argued similar positions, often from within 'First World' academic settings (Johnson-Odim 1991, Spivak 1987, Collins 1991, Sandoval 1990, Lugones and Spelman 1995, Alexander and Mohanty 1997).

A different story is told by some feminists writing in or about Africa. Snyder and Tadesse argue that the 'global feminist movement created at Mexico in 1975 has strong roots in the African independence movements' (1995, p.6). They comprehensively describe the institutional history of the Pan-African Women's Organisation, as well as numerous regional gatherings explicitly intended to mobilise women. Histories of African womens' organisations such as AAWORD (Association of African Women for Research and Development) and DAWN (Development Alternatives for Women for a New era) reveal a constant challenge to dominant Euro-American feminist representations of African issues (Sebag n.d.). More recently Owomoyela (1994) is still critical of contemporary feminist depictions of Africa, whilst Ogunyemi (1985) questions the label itself, arguing for the category of 'womanism' rather than 'feminism' to better represent the aspirations of African women. Yet, despite this critique, Mikell (1995) insists on the sweeping term 'feminism' in describing the emergence of a new African women's movement through the pragmatic struggle for political representation, despite the fact that only a few South African women leaders actually use the term. Her ascriptive use of the term seems to reinscribe an unproductive power dynamic. Certainly the 'feminist' label would be strongly denied by most Ugandan women, though some of those writing about the role of women in social transformation (Kiguli 1995, Karungi 1995, Ssenabulya 1995) do affirm the importance of pragmatic political change.

Academic writings on feminism have therefore to be located within larger asymmetries of economic and cultural power. Postcolonial critiques of 'Western' intellectual feminisms are necessary and important, but one also has to recognise that academic practices are but one part of a diverse history of women's organising. Some feminist critics are even sceptical about the continuing value of these international meetings and conferences, the latest being that held in Beijing in September 1995. Can they really speak for and about the huge diversity of women's oppressions? Spivak (1996) expresses this most powerfully, suggesting that the Beijing conference was merely global theatre, 'staged to show participation between the North and the South, the latter constituted by Northern discursive mechanisms' (ibid, 2). She attacks the assumption that 'altogether salutary debate in the conference will have necessary consequences in the lifeworld of oppressed and super-exploited women' (ibid, 5).

As 'Beijing' became such an iconic keyword in Uganda during 1995, I want to explore both the positive and negative consequences for Ugandan gender politics of being positioned within such transnational conversations. How was 'Beijing', and all it stood for, drawn upon, upheld or disputed in Ugandan public cultures? I do this in two ways. First I explore some of the media presentations of the debates, and then detail the equally diverse opinions of individuals within the different social groups that make up middle-class Kampala. In both cases I argue that their public and private negotiations constantly rework understandings of 'development', the 'nation' and being 'modern', and in doing so have important material consequences.

Media Agendas/Genders, Kampala 1995

I want to begin by discussing the role of the mass media, and in particular the newspapers, in reproducing and inflecting more transnational gender ideologies. But it is best to start by situating the contemporary debate within a more localised history of women's organisations in Uganda. The role of women in anti-colonial movements and other civil wars notwithstanding, the first formal organisation to promote 'women's concerns' and social change was the multi-racial Uganda Council of Women, formed in 1946. Yet, as Kwesiga (1995) notes, after independence there was very little support for women's organising. Kalungi (n.d.) argues that Amin opportunistically promoted women's rights when it suited him, but then subsequently banned women's organisations. Later, the Ugandan National Council for Women was discredited by being perceived as an organ of Obote's Ugandan People's Congress (UPC). This history would seem to distinguish Obote and Amin from Museveni. Many women fought for the National Resistance Army during the liberation war of the early 1980s. On the formation of the NRM

government in 1986, Museveni ensured women's political representation by establishing the position of 'Secretary for Women's Affairs' at every level of the Resistance Council local government hierarchy, from parish to national level. No matter that this secured him the female vote, and often led to the presumption that the other 10 posts on each council were for men; it enabled women to have representation at every level of government. Immediately there were 39 women representatives in the National Resistance Council, one from each district of the country, and a powerful force for change (Tripp, 1994). Such positive discrimination resulted in women parliamentarians making up 17% of the legislative body, along with similar proportions in other elite Government and civil service positions. This number has increased further with the most recent parliamentary elections in 1996, and the Vice-President is now a woman.

An equally important dynamic is the role of the UN and many other 'development' organisations in thoroughly reshaping Uganda's public sphere in the last ten years. Women's organisations are not new to Uganda, as both Kwesiga (1995) and Mwaka (1996) point out, but their visibility and power have increased dramatically. Massive funding for research and development interventions related to 'women's issues' has resulted in numerous research projects, revealed by the resultant voluminous bibliographies (Musoke et al. 1994, Mutibwa 1986). Whilst much of this merely objectifies and situates women as symbols of the nation's future, it also brings 'gender' into the popular consciousness. There are also endless 'gender' workshops, training courses in gender awareness and conferences, all with the inevitable 'per diems'. As one jealous (male) social scientist academic commented to me in an interview:

Feminism? You're talking about all this money pouring into feminism? It is only an industry, a business for academicians, for people who understand it. Now men have learnt the trick. Whenever you write a proposal, you write about gender to get the money.

Gender may be a 'business', but it is one that has irreversibly politicised and made visible the public zone of debate over equality in Uganda. I would suggest that this has been most effectively achieved within a thriving - if male-dominated - Ugandan print media. So I turn to describe this media sector, to show how they portrayed 'Beijing' and gender relations more generally during 1995.

Walking along Kampala's streets, one immediately notes the sheer number and variety of newspapers on sale, often displayed across several metres of pavement. One count in 1994 revealed that there were 22 papers,⁹ and the market has boomed since then. In 1995 the pro-Government daily

⁹ 'Once thriving media under pressure in Uganda', *The EastAfrican*, 5th December 1994.

newspaper 'New Vision' had the biggest circulation, but many preferred the proudly independent and determinedly populist thrice-weekly 'The Monitor.' The investigative 'Uganda Confidential' (modelled on Africa Confidential) could always be relied on to uncover corruption or vice of some kind, whilst several monthly magazines attempted a more reflective or long-term perspective. This does not include the several daily papers printed in vernacular languages, with the Luganda papers *Ngabo* (Shield) and *Bukedde* (What's New?) being some of the best selling. It was an ever-changing market, with new publications launching and folding with predictable regularity.

The winds of change in Africa today are those of neo-liberalism and deregulation, and it is no surprise that several new private radio and television stations were set up around Kampala during the early 1990s, with more planned. Yet neo-liberalism only goes so far, and it was only in the newspapers that one found the critical reflections, political satire and acute social commentary that a burgeoning politically-aware readership both desired and could afford. Part of the popularity of such papers came from the combination of important news stories with rather explicit and wickedly funny gossip columns. Some of the contributors wrote only occasionally, and so with a freshness and immediacy deriving more from the ironies of Kampala life than from a long journalistic training. A relaxed office culture meant that Kampala's white-collar workers found time to read several newspapers daily, whilst others would just stand at news-stalls to peer at the headlines. At the rural school where I taught, even a three-day old paper would be carefully split between four or five teachers in the staffroom, and then circulated between them until each had read every page fully.

The result was a highly politicised and aware reading public, and one that was likely to supplement and share that knowledge during everyday discussions in taxis, offices and bars. Of course, this was only a small section of the Ugandan population, given perhaps 50% textual illiteracy (Government of Uganda 1994), and the geographical and monetary exclusions of many rural farmers from such a public sphere. But the changing attitudes of Kampala's chattering classes, and in particular the University elites, both students and lecturers, are central to this dynamic, and I make no excuse for focusing on them.

I start with the most widely read, though perhaps the less provocative, of the national papers. The 'New Vision' began a weekly four-page insert '*Women's Vision*' in 1994, a clever mix of the personal and political. Beauty tips, an agony aunt, legal advice, a health section, and fictionalised diaries were mixed in with provocative columns on gender politics. Most revealing were these personal diaries, one purportedly male, one female, providing an ironic 'homespun' commentary on sexuality and the gender conflicts or political issues of the day. The lead articles, on such things as impotence, sexual

harassment, bridewealth and teenage sexuality, seemed to break unspoken taboos. Headlines such as 'Career or babies?'¹⁰ or 'Should husbands be present at labour?'¹¹ hint at the issues being engaged. It was a mix that paralleled many Euro-American women's magazines, and indeed it occasionally seemed to draw on them for ideas. That said, some of the responses in the article about male roles during labour were less than sympathetic. One provided an interesting defence of Ugandan cultural mores:

No, it is not good. A man should never see a woman in her times of labour. We must stop the habit of copying everything we hear from the Bazungu (white people).

The Monitor also had a 'Gender Issues' page, adopting an even more controversial style in the quest for readers, with articles defending homosexuality, exploring infidelity, and even speculating about whether women could ever enjoy sex, given the pressure on them to not say no.¹² One memorable piece was headlined 'Is an orgasm a tiger or a donkey-ride?'¹³ Such articles would often lead to angry responses in the paper's letter pages. One picture, a mildly explicit photograph of a Zairean dancer with a slit skirt on stage with her band, was sub-titled 'Could this be another form of exploitation of women?'¹⁴ It led to a vituperative correspondence about pornography and the paper's intention to titillate its readers. One male respondent blurted, 'If emancipation of the 'modern' woman is what that picture portrays, they still have a long way to go.'¹⁵ Yet the most sensible response was a letter from three women which pointed out the hypocrisy of those complaining about the picture, pointing out that there were 'hundreds of people watching her live...adults, children, VIPs...they cheered this woman's indecent exposure, they screamed with ecstasy at her antics, they never screamed at her to stop'.¹⁶ Intriguingly, the letter finished with an appeal:

Let us not water down womens' cause by picking up the jargon which is doing the rounds in the Western world, and repeating it here. Words like 'trivialisation, stereotyping.' Our contexts are totally different from the world of the Bazungu.

10 'Career or Babies' by Joan Smith, Women's Vision May 16th 1995.

11 'Should husbands be present at labour?' Patrick Luganda, June 6th 1995.

12 'Do Uganda women enjoy sex?' By Anna Mugisha, The Monitor, March 6th 1995.

13 'Is an orgasm a tiger or a donkey-ride' By Melody, The Monitor 28th August 1995.

14 The Monitor, 19th-21st September 1994.

15 'Hmm, so much for women's lib! Letter by Charles Birungi, The Monitor, Sept 30th 1994.

16 Letter by T.Kibalama, B Muwonge and A Atuhaire to The Monitor, Sept 30th, 1995.

I focus on this discursive boundary-maintenance around what counted as 'Ugandan' or 'African' women's issues throughout this chapter. It seems particularly visible when discussions of feminism are brought up. Many of the jokes and cartoons about *'this Beijing thing'* that filled the papers during the Forth World Conference on Women in September 1995 focused on the gap between the event and the Ugandan situation. The limits to women's emancipation were also being constantly disputed, particularly by male writers. *Kizito's Diary* makes this clear in one entry:

*Of all days, Laura (Kizito's wife) decides that she is going up-country to 'mobilise' rural women today. I do not even know if she was asking or just informing me. Now that they have a Vice-President they will no longer be content with just sitting on us, they will want to walk all over us till we are minced meat.*¹⁷

There are many such comments which draw upon discourses of 'development' and modernisation, if only to subsequently subvert them. Everywhere in the media, one would hear talk of the importance of *'community mobilisation'*, of *'participation in sustainable development'*. Yet such talk could be twisted, according to the situation. One example was a story headed *'Equal opportunity, not sexes'*, in which the female Managing Director of a large company explains how she believed not in the equality of the sexes, but rather in equal opportunities.¹⁸ This subtle linguistic distinction served both to distance herself both from the perceived radicalism of a 'Western' feminism, and yet still to make a strong pro-women statement. It was this careful boundary negotiation that some of the more forthright women politicians found harder to balance, resulting in their vilification as *'lesbians'* and *'castrators'* in the press and in masculine bar-room banter.

Some of the media topics could be guaranteed to produce an immediate response from male readers. One such issue in 1995 was the news of an impending government bill on marital rape, the source of much hilarious - and anxious - discussion in the press and on the streets. That this was also an issue in the U.K. at about the same time reveals a good deal about the power (and importance) of transnational feminist discourses. One of Uganda's most respected journalists, Charles Onyango-Obbo, wrote a rather tongue-in-cheek column. He pointed out that *'there are less than six countries in the world where if you had sex with your wife when she is, to use the*

17 Kizito's Diary, November 29th, 1994.

18 Jimmi Combe 'Equal Opportunities, not sexes' (says) MD. New Vision 8th March 1995.

wonderful expression, "not in the mood", she could haul you to court for rape'.¹⁹ He acknowledges that this will not go down well with Ugandan men, 'who think that once they have given their in-laws a few animals as bride-price, the wife is available to them to do with as they wish'. But he has a solution. 'The only way the male species can survive is to come up with a plan which makes it very difficult for the wives to say "No". That is simple, all we have to do is avoid doing the things that put wives and girlfriends off'. The rest of the article was taken up with suggestions for male personal hygiene, as if this were all that mattered. He ends with the importance of 'learning how to beg and persuade'.

Such articles, especially when written by such good journalists, provoked intense but contradictory feelings in me. Partly written in jest, they also revealed deep-seated male anxieties about their own fragile positions of authority. As a white person having to negotiate the deeply structuring dynamics of race and class in my research, I found it difficult to know how to take up a position that could understand, empathise and also engage Ugandan debates over masculinity. I soon realised that, whilst the masculinity characterised by Onyango-Obbo's article was commonplace, it was also class-specific; and that there were dissenting voices, especially amongst the lecturing elite who could afford a more accommodating stance, but also amongst the younger, more militant, and yet more vulnerable students. It was this dissension and debate that I try and bring out below.

In these negotiations with modernity, it was always intriguing to see the use made of recent news from the U.S. and Britain. News reports not only challenged Eurocentric perceptions, but also drew upon and exaggerated them in order to justify particular arguments. One report from London described one of the 'date rape' cases, so as to ridicule the whole debate, quoting the defendant as saying 'In the US, couples at some colleges have to sign forms before they kiss and cuddle'.²⁰ Given the constant flow of middle-class and working-class Ugandans in and out of Uganda, and the rather more uni-directional flow of news - the local FM radio station relays news from the BBC World Service, whilst American magazines such as Newsweek are available on Kampala's streets - it is no surprise that people have a great deal of information they can marshal to make their case about Uganda being different.

The Beijing conference itself was a media topic for several weeks, with many newspaper

19 Charles Onyango-Obbo, 'Beware men! Law on wife rape is coming' Monitor 15th February 1995.

20 A. Keto, 'When does a woman's 'no' mean 'no' Monitor 13th February 1995.

inches given over to the fact that the initial Government delegation had more men than women. Even after a reshuffle, twelve of the government's delegation were men. Given Uganda's exemplary 'Third World' status, there were many different sources of funding available for well-known women activists and academics to travel. Much of the reporting on the conference was superficial and sensationalist, as evidenced by one headline, *'White Women want lesbianism, Is it taboo to the African Girl?'*²¹ Journalists also pointed out that the conference seemed to have little relevance to a female underclass. One news vendor interviewed had this to say, *'Beijing ye wa?' (Where is Beijing?). 'Nze ebya Beijing sibimanyi. Ekisinga wano bwo'ndaba kwe kumalawo amawulire gange' (I don't know about Beijing. My immediate concern is to sell off my papers).* Another responded, *'Which part of Uganda is Beijing? Anyway, even if there is a bus going I can't afford the fare.'*²²

All too often in public discourse, men and even women would criticise the women's movement for its class-positioning. Articles asking about what elite women were doing for their less privileged sisters would often focus on the supposed lack of achievement of female members of parliament, arguing that *'elitist demands for representation and top jobs ignore the needs of women at the grassroots level'*.²³ One female columnist wrote despairingly, *'I fail to understand how the rural woman, who needs emancipation most, is going to be helped by the fact that a woman is Museveni's No.2'*.²⁴ This paradox was exemplified by Janet Museveni's keynote speech to the Beijing conference, entitled *'Free the rural woman'*.²⁵ It was not that people were unaware of the agendas pursued in the name of 'women'. On the contrary, many knew that it was a privileged signifier, full of potential for political machination and advancement. To quote one woman interviewed in the New Vision, *'I have heard about Beijing. But most women in Uganda are not yet educated; yet all those going are educated. Why don't they leave the Permanent Secretary behind and replace him with a rural woman. Even if she does not participate, her experience will teach us a lot, then we can copy what other women have done'*.²⁶ For most, the machinations of power around the 'gender' signifier were frustratingly obvious.

21 The Monitor, September 18th - 20th 1995.

22 'What on Earth is Beijing?' Womens Vision 22nd August 1995.

23 Simon Kaheru 'Can Women delegates deliver' New Vision 29th November 1994.

24 Jenny in 'The Monitor' 19th - 21st December 1994.

25 Janet Museveni 'Free the rural woman', Womens Vision, 10th October 1995.

26 The New Vision, 22nd August 1995.

Wife beating was another perennial issue in the press, and indeed in Ugandan life more generally. As always, opinion varied greatly. In 1995 many column inches were devoted to a seeming rash of cases of people pouring scalding water or acid over their spouses in retaliation for infidelity. There is a particular irony to the issue of hot water, for in one (masculinist?) version of Kiganda culture, the woman is traditionally expected to have hot water ready when the man comes home, to enable him to bathe! Predictably, opinions on this topic were often gendered. Women writers focused on male brutality, whilst a male columnist inflected the issue by focusing on men's growing anxiety.²⁷ He concludes, '*A number of men talked of fear that the extreme violence meted out to their unfaithful colleagues lately could develop into a Ugandan culture. Human beings learn by seeing and hearing. The more such acts occur in the country, the more likely they are to become ingrained into the system here*'. This was particularly ironic given its position next to another column full of horrific detail (and a graphic picture) of a woman victim of such an acid attack.²⁸ Yet views were never simply polarised across genders, and there were always dissenting opinions. One woman columnist was of the opinion that:

*Inferiority complexes at times lead to beatings. You may be better educated than him, earning more or better endowed with talents, but he is your husband...Many women, especially the 'emancipated' women might think this is being submissive. It is not. You are not a competitor, you are a partner in your marriage.*²⁹

This confusion is again revealed by one article in 'Women's Vision' which played up an aggrieved and threatened masculinity, headlined '*Women Harass Men!*'³⁰ One taxi-driver interviewed is quoted as saying, '*It is a shame that these days, women can stand up and shout at their husbands as if they are equals. It is because of this emancipation 'thing' that they too feel that they have to take an upper hand in the running of the family and subdue their husbands*'. And another man commented '*I don't know what is wrong with women these days. You go back to your home one evening hoping to find your supper ready, but instead hot water is poured on you. I simply cannot understand it*'. It was usually the men rather than the women talking up such conflicts.

Having outlined some depictions in the English-language press, it is worth mentioning that

27 Patrick Luganda 'Why the Violence', The New Vision 24th February 1995.

28 Elvis Basudde Kyeyune 'I am victim of man's brutality',
New Vision, 24th February 1995.

29 Harriet Nalusiba 'Wife beating: a way of escape' New Vision 2nd May 1995.

30 Women's Vision 10th October 1995.

in the vernacular press (at least, in the Luganda papers) such contentious issues were usually approached in a more roundabout and more conservative way. Papers such as Bukedde and Ngabo also made less space for popular culture - though the former recently started a column called '*Munnakibuga Omuyaaye*' ('Dude about town') written by *Rasta Falia* (Rasta Lad) in '*Luyaayi*', a Kampala street dialect mixing Luganda, Swahili and English. The column exudes a laddish heterosexual masculinity, full of references to 'chicks' and 'babes'. Articles in the vernacular papers directly addressing gender issues usually get put on the pages entitled *Ebya'bakyala* (Women's Things), ensuring that the topics get construed as of female concern only. I have also to take into account the different geographical, class and age readership distribution of the vernacular press, making many suspicious of many of the symbols of urban middle-class modernity .

My choice to begin by discussing the Ugandan media was not a presumption about its discursive power to interpellate subjectivities or manufacture consent. Indeed theoretical debates around the media in Euro-American contexts often need to be rethought before being applied elsewhere. This is especially so in Uganda, given much of the media's fledgling status and the negotiation of its ability to ensure state accountability through a strong and vigilant public culture. My point here has been to show that 'gender' is now very much an arena of material and discursive contestation in Uganda, and that the diversity of journalistic views expressed in newspapers has contributed to its continuing politicisation.

I am not suggesting that this issue of 'women's emancipation' is one totally new to Uganda. Rather what seems new is the way that it is imagined and constructed, and I think the media's role in circulating stories of encounters with 'Western' feminisms has a good deal to do with this. Even this encounter has been around for a while, as one senior woman executive recalled in a New Vision interview, noting the jokes that were made about the 'men's year' that was to follow the 'woman's year' in 1975. But the increasing inter-relatedness of and dependence on a globalising economy seems to make the accompanying discourses ever more visible, and the media are directly implicated. I would further suggest that 'news from elsewhere' is made more powerful by the way that it is now being reported and written about by Ugandans living in London, Washington and New York. The Ugandan communities in these places are confident and well-established, with enough journalists writing for the Kampalan press to ensure that news from the diaspora communities, together with a Ugandan spin on Euro-American popular culture, is constantly filtering back to Uganda.

Talking Gender, Kampala 1995

In this section I shift from media depictions of feminist issues to their discussion and interpretation by Kampala's elite. I immediately find myself in even more contested terrain. One of my first experiences of the strength of feeling amongst male Makerere students on this topic was during a debate organised in a hall of residence, entitled *'Women liberation struggles in Uganda pose a great danger to National development'*. Few women dared attend, and those who did were treated to the performance of a misogyny which pulled few punches. One after another, male students stood up to accuse women politicians of manipulating rural women for their own gain, and for seeing women's liberation as consisting solely of men's castration and lesbianism (this latter comment was a gross misreading of a comment made by Miria Matembe, a pro-women parliamentarian, about male rapists). One male student dismissed all women activists as *'a clique of oppressive, incompetent and inefficient women with no clear objective towards national development..they spend a lot of time making noise, moving around misinforming people'*. Whenever a female student attempted to speak, male students simply heckled or jeered, shouting *'Malaaya'* (Prostitute) or *'1.5'*.³¹ Student fun perhaps, but also a deeply unedifying spectacle.

My first reaction to such a degrading performance was one of righteous anger, an intense desire to intervene. Yet my location luckily prevented me from doing so, and subsequent calmer reflection led me to think about how to interpret my emotions, channelling them in finding an appropriate way to respond. This entailed recognising the axes of a number of different power dynamics - not only my position within the race and gender politics of European academia, but also the importance of understanding the particularities of Ugandan gender conflicts. That said, there can be no attempt to stand back, to presume some sort of spurious academic neutrality, for my very presence as a researcher instantiates a long history of global economic and political inequalities. One can no longer opt out by invoking difference. The question instead has to be *where* and *when* one can position oneself within a political dynamic. Given that I was always being positioned by my skin colour whenever the issue of 'Ugandan-ness' arose, I found responding very difficult.

Any attempt seemed most appropriate in Makerere, a university partly modelled on Oxbridge, which has long been the elite and occasionally detached centre of Uganda's

³¹ '1.5' is the difference in the number of A level 'points' between genders required for entry into Makerere University. It is used by men to argue that female students are not up to their standard.

intellectual life (Sichermann 1995). It was a place in which I spent much time, a place in which the power dynamics were not unfamiliar. In what follows, I draw upon a number of interviews with Makerere academics carried out with my co-researcher Richard Ssewakiryanga, and also from many conversations with students. We even used the opportunity of a Makerere conference to present the lecturers' and professors' own views back to them, demonstrating the various ways men bolstered and defended their masculinities against a perceived 'feminist' threat (Ssewakiryanga and Mills, n.d.). In this section I want to focus specifically on people's symbolic invocations of 'Ugandan-ness' as a response to the questions posed by gender politics. Whilst touching also on issues of modernity, tradition, and much else besides, I suggest that these masculinities centrally relied on a form of cultural nationalism for support. Hence the importance of contestations over just what counts as 'Ugandan' and, more crucially still, as 'modern and Ugandan'. The views of academics are intriguing here. More than most they are aware of the dynamics of feminist politics in Europe and America. They are also an influential group of people within Ugandan society, given their elite pedagogical positions. Some even teach 'gender' as an academic topic.

I begin with the views of one young sociologist, who eloquently talked about the topic of gender using an erudite academic language, as if reciting his lecture notes. I should add that the interviews were carried out in peoples' offices, so we were very much situated as students! He attempted to define Uganda in contradistinction to feminism, arguing that:

Most countries in the third world are still traditional, and not yet modernised. There is this fear amongst some men who think that women are going to be on top. Most of the theories we use are from Europe, take Marx, Engels, feminism, psychology, but there is even confusion within Europe, what with Madonna going naked and lesbianism, which we may not yet accommodate. I would say that the idea of feminism was not part and parcel of the Uganda thing, it is something that has been brought in. When you go back to America you see women doing all sorts of things in business etc.

Metaphors were a handy way of depoliticising this process :

We have the feeling that these external forces are overpushing themselves, so that there may be problems of absorption. Therefore we need to domesticate the issue, to own it.

In many of our interviews, knowing the ability of academics to hide behind long words, we deliberately tried to ask more personal questions about peoples' views on gender. In the case of this sociologist it backfired. He continued, '*changes (in gender relations) have to begin in the atomic arena, in the family, not in schools, because I have come to know gender just when I completed my BA, so now how would you expect me to change all of a sudden*'. He was very aware of the opportunities that the whole gender business gave academics, for he went on, '*If we*

are to get donations for gender projects from donor countries, England and America, day and night, and then we don't trickle down our own skills and experiences to local people, then is it an awakening? We are the ones who live with gender projects, who sleep with them (sic), and this wasn't meant to be, but this is how elites usually do it, going quickly to the rural areas to do their research before rushing back to city'. Given the academic narratives through which some of the discussions often unfolded, such moments of self-reflection were rare and valuable.

A lecturer in the philosophy department was less compromising. He talked about a paper that he had written on the 'Negative aspects of the gender perspective'. He presented it in a conflictual way, '*Many women now want to portray themselves as fighters, it's creating a kind of conflict. The consequences of that are that if one opens the New vision, there must be a woman who has beaten a man, there must be a woman who has poured water on her husband, to me this is the way women express their equality*'. Here again one encounters the iconic status of spilt hot water as a symbol of gender trouble. It was primarily men who would focus on and exaggerate such crises.

Several of the male academics we talked to felt that the very term 'gender issues' implied conflict. One lecturer in technology had this to say: '*First of all the issues shouldn't have arrived, for it is the consequence of divisiveness...when the Muryankole is with people from other parts of Uganda, he tries to fit in, but when he sticks with other Banyankole, he feels he has to live up to the traditional roles, we copy those around us*'. This is a rhetoric of holism that I repeatedly encountered - that somehow if men and women could just work together then 'gender' would no longer be an issue. There was a constant attempt to re-envision women's rights instead as an issue of human equality, to challenge the means rather the end. '*Very few would oppose their struggle*', said another academic, referring to women's rights. '*I think that the problems are the methods being used by some of those advocating the emancipation, some of them are very radical and this makes them detached from those who might support them*'. Such comments are ironic given the rhetoric of feminine moderation and partnership adopted by nearly all the women interviewed.

Another senior sociologist was more outspoken about the origins of this whole debate, '*In our society, gender cannot be applied just like that, those people should come down and study the situation on the ground, most of these theories are formulated by people who are unmarried, by people who do not know what goes on in the family, people who don't know how the nuclear family operates except in books. There are certain relationships that cannot be written in books, but that go on in the household*'. He justified such strong views by attempting to disengage

Uganda from a more global modernity, *'if you go to Europe and find this it is because they are more urbanised, more advanced; whilst for us, we are still very rural, so our relationships are more tied to society'*.

There was also much talk amongst these male academics about feminism having gone too far. Indeed few had anything positive to say about a feminist politics - characterising it as extremist and unproductive. One lecturer in architecture was particularly honest about the benefits of a dominant masculinity :

Yes, there is a backlash, I don't know how far it has gone, but the menfolk feel that they have been pushed. Man looks at himself as the main shaper of his environment, and when there is a war man was the one who went to fight, this was the macho thing, but now all of a sudden this other half comes and says 'I want it all'. It is this edge that men don't want to lose.

Others targeted what they saw as the inconsistencies and failings of feminists. One suggested that *'the women join the movement because they are too weak to stand on their own'*. Another more extreme position was that *'most of them are fanatic, you see, they don't want to listen to the other side, they think that whatever a man is doing is subjugating women'*. A third hinted at their contradictory positions, *'you find that the most outspoken advocates of gender issues are at another time the most oppressive vis-à-vis women'*.

Affirmative action was a provocative issue for many of these lecturers, as the University had introduced a policy of slightly lowering entrance requirements for women.³² One social scientist argued for going beyond the '1.5 rule', explaining that *'we need to go to the schools and the homes..in the modern economy the woman might not become the heir but can play a critical role - so we need to have the gender balance right from the kindergarten'*. Several others agreed, though their emphasis on beginning affirmative action in the home seemed a way to avoid acknowledging its importance in the University itself. Even those in favour pointed out that it did not help the poor rural women, since most of those benefitting were women from the top private schools, as if this somehow invalidated the project.

Finally, the kitchen was often brought up in these discussions, with cooking and housework presented as highly contested issues. Again, opinions were diverse, with several men commenting that they were happy to do the cooking if necessary. Others pointed out that it was

32 This was called the 1.5 policy, as the cumulative A level score required for entrance into Makerere was 1.5 points lower for women than for men.

against 'our culture' to do so, though one cleverly resolved it by saying, 'I am not saying that the women's role should be in the kitchen, but let the men join her'. One of the older and more conservative academics displayed a defensive masculinity in his comment, again confirming that intimate domestic arenas of kitchens and bedrooms are significant places for the reworking of societal values and public culture:

Every working woman knows she has to take part in the housework. Take the rural couple, they go to the field, and then when she comes home, she has to do the housework. There is no way you as a man can be in the kitchen. In Europe the situation is different, the kitchen is in the house, whereas here the kitchen is 15 metres away, and so if they find you in the kitchen, they will know that you are cooking, and that one will work on you. If there is an election, say for RC1, they will say 'Ach, that one, he is no man', and you will lose their vote.

In discussing these viewpoints, I want to emphasise that these men displayed widely differing opinions about this politics. Several declared themselves very much in favour of gender equality - even if they felt that it was not an issue in their own departments or offices! Some knew that it was as much challenge to them as to women, with one insightfully commenting that, 'for us men, part of our problem is that we have to fit in with the description that is made of us in our traditional societies...we now need to amend our ways'. A physics lecturer, whose partner has become one of Uganda's 'gender specialists', constructed a different mapping of a modern Uganda, again in comparison with an imagined outside. 'In Britain women are self-accounting in so many matters, and a man wouldn't come and try to know about the wife's accounts, but here a man would interfere so much more - how much she has, what she is going to use it for. But in the urban areas this will change and catch up with this gender situation..there are ways of empowering women'. In this model Ugandan modernity is seemingly found only in the cities, a version confirmed by many men in rural areas who fought hard to distance themselves from such changes.

Despite the diversity of the men's views, I would suggest that together they reveal an attempt to re-interpret 'gender issues' in a less conflictual way, a way that didn't directly challenge dominant masculinities and their dependence on economic and cultural power. Such a move attempted to map one possible future, seeking to imagine a consensual and conflict-free society. When Richard and I did attempt to present some of these ideas at conferences as a way of demonstrating the presumptions people made, our paper was laughed off as not being academic, merely a set of conversations. As a white non-Ugandan interfering in such fraught debates, I clearly antagonised people, and was told that I would not understand Ugandan relationships.

I want now to discuss the views of some of the male students, views expressed in relaxed single-sex discussion groups. Again there was a good deal of ambivalence, but also a more immediate degree of conflict and anger. As young, relatively poor men (at least by the standards of the Kampalan elite), the students had little time for the apparent rhetoric of accommodation favoured by their lecturers. Most knew who to blame for these new ideas, and what the material consequences of change were:

Makerere graduates are gender-sensitive, she knows that the law provides for her, and there is a certain percentage of the wealth that will go to her. If you have a graduate then she will challenge you in the case of income, she will know how much money her man is getting when you are doing the budgeting.

In discussing their viewpoints, it is important to try to contextualise them in relation to the everyday places and practices where these contestations of masculinities and femininities occur. To give an example, this male rhetoric is all occurring within single-sex Makerere hall cultures which are sometimes highly misogynistic and antagonistic, to the extent of occasional physical confrontations between halls on campus. There are (or were) five all-male halls of residence (Northcote, Lumumba, University, Mitchell and Nkrumah) each with jealously guarded hall identities, often predicated on animal mascots. That of Northcote was particularly militaristic, with every student given a military rank, and the hall affairs run by an army council. Northcote students often dressed in military apparel on public occasions. Some of these halls have alliances - called *solidarities* - with particular female halls, but nevertheless female students visiting or walking past the halls at night are regularly subjected to verbal abuse. The halls socialise their first-year students with a boot-camp culture in the first weeks, forcing them out of bed at five a.m. to jog around campus singing military and hall songs, and teaching hall 'culture'. Most students exhibit a fierce pride in their hall, always standing to attention with a clenched fist salute to sing the hall anthem, and always responding with a resilient 'oyee' to any rallying cry made in public.

Male antagonisms and attempts to blame women for social changes meant that the several joint discussion groups were combative affairs. One woman student commented on men's attempts to maintain power thus: *'I have been in school for 17 long back-breaking years, and then you tell me "Don't do this, don't do that", girls don't want that kind of men, when they are challenging them all the time, these men want to dictate, and some of us can't accept this, they are still very African'*. Another agreed, but not quite. *'Maybe women should be recognised to a bigger extent. For most of us women in Africa are despised, especially in Uganda. Women don't say anything, they should be recognised. But men should still control'*. Again, an ambivalence

emerges, unhappy at the benefits accorded to men by these very inequalities, but also seeking compromise and consensus.

Predictably, none of the women undergraduates I met would call themselves feminists. Most seemed to agree that a radical or outspoken gender politics was unacceptable, even though radicalism in another idiom - such as with regard to nationalist politics - was prevalent and went unchallenged. Two female students were able to express discontent at the present situation and yet distance themselves from conflict, as the following comments show:

For me, I think it should be more of a personal thing, we can't do without men and they can't do without us, these feminists are too radical, they are militarists, most of them. There was a teacher in school who was telling us that most of them have had frustration in the marriages, and have had broken marriages, so if you listen to them you might end up failing in your relationship...But, as human beings we should try to work out and strike a balance between the men and the women, but not over-do it, saying men are this, men are that. I don't think this works.

Women in Uganda think, or want men and women to be equal, which is really impossible in my opinion. The thing I want to wipe out is the way they overhandle their women. I disagree with the methods people use, but at the same time I am not happy with the status of women today. I think the gender thing is a good thing, but it depends on how we do it, we shouldn't use force, that if men do this, then women should do that. No, we should do it in an understanding way, but not fighting for a long time.

How might one contextualise these attitudes and conflicts? What relationship do they bear to older understandings of sociality and gender, whether established by the Christian churches or from the everyday practice of 'Ganda' cultural idioms. I have no doubt that one could, following the Comaroffs (1991, 1992), demonstrate the continuing power of Christian religious and moral beliefs in shaping gendered subjectivities. I am not suggesting that the very negotiations of the values of a 'proper' man or woman (Ogden 1995) are new. Rather I have argued that the particular sites and discourses within which this debate is occurring are unique to the present moment. Whilst women's rights are not a new topic, the efflorescence of 'gender' in recent years as an accepted and appropriate language for government policy endeavours, political rhetoric and institutional practice makes it an important dynamic with which to engage. This may only be a partial picture of gender relations but, given the impact of 'development' debates' on people's understanding and interpretation of the present, I make no apologies for my focus.

I end with a sad postscript to this discussion of student attitudes, without drawing any conclusions for what it might say about threatened masculinities. During an end-of-term

celebration in 1996, several students from Northcote hall attempted to put pepper and glass in food intended for students at two women's halls. When the authorities found out, none of the students admitted responsibility. The University decided to punish all the students by re-naming the Hall, breaking up Northcote's militarist culture and dispersing the students to other halls. This decision produced a great deal of acrimony and dissent within the University, with the student body agitating for a less extreme punishment. Disagreement within the University council resulted in a stand-off. This was broken at the beginning of November 1996 by mass rioting on the campus as the students, led by their representatives in the guild council, attempted to break back into the hall and to occupy it. Running battles with riot police ensued. The police used tear gas to disperse the students, and many were arrested or injured. Thirty-five ringleaders were summarily expelled from the University. The students have either been dispersed to other halls, or sent to find their own accommodation off-campus. The hall has been re-named, and now has a completely new group of students.

Women's Studies as Development Studies?

In this last section, I describe conversations held with Master's students in 'Women's Studies', made possible by my teaching a one-term course in 'feminist theory'. Both male and female, their articulate and cogent views on gender politics made me rethink my own. They also suggested a possible direction in which the issue of equality would develop in Uganda. One might expect them to have been the most outspoken about women's issues. Yet they too attempted to redefine and 'nationalise' understandings of gender, often using a rhetoric parallel to the male one. An example of this was the speech made by a woman parliamentarian denounced constantly by male students as a women's rights 'extremist'. This was far from her position in a Makerere debate, where she commented that *'gender equality does not mean equality with men in every aspect because that would be impossible. To me, equality means equal opportunities and rights with men'*.

All of the Makerere Women's Studies students, and there were about thirty in each year, had clear ideas about what just what feminism entailed. They defined it variously as *'a group of women developing ideas about the way that women are oppressed'*, *'ideas put forward determining society according to the sex, especially from a woman's perspective'*, and *'a practical struggle over rights'*. Yet none would describe themselves as feminists, feeling that such a label was aggressively anti-male. Some were eloquent in their dismissal of the term. This

is shown in an extract from an essay which attempts to craft a distinctly Ugandan response to these gender troubles:

The pressing problem of underdeveloped countries is poverty. To women in such countries, sharing equally available resources would mean sharing 'poverty'. So telling such women that the idea of emancipation is giving them the idea of feminism is like donating packets of toothpicks to a hungry man who last ate meat at his baptism party. Therefore such feminism becomes out of touch with reality.

In discussions with these students I learnt a great deal from the way that certain feminist theorists were read and understood in the Ugandan context, changing my own understandings of the texts. One woman had this to say in an essay on Simone de Beauvoir:

It is important to mention that Western civilisation and its historical ideologies have left a Ugandan woman in struggle against her menfolk, The typical traditional Ugandan women used to enjoy her privileges and prestige in society before the introduction of the so-called capitalist and missionary ideologies which robbed a woman of her independence labelling her an 'other'. This trained man and woman in the interests of western imperialism and colonisation.

Similar, though less welcome, comments were made about any 'Western' feminist critique of the heterosexual matrix. To quote one female student, *'Many societies still value their culture, with marriage and reproducing children being highly observed...lesbian feminists are seen as abominable characters that need not be mentioned in society and no wonder they are ignored except to be criticised'*. If I dared mention the overwhelming evidence for the practice of homosexuality at the Kabaka's court in the nineteenth century, I provoked uproar, and the uniform response that it had not existed. And, if it had, it had been brought there by Arab traders, a move that once again racialised sexuality.

At the beginning of the paper I reflected on my own position, asking about the political appropriateness of any possible engagement. I now realise that such attempts are fraught with difficulty, and that listening and trying to understand the strength of anti-Western viewpoints is as important as any intervention. I learnt much about the potentials of a 'consensual' approach, and of women's abilities to strategically defuse and externalise conflict.

Finally, I want to situate these debates within a debate going on in the Department about whether to rename Women's studies as 'Gender studies'. The course itself had only been established in the face of strong opposition and delaying tactics from the (male-dominated) University hierarchy. Despite pledges of support for such a department at an international donor's conference in 1987, the first students were only accepted in 1991 (Mwaka 1996). Such antipathy

and lack of support had continued, such that in the refurbished private residence that housed the department there were hardly enough chairs for the students. The move to re-name it as 'Gender studies' was intended both as an attempt to superficially depoliticise and legitimise the subject, but also as a challenge to men that these were not merely 'women's things'. Yet some of the students wanted to go further, arguing eloquently in discussions that it should actually be re-named 'Development studies'. This, they argued, would make the topic still more central and relevant to everyone in Uganda. After all, one pointed out, weren't women's rights also human rights? Again, if development was what really mattered for Uganda, then people had to learn that *'developmental concerns were also gender concerns'*. This was a powerful way of inflecting and re-positioning the dominant 'development discourse' that has seeped into every aspect of Ugandan public culture. If the central issue of the day both in Uganda's public sphere and in state policy is not gender but development, as these female students suggested, then the subsequent political question becomes one of how to achieve that development, and what it might consist of. Rather than stress the importance of adding 'gender' to other development concerns, they instead insisted that development necessarily included women as much as men.

For me, the 'how' and 'what' questions are central to the discursive contestations described in this chapter. All sides were attempting to delineate what a distinctly Ugandan future might look like, with inevitable consequences for the present. There is little overt conflict in this vision, and instead a consensus between genders is seen as 'Ugandan' and therefore highly desirable. Yet such a 'consensus' can mean very different things. Some of the male elite turn to the past to find appropriately unthreatening models of non-conflictual relationships and masculine power, whilst vulnerable students are more ambivalent, recognising possible gains but defensive about the losses that change would bring. It was middle-class women who sought a co-operative and conflict-free future in which they would be treated as equal partners. These were continuing processes, especially as women gained more material power, and my viewpoint in this paper is but a snapshot. My own feeling is that this female discourse which appropriates the supposedly neutral and uncontentious notion of 'development', putting it to work in justifying their claims to equal opportunity and equal rights, is best able to reposition and mobilise this consensus, and is meeting with a good degree of success. It is a powerful and effective move. There is little chance of being labelled a 'feminist', for the rhetoric merely inflects and redefines 'development', that crucial and unquestionable avenue to a Ugandan modernity. It is a process enabled by, yet also in reaction to, trans-national feminist discourses. Whilst it does depend on consensual imaginings of the 'nation', one could see this negotiation as a strategy leading to a more egalitarian and just future.

CHAPTER SIX

NOT FOR 'LOVE' OR 'MONEY': RELATIONSHIPS, COMMODITIES AND SEXUALITY AT MAKERERE

Abstract

In this last chapter, based primarily on a number of informal discussion groups held with Makerere students, I describe the tense and conflictual inter-relationship of 'love' and 'money' in young people's lives. Drawing on academic debates about the cultural construction of commodities and also on representations of sexuality within Ugandan popular culture, I attempt to demonstrate the materiality of relationships and the sociality of things.

I begin with a discussion of a rap song that captured the popular imagination during 1995. Using further examples of media articles and gossip columns, I show the central place that 'money' and 'commodities' have in mediating intimate relationships between male and female students at Makerere. Never simply understood as neutral units of exchange, I describe how wealth is culturally interpreted and equilibrated to signify 'love'. Using quotations from the discussion groups, I argue that emotional sentiments and material commodities are thoroughly intertwined but never reducible to each other. In this way I try to capture the confusing tangle of things, emotions and power that make up the lived everyday experiences of relationships. This is a cultural truth that applies well beyond this particular case-study, but I end by hinting at the way that it might enable a more nuanced approach to challenging oppressive gender relations and the spread of STDs.

Not for 'love' or 'money' Relationships, commodities and sexuality at Makerere

Aie, aie, aie, aie, aie - gino miggo gyenninyi
Bamusakata, Bamusakata, Bamusakata kiboko n'azimatira
Nabadde nkweegomba, naye, empisa zo Maama zakunemya
Nkugambye, yakuula bangi ebinyo n'abamatizza
N'asangayo sharp gwatasobola, nkugambye yamusakata kiboko n'azimatira,
yamusakata, yamusakata, n'amukuba kiboko n'akaaba'

Ow, Ow, Ow, Ow, OW! these are real canes alright',
They beat her, they beat her, they beat her, with a stick until she really felt it,
I used to admire you, but, darling, your behaviour humiliates me,
I am telling you, she conned things out of so many men, and they took it,
Until she met a sharp dude, who she couldn't manage. I am telling you he beat her with a
stick until she really felt it, he beat her, he beat her, he beat her with a stick and she cried.

'Bamusakata'
No 1 hit by Da Hommies, Uganda 1995

'Love Carefully'
Uganda Aids Commission Publicity Slogan

Have you ever noticed the subtle, stunning way that names, words or phrases momentarily over-run public culture? Everyone is - briefly - in on the joke. Whether the name of a football player, political pun or a titbit of global gossip, the joke is everywhere, and those who don't 'get it' are ridiculed. The word that captivated much of Kampala and the rest of southern Uganda in 1995 was the Luganda verb '*oku-sakata*'. Endless laughs were to be had from bringing up the word in a conversation, on the bus, or in the bar, transporting it to all sorts of new contexts and imbuing it with intoxicating new sexual meanings. Women as much as men would play with the idea, turning it on its head to mock the sort of feeble guy who might not be able to stand up to his wife. Popularised in a rap song that became de rigueur at every party and on every radio station, the phenomenon seemed hardly one to be danced to.

Once upon a time the word '*oku-sakata*' could be simply translated as 'to beat unmercifully',¹

¹ In the song '*Bamusakatta*' the verb stem '*sakatta*' is preceded by the subject *Ba* (They) and the object *mu* (her or him), such that the whole word can be translated 'They beat her unmercifully'.

but now its meaning is much harder to delineate. In the context of the rap-song that ensured the word's iconic status, it was used to describe a man viciously beating a woman who would not give him the sexual favours that she 'owed', after she had been treated by the man to drinks or goods. The violence is justified on sexual grounds. So now in Uganda the word would seem to conflate the sexualised nature of violence with sexuality itself, signifying both a deservedly sexualised beating and a deservedly violent fuck.

The word and the reactions it provoked enable me to introduce this last chapter of the thesis. It draws on archival research and a number of discussion groups held with Makerere students throughout 1995. I use both to explore the conflictual and gendered understandings and practices of students' intimate sexual relationships. In particular I focus on idioms of finance and romance, demonstrating both the social life of 'money' and the material force of 'love', and how each is implicated in - but irreducible to - the other .

I began with the rap song, but I do not wish to treat its lyrics as a privileged text, or presume that one can transparently read from it a contemporary Ugandan sexual morality. After all, vigorously expressive rap songs began as a politicised African-American art form, but have since become part of a trans-national popular culture. Misogynistic portrayals of gender relations are sometimes contested by raps that attempt to create more emancipatory images of black masculinity, as Gilroy (1995) suggests with regard to the rapper Snoop Doggy-Dog. He goes further to show that even the initial shock and 'freakiness' of some of these songs can be understood also as a form of inter-subjectivity that, in the U.S. at least, challenges the dominance of the commodified black body (Gilroy 1995). He points out that it is far too easy to either simplistically condemn or celebrate popular cultural styles. Heeding his advice, I attempted to keep a critical distance from the too easy presumption of misogyny, and instead began thinking about and doing research, along with my colleague Richard Ssewakiryanga,² into the conflictual and tense understandings that young Ugandans have of gender and sexual relations.

In this chapter I hope to do several things. I start by discussing the theoretical ideas that provide one way of interpreting these relationships. The practice of research itself was also very insightful, forcing me to recognise the confusing tangle of things, emotions and power that make

² Richard Ssewakiryanga is a researcher at the Centre for Basic Research. Over a period of 12 months we carried out several research projects together in Makerere, and his support was invaluable. However this chapter is my own interpretation of the results of one such project, and I bear all responsibility for it.

up the lived everyday experiences of relationships. It provoked me into thinking about the different ways social relationships can be encapsulated within things. It brought home the ambiguity of such objects, making me aware of the processes through which a de-contextualised commodity at one moment can not only be transformed into a gift, but also into an emotion in and of itself. In this chapter I emphasise the constructed and arbitrary form of all these explanatory dichotomies, whether it be commodity/gift or relationship/thing. Instead I suggest that it is the very act of paying attention to different parts of these dichotomies that brings particular agendas and interests into focus. This seems true both for academic practice and that of everyday life.

Another way of understanding these relationships is by exploring how they draw upon or rework older cultural idioms, both within Makerere University and in Uganda more generally. To this end, I draw on a number of Ugandan historical sources. I also attempt a comparison with spaces of intimacy in other contemporary contexts. No-one could argue that money does not also assume central importance in middle-class European or American relationships, even if modern romantic ideology argues that 'Love conquers All'. Finally, I touch on the politics of my research intervention, reflecting both on my methods and on the possible ways in which anthropological research might also be combined with pedagogical and political intervention.

Money talk/s

Money has this wonderful ability to appear to us in many guises at once. On the one hand it is a seemingly neutral, abstracted medium for exchange; on the other the stuff of fantasy, the focus of dreams and nightmares, with endless symbolic meanings attached. The multiple ways in which we visualise, talk about and understand money seem to put the lie to the notion of it as an abstract entity. Of course at one level money is just a 'thing', a medium of exchange, but it is this same medium through which many of our relationships in the contemporary world are imagined, conducted and understood. This is true whether in London or Kampala, but the social meanings and cultural forms of wealth exchange may be very different in each, revealing broader aspects of societal power relations.

These are not new observations, for both Simmel and Marx pointed them out clearly more than a hundred years ago. That does not make such insights worth overlooking. Marx spoke of the way that 'a definite social relation between men..assumes in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things' (1967[1867], 73), whilst Simmel, in his extravagant 1907 account of

the social and psychological aspects of a commoditised economy, suggests economic exchange to be the grounds from which to explore the individual psyche as well as metaphysics (Simmel 1978). Marx's work has been by far the more influential, but both authors have set the stage for much subsequent anthropological work on the cultural and historical mediation of money and commodities. Indeed, these categories are so mediated that it might be appropriate (if tiresome) to put such terms in scare-quotes. To name but a few of the many works in this vein, Parry and Bloch's work (1989) explored the moral meanings attached to exchange. Appadurai's (1986) edited volume on the social life of commodities provoked thinking about the artificiality of the divide between the commodity and the gift, an idea taken further in Carrier's (1992) work. Hutchinson (1992, 1996) and Ferguson (1992) both explore the very different types of wealth and commodities that exist within particular social worlds, and the cultural power relations that determine possible exchanges, conversions and uses. Their work demonstrates the barriers against the conversion of some types of wealth, and therefore the impossibility of reducing all types of wealth to the money form. It is important also to remember the particular historical and economic contexts in which understandings of money developed, as contributors to Jane Guyer's (1995) 'Money Matters' attempt to do. Burke's (1996) social biography of one commodity in Zimbabwe deftly brings many of these insights together, showing the racialised colonial history of hygiene and consumption as demonstrated by the sale, use and cultural significance of soap.

The inevitable corollary of the notion of a commodity, the gift, has also proven to be a constant focus for anthropological research, with Mauss's germinal text (Mauss 1954) providing the starting point. As Parry (1986) points out, the way in which the gift represents and stands in for the donor (hence symbolising an continuing social relationship) is often missed in interpretations of Mauss's work, with the presumption that the gift is a calculated act of self-interest. After Mauss, Parry emphasises the ambiguity that the gift encapsulates, a combination of interest and dis-interest, of freedom and constraint. This ambivalence will be visible in the discussions that follow. It confirms the importance of following Strathern's (1988) advice to think carefully about just how and why a gift exchange occurs, and who might be defined as a consequence of it. Her work strives to show that gift-giving is never gender-neutral, and rather that gendering occurs through the action itself, through the relationship itself. One has to somehow maintain an awareness of both the materiality of relationships and the sociality of things.

I cannot even begin to do justice to all these works here, or to the potent ambiguities within the idea of the commodity/gift/thing that they explore. It would seem to me that any attempt to

tie down these diverse concepts with definitions would purely be for tactical purposes, in order to see 'things' through a particular analytical lens. It serves my purpose in this chapter to try and displace, or at least partially ignore, the powerful discursive dichotomy of commodity and gift, and even the commodity/relationship split. This is of course made more difficult by the way that we all mobilise these dichotomies in conversation with each other. It is hard not to draw upon Marx's alienating notion of the commodity occasionally in order to make a comment on the link between access to economic capital and cultural power. Nevertheless, my own intention is to try and suggest that emotions and things are not as separate as one might imagine, and that they can do each other's work, even if they are never simply reducible to each other. Clearly many relationships in Uganda are understood and mediated through the medium of 'money', but just how much coercive power does this specific social category have? Does the control of 'money' define the shape of a relationship? How does 'love' reshape understandings of commodities? How does one describe the way in which language and materiality are intertwined but never reducible to each other? These are just some of the questions that I hope to address in this chapter.

Whilst it was the unequal and exploitative nature of the social relations encapsulated in the verb '*oku-sakata*' that led me to this research, was I right to jump immediately to the presumption of such an oppressive gendered power dynamic in Ugandan society more generally? Theoretical questions about processes of gendering concern me throughout this chapter. Intimate relationships inevitably shape as much as presume genders, and yet these gendering processes are never easy to explore, especially given the polarised and dichotomising ways in which male and female seem to perceive and construct each other. This is as true in contemporary Euro-American society as it is in Uganda. Yet these difficulties were not helped by the methodological context of single-sex discussion groups, where people inevitably simplified and essentialised gender issues, nor by an atmosphere where gay and lesbian sexualities were to be abhorred and concealed to the extent that no mention could be made of them. Such a context reinforced the compulsory heterosexuality that is constantly compelled and reiterated (Butler 1993), making it harder still to question or challenge.

Oppressive gender relations are clearly directly linked to the AIDS epidemic, as is argued by Schoepf with reference to women traders in Zaire (1993). In the Ugandan context, Christine Obbo (1993) points the importance of focusing on men, whilst in Tanzania Weiss (1993) attends to the link between commodities and gendered power. Yet often the categories 'men' and 'women' are not questioned, and instead a simple binary division is assumed. Everyone has an idea of what masculinity is, but most would see it as a static, reified entity that all 'real' men possess.

Rather, I would suggest that it is the whole set of practices, characteristics and stereotypes that people link with ideas of 'maleness'. The link is a contingent, constructed one, yet it is one that many men reiterate and perform, so privileging them by linking them to particular forms of power. I try to show how 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are constructs specific to a particular time and place, and are categories performed, practised and forged in the relationships between and amongst men and women (Connell 1992, Segal 1992). Some masculinities are dominant and some are subordinate, echoing the power relations that go on amongst as well as between men and women (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). In what follows I attempt to further subvert this polarisation by discussing the various ways in which masculinities can be feminised, feminities might be masculinized, and the two might even be interchanged through the material aspects of social interaction and relationships.

Despite its position in my thesis, this chapter was one of the first to be researched and prepared, provoked by relationship dilemmas faced by friends and colleagues. Yet, after my discussion of the politics of social research in chapter one, that explanation hardly justifies the research. Research politics matter. Methodologically, it is not enough to just presume that the research was 'carried out' and then move onto the results, for first there are questions to be asked. What enabled me to be in Uganda in the first place? Why could I presume to engage with the heated arena of gender politics, especially given the racialised histories of colonial research and policy interventions? And why at Makerere University?

These are questions which I tried to respond to in chapter one, yet they need to be asked again and again. One possible answer comes from my search for an appropriate form of engaged solidarity. Everyone, myself included, had to negotiate personal relationships and face similar dilemmas, and it seemed an important arena in which to explore cultural difference and economic power. Another is my attempt to challenge the 'knowledge economy' of anthropology and cultural studies, wherein Universities are rarely the focus of scholarly attention. Finally, my interest and approach stem from shock at the racisms exhibited in much medical and social science research on AIDS and sexual relationships during the 1980s. Either whole continents would be viewed as one, as in the Caldwell's discussion of an 'African Sexual System' (Heald 1995, Caldwell 1989), or sexual practices would be exoticised (Chirimuta and Chirimuta 1987). Even today, much HIV research still de-contextualises knowledge about STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) and sexuality from the practice of gender relations in everyday life. This is perhaps inevitable given academia's predilection for generalising, but such an approach ends up objectifying a particular field of knowledge rather than transforming it. For this reason I chose

not to discuss the overwhelming effects of the virus directly, but rather to approach it obliquely, paying attention to passing comments and ominous silences.

Makerere and 'money'

This particular project began with a number of relationships with male students at the University. Socialising with them, I increasingly realised that, for the middle-class, educated young men I encountered at Makerere, money was the single most significant mediating symbol through which they imagined, practised and understood their sexual and social relationships with women. Together with my co-researcher, Richard Ssewakiryanga, we decided to explore this more formally, and decided to arrange and host some informal discussion groups. These confirmed our views. When men were asked in single-sex groups what unspecified 'things' they could never show women, money in its different manifestations came up again and again and again. Out of more than thirty men asked, money came up fifty times - whether in reference to one's wallet, payslip, bank account number, salary or even will. There were other issues, such as the concealment of one's other affairs, even one's body, yet the dominant impression was of the mediating power of money in these students' relationships.

I need to step back, and think about the presumptions that I am making by using the term 'money'. Just what do I, and Ugandan students, mean by it? I wish to be clear here that I am not simply presuming that the students simply have an instrumentalist 'get-rich-quick' attitude to social life. 'Money', ironically and perhaps thankfully, is not simply money. Instead it is a complex and multiple social category. There is a whole literature which focuses on cultural constructions of money, on the way it is understood as a social concept. One way of illustrating this is by thinking about some of the metaphors that students use to talk about money and its ramifications. It is easy to under-estimate the material force of metaphors and their role in creating the social worlds which they are used to describe. They show that the word 'money' has a social and material significance beyond that which we might expect.

I start with Makerere, Uganda's oldest and best-known University, where a large campus on one of Kampala's seven hills creates a social community all of its own. On the hill there are endless often transient and incomprehensible local dialects and slang words arising out of youth sub-cultures; styles that Hebdige (1979), in the rather different context of punk Britain, described so well. I often found myself lost in such conversations. This chapter was originally entitled '*Vegetarianus Economicus*', one of the many slang words current in 1995 Makerere. This play

on the Linnaean classificatory system is intended to designate that species of student who cannot eat meat because of financial constraints. It is of course sexualised, such that the meat referred to is the illicit and much desired flesh of the opposite sex. There are, predictably, other such species, including '*Vegetarianus Cowardicus*' and '*Vegetarianus Biblicus*' - the latter referring to religious self-prohibitions, particularly amongst the 'saved' community. Most intriguing of all is the '*Vegetarianus Geographicus*', used to refer to those students otherwise known as 'L' (Locals) - supposedly rural, backward, poor and therefore unattractive. The importance of such popular cultural idioms should be obvious to academics writing about contemporary life, but on the whole they receive little attention in the 'Africanist' oeuvre.

The Makerere halls of residence were built along Oxbridge lines in the 1950s, a story of the creation of an 'African' University which merits telling in itself. But since then each hall has developed a vibrant, if not jingoistic, local culture, complete with elaborate initiation rituals and distinctive traditions. As mentioned in chapter five, Northcote Hall modelled itself after a military state, complete with a Field Marshal, and all the students were allotted different ranks. Perhaps it is no surprise to hear their description of money as a tool of aggression.. '*we say money is a weapon, but it can be a weapon against you..officers defend their wallets!*'

Another aggressive metaphor that has general currency in Kampala is the term '*Okukuula ebinyo*', literally 'to extract teeth'. This is a term that began life as a health belief of young mothers, worried about their babies' early formation of milk-teeth, with the consequence that they often removed them (see also Weiss 1996). In its new incarnation, it conjures up the image of women's persistent desire to extract as many goodies and commodities from their menfolk as possible. Another slang word, it was seen by older people as a rather obscene term. Predictably enough, it is in the lyrics of the rap song described at the beginning.

Whilst this paper focuses primarily on Makerere, this whole discourse on the link between relationships and commodities is not restricted to the University. One young student at a rural school talked about why she was happy to be woman, '*Ndi musanyufu nnyo okuba omuwala kubanga katonda yampa banka yange eri gye nsobola okujaamu ssente*' (*I am happy to be a girl because God gave me my bank, and I can use it to get money*). Other girls talked of being given things by their boyfriends to show that they were loved, demonstrating that this was not simply a Makerere sub-culture.

Within the mass media, there is a good deal of evidence corroborating this desperate search

for money and the social status and power it provides. Every week, two columns in the leisure section of a national New Vision newspaper were devoted to Makerere gossip, showing the prominent place it maintains in the national imagination. Written, predictably, by male students, the focus is often on money, as the magic catalyst for all other social interactions. A couple of examples suffice. One article³ dwells on the tension that it creates:

In the battle of sex on this hill..the men have no kind words for the women. 'You flirt with the refillers (sugar daddies)' they say, 'you are always in superleague matches. Have you forgotten the mini-league matches, the home matches right here' they ask.

The ladies, at first non-plussed, take up the challenge. 'Look who is talking. The other day you had a friendly match with a 'Michael West', today you have an engagement with an Africana, and your schedule says you have two encounters with Boxers and Crocodiles before you close the season'. Now who is the devil?

And for ages the issue of virtue is top on the agenda of these fellows up here. But this hill is strange. 'You ain't got the money baby. I ain't got the time honey, it coos at you'. Ah! So money is the problem. If the ladies want money and the men want to give it to them, who am I to complain? It isn't as if the women don't do something about that money..or do they? They are not robbers anyway if they do not pull it out of the men's pockets - so shut up about all that and talk of livelier things.

Immediately one gets a sense of the conflictual atmosphere on campus, along with some of the slang that is commonplace on the 'Hill'. Sugar daddies might be obvious, 'matches' less so; they refer to encounters of a romantic or sexual nature. A 'Michael West' is someone who is still at school, and who might well be carrying around an elementary English dictionary published by Michael West Inc. A Boxer is an inhabitant of the all-female Mary Stuart Hall (named after the box-like building which acted as the first hall), and a Crocodile refers to the inhabitants of the female CCE hall (CCE standing for 'Centre for Continuing Education').

The leisure columns also go into great detail with regard to the tricks that one needs to play in order to appear as the wealthy young thing. In another column⁴ the student writer describes the complex manoeuvring needed to persuade a woman to come back from one of Kampala's nightclubs to one's bedroom:

How exactly does one play the politics of deceit at Club Silk or Ange Noir? And how do you go about crisis management in your room at campus after Silk? The key thing here is 'science'. You've got to be adept at scheming. Your pocket is running into a crisis, yet

3 'The Campus Survivor', New Vision, October 8th 1994 by Robert Kasozi.

4 'From Club Silk to your Campus Bedroom.'
Andrew Mwenda, The Monitor, December 20th 1995.

you've got to demonstrate that you have an inexhaustible reservoir of funds. To resolve this contradiction you'll have to be skilful.

The author continues by elaborating the numerous ways in which one can signify one's cultural and economic capital, without actually spending any money. The advice offered is to surround oneself with as many trappings of status and cultural capital as possible. The reader is told to borrow a car, a video and CD player for the evening - and to learn the names of all the hip pop-stars. Perhaps unsurprisingly, such helpful hints are of little use to most Ugandans who have no access to electricity, let alone video decks. The article is written only partly in jest, but like many of those in the leisure columns of the national press, it captures the dilemmas of contemporary gender relationships for the young males of Kampala's burgeoning middle classes. The issue would seem not to be merely the acquisition of all these status objects in themselves, but rather the social and sexual potentiality these things would seem to embody. Intriguingly, the writer names 'science' as the key, invoking not only Museveni's regular speeches about science and technology as the cure for backwardness, but also a student slang in which a canny application of 'science' (read nous) can surmount any problems.

Yet this is not to say that it is only students who need to negotiate the conflictual nature of gender relations. The independent newspaper which has reached the greatest national circulation (The Monitor) has partly done so through its entertaining gossip and scandal columns, even if such titillation is safely tucked away at the back of the paper. One such author is '*Baba Pajero*' (a pseudonym and a joke on the 'Mitsubishi Pajero' four-wheel-drive Ugandan elite), who regales his masculine adventures. The tales always involve a lot of drinking, chasing of '*off-layers*' (older women) or '*kyanas*' (young girls), and satirical comment on sexual relations in Ugandan society. Occasionally his wife (Mama Pajero) appears too - usually to rein him in, whack him one, or to patch him up after some escapade. One such example will suffice. We encounter Baba Pajero cornered in a bar by a woman who is telling him all about the man that she had recently dumped. The column is usually written in English, but on this day he relates her tale in Luganda for fuller impact.⁵

You see, uncle, that friend of yours, let me tell you why I left him. That man doesn't feed me, he doesn't pay the rent, all these clothes you see on me I had to buy them myself. When people see me they think that it was him who bought them for me. No way. That man has given me nothing. But one time he met me at the House of Entertainment, and he came up to me, and shamed me badly, saying that I was with other men.

⁵ Baba Pajero, The Monitor 22nd September 1995.

Baba has his own comments to make on the offending man:

He was simply reaping without investing - and yet then he was 'ungrateful' after being allowed to reap where he did not sow - going ahead to accuse her of jumping up and down with other men. (Did this mean that Baba felt sorry for her? Soon we are told where his sympathies lie) I know the poor chap alright, but he should have known that he would never manage that type of woman. In the first place, he is not even the 'majority shareholder' (not the principal boyfriend); but one of the several 'minority shareholders'.

Once again Ugandans' constantly creative use of language is demonstrated, even if here the whole readership is 'in on the joke'. It is no surprise that Baba should choose a market metaphor to make his point - these matters need investment.

So far I have only focused on a small sector of middle-class, male Ugandan society, and I inevitably have excluded as much as I reveal. From my own experience in rural Buganda, I know that there similar dynamics exist within intimate relationships. The male school students moaned about how their girlfriends were always demanding gifts - such as hair pomade and soap - and how they would go to great lengths to get hold of such things. Similarly, the female students would talk about the presents they received, and how they demonstrated whether their boyfriend really loved them.

One could widen the angle further still, and recognise the commonalities with European and American popular culture. One only has to think about the number of rock and pop songs that focus on money in relationships, or the metaphorical ways money is discussed and used in everyday life. Yet Uganda seems to provide a particularly vivid and extreme example of money's enabling cultural power. Whilst comparisons would be fascinating, for the time being I focus on the University students.

Campus Gossip

In this whole discussion I am wary of essentialising Ugandan popular culture in a simplistic way to serve my own purposes. By emphasising money, there is the danger of reducing and condensing the whole conversation on sexuality and intimacy in an African context to one of mere transaction - constructing people as instrumentally seeking gratification. This parallels a view put forward by the Caldwells, who suggest that in Africa 'sex is a worldly activity like work or eating or drinking' (Caldwell 1989, quoted in Heald 1995), wherein sex is seen as a service transacted for cash. It is a reduction to the logic of the market, to a cost-benefit analysis. In a

society that often lives well below the poverty line, financial issues are certainly important, as Obbo (1980) shows in her illuminating description of the lives of Ugandan women. Yet much of her book dwells on women's ability to negotiate some level of independence for themselves socially as well as economically (see also Wallman 1996). Clearly there is much more to say about love and relationships than just budget negotiations, and any attempt to reduce the debate to the accountant's 'bottom line' risks fetishising the commodity form, just as Marx warned.

Having said that, I do need to address the pragmatics of getting hold of and spending this money. For the male students, a visit to *Mzee* (the 'Old Man') was always one option, especially as their student grants (for government-funded students) barely covered their own needs. Many also entered into entrepreneurial schemes or small-scale business projects as a way of making money. These schemes varied from cutting hair or taking photographs to the illicit import of jeans or sale of duty-free alcohol. Nearly all involved a lot of time and effort. In a different way, the women would also devote much time and energy to hosting visitors and being entertained, expecting the appropriate treats, but also investing in their own appearance and dress.

To illustrate my argument, I will draw from a number of focus-group conversations in Makerere, all of which were openly taped. Conducted in English, each was held one evening in a hall of residence, having been first advertised with posters entitled either 'Men's Talk', or 'Gender Trouble'. My co-researcher and I were always very explicit about our intentions, and the conversation was initially carefully directed. Our provision of refreshments and a few initial games helped the atmosphere to lighten up, and usually people seemed to enjoy it. Initially the discussion groups involved people of the same gender, which enabled a freer if more predictable discussion. Only later did we encourage the two sides to meet up and start a dialogue. The participants were to some extent self-selecting, though our contact - usually the member of a hall committee responsible for booking a room - would often invite along some of his or her friends. Occasionally we wondered whether the richer students would have better things to do than come along, but we held the meetings mid-week to try and limit this. That said, we were also sometimes frustrated by our hall contact cancelling the evening or just disappearing.

Some of the mens' views revealed how the contestation over money is simultaneously symbolic and material. One man managed to ethnicise the debate, using culture to downgrade women, saying '*Money for Baganda women is always put in the Kikooyi*' (fabric used as a wrap). '*Even if she has it, she is not willing to use it*'. Another explained how the wallet was a site of struggle. '*If I show her my wallet, and I have 50K inside, then it is clear that she would make*

sure that she went for the most expensive thing, and would use 49K of that money, just leaving me with 1,000Sh....A woman would go for the wallet when it is shown to her - no matter how much money there is in it!' The only answer would seem to be for the man to hide it, so making it the taboo that everyone wants to talk about. Perhaps subterfuge was a way of maintaining control, as one 'Cottie' (member of Northcote Hall) brazenly suggested, 'How can we talk about money? Authority revolves around money, and you can suppress her if you keep quiet about money. It is all about power..ensuring zero conflicts'.

The students were all too aware of the power relations involved, which might explain their keenness for younger women and those still at school. The openly calculated approach of the occasional discussant, even if just a show for his mates, shocked me:

We have to think about these Michael Wests. I for myself have never proposed to a camper. The campusers, they are too expensive, they want eats, sodas, what, but the Michael Wests, they are good-looking, cheap, no make-up. No, these are the issues, they have simple minds, anything you say she laughs, she can be taken advantage of, and so these are the girls we are brooding. The campus girls are just for fun, we will come back in 4 or 5 years to these Senior 4s and 5s.

I originally intended to write about how different Ugandan masculinities revealed themselves in these conversations; but I now find this rather difficult. This is not to say that they are fixed, or impermeable. There are many variables involved, including one's regional origin, social background and an urban or rural upbringing. Yet it still seemed that masculinities were performed, within Kampala at least, along the axis of status that money brings. The strut of a 'big man' is the strut of a rich man. The male students know that they can't compete with the 'pregnant' men who arrives at the 'airport' (hall car-park) with their Mitsubishi Pajeros, not that this stops them trying. This ambivalent use of the word 'pregnant' suggests that masculinities can be demeaned by their association with female attributes, though this is my interpretation, and perhaps it just reveals student envy.

This same attitude - one of maintaining cultural power through economic superiority - explains why the men find it hard to be with a richer woman. As one male student put it, 'The issue becomes one of thinking about the cultural aspects in our situation where a man is culturally superior. Take sugar mummies, she has all the money, and so she says 'we are going here tomorrow'. You are lost, you are nothing, she decides everything'. Some men were nevertheless in relationships with women better off than them, indicating perhaps a tacit acceptance of changing times, or changing masculinities. As another pointed out, 'On campus everyone has the same source of income, but the women are frank, and are prepared to say that

they don't have any money, and will you pay for me, but us men just can't get the guts to say these things'. This might explain the several stories I heard of women surreptitiously passing money to their partners underneath the table to pay for drinks in a bar. The women were aware of the risk of upsetting the performance of these inviolate but fragile masculinities, as one confident female undergraduate explained:

Men are not expected to be the ones to pay, but say, if I went out with a man and then I got my money and paid the entrance fee, he would be mad the whole night, the African man, the typical African man. He'd say, 'This woman what does she think she is doing, she thinks I don't have the money that is why she had to pay.

Many of the male students vividly brought their concerns to life by using idioms drawn from other parts of Ugandan public culture, and reinterpreting trans-national discourses. Courting thus involved the '*presentation of your C.V.*', seduction necessitated a good deal of '*science*', but student poverty, '*structural adjustment on the pocket*', made the whole process near impossible. One common-room wit analogised submissive masculinities perfectly, metaphorically comparing them to a trade organisation (COMESA) that is attempting, without much success, to create an Eastern and Southern African economic union:

With the new economic order there is liberalisation, everything has been liberalised, even things of human nature, there is a free-market economy. If she is richer than you, she can hold you to ransom, by cutting off Aid, she will be an IMF, a World Bank, and you won't be a decision-maker, she will try to be boss. What we need is a men's conference, a men's Beijing. If the women form a market, then we should have a COMESA of men, an organisation of men.

Contrary to received wisdom, 'masculinity' should not be interpreted as a term that pertains directly to men, as a thing that men possess. Rather both women and men can be involved in the production and performance of masculine identities. In Uganda, rich and powerful women were sometimes referred to as '*Ssebo*' (Sir), called '*omukazi-omusajja*' (a woman-man), and it would be joked that a woman '*yakula sajja*' (she grew up as a man). It would seem that, while neither sex has to stick to the script, with transgression and reversal possible, this does not mean one can escape the one-dimensional dynamic through which 'money' seems to position people. Group conversations could not always capture the complex nuances of lived relationships, but the very repetitions of such a heterosexist discourse strengthened its normative power.

Predictably perhaps, women were little different from men when it came to talking business, and were equally coy about revealing their financial circumstances. Many of the female students at Makerere have been to Uganda's best schools and are from wealthy backgrounds, even if there

is a pressure not to openly display such wealth. Most were vociferous in their condemnation of joint accounts or the idea of matrimonial equality and open-ness. Yet this was not an admission of their submissive status, rather a desire to maintain their economic independence and freedom. As one female member of C.C.E. put it:

Me, I wouldn't show him my account because, and I've seen this, sometimes when a man might run out, he might run to your account which he can use to finance other girls, because I know someone who used the woman's account to marry another girl. If he did it to me I'd kill him, I'd kill him.

The male students also stressed how hard they would find it to go out with a more educated woman, again demonstrating the fragility of masculine power in certain situations. A rich man without a degree is still very much a big man in many circles, but he is also vulnerable to ridicule. I described in chapter two the fall of the 'ancien regime' in pre-colonial Uganda, precipitated by the introduction of white Missionary education and in particular by the presence of the *abasomi* - those who read - in the Kabaka's court. Ever since education has been a centrally important social idiom in Ugandan society, and great emphasis has been placed on its liberating and empowering potential. In general, men fear to become involved with women more educated than themselves, as this is just another power relation that they have to deal with.

In this section I have shown the powerful and sometimes colourful ways that money and commodities, or their lack, encapsulate and symbolise tensions and divisions within social relationships. I should be more careful in my description of these entities, for it soon becomes clear that the polarised division that is created between a commodity and a gift is actually a false one, as Appadurai points out (1986). Not only can one metamorphose into the other, but their very appearance as particular types of objects depends on the discursive mobilisation of the gift/commodity dichotomy. Perhaps then the next question to ask is how people represent objects as either 'gifts' or 'commodities' at a particular time for a particular purpose, and how that links with their views of 'love' and emotions in the relationship more broadly.

What's love got to do with it?

After this consideration of the fantastic signifying power and dreamlike potency of money, it is rather a comedown to realise that in Uganda the emotion of love holds little of this potency. Until recently it has been little discussed in the media, and certainly has none of the often transcendental symbolism in Uganda that it is accorded in Euro-American culture. The women's section of the New Vision newspaper might dwell on dispute resolution or on violence within

relationships, but rarely touched on the emotion of love itself. It is not that it is too much to hope for, but instead that the ideology of 'romantic love' had not been so pervasive or central to people's aspirations. Indeed in Luganda, there is no word for love distinct from that for friendship (*obukwano*, from *oku-kwana*, to befriend).

Times are, as always, changing. Valentine's Day is a new phenomenon in Kampala, and the streets are lined with the obligatory kitsch heart-embossed cards to buy for one's sweetheart. In Makerere, it is dreaded by males as a time of one-upmanship - what chance does a 'needy' student have of impressing his sweetheart with one solitary rose when at any time a heavyweight might cruise into the 'airport' in his turbo-cooled Pajero bearing a huge bouquet? Tension for the women too, as they hope someone might come 'benching' (visiting) or bring them flowers to show that they haven't been forgotten.

This is confirmed by a newspaper article entitled '*Valentine, Love, Fun, Money?*'⁶ which begins with a note of shock at this 'new-fangled culture', and continues with revealing reinterpretations of the notion of romantic love:

Ki-ki ekigudde mu kibuga? Abantu bagudde ddalu? (What on earth is going on in town these days? Has everyone gone mad?) a man asked me on Wednesday when our taxi stopped short of knocking down forty-eight roses in a bouquet that happened to be crossing the road (with the help of an innocent bespectacled boy).

Valentine's Day used to be a normal day like any other; it was just like my grandfather's birthday - a day of no importance to the general public. People would go to work, school, and run around chasing deals in town. Staying alive was so important that no-one had time to show how much they were in love with one another except at night, with the sound of gunshots and screams of terror from the neighbours in the background.

Now to see the way roses are grown, clipped, packaged and addressed, cards perfumed and faxed, you would not believe this thing had just fallen in town. Makerere University is a cauldron for these new-fangled cultures; the students over there pick them up quicker than contagion. This year was tricky - lecturers didn't go on strike so the boys had no time to look for money. Assets were mortgaged, some sold, and bank accounts went quickly arid, all in the name of love.

The rival Monitor newspaper was not to be outdone in its coverage of such a topical issue. On Valentine's day a year before, the paper carried an article on a rather similar theme:⁷

6 Simon Kaheru, Sunday Vision 11th February 1996.

7 Robert Wanyama, 'Love, Why do we love at all?' The Monitor, February 13th 1995.

After all they say love is the lodestone of love, or love is its own reward. But is it good business? I mean if love is blind, devoid of reason and makes the wise become foolish, is it a canny substitution for money? After all, though love does much, money does everything (or more). Love may make the world go round but money spins and makes you creator of your destiny. As the old adage goes 'Money doesn't mean everything to me, but give it to me, it can do'. Well, ask yourself and be honest at it, really doesn't love last as long as money endures? Many of us find out later (gone broke) that love is sweet at the beginning (with cash) but sour in the end (cashless).

In what were ostensibly articles about love, and the strange new practice of Valentine's Day being copied from Europe or America, one actually finds an extended meditation upon the finance one needs to make the romance happen. This is not quite the feast St. Valentine might have intended. Admittedly, such feast-days are increasingly criticised in other places for being 'over-commercialised'. Such opinions presume that underneath it all one can still find the unsullied emotion in all its purity.

Attentive to the ideologies shaping my own understanding of 'love', I realised that it was impossible to think about 'love' as a singular thing, separate from all the other aspects of social life with their commitments and rewards. So it was with the story I was told about love at Makerere. The emotion seemed dependent on a supplement in order to be fully realised - the necessary financial consideration. This is not to say that some of the male students would not talk about 'true love' - some swore that they had indeed found it. Yet in the discussion groups they would nearly always qualify their comments. As one gentle Nkrumah Hall student explained: *'If you show her you love her with the earthly things, then she knows it for true. No matter how much you love a woman, if you don't add in the top part of it, she won't stay. You are buying love - by using money you are strengthening the relationship - it shows you are responsible'*.

Were women more likely to talk about love? Again, there was a powerful ambivalence. Some were clearly 'in love', but couldn't show it. *'For me that thing of too much love, when you show a guy too much love, he takes it for granted, he knows that you are already there for him, and so he will go out with so many other girls, and that leaves you a wreck, a human wreck, you can even get hysteria'*. It is not then the case that 'romantic love' does not exist; rather that the emotion cannot be untangled from all sorts of other agendas. This is by no means a moral judgement, for perhaps the fantasy of loving bliss, of living 'happily ever after', is a dominant Euro-American discourse within which people downplay other issues in their relationships. Certainly the Ugandans I met were less caught up within the mystification of romantic love, with

all its illusions of individual choice and freedom. Intriguingly, one group of women students in Africa Hall said that they would rather have a boyfriend whom they could trust, than one who loved them; showing their wariness of the whole 'love' concept. Perhaps asking for love makes one too vulnerable, and so asking for money is a coded, safer way of expressing an emotion.

Some women readily acknowledged the physicality of their sentiment, *'If you love someone, truly love someone, I don't think that the relationship is based on taking, you give and take, it is like sharing, not really getting resources'*. And their view on how the men felt about this 'sharing'? *'Maybe if you are in love with someone, and you are giving something to him or her you don't feel cheated, it is out of love that you do it, you don't even think about it, it is because you love him or her'*. These are not isolated examples, and many would talk of feelings coming before money, or of money just reinforcing a loving relationship. Few talked of love in isolation.

It would seem that the very material aspect of emotion is clear here. The spectrum between commoditised, calculating relationships and those of selfless, altruistic love is one that can be easily crossed, even in the space of a sentence. This is partly because the gift-commodity dichotomy is an imagined one, though a very powerful one for all that. But the conversations also demonstrate the way that different relationships can be mediated through the same object, with the real and symbolic meanings of money shifting all the time, as the sentiments themselves shift. It thus makes sense to talk about the shifting and fluid dynamics of the relationship between two people, always positioning them and being performed by them, rather than to talk of their identities themselves. Given these new 'modern' understandings of love and money, the possible ways in which the two can be negotiated are seemingly much more open for debate. Such debates, even amongst students of the same gender, ranged from the consensual to the conflictual. Lengthier transcripts would have revealed the way that conversations shifted from one aspect of a relationship to another in the space of a few words. In what follows, especially given the frightening power of the *'Bamusakata'* (They beat her mercilessly) rap, I focus on the more conflictual aspects of these viewpoints and debates.

CONFLICT:

At one evening's discussion group, I asked the women students what they would never tell their boyfriend. There was one response I could not have anticipated - that they hated him. How could they hate their boyfriend? One woman explained:

OK not hating him as such, but perhaps we may have some personal motives instead of

love. To some extent you could be a dentist, you could like his money and not the person, and so you do not show that you really love the money, but instead you change and pretend that you love the person.

This sense of conflict and deep ambivalence about their relationships shocked me. Perhaps I had been too lulled into the sentimentality of romantic ideology. What were the consequences of such conflicts and tensions for men and women's views of themselves, and for the future? I do not wish to over-dramatise these dynamics, for they were also the source of much humour and light relief, in conversations and the media. This did not, however, take away from the great disagreements that the men and women had over the purpose and meaning of intimate relationships.

These tensions came out in all sorts of ways. One was the elaborate secrecy that would surround their financial and social affairs. Men announced that they couldn't even show a girlfriend which bar they went to with their mates. *'If you show her it, then she can manipulate you..she will know where the money for the home is going. She will come and be suspicious of the beautiful waitresses, and think you have another woman'*. There is another, even more frightening possibility, *'If she knows where you are every night, then she can pass through on her way through, check that you are there, and then head off to her own away match'*.

The female students certainly did not let the men wield all the power, even if they felt no obligation to pay for things themselves. But they were all too aware of the position they put themselves in. They even joked about the label the men use to denigrate them - saying that they are *'dentists'* extracting as much as they can. One woman did not deny it:

There is one mistake that men make, when they spend their money on you. They expect a payment, and in most cases it is in kind, it is in bed, but we don't want to, and if they want we can pay them back their money. If I am going out with them, at times it is a favour, because he will keep on bugging you, and next time you say 'Kammuyambe' (Let me help him) and so I go out, and he should be grateful, because at least you went out with him.

The women realise that whether a gift, a 'treat' or hard cash, the constant flow of things embody an ever-closer and ever-tightening relationship, and they have to be careful how they negotiate such objects. The threat that the debts might be collected, that they too might be *'sakata'*-ed, is ever present. It induces fear, and necessitates precaution:

Of course the first time I go out with a man, I have to get confidence, First of all I have some money in my bag, so when he gets funny, and this is the scary part of it, in case he

*gets funny, I've got my money and I can easily get a cab back. You don't go to a very secluded place, you go to a place that is a bit crowded, and you go with a person who is a gentlemen, none of these bayayi.*⁸

I found it hard not to be disturbed by peoples' cavalier agreement that, both in the past and in today's Uganda, 'No' does not mean 'No'. At the Makerere Arts conference in 1995 near-universal laughter greeted one man's explanation of just why this was the case. He explained what women mean when they say no... '*NEDDA, nedda, kyokka bambi*': '*NO...no..oh...oh...you naughty thing.*

One last column on campus life from the New Vision presents a frightening, if possibly apocryphal, image of this refusal to take no for an answer, with violent coercion being the consequence:⁹

He invites her for a round of benching during one of these festivities - those days when you take occasion to swing your loved one. She arrives and the rat¹⁰ is all hospitality. Drinks here, eats there, all spiced up with a lot of foolish talk. As the night wears on, our friend makes the first move. Things are negotiated for about an hour. Nothing doing. Next he coerces and getting weary of that, gets down to force. It is an unwritten rule around here that for good manners people should eat quietly. This one was being difficult. Well after four hours of wrestling there emerges a bedraggled lady with not much of the lady left in her.

The article is written in a somewhat admiring tone, and there is a very clear assumption that accepting a flow of goods is tantamount to accepting that a relationship exists. This relationship would seem to legitimate the man's use of violence. Was this reasoning one that the male students would accept? On the whole, those I met were all too aware of their '*needy*' status (the University's classification for 'poor' students, which entitled them to a special living allowance), and so could hardly imagine themselves in such a dominant position. Being conscious that they were in no position to impress women students, the men directed their anger at the women for accepting the favours from others. They joked about themselves being in a position of '*structural adjustment*' - simultaneously linking their own dilemmas to those of a continent unable to escape the numbing strictures of economic dependency. The one consolation for their low status was the realisation that one day they too would be able to pick and choose, whilst the women might well be 'stuck' within marriage. This was small consolation. The men turned their

⁸ 'Bayayi' is Luganda slang for ruffians, louts and other low-life characters.

⁹ Robert Kasozi, 'The Campus Survivor' 19th May 1995.

¹⁰ The term 'Rat' is one used by other students to describe the residents of Mitchell Hall.

anger on the women, ensuring that the mixed discussions were heated events, with little common ground evident.

I am wary of drawing too many conclusions about the operation of power in these relationships. One could argue that these examples reveal a misogynist masculinity that always gets its way. Yet it seems women also have a good deal of power in being able to manipulate and 'extract' things from men, and are able to maintain their own sense of agency. The position of accepting is not always a vulnerable one, especially if one can deconstruct a gift as being merely a bribe, thereby denying the need to reciprocate. I hesitate to continue this latter argument too far, partly because it is hard to avoid the compulsive logic that giving does seem to empower, but also because - discursive or not - the threat of male sexual violence is ever-present. There are perhaps other responses open to women, and I often heard stories about women standing up to their man and fighting back. The rare case of women splashing acid on their menfolk, or indeed attempting to '*bobbitt*' them, would capture and terrify the male social imagination, as I described in chapter five.

Comparing and contextualising:

To do this research I immersed myself in, and learnt from, a particular social world. Looking back on these focus groups, the aspects which intrigued me most were those that contrasted vividly with my own lived experiences. In Britain, I would think, men would not always agree to pay - but then I realised that mine too was an age, race and class-specific view. Fifty years ago middle-class men might have had little choice as most women were not expected to work, and even today I am sure there are many who like to 'treat' their girlfriends regularly. Does this invalidate the research? I do not think so, for though this contrast made the phenomenon more explicit to me, it is the prominence and importance that Ugandans attribute to the whole gendered dynamic that makes it important to think about. Marilyn Strathern writes that 'knowledge (might be defined as) the transformation of already existing awareness..shifting is instrumental to the perception of significances' (1995, 6). It is the very act of contrasting that brings out the phenomenon at hand.

One of the inevitable risks I face in this chapter is of implicitly racialising my analysis, presuming a Ugandan sexuality, no matter how partial my conclusions. I am conscious of the way racial power has long been maintained through control over sexuality. In the American

context, Cornel West (1993) emphasises the importance of opening up conversations about sexuality across race barriers as a way of challenging the racist myths of black sexuality. His emphasis on the importance of breaking down sexual taboos resonates with the occasional attempt made in the Ugandan media to challenge constricting taboos around homosexuality. Discussions of conflictual gender relations in African-American society also benefit from the advice that bell hooks and Cornell West (1991) offer each other in trying to come to terms with the critical divisions within their own community.

I suggest that, within the anthropological call to reflection and location, an implicitly comparative move is made, and the mirror is also turned on ourselves, revealing our own biases and positions. The saying 'Not for love nor money' takes on a different resonance as we realise that neither term quite means what we presume it does, and that there are connections between them that a Euro-American romantic ideology struggles to erase. As I move back and forth in my research, between 'theory' and 'description', between Uganda and my own experiences, I am constantly making implicit comparisons. I chose to focus on relationships in order to further explore the differences and similarities within them, but I must be wary of even presuming 'relationships' as a grounding variable. As Strathern (1995) points out, all anthropological investigations beg the question of the ontological presumptions they necessarily make.

If knowledge is created through 'shifting contexts' (Strathern 1995), then historicising these contexts is a way of bringing the present into relief, acknowledging the political and cultural legacies that make up a history of the present. These include the influence of various Islamic and Christian missionary teachings on interpretations of sexual morality, together with the importance of 'bridewealth' practices in determining material flows within social relationships.

There is a large historical literature on the role of colonial religious practices in reshaping subjectivities and controlling sexuality throughout Africa. Writing about evangelical power in Botswana, the Comaroffs powerfully show how 'the construction of the 'private' domain was fundamental to the propagation of the (missionary) social order' (1992, 293), describing how the missionaries encouraged 'civilised' dress and 'Christian' domestic architecture. Within Uganda, Rowe (1966) reveals the huge cultural impact of missionary expansion, whilst Summers (1991) describes how colonial maternity services combined public health programmes with evangelism and a racialising sexual morality. Lyons (n.d.) argues that early colonial STD prevention strategies were founded on a belief in Africans' uncontrolled sexual activity, suggesting that this shaped peoples' responses both then and more recently to medical intervention. Religious

groupings still have much influence in contemporary Uganda, both in the political sphere (Hansen and Twaddle 1995b, Taylor 1958) and on everyday lives, and many Makerere students attended popular *balokole* (the saved) religious revival meetings. These new churches often had strict rules about drinking alcohol and about sexual intimacy, and often students were encouraged to choose boyfriends or girlfriends who were also 'saved'. This recurrent campaign for moral regeneration began in the 1930s, if not before (Ward 1995, Pirouet 1978), and one might suggest that its idioms of social renewal and moral dedication might explain the popular uptake of similarly fervent developmental ideals. Whilst many of the students quoted here may have been practising Christians, their discussions on the links between 'money' and 'love' never explicitly invoked a Christian morality, and I would question any simple attribution of the debate to a religious ambivalence over the commodity form.

Discussions around 'bridewealth' have long been central to anthropological debates, even if primarily as a gendered means of comparing kinship systems cross-culturally. The practice of marriage-avoidance was first explored by Tylor, amongst others (Stocking 1996), and by the time of the publication of *African Political Systems* (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940), classificatory kinship relations were being closely linked to patterns of political power. In the literature on Buganda, however, attention to kinship issues was eclipsed by interest in the changing forms of monarchical political power (Fallers 1964). With regard to Ganda marriage Fallers (1960, 57) comments simply that *'bridewealth was paid, but never in enormous amounts...and it was not sufficient to prevent many marriages from breaking up'*. She goes on to acknowledge the churches' role in discouraging bridewealth payments, stating that *'the old practices of bride wealth and polygyny have been thrown aside'* (ibid) and pointing out instead the expense of 'modern' church marriages (incurred by the groom and his family) and the frequency of divorce.

Discussing only Ganda traditions here might be dangerous, hinting of a search for an ethnicising and 'culturalist' explanation to link the past with the present. After all, many of the students quoted in this chapter did not see themselves as Ganda. Makerere now attempts to reflect the social composition of Uganda as a whole, yet back in 1946 when college statutes were announced, Ganda students were by far the largest social grouping in the college, making up more than 30% of the 140 students who were gathered from all over East Africa. Given the history of Ganda participation in British imperial expansion (Roberts 1962, Twaddle 1993) and the still powerful dominance of Ganda cultural idioms within Kampala and much of Uganda, it seems important to turn also to Roscoe's important early ethnography *'The Baganda'* (1911) to attend to the history of these social practices.

In the chapter 'Marriage' Roscoe dwells on the topic of chiefly and kingly unions for several pages before turning to the '*custom followed by common people in obtaining wives*' (ibid, 87). He comments, '*Love did not enter into marriage contracts, though men and women become attached to one another, and a woman would cling to her husband in danger*' (ibid). His description of everyday life for women is brusque, '*Women married young, on entering their teens. A girl at thirteen showed signs of maturity, and she would have an offer of marriage at that age*'. It seems that women had little choice in the matter.

The procedure of courtship, according to Roscoe, was simple. '*The man would go to the girl's brother, and tell that he wished to marry his sister, or on the other hand, he might approach the girl directly, or might meet her and intimate by a small present of meat or salt, or some such trifle, that he would like to marry her*' (ibid, p87) Here one finds a useful historical echo, reminding us that the 'treats' that contemporary male students try so hard to offer women are not simply displays of wealth, but also ways of establishing relationships and even intimacy. Perhaps women also gained a realisation of themselves as being of value to their father and brothers. Too much focus on consumption in the context of modernity might lead one to neglect these older cultural idioms.

Roscoe goes on to talk about the bridewealth, and the way that the man would have to beg his friends and relatives to support him, often taking up to twelve months to collect the goods together. Throughout this period, he says, the groom would visit the woman's mother, '*taking small presents of salt, or a barkcloth for his bride, and hearing about her at the same time*' (ibid, 89). The ceremony itself involves many further exchanges of tokens and presents. The emphasis, if we are to heed Roscoe, is on the longer process through which an intimate relationship develops.

In case one might think that woman has no say in all this, Roscoe does allow her a little agency of her own. '*If, after a few months, a woman disliked her husband, she took the first opportunity of escaping to her own relations without her husband's knowledge. He was then under the necessity of explaining his conduct; if the wife was in the right, he was obliged to give her a present before she would return to him*' (ibid, 92). Yet this was little consolation, for Roscoe adds that after marriage the woman was treated much like property, with endless burdensome duties. If she ran away more than two or three times, for whatever reason she would be abandoned by her husband and generally known as a '*bad woman*' (ibid, 92). This masculine objectification of female morality has changed little (Obbo 1980, Ogden 1995).

I am not trying to suggest that contemporary social dynamics and cultural idioms in Kampala and Makerere directly derive from these earlier practices, though there are many ritual aspects - such as the *Kwanjula* (Introduction) - which are still performed and relived. Rather these fragments of the past can enable one to put contemporary discourses into a different and unexpected perspective. I want to heed Louise White's call to '*listen to these voices as different types of storytelling*', to see these extracts as '*genres, formulaic stories structured by set elements and conversations*' (White, 1995), stories which may have relevance for the present.

Moving forward, the next clues I draw upon are those gathered from early Makerere archives. The history of Makerere merits attention in itself, but acclamatory texts such as Margaret MacPherson's 'They Built for the Future' (1964) cover over some of the tensions and divisions that went with the forging of a 'modern' academic University. More intriguing are the fragments of campus life, particularly student attitudes to each other and to authority figures, that one gets from the personal files of her husband Alistair who was Makerere's Dean in the late 1940s.¹¹ There one finds a long-running and anxious correspondence over the first student College Dance held in 1947. It was suggested by students keen to have at least some little contact with the opposite sex, and perhaps by the authorities eager to set precedents for healthy social engagement. After some disagreement within the administration, the rules of engagement were finally displayed:

*1. Ladies invited should know how to dance.
They should have as far as possible the spirit of the party.*

*2. Visitors (i.e. ladies, for no men were to be invited) invited must be respectable.
They must not be such as to disgrace the name of the students and the intention of the dance.*

The rules continue in this fashion, ending with the admonition that no person might stay in the refreshment room for more than 15 minutes. It would seem that the College authorities felt morally responsible for the students, especially as the dance was a controversial and unprecedented event. It was a seeming success and became a regular fixture.

This sort of attitude is found also in some of the discussions over the Hall rules. Women

¹¹ All the following extracts are taken from Dean Alistair MacPherson's files of the 'Welfare and Discipline Committee' which he chaired, and which are now stored in the Africana section in Makerere library.

were first admitted to the University in 1945, and the first women's hall, Mary Stuart, began in 1946. In November 1947 the warden issued her rules, beginning '1) *Women students are not allowed to entertain European guests without the presence of the warden.*' There is a gentle ambiguity here about just whose morality and honour she is trying to protect here. In the male halls, there was also a long-running debate about whether students should receive guests in their rooms, or in the special visiting rooms. I imply that there was a good deal of doubt amongst the college administration as to the appropriate level of autonomy for the students. This was acknowledged by Margaret MacPherson, who described Alistair and her efforts to create a welcoming and liberal multi-racial atmosphere in their living-quarters, and the way that this was disapproved of by some British expatriates.¹²

Part of the issue for those in the college administration was the fact that in the 1940s and 1950s Makerere was undergoing a slow metamorphosis from a school to a university college, with all the changes in attitudes and responsibilities that this implied. Some found it easier to negotiate than others. The principal, W.D. Lamont, seemed to be having particular difficulties, as this letter to the Committee for Student Welfare showed :

My criticisms come under three headings:

- 1) I believe that at Makerere rules are continually and openly broken by a majority of the students, to whom it seems nothing is done about it.*
- 2) I believe that at Makerere there is much drunken-ness, heavy drinking and immorality, and that the students have the impression that the authorities are unconcerned and uninterested.*
- 3) I believe that a great deal of teaching envisages a stage of development which the majority of students have not yet reached; that it passes over their heads and leaves little but an impression of great knowledge.*

He continues by discussing recent examples of drunken-ness, before concluding:

1), 2) and 3) seem to hang together in this respect, that each is a symptom of an attempt at grandness. Our students are trying to be what they are not, Makerere is trying to be what it is not. The result is terrifying to me, to other Europeans whose judgement I value, and to a few really good students whose judgement matters.

The state of affairs is accepted by Makerere students today as the hall-mark of true attainment..ie to a student it may seem right to keep rules, to stay sober, to be taught, but we are not schoolboys,. We are men, just like the Men at Oxford and Cambridge. We have no use for the rules. We get drunk when we like and do what we like. We are the leaders of the African people.

The explicitly racialised comparison here with a 'real' European University is revealing, as

¹² Interview carried out in and around Windermere, February 18th 1997.

is the representation of what an appropriate African masculinity (with a small 'm') and demeanour should resemble. Makerere students should remember that they are not 'real' white Oxford Men. Predictably, this caused a stir, neatly hinted at by MacPherson (1964) as the University's 'adolescent' stage. Not everyone agreed, and in a private letter to the Dean from an outgoing Head of Hall, one gets a rather different view:

In fact, I am inclined to think that a certain opportunity for sowing wild oats is a valuable experience as the sooner one learns that excesses have a bad effect on one's work and health the better, and the amount and the quality of the work they have to do here soon becomes apparent.

At this early stage of the College's life it is harder to work out the feelings of the undergraduates - for the early editors of the official College Magazine 'Makerere' carefully distil the realities of student culture in order not to sour the old members' nostalgia. Later, however, the newly-formed College Student Guild produced its own paper 'The Undergraduate'. More honest in its depiction of student life, it ran articles on the anti-communist mood of the time, perhaps because they did not dare touch on the more pressing anti-colonial question. On the whole Makerere students were under strong pressure to be apolitical, and the Guild was initially controlled by the college administration. 'The Undergraduate' had the occasional revealing snippet on gender relations, with a column entitled *College Portraits* (March 1956) reading:

*To the residents of Mary Stuart Hall after 10.30 pm,
Stone walls do not a prison make; nor iron bars a cage.*

One copy of the Northcote Hall magazine had an equally quixotic and revealing aside, explaining the words CLUB and PILSNER, otherwise known as Uganda's most popular brands of beer:

*CLUB - Can Ladies Understand Bills?
PILSNER - People In Love Should Never Entertain Rogues.*

From an early stage, articles and texts hint at an 'unhealthy' relationship between the sexes on the 'Hill', but one has to wait until the 1960s and the publication of the more outspoken student newspaper 'The Makererean' to get a fuller insight. It is this period that Margaret McPherson described in a recent interview as *'a period of loosening up of morals, as well as a feeling for the men of being dominant, with a notion of "I'll go as far as I can", and even blackmail in sexual relations'*. She noted however that *'there were thankfully few illegitimate children'*. In the late 1960s there were many discussions and debates on this topic, mostly provoked by men, angry and frustrated at the lack of social mixing between the genders. An

article on one such debate entitled *'Makerere Students Unromantic'* revealed some of the issues at stake:¹³

The panel which talked about the relationship between men and women at Makerere said that there were healthy and unhealthy ways of relating by which the latter means the 'constant demand for goods' on the male sector. The women responded. Is it not contradictory on the part of the panel to admit social integration is lacking and at the same time endorse the fact that 'goods are constantly demanded'.

The men were having none of this. The girls who come to Makerere are not the romantic type. They have been screened twice at Ordinary level and HSC level. The most romantic have been screened off. It is this mediocre group of geniuses that continue. By nature and character, therefore they are hard, repulsive with an unsurpassed degree of eccentricity. The women did not let such gross insults put them off, responding in like manner, The male students are likewise a non-romantic group. They are a reserved, clumsy, careless group who are ignorant of the techniques of handling the women folk.

I could multiply examples of these, but perhaps one more will suffice, taken from a survey in the same newspaper.¹⁴ As a reminder, *'the Box'* is the nickname for Mary Stuart Hall, the women's hall; hence its inhabitants are *'Boxers'*. The article was based on a survey:

47% of the male subjects have been to the Box for private and official affairs, at least once. 30% wanted to go to the Box, but feared to go there alone or without being invited! 7% have girlfriends in the Box!! 52% liked the idea of having Boxers for girlfriends. 'But you see Mister, Boxers are expensive to maintain' one of the subjects pointed out.

I reminded him (he seemed to have forgotten) that actually it is the Government which maintains boys and girls here, not individuals! 'Mister, you know what I mean' my friend hit back. He left me still confused.

These extracts suggest that gender troubles and conflicts are not new, and can be traced a fair way back. Comparisons with the university milieu of thirty or even fifty years ago reveal that, whilst the specific language and idioms of conflict might be new, the issues are not. These tensions may be a reflection of societal concerns more broadly, not a specifically Makererean cultural legacy, but in the context of the AIDS epidemic the questions it raises are posed more starkly.

¹³ *'Makerere Students Unromantic?'* The Makererean 17th Nov 1967.

¹⁴ A. Medi Kawuma The Makererean, 18th March 1969.

Conflicts / Resolutions?

In this last part of the chapter I want to suggest that this research (perhaps like all theorising) inevitably also has a political dimension. As Bhabha notes, 'negotiations between politics and theory make it impossible to think of the place of the theoretical as a metanarrative claiming a more total form of generality' (1994, 30). The contexts which we draw upon and the conclusions that we make are never neutral, and cannot be viewed in solely academic terms, but always have to be considered in relation to one's political projects. This is something that I have tried to make explicit throughout this thesis. Here I briefly touch on my own objectives in engaging, along with Richard Ssewakiryanga, with Makerere's gender troubles.

Before the rap song *Bamusakata* provoked my thinking, I had already been shocked by the seeming lack of communication across the genders within Makerere. I had been to several debates on the position of women in society, finding male students getting great pleasure in shouting women down or laughing them off stage with sexual innuendo. Some women felt little choice but to join in with the laughter, though others clearly felt silenced. One debate was on whether polygamy was relevant today in African culture. The level of debate can be seen from a comment, made to uproarious laughter, that *'if a man has 20 wives, it will take up all his time trying to fulfil their needs, and so he wouldn't sleep around, protecting him from AIDS'*. I began to wonder whether a more sober and constructive level of engagement was possible.

Perhaps AIDS can only be faced with humour and levity. Certainly students knew all about the risks, but does that knowledge lessen the sustained degree of distrust in many sexual relationships? I felt unable, as an outsider, to engage in these public debates directly, but as I shared the experiences of my male friends and the dilemmas money presented them, I deliberated over an appropriate form of engagement and solidarity. On the one hand as a white British research student I was clearly positioned very differently within trans-national fields of power, but on the other we shared similar experiences of a university culture with its rigid social hierarchy. And so Richard and I felt it was appropriate to explore the level of communication existing between the male and female students on the issues that they felt so strongly about.

After organising the single-gender group discussions, we therefore attempted to persuade female and male students to meet up and present each other with their views. These exchanges took some organising, as both sides were understandably anxious not to lose face, nor to be too open about their own interests. Yet they also welcomed the potential to get their side of the debate across. After hesitant starts, and the lubrication provided by alcohol, a dialogue soon

developed. They were 'hot' affairs, as Ugandans would say, and initial distrust gave way to outright, if good-natured, confrontation. My initial and naive hope had been that, once people had become aware of the performance of gender in relation to money, they would be able to displace them and find different subjectivities and more accommodating ways of relating. Unsurprisingly, the intertwining of the material and the emotional is not easily disentangled. I began to realise that both sides benefitted from, as well as being constrained by, the situation. Both masculinities and femininities seemed strengthened through these material flows.

It was intriguing to listen to people's responses to the debate, with one woman stating that, *'I always thought this was a traditional belief that was worldwide, that women are supposed to be given money and to be dependent on men, I think it is a worldwide belief'*. Less encouragingly, I asked the students whether it was a dynamic that could change. The responses were rapid, *'Maybe in the next century..now that Beijing has taken place...after the next Beijing... after 10 Beijings'*.

A small patch of dialogue from one discussion group illustrates the students' ambivalent attitudes to money in their relationships, and their ability to live with contradictions. People are compelled to take up relational positions within discourses, and people could happily justify holding two very different viewpoints. These would depend on the economic status of each person in a relationship, and the way that the material transactions are therefore understood, either as genuine signs of affection or coercive bribes:

Female 1: (Talking about the competition amongst men for women) : But competition is healthy.

Female 2: Yes, but we should learn to be honest with ourselves and our lovers. I think that is all it takes, for if you are honest, then you would be happy, everyone should give it a try.

Male: Does being honest mean that you don't like money?

Female 2: If you are honest with yourself, and you don't have money, then you don't have it, and you shouldn't strain, but if you say 'I have money and I want to spend', then spend please.

The women were all too aware of the fragility of masculinities and their dependence on economic security, for as one woman pointed out, *'It seems that the gentlemen have this lack of confidence feeling, now they are saying that every girl wants money, but if they were to just make advances, some girls are ready for them'*. The women insisted that if he had no money it would not be an issue. Yet they did not deny the accusation that, if there was money around, then they would accept the treats. One woman revealed the partiality of this view. *'Men'*, she announced, *'If you have*

a girlfriend, and you are sure she is in love with you, then let her go out and get the money elsewhere and enjoy it, just enjoy it. If you know she loves you, and she's not sleeping with him (ie the other man), if you love her you just have to trust her...she can make money for the both of you!' This would seem to be quite an assertion of female masculinity and power, but also a challenge to that of the man. Perhaps it was no wonder that a man's sense of worth was so dependent on just what he was worth.

Women are also under pressure to demonstrate their desirability and femininity to others. One man pointed out that, *'I think that one principal factor undermining sincere love is that of peer group pressure, and girls are very much prone to this. Take two girls in a shared room, where one goes to Lords (the exclusive nightclub in Kampala) and the other to the Guild (the student canteen), and as they discuss it, then one has the feeling that she must be inferior.'* At this the girls could only laugh, with some boldly hinting to the men that they would like invitations to the big reggae concert in Kampala the week after. One woman did attempt a defence, *'Now let us be realistic, yes money is needed, but when we talk of love, money may be needed, but the emphasis is not on money, rather call it 'part and parcel', the emphasis is not on money, but on the feeling.'* And so the contradictions remained. The conversation went on and on, both sides all too aware of the contrary positions they found themselves in, but justifying them nevertheless, rather than looking for any form of compromise. Money and emotional relationships were irreducibly entangled.

I suggest that the female students had more to lose in the short term (i.e. financially) from not performing an accepting femininity than the men did from not performing a generous and distributive masculinity, but both sides needed the implicit acquiescence of the other for this dynamic to be possible. At the end of one joint session, there was lots of jokey room-number swapping between men and women, and talk of how they would now be able to have a more liberated relationship - but I doubt that they would have been able to fight against the unwritten conventions and normative discourses for long. Inevitably, the dissimulation and dissonance will go on, possibly exaggerated by the ever stronger inducements to consume that seem part of a Ugandan and African modernity (Hansen 1995, Weiss 1996, Burke 1996).

As the long evenings of conversation finished, I realised the limited nature of my intended engagement. Even if people had not previously been aware of the links they implicitly made between 'love' and 'money', their new level of consciousness was hardly going to change things in itself. In the space of a few words the students were able to discursively transform thoroughly socialised gifts into asocial commodities, to decide on the emotional value of a material thing, and to subject

sentiment to a cost-benefit analysis. Becoming aware of this process made such everyday negotiations over 'love' and 'money' no easier and no less necessary. It was this realisation that brought me up against the limits of any awareness-raising programmes or discussion forums. The realm of the social is irreducible to, and inseparable from, that of the material. As Butler (1993, 68) notes, 'language and materiality are not opposed, for language both is and refers to that which is material, and what is material never fully escapes from the process by which it is signified'. The seductive wiles of a bulging wallet, with all its consequences for the performance of dominant masculinities and femininities, were too strong to ignore. Yet so too was the hope that love would, after all, conquer all.

CODA

There are no grand conclusions. Hurried attempts at unearthing relevances for policy formulations would be equally misplaced. The rhetorical 'Where do we go from here?' begs questions about both the assumed 'we' and the simplistic ascription of political agency implied.

What then has been my purpose? What am I 'for'? Whilst it may be read differently, I suggest that this thesis has hinted at the complex power relations imbricated within the signification and discursive practices of 'development' at one particular post-colonial moment. I have also paid attention to the histories and genealogies of the other aspects of a gendered national modernity that such a ramifying concept as development is inevitably intertwined with.

I hope in the last six chapters to have demonstrated what Stuart Hall describes as 'the tension between a refusal to close the field, to police it and, at the same time, a determination to stake out some positions within it and argue for them' (1992a, 278). Throughout I have attempted to demonstrate how racialised and Eurocentric envisionings of 'development' are actually imagined, signified, interpreted and practiced in different ways. In the same way that I try to depict negotiations and contestations of gendered understandings of the nation and modernity, I suggest that these dynamics do open up the possibility for emancipatory political change.

I have tried constantly to attend to the politics of theory, 'not theory as the will to truth, but theory as a set of contested, localised, conjunctural knowledges, which have to be debated in a dialogical way' (ibid, 286). This has involved working within anthropology's colonial legacies and the ethical dilemmas of ethnography, in order to demonstrate the cultural idioms and practices through which the projects of 'progress' and 'development' are subverted and redefined. I have tried to demonstrate that culture is always about power, so as to explore the cultural politics of development in both its symbolic and material aspects. I suggest that this attention to cultural politics encourages an awareness that 'development' is not a thing in itself, to be studied separately from other aspects of power and social relations. As the ideological best-seller of the late twentieth century, a globalising understanding of 'development' seems to infuse all our lives, and only a vigilant attention to the way we reiterate or manipulate such understandings will enable us to re-work its effects and imagine more egalitarian and inclusive futures.

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