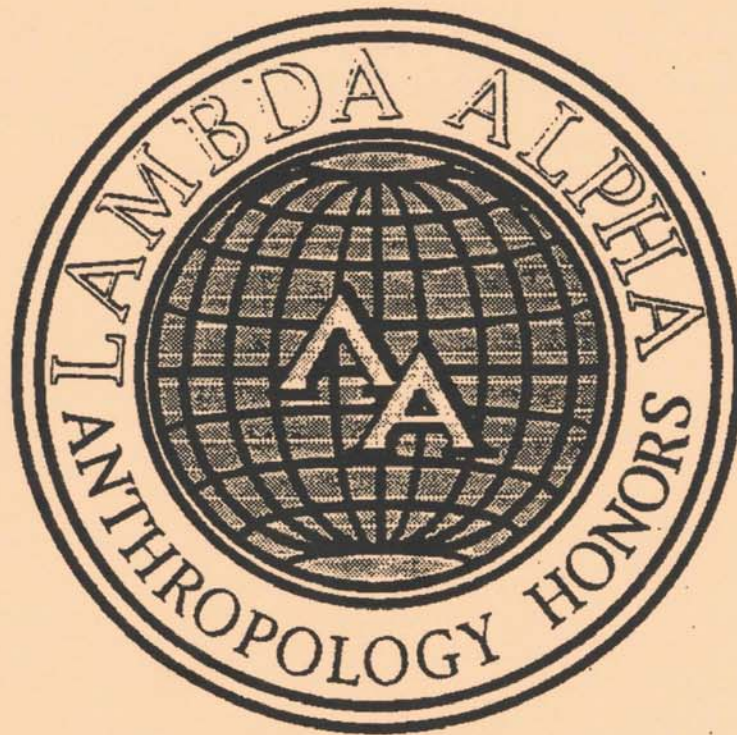


WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

Lambda Alpha Journal

Student Journal of the National Anthropology Honor Society

VOLUME 34, 2004



PEER H. MOORE-JANSEN, EDITOR IN CHIEF

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABOUT THE LAMBDA ALPHA JOURNAL

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I am pleased to announce the completion of the thirty fourth volume of the Lambda Alpha Journal, a publication of the National Anthropology Honors Society. This year's volume presents four papers with topics in archaeological and cultural anthropology. Volume 34 opens with an article by Abigail Dumes addressing the role of Cameroonian *tontine* (a form of rotating savings and credit association) as an effective economic survival strategy. The next article is by Andrew Schumann and provides an ethnographic account of the physical therapist-patient relationship.

Immediately following, Janelle Mort gives us her own perspective on the relationship between spirituality and activism, specifically social and political activism. The next article is by Colin Quinn addressing the use-life and use-wear patterns of gunflints. Finally, we conclude this volume with three book reviews in the area of biological anthropology.

This year's journal concludes with an updated list of chapters and advisors, followed by a recognition of past award recipients of the National Graduate Research Grants winners, National Scholarship Award winners, and the National Dean's List Scholarship winners. The Journal staff welcomes all of the recent chapters and all new members to the society. We also want to congratulate this year's award winners and wish them success in their future endeavors.

As a chapter sponsor and Journal Editor-In-Chief, I wish to extend my appreciation to all of the advisors and officers of the Lambda Alpha chapters across the nation. I would also like to thank the student authors, and the student editor, Ms. Veronica Hinkle, for their contributions to the completion of this volume.

Sincerely,

Peer H. Moore-Jansen
Editor-In-Chief

*ON DOIT SURVIVRE (ONE MUST SURVIVE):
THE ROTATING SAVINGS AND CREDIT ASSOCIATION
AS AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE WOMEN OF
TSKINKUP QUARTER IN DSCHANG, CAMEROON*

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Introduction

Morning opens slowly on the Dschang *quartier* of Tsinkup¹ informally refers to a person's neighbors and neighboring establishments and also formally designates a territorial unit of chiefly governance. A *quartier* is also a unit of state administration (Feldman-Savelsburg 1999:59). At six o'clock, its women, already thirty minutes into their day's work, are still moving in and out of the night's lingering shadows, shadows that make mute the bolder purples and greens and reds of midday. Claudette, her chest held forward to support the weight of her still-sleeping daughter swathed in cloth to her back, washes yesterday's unfinished laundry in a small white bucket. Across the road, Madeleine pauses to tuck a fallen braid into her pink head covering before continuing to iron a dress just-stitched. And next door, Saraphine, her body neatly creased in half at the hips, reheats the breakfast of the last night's dinner by pushing a small piece of wood beneath the well-worn and fire-blackened pot that is perfectly balanced on a three-stoned hearth. Within an hour, Claudette, with her daughter in tow, will walk to stall 115 of Dschang's market to sell the rice and beans that she purchased last week; Madeleine, her eyebrows blackened and lips made redder, will walk her steadfast, high-heeled pace to her seamstress shop in town where she will tirelessly sew until nightfall; and Saraphine, a bucket of fertilizer in one hand and a hoe in the other, will begin the thirty-minute climb to her garden, its turned rows dug perpendicular to the grain of the mountain.

The pace and rhythm of the days of these three women are uniquely tuned to the varying demands of their individual lives, but, like all of the women of Tsinkup *quartier*, Claudette, Madeleine, and Saraphine are each responsible for their household's domestic labor, including cooking, cleaning, childcare, and the cultivation of food crops for home consumption. Indeed, the time and energy that the women of Tsinkup invest in their domestic labor is considerable. "On travaille toujours," one female Tsinkup resident said of a woman's work.² But despite their significant, and sometimes exclusive,

occupation with household activities and food crop cultivation, the women of Tsinkup *quartier* are also financially responsible for certain household expenditures. For example, while a man is characteristically responsible for medical expenses and school fees, it is to the woman that the expenditures of her own clothing, her children's clothing, and food preparation necessities such as oil and bouillon flavor cubes fall. Where, then, do women procure the funds to fulfill their financial obligations?

Although few Tsinkup women have salaried or well-paid jobs, almost all of them participate in small-scale income-generating activities, including petty trading, hairdressing, and tailoring. Indeed, of the fourteen Tsinkup women with whom I spoke, only one did not also seek income. More often than not, the amount of income that the women of Tsinkup earn barely meets the minimum needed for their household's survival. For example, Marie, a Tsinkup woman with six children below the age of fourteen, began selling rice and beans at the market only six months ago. When I asked her why she had decided to begin selling, she puzzled over my choice of the word "decide." "Decidé?" she asked. "Je n'ai pas décidé. On doit manger, non? On doit survivre." Marie continued, "On ne gagne pas beaucoup. Quelquefois, on gagne rien."⁴

In light of insufficient income-generating activities, how do Tsinkup women, then, work to insure the survival of their households? One of the most effective strategies by which women fulfill their financial obligations is the *tontine*, an informal but highly structured association that at once provides financial security and social solidarity to its members. The Cameroonian *tontine*, a type of rotating credit and savings association (ROSCA), offers a collective pool of aggregated funds that each contributing member receives in its entirety on a rotating basis. Engaged in by both men and women, and experimented with by young children mirroring their elders, the *tontine* is the financial component of the larger *reunion*, a regularly held gathering of individuals who share certain similarities—for example, the same village, the same neighborhood, and the same profession—and who depend on one another for support in times of need. As a pillar of Cameroonian social and economic organization, the *reunion* and its *tontine* are both a marker of social legitimacy and a means of economic mobility.

The *tontine* as an economic survival strategy for Cameroonian women is the focus of this article. An indigenous system that has accommodated and adapted to a monetary economy, the *tontine* has trumped the predictions of skeptical scholars who, in the early 1960s, underestimated its efficacy and

savings potential. Forty years later, the *tontine* flourishes where formal financial institutions flounder. Although both men and women participate in *tontines*, women participate more frequently and for different reasons than men. In this article, I explore the cultural context of the women who participate in the *tontine* and the ways in which the cultural context informs the operation of the *tontine*. I am also interested in the recipe for the *tontine*'s success. For example, what are the mechanics of the *tontine*? What is the *tontine*'s social function? What edge does the *tontine* have over formal financial institutions?

Ultimately, a thorough and more holistic investigation of the *tontine* in both Cameroon and France has positive implications for the improvement of the approach to Women in Development (WID), a movement specifically concerned with the alleviation of female poverty and the elevation of female status in "developing" countries such as Cameroon.⁵⁶

Although aimed at the "improvement" of women's status, WID policies have been miserably misguided, culturally inappropriate, and ineffectively managed. In fact, scholars argue that WID policies have but further marginalized women in "developing" countries (Ardener 1995; Niger Thomas 1995; Wright 1990). Part of the problem is that WID policies are permeated with sexist assumptions that spring from a Western patriarchy. These assumptions include (1) that households are basically nuclear and monogamous, (2) that household members pool their incomes, and (3) that there is a uniform division of labor in which men earn money outside of the home and women stay at home as "housewives" (Gordon 1996:136).

Unfortunately, such assumptions are at odds with Cameroonian cultural realities, in which households are "traditionally" extended and polygynous, in which spouses are financially autonomous, and in which women are responsible for a great amount of labor, both in the private and public sectors. WID initiatives will be culturally appropriate and truly "successful" only if they are context specific and if they are actively guided by the cultural priorities of the targeted population. If, in fact, the *tontine* is as efficacious, resilient, and adaptive as it appears to be, if, in fact, it is an effective bridge between Cameroonian cultural priorities and the demands of a global capitalist market, then it would behoove the leaders of both external and internal WID organizations to pay attention to the pre-existing infrastructure of the *tontine*. Rather than replace or substitute the *tontine* with a culturally inappropriate system of finance, rather than implement initiatives that work in conflict with the *tontine*, the charge of WID organizations in Cameroon should be to use the *tontine* to find new ways in which to finance WID initiatives. In the remainder of this introduction, I describe and discuss the

setting of my research site in Cameroon. I also discuss my methodology and the theoretical framework through which I examine and analyze the data that I collected. In section two, Gender at Work, I discuss gender ideology in Tsinkup *quartier* (and Cameroon more generally) and how such an ideology, influenced by the events of colonialism and post-colonialism, informs the expectations of Cameroonian women at “home” and “at work.” This discussion sets the stage for understanding why the *tontine* is helpful for Cameroonian women. In section three, Just How On Doit Survivre, I provide an in-depth examination of the mechanics of the *tontine* and its social and economic role in the lives of the women of Tsinkup *quartier*. Finally, in section four, the conclusion, I argue that, based on my data, the *tontine* is an effective economic survival strategy. I end by making the recommendation that Cameroon’s *tontine* infrastructure should be actively incorporated into any development initiative targeted toward Cameroonian women.

Research Site

My research in Cameroon took place in Tsinkup *quartier*, one of the many *quartiers* in Dschang, Cameroon. Dschang (pronounced Chong) is a small town in the mountains of Cameroon’s West Province⁷. There, stalwart green mountains meet greener deep valleys to form a sweeping, dynamic landscape. In the dry season (mid-November to mid-March), Dschang’s vibrant colors are made dull with thirst. Frequent use of Dschang’s many dirt roads creates a cloud of red parched dust that hovers about the town and occludes the surrounding ridges from view. In the rainy season (mid-March to mid-November), Dschang returns to life: rich, fecund greens contrast with the brick red of the daily-drenched roads, the air is swept clear, and the surrounding ridges, made visible, loom even more majestically. At the center of town, through which Dschang’s two main paved roads run parallel, Dschang is awash with activity: elderly men play checkers on makeshift benches; street vendors sell roasted peanuts, bananas, pineapples, and small plastic goods; and children of all ages walk to school in their well-worn uniforms, their arms thrown around one another affectionately, a half-sucked piece of sugar cane in their free hand. With a resident population of about 80,000, Dschang boasts a post office, a bank, myriad small restaurants and boutiques, several primary and secondary schools, and a bustling outdoor market. Dschang’s university, which sits on the edge of town, was founded in 1993 and is a comprehensive institution with a student body of 12,000 and five academic faculties on its main campus. In addition to its university, Dschang, the former regional capital of West Cameroon, is also known among Cameroonians for the Centre Climatique, a still-functioning holiday resort built by German colonialists in the early 1900s. The majority of Dschang’s

residents are identified as Bamileke, one of Cameroon's 230 ethnic groups. The Bamileke ethnic group is united in sociopolitical structure and customs and is diverse in language and dialect (Tardits 1970:2). With one hundred kingdoms and five administrative centers (Bafang, Bafoussam, Bangangte, Dschang, and Mbouda), the Bamileke of Western Cameroon comprise twenty-five percent of Cameroon's total population (Tardits 1970:10)⁸. Historically agriculturalists, the Bamileke have, in recent times, developed a reputation for being successful entrepreneurs (McFerson 1983:21; Tardits 1970:14). Indeed, it is not uncommon for Bamileke men to own simultaneously two or three small boutiques. The Bamileke are notorious among Cameroonians for their fierce work ethic and their industriousness. When asked about the distinguishing characteristics of the Bamileke, one Bamileke man of Tsinkup *quartier* responded, "Les Bamileke travaillent beaucoup. Le travail c'est notre vie."⁹ Because of their perceived success, the Bamileke have generated jealousy and resentment among Cameroon's other ethnic groups. Tsinkup *quartier* is a thirty-minute walk from the center of Dschang. Situated in the *peri-urbaine*¹⁰ region of Dschang, Tsinkup *quartier* is, by definition, a liminal space that is neither in the city nor in the village but that, at once, shares characteristic features of both. For example, unlike in the village, many of Tsinkup's residents seek income in Dschang. Unlike in the city, Tsinkup has several polygynous households, and women still primarily cook in an outdoor kitchen.¹¹ The exposure of Tsinkup residents to the demands of both village and city life creates a space in which residents are consciously picking and choosing between lifestyle elements of the two settings; it is a space, therefore, that elicits an observable narrative of otherwise semi-conscious cultural processes. Tsinkup, like many of Dschang's *quartiers*, is comprised of house-lined dirt roads, interspersed garden plots, and several boutiques leanly stocked with sundry items such as matches and candy. The majority of Tsinkup residents are identified as Bamileke and were originally born in or have family members who still live in the neighboring village of Fongo Tongo. Although most adult residents speak French, Yemba, the language indigenous to the Dschang region, is the language primarily spoken at home.

Methods

I conducted fieldwork in Tsinkup *quartier* from 10 April 2003 until 10 May 2003. Prior to my arrival in Dschang, I had wanted to look at women who cultivate in town and women who cultivate in the village, and the ways in which this difference in setting affects the woman's role in household economic organization. To examine this, I proposed to spend ten days with a woman farmer who lived in town and ten days with a woman farmer who

lived in the village, with the intent of engaging, in both settings, the research methods of participant observation, unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews. One day with my first host family, however, was enough to tell me that a change in setting would compromise the depth of my research. It was in Tsinkup *quartier* that I would spend the duration of my fieldwork. And it was in Tsinkup *quartier*, too, that I became interested in the *tontine*. With the knowledge that good questions are key to getting beneath the surface of a new culture and that good questions necessitate good understanding of cultural context, every detail, in the beginning, seemed important and every conversation overwhelming. The end of my third day of research left me with only hastily scribbled notes, a tired right hand, and a seemingly nebulous if not misshapen project to show for itself. But with each day after that, as I tried to mirror the nuanced rhythm of my host mother and the women of our *quartier*, I found that my project, as if put through some intangible sieve, began to shape itself—instead of working from the outside in, I started working from the inside out. After one week and two *tontine* meetings, I finally felt as though I could begin an exploration that was appropriate, realistic, and culturally relevant. Aware, too, that my project had but more change in store for it, I continued scribbling (less hastily), continued asking, and continued, with clumsy step, to attempt to move like the women around me.

As a rookie researcher, I am skeptical about what right I have or with what accuracy I can make statements about the residents of Tsinkup *quartier*, let alone the rest of the citizens of the country of Cameroon. The observations used to write this article come from only three weeks spent in one small neighborhood in one town in one province of Cameroon. When, in the body of this article, I discuss behavior and social organization of *Tsinkup residents* specifically, I do so not because I think such behavior and organization is necessarily specific to Tsinkup residents but because I do not feel that I can knowingly speak of any other Cameroonian, Central/West African, or African, in general, beyond the Tsinkup resident. A large part of my research in Tsinkup relied on participant observation. Whether in the fields from early morning to early afternoon or in the kitchen of my next-door neighbor with hands kept busy peeling away the translucent spines of wild melon stalks, participant observation was the key to getting beneath the surface of Tsinkup *quartier*.

In addition to participant observation, I conducted twenty-four unstructured and semi-structured interviews, including interviews with nineteen Tsinkup residents (twelve separate households in total, with women ranging between

the ages of 19 and 41 and men ranging between the ages of 31 and 50), two University of Dschang professors, two employees of the Institute of Agricultural Research for Development, and one fifth-year agricultural economics student. Prior to each interview, I assured the informants of their anonymity. I conducted all interviews in French. Those interviews that I did tape record, I transcribed and analyzed in Dschang. My sampling of informants was both random and non-random—random in that a specified variable did not dictate the selection of my informants, non-random in that all of the Tsinkup residents interviewed were somehow connected to my host mother.

Analytical Framework

Because this article encompasses several overlapping theoretical issues--gender relations, development, and empowerment--and because I hesitate to simplify the complex experiences of Cameroonian women in Cameroon and in France, I have chosen to take anthropologist Gracia Clark's lead and engage the "eclectic" theoretical approach of Black feminist theorists such as Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks. The eclectic theoretical approach accommodates the intersection and interpenetration of several systems of domination that "reinforce, compound, and compensate for each other just as easily as they conflict" (Clark 1994:27). These systems of domination or oppression include gender, race, and class, and, in regards to this article, each system individually and collectively applies to the experience of Cameroonian women in Cameroon and in France. Indeed, asymmetrical and unequal gender relations (gender), the global hierarchal dynamic of black/white relations (race), and the power differentials of a capitalist market (class) individually and systematically affect Cameroonian women. In taking on an eclectic approach, I recognize that systems of domination are fluid and messy, and I recognize the importance of anomaly over analogy. Ultimately, this more holistic approach promises to do justice to the complex and dynamic living and working conditions of Cameroonian women.

Gender at Work

My host brother Innocent, his shoes still muddy from an early Sunday jog along the outlying roads of Tsinkup *quartier*, sat beside me in the kitchen on the now-splintered bench that his mother had received at her wedding fifteen years ago. Having just finished washing the weekly pile of his siblings' clothing at a nearby creek bend, he now brought the kitchen's large wooden mortar beneath his feet so that they rested lightly on the rim. With his left hand at the top of the large pestle and his other near the middle, Innocent began to pound the *cous cous* with an ease that belied the task's rigor, and

stopped only to nudge pieces of wood back into the heat of the fire. Innocent's nimble navigation of the cuisine made more apparent my clumsy hands. Over the past weeks, I had grown used to my household ineptitude and had come to appreciate that my near daily domestic blunders unfailingly made Innocent laugh. At fifteen, Innocent cooks, cleans, mops, and chops like any of Tsinkup's women, and he does so with little complaint.

"Will you pound *cous cous*¹² for your wife, Innocent?" I asked as I, with a small platter balanced on my lap, too carefully cut an onion. Innocent stopped pounding the *cous cous* and let the pestle rest on his left shoulder. He smiled, amused. "Why would I pound *cous cous* for my wife?" he asked incredulously. My host mother looked up from grinding the condiments and asked, "Why not?" "Does Papa pound for you, *maman*?" Innocent retorted. My host mother returned to the grindstone without a word, her jaw noticeably clenched. "That's what women do, they cook for their husbands. I'm not going to do that. Men are more powerful than women." Innocent nodded, seemingly content with what he had just said. For Innocent, life's everyday tasks can be more or less divided into categories of gender.

Although Innocent, unmarried and still living with his parents, is not yet an "adult," he is quick to voice his opinions about what a man or woman's responsibilities *should* be, and, for the most part, Innocent's opinions echo those of both the male and female residents of Tsinkup. Men are to *cherche l'argent* (seek out money), to provide protection, to provide school tuition and medical fees, and to fix objects that become broken around the house. Women are to occupy themselves with all domestic responsibilities, including cooking, dishwashing, laundry, the cultivation of food crops for home consumption, and, last but not least, childcare. In addition to their domestic responsibilities, Tsinkup women also have household financial obligations, including, but not limited to, the expenditures of their children's clothing, their own clothing, and various food preparation necessities such as oil and bouillon cubes. While both men and women have household responsibilities and financial obligations, the highly articulated division of labor at the household level is undeniably hierarchal—not only do women bear a disproportionately larger amount of household responsibilities, but their responsibilities are also considered inferior to men's responsibilities. Indeed, both the men and women of Tsinkup *quartier* explain that men "ont la dernière décision dans la foyer" because "c'est les hommes qui ont le pouvoir."¹³

The hierarchal division between men and women that is found within the basic household unit in Tsinkup *quartier* is expressed at large in Cameroon's hierarchal division of labor, in which women's labor is, for the most part,

allocated to food farming and provisioning the household while men work in the wage labor sector and engage in a variety of entrepreneurial activities (Goheen 1996). Although women do seek income in both the formal and informal sectors of Cameroon's economy, the *types* of jobs that women typically engage are gender specific and, in general, pay less than men's jobs.¹⁴ For example, in the formal sector, the majority of jobs held by women are in the teaching, nursing, and clerical fields, as opposed to the jobs held by men, which are primarily in the administrative, public works, and public health fields (Niger-Thomas 2000:32). Moreover, disproportionately more men are employed in the formal sector than women. Because women have limited access to the formal sector, most Cameroonian women marginally subsist in the informal sector by enlisting a variety of activities, including petty trading, hairdressing, and tailoring.

That Cameroonian women, and West African women in general, have been and continue to be financially autonomous does not mean that they share equitable social and economic status with Cameroonian men. Unlike in the West, the often-noted financial autonomy of Cameroonian women is "less a mark of privilege than a matter of necessity" (Hafkin and Bay 1976:7). For the women of Tsinkup, working to earn income is a matter of survival. Indeed, the perception of work and income in Tsinkup, although quite different from that in the West, is equally reflective of women's subordinate status.

For most male and female residents of Tsinkup, work, especially physical work, is the task of *ceux qui sont dessous* (those who are below); it is the task of servants and of women. For example, Tsinkup men often compare themselves to the lion, a kinglike animal that leisurely rests in the shade of a tree while his lioness brings him his food. Tsinkup men quite readily admit that women work hard, harder, in fact, than themselves; men will also encourage women to make as much money as they can. But it is exactly because the freedom to engage in income-generating activities has little direct correlation to degree of social power that men inevitably qualify this admission. Indeed, a woman can make money *as long as* she does not take on a *grand dos* (cocksure, haughty behavior) or *as long as* she continues to "respecter son mari et connaître sa place."¹⁵ In addition to being responsible for their household's domestic activities, most Tsinkup women are also financially autonomous. But their being so does not mean that they are not also subordinate to men, that they are not subject to the real gender hierarchy of Cameroonian culture. Rather than an overt symbol of power, a Cameroonian woman's traditional access to money is more simply a matter of

survival, a way in which she might survive independent of her husband.

Gender at Work: The Pre-Colonial Era ¹⁶

Current gender relations in Cameroon, both at home and at work, are asymmetrical and unequal--that is, Cameroonian women have both inferior social status and limited access to economic power relative to Cameroonian men. However, scholars argue that this has not always been the case (Goheen 1996; Guyer 1977; Hafkin and Bay 1976; Boserup 1970). Although pre-colonial Cameroonian women were clearly subordinate to Cameroonian men, they appear to have at least enjoyed greater social and political agency than woman of modern times. The indigenous model of dual-sex organization, or gender-complementarity, which promotes the idea of balanced gender responsibilities, undergirded all aspects of pre-colonial life (Mikell 1997:16). For example, prior to the introduction of a monetary economy, pre-colonial villages maintained a subsistence agrarian lifestyle that was based on the household economy. Despite the sexual division of labor in which women cultivated food crops and men cleared the fields and procured game, both men and women participated in food crop production. (Wright 1990:25). Women also figured largely as traders in Cameroon's extensive trade network in which members of different chiefdoms would trade various goods (Fyle 2002:30).

The gender symmetry within Cameroon's pre-colonial economic organization was also found in pre-colonial political and social organizations. For example, the Bamileke chiefdom comprised a chief (*fon*), a queen mother (*mafo*), and complementary men and women associations (Nana-Fabu 1987:55). The queen mother (the mother of the chief) held powerful clout with regard to local political and social issues. Some scholars suggest that the queen mother "commanded as much respect as the Fon who listened to her advice" (Nana-Fabu 1987:55). The queen mother had her own house with annexed living quarters for her attendants; she also selected her own husband who thereafter had no right over the children she bore. Finally, the queen mother was president of the chiefdom's women's societies (which took responsibility for the well-being of the chiefdom's female citizens) and was the only female member of men's societies. Although the autonomy and power held by the Queen mother were anomalous among female non-nobility of the chiefdom, women of all statuses belonged to women's associations, which collectively worked in the interest of their members. Bamileke women's associations were a socially sanctioned space in which women's opinions, needs, and directives were respected (Nana-Fabu 1987:56).

Gender at Work: The Colonial Era

French colonialism and the introduction of a capitalist economy effectively undermined the status of Cameroonian women and limited their access to political and economic power (Goheen 1996; Guyer 1977; Hafkin and Bay 1976; Boserup 1970). Despite the fact that some colonial efforts were presumptuously aimed at improving the status of Cameroonian women by freeing them from the drudgery of farm labor and the backwardness of their own social customs, colonial policy and its impact, far from liberating Cameroonian women, effectively decreased the rights they previously enjoyed (Hafkin and Bay 1976:3).

One way in which colonialism disempowered Cameroonian women was in the gendered exploitation of Cameroon's agricultural resources, an exploitation that made more hierarchal Cameroon's sexual division of labor and undermined women's seminal importance in agricultural production. With the introduction of coffee and cocoa cash crops in the 1940s, Cameroonian men were given a source of cash income and were woven into the emerging public sphere of a monetary economy, while Cameroonian women, who had cultivated and continued to cultivate all food crops, became associated with an emerging domestic and private sphere (Goheen 1996:66). Those women who did manage to earn money, whether from the sale of food crops or from some other activity in the informal sector, saw their income not as a legitimate opportunity to "maximize revenues by increasing yields" but as a risk-reducing strategy that provided items necessary to the survival of the household (Ferguson and Horn 1985:6). Indeed the monetization of the Cameroonian economy required women to seek income-generating activities to meet their household obligations but did not provide them with access to the means to do so. Prior to the introduction of a monetary economy, women in Tsinkup explain, women did not know they were poor because they could take care of their family without money. Now, they continue to explain, women know they are poor and cannot do anything about it.

Colonialism also disempowered Cameroonian women by practicing a policy of "benign female exclusion" (Mikell 1997:16). Colonial administrators implemented land regulations, tax and inheritance laws, crop marking systems, marriage reform, and Westernized educational systems—all of which reinforced Cameroonian patriarchy and worked to exclude female participation. Colonial administrators also uprooted the power and authority of indigenous political systems, which, subsequently, uprooted what little parallel political power women once held. Indeed, the superimposition of Western practices onto indigenous practices further oppressed an already

oppressed female population by reducing the effectiveness of existing female strategies used to counteract the hegemony of the Cameroonian patriarchy¹⁷.

Gender at Work: Post-Independence

Continued government-led development initiatives after national independence in 1960 but reinforced the inequitable gender tracks laid during the colonial era. From the early 1960s until the early 1980s, the Cameroonian government promoted development projects, such as the *Societe Developpement du Cacao*, whose primary objectives of increasing volume of exports through the use of modern cultivation techniques were catered to men (Ndongo 1978:4). Indeed, whereas “extension services, farm credit, and training in economically productive activities are generally geared to men who are presumed to be the family providers . . . development programs for women emphasize home economics and craft production” (Potash 1989:195).

Several legal and constitutional changes did take place in early post-independence Cameroon that have positively affected Cameroonian women. These changes include education reforms calling for equal educational opportunities regardless of sex, ethnicity, or creed (mid-1960s) and equal employment opportunities (mid-1970s). By the late 1960s, the number of women educated past the primary level more than tripled, and, by the late 1970s, women had begun to be appointed to civil service and administrative positions (Wright 1990:34).¹⁸

This social and economic momentum that Cameroon gained during the 1960s and 1970s, however, came to an abrupt halt in the early 1980s with the fall of cash crop prices (cocoa, coffee, and tobacco) and the ensuing national economic crisis, or *la Crise*. According to Dr. Ayissi, a professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Dschang, the roots of *la Crise* can be found in “mismanagement” within the agricultural sector. The government, he says, “was too involved in the management of the economy—both in production and in the marketing of products. Not taking into account those who produce, much of the revenue that was derived from the agricultural sector was not reinvested back into the sector.”¹⁹ In an effort to revitalize a thus weakened agricultural sector and to provide durable solutions to *la Crise*, the government began to develop and maximize the food crop production potential of Cameroon’s rural farming areas. In 1990, the government formed nearly 17,000 rural farming cooperatives. Such a *relance de l’agriculture* (agricultural revitalization) “contributed to a proliferation of channels of access to land,” channels which “have largely worked in favor of men, who

have both access to cash and a knowledge of the workings of the state bureaucracy” (Goheen 1996:83). That land was and is more accessible to men is not inadvertent. In fact, in response to *la Crise*, the government actively encouraged men, many of whom had migrated from their home villages in search of cash crop work, to return to rural areas to cultivate food crops for their sale. In the Cameroonian national consciousness, food production and men’s involvement in food production came to represent the antidote to the economic crisis.

Despite its efforts, the Cameroonian government, having suffered a complete breakdown of its administrative and legal systems, was unable to contain the devastation of *la Crise* without external support and quickly turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for help. In response, the IMF and the World Bank insisted on the implementation of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Although designed to stimulate long-term development, the immediate measures called for by SAP--currency devaluation, increases in food prices and interest rates, decreases in wages and hiring rates, trade liberalization, removal of input subsidies, and decreases in budget deficits--placed difficult, if not insurmountable, demands on Cameroonians, particularly women (Fonchingong 1999; Niger-Thomas 2000). With cuts in salaries and increases in prices, the cost of living in Cameroon more than tripled, and women were forced to increase their income-generating activities while maintaining their responsibilities in the domestic domain (Niger-Thomas 2000:12).

A Day in the Life

More than ten years later in 2003, Cameroon is still reeling from the aftermath of its economic crisis and the failures of SAP intervention. Although life is difficult for both men and women, women bear the brunt of a “double day,” in which, as a result of both their domestic and public responsibilities, women must work longer hours than men, with fewer resources, opportunities, and rewards (Wright 1990:30). According to the women of Tsinkup *quartier*, women work harder than women of the past. One Tsinkup woman explained, “Á cause de la *Crise*, la vie est dur.”²⁰ Another woman explained, “Les femmes aujourd’hui travaillent plus que nos meres.”²¹ Below I provide a closer look at the life of just one woman of Tsinkup *quartier* and the ways in which she, like Tsinkup’s other women, works to insure her family’s survival.

Esther

It is seven o’clock in the morning. Esther has been working for two hours. She has drawn water from the well, chopped firewood, rinsed and sorted rice, rinsed and sorted beans, and washed and peeled potatoes. Now she is

languidly poised on an upturned box in the outdoor kitchen, stirring the aromatic contents of an already-begun dinner. Esther has been cooking since before she can remember, but she points to her three-year-old daughter, Leoni, who can already cut garlic with ease, to give me an idea of the early beginnings of her relationship with cooking. One of thirty children and the daughter of a Bamileke farmer with five wives, Esther remarks that there were always mouths to feed when she was growing up in the village of Fongo Tongo. By the age of seven, Esther was responsible for making sure that all of her younger siblings were fed. When Esther turned nine, she left Fongo Tongo to live with her mother's younger brother in Consemba, a town in Cameroon's Littoral province. In addition to selling vegetables in the market with one of her uncle's daughters, Esther's responsibilities included meal preparation and general household attention. Although Esther missed her mother, she did not want to disappoint her, so she worked as hard as she could to make her mother proud.

Aside from the skills Esther learned from watching her mother and helping her uncle's family, Esther's formal education at a technical high school in the Littoral province refined her skills in household affairs, skills such as caring for a child or preparing meals. Eight years later, at the age of seventeen, Esther was able to put these skills into practice when she returned to Fongo Tongo and married Patrick. One year later, at the age of eighteen, Esther's first son, Sanders, was born. Esther was now, as she had been learning to do over the years, caring for her own child and preparing meals for her own family. On 17 March 2003, Esther turned thirty-three. She is a mother of six (three boys and three girls, ranging from 3 to 15 years old) who takes pride in her well-run household. After living with Patrick's sister and her husband for several years for financial reasons, Esther and Patrick, who is an employee at Dschang's Centre Climatique, now live in their own house. Their house is small, but it is big enough to hold anyone who wants to visit, Esther explains. Esther and Patrick recently purchased a television, and it is almost always on, especially in the company of visitors. When Esther's neighbors pay visits, which they do almost every day, Esther offers them a heaping plate of that morning's leftovers, which they eat in the living room, in front of the television, its monotonal buzz a backdrop to their more dynamic conversation.

Esther has two garden plots—one near her house and one up in the mountains, a thirty-minute walk away. During the rainy season, the season when *les femmes ne dorment pas* (the women do not sleep), Esther walks to her distant garden at least three times a week and works full-bodied, barefoot work—she weeds, aerates the earth with a hand hoe, and carefully applies pesticides.

Most days, Esther works in the garden from eight in the morning until three in the afternoon when she must return home to prepare dinner for her family. During the harvest season, Esther enlists the help of her children and will sometimes employ young relatives or friends from her village, Fongo Tongo. All of the food that Esther cultivates, including potatoes, maize, and beans, is for home consumption. Esther says that if she could afford another garden plot, she would be able to sell surplus food. For now, the purchase of another garden plot is beyond her means.

When Esther's youngest daughter, Leoni, enrolled in an *école maternelle* (nursery school) last fall, Esther began selling pre-purchased food in the marketplace during the day. A year into market trading, Esther now has her own stall in the marketplace, in which she stores her non-perishable and perishable items. Although Esther is content with market trading, her dream is to own a clothing boutique for women and children. Esther is confident that the boutique would do well. "C'est sûr. Ça va gagner l'argent,"²² she says assuredly.

Esther plans to use her *tontines* to achieve her dream. Esther has one *tontine* that meets on a monthly basis and another that meets on a weekly basis. She will continue to use her weekly *tontine* to supply her household's immediate needs, including cooking oil and matches. Esther will then use her monthly *tontine*, which offers a larger collection pool, to save capital for her clothing boutique. Esther is concerned that Patrick will disapprove of her idea to open up a clothing boutique. In fact, he is already concerned that Esther's market trading is forcing her to neglect her family. Esther has therefore decided to keep her clothing boutique dream a secret. "C'est l'avantage de la *tontine*," Esther explains, "Ton mari ne sait pas ce que tu fait, ce que tu épargne."²³ "Si je fait la cuisine, si je lave ses habilles," Esther continues to explain, "il va être content."²⁴

At the end of a day, it is about all Esther can do to get her children and then herself to bed so that she can rise with the energy she needs at five thirty the next morning. Esther is a tireless worker and a cunning businesswoman. More than that, she is a woman who knows how to strategize and to make the best of what she has. Esther is a woman who never hesitates to ask a question, but never asks a question unless she needs to, a woman who cooks in a dress of patchwork colors and goes to town in bright yellow chiffon, and, above all, Esther is a woman who, after a lifetime of learning how to be a Cameroonian woman, could cook with her eyes closed.

Just How On Doit Survivre

For Esther and the other women of Tsinkup *quartier*, *tontine* participation is one effective means by which they can fulfill their financial obligations to their household. The *tontine*, an informal but highly structured rotating savings and credit association (ROSCA) that at once provides financial security and social solidarity to its members, is a collective pool of aggregated funds that each contributing member receives in its entirety on a rotating basis. Ultimately, the *tontine* is a powerful tool with which the women of Tsinkup *quartier* can exercise collective power and, in doing so, effect change. In this chapter, I provide background information on rotating credit associations and then discuss the structure and organization of the Tsinkup *tontine* and its role in the lives of the women of Tsinkup *quartier*.

Definitions

“The basic principle upon which the rotating credit association is founded is everywhere the same: a lump sum fund composed of fixed contributions from each member of the association is distributed, at fixed intervals and as a whole, to each member in turn” (Geertz 1962:243). Ardener, however, asserts that Geertz’s definition is “too restrictive.” She points out that contributions are not always fixed and that one member does not always receive the entirety of the lump sum. In place of Geertz’s definition, she offers the following: “An association formed upon a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund which is given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation” (Ardener 1964:201). Unlike Geertz’s definition, Ardener’s definition emphasizes the principles of “regularity” and “rotation,” two essential criteria that Ardener states distinguish rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCA) from other mutual benefit societies (Buijs 1994:6). Although Geertz coined the term “rotating credit association,” most scholars follow Ardener’s definition.

Distribution and History

Known as the *tontine* in Francophone West Africa, the *arisan* in Indonesia, the *ko* in Japan, and the *upatu* in Tanzania, ROSCAs are found the world over. Although it appears that many ROSCAs developed in response to the introduction of foreign monetary economies, rudimentary forms of the ROSCA seemed to have existed in Cameroon prior to European contact (Ardener 1995:206). DeLancey theorizes that the Cameroonian ROSCA is “the monetized form of a traditional method of organizing cooperative labour, namely what might be called a rotating land-clearing association” (1978:10). In exchange for work, members of the labor cooperative received food and palm wine from the member for whom the work was being done. With the introduction of a cash economy, cash gradually replaced food and wine, and

the ROSCA was born (Niger-Thomas 2002: 99; Rielly 1990: 20).

Tontines are particularly popular in Cameroon (Ardener 1995:202). In a 1987 study of five Francophone African countries, researchers found that Cameroon had the highest *tontine* participation: forty-seven percent of all Cameroonians belong to a *tontine* (Rielly 1990:4).²⁵ Although the *tontine* has always been an important aspect of Cameroonians' social and financial lives, it has become increasingly important, and increasingly relied upon, since Cameroon's economic crisis in the mid-1980s when, due to the global economic recession, Cameroon's cash-crop prices plummeted. In the face of the dissolution of the formal financial sector, it is not surprising that Cameroonians turned to the *tontine*. Indeed, even in 2003, despite the reconstruction of Cameroon's formal financial sector, more Cameroonians borrow and save through the *tontine* than through formal lending institutions (Rielly 1990:4).

The *Tontine* and Cameroonian Women

Although both Cameroonian men and women benefit from their participation in the *tontine*, women participate at higher rates than men.²⁶ This phenomenon can be explained, in part, by the fact that most Cameroonian women, like most African women in general, have limited access to formal credit (Rielly 1990:2; Endeley 2002:194). For example, in Cameroon, government-run credit associations often require collateral against risk in the form of property or formal assets, in addition to a minimum salary (Rielly 1990:26; Niger-Thomas 2002:96). For most Cameroonian women, who do not have legally secure rights to land and rarely have salaried employment, such requirements are often impossible to meet. Thus, for many Cameroonian women, especially those living in rural areas such as Tsinkup *quartier*, the *tontine* is the only strategy by which they might fulfill their financial obligations, a large portion of which includes daily household expenditures. Furthermore, women are more likely than men to belong to several *tontines* at the same time (Rielly 1990:45). Indeed, of the fourteen Tsinkup women whom I interviewed, only one belonged to just one *tontine*, and she, unlike the other women, was a newlywed, having only recently arrived in Tsinkup *quartier*. She explained that she was going to join another *tontine* after she had given birth to her second child. Most women in Tsinkup *quartier* belong to between two and three *tontines*. "Concurrent memberships allow [Cameroonian women] to hedge the risk of their falling at the end of the *tontine* queue and to receive the purse more frequently (Rielly 1990:45). Ultimately this pattern of multiple *tontine* memberships helps to ensure that Cameroonian women will be able to meet their daily financial obligations.

A Closer Look at the *Tontine* of the Women of Tsinkup *Quartier*

“Non, ca n’est pas bien,” my host mother said in response to the hastily assembled outfit I displayed for her approval.²⁷ I returned to my room, changed into my only pair of heels, hung some mismatched jewelry on my ears and neck, and, with a few strokes of my mascara wand, reappeared. This time I was met with an approving but impatient nod--we were late, as usual. Together, our high heels led us down the entrenched, dusty road to a house already teeming with women of the Association de Jeunes Dammes de Fongo Tongo et Dschang (Association of Young Women from Fongo Tongo and Dschang), women all dressed in identical, brightly colored *pegne* (cloth). Within the house’s sky-blue walls, nearly fifty women sat crammed together on four long benches, fanning themselves, talking, their feet anchored firmly to brown cement floor. Lost in a sea of the Yemba language, I reclined in the delight of visual observation—mud hand prints strewn across the lower portion of the walls, women nursing babies, Maggie Cube posters tacked crookedly above our heads, shiny shoe after shiny high-heeled shoe, and, on a central table, bowls of *cous cous* wrapped in banana leaves.

The *tontine* began with the taking of attendance, a procedure that is the responsibility of the *censeur* who, in her lined ledger, recorded all the names of the attending women. The *censeur*, as I came to learn from a woman sitting next to me, is one of five elected positions in the *Bureau* (office) of a *tontine*, which includes the president, the vice president, the secretary, and the treasurer. After the secretary made apparent that she had finished, the vice president began to call up, one by one, those women who regularly contribute to the 500 CFA *tontine* and then those who regularly contribute to the 1000 CFA *tontine*. Indeed, “on donne ce qu’on a cotisé”; many women give to both *tontines*, and some give to only one. At the sound of her name, each woman came forward and handed her money to the treasurer. Women, who for some reason could not make the *tontine*, as is often the case on market days, had given their contributions to a friend who then placed it in the *tontine* for them. Collection finished, everyone stood up, listened to a quick address from the president and watched as the money was given to the woman whose turn it was to receive the collective pool of money. Dancing, singing, drumming, drinking, and eating followed.

Such a description is typical of the *tontine* meetings of the women of Tsinkup *quartier*.²⁹ Over the course of my stay in Tsinkup *quartier*, I attended eight *tontine* meetings, each of which had a similar structure and followed a similar order of progression. Below, I discuss the general structure and organization

of women's *tontines* in Tsinkup *quartier*.

Membership

In Tsinkup *quartier*, total *tontine* membership can range from ten to one hundred members. For example, while the Association of Young Women from Fongo Tongo and Dschang has eighty-five members, the Association of Young Women from Eastern Fongo Tongo, has only fifteen members. The membership numbers of Tsinkup *tontines* are fairly representative of those found throughout Cameroon. In her study of Dschang and Douala *ROSCAs*, Ndjeunga found that the average number of members in a *ROSCA* is twenty-four members (1995:21). In addition to gender, ethnicity, and locality, membership criteria may also be based on kinship, occupation, religion, and education (Ardener 1995:210). The most important membership qualifications appear to be mutual trustworthiness and personal friendship. Women of Tsinkup *quartier* emphasize the fact that *tontines* are built on *la confiance* (trust). For this reason, new members are almost always recommended and then introduced to the group by a long-standing member who has a well-established reputation. Upon admission into the group, new members are usually placed at the end of the rotation so that old members of the group can monitor both the saving and social behavior of the new member before she actually benefits from the collective pot (Endeley 2002:25).

Leadership

The *tontine* of the women of Tsinkup *quartier* typically has five elected positions: the president, the vice president, the secretary, the treasurer, and the *censeur*. These five positions comprise *le Bureau* (office) of the *tontine*. The president's responsibilities and privileges include: hosting the *tontine* at her house, settling any disputes that might arise between members of the *tontine*, and making the final decision on any issue that comes before the *tontine*. For example, at the close of one *tontine* meeting I attended, the president announced that she had received a letter from the Les Hommes de Fongo Tongo et Dschang (Men of Fongo Tongo and Dschang) in which the men had asked for a contribution to aid in the construction of a soccer field. Although many of the *tontines* members said that the contribution should be given, the president ultimately decided that the *tontine* did not have enough money. As for the other positions, the vice president aids the president in settling disputes and making decisions, the secretary registers all of the money transactions, the treasurer counts and guards all of the money, and the *censeur* takes attendance. Any member of the *tontine* is eligible to run for any of the five positions. *Tontine* elections are held at the end of December. Members of the *tontine* must first announce their intent to run for office before they are

elected by majority vote. At any point during the tenure of an officer's position, the members may vote out the officer if they are dissatisfied with her performance and/or her ability to handle the responsibilities of her position. Each of the five elected officers receives a one-time salary at the end of December. Their salaries are made possible by the interest gained on *tontine* loans. Although salaries change from year to year, the typical salary is 3000 CFA.

Frequency

In Cameroon, *tontines* meet with a variety of frequencies: daily, every five days, weekly, bi-monthly, and quarterly. The two types of *tontine* frequencies represented among the women of Tsinkup *quartier* are the monthly and the weekly. In general, women's *tontines* meet more frequently than men's *tontines*. This difference can be explained, in part, by the discrepancy between men and women's cash income flows (Rielly 1990:55). Depending on occupation and area, women often earn small amounts of cash at short and regular intervals. Men often earn larger amounts of cash at longer intervals. Fittingly, men whose income-generating patterns resemble women's belong to *tontines* that meet more frequently.

Contributions

Contributions to the rotating *tontine* can either be fixed or variable, and they can be made in cash or kind (Ndjeunga [1995] describes a *tontine* in which members each contributed a pack of sugar and 400 grams of soap). In Tsinkup *quartier*, the majority of *tontines* have fixed cash contributions, which can range from 500 to 5,000 CFA. Most *tontines* with fixed cash contributions give multiple contribution options. For example, in the above description, members of the Association of Women from Fongo Tongo and Dschang either contributed 500 CFA or 1000 CFA or both, depending on their individual financial situations. The members who contribute to the 500 CFA pool may receive from the 500 CFA pool, the members who contribute to the 1000 CFA pool may receive from the 1000 CFA pool, and the members who contribute to both may receive from both. The money received from the *tontine* has no interest calculations.

Order of Rotation

The order in which *tontine* members receive the collective pool is determined by two primary schemes: the project-ranking scheme and the random scheme (Ndjeunga 1995:16). In the project-ranking scheme, the winner is selected by

group consensus from a group of applicants who have specified the nature of their financial needs. In the random scheme, members are randomly assigned numbers and know their winning position in advance. Members who are unsatisfied with their winning position may negotiate and exchange with another member. Although the project-ranking scheme is more responsive to the members' individual needs and various extenuating circumstances, the random scheme helps to eliminate the conflict inherent in the selection process of the project-ranking scheme. Members of a Tsinkup *tontine* that had recently switched from a project-ranking scheme to a random scheme were satisfied with the switch and commented that the average length of the *tontine* meetings was drastically shorter than it had previously been.

***Tontine* Funds**

The *tontine* offers two unique types of funds: the annual fund (or "trouble bank") and the emergency fund. The annual fund operates much like a bank. In addition to the monthly or weekly *tontine* contributions, members can, and often must, contribute to the annual fund. The accumulated fund is used to give loans to members of the *tontine* at an interest rate of 50 CFA per month per 1,000 CFA, that is, five percent per month on the principal, which implies an annual interest rate of 60 percent (van den Brink 1991:3). Members who take out loans may use the loans in any manner they desire. To take out a loan, a member must have a witness. If the member is unable to repay the loan in the given amount of time, the witness must repay the loan for her. Members are allowed several loans per year, as long as old debts are settled in advance. The interest earned on the loans is put toward the salaries of the *tontine* officers. At the end of the year, the annual fund is "broken," and each member receives, in lump sum, the amount that she has contributed over the past year. The emergency fund, a type of insurance, serves to protect members against health and life risks. Comprised of late fees, default fees, and subscription fees, the emergency fund can be used to cover expenditures associated with the illness/death of a member or a member's relative. Such expenditures include food, drink, transportation, and medical care. For example, when a Tsinkup woman's father passed away, her *tontine* used money from its emergency fund to pay for a bush taxi so that the woman and a *tontine* member could attend the *deuil* (mourning period) in the village of her father's birth.

Use of *Tontine* Payouts

Josephine

Thirty-two year-old Josephine, the daughter of a schoolteacher, was born in the village of Fongo Tongo but moved to Tsinkup *quartier* when she married at the age of eighteen. When Josephine had her sixth child in 2001, she stopped

selling food at the Dschang market, an activity in which she had been engaged for several years. In 2002, Josephine's husband, an auto mechanic, married another woman. Josephine and her new co-wife have separate bedrooms and kitchens. "Je n'ai pas voulu être une co-épouse," Josephine says, but continues to explain that she did not have a say in the matter.³⁰ Josephine's husband gives her a monetary ration, which she splits between her two *tontines*. When asked what she does with the money she receives from the *tontine*, Josephine responds, "Je vive. J'achete la nourriture et les condiments."³¹ Without the *tontine*, Josephine says, she would not be able to live, because "mon mari ne me donne pas assez de l'argent."³² Josephine wants to begin selling at the market again so that she can eventually purchase a parcel of land with a loan from her *tontine*. Since she now has too many children to sell the crops that she cultivates, Josephine plans on selling pre-purchased items. According to Josephine, a parcel of land and its assurance of food crops for home consumption would provide greater security for her and her children in the event that her husband abandons her.

Claudette

At forty-five years of age, Claudette can hoe a row of maize like a 20-year-old woman. Originally from the village of Foto, Claudette came to Tsinkup *quartier* twenty-eight years ago to live with her husband, a hospital technician who retired in 1998. Like her mother, Claudette is a market vendor. Each Sunday for ten years, Claudette has sold her own potatoes at the *grande marche*. In a good season, she says, she can make 2000 CFA for a liter of potatoes. Although she once belonged to three *tontines*, Claudette now belongs to only two, one of which is comprised solely of potato vendors like herself. With the payouts from the potato vendor *tontine*, Claudette purchases fungicides for her crops. Because fungicides are relatively expensive, Claudette would not be able to afford them without the help of the *tontine*. And without the fungicides, say Claudette, her potatoes would never sell for 2000 CFA a bucket.

Saraphine

Saraphine's husband was fired from his job at the Dschang hospital in 2000. At 41 years of age, Saraphine is her household's sole income earner. To produce enough food to sell at the market, Saraphine simultaneously cultivates three gardens. Even with the help of her six children, Saraphine spends every day in her gardens just to be able to sell produce at the market once a week. Saraphine has sold beans, corn, and sugar cane at the Dschang market for ten years. Since her husband was fired, Saraphine has had to work twice as hard to cover her husband's former financial obligations, which include her children's school tuition. Despite her market expertise, Saraphine makes little money.

In fact, Saraphine can afford to be in only one weekly *tontine*, and even with *tontine* assistance, Saraphine often does not have enough oil with which to prepare dinner. Occasionally, when she has had a very good week at the market, Saraphine is able to buy bouillon cubes. But that is a rare occasion. Without the *tontine*, Saraphine testifies, “on ne peut pas vivre.”³³ By way of the *tontine*, Tsinkup women, like Josephine, Claudette, and Saraphine, are able to fulfill their financial obligations and purchase items that are otherwise beyond their individual means. Like Josephine, most Tsinkup women use their *tontine* money for non-durable expenditures. Indeed, in Cameroon, the majority of a woman’s *tontine* payout goes toward food and other non-durable expenditures, whereas the majority of a Cameroonian man’s *tontine* payout goes toward “lump-sum” expenditures such as motorbikes, radios, and roof materials (Rielly 1990:57; Niger-Thomas 2002:101). For the most part, the difference in the uses of *tontine* funds between men and women reflect the gendered responsibilities of household expenditures. While men are typically responsible for major household expenditures such as house construction and repair, women are typically responsible for the daily expenditures of non-durable goods such as food, salt, oil, and condiments. Despite their household responsibilities, men often use payouts for their own recreational purposes. Unlike men, women hold back less of their money for personal expenditure than do men. One study showed that men kept back as much as fifty per cent of their income for their own use, whereas women contribute all of their income to family welfare (Buijs 1995:2-3). Ultimately, when men neglect their household financial responsibilities, women are forced to meet the demands of both their own financial responsibilities and those of their husbands. A woman’s responsibility to her household is often directly enforced by the *tontine* itself. For example, in Tsinkup *quartier*, many of the *tontines* formed by women regulate and monitor the way in which *tontine* funds are used. These *tontines* are “special-purchase” ones (Niger-Thomas 2002:101). One such *tontine* found in Tsinkup *quartier* is the *équipement tontine* (household item *tontine*), which provides opportunities for its members to purchase expensive durable items such as refrigerators, gas cookers, and sewing machines. Although the benefiting member is not required to report each individual item that she purchases, the *tontine* is only for a woman’s *équipement*. Anything beyond *équipement*, such as a woman’s clothing, “ca, c’est interdit.”³⁴ Niger-Thomas also reports the existence of “kitchen *tontines*” which help women purchase relatively low-priced kitchen utensils (2002:101). In most kitchen *tontines*, the members collectively determine the use of each individual payout. For example, if a member expresses a need for cooking oil, the other members will either contribute oil in kind or they will purchase oil for her.

Risks and Deterrents

The effectiveness of a *tontine* is precariously balanced on the equal participation of each of its members. The default of just one member dramatically affects the entire *tontine*, as each member depends on one another's contribution for her economic survival. In Tsinkup *quartier*, as in much of Cameroon, default occurs along a spectrum of severity. A relatively benign form of default is when a member is unable to contribute before she receives her payout; a more severe default is when a member is unable to contribute after she has already received her payout. These two defaults reduce the size of the fund for those who have yet to receive. The worst that can befall a *tontine* is when a member actually steals from it. Alise, a Tsinkup woman, described such an instance of theft in which a member of one of her *tontines* managed to benefit twice in one cycle. Although the event occurred two years ago, the Tsinkup woman was still angry. "Elle a volé 15,000 CFA, et puis, elle a acheté les chaussures. Quelqu'un vole pour les chaussures? Ça c'est bizarre. On vole pour les grattes de ciel, pas pour ça," Alise passionately exclaimed.³⁵ Although defaults can clearly be detrimental for the other members of the *tontine*, they can be even more detrimental for the defaulting member. Members who commit the first type of default jeopardize their credit-worthiness and their reputation; members who commit the second type of default are invariably expelled from the *tontine*. And members who go so far as to blatantly steal suffer a worse fate. Indeed, in the case of the thieving member described by Alise, the person was subsequently labeled a bandit, disowned by her husband, and expelled from both the *tontine* and the *quartier*. The "bandit" now lives by herself in a rented home in another *quartier*; when members of her former *tontine* see her in public they discreetly acknowledge her presence and walk on. All gradations of default and dishonesty threaten the very principle on which the success of the *tontine's* operation is based: mutual confidence. Therefore, any default is met with socially enforced consequences. The consequences of loss of reputation and social ostracism effectively minimize the risk of *tontine* default. Indeed, without her social support system, a Tsinkup woman is not "strong." For this reason, because no Tsinkup woman can expect to survive without the "strength" of her social network, default is, on the whole, rare. And because it is in the interest of all *tontine* members to reduce default and dishonesty, members will go to great lengths to aid one another. For example, when a member cannot make a *tontine* meeting, a fellow member will be certain to stop by that member's house prior to the meeting to collect her contribution. Additionally, if a member arrives at a meeting without her contribution, she will either be loaned the money by another member or she will have the opportunity to borrow the amount of her contribution from the "trouble bank." Loans must be repaid and always have an interest payment attached, even in the event of the

death of a member. In such an instance, the heir of the deceased member will automatically be responsible for the repayment.

Unlike default, the modern *tontine* witchcraft of *femlah* is a risk that cannot so easily be minimized. *Femlah* witchcraft is borne out of consuming greed and can result in the conspired death of either a member or a member's beloved. For example, a woman named Felicite hypothetically joins a *tontine* of women whom she does not know well. The women tell Felicite that they will give her enough money to purchase her own car *if* she agrees to give them the soul of her husband or of her first child in exchange. If Felicite accepts, she will receive the money at the price of the death of her husband or her first child. If she declines, the members of the *tontine* will kill her or her husband or her first child. Felicite decides to decline the offer. The other members of the *tontine* then excuse themselves, exit the room, and return some minutes later. After the meeting's close, Felicite leaves with a headache but thinks nothing of it. Some hours later, Felicite develops a fever and begins to convulse. By morning, Felicite is dead.

All women of Tsinkup *quartier* fear *femlah*. In fact, women are so fearful of *femlah* that they hesitate to talk about it. For this reason, I was only able to get information about it through piecemeal conversations with different women. The one preventative measure that a woman can take is to cautiously and judiciously join *tontines* whose members she knows well. As the women of Tsinkup *quartier* often told me, "Il faut qu'on connaisse son milieu."³⁶ Indeed, a woman cannot take *tontine* participation lightly, because she must both trust and fear the women who are necessary to her survival. Whether *femlah* actually kills *tontine* members or whether *femlah* is a myth that serves as a mechanism to reinforce social bonds is unimportant. What is important is that the concept of *femlah* further emphasizes the central principle of successful *tontine* operation: mutual trustworthiness.

The Future of the Tontine in Cameroon

Geertz describes the rotating credit association as a "middle-rung institution" that formed as a result of a "shift from a traditionalistic agrarian society to an increasingly fluid commercial one" (Geertz 1962:243). Because of its transitional nature, Geertz predicts that as the ROSCA becomes "more and more like a specifically economic institution" it will simultaneously become "self-liquidating, being replaced ultimately by banks, co-operative, and other economically more rational types of credit institution" (Geertz 1962:263). Ardener argues that the "persistence of the institution in communities in which banks and co-operatives exist, such as in Great Britain, Japan, and South Africa, suggests that there is still a place for these institutions alongside 'other

economically more rational types of institutions” (Ardener 1965:222). In a more recent article, Ardener observes that although in some places “ROSCAs may have become less important in proportion to other credit institutions, elsewhere they have spread or burgeoned more vigorously than ever” (Ardener 1995:2). Ardener lists Cameroon as one area in which current economic activity “at all levels, depends heavily on participation in ROSCAs of a variety of forms and scale.” More importantly, the ROSCA has “burgeoned” where other credit systems have faltered if not failed. In a study conducted in the village of Babinki in the Northwest Province of Cameroon, Van den Brink found that the village’s formal savings and credit cooperative, The Credit Union, handled only 3,800USD annually given out in thirty-seven loans, while the village’s ROSCA system handled 74,000USD given out in six-hundred and fifty loans (van den Brink 1990:23). Just as popular among Cameroon’s political and intellectual elite as it is among the women of Tsinkup *quartier*, the *tontine* has not only significantly expanded in response to the insecurity of the banking system, but it has also, in its success, disrupted the banking system itself (van den Brink 1990:2).

Why is the *tontine* more successful than formal credit institutions, especially among poorer rural women? I can offer several reasons. First, as opposed to formal credit institutions that demand collateral security for loans, the *tontine* considers all of its members “creditworthy” (Niger-Thomas 2002:109). Second, the immediate responsiveness of the *tontine* to its members’ needs can rarely be met by more impersonal credit institutions (Ardener 1995:4). Third, most formal credit institutions, such as Babinki’s Credit Union, do not allow members withdraw savings nor do they have the capacity to reinvest savings locally (Van den Brink 1991:23). Fourth, unlike *tontines*, formal credit institutions do not have external funding. This feature gives *tontines* an advantage over donor- or government-funded credit institutions whose credit, often subsidized at high rates, is perceived as “free” by the few women who do receive it. Subsequently, default rates among formal credit institutions are relatively high in comparison to those of *tontines* (Rielly 1994; Van den Brink 1991). Ultimately, the *tontine* serves as an effective bridge between two logics: the “accumulative western concern with rational calculation” and “the West African additive principle of converting and diversifying wealth into social networks” (Rowlands 1995:120).

It should be noted that formal credit development is increasingly using ROSCA as its model, and, consequently, formal credit development is, like ROSCA, increasingly bridging the above-described incompatible logics. For example, in recent years, the Grameen Bank, a formal microcredit organization, has not only become popular but has proven to be effective in

assisting impoverished women.³⁷ Tailored to the cultural priorities of the individuals it serves, the key features of Grameen credit are: it is based on trust and not collateral, it is offered only for income-generating activities, and a borrower must join a small group of borrowers, and loans are paid back in installments.³⁸ Originally established in Bangladesh in 1976 by Professor Muhammad Yanus, the Grameen Bank now in 2004 has branches throughout southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, including Cameroon. Indeed, the Grameen Bank has seen no greater success than it has in Cameroon. In 1997, the Grameen Trust gave 50,000USD in seed money to Cameroon's branch, the Benevolent Community Education and Rural Development Society (BERDSCO) and, since then, BERDSCO has distributed 104,723USD in loans among 3,120 members (of whom 2,720 are women). More importantly, BERDSCO reports a repayment rate of ninety per cent.³⁹ As evidenced by its low default rate, BERDSCO, and the Grameen Bank in general, have incorporated into their operations the secret of ROSCAs' repayment success: social capital. But, unlike ROSCA whose capital formation is limited by its group size, BERDSCO, because it reaches more women than one ROSCA could alone, is able to offer higher capital formation and facilitate a higher rate of information exchange (Lairap-Fonderson 2003:195).

Despite its success, BERDSCO is still significantly flawed. Like other micro credit institutions, BERDSCO operates under the auspices of the Cameroonian government and is dependent on foreign-donor funding, *unlike* the ROSCA whose capital is wholly comprised of member contributions. Microcredit institutions are "to a large extent 'top-down' sponsored and fast becoming an integral part of global finance" and, as such, micro-credit institutions are "prone to disciplinary practices and more susceptible to co-optation" (Lairap-Fonderson 2003:194). Furthermore, although BERDSCO is notable among formal credit institutions for its attention to the needs of its members, it is still not as flexible or as responsive as ROSCA. For example, BERDSCO's loans can be used to invest only in income-generating activities and cannot be used for consumption, even if consumption is a pressing need. Of course women do use parts of their loans for "unintended purposes," but these women are then subject to disciplinary action (Lairap-Fonderson 2003:195).

Fortunately, these two methods of finance, BERDSCO (and other similarly structured microcredit options) and ROSCA, are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they can be complementary. In Kenya, where microcredit institutions have a longer history, women in the village of Bahari concurrently use the Grameen bank for income-generating activities and ROSCA for foodstuffs and utensils (Lairap-Fonderson 2003:195). The mobilizing potential of this type of dual microfinance system among Cameroonian women, who are already the

most famous organizers of informal credit schemes and who have demonstrated their proficiency at juggling multiple memberships, is promising (Endeley 2001). Although BERDSCO has not yet hit Tsinkup *quartier*, it seems likely that it will. Its arrival, however, will not jeopardize the existence of the *tontine*, because, as I have shown throughout my discussion of the *tontine* in Tsinkup *quartier*, the *tontine* is the foundation of a woman's social network. Indeed, as Henry Alain observes in his study of the Cameroonian *tontine*, "Le *tontine* ne peut pas mourir. . . (Elle) est immortelle" (Alain 1992:89).⁴⁰ Rather, the arrival of BERDSCO and other investment-specific microfinance institutions will most likely provide another strategy by which the women of Tsinkup *quartier* will be able to fulfill their financial obligations. Perhaps then Josephine will not only be able to buy condiments for her kitchen, but will also be able to buy her own parcel of land. Perhaps then Claudette will not only be able to purchase fungicides for her potatoes, but will also be able to hire laborers and further increase her potato yield. Perhaps then the women of Tsinkup will not only be able to survive but will also be able to get ahead.

Conclusion

I returned home one evening to an unusual emptiness in the courtyard of my host family's house. A quick walk around the neighborhood found my host mother three houses down in a semi circle of six Tsinkup women who, languidly positioned on upturned wooden crates, were held in soul-deep laughter. I took a seat next to my host mother and watched as our neighbor Saraphine offered a bit of gossip that she had heard hours earlier in the fields; I watched, too, as the other women leaned eagerly forward, drew deep, libational draughts from Saraphine's words, and leaned back satisfied. When Saraphine arrived at the part in which a Tsinkup man, with a reputation of unjustly withholding rations from his wife, impregnates his mistress, the women erupted in a swell of exclamations, knee-slaps, sighs and laughter. "Les hommes!"⁴¹ one woman cried. "Les femmes, nous souffront!"⁴² cried another.⁴² And in that vein, the women good-naturedly railed against the whims of their men, they railed and railed into the fading light. Like Esther and Josephine and Claudette and Saraphine, the women of Tsinkup *quartier* must strike a fine balance between their domestic responsibilities and their financial obligations. Indeed, juggling one's many domestic responsibilities is a day of work in itself. However, most women also engage in income-generating activities—some women sell their surplus food crops and others earn money in the town of Dschang, as hairdressers or seamstresses or boutique employees. And like Esther and Josephine and Claudette and Saraphine, each woman of Tsinkup *quartier* participates in at least one *tontine* to insure the survival of her household.

In Cameroon, the *tontine* offers myriad advantages for women located at the disadvantaged crossroads of gender, race, and class. On a most basic level, the *tontine* offers its members a dependable savings strategy and minimal criteria credit opportunities. Moreover, the *tontine* offers its members unparalleled flexibility. Finally, the *tontine* offers its members a sense of community. Culturally compatible and flexible to the demands of an increasingly interconnected world, the *tontine* is indeed a powerful tool for meeting the social and financial needs of Cameroonian women, whether those needs are cooking supplies or emotional support. Of course, the women of Tsinkup *quartier* do not need to be told that the *tontine* is effective. Indeed, they already know that the *tontine* is effective. It is, instead, those individuals involved with Women in Development who would benefit from understanding the effectiveness of the *tontine*.⁴³ And for the women of Tsinkup *quartier*, whose country, only forty years into independence from colonial powers, is still heavily dependent on foreign aid and development, their lives are directly affected by whether or not WID projects are informed by such an understanding. Granted, the recent trend in microcredit development targeted toward rural women, such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and BERDSCO in Cameroon, indicates an increasing awareness of the efficacy and legitimacy of ROSCAs. However, despite its success, much of microcredit development is flawed in the way that so much of general development in general has been flawed in the past: it ignores pre-existing infrastructure. Indeed, most microcredit programs are meant to substitute or replace ROSCA, not to work in conjunction with it.

To date, few micro-credit programs have established working links with pre-existing ROSCA networks. One of the few examples of such a linkage can be found in Senegal, between a market *tontine* and the Femmes Developpement Entreprises en Afrique (FDEA) microcredit program. FDEA offers previously organized, ten-member *tontines* 30,000 CFA per member for a six-month term at an interest rate of five per cent. The women concurrently use the accumulating function of their *tontine* to ensure that they are able to meet the FDEA repayment schedule, with daily contributions tailored to the size of the loans received (Kane 2002: 313). Another promising example is Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products in Senegal (ASNAPP). ASNAPP organizes and trains rural women to cultivate organically indigenous plants for local, regional, and overseas markets. The directors of ASNAPP are currently looking to use the *tontines* of ASNAPP participants to provide start-up capital to finance the initial expenditures associated with ASNAPP plant cultivation. However, ASNAPP has already encountered resistance from one of its primary donors, the United States Agency for International Development

Footnotes

¹ *Quartier* (quarter or neighborhood) informally refers to a person's neighbors and neighboring establishments and also formally designates a territorial unit of chiefly governance. A *quartier* is also a unit of state administration (Feldman-Savelsburg 1999:59).

² One is always working.

³ Decided? I didn't decide. You have to eat, right? You have to survive.

⁴ One doesn't make a lot. Sometimes, one makes nothing.

⁵ Women in Development (WID) "emerged initially as a women's caucus within the Society for International Development (SID) to promote professional employment opportunities for women in development agencies, and to compile data which explore the institution that development was having an adverse effect on impoverished women" (Saunders 2002:1).

⁶ Ayittey provides the following ironic but apt defining characteristics for the institution of development: (1) An excessive preoccupation with sophisticated gadgetry, signs of modernism, an inclination to exalt anything foreign or Western as sanctified, and a tendency to castigate the traditional as "backward," (2) a tendency to emphasize industry over agriculture, (3) a misinterpretation of the so-called characteristics of underdevelopment as cause of economic "backwardness," and the belief that development means their absence, (4) a tendency to seek solutions to problems from outside rather than from inside Africa, and (5) attempts to model African cities after London, Paris, New York, or Moscow (Ayittey 1999:137)

⁷ After independence, Cameroon was divided into eight provinces for political and administrative purposes: West, Northwest, Central, Littoral, South, East, North, Extreme North

⁸ Despite the influence of state administration, the chiefdom is still of central importance to the Bamileke. For the Bamileke, the chiefdom is the resting place of one's ancestors and the home of one's chief or *fon*. The chief, although under the power of state administration, is still given a considerable amount of authority and respect by his subjects: for example, the chief is responsible for the mediation of local disputes and for the general well-being of the kingdom. The chief's state-related responsibilities include the signing

of all birth, marriage, and death certificates and the supervising of tax collection. Dschang's chiefdoms are scattered throughout its periphery.

⁹ The Bamileke work a lot. Work is our life.

¹⁰ urban periphery

¹¹ A type of marriage arrangement in which a man has more than one wife. Polygynous marriage is the traditional form of marriage in Cameroon; chiefs of villages often have up to ten wives, if not more. Although polygynous marriages are more common in the villages, polygynous marriage does exist in both *peri-urbaine* and urban areas. Of the twelve households that I surveyed, 2 households were polygynous.

¹² Cameroonian starch staple made from corn, macabo, or tarot.

¹³

¹⁴ I use "informal" to refer to business outside of the colonially imposed "formal" business sector. The informal sector generally comprises small-scale entrepreneurial activities (Fyle 2002:29).

¹⁵ respect her husband and know her place.

¹⁶ Although Cameroon's earliest interaction's with European powers began in the late fifteenth century, it was not until 1884, with the signing of a treaty by the Duala kings with the German empire, that the colonial era in Cameroon officially began. Germany remained the colonial power in Cameroon until World War I. A United Nations mandate in 1919 divided Cameroon between the United Kingdom and France, with the larger eastern half designated to France. Cameroon gained independence from both the United Kingdom and France on 1 January 1960.

¹⁷ I draw here from Gramsci's concept of hegemony, a concept that speaks to the complete moral, political, cultural, and intellectual dominance of a governing power. The key to hegemonic dominance is the internalization and reproduction of the dominant discourse by both the dominators and the dominated (Goheen 1996:11).

¹⁸ These changes, of course, were really only pertinent to urban women, as rural women (ninety-two per cent of Cameroon's female population) are not affected by equal wage regulations (Niger Thomas 2000:18).

¹⁹ Excerpt from an interview with Professor Ayissi conducted on 25 April, 2003 at the University of Dschang.

²⁰ Because of the Crisis, life is hard.

²¹ Women today work more than our mothers.

²² It's a sure thing. That's going to make money.

²³ That's the advantage of the *tontine*—your husband doesn't know what you are doing, what you are saving.

²⁴ If I cook, if I wash his clothes, he is going to be content.

²⁵ In rural areas, *tontine* participation is even higher: sixty-seven per cent of all rural inhabitants belong to at least one *tontine*.

²⁶ One study conducted in Cameroon's Central Province among sixty farming households, seventy-five per cent of women participate in *tontines*, while fifty-seven per cent of men participate (Rielly 1990:128).

²⁷ No, that's not good.

²⁸ One gives that which one has saved.

²⁹ The *tontines* of Bamileke men are purportedly similar. I was not able to witness one first hand.

³⁰ I didn't want to be a co-wife.

³¹ I buy food and condiments.

³² My husband doesn't give me enough money.

³³ One cannot live.

³⁴ That's prohibited.

³⁵ She stole 15,000 CFA and then she bought shoes. Who steals for shoes? Now that's bizarre. One steals for skyscrapers, not for that

³⁶ One must know one's context.

³⁷ Micro credit is defined here as “the small loans—often ranging from a few to a couple of hundred dollars—provided to poor women for investment in come-generating activities” (Lairap-Fonderson 2003:183).

³⁸ www.grameen-info.org/bank/WhatisMicrocredit.html

³⁹ <http://www.grameen-info.org/dialogue/index.html>

⁴⁰ The *tontine* cannot die. It is immortal.

⁴¹ Men!

⁴² Us women, we suffer!

⁴³ A high percentage of WID projects are concerned with improving women’s access to credit.

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ETHNOGRAPHY OF A PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT

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Introduction

I first entered the physical therapy department of a local hospital simply looking for a job as a patient transporter, and as soon as I got off the elevator onto the fifth floor and into the department, I realized how different this job would be from any other I had ever experienced. Immediately to the right was a short hallway which opened up into the actual department, where people in long white coats and purple scrubs could be seen coming back and forth from desks at the right end of the room to patients in wheelchairs lined up side by side along the wall at the left side of the room. It was the patients that immediately attracted my attention. They were elderly, some with unsightly bandages on their heads, others missing limbs, and others with casts, all looking pretty worn out and unkempt. As I cautiously walked into the open space I quickly became aware of my own alien appearance within this setting in my street clothes and hoped that one of the therapists would notice and intercept me before I entered too far into the room. This of course was done as I was greeted with a smile and a "Can I help you?" but not before everyone in the room, patients included, noticed the unfamiliar redheaded kid in jeans at the corner. I was not sure how to react to the blank stares I received from the patients; I was in total confusion as to how to behave in such a setting. Do I acknowledge the patients or simply act as if I hadn't noticed them? Luckily, the therapist took me back into one of the offices to fill out an application and left me to mull over what had just occurred.

Perhaps Benedicte Ingstad best summarizes how I felt in his work, *Disability and Culture*: The tendency within American culture in dealing with disability is to treat it as unspeakable and invisible. Children are taught not to point, stare, or mention the impairments of people they meet. And so we are treated with the paradox of nobody seeing the one person in the room of whom they are most acutely, and uncomfortably aware (Ingstad 9).

My initial introduction into the physical therapy department under study was very much in tune with this statement. My feelings of uneasiness and

unfamiliarity from this encounter emphasize just one of the many contrasts that this physical therapy department has from daily American life, and thus sparked my interest in conducting an ethnography of the interactions and views of the physical therapists who confront situations such as disability on a daily basis.

Research Methods

The particular department which I am investigating works within a surgical hospital, so the majority of the patients that come into the department have undergone some type of surgical procedure, typically knee and hip replacements and back surgeries. Many patients however have had debilitating strokes and have lost total mobility on one side of their body, and other patients have had limbs amputated as a result of growing difficulties with diabetes and bad circulation as they grow older. The greatest extent of my research was conducted as I followed through my tasks as a transporter for the department, every Saturday and Sunday from 8am to 4:30pm. My responsibilities as an employee are to go to each patient's room to ask them if they are ready for their session. (It is important to note that they do have the right to "refuse" therapy.) If they say yes, I then safely assist them from their bed or chair into the wheelchair or stretcher, and take them to the therapy department. In doing this, I experience first hand the patient's feelings of dependency on others for simple tasks. I also take the patients back to their rooms after therapy is over. I have access to patients before and after their sessions and am therefore able to inquire as to how they feel their session went.

Evaluating a Research Question

Over the course of my observations and readings a number of relevant themes have emerged on which I have primarily focused, such as what therapists consider to be the main factor in determining and evaluating what type of therapy to administer on a patient. Some questions I wished to answer was how familiar the therapists were with the patients on a personal level, how important they feel this knowledge is, and the ways in which they instigate such knowledge. Also, what is the impact of family relations on the therapy process and how much does patient motivation affect the therapist's interaction with each particular patient? These questions, among many others, emerged throughout the process of my research and observation and constitute the focus of my study.

As I began working, my experiences with the patients initially prompted me to undertake an ethnographic study of the ways in which patients who have experienced some form of illness or disability as a result of aging cope with their particular losses. I wanted to examine how age determines the attitudes of the therapists concerning the physical malady, and how this in turn affects the type of therapy administered.

In order to answer these questions, it would have been necessary for my research to include both the patient and physician aspect of the therapy department and how the two interact accordingly. Just a few questions that I wanted to address were how the patients view therapy, and how do these views coincide or conflict with the physician's views? If a patient realizes that he or she may not recover fully, how does this affect their world-view and how they see themselves within it? Do they assign themselves an inferior status, as Ingstad proposes American society does to individuals with disabilities? (Ingstad 9) Do the patients consider themselves disabled? How willing are they to accept assistance in simple tasks, and do they feel like this threatens their individuality?

There were many ethical dilemmas with these questions however. Since the patient's uncertainty about the future may cause a great deal of anxiety and stress, they may rightly feel uncomfortable talking about their ailments and the unknown future that their particular ailment might bring. This would have made interviewing patients very difficult, for I would have had to present questions in a non-troubling manner so as not to dismay patients further as to their condition, but at the same time attaining relevant data. I would have been forced to ask direct questions about one's impairments, forcing patients to acknowledge their own inabilities at a time when they may not be ready to do so. Given this ethical consideration, I decided to shift my focus onto the views of the therapists on many of these issues.

Literature Review

Although there has never been an ethnography carried out among an American physical therapy department to my knowledge, many articles have been written about the relations between patient and physician. Also, there is relevance to this topic in anthropology among the various studies examining the concept of disability.

A very relevant article to the current research proposal is Gay Becker's *Managing an uncertain illness trajectory in old age: patient and physician*

views of a stroke, in which he outlines three stages of Anselm Straus' concept of "illness trajectory." These three stages include the medical diagnosis or the physician's view, the time-span encapsulating the "sickness" of the patient, and the "personnel narrative" or the patient's view (Becker 166). Becker emphasizes the uncertainty felt among patients as to whether they would be able to return to their normal lifestyle. This uncertainty is a significant catalyst for anxiety among patients, and they are thus likely to falsely assume that if they work hard enough, rehabilitation will eventually cure them of their predicament.

Physicians, on the other hand, base their views on biological knowledge and are aware that rehabilitation is not a cure, but nevertheless may still be utilized as a useful psychological comfort. Physicians place patient motivation and a positive attitude as the main factor in possibly regaining lost abilities. Becker goes on to identify five components involved in the physicians' evaluations of a patient's "recovery potential." These include the physical abilities before the affliction, the ability of the patient to perceive his or her surroundings correctly, the severity of the condition, age, and the willingness and ability of the patient to undergo and challenging therapy program (Becker 168).

This particular research conducted by Becker and the necessary terms such as "recovery potential" within will prove essential for this study for I am interested in how physicians weigh the particular components of "recovery potential." Also, at what point does a physician give up on a patient citing lack of motivation and improper attitude, and if this occurs, is this action justified?

In another article, Rita M Riani examines this relationship between physician and patient as well, asserting that physicians can lessen the degree of physical suffering among the patient by recognizing the connection that physical ailments may have on an emotional and psychological level. Riani examines these issues using Alderian theory, which asserts that peoples' patterns of behavior and attitudes are developed by social interactions experienced in early childhood (Rule 208). Based on this theory, she asserts that the adopted beliefs and values of an individual throughout his or her life will greatly influence the degree of his or her success in rehabilitation, and she stresses the importance of patient motivation and attitude when undergoing therapy. However, she also places great importance on the knowledge of the therapist concerning their patient's history, beliefs, and values, which would greatly help the therapist in decision making, treatment approaches, predicting the patient's future behavior, and goal setting (Rule 214). She in turn emphasizes the physician's ability to identify behavioral patterns as crucial to the

rehabilitation process.

John Janzen defines all those involved with the rehabilitation of an individual as the “therapy management group,” therapy management in turn consisting of both the formulation of a diagnosis and the prescribed therapy, as well as those present when this therapy takes place, including family and physicians (Janzen 69). He defines the therapeutic process as:

A series of actions occurring in a social context in which individuals living in ordered relationships or roles, make decisions about their own welfare... on the basis or partially shared classifications, values, and knowledge. Such therapeutic acts thus mediate differing classifications and values (culture), social structures or roles (society), and protagonists’ assessments of the effectiveness of the therapy (Janzen 76).

He emphasizes that therapy is a process, the consequences of which include a “role transforming experience” for the patient, although just another day at the office for the therapist. My research will further examine this concept of “therapy management group” and explore the ways family relations affect the therapy process.

Main themes

My observations in the field have yielded a number of basic conclusions, five of which are outlined in this current study: 1) motivation is considered to be very important among the therapists and employees of the hospital, despite some therapists’ tendencies to downplay its significance; 2) knowledge of a patient’s personal life is considered important, but mostly only in terms of finding out who will be there to take care of the patient after they return home; 3) the role of the family plays an extensive part in the therapy process both as a motivator as well as a determinant for future care procedures; 4) therapists may indeed tend to promote therapy as a “cure” in order to motivate a patient if other means have been exhausted; 5) patient independence is the ultimate goal.

Field observations

Two of the three therapists interviewed cited patient motivation as the single most important factor in the therapy process. One even went so far as to label the role of the therapists to be that of *Motivator*, saying, “the bottom line is if they don’t want to do it, they’re not going to. You can try everything in the

world but if they don't want to they're not going to." Another therapist said motivation is a great tool to use "if you can find what gets them going. For instance, if you know someone's a mother, you can say, 'Oh you can do this! If you're a mother I know you can do this!' and 95% of the time they end up doing it." In contrast to this statement, however, this same therapist labeled motivation as the least important factor in therapy, saying, "Motivated or not, you still got to do it". She went on to point out that therapists must establish short term and long term goals with a patient and that even though lack of motivation in a patient may lessen the short term goals, the long term goal always remains the same: independence. These discrepancies are somewhat troubling, but from my own observations and work experience, I would have to conclude that motivation does indeed play a crucial role, because, as I have observed in many separate situations, if a patient does not wish to participate in a session, they have the right to refuse to and often do.

One instance in particular is worth citing in its entirety from my field-notes. It was taken over the course of two days regarding one patient's refusal to attend therapy, despite his nurse's insistence that he go. Ignoring the patient's refusal, the nurse placed him in the wheelchair to go up to therapy anyway. The patient, whom we shall call Mr. Smith for privacy considerations, continued to voice his refusal while in the department, and the therapist sent him right back down to his room without therapy. This incident occurred on the weekend of April 12, 2003.

I came to get patient after lunch. (Patient had already refused his morning session.) When asked to go therapy he shook his head no. I asked why and he said, "I just don't want to go. I just want to go home and sit on my front porch." Seeing this as a possible means of motivation, I replied, "I understand that, and if you come up to therapy, your doctor may let you go home earlier so you can sit on your porch." He thought about it for awhile, and then shook his head no again. I told his nurse, and she said that he needed to go because his doctor was going to send him to a rehabilitation hospital, Cardinal Hill, and if he kept refusing therapy here, they would not accept him there. She went into his room to try to convince him to go, "You need to go to therapy to get better. Don't you want to get better?" He replied, "No! I just want to go home and sit on my front porch!" After many more similar exchanges, she finally started to physically sit him up in bed. He did not resist physically, but with verbal resistance, almost pleading, "please don't make me do something I don't want to do." He then looked at me, as I stood by the door watching. "Sir, sir, would you make a man do something that he doesn't want to do?" Although my internal reply was no, and I felt as if what this nurse was doing

was wrong, I replied cautiously, so as not to rebuke her actions, "If it would help that man get better, yes." The nurse continued to place him into the wheelchair despite his constant moaning and verbal refusal. He was almost at the point of tears. I knew that the therapist would not work with him like this, but took him up anyway, with him moaning and reiterating how much he did not want to go the entire way. Once up in therapy he continued to moan even louder and exclaimed "I just don't want to be here!!" The therapist replied with a frown, "It sounds like you just don't want any rehab is what it sounds like. We thought that you were going to Cardinal Hill to try to be independent and stuff." The patient continued to moan and refuse, and the therapist said shortly, "OK, we'll take you back and tell the nurse you were in pain." He replied, "Why don't you tell her the truth?" "Well, what is the truth then?" "I just don't want to be here!" The therapist frowned again and said OK. She then walked over to another therapist and said heatedly, "If he's not going to do anything, I'm not going to make him. Take him back. He's supposed to go to Cardinal Hill but they won't take him like this."

This incident is very important for understanding many of the main themes: it demonstrates how motivation is the crucial factor in patient participation in therapy, it shows the point at which the therapist may give up on a patient, and it also demonstrates how employees may try to coerce a patient into coming to therapy.

Mr. Smith was incredibly obstinate in his refusal to attend therapy. It is evident here that the therapist's statement about motivation does not apply in this instance. He is determined not to do it, and he won't, despite the pleas of his nurse, transporter (in this case myself), and therapist. From this instance alone it is clear that a certain degree of motivation must be present in a patient in order for them to carry out their exercises, and therefore it is a crucial ingredient in rehabilitation. So the question must then be asked, why did one therapist downplay motivation so much?

A possible answer that I have determined lies in the role of my job within this particular department, the transporter. As I explained earlier, it is my job to take the patients out of their beds, place them in the wheelchair, and take them up to the therapy room where they are then seen by the therapist. A possible explanation for the diminished role of motivation in the view of this particular therapist is the fact that every patient she sees in the department was at least motivated enough to get out of bed (a process which alone can be very painful and tedious) and come up to the therapy room. In contrast, every patient that lacks this minimal level of motivation would have refused my efforts to take

them to the department and remained in bed. Thus, simply put, the therapist sees the motivated patients whereas she does not see the unmotivated patients, and therefore motivation would likely seem as of little significance, whereas from my point of view, motivation is crucial. With this being said, motivation is seen to play a dominant role in application of rehabilitation.

Another significant point about this particular instance with Mr. Smith is the dialogue between the nurse, myself, and the patient. Upon first refusal he gave me a reason why— he wanted to go home and sit on his porch. I picked this up immediately as a possible motivating tool (using the patient's own desire to go home as a means of motivation is echoed in the interviews by every therapist). This however, did not convince Mr. Smith and he continued to refuse. I informed his nurse and she again reiterated to him that therapy would help him get better. Both of us implied that therapy would in fact improve his current condition, as it most probably would. But the fact of the matter is that we both emphasized it as a possible means of curing, and not simply as a process of rehabilitation, thus encouraging the illusion of therapy as a cure as Gay Becker discusses. Although I realized that I could have been perpetuating this illusion while I made those statements, I felt forced into it by the insistence of the nurse that he go and the patient's own insistence that he not go.

The third major theme of this particular instance is the therapist's unwillingness to work with him while he remained so obstinate. She feebly tries to convince him, frowns at his refusal, and finally waves him back down to his room saying "If he's not going to do it, I'm not going to make him." Once again, patient motivation is the main element here. It is, however, important to note that Mr. Smith's name was on my list of patients to bring up to the rehab room the next day as well, insinuating that she had not totally given up on him. This next account with Mr. Smith is as follows:

The next day: Patient was on my list again to bring up to therapy. Once again, he refused in the morning with a shake of his head, and I told him I would check back after lunch, which I did. He was asleep. I woke him, and was very surprised to hear that he would agree to go to therapy without objection this time. He took his time getting out of bed and politely refused any help saying he wanted to do it himself. He worked himself to the side of the bed slowly with many rests and I helped him into the wheelchair. Just before doing so he told me that he dreamt about me last night, and that he never hated anyone more in his entire life. I smiled nervously and asked him if he hated me now, and he said no. He then said that his wife called today and refused to bring his

grandson to visit if he wouldn't cooperate with the therapists, and so now he said he would do anything we asked him too. Once in the department, he was welcomed back with all smiles, "Well look who's back! Good to see you Mr. Smith. How are you doing today?" He cooperated with every request to the best of his ability today.

Perhaps the best example of how these incidents coincide with the information gathered from relevant literary sources is that of Mr. Smith's agreement to cooperate with therapy only after his wife refused to bring his grandson if he would not. This fits in very nicely with John Janzen's concept of a "therapy management group", or all those in the therapy process. With this particular incident, the family was a crucial means of incentive to improve and cooperate with the therapists, which greatly emphasizes the effect of the family on the patient's motivation. On having knowledge of this particular motivation for Mr. Smith, the therapist then used it to her advantage by encouraging the patient to keep working at his therapy so that he could pick up his grandson, etc. In this instance having a general knowledge of a patient's personal life proved to be of great benefit.

When asked about how important they felt it was to get to know a patient on a personal level, most of the therapists interviewed agreed that it helps, but is not really necessary. One commented, "It makes it easy, but you don't want to delve too much into their personal lives because it can make it complicated. You don't want to get off track". Another said that patients will generally work harder for you if you get to know them personally. The overall consensus however was that a certain amount of knowledge was needed as to what their home situations were like, whether or not someone would be there to look after them if so required. The therapists are only able to meet with some patients about 15 minutes a day, and therefore don't have the time to develop real close relations with patients, so they generally focus on what is relevant to the situation, which is learning about possible caretakers after the patients leave the hospital. One therapist said that she generally gets that information from the patient's chart, while another found a more personable method of asking and said "I always ask where they're from and about the area and try to relate to it personally with my own home somehow. I also ask who will be there when they get home. That way you learn about their family dynamics, but it comes across as you asking about them and helps you do your job as well. It makes them trust you and lets them know that you care about them and don't see them as just another heart patient."

This certainly seems to be the case from my observations. Patients that I had made an effort to get to know and converse with were generally more willing to make an effort to come to therapy with me, despite the level of pain they were experiencing. One particular instance was with a certain male patient in March who had had his leg amputated. His nurse warned me that he would be uncooperative and rude, so I was prepared for anything when I knocked on his door. I asked him if he would come to therapy with me and he replied curtly and almost reluctantly, "I guess". Then he said, "Well sit down and hear my story," so I sat down in a chair and listened as he explained to me that in December he had his leg amputated below the knee and underwent therapy then. He was now back again to get more removed, this time just above the knee, "So you see, I've gone through all this shit before." He was pretty put out about it, but nevertheless was willing to cooperate with me every time I came for him, and even cracked a few jokes now and then. His nurse came up to me later that day and was shocked to hear that he had given me no problems. Simply listening and getting to know this particular individual had resulted in his cooperation with me whereas he was uncooperative with other employees.

From my experience I found that this proved to be the case with many of the patients. One woman in particular had a knee replacement. She refused her morning session due to intense pain, so I checked on her again after lunch to see if she was feeling better. She was still in a lot of pain, but agreed to try to come. Getting her out of bed was extremely slow and difficult and she was constantly commenting on the pain she was feeling, so I tried to get her mind off it by talking to her a bit. I ended up telling her that I was an Anthropology major at UK and she immediately lit up. She started talking about programs she had seen on the Discovery Channel about old civilizations and she told me everything I ever wanted to know about Pompeii. I told her that I would love to travel to Europe to see it, and she then said that she's love to see the cave paintings in France as well. I agreed. It is significant to point out that in the twenty minutes we talked, she never once mentioned the pain again and was clearly feeling better. Color was restored back in her face and she was smiling cheerfully. After her session I put her back in bed and before I said goodbye she stopped and said, "Andrew, if you ever get to see the cave paintings in France, think of me." I assured her that I would.

Gay Becker's term "recovery potential" was never actually used by any of the therapists interviewed, and it is interesting to note that each therapist had a somewhat different idea of what factors are relevant when deciding what type of therapy to administer on a patient. Becker mentions "the

physical abilities of the patient before the affliction, the ability of the patient to perceive his or her surroundings correctly, the severity of the condition, age, and willingness and ability of the patient to undergo a challenging therapy program (Becker 168). In comparison, one of the therapists mentioned strength and flexibility, cognition (perception of surroundings), sensation, hearing and vision, and medical history as important factors in devising goals for which the patients should strive to reach. Another therapist mentioned strength, endurance, range of motion, bed mobility, and emphasized prior functioning ability as one of the most important factors. The third therapist also emphasized prior physical level of function, saying, "It's our job to get them back to what they were doing before." She also listed family support as a crucial factor.

Despite the differences of opinion between the therapists interviewed, all place an important emphasis on the functioning ability of the patient prior to being in the hospital, and stated that the ultimate goal of the therapists was to restore, if possible, the patient back to that level of independence. One therapist stated, "The goal is to get people to fire us. We don't want to people to get attached to therapy. The goal is to get people to where they don't need us anymore."

Conclusion

Based on my observations within a physical therapy department, a number of prominent themes have emerged both from the field itself and from relevant literature on the topic of the therapist/patient interactions. Motivation was seen to be very important for patient participation in rehabilitation, and therapists' knowledge of the personal aspect of a patient's life was seen to have been a possible means of motivation, but based on time constraints and heavy workload, was not really emphasized within this particular department. The family support was also seen to have been a crucial factor in patient motivation, and therapists and employees had been observed to propagate the illusion of the curative capabilities of therapy in order to motivate a patient to participate. Furthermore, when establishing goals, prior level of functioning ability was one of the main factors as well, and independence was always the underlying goal.

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TO EMPOWER THE SPIRIT: ACTIVISM AS AN EXPRESSION OF SPIRITUALITY

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Introduction

“Practice what you preach” is a common charge leveled at people who dispense hypocritical advice in our culture. Another expression related to the same principles is to “walk your talk”. We have these sayings that remind us to let our actions reflect our inner beliefs and principles, yet how many of us actually do this, especially in the political realm? And if we do not, why not? Some political scientists have recently begun to take into account the ties between religious and ethnic ideology and political inclination. They see that the “...energies which release themselves in public life are emotional as well as rational, cultural and ideological as well as economic and pragmatic.” (Kelley 1997:531) My aim is to investigate the relationship between spirituality and activism, specifically social and political activism. I will do this by examining two seemingly disparate religious groups, Reclaiming Witches and the Religious Society of Friends, that seem to have incorporated an ideology which encourages and empowers their practitioners to act on their beliefs. As groups and as individuals they often choose to act upon issues of social justice which creates a link between spirituality, social activism and politics.

What is Reclaiming tradition Witchcraft?

Popular culture has traditionally linked Witchcraft to Satanic worship but contemporary Witches are more likely to be part of the earth and Goddess worshipping religion of Wicca. There are many traditions of Wicca or Witchcraft just as there are many different versions of the well-known religions, but most traditions of Wicca have in common polytheism, worship of a Goddess deity, and a deep reverence for the earth, typically considering the earth to be the body or manifestation of the Goddess. In addition, it has been my experience that a common teaching is “Thou art Goddess” and that the Goddess is within everything. This belief is akin to the philosophy of deep ecologists who believe that “all species (of) life holds intrinsic worth, and as a

result, the whole of nature is part of the moral community.” (Lee 1997:123-124)

Reclaiming is a tradition of Witchcraft that began in the San Francisco area of the United States but has branched out to most other states and even to other countries since its founding over twenty years ago. According to the description published in every issue of the Reclaiming Quarterly, they are “a community of women and men working to unify spirit and politics. Our vision is rooted in the religion and magic of the Goddess - the Immanent Life Force. We see our work as teaching and making magic - the art of empowering ourselves and each other... We use the skills we learn to deepen our strength... to voice our concerns about the world in which we live, and bring to birth a vision of a new culture” (NightMare and Willow 2002:20-21).

Ideologically, the Reclaiming tradition has roots in feminist and Celtic witchcraft since some of the founding members had formal training in those traditions. In addition to traditional Wiccan practice, many of the original Reclaiming Collective were also actively supporting or engaging in civil disobedience during anti-nuclear protests, some lived communally and some were anarchists so activism became a prominent practice in this tradition of Witchcraft and they have “always espoused a connection between spirituality and political action” (NightMare and Willow 2002:19-21).

Who are the Religious Society of Friends?

Many people have no idea what the Religious Society of Friends is, but if you ask them if they've ever heard of Quakers then images of oatmeal containers appear in their minds immediately. Unfortunately, like the inaccurate stereotypes of Witches, most portrayals of Quakers are also off the mark. Many people don't even realize that the Religious Society of Friends is still around, since a popular misconception is that it was a religion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and has since disappeared. Most people don't know that President Richard Nixon was a Quaker, and many of his lesser known policies reflected his religious beliefs (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 2000-2001).

The Religious Society of Friends was founded in England by George Fox during the political and social turmoil of the English Civil War of the seventeenth century. (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 2000-2001) George Fox believed that the Christian church had lost the message of the Apostle Peter, who proclaimed that Jesus was present on the earth in the Spirit and that he empowered and purified the hearts of his devotees. Fox, believing this Holy

Spirit had a personal relationship with each individual, established a non-hierarchical, “radical, egalitarian, spirit-filled Christianity” that became known as the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers. (Hoare 2002). Like the Reclaiming Witches, the Quakers were embroiled in activism right from the start. In addition to suffering religious harassment, the Quakers insisted on equal treatment of women and this was one of the reasons the Puritans persecuted them during Colonial times. (Bacon 1987:97-98) During the past three centuries they have been acting in the forefront of such social movements as anti-slavery, women’s rights and the peace movement. Currently the most visible organization of Quaker social concerns (non-Quakers are members also) is the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Founded in 1917 “to carry out a ‘service of love in wartime’” the AFSC was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1947. (Kentworthy 1987:7) According to the AFSC website, their work is to “understand and address the root causes of poverty, injustice, and war. We are called to confront, nonviolently, powerful institutions of violence, evil, oppression and injustice... Seeking to transform the institutions of society, we are ourselves transformed...” (AFSC 2002)

Some Common Beliefs

This vision of societal transformation is present in both Reclaiming Witch and Quaker thought and both groups explore methods of empowerment and change. For instance, many Quakers and Reclaiming Witches see our culture as being founded in paradigms of violence and dominance, and both groups examine the role of cultural myths in shaping and perpetuating those paradigms. Mary Lord spoke on this subject when she addressed the Annual Meeting of Friends World Committee for Consultation. She talked about the insights of theologian and author Walter Wink who pointed out that “we all live in a culture...founded in the belief in combat as the way that goodness overcomes evil. This belief...is the undercurrent of our myths...(this) belief in ‘redemption through violence’ becomes the underlying structure of our culture and actions.” (Lord 2002) Lord describes it as a system of religious faith in the use of force, and she urges us to examine the success and effectiveness of such a strategy. The fact that Quakers are noticing and confronting such issues means they are taking the first step toward acting in ways that can resist deadly effects of this mythical undertow.

Reclaiming Witches are trained to be aware of these cultural myths since an underlying principle of the magic they practice is that consciousness has

structure and that structure determines how energy flows. In our culture many myths are used to shape the structure of our consciousness so that it complies with authority and the use of force. In *Dreaming the Dark*, Starhawk states that “culture is a set of stories we tell each other again and again. These stories have shapes. The shapes of the stories...shape our expectations and our actions.” (1982:19) She examines the role of several Western cultural myths, including the myth of the apocalypse and its role in shaping how we view time (linear instead of cyclical), its relationship to our cultural view of God being separate from us, and how these perspectives shape a mental structure that “allows certain absolutes to stand outside the world, where they take precedence over the values of the world...” (Starhawk 1982:19-20) As a result, we see ourselves as being separate and fail to notice interconnections and relationships between ourselves and the world which, in turn, blinds us to power relationships us and allows us to be controlled and manipulated. Again, the first step toward change is to be aware and then to create changes in our language and our myths for “Nothing *does* change, unless its form, its structure, its language also changes.” (Starhawk 1982:26)

Another way these two groups link their spiritual beliefs to their social and political practices is found in some beliefs held by both religions. Reclaiming Witches and the Religious Society of Friends believe that the same spirit moves through all of us, that love is a transforming power, and that the self is an agent of transformation. According to the AFSC website, they believe that “there is that of God in each person, leading us to respect the worth and dignity of all.” (AFSC 2002) Kentworthy says “At the heart of the Quaker message is the belief in that of God in every individual. That belief carries with it tremendous implications...” (1987:22) If you see “that of God” in every person then you must treat every person as if they are of God. Most Witches, not only Reclaiming Witches, share a similar belief, although they may phrase it in differently gendered terms. As I mentioned before, “Thou art Goddess” is a popular salutation, but one could just as easily say “You have God in you.” Another small difference is that Witches tend to extend this circle of divinity beyond only humans to include the whole earth and all that goes with it. Starhawk phrased it best when she wrote:

“She is alive in us: we are alive in her as in each other
as all that is alive is alive in us
and all is alive” (1987: 3)

In addition to sharing the belief that the same sacred spirit moves within us all, these two religions also ascribe to the transforming power of love and the concept of the self as an agent of transformation. According to the

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Quakers believe the “power and love of God is over all, erasing the artificial division between the secular and religious” and that Friends continuously are “striving to trust in love rather than react in fear.” (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 2000-2001) The organizational principles and guidelines for the AFSC state that they “assert the transforming power of love and nonviolence as a challenge to injustice and violence and as a force for reconciliation,” and they “seek to address the goodness and truth in each individual.” (AFSC 2002) The Reclaiming Principles of Unity begin with a quote from The Charge of the Goddess, “My law is love unto all beings...” and further states that they “value peace and practice non-violence, in keeping with the Rede, ‘Harm none, and do what you will.’” (Reclaiming 2002) Reclaiming Witches see love as the key to self-empowerment and the tool to bring about their vision of a more sustainable culture. “Love connects; love transforms. Loving the world, for what it is and our vision of what it could be, loving the world’s creatures (including ourselves)... we can transform. We can reclaim our power to shape ourselves and the world around us.” Starhawk 1982: 44) This power to shape the world is present in all individuals, a fact that Quakers and Reclaiming Witches both emphasize.

Action is an expression of spirituality

The Friends and the Reclaiming Witches have in common the idea that action is an expression of spirituality because they do not see a separation between the world and the spirit. As I stated above, Quakers believe that God’s love erases the division between religion and the secular world. (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 2000-2001) The AFSC calls itself “a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends” (AFSC 2002), and other Quakers claim that their most important message is that religion is experiential. (Hoare 2002) “It is not just a matter of accepting words or practices but of experiencing God for oneself. The fact that God is always present means that the whole of a person’s life is sacramental.” (Hoare 2002) Activism is the result of living a sacramental life, experiencing your beliefs. Frances Irene Taber in discussing Quaker personal growth says a “realization comes that (the) inner and outer lives are connected, that for the inward life to continue to grow, there must be a response from the outward life. *It is at that point where awareness dawns that spiritual knowledge itself comes from an open relationship between one’s inner and outer lives, and from a free movement between the two.*” (1987:59)(italics added) Interestingly, other Christian churches have made this connection at times, especially the social gospel movement that

“demanded the church demonstrate its faith by active concern for the poor and dispossessed.” (Findlay 1990:66-67) Another example is how many churches were motivated to social activism by various events during the civil rights movement. (Findlay 1990:71) The difference between these Christian churches and The Religious Society of Friends is the tempo of their social movements. Quaker social activism moves to a steady beat while the other churches are quiet for periods with occasional crescendos of activist periods.

Like the Quakers, Reclaiming Witches have a similar view of action being a part of spirituality. To begin with, Reclaiming rituals are “participatory and ecstatic, celebrating the cycles of the seasons and our lives, and raising energy for personal, collective and earth healing.” (Reclaiming 2002) Witchcraft tends to be a way of life that is practiced rather than just a belief. As a result, many Witches do not see a division between the natural and the supernatural. According to Starhawk, this split between the natural and supernatural world began during the Renaissance when the scientific worldview of a non-living world replaced an organic worldview that valued the living body of the earth. When people see themselves as apart from the earth and each other they are more amenable to domination and control. (1982, 1987) This is where the political aspect comes into play. Starhawk states that “...our ideals, our visions, are meaningless until they are some way enacted.” (1987:8) In her book *Dreaming the Dark* she says, “This is a book about bringing together the spiritual and the political. Or rather, it is a work that attempts to move in the space where that split does not exist...” (1982:xxv) Witches practice magic and if “magic is ‘the art of causing change in accordance with will,’ then political acts, acts of protest and resistance, acts that speak truth to power, that push for change, are acts of magic.” (Starhawk 1982:169) This is why Reclaiming Witches advocate political and social activism as part of their spiritual practice. Other Wiccan groups may have individual members who work for environmental and social justice, certainly many Neo-Pagans of different persuasions are attracted to such issues, but such activism is not part of their creed.

Robert Kelley examined the relationship between religious and ethnic groups and their political affiliations. He found that religion does affect political views, specifically that religion affects our view of the world, how other ethnic groups are seen in relation to ourselves, and the role government should play in our lives. (Kelley 1977) As we have seen, for some groups politics and religion are not only interrelated, but inseparable. The Religious Society of Friends has been around for more than three hundred years and during that time they have made a long career of political and social activism

and reform. Reclaiming Witches are a newer group, but they are just as committed to ideals of social justice and a truly egalitarian society. Both of these groups recognize the oneness of the spirit moving within all humans, acknowledge the transformational power of love and seek to reform our culture into a more egalitarian and just society. They are two religious groups who “practice what they preach.”

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AN EXPERIMENTAL USE-WEAR AND FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF GUNFLINTS

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Introduction

There have been relatively few archaeological studies performed on gunflints, and most of those that have been conducted focus on identification of an artifact as a gunflint and the gunflint's country of origin. This study addresses the dearth of information on use-life and use-wear patterns of gunflints. Previous archaeological and experimental research had concluded that unifacial step flaking associated with smoothing of the worked edges is the prototypical gunflint use-wear pattern (Kenmotsu 1990). This pattern is classified as unique to gunflints, allowing archaeologists to categorize artifacts in a collection that exhibited these wear patterns as gunflints, and also estimate its use-life based on the kind and severity of use-wear present.

This research project was designed to evaluate previous gunflint use-wear studies, conducted by Nancy Kenmotsu, and to see if there is indeed a unique use-wear pattern that increases systematically each time the flint strikes the frizzen. These patterns would be observed in a modern sample through experimental research and compared to gunflints from the archaeological collection in order to reconstruct the artifact's use-life. An accurate assessment of use-life will allow for reconstructions of site economics and make it possible to see if gunflints are being used differently in varying spatial and cultural contexts.

Another topic that this study addresses is one that has been overlooked in experimental archaeological literature. Experimental research was conducted to see if differences in raw material and manufacturing processes affected the likelihood of shots being fired. This was measured through a comparison of the numbers of charges lit and the number of times the flint strikes the frizzen. Differences in the numbers of shots fired per gunflint can lead to a more accurate understanding of the best type of gunflint to be using.

Before an evaluation of relative manufacturing techniques and raw material, a review of the history of gunflint manufacturing, materials used, and gunflint use is required. After gathering an adequate amount of background information, an experiment was designed and performed to address the two issues this project raised. The data collected were then interpreted to discover if unique, systematically increasing use-wear patterns existed in gunflints and to evaluate the differences, if any, between manufacturing techniques, raw materials and the effectiveness of the gunflint.

Background

Gunflint production started in the 1600's with the invention of snaphance guns (Lenk 1965). Manufacture of flintlock rifles began in 1650 (Chapel 1962). The gunflint itself was used to produce a spark to ignite the black powder in the frizzen pan of a flintlock rifle (Hamilton 1964). All gunflints were manufactured outside of the United States, mainly in France and England, and then imported (Woodward 1960). Gunflints of French origin were the most common in the United States until 1790, when production of Brandon flint in England began (Kenmotsu 1990). English Brandon flints rapidly replaced French flints as the gunflint of choice for people in the United States. Gunflint manufacturing techniques changed from gunspall production to blade-core production c. 1790, and only recently have gunflints been mass-produced by machine cutting. Native Americans utilized gunflints differently than Europeans in the United States. The Native Americans fired and retouched their gunflints bifacially (Witthoft 1966), while Europeans worked their gunflints unifacially. In the archaeological record, a gunflint worked bifacially most likely has been utilized by Native Americans. Previous research has focused on spatial distribution analyses (Hamilton 1960). Nancy Kenmotsu's (1990) research project added a dimension of use-wear analysis to the literature. Kenmotsu microscopically examined 38 gunflints from modern and archaeological contexts and proposed a use-wear pattern for gunflints based on her observations.

Project Design and Methods

The archeological collection used in this study comes from sites excavated by Mark Schurr during the University of Notre Dame Archaeological Field School conducted from 2000 to 2003. Three sites, Bennac Village (12MR231), Pokagon Village (20BE13), and McCartney Cabin (12K0313), date from the Removal Period of the Potawatomi, between 1830 and 1850. These three collections contained a total of seven complete gunflints,

and a number of alleged gunflint fragments. The gunflint fragments were not included in this study due to the inability to ascertain information about the number of worked edges. The gunflints were then categorized, based on a table by Mark Wagner (2001). It was hoped that this data, when compared with the modern gunflints, would aid in reconstructing site economics and individual artifact use-life.

To formulate a modern sample of gunflints for the experimental work, a flintlock rifle and gunflints first had to be attained. Thirty gunflints were purchased for this study: ten English Brandon gunflints manufactured with blade and core technology, ten gunflints machine cut from Brazilian agate, and ten machine cut gunflints made from Arkansas chert. It had been hoped that ten gunflints of French raw material and manufacturing would be used in this study because of the presence of gunflints with a French origin in the archaeological collection. Yet the relatively small number of modernly manufactured gunflints provided a scarcity of resources, and the desired materials were unable to be acquired. As Kenmotsu suggests, a 10-70 power light microscope was used for analysis of the use-wear patterns. Each modern gunflint was examined microscopically and a Lithic Use-Wear Pattern data sheet, modeled on Kenmotsu's and Ahler's (1979) data collection sheet, was completed for each gunflint. The Lithic Use-Wear Pattern data sheet examined the presence or absence of blunting, smoothing, polishing, step-fracturing, crushing, flat flaking, striations, and residue on the edges of the gunflints. The definition of these use-wear terms was taken from Ahler (1979).

First, a gunflint was fitted into the cock. The frizzen pan was then loaded with a small amount of black powder. Then the frizzen pan was covered with the frizzen, the cock was pulled back, and the trigger was pulled. This action created sparks which had the opportunity to light the black powder in the frizzen pan. A successful shot is attained when the sparks produced from the flint striking the frizzen ignite the black powder in the frizzen pan. In use, this ignition would then light black powder in the barrel, firing the round. For this experiment, the barrel was not loaded with powder or a round because a lighting of the frizzen pan's black powder almost assuredly would guarantee a shot to be fired. Each flint was used for a specific number of shots. Six flints from each raw material (English, Arkansas, and Brazil) were used. One flint of each material was not shot to provide a control specimen. The other five flints struck the frizzen 10 times, 20 times, 50 times, and 100 times. Each time, it was recorded whether the sparks produced by the flint striking the frizzen resulted in a successful shot.

Use-Wear Expectations

Based on previous studies, this project expected to find a number of characteristics of the gunflints that would signify uniform use-wear. First, it was expected that use-wear patterns would become more severe as use-life increased. Severity of gunflint use-wear patterns would be indicated by macroscopic observation and by high levels of step fracturing, blunting, and polishing on the working surface. It was also expected that the use-life of the gunflints, specifically the number of times it has been fired, could be determined through microscopic analysis. In Kenmotsu's research, 100 percent of the working edges of the gunflints exhibited step fracturing. It was expected that this work would reflect her data, and that all worked edges would have step fractures. Finally, in Kenmotsu's study, analysis of use-wear was not limited to gunflint edges that had been used to strike the frizzen. She included all edges that exhibited use-wear, not differentiating between firing use-wear and manufacturing use-wear. In this study, the number of edges used and which edges struck the frizzen is known. It was expected that the used edges would have more severe use-wear patterns than the unused edges, especially in blunting, crushing, and step-fracturing.

Firing Expectations

First, it was expected that the reliability of the gunflints would decrease with an increase in the number of times the flint struck the frizzen. Second, drawing upon U.S. military records, it was expected that a gunflint edge would only be reliable for 20 rounds (Chapel 1962). It has been put forth in archaeological literature that light serrations on the working edge produced during the knapping process increase the number of sparks sent into the frizzen pan, resulting in more successful shots (Kenmotsu 1990). It was therefore expected that the English Brandon flint manufactured using the blade-core technology would fire more consistently than the machine cut gunflints. Finally, it was expected that the English Brandon flint would produce a larger number of successful shots because of its popularity for nearly 100 years as the premier gunflint material.

Results

Due to small size, the Arkansas gunflints could not be used in this study.

This left the Brazilian agate and the English Brandon flint as the two comparative materials.

Use-Wear Results

Upon completion of the experimental portion of the project, the gunflints were analyzed under a microscope and data recorded on Lithic Use-Wear Pattern data sheets. The information from the data sheets was then combined into a spreadsheet (table 1). Blunting was found in four (66.7%) of the Brazilian worked edges and two (7.7%) of the English worked edges. There were no recorded instances of smoothing of the edges in this experimental study. Two (33%) of the Brazilian edges, the ones that were fired over 20 times, exhibited polishing while there was no polishing found on the English gunflints. Step-fracturing was found in four (66.7%) Brazilian agates and sixteen (61.5%) English flint edges. Crushing was recorded on 2 (33.3%) of the Brazilian edges and fourteen (53.8%) of the English edges. Four (66.7%) of the Brazilian worked edges had flat flaking, while all 26 (100%) edges of the English flints had flat flakes removed. Striation was non-existent in the Brazilian agate (0%), but it was found on two (7.7%) English gunflint edges. The most common residue found on the gunflints was metal. Metal was found on one (16.7%) Brazilian gunflint and all six (100%) English gunflints. Three (50%) of the Brazilian gunflints had a black residue on the worked edge, though it was not found on the English gunflints.

Analysis of the used edges of the gunflints was also recorded. Four (80%) of the used edges of Brazilian agate had blunting, while there were no occurrences (0%) of blunting on the English Brandon flint. There were two (40%) used edges of the Brazilian gunflints that had polishing and zero (0%) English gunflints exhibited that type of use-wear. The Brazilian agate and Brandon flint both had 3 (60%) used edges that had step-fracturing. One (20%) of the Brazilian gunflints and two (40%) of the English flints had crushing along the used edge. Flat flaking was present on four (80%) of the Brazilian agate used edges and on all 5 (100%) of the Brandon flint used edges. While there were no striations (0%) on the Brazilian gunflint used edges, striations were present on one (20%) of the English gunflint's used edges.

Firing Results

Each time the gunflint struck the frizzen it was noted if that contact produced sparks that ignited the black powder in the frizzen pan. The relative

frequency of successful shots is shown in figure 3. In this chart, the average number of successful firing is computed per five shot increment. The best five shot increment for the Brazilian gunflints produced two successful firings (40%) and it occurred seven times: shots 6 to 10, shots 16 to 20, shots 21 to 25, shots 31 to 35, shots 36 to 40, shots 46 to 50, and shots 81 to 85. The best five shot increment for the English gunflints was from shots 31 to 35 when it averaged 4.5 out of five (90%). On average, at any given five shot increment, it is 80% likely the English Brandon flint is at least equal in reliability, and usually more reliable, than the Brazilian agate. The average number of successful firings per 100 shots for the Brazilian agate was 25.2. Over the same 100 shot period, the English Brandon flint averaged 37.0 successful firings. For the English gunflints, the average number of times the flint has to strike the frizzen to fire 20 rounds is between 30 and 35 times. The Brazilian gunflints, on average, fire 20 rounds in 65 to 70 shots.

Discussion

Use wear

The macroscopic and microscopic analysis revealed no consistent use-wear patterns produced on gunflints. The only use-wear pattern that was found on all used English gunflints is flat flaking, yet this was also found on the English gunflint that was not fired (as a result of the manufacturing process). In Brandon flint, the action of the flint striking the frizzen creates step flaking, crushing, and sometimes striations and blunting. The severity of this use-wear, however, is highly variable, in contrast to the first expectation of use-wear patterns. Upon macroscopic and microscopic analysis, it was clear that the English gunflint that was fired 10 times had a higher severity of step-fractures, crushing, flat flaking, and striation on the used edge than the English gunflint that was fired 100 times. The English gunflint that was fired 100 times had no step fracturing, blunting, crushing, or striations on the worked edge, compared with the gunflint shot 10 times that had crushing, striations, and step fracturing on the working edge. The Brazilian gunflints were even less predictable, as the presence or absence of flat flaking, step-fracturing, crushing, and blunting did not increase systematically. The metal residue that was left on all of the English gunflints yet only one Brazilian gunflint might suggest that the Brandon flint is harder or less brittle than the Brazilian agate. The one type of wear that seems to increase with shots fired is polishing in the Brazilian agate, but Kenmotsu (1990) suggests that polishing in the archaeological record may not be found, as the gunflints are usually discarded or retouched before they develop this severe type of use-

wear. This high variability in the severity of use-wear makes it nearly impossible to determine the number of times a gunflint has been used.

The objective of categorizing the gunflints from the archaeological collection into different degrees of use-wear to reconstruct use-life and site economics was unable to be realized. In addition, it was evident that the gunflints in the archaeological record had been retouched. All of the archaeological gunflints had been pressure flaked bifacially. While this suggests Native American use, it hampers a use-wear analysis. Retouching an edge removes all of the worn material, regenerating that edge for further use. It cannot be determined how many times an edge has been retouched, and in turn, the number of shots fired cannot be calculated. Other factors, such as differences in individual gunflint shape and size and orientation in relation to the frizzen, appear to account for the lack of a uniform use-wear pattern that increases systematically through use.

The expectation of the presence of step-fracturing on all worked edges was also not supported by the data. Only 66.7% of the Brazilian agate edges and 61.5% of the English Brandon flint edges had step-fractures, far below the 100% found in Kenmotsu's project. This is once again evidence that there is no uniform use-wear pattern associated with gunflints. There were differences in the use-wear analysis between the two raw materials and production techniques. The Brazilian agate had much more use-wear in the categories of blunting and polishing, while the Brandon flint had more edges with crushing, flat flaking, and striations. The template for use-wear patterns that Kenmotsu suggests does not take into account raw material. The results from this experiment, however, show that gunflint material and production technique impact the presence or absence of use-wear.

When comparing the percentage of worked edges with particular use-wear patterns to the percentage of used edges with those same patterns, there is no glaring disparity. If use, rather than manufacturing process, is allegedly producing the wear patterns, then it is expected that the used edges would have significantly more wear. That is not the case in this study. For the English gunflints, the presence of use-wear patterns does not appear linked to the edge used. For example, there were two instances in blunting in the English flints, yet neither of them was on a worked edge. Similarly, 53.8% of the worked edges exhibited crushing, but only 40% of the worked edges showed the same. The percentage of step-fracturing was nearly identical. Increasing use-wear patterns along the used edge does not occur.

The presence of residue on the gunflint does not necessarily correlate with use-wear. In the Brazilian agate, not all of the samples had black residue, most likely a result of the powder, and only one had metal on the surface. The lack of consistent residue patterns makes it hard to apply it to an archaeological context. Lack of residue is not an indicator of lack of use. Presence of residue is likewise not an indicator of use. In the English Brandon gunflints, there was metal residue found on the gunflint that was not fired. The residue most likely was a result of the blade-core manufacturing process, and not a result of striking the frizzen.

A problem with a use-wear analysis of gunflints is found from the military literature. Soldiers often fell into the habit of needlessly snapping the cock, which severely shortened the use-life of a flint (Hicks 1937). This activity would undoubtedly leave use-wear on the gunflint. Even if a uniform use-wear pattern were present on gunflints, activities such as this would distort possible site economic reconstructions.

Firing reliability

In tracking the flint's ability to light the black powder in the frizzen pan, it was observed that the peak effectiveness of each material was between shots 10 and 40. After the gunflint had struck the frizzen more than 50 times, it became wholly unreliable. This result supported the first expectation of firing for the project. For example, in shots 1 to 50 of the English gunflint that was fired 100 times, 27 successful firings of the black powder were produced. In contrast, shots 51-100 of that same flint produced only 9 successful firings. It is unlikely that in the practice, gunflint edges would be shot more than fifty times before utilization of another edge or retouching. The average number of times the flint strikes the frizzen in order to produce 20 successful firings is 30 to 35 for English Brandon flints and 65 to 70 for the Brazilian agate. When all of the gunflints in this study are combined, the average number of shots to shoot 20 rounds is around 50. This agrees with the reliability expectation that each gunflint edge only produces quality sparks for the first 50 shots.

The U.S. Army issued one gunflint per 20 rounds in 1846 (Chapel 1962). Interviews with modern flintlock rifle enthusiasts have shown that a single gunflint usually can shoot close to 200 rounds (Kenmotsu 1990). Kenmotsu concludes that modern people using gunflints are able to maintain a longer use-life of their flints than people 150 years ago. I believe that Kenmotsu's conclusion does not take into account other factors. Modern enthusiasts often

have a number of high quality flints in their kits. The mass production of gunflints in the nineteenth century would have limited the quality of individual flints. Low quality flints may not have had alternate edges to be utilized through retouching and flipping the gunflint over. In addition, in a military situation, it is much easier to simply change gunflints than try and rejuvenate them. To retouch a gunflint, the soldier would need to have additional materials in their kit, such as a stone or antler billet. The size and weight of the gunflints would make it much more attractive to carry around many of them than retouching tools. It also takes less time to change a gunflint than to retouch it. In a battle, that may mean the difference between life and death.

Functionality and cultural differences may be reasons for the distinction between military flints and Native American flints from habitation sites. Acculturation is a major issue in Native American sites during the Removal Period. The gunflint collection from Bennac Village, Pokagon Village, and McCartney cabin sites show that the Native Americans were not using gunflints in the same way as Europeans. Technologically, bifacial retouching of European gunflints is an example of Native Americans adopting materials from the foreign influences, yet keeping their own production techniques that were passed down through numerous generations. Functionally, the Native Americans did adopt European guns and gunflints, yet they used them in their own way. Gunflints found at Native American habitation sites were most likely used for hunting, as opposed to the military's use of guns as warring implements. Gunflints are evidence for partial acculturation, yet with many traditional values and practices still being maintained.

The raw material and manufacturing methods played a large role in predicting the success of a shot. The blade-core manufactured English Brandon flint outperformed the machine cut Brazilian agate, often at a successful firing rate of 2:1. This result was as expected, because the light serrations, which are thought to increase the number and quality of sparks, on the working edge that are produced through the knapping process of blade-core technology are absent in the machine cut material. Further investigation, isolating one of the two variables, raw material and manufacturing process, can show to what extent each affects the gunflint's quality.

Conclusion

This research project was designed to evaluate previous gunflint use-wear

studies, conducted by Nancy Kenmotsu, and to see if there is indeed a unique use-wear pattern that increases systematically each time the flint strikes the frizzen. The results that the experimental work provided contradict Kenmotsu's conclusion. Variables, such as raw material, manufacturing process, angle at which the flint strikes the frizzen, and weapon used impede gunflint analysis by affecting the severity of the use-wear and the way in which use-wear is formed.

Due to a lack of systematic use-wear patterns, archaeologists are unable to categorize the use-life of gunflints in the archaeological collection. Conclusions about cultural processes, such as site economics, which had been hoped to be supported by gunflints in the archaeological collection, cannot be made. Gunflint rejuvenation, uneven use-wear, and alternative use-wear forming activities keep archaeologists from knowing how many times a gunflint has been fired. Experimental research showed that gunflint edges are only reliable for about 50 shots, or 20 rounds. This is in line with the historical military documents of the nineteenth century. It was also seen that raw material and manufacturing process dictate how effective a gunflint will be. Gunflints are surprisingly inconsistent, with most gunflints only successfully firing 40% to 60% of the time. There are many questions about gunflints that have yet to be asked or answered. Further study into ideal raw materials and production techniques can be completed in order to find the optimal gunflint morphology. Gunflints, while found on many archaeological sites, have not at this point been examined for their ramifications on cultural processes such as economics and cultural identity, and that step will lead to a better understanding of historical archaeological sites.

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BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT EVOLUTION IS ERNST MAYR, 2001

*Review by Gretchen Dabbs
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Approximately 150 years after Charles Darwin wrote *On the Origins of Species*, the principles of evolutionary science still resides on his foundations. Written by renowned evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr, *What Evolution Is*, outlines the course of evolution from its inception by Darwin until present times. Mayr offers considerable insight into taxonomy, adaptation, diversity, and processes of speciation. This book is intended for anyone who would like to know more about evolution. Mayr organizes the book into four main parts. The first provides evidence for evolution. He uses such evidence as fossil remains, comparative morphology, embryonic similarities, geographical variation, and molecular biology. Using numerous charts and diagrams, Mayr is able to break down evolutionary evidence into its simplest components, making it comprehensible to even the most evolutionarily challenged.

The second section of the book deals with the explanation for evolutionary change and adaptation. Mayr further subdivides this section into two important categories: variational evolution and natural selection. According to variational evolution, a vast quantity of genetic variation is produced in every generation, but only a few individuals will survive to produce the next generation of offspring. Therefore, it is the individuals that are best adapted which will reproduce successfully. In contrast, natural selection is the weeding out of individuals from a population of lower fitness. Mayr is able to give precise and coherent evidence for both of these theories and once again provides helpful diagrams to aid the reader in understanding certain concepts. He also supplies in-text boxes for additional reading for those readers who would like to know more.

The third section of the book looks at the origins and meanings of biodiversity. Mayr delves into the concepts of micro and macroevolution and explores the difficulty in establishing what constitutes a species. He breaks down the process leading to speciation and examines the different kinds of speciation. However, the majority of this section is devoted to the phenomenon of macroevolution. Mayr is able to take the daunting subject of macroevolution and subdivide it into easily readable sections. He provides case studies to illustrate his points and allows the reader to feel at ease while wading into the depths of macroevolution.

The final section of this book is devoted to human evolution. He acknowledges the fact that the evolution of man is incomplete due to the fact that there is a lack of fossil evidence. He offers evidence for the support of the primate origin of man and also examines the stages of hominization. Lastly, he studies the evolution of human ethics and the future of mankind.

Early on, the reader gets the feeling that Mayr is attempting to put one at ease when presented with such normally intimidating material. Mayr uses common terminology, instead of specialized terminology, and also provides a helpful glossary at the end of the book. He also does an extraordinary job of supplying the reader with diagrams and charts to illustrate his points along the way. On top of that, Mayr also uses in-text boxes to refer the reader to another work on the subject or to offer case studies. Mayr readily acknowledges both Darwin and Wallace as having established the foundation of evolution. He provides extensive additional reading lists, and recognizes the fact that he doesn't know everything there is about evolution. Mayr also realizes that further developments in molecular biology, the unearthing of more fossil evidence, and identification of new species could lead to a revision of evolutionary theory, but its premise will still be Darwinian.

Skillfully written with useful diagrams, this book provides an exceptional perspective of evolutionary theory through its many stages since Mayr has been around for most of them. He offers a first-hand view of how and why evolutionary theory changed, but also dismantles the theory to its simplest parts. By breaking down the intimidating theory of evolution, Mayr establishes a book readily accessible to anyone with an interest in evolution.

**DARK NATURE:
A NATURAL HISTORY OF EVIL**
LYALL WATSON, 1995

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The biologist-naturalist Dr. Lyall Watson has presented a jewel of a book for those who are diligent enough to forge through his compact writing style and get to the kernel of the point that he is trying to convey. Each sentence in *Dark Nature* must be read, dissected, and digested before moving on to the next. This work strives to answer the question “what is evil?”, and from there works to unravel the mystery that surrounds the origin of evil in humans. Early in the introduction to chapter one Dr. Watson defines for the reader what good and evil are. Respectively they are that which encourages the integrity of the whole, and that which disturbs or disrupts that completeness, or anything that is bad for the ecology (page 9). While not explicitly part of his definition of good and evil, the reader gains a sense that these definitions are proffered on a genetic basis, as evidenced by his writings throughout the rest of the work.

Throughout the entire work Dr. Watson provides the reader with many colorful and interesting examples of the workings of the natural world from the animal world ranging from gorillas and chimpanzees to killer whales. These examples act to show the reader that the rules and ideas Watson is putting forth about evil do not only apply to *Homo sapiens*, but can also be applied to the animal world. Watson is demonstrating the universality of evil, an important point when trying to discover the origins.

Dr. Watson gives the “Three Principles of Pathics,” which he argues describes how things get bad, a synonym for evil throughout the work. Watson argues that things become bad when one of the Three Principles of Pathics is violated. He argues that order is disturbed by loss of place, which means that “stability suffers when something is removed from, detached from or distanced from, the locus where it works best and set down somewhere else, where it is no longer part of a larger system of mutual advantages and constraints” (page 30). Watson argues that this rule is so obvious that even

the federal governments of many nations have realized it, in limiting the importation of exotic plant and animal life. When order is disrupted by loss of balance, or a population increases to the point where they have exceeded their resource supply, the Second Principle of Pathics is demonstrated (page 33). Watson illustrates this point with an explanation as to why Norwegian lemmings tend to “commit suicide.” The final Principle of Pathics argues that when order is destroyed by loss of diversity good turns to bad, which can be seen in his depiction of elephants and baobab trees from his childhood home in South Africa (page 42).

As mentioned previously, Watson uses the genetic makeup of the world as the driving force behind all actions and therefore behind the ideas of good and evil. He suggests that there are universally applicable genetic rules for survival which should be activated when one of the Three Principles of Pathics is violated. These rules are to be nasty to outsiders, be nice to insiders, and to cheat whenever possible (page 54). Watson suggests that violation of these genetic rules of survival or violation of any of the Principles of Pathics is evil, except for certain circumstances.

Interestingly, Watson argues that something as heinous as murdering your own child could be spared the label of evil, despite the fact that it violates the first rule of genetic survival, and the first principle of Pathics. Watson argues the killing of a child, whether yours or someone else’s, may be considered good, or at least not evil, if there is good for the greater social group to come out of the act. He uses the example of ritual killings among the Asmat people, with whom he has closely interacted (page 153).

Watson suggests that the ritual killing of children can serve to promote ecological equilibrium, population stability and social cohesion, all of which serve the Asmat society well. On the other hand, Watson brings the discussion around to instances in which parents have killed their own children where it was evil, primarily pointing the finger at Susan Smith, who in October of 1995 rolled her car into a lake, while her two young sons were strapped in the backseat. Watson argues that this deed was evil, while the actions of the Asmat parents are not, because not only did Smith’s action destroy diversity, a breach of the third principle of Pathics, but it violated the second genetic instruction for survival (pages 192-3).

While I enjoyed the experience of reading *Dark Nature* by Dr. Lyall Watson, I do not think that there are any real revelations as to the true nature of evil in his wonderfully written work. Perhaps it is an error on my part to have

expected so much, but I was well prepared for a biological, or at least sociological history of evil, a definite answer as to what evil really is, and perhaps several hypotheses about where evil originated. Alas, this was not in the cards for this book, and I wonder had it been, how much more satisfying would the work have been to those of us in the world who are looking for concretes, not just socio-biological hypotheses.

THE EXTENDED PHENOTYPE: THE GENE AS THE UNIT OF SELECTION RICHARD DAWKINS, 1982

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“The Extended Phenotype” is written as a sequel to “The Selfish Gene.” Dawkins says that it is written for people with a knowledge of evolutionary biology, which is very true. If a person has little knowledge of the terminology, then they will never decipher what he is trying to say. He begins his book by stating that, “The phenomena that I shall consider—co-evolution, arms races, manipulation of hosts by parasites, manipulation of the inanimate world by living things, economic ‘strategies’ for minimizing costs and maximizing costs and maximizing benefits.” (2)

One of the first ideas that he addresses is that scientists often speak of adaptation being “for the benefit of something,” but it usually is best not seen as an individual organism. He says that it is best to think in terms of genes, which he calls the “germ-line replicator.” Although, he says, “it is convenient to think of these phenotypic effects as being packaged together in discrete ‘vehicles’ such as individual organisms, this is not fundamentally necessary.” (4) He says that the replicator should be thought of instead of as of having “*extended phenotypic effects*.” Dawkins says that that effect should be thought of in terms of its effect on its whole environment rather than on itself only.

For this, he uses an analogy of a Necker Cube. He illustrates that when a person draws a Necker Cube on a piece of paper, one can see it from two perspectives. Dawkins says that he sees the replicator in the same way.

He says to begin by picturing a group of interacting organisms. “We know that they contain smaller units, and we know that they are, in turn, parts of larger composite units, but we fix our gaze on the whole organisms. Then suddenly the image flips. The individual bodies are still there; they have not moved, but they seem to have gone transparent. We see through them to the replicating fragments of DNA within, and we see the wider world as an arena in which these genetic fragments play out their tournaments of manipulative skill.” (4-5) Dawkins goes on to say that genes manipulate the world, because they cause an organism to change according to its own fitness. Organisms work to “maximize their own reproductive success.” (5) He says that his hopes for this book is expressed through the Necker Cube analogy. The genetic replicators “preserving themselves by means of their extended phenotypes” is an example of all organisms striving for fitness and for survival, which is the basis for the book. Dawkins writes of the way that genes select and how they replicate.

Dawkins goes on to state that he uses the term replicator in a vague manner, because it can refer to many things. Some people might think of it in terms of a gene pool, but he prefers to look at it in many ways. He says that a replicator can be any portion of a chromosome. He says that natural selection is the survival of any given replicator relative to an allele. “If we look at a portion of chromosome five cistrons long, its alleles are the alternative sets of five cistrons that exist at the homologous loci of all the chromosomes in the population.” (87) He goes on to state that any stretch of DNA can be considered to be competing for an area on the chromosome. Dawkins chose a random piece of chromosome to analyze. He chose an area with twenty-six codons to test to see if it is a replicator. Dawkins states that it must have a “minimum degree of longevity/fecundity and fidelity.” (87) This means that it lasts a long period of time through making copies of itself. He goes on to illustrate how different forms of replicators exist and shows what is not considered a replicator. He goes into an immense amount of detail and attempts to make his description very clear in case the reader is not an expert.

Dawkins goes on to illustrate how organisms tend to do what is best for its own survival. He compares animals to computers by saying that the animal seems to have a program that it uses as it does things in a certain manner every time. However, the program is not a written one, natural selection has weeded out certain characteristics that would deviate from a pattern that is best for the animal’s survival. Dawkins explains that while there are replicators that improve itself for the betterment of the generation, there are others that promote its self, while harming the remainder of the genome. He calls them

“outlaws.” He gives two kinds of outlaws, the “allelic” and the “laterally spreading outlaw.” These two replicators that are outlaws don’t often exist, because the alleles that survive are the ones that promote the survival of the organism as a whole.

Dawkins goes on to explain that the term “fitness” is a confusing one. People often use it in terms of comparison to Darwin and Spencer’s *Survival of the Fittest*. And many people who use the term make it sound like the organism chooses whether it changes or survives. Dawkins says that it pains him to write about the term fitness, because even Biologists get confused. He says, “gene survival is what matters; what is the minimum change we have to make to our old view of what individuals must do, in order that we may cling on to our ideas of the individual as the unit of action? The result—inclusive fitness—was technically correct, but complicated and easy to misunderstand.” (194) He went on to say that he would not use that term again, so that his book will be easier to understand.

The Extended Phenotype is relatively easy to understand. However, unless one is a Biologist they will not grasp the whole concept behind the book. Yes, one might get the general idea, because the author does not often use biological terms without explaining in great detail what they mean, but for those who are not Biologists, it will be as clear as mud. If you are beginning in the field, the book does help to generate thought and a desire to want to know more, but unless well versed in Biological issues and genetics, one will not walk away with the underlying knowledge that Dawkins intends to pass along.

The Extended Phenotype is an interesting read. If one is going into Biology or is already working in the field, then this book is something that one might want to read. It is an interesting way to interpret natural selection.

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