

Tea Virtanen

**PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMATIVITY IN
PASTORAL FULBE CULTURE**

Research Series in Anthropology
University of Helsinki

Academic Dissertation
Research Series in Anthropology
University of Helsinki, Finland

Distributed by:
Helsinki University Press
PO Box 4 (Vuorikatu 3A)
00014 University of Helsinki
Finland
Fax: + 358-9-70102374
www.yliopistopaino.helsinki.fi

Copyright © 2003 Tea Virtanen
ISSN 1458-3186
ISBN (print.) 952-10-1397-4
ISBN (pdf) 952-10-1398-2
<http://ethesis.helsinki.fi>

Helsinki University Printing House
Helsinki 2003

To the Memory of Alhaji Kongoro

Each world whilst it is attended to is real after its own fashion.

William James

CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
1. Introduction	1
Shifting Perspectives	1
Gathering Information	7
From Cultural Performances towards the Performativity of Culture	10
Outline	23
2. <i>Pulaaku</i>: Performed or Embodied Culture?	25
<i>Pulaaku</i> , Performance and Shame	27
<i>Pulaaku</i> as Cultural Competence	31
Sharing Shame and Ideals	34
“Is Your Body Well?": <i>Pulaaku</i> in Greetings	36
On How the Fulbe Greet	37
Greeting as a Model for Smooth Interaction	40
Reframing the Greeting Performance	42
3. People of the Blessed Cattle	48
Nomads, <i>Jihad</i> and the Process of Sedentarisation	48
Fulbe Routes to Cameroon	50
The Formation of Muslim Fulbe Chiefdoms in Adamawa	51
The Migration of the Cattle Fulbe to Cameroon	58
Tibati: Excursion into Local History	63
Later Arrivals: The Aku Wave of the 1970s	70
The Blessed Cattle	81

Contents

4.	Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present	85
	Reshaping the Origins	85
	"We Come after Arabs"	86
	From Town to Bush	90
	Creation of the Cattle	92
	Myths and Islam in Adamaoua	96
	Performing a Mythical History	99
	Recollecting Nigeria	101
	The Unspoken Pre-Muslim Past	102
	The Two Landscapes	106
	From <i>Soro</i> to Manslaughter:	
	Cameroon and the Undisciplined Youth	113
	Change and Continuity in Campsites	121
	History in the Present	126
5.	Schemes for Mobile Living	130
	Culture on the Move	130
	How to Do Things with Verbs	134
	Nomads in the <i>Hijju</i>	137
6.	Schemes for Lifetimes	145
	Relating to Others through <i>Hakkiilo</i>	145
	Young Lives	149
	The Message of the Firstborn	154
	<i>Koggal</i> of Faadi	154
	Coming for the Bride	158
	Celebrating the Firstborn	161
	Displaying the Wealth of the New Mother:	
	<i>Bantal</i>	169
	Starting a Household: <i>Defol</i>	174
	Married Men, Married Women	178
	Mature Lives	181
	From Autonomy to Social Personhood	187
7.	Co-Wives through Milk:	
	Gender and <i>Pulaaku</i> in Everyday Life	189
	Gender, Generation and Shame	189
	Milk and Money in Motion	198
	Seclusion of Women: Puzzling Dependencies	214
	Living up to Ideals	219

Contents

8.	“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness	222
	The Rhetorics of “Our Lineage”	223
	Performing Patrikin	226
	Maternal Connections	232
	<i>DenDiraagu</i> : Relating through Play	237
	Framing Relations in Everyday Life	239
	The Limits of Respectable Relatedness	242
	From Difference to Unity	246
9.	Conclusion	249
	<i>Glossary</i>	254
	<i>Bibliography</i>	258
	<i>Name Index</i>	268

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Maps

1	Location of the Adamaoua Province and the Djerem Department in the Republic of Cameroon.	5
2	Migration route of Gaani.	75
3	Migration routes of Isa and Hajara.	80

Figures

1	Kinship relations between Saani's and Nayeeri's people.	231
---	---	-----

Photographs

1	A pastoral Fulbe camp after the harvest, the hut of the camp leader in the middle.	7
2	A pastoralist man milking a white <i>daneeji</i> cow, his son and a herder keeping him company.	83
3	Women's huts in a dry season camp.	124
4	Pastoral Fulbe men and women gathered for a communal prayer led by a Hausa <i>mallum</i> at the end of Ramadan.	141
5	<i>Bantal</i> . A kinswoman showing the male representatives of the husband the objects that has been bought for the young wife.	172
6	A woman's wealth that has been displayed in her new hut for the <i>defol</i> ritual.	174
7	Milk-sellers on their way to the market.	200
8	Paternal half brothers visiting the Friday market of Tibati.	228
9	Joy of <i>sakiikeeku</i> . A pastoralist girl (right) carrying the baby of her older sister (left) during a visit.	236

All photographs by Tea Virtanen

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of writing this book, as well as during the process of collecting material for it, I have received support and guidance from many people and institutions. Professor Karen Armstrong has followed this project throughout all of its stages; I thank her for patient and thorough supervision of my dissertation, as well as for visiting me at my field site in Cameroon. In addition, I am grateful to her for constantly helping me to write “proper” English. Professor Jukka Siikala’s encouragement was crucial in my decision to continue anthropological studies after my graduate thesis. He has been my mentor all these years; I thank him for his anthropological wisdom and inspiration. I am also grateful to Professor Siikala for his insightful comments as a preliminary examiner of my dissertation. I thank Professor Philip Burnham, my other preliminary examiner, for careful reading of my work. His critical comments, based on his regional expertise in my research area, were of great value at the phase of revising the dissertation manuscript.

In the process of writing my dissertation, I have received valuable support and comments from several colleagues. In 1998 I participated in two seminars that gave me fresh perspectives on my work. I thank Mette Bovin for inviting me to a seminar organised by the Nordic Africa Institute, *Crisis and Culture in Africa – with Special Emphasis on Pastoral Nomads and Farmers in the West African Sahel*, in Uppsala, Sweden, where I had a welcomed opportunity to exchange ideas with other scholars doing research on the Fulbe. I thank Barbara Cooper for offering me an opportunity to attend a panel focusing on African pilgrims at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, in Chicago, the United States, which encouraged me to discuss the theme of pilgrimage in my dissertation. I also want to thank Adeline Masquelier, Mirjam de Bruijn and Mariane Ferme for their comments on drafts and papers that I have presented in these seminars and elsewhere.

I want to thank the members of the research community in Finland. I am grateful to Professor Matti Sarmela for his positive attitude towards my dissertation project, and to Professor Marja-Liisa Swantz for paving the way for all Finnish anthropologists doing research on Africa. I thank Timo Kaartinen and Tuulikki Pietilä who have read and commented on various seminar papers related to my dissertation. Special thanks go to Anna-Maria Tapaninen who has been an inspiring colleague, as well as a warm-hearted neighbour. I am indebted also to many others – teachers, researchers,

Acknowledgements

graduate students and secretaries – in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Helsinki for their collective support through all these years; writing this study could hardly have been possible without this support.

I also want to thank the staff of the Department of Finnish and Cultural Research at the University of Joensuu for their understanding attitude as I struggled with revising and editing the final manuscript. Warm thanks go to Professor Erkki Sevänen who kindly provided me with the needed facilities for bringing this project to an end. Tero Koistinen helped me with compiling this book, and Varpu Heiskanen assisted in converting illustrations into printable form; I am grateful to both of them. I thank Kaisu Kortelainen and Matleena Pekkanen for giving a helping hand whenever I needed it.

My dissertation project was mainly funded by the Academy of Finland in 1994-1997 as part of the project *Changing Gender Relations in Three African Communities* directed by Professor Karen Armstrong. Additional funding was provided by the Graduate School of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, University of Helsinki, in 1997-1999. I also received a travel scholarship for a field trip to Cameroon in 1998 from the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

In Cameroon I was privileged to have the opportunity to co-operate with many helpful people. I thank the staff of the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research in Yaounde, especially Dr. Jean Blaise Nyobe, the research director, for providing me with a research permit in Cameroon. I thank the staff of Ngaoundere-Anthropos, a Cameroonian-Norwegian research program, for helping me with practical arrangements, and for inviting me to three of their seminars on cultures of the Adamaoua region, organised in Ngaoundere, Cameroon, in 1994-1995. Special thanks go to Professor Lisbeth Høltedahl and Mohammadou Djingui for their interest in my research project; their moral support was important in the course of my fieldwork. I am also grateful to Professor Saibou Nassourou, as well as to Professor Jean Louis Dongmo who was my Cameroonian supervisor during my fieldwork.

I have also received help from several research assistants. I thank Magali Robert whose sad and untimely death I heard about while writing these lines. Mr. Robert, together with Tibiyea Philippe and Ngnandal Edouard, consulted materials stored in the National Archives in Yaounde for me; I am grateful for their valuable work. In addition, I thank Tibiyea Philippe for recording and transcribing part of the interviews, as well as for making me and my son feel at home in Cameroon. Ismaila Saidu, besides recording a few of the interviews, was my Fulfulde teacher; I thank him for his inspiring language lessons. I also appreciate the practical help of Miia Laurila at the preparatory phase of my fieldwork.

Acknowledgements

I have enjoyed people's hospitality during my stay in Cameroon. I am thankful to Harri and Anna-Maija Joensuu and Tuija Emaus from the ELCF mission for providing me and my son with a smooth start in a foreign country in their homes in Yaounde. I appreciate the warmth with which Mbinum Marie, with her children, shared her home with me and my son in the beginning of our stay in Adamaoua. I thank also Audu Kano and his family, in whose house in Tibati I was always warmly welcomed when wanting to take a short break from my fieldwork at its later phase. Additional thanks go to Charles and Barbara Bunk from the ELCA mission for their generosity.

Special thanks belong to all of my friends, to my mother, Sylvi Virtanen, and my sister, Sirpa Kivinen, with her family. With their ceaseless support I have found the strength to complete this work without losing my sense of proportion.

Above all, I am deeply grateful to all the pastoral Fulbe men and women who shared their lives with me in Adamaoua. Without their patience, their caring attitude and sense of humour, this study would have not been possible. In the middle of revising the manuscript, I received sad news of deaths of several people whose contributions to the contents of this book have been central. I remain indebted to them all, especially to Hapsatu Altine into whose hut I could always hide in moments of distress.

Finally, I thank Amina for her friendship and calming presence throughout my fieldwork, and my son Aleksu for being incredibly patient and for sharing memories of Cameroon with me through all these years.

Joensuu, September 2003

Tea Virtanen

1 INTRODUCTION

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

My first visit to Adamaoua Province in Cameroon took place in the middle of October, at the end of the rainy season. At that time of the year the landscape is richly vegetated, and the pastoral Fulbe¹ camps, located here and there in the bush, are barely distinguishable for a stranger who is not accustomed to moving in the thicket. In January, when I returned to the place in order to start my fieldwork there, the scenery had changed into a totally different world. It was stripped of all that abundant greenery and filled with dust, fading leaves, and blazing sunshine. The change of season had also deprived the pastoral camps of their thick green shelter; now they stood exposed in the dusty bush, and could be seen by anyone approaching from a distance.

As I gradually learned, the contrast between the dry season and the rainy season also leaves its mark on people's social life. In the rainy season, when there is enough grass and thus no need to take the cattle to distant pastures, the pastoral Fulbe can stay near each other and cherish their social relations. During the dry season, however, many of them live in tiny transhumant camps scattered around the region, and so socialising is limited. Indeed, as became clear to me on the spot, the middle of January is a rather challenging time to start fieldwork among pastoralists, since their visits to public places are considerably diminished. Suddenly, it seemed that the people with whom I had made preliminary contact only a couple of months earlier had disappeared. No young people danced in Tibati, the administrative centre of the area,² because the adolescent boys were occupied with herding cattle in

¹ In this study I shall employ the terms "pastoral Fulbe" and "cattle Fulbe" (as well as "pastoralists" and "cattle herders") as synonyms, in order to differentiate the people studied from the "town Fulbe" or "village Fulbe" who, at an earlier phase in Fulbe history, gave up the pastoral way of life and shifted to various urban activities. Among themselves, the pastoral Fulbe call themselves "Fulbe *ladde*", "the Fulbe of the bush", while other people in Cameroon call them by the term "Mbororo". When speaking of individual Fulbe, I shall use the singular form "Pullo".

² Tibati is the administrative, economic and religious (Muslim) centre of the Department of Djerem, situated in the central part of Adamaoua Province in Cameroon. I conducted my fieldwork from January 1995 to March 1996 and in June-July 1998 within a fifteen-kilometre radius of Tibati.

Introduction

the bush. Nor were there many women coming to the market places with their milk calabashes as, due to the decreased milk yield of the cows, milk-selling had become rare. The men's visits to the villages were also infrequent, as they were busy with organising their herds' dry season movement. "Let us see after the cattle have returned" was a frequent answer when I asked the busy pastoralists about the possibility of settling in their camps. The situation became even worse in early February when the pastoral Fulbe started to fast for Ramadan, which then restricted their transactions in the villages to a minimum.

Given these circumstances, my only choice was to settle in a village and wait for the rains. The village that I chose was located about eight kilometres from Tibati, and the three months that I lived there, running after the passing pastoralists and learning the basics of the Fulfulde language, gave me a good lesson in the Fulbe virtue of *munya*³ (patience). Another consequence of my prolonged stay in the village was that it forced me to look at local life from the viewpoint of the villagers. From this specific spatio-cultural angle, the pastoral Fulbe are viewed as a peripheral people who visit the space of others, carrying their culture with them as more or less discernible appearance and performative styles. In this sense, my first months in Adamaoua gave me a deeper perspective on the hierarchical relationship between the village dwellers and the bush people than I could have achieved by living only in the cattle camps.

My first crucial lesson in bush-village relations was actually connected with my efforts to find a pastoral Fulbe camp to live in. As I gradually learned, for most of those pastoralists with whom I first discussed the matter, the complaints about the busy dry season were just an excuse; these men did not have the slightest intention to take me into their camps in the first place. As it turned out later, the reason for this decision – which had been made before my return – was based on simple prejudice; I had been seen socialising with the American missionaries, and even taking part in their services in Fulfulde, which was considered a clear sign of my involvement with their mission to convert the Fulbe to Christianity.

³ In the transcription of Fulfulde I follow Noye (1974) in 1) separating the short vowels (a, e, i, o, u) from the long ones (aa, ee, ii, oo, uu) 2) separating single consonants (d, k, etc.) from double ones (dd, kk, etc.) and 3) marking glottal occlusion by apostrophe (') between two vowels as in the word *na'i* (cows), or before certain endings as in the word *mallum'en* (marabouts). In the case of the glottal occlusion before the consonants b, d and y – which Noye calls "implosive" – I write the consonant with a capital letter (B, D, Y) as in the phrase "*mi Don jooDa*" ("I sit"). However, I make an exception for the word *Fulbe* (phonetically the correct spelling would be *FulBe*) as it recurs so often in the text.

Introduction

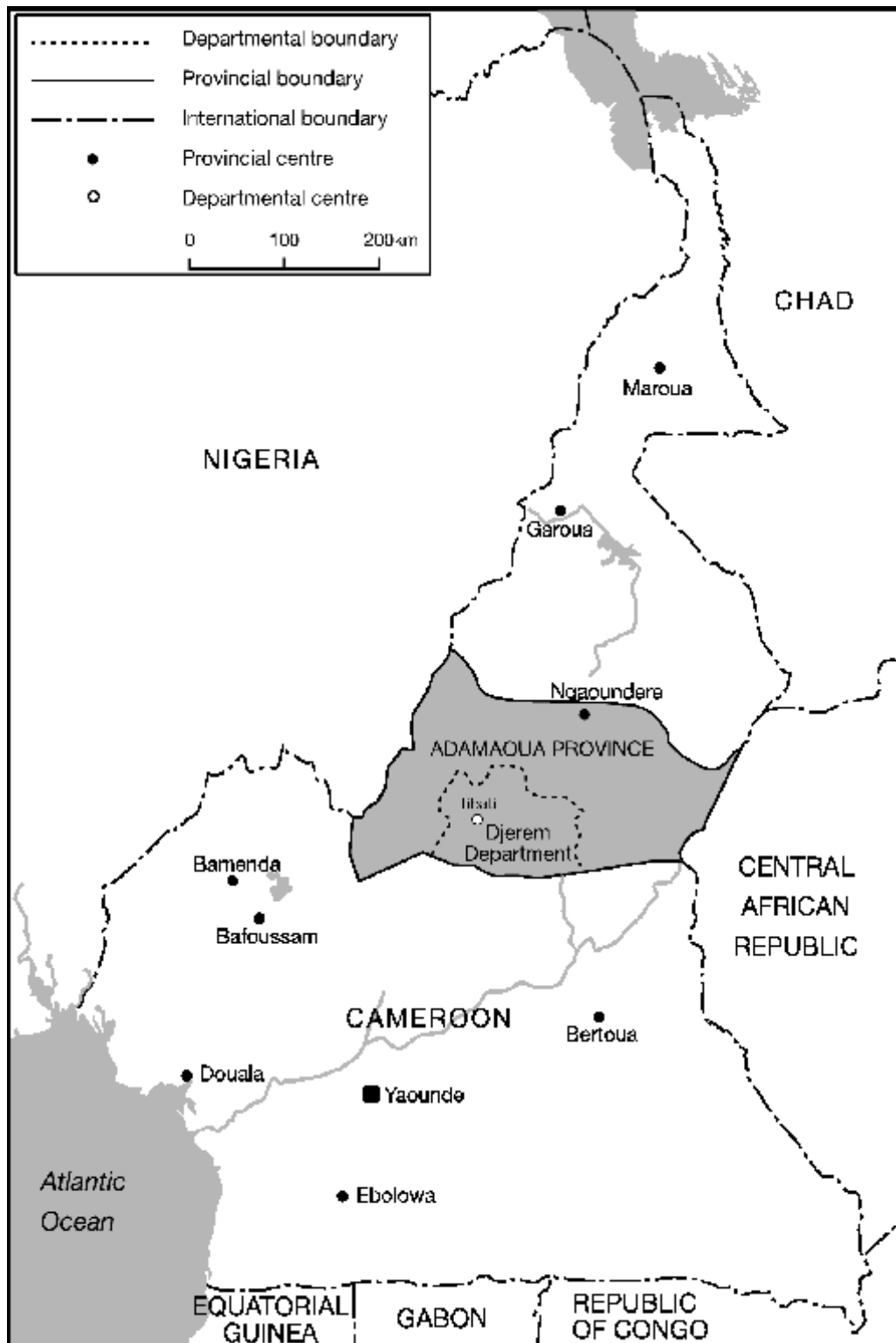
The situation was not made easier by my desperate decision, made after three long months in the village, to move into a bush hut in which the missionaries had earlier studied Fulfulde in collaboration with Dalle,⁴ a pastoralist living close by. My plan was first to accustom myself and my five-year old son to the pragmatics of bush life, with the support of Dalle's family. Later on, I thought, I would move into a bigger camp that was situated one or two kilometres away. I assumed that the smooth relations between Dalle and the other camp, as well as the fact that there was one marriage between these camps, would facilitate this move. However, my hopeful plans came to nothing when a young woman was sent to me with the message that, because of my presumed missionary agenda, I would no longer be allowed to visit the bigger camp. To crown it all, quite coincidentally Dalle regretfully informed me that he was about to return to Nigeria with his family. The cold comfort in this rather embarrassing situation was that Dalle, due to his economic and other troubles,⁵ had in fact been thinking of returning to his Nigerian relatives for some time, and thus his departure had nothing to do with my presence.

But even in the case of Dalle's acquaintances who finally rejected me – as well as for various other pastoral Fulbe who had made excuses of different kinds – the decision to refuse me did not originate from the bush camps. Instead, as people told me later, it resulted from the pastoralists' consultation with the Muslim villagers whom they turn to in baffling affairs of which they have no previous experience. Thus, my initial difficulties in starting my fieldwork were closely related to the local hierarchy where the Hausa-Fulbe villagers, who arrived earlier in the region, represent the local authority, exercising power by "counselling" the pastoral Fulbe to make morally appropriate choices. Ironically, it was through the same hierarchy that, after five months of doubt and frustration, my "real" fieldwork was rendered possible. The important middlemen were two officials of the local livestock service who introduced me to Sulei, a pastoralist in his sixties, in whose camp I finally settled. Thus, in both the case of refusing and accepting me, the pastoral Fulbe had no other choice than to comply with the whims of the villagers, irrespective of whether the villagers' authority was based on religious or veterinary expertise.

⁴ All the individual names in this study are pseudonyms.

⁵ What made Dalle finally carry out his plan was that his seriously ill first wife had suddenly left for Nigeria a couple of months earlier and, despite Dalle's trip to the spot to persuade her, the wife refused to return to Cameroon.

Introduction



Map 1: Location of the Adamaoua Province and the Djerem Department in the Republic of Cameroon.

Introduction

This formal acceptance did not, however, alter the fact that my presence was tolerated out of sheer necessity. This was made clear by the women especially; their total indifference to me during my visits to the camp while my two huts were under construction made it quite obvious that I was not going to be there out of any willingness on their part. It took a long time before the very same women cheerfully told me about a secret meeting that had taken place at the time of my arrival. In the meeting, the camp members had made a plan in case I had some secret intentions, such as taking their children to school: the camp would simply move away, with only some elderly people being left to keep me company.

The pastoral Fulbe camp in which I stayed was wealthy in both cattle and people. This was not accidental; Sulei's family had been selected by veterinary experts who considered it a point of honour to acquaint me with "true" pastoralists, as well as to provide stable conditions for my fieldwork. The new social milieu differed greatly from my preceding networks. During my prolonged stay in the village my pastoral Fulbe acquaintances had not been actual cattle herders, but people who, for some reason, had left the bush behind. Some of them cultivated their little plots on the fringes of the village, others sold bush remedies or ran errands for the villagers. Still others, mainly young men, joined a mission school run by American missionaries on whom they depended for support. The pastoral Fulbe in Dalle's neighbourhood had also differed from my future hosts in that they were people living in tiny camps, working mostly as hired herders of the villagers' cattle.

After moving into Sulei's camp, I continued to visit many of my pastoral Fulbe friends from the preceding period. Thus, besides the instructive lesson about the bush-village hierarchy, another long-term blessing from my initial troubles was that it provided me with a wider perspective on intragroup differences, as my attention continued to shift between the richest and the poorest cattle Fulbe in the region. One difference that I soon noticed, which proved to be of special relevance to this study, was that only people with cattle are able to perform various rituals "properly". It is through the ritual use of meat and milk that newborn babies are transformed into members of the community, as well as teenagers into spouses and later into parents. It is also through the consummation of these substances that sociality is mediated both on ritual and everyday occasions. Indeed, for a pastoral Fulbe (pl. Fulbe) without a herd, it is easier to be a good Muslim than a respected member of the pastoral community; in fact, the less cattle people have, the more their way of performing rituals resembles that of the Muslim villagers. Concomitantly, it was most often those pastoralists who are wealthy in cattle whose talk reversed the historically constructed hierarchy between the village and the bush, and who placed the pastoral Fulbe above the greedy villagers.

Introduction



Photograph 1: A pastoral Fulbe camp after the harvest, the hut of the camp leader in the middle.

In this subverted hierarchy it is the pastoralists who are morally and socially virtuous enough to call themselves Fulbe.⁶ Additionally, the question is not of abstract virtues only; the pastoral Fulbe are well aware that the economy of Adamaoua leans largely upon their cattle. As one pastoralist emphasised, even the wealthiest man in Tibati would have never become rich in the first place without his long-term engagement in retailing the pastoralists' cattle in Yaounde, the southern capital of Cameroon.

GATHERING INFORMATION

In anthropological fieldwork, engaging in the method of participant observation is always a gradual process. In the beginning, the anthropologist is always more an observer than an actual participant, and the degree of participation in the life of the people increases as the anthropologist reinforces his/her competence in different social skills in the culture being studied. As already described, in my case the whole process had a particularly slow start, as I was forced to hang around in the village for several months before having

⁶ Among themselves, the pastoral Fulbe usually call the village Fulbe *Huya'en*, a term referring to an animal which lives off the village by eating its garbage (Burnham 1996:180 n13).

Introduction

the opportunity to move into a bush camp. In retrospect, the delay was methodologically beneficial, as my practically nonexistent knowledge of the Fulfulde language made me feel quite unsure of myself in the presence of the pastoralists. Staying in a village thus provided me with a smooth start during which my language studies proceeded in small stages, in step with learning basic interactional skills, such as greeting the people, buying sour milk from the pastoral women, and so on.

As regards my linguistic skills, my level of speaking Fulfulde never got anywhere near the way the pastoralists speak their native language; in a one-year fieldwork period it was hardly possible. Therefore, throughout my fieldwork, my stance towards my own linguistic competence remained pragmatic. I was more interested in learning to understand others – as well as making myself understood – than in refining my own performing skills. It is also worth mentioning that I started my Fulfulde lessons under the supervision of a young man of village Fulbe origin and, during the first months in Adamaoua, I spoke the language mostly with villagers. Thus, although in my textbooks Fulfulde was taught mainly in its “pastoral” version,⁷ in most of those situations in which I first started to practise it, the conversation took place in the grammatically simplified, “village” or “market” version of the language.⁸ Later, when I moved to live with the pastoral Fulbe, my vocabulary was gradually complemented by many words distinctive to them. My manner of speaking the language remained, however, closer to the “village” than the “pastoral” way, although the refined grammatical structures used by the pastoralists started to flavour my talk more and more in the course of my fieldwork.

My fieldwork in the bush took, following Sharon Hutchinson (1996:44), what could be characterised as a rather “nondirective” approach. This was especially the case during the first months when I tried to make sense of all possible information that flooded my perception. The main recording method was making notes of my observations. In the beginning, the most rewarding technique was to ask people the Fulfulde words for material objects which I

⁷ My Fulfulde teacher was also quite competent in that sense; for a villager, his knowledge of the Fulfulde spoken by pastoralists was exceptional.

⁸ There are big regional as well as intergroup variations in the ways Fulfulde is spoken in Cameroon. In Adamaoua, a typical feature is that the Fulfulde spoken in villages is grammatically much more simplified than that spoken by the pastoral Fulbe, the latter being characterised by such phenomena as consonantal alteration and a complex noun and pronoun class system. As regards language skills, a difference can also be made between those villagers – such as Hausa-Fulbe – who speak Fulfulde as their native language and the people who do not. The Fulbe themselves call the poor Fulfulde spoken by non-native speakers by the term *bilkiire*.

Introduction

then wrote down in my “dictionary”. As my limited linguistic competence⁹ did not allow me to enter into any abstract conversations, word gathering was a nice way of approaching people and planting the first seeds of mutual confidence. Later, when I was capable of making sense of people’s conversation and of their interaction in general, I began to write down some key notes whenever there was the possibility of doing so, in order to write a more detailed description of an event or a discussion afterwards, for example, in my hut the same evening. As my fieldwork proceeded, I realised, however, that the importance that I put on not writing my notes in public had more to do with my own uncertainty of proper conduct among the pastoral Fulbe than with their own attitude towards my doings in their camp. Indeed, during the later phase of my stay, after people had seen me writing my notes now and then, many of them often asked me if I had remembered to write down my daily notes. In the eyes of the pastoralists, note writing became my job in Cameroon – a job which would later enable me to write a book about their way of life. Their understanding made things much easier, and, finally, I wrote a big part of my notes in the presence of others, for example, when spending time with other women after the evening meal.

Besides handwritten notes, my data includes approximately thirty hours of interviews which I started to record in the middle of my fieldwork.¹⁰ The interviews include my informants’ personal life and migration histories, as well as their recollections of such issues as their former life in Nigeria or their

⁹ What makes the question of linguistic competence relevant in the present study is the emphasis that the pastoral Fulbe place on linguistic performativity. A central practice is situational code switching, that is, the way in which the pastoralists switch between “pastoral” and “village” Fulfulde, and vice versa, while socialising with other pastoralists or villagers respectively. Although in the course of my fieldwork I gradually learned to distinguish between the codes in different situations, I was not, however, capable of engaging in the same practice in any impressive manner, and thus the art of code switching was in my case mainly reflected in using pastoral Fulbe idioms and grammatical structures more in the presence of the pastoralists than with others. As regards my field data, I did not collect linguistic material related to the practice in any systematic manner, and thus a profound analysis of performativity based on code switching remains beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁰ Besides the interviews recorded by myself, approximately five hours of the taped data was collected by two research assistants. Of these, a one-hour tape – consisting mainly of one life history – was recorded by my Fulfulde teacher. The rest, four tapes, were recorded eight months after my actual fieldwork by a university student from Ngaoundere to whom I sent a list of detailed questions in order to complement my knowledge of some special issues. Two of these latter tapes also include several versions of origin myths told by my earlier informants. Except for some of these versions cited in chapter 4, all of the quotations used in this study derive from interviews made by myself.

In addition to the various field data collected in the Tibati area, the study makes use of archival materials stored in Yaounde. In the consultation of that material the contribution of my research assistants has been indispensable.

Introduction

pilgrimages to Mecca. During my fieldwork, I also recorded people's reflexive talk about recent events, such as various social gatherings that they had attended. In addition, the recorded data contains people's accounts of origin myths, as well their general descriptions of diverse practices ranging from pastoral activities to life cycle rituals. Sometimes I also utilised the tape recorder when asking people the meaning of certain Fulfulde words.

All in all, my study is mainly grounded on two types of field material. First, there are notes based on observations that I made of people's cultural practices in various social spaces.¹¹ Second, there is verbal data that is based on interviews or discussions between me and the informant(s) and recorded either manually or via a tape recorder. The analytical weight given to these different materials varies from chapter to chapter. For example, while chapter 4 is mainly based on people's discourse, much of the material introduced in chapters 6 and 7 is based on my direct observation, the quotations serving mainly to complement and illustrate the rest of the description. By making use of different data side by side, my purpose has been to depict the world of the pastoral Fulbe – or the visions and practices through which they devote themselves to that world – in as subtle a way as possible.

FROM CULTURAL PERFORMANCES TOWARDS THE PERFORMATIVITY OF CULTURE

This is a study about how people perform their culture. In looking back on my fieldwork experience in Adamaoua, the idea of performance immediately evokes two distinct scenes in my mind. The first belongs to the everyday life of the sedentary village where I started to adapt myself to the local conditions before moving to the bush. The house in which I lived was located at the end of the village, near the spot where a bush path joins the village's through route. It was a point where certain pastoral Fulbe women – alone or in pairs – usually entered the village before noon, laid their calabashes down on our veranda and prepared themselves for their afternoon of selling milk in the market place. This preparation – washing one's face and legs at the well, making up oneself and one's baby, and possibly changing some clothes – easily brings to mind Victor Turner's (1987) thoughts about preparatory phases of ritual performances. In this case, however, the performance itself, that is, the milk-selling, escapes Turner's vision of the dramatics of social life and comes closer to Erving Goffman's (1959) ideas of more ordinary self-presentation. The gable of the house – “the back stage” where the preparations took place

¹¹ On the various social spaces related to my fieldwork see chapter 5.

Introduction

– appeared to me as an interspace between two differently conceived worlds: firstly the bush, where the women came from, with its pastoral camp life of which most sedentary people had only a vague notion, then the village as a public, “plural” space, where the women – as well as other pastoral Fulbe – come to perform their ethnicity, their Fulbeness, in the presence of other people. The second scene is a recollection of the dance of pastoral Fulbe youth which often closes the market day. It is probably an event that most people could easily consider to be a “true performance” with its particular tam-tam sounds, the vertically moving male and female bodies, the improvising voices of young men and their conspicuous clothes and make up. Despite the more intense and spectacular character of the dance, certain analogies can be discerned in the activities of the young dancers and those of their milk-selling mothers or older sisters. Arriving later, the young people change their clothes and make their “masks” up at a certain point – usually at the yard of a villager they know – before appearing in the market place. When the last milk-sellers are about to leave the village the dancers are ready to begin.

The two scenes above serve as an ethnographic invitation to the elaboration of some specific themes that have recurred in the discussion of performance in the social sciences and in the humanities. The themes to be elaborated upon in this chapter are those which have been the most rewarding for me as I have tried to locate my own approach in relation to different theoretical emphases. Hence, the discussion will also provide clues about the theoretical ideas that brace the ethnography to follow.

For many years, scholars have paid attention to the different meanings attached to the notion of performance in various fields of performance studies. Johannes Fabian (1990), for example, takes a quite critical stand when he describes how social scientists, in employing the term, have vacillated ambiguously between two possibilities:

Either they methodologize performance such that the concept can cover almost any sort of action or they celebrate performance as an artistic achievement in which case the concept should be reserved to acts of extraordinary intensity and heightened significance. (ibid., 16)

There are, however, others who see the polarisation of the usage of the term performance without so much cynicism; rather they tend to take it as a sensible distinction between two different research preferences. From such a perspective we have, first, the studies of performances that are “apart from the ordinary”, that is, performances that are regarded as being of a spectacular, aesthetic or ritual kind. Second, there are studies that, instead of searching for the Turnerian liminal, focus on the performativity of everyday

Introduction

life, on how people manage their roles and give appearances in their daily social interaction. (See e.g., Palmer and Jankowiak 1996; Schieffelin 1996; Turner 1987.) In anthropology, it is often the former kinds of performance that are understood as cultural performances proper, in the sense that Milton Singer (1955; 1974) first addressed the term. In his volumes on Indian civilisation, Singer defined cultural performances as particular occasions during which the content of culture is organised and transmitted via specific cultural media. For him, cultural performances were the most concrete units to be observed “for each performance has a definitely limited time span, a beginning and end, an organised program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance” (Singer 1955:xiii).¹² Later, Richard Bauman (1992:46) followed Singer’s definition while designating characteristic features common to all cultural performances: such events tend to be scheduled in advance, temporally and spatially bounded, and structurally programmed. Additionally, Bauman pays attention to their quality as coordinated, collectively shared public events and as heightened experiential occasions – the latter quality deriving from their aesthetic and accomplished form.

When talking of cultural performances, it has been common to classify different performances within specific genres. Although in anthropology discussion of the topic was for many years theoretically much less ambitious than it was, for example, among folklorists¹³ (see e.g., MacAloon 1984), the idea of distinct performative genres has nevertheless shaped the works of many scholars. One scholar worth mentioning here is Victor Turner (1987) with his analytic distinction between two kinds of performances: Turner distinguished cultural performances, which can be grouped into different *genres*, from social performances – or social dramas as he often called them – which he saw as divisible into different *types*. Within cultural performances he then included a wide range of genres, from ritual to theatre, folk-drama, art exhibitions, film and television (ibid., 81-82, 124). To give another example, Edward Schieffelin (1996), while talking of performances belonging to “the domain of particular symbolic and aesthetic modes of action” – a definition consistent with Singer’s and Bauman’s understanding of cultural

¹² On Singer’s view of cultural performance, see also MacAloon (1984) and Turner (1987).

¹³ Anthropologists, while using the concept of genre, owe of course much to folklore studies and literary research in which the concept has traditionally been employed to designate different discursive categories such as literary, verbal folklore or speech genres. In contemporary communicative and practice-oriented studies the focus has shifted so that, more than as a classificatory category, genre is viewed as an orienting framework for social practice (see Bauman 1992; Hanks 1987). Besides discursive acts, the term has also been used for non-verbal expressive forms by both folklorists (Bauman 1992) and anthropologists (see e.g., Kapchan 1996).

Introduction

performances – denotes “ritual-theatrical or folk artistic activities which are enacted as intentional expressive productions in an established local genre” (ibid., 60).¹⁴

In spite of the obvious utility of the concept of genre in various fields, the main aim of this study is not to sketch any performative genres or “performances fixed in time and place” (Seremetakis 1991:47), which could then be divided into separate acts and investigated in detail. In my study the focus will be more on the performative than on performance, that is, more on the ways of doing – or “behaviourial styles”¹⁵ – than on the substance of the acts. Thus, in regard to the two research preferences presented above, my emphasis tends more towards the latter, towards “the fundamental practices and performativity of everyday life” (Schieffelin 1996:60-61), growing away from performances as genres of particular events. Choosing a performative approach to the whole culture does not mean, however, that all the particular events that can be defined as cultural performances – in the sense that Singer gave to the term – should be excluded from scrutiny. Rather, I argue, the question is what kind of analytical position these distinct performances are given in the overall framework of the study. Thus, while I shall give descriptions of such “observable units” as marriage feasts and name-giving ceremonies, these occasions will not take any analytic priority over other, more day-to-day spheres of Fulbe social life, such as the daily milk-selling trip of the women mentioned above.

As has been already hinted at, I owe much of my overall perspective to Erving Goffman’s thinking on how people present themselves and articulate their purposes in everyday interaction. In an often-cited formulation in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Goffman defined performance as “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (ibid., 22). To support his tenet Goffman presented numerous examples from Anglo-American working life, showing how everyday working tasks are converted into expressive performances whenever the presence of an audience demands it. Despite his pioneering theoretical insights and his analytic sensitivity towards “everyday secular performances” (ibid., 55) in his own society, Goffman’s work has not been spared severe criticism. There are two particular points that I want to

¹⁴ The list could be continued with numerous other scholars. Richard Schechner (1988:6), for example, talks of seven performative genres – ritual, theatre, play, games, sports, dance and music – that comprise what he calls public performance activities of humans, and John J. MacAloon (1984) distinguishes game, rite, festival and spectacle as discrete performative genres while analysing the Olympic Games.

¹⁵ The term is borrowed from Broch-Due’s and Rudie’s (1993:38) discussion of how to analyse gender models and gendered persons.

Introduction

consider – I shall return later to the second point. The first concerns the all-encompassing character that Goffman designated to performance. It has been argued (see e.g., MacAloon 1984) that in Goffman's treatment the category of performance has suffered from such a degree of inflation that by following his train of thought any kind of interaction could be understood as performance. In a similar fashion, as John MacAloon (*ibid.*) has noticed, one could apply to Goffman the general objection that Dell Hymes (1981:81) made about anthropologists and folklorists who employ the term performance for virtually everything that interests them.

A slightly different viewpoint is that of Richard Schechner (1988), who argues that, from Goffman's position, "performing is a mode of behavior that may characterise *any* activity", hence "performance is a quality that can occur in any situation rather than a fenced-off genre" (*ibid.*, 30 n10). To my understanding, Schechner's footnote can be interpreted more as an unbiased statement than as an overt criticism.¹⁶ Furthermore, I argue against the above critique on the grounds that, although the question of which acts can be defined as performances in a given culture may be appropriate when particular performances are searched for, it is quite misleading if the analysis goes the other way round and takes the idea of performativity as a premise from which the whole culture is reflected upon. From such a point of view it is possible, without abandoning Goffman's keen insights, to shift from the socio-psychological aspects of self-presentation to the more general anthropological question of how people present themselves as cultural beings, or, how they perform their culture.¹⁷ Such a shift in perspective needs, however, much more anthropological conceptualisation than is to be found from Goffman himself. For example, the central question of how performance is related to cultural knowledge and cultural competence (cf. Hymes 1981) cannot be ignored in any performance-oriented anthropological study.¹⁸ Another point has to do with the – characteristically anthropological – way of looking at different spheres of social life as interconnected. Thus, in my case, looking at milk trips and marriage rituals from the same perspective does not result simply from an axiom that different kinds of social phenomena

¹⁶ Schechner nonetheless admits the overall difficulties in defining the concept of performance in any accurate way and confines himself to "mean something much more limited" by the term than, for example, Goffman did (see *ibid.*).

¹⁷ In the following quotation from Elizabeth C. Fine and Jean Haskell Speer (1992:10) Goffman's and the more anthropological dimensions of performance blend nicely: "Studying performance – – is a critical way for grasping how persons choose to present themselves, how they construct their identity, and, ultimately, how they embody, reflect, and construct their culture."

¹⁸ See also the comparison between Goffman and Hymes in Palmer and Jankowiak (1996:233).

Introduction

should be examined equally, simply because they all involve performing. More than that, my purpose is to address the ways in which these phenomena – or genres of action if you like – are interrelated.

One way of exploring the interrelations between performative actions in different social spheres is to make use of the concept of scheme, and here I refer mainly to how the concept is used by Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1990) and Sherry Ortner (1990). For Bourdieu, schemes, which he defines as practice-generating, are the preconditions of all actions and discourses and at the same time are continually reinforced by them (see e.g., 1990:14). But, although actions and discourses are produced according to the same schemes, the schemes themselves are not discursive, but implicit in practice. To quote Bourdieu, they exist “in a practical stage in agents’ practice and not in their consciousness” (1977:27). In Bourdieu’s theory – as in his descriptions of Kabyle society – the special emphasis is on body schemes, on the schemes based on the geometric practice of bodily postures and movements. Ortner, in turn, uses the concept more explicitly in the wider meaning of shared, culturally ordered schemas – or “key scenarios” as she has earlier called them – “for the staging and playing out of standard social interactions in a particular culture” (1990:60). To give an example from Ortner’s own research, a dominant cultural schema among the Sherpas of Nepal is that of hospitality, which programmes a wide variety of their social encounters.

In the present context there is a good case for applying the concept of scheme. What makes Bourdieu’s accents fitting is the particular consideration that the Fulbe show for the body. In their world of ideas, regulated bodily movements are closely connected to *pulaaku*, the Fulbe code of ideal public behaviour, which refers to restrained and self-controlled bodily behaviour that is deeply motivated by a sense of shame. Moreover – and here Ortner’s emphasis comes into the picture – *pulaaku* forms a central constituent in a more general cultural scheme that shapes a wide range of social relations and interactions. As the scheme in question has to do with the ability of hiding different dependencies – whether regarding one’s bodily demands or other people – I shall call it simply a scheme of autonomy. My purpose is to demonstrate that in the Fulbe scheme of autonomy – as in all cultural schemes according to Ortner’s definition – there is “a degree of generality and transferability across a variety of situations” (1990:60).

My decision to employ a performative approach to the study of the Fulbe brings up the more general problem of comparison. Can one culture be considered as more performative than another (cf. Hymes 1981:81)? I want to emphasise that to determine what is performative in a particular culture does not depend exclusively on handbooks read before the fieldwork; the gaze of the anthropologist is influenced by various other factors as well. My own attitude towards the pastoral Fulbe was moulded by the comments of previous

Introduction

western observers,¹⁹ by my personal experiences and aesthetic valuations, as well as by the opinions and advice of other local people. To visit a virtually empty camp at midday – as was my first impression of life in the bush after having seen the smoothly moving milk women or the colourfully dressed young dancers – persuades anybody to associate performance with public, multicultural presentations. This view got support from the local sedentary people to whom the pastoral Fulbe normally present themselves in the villages, dressed and made up in their culturally distinct way. However, as living with the pastoralists soon revealed, the special performativity of Fulbe culture, closely related to following the *pulaaku* code, is not something peculiar to the multi-ethnic settings in the villages only – it is an integral part of Fulbe everyday interaction in the bush camps as well.

Marshall Sahlins, in *Islands of History* (1985), contributes to the anthropological discussion of performativity by differentiating two “reciprocal modes of symbolic production” (ibid., 28), which he calls prescriptive and performative structures respectively. According to his definition, in the prescriptive structure it is “the compelling rules that – – prescribe in advance much of the way people act and interact” (ibid., 28). In the performative structure the logic goes the other way round, so that it is “the act [that creates] an appropriate relation” (ibid., xi). In considering my own data, I see no reason for making any strong arguments about whether Fulbe culture can be defined more as performative or prescriptive.²⁰ Instead, a more constructive alternative is to pay attention to the – often quite subtle – distinctions that can be drawn between different types of socially defined situations. One useful tool in doing so is Goffman’s (1974) use of the concept of frame through which it is possible to ask which kind of “principles of organisation” govern the events and people’s “subjective involvement in them” (ibid., 10-11). In other words, Goffman’s ideas enable one to examine the frames that prescribe and shape the nature of people’s interaction, that is, inform them “what is going on” in a particular social situation.

The active intervention in the state of things that is characteristic of Sahlins’ performative structure brings to mind another related concept, namely, the concept of performative utterance, formulated by J. L. Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). In Austin’s definition, the performative

¹⁹ I refer here mainly to the way in which the European explorers (see e.g., Barth 1965, vol. 3) and colonial officers emphasised the uniqueness and grace of the Fulbe, i.e., how the Fulbe differ – both physically, intellectually and culturally – from other West African people. See also Ogawa (1993).

²⁰ The statement should not be taken as a critique of Sahlins, as, according to my understanding, his distinction between prescriptive and performative structures does not refer to any concrete social entities, but are two ideal-typical ways in which the relationship between structure and practice can be articulated.

Introduction

utterances, or performatives as he also calls them, are speech acts which do not merely describe a state of affairs, but, instead, do something. For example, when the groom and the bride utter “I do” in the course of the marriage ceremony, they are marrying rather than reporting the event (ibid., 5, 12-13). In such speech acts, the uttering of certain words is thus a leading incident in the performance of the act (ibid., 8), even if not sufficient as such. What is also necessary is “appropriate circumstances” (ibid., 13) by which Austin refers to the felicitous conditions needed for a given performative to be successful, thus coming close to Goffman’s idea of frames. But, without going into details about Austin’s conditions of “happy performatives”,²¹ or about his classification of verbal utterances for that matter, it is interesting to consider the possibility of extending the concept of performative from speech acts to other communicative acts as well. As Thomas Csordas (1996:93) has observed, anthropologists have applied the word to a variety of activities, from conventional forms of ordinary speech and forms of ritual language to non-linguistic ritual as well, thus reinforcing “the theory’s implicit blurring of the line of word and deed”. If perceived in this extended sense, Austin’s performatives can be found in many ethnographic examples in this study.

To return to the critique of Goffman, the second point that I want to take up here is linked to the question of authenticity of performance. As stated earlier, Goffman has been criticised for his all-encompassing way of using the term performance. Presumably the only specification that he himself initially²² offered in this regard was that, by performances, he meant those occasions in which people try to manipulate the impressions that they give and thus “the

²¹ In these conditions Austin (1962:14-15) includes such details as “an accepted conventional procedure”, “appropriate persons and circumstances”, “a procedure properly executed by all participants”, and “expected thoughts and feelings of the participating persons”. Austin has, nevertheless, been criticised for not paying enough attention to the social context of speech acts. For example, Malcolm Ruel (1987:111-112 n4) has argued that Austin, although recognising the conventional and situational character of performative utterances, concentrated upon the utterance and its inherent force. Stanley Tambiah (1985), in turn, has sought to elaborate Austin’s theory by formulating the necessary social conditions for performatives. Another name worth mentioning here is Michelle Rosaldo (1982) with her ethnographic critique of the individualistic and relatively asocial biases of John R. Searle’s speech act theory, a theory which is based and developed upon Austin’s ideas.

²² Here I refer to Goffman’s earlier work (1959). Later, in *Frame Analysis* (1974), Goffman confined himself to using the term exclusively in the field of theatre. Thus, he redefined performance as “that arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer, the latter, in turn, being an object that can be looked at in the round and at length without offense, and looked to for engaging behaviour, by persons in an ‘audience’ role” (ibid., 124). See also MacAloon (1984).

Introduction

round of [their] activity becomes dramatised” (Goffman 1959:251).²³ The specification discloses a central aspect in Goffman’s thinking, namely the idea of performance as an appearance created by conscious manipulation. To be accurate, Goffman saw such “cynical” performances, in which the performer “has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience” (ibid., 18), as one of two extremes; at the other extreme he located “sincere” performances in which the performer believes “in the impression of reality that he attempts to engender” (ibid., 17) in others.²⁴ Goffman’s dichotomy has been criticised for its obvious ethnocentrism. MacAloon (1984) refers to the fact that in our culture, in which appearance and reality are understood as separate categories, it is “natural” to evaluate performances according to their truthfulness. Accordingly, Edward Schieffelin (1996) makes the point, although without referring directly to Goffman, that “performance in the Western theatrical sense strongly implies the production of imaginary, ‘pretend’ situations, not real ones” (ibid., 86 n19).

While I agree with MacAloon’s critique that the typical Western way of evaluating the acts of others is not necessarily valid in other cultures, it should be noted that Goffman’s view of the performing individual was not as sceptical as it is often thought to be. In fact, he emphasised that much of everyday performing has little to do with conscious, anticipated play-acting because people often perform appearance-maintaining routines unwittingly, being thus unaware of their own performance (see e.g., Goffman 1959:75). Schechner, taking notice of this specification, divides “Goffman performers” into two types: into “the ones who conceal, as comen do; and [into] the ones who don’t know they are performing” (Schechner 1988:260). Moreover, he subdivides the latter into “ordinary people playing their ‘life roles’ as waitresses, doctors, teachers, street people, etc.” and into “those whose particular actions have been framed as a performance in documentary film, shows like *Candid Camera*, or on the 6 o’clock TV news” (ibid., 260-261). Schechner’s idea of framed-as performers brings to mind another context, that is, the manner in which anthropologists frame some of the events they observe as performances. My aim is not to go back to analytic definitions here,

²³ At this point it is appropriate to bring out the influence that Kenneth Burke’s (1968) “dramatistic” view of life and culture had on Goffman’s thinking. Burke introduced “dramatism” as a method to investigate symbolic action and the human motivation behind it. Goffman, in turn, characterised life as “a dramatically enacted thing” (1959:72) and talked of a dramaturgical approach to social establishments (ibid., 239-240). MacAloon sums up the affinity between the two scholars by portraying Goffman aptly as “the Kenneth Burke of social science” (1984:5).

²⁴ Goffman acknowledged, however, that performers can move back and forth between these two extremes over the course of time (1959:21).

Introduction

but rather to pay attention to the incommensurability that often exists between anthropologists' and natives' interpretations of what is going on in the course of "performance". For example, Schieffelin has discussed the risk that is implied when certain phenomena in other cultures are interpreted as performances in the sense of pure theatrical display. He brings up the point in an article (1996) focusing on the spirit seances among the Kaluli people. Schieffelin describes a seance in which the audience chose between two spirit mediums: they acknowledged the one who, in their view, really spoke with a spirit while discrediting the other who was considered a cheat. Thus, from the point of view of the Kaluli, the major issue was not whether the seance was properly performed, but, instead, the crucial point for them was whether the people were really communicating with a spirit. As Schieffelin argues, the Kaluli spirit seance is "a dramatical 'theatrical' social process, which instead of creating an imaginary reality articulates a real one" (ibid., 83).

The ethnography to follow adds interesting material to the discussion of the authenticity and/or theatricality of performance. Interesting because, in the case of *pulaaku*, it is a dramatic display of total autonomy which, in a peculiar way, conforms with the specific theatricality that Westerners tend to associate with performance. Nevertheless, here, as in Schieffelin's example of the Kaluli spirit seances, shrinking the performance into a kind of calculated role playing would leave out a whole range of questions related to Goffman's "unaware performer". To be accurate, I am not after particular occasions in which the person is totally unaware of his/her own performance, but the kind of performing in which both willful and unconscious aspects work simultaneously. To a degree, the latter point holds true, of course, for all performances – a fact that was not left unnoticed by Goffman:

The legitimate performances of everyday life are not 'acted' or 'put on' in the sense that the performer knows in advance just what he is going to do, and does this solely because of the effect it is likely to have. The expressions it is felt he is giving off will be especially 'inaccessible' to him. But as in the case of less legitimate performers, the incapacity of the ordinary individual to formulate in advance the movements of his eyes and body does not mean that he will not express himself through these devices in a way that is dramatized and pre-formed in his repertoire of actions. In short, we all act better than we know how. (Goffman 1959:73-74)

There are still two interrelated – as well as most crucial – dimensions of performing to be mentioned, namely, its intersubjectivity and reflexivity. The issue can be traced back to George Herbert Mead (1962) who emphasised that it is only through social, intersubjectively shared experience that people become aware of themselves. According to Mead, the self, "as that which can be an object to itself" (ibid., 140), arises in social experience through role-

Introduction

taking, that is, by looking at oneself and reflecting upon one's action through the perspective of other persons (see also Kapferer 1986). Thus, to quote Kenneth Burke on Mead, selfhood arises through building "within oneself a more complex set of attitudes, thoroughly social" (Burke 1968:237). Mead defined these internalised social attitudes as "the attitude of the generalized other" (1962:154).²⁵

In the study of performance, the intersubjective and reflexive dimensions of human experience – the attitude of the other, so to speak – have been materialised often in the concept of audience. According to Goffman (1959:55-56), it is the awareness of observers that makes one perform – to transform from an "all-too-human self" into a "socialized self"²⁶ – in the first place. But what do scholars mean precisely when speaking of certain actors as an audience for a performance? Goffman himself approached the question by defining the difference between the audience of the stage and the audience in real life. He argued that, while in the stage context the audience forms a third party besides the actual player and other players, in real life the three parties are reduced to two, as "the part one individual plays is tailored to the parts played by the others present, and yet these others also constitute the audience" (ibid., xi). One of the numerous examples that Goffman gave of the latter case is the near-sighted plumber who – in order to protect the impression of rough strength associated with his profession – takes off and hides his spectacles as soon as the housewife comes near (ibid., 55-56).

The crucial point in Goffman's example is the concrete presence of a separate audience – a point that is central to performance in many anthropological descriptions as well. Dell Hymes (1981:80ff) underlines the role of audience in cultural performance in his well-known essay "Breakthrough into Performance". Drawing from folklore studies, he claims that performance, as the "realization of known traditional material" (ibid., 80), is made possible by the abilities of competent members of a community.²⁷ What is central for Hymes is the responsibility that the performers assume for an audience that more or less shares their competence. I shall return to

²⁵ I am thankful to Professor Jukka Siikala who advised me to reflect upon my material through Mead's concept of the generalized other.

²⁶ Like Mead, Goffman emphasised the social origin of the self. More specifically, he anchored the emergence of the self on the performance scene. He wrote: "The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location – ; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented" (Goffman 1959:252-253). Thus, in Goffman's terms, in order to emerge, the self needs all the arrangements – such as the action of possible other performers and the response of an audience – that are required in constituting a scene (ibid., 253).

²⁷ As a folklorist Hymes is especially concerned with performances based on linguistic competence. In the above-mentioned essay he examines the performance of three Chinookan narratives in North America.

Introduction

Hymes' ideas while discussing the crucial role of the competent "native audience" (ibid., 139) in *pulaaku* performativity without, however, overlooking the meaning of more occasional and non-attentive people present as regards the performer-audience relation.

Although it is important for an anthropologist to discover those specific folk audience schemas (Palmer and Jankowiak 1996:244) that are distinctive to the culture s/he studies, a more profound understanding of intersubjectivity and reflexivity in performance asks more than that. This "more" involves understanding the process in which the performer becomes his/her own audience by – to use Mead's wording – taking the role of the other. According to Goffman (1959:80-81), one form of this performer-observer fusion takes place at the moment when the performer is so taken by his own act that he becomes convinced that the impression of reality he fosters is real. From this point of view, the process of becoming one's own audience contains always a measure of self-delusion. An opposite – as well as a more creative – perspective to what Goffman defined as the performer's "audience capacity" (ibid., 81) is to be found in studies that focus on the actors' possibility to reach a self-reflective distance from their own experiences during the performance. Victor Turner has been a central figure in the elaboration of the idea of performative reflexivity. According to his definition:

Performative reflexivity is a condition in which a sociocultural group, or its most perceptive members acting representatively, turn, bend or reflect back upon themselves, upon the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other sociocultural components which make up their public "selves". (Turner 1987:24)

According to Turner, the reflexivity is based on revelation: the actor reveals himself to himself through performing. This can happen in two ways, that is, through two distinctive reflexivities. In the first, which Turner labels singular reflexivity, "the actor may come to know himself better through acting or enactment". In the second, i.e. in the plural reflexivity, a group of actors "may come to know themselves better through observing and/or participating" in performances presented by another group (ibid., 81).²⁸ Palmer and Jankowiak

²⁸ Some sort of analogy can be drawn between Turner's division and the way in which Goffman separated individual performance and team performance – although he considered the former as one form of the latter (see e.g. Goffman 1959:79-80). Goffman was not, however, so much interested in reflexivity, but in how one performing individual alone or a performing group of individuals – a team – together try to foster impressions. The same theme dominates his discussion of the performer-audience relation. The rare occasions in which Goffman touches upon the question of reflexivity will be discussed in the text.

Introduction

(1996) have recently incorporated Turner's ideas into their own analytic schema concerning performance. They identify the first, singular reflexivity, with actual self-reflection, whereas they connect the second, plural reflexivity, more with the notion of self-discovery (*ibid.*, 248). The difference that they make between the two notions is seen in the following quotation:

In self-reflection, performers monitor their own experiences, memories, and feeling states, and they evaluate their own performances for competence and harmony with other images and ideals in their own cognitive repertoires. – –
In self-discovery, performers evaluate their own performances for their effects on audiences, seeing themselves in the responses of others. (*ibid.*, 246-247)

Turner's division of singular and plural reflexivity – as well as Gary Palmer's and William Jankowiak's modification of it – bears a resemblance to Mead's thinking, especially to his definition of abstract and concrete thought. Mead related these concepts to the development of the self and considered the abstract thought as the stage where the self reaches its full development (Mead 1964:158). What combines these modes of thought, however, is that a precondition for both of them – as for any kind of thought according to Mead – is the ability to take the attitude of the generalized other. I quote Mead's definition:

In abstract thought the individual takes the attitude of the generalized other toward himself, without reference to its expression in any particular other individuals; and in concrete thought he takes that attitude in so far as it is expressed in the attitudes towards his behavior of those other individuals with whom he is involved in the given social situation or act. (Mead 1962:155-156)

Comparing their definitions with that of Mead, both Turner's "singular reflexivity" and Palmer and Jankowiak's "self-reflection" refer to the generalized other in its most abstract, or internalised, form. Thus, in self-reflection, people do not call on the attitudes of any particular other persons while evaluating their own experience, but draw from "their own cognitive repertoire" (Palmer and Jankowiak 1996:246), that is, from a repertoire which ultimately repeats the attitude of the whole community (*cf.* Mead 1962:154). When it comes to "plural reflexivity" or "self-discovery", these terms point at moments of concrete intersubjectivity, at social situations in which the generalized other is actually present in the form of other persons. The two kinds of reflexivities should not, however, be considered as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, when performing, people often "turn, bend or reflect back" (Turner 1987:24) upon themselves and their own inner worlds as well as upon others present at the same time. Moreover, performances are constantly reframed (*cf.* Bauman 1975) by altering the audience. Thus, what

Introduction

was once an “observing audience” can today become “a social attitude”, and vice versa, and so the distinction between the two reflexivities proves highly ephemeral.

The simultaneity of the “inner” and “outer” audience, so to speak, will be observed in the following as I explore the interplay between different reflexivities among the pastoral Fulbe. One central theme which is related to this issue – and which will be discussed all along in the text – is the sense of shame that Fulbe poignantly associate with acting in public. What will be called forth as well, however, is that, beyond the moment when one’s conduct is under the evaluation of others present, there is a kind of omnipresence of the sense of shame in Fulbe culture. It is appropriate to cite again Goffman who, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, paid attention to the relation between performing and morality, and to the constant pressure of being a socialised character:

When a performer guides his private activity in accordance with incorporated moral standards, he may associate these standards with a reference group of some kind, thus creating a non-present audience for his activity. (Goffman 1959:81)

“People see” or “Fulbe say” as the Fulbe so often utter. Or, when generalising the other even more: “God exists”.

OUTLINE

The study is structured as follows. The purpose of chapters 2 and 3 is to give a general overview of pastoral Fulbe culture and history. Chapter 2 focuses on the Fulbe ideal behaviour code, *pulaaku*, by looking at it from two different angles. First, *pulaaku* is examined from the individual point of view by discussing how it structures one’s everyday practice through the idea of bodily autonomy. Later, the emphasis is shifted from the individual body to the level of intersubjective experience by examining how *pulaaku* organises people’s way of being together. Chapter 3 deals with the historical development of Fulbe ethnicity by discussing both the historical split between pastoral Fulbe and village Fulbe and the cultural divisions among the the pastoral Fulbe themselves. It explores the particular forms this fragmentation has taken in Cameroon and sketches the history of my research area, the subdivision of Tibati, by using both literature and archival records.

Chapters 4-8 examine the cultural schemes through which the pastoral Fulbe perceive their social world as well as the performative routines through which these schemes are put into practice. Chapter 4 looks at how the

Introduction

pastoral Fulbe reflect on their mythical and historical past. I shall first go back to the imagined past of the people by exploring the Fulbe origin myths and their change in the course of time. Later I move to the recent history by examining the collective memories that the cattle Fulbe have carried with them from Nigeria to Cameroon and, finally, by making short remarks about the memories related to the newly entered territory of the Central African Republic. Chapter 5 looks at the way in which the specific relation that the seminomadic pastoral Fulbe have with moving shapes people's everyday experience. I start by practice, that is, by discussing the meaning of movement as a central experience in Fulbe everyday life. Then I proceed to speech by looking at the rich kinetic vocabulary which provides the Fulbe talk with a strong sense of dynamic spatiality. Finally, I give examples from different speech genres, that is, from migration and pilgrimage narratives. Chapter 6 examines how, among the pastoral Fulbe, the social person is constituted over the individual life course. This is done first by discussing social maturation during childhood, and second by going through the gendered life cycle of men and women. All along, I shall also examine the performative ways in which the turning points of the cycle are made public. Special attention is paid to the marriage rituals as they highlight the process of how reproductive autonomy is produced during men's and women's life cycles. In chapter 7 the attention is turned to women's lives. The question that underlies the ethnographic description is how the pastoral Fulbe women seek to live up to the *pulaaku* ideals amidst the multifarious demands of their daily life. This question will be approached from three different angles, first, by bringing out examples of women's observance of *pulaaku* in relation to their husbands and children, second, by looking at women's activities in pastoralism and their relation to its most central signifiers, milk and cattle, and third, by taking up the quite recently introduced practice of female seclusion. Chapter 8 examines the various rhetorical and practical forms that people's aspirations of being related to others take among the pastoral Fulbe. The discussion will focus on the cultural understanding of the concept of lineage (*lenyol*), as well as on the meanings that patrilineal and matrilineal connections have in manoeuvring everyday camp life. Finally, the culturally specific intertwining of the ideas of relatedness and autonomy is illustrated through examples of individual pastoral Fulbe who radically altered their social alignments.

2 PULAAKU: PERFORMED OR EMBODIED CULTURE?

In March 1998 a seminar focusing on the people of the West African Sahel was held in Uppsala, Sweden.¹ In one session, as many of the participants were either doing research on Fulbe or representing various Fulbe groups themselves, a debate burst out on the notion of *pulaaku* (Fulbeness). After the efforts of several researchers to highlight the notion embracing diverse Fulbe behaviour ideals, Gorjo Bii Rima, a *BoDaaDo* Pullo pastoralist from Niger, completed the discussion by saying: "People, like most of you here, who do not have *pulaaku*, can ask what it means and try to answer the question. But we, people with *pulaaku*, just do not talk about it."

Gorjo's apt remark opens up some theoretical issues which are central to this study, such as the relationship between discourse and embodied experience or between performance and self-reflection. His words also recalled vividly my own efforts to capture it all on tape when, during the first months of my fieldwork, I began many preparatory interviews in Fulbe camps with the innocent question: "what is *pulaaku*?" With my clumsy inquiries I fell into the trap of trying to shrink *pulaaku* into an explicit discourse which could then be directly divided into separate components of an ideal behavior code. The same method has been used in many former studies in which the components of *laawol pulaaku* (the Fulbe way) have been neatly listed to form a coherent whole.² In its broader usage the notion has been extended to cover a wide range of "qualities appropriate to the Fulani" (Riesman 1977:127), from Fulbe social practices, such as their language,³ endogamous marriage rules and cattle rearing, to ideal physical traits like light skin, slim hips or a narrow nose. (See for example Azarya et al. 1993; Kirk-Greene 1986; Riesman 1977; Stenning 1959.) All along, a shortened, more common version of *pulaaku* has

¹ The seminar, which was titled "Crisis and Culture in Africa – with special Emphasis on Pastoral Nomads and Farmers in the West African Sahel", was organised by The Nordic Africa Institute.

² As an outstanding example of ethnic representations, *pulaaku* is an excessively discussed theme in the anthropological literature. Due to the particular tone it gives to the Fulbe daily life and talk, it would be difficult to ignore it for any scholar doing serious fieldwork among the Fulbe.

³ The important role that the language has in defining Fulbeness among the people themselves is seen in everyday talk when the term *pulaaku* is often substituted with the term *fulfulde*.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

persisted in a definition with three everyday behaviour-centred key traits: *semteende* (modesty, reserve and shame), *munyal* (patience, self-control and fortitude) and *hakkiilo* (care and forethought) (Bocquené 1981; Riesman 1977; Stenning 1959). Usually these three moral behaviour traits have formed also the core of the more extended definitions.

The tripartition can be justified by the fact that the three words, *semteende*, *munyal* and *hakkiilo*, are the most repeated attributes in everyday talk when the Fulbe are morally evaluating each other's undertakings. What is characteristic of such judgements is, as I observed in Adamaoua, that they are frequently made through negation – such as by stating that a certain person does not have *hakkiilo*. The same pattern was also employed frequently during interviews when people tried to explain to me the meaning of the concept of *pulaaku* by actually defining what a person with highly developed *pulaaku* does not do: s/he does not eat much, beg for things, ask for troubles, and so on. An extraction from a Pullo woman's condensed description of *semteende*, undoubtedly the most critical *pulaaku* key trait, illustrates the point:

– – *semteende*, if you see people on the road, it is better that you leave the road a little, so that they can pass. Don't stand in the middle of the road. If they married you, don't look at the eyes of your in-law all the time. It is bad. You have to feel ashamed. Don't call the name of your in-law, don't call the name of [your] husband's mother, don't call the name of [your] husband's father. It is better to call the name of your husband's younger brother or sister. Don't call the name of your husband's older brother. Don't call the name of his maternal aunt. Because you feel ashamed.

The inclination to use short negations is similar to how Pierre Bourdieu has described academic inquiries in which an informant is forced to reflect on his practice and to bring it to the order of explicit discourse. In Bourdieu's words: “[The informant's] remarks convey the primary truth of primary experience only by omission, through the silences and ellipses of self-evidence” (1990:91). In the Fulbe case, however, the omissions and negations are not restricted to explications given to the curious anthropologist; in everyday conversations with kinsfolk they are used as well to express “all that goes without saying” (ibid. 87). Often a simple utterance like “*pulaaku wala*” (“there is no *pulaaku*”) provides sufficient associations to establish a mutual understanding between interlocutors in a specific situation.⁴ Thus, while the word *pulaaku*

⁴ An illustrating description of an utterance of a similar kind can be found in Riesman (1977:151).

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

is continuously repeated in daily talk, its actual meaning usually escapes more elaborate discussions and thus remains implicit.

PULAAKU, PERFORMANCE AND SHAME

How then should the actual meaning of *pulaaku* be approached? Despite its rather mute or implicit character among the Fulbe themselves, a short analytic definition that pulls together the three above-mentioned key traits is appropriate here. First, to repeat a sentence from the introduction: *pulaaku* (literally “Fulbeness” or “to be a Pullo”) is the Fulbe code of ideal public behaviour that refers to restrained and self-controlled bodily behaviour which is deeply motivated by a sense of shame. Through this self-mastering, a Pullo attempts to appear as if s/he is autonomous in relation to other people and to his/her own bodily needs. Thus, *pulaaku* is essentially public – and conditional – behaviour as it is expected in the presence of defined social others. Through a rather simplifying definition those others can be stereotyped as belonging to in-laws, certain patrilineal relatives, or the representatives of other lineages and ethnic groups. The opposite group, those with whom there is no need for self-control, include such persons as one’s mother and siblings, maternal relatives and – especially in the case of the youth – one’s age-mates.⁵

The above description reveals the twofold character of *pulaaku* behaviour. On one hand, it discloses the fact that *pulaaku* is something that is consciously done or performed whenever the presence of certain culturally defined others demands it. On the other hand, it refers to the more uncontrolled side of *pulaaku* – its entanglement with the feeling of shame. The idea of *pulaaku* as conscious performing is central in Paul Riesman’s⁶ (1977) renown study of the Jelgobe Fulbe of Burkina Faso. Riesman argued that Fulbeness is understood as acted, because “typically Fulani behavior [,] is often thought by the Fulani themselves to be a role which one plays (or does not play)” (ibid. 122) when dealing with others. The argument can certainly be subscribed to by anyone who, while living with the Fulbe, has made an effort to adjust his/her own behaviour to *pulaaku* ideals (see e.g., Regis 1997:138). The difficulty lies not,

⁵ The degree of restrained or relaxed behaviour is also defined by the generational and collateral distance between relatives. I shall return to these and more personal factors affecting the social interaction among kinsfolk I shall return in chapters 7 and 8.

⁶ Riesman (1977; 1992) has been unquestionably the one with the most ambitious objectives in understanding and analysing the meaning of *pulaaku* in sharp tuning Fulbe social life. Riesman’s view of *pulaaku* brings it very close to the idea of performance and I owe much to his writings for formulating my statements about Fulbe culture and its performativity.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

however, merely in “playing” or “doing” (*waDgo pulaaku*),⁷ but even more, I would say, in recognising the sometimes quite subtle difference between those situations that demand *pulaaku* behaviour and those in which it is not considered appropriate at all. This is what the Fulbe do so skilfully: they explicitly differentiate between a restrained and a more relaxed way of acting – being also capable of changing their behaviour accordingly in practice. In a similar vein, “my *pulaaku*” was appreciated on such occasions as when I sold my kitchen utensils cheap to women, or when I did not demand any punishment for a young boy who stole and resold my radio. But, like Riesman, I got used to hearing the phrase “*taa waDu pulaaku*” (“don’t do *pulaaku*”) whenever I ate too little or behaved otherwise “too formally” among people who were more close to me.

While playing *pulaaku* is conscious enough to be a source of constant commenting – and even joking – the way in which it is related to the feeling of shame points to its deeper motivation in the body (cf. Hastrup 1995) that can never be totally controlled. To be accurate, the Fulbe sensitivity to feeling shame is mainly connected to one *pulaaku* key trait, *semteende*⁸ (shame) which, in turn, is closely related to the idea of autonomy. Riesman describes the interrelation between autonomy and *semteende* in the following way: “– autonomy is never won once and for all but always runs the risk of being thrown into question because of an error committed in public” (1977:232). The ways and situations in which a Fulbe can be considered as having conducted him/herself shamefully are numerous, but the common fact is that in some way s/he has lost his/her self-control. To lose self-control is to lose temporarily one’s sense of autonomy and in the Fulbe view this takes place whenever a person shows in public that s/he is not in control of his/her own emotions or that s/he is dependent for his/her basic needs – like eating or defecating – on other persons, like a spouse or in-laws. The specific way in which Fulbe relate a person’s autonomy with his/her ability to bodily self-control finds expression also in their vocabulary. Although in Fulfulde language there is no specific word that can be directly translated as a person’s

⁷ If translated word-for-word, the idiom *waDgo pulaaku* means “to do *pulaaku*”. There is another word for “to play”, *fijgo*, but Fulbe never use it in connection with *pulaaku*. Instead, they use it when talking of the joking relationship between cross-cousins or of the free play among youth or children. That is why I shall employ “doing *pulaaku*” in direct quotations, although it does not express the enacted element that the Fulbe often associate with formal behaviour. In general discussion, however, I prefer to talk of “playing” instead of “doing” *pulaaku*.

⁸ Of the three *pulaaku* key traits, I limit myself in this chapter to *semteende* as it is the concept through which the aspects to be discussed here become best featured. I shall return to another of these traits, *hakkilo*, in chapter 6.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

autonomy, many expressions refer to it, the most common of which include the word *hoore* (head). According to Riesman (ibid. 226-227; 1992:200), among the Jelgobe Fulbe to be autonomous in the sense of mastering oneself is expressed with the words “*jeyude hoore mum*” (“possessing one’s own head”) or *waawude hoore mum* (“mastering one’s own head”). In Adamaoua the idea of autonomy is implicitly present at any time a person is said to do something “with his/her own head” (“*bee hoore maako*”).

The deeper, embodied motivation behind *pulaaku* performance is also reflected in Riesman’s linguistic analysis of the term *semteende*. Riesman suggests that the passive voice used in the term “– – in Fula (= Fulfulde) expresses the idea of an action or a condition undergone in an entirely involuntary fashion by the subject” (1977:137). The condition to which Riesman refers could easily be understood as belonging to situations in which a person feels ashamed because s/he has already conducted a shameful act. But *semteende* points to quite the opposite. It is a central virtue, a kind of inner quality that keeps a person constantly aware of the lurking risk of acting shamefully (ibid. 137-138). It is an inner moral state that can be deduced from what is performed, that is, from the way of acting in the presence of others. Inversely, *semteende* is instilled through acting, through the learned patterns of body use (cf. Jackson 1983), and its embodied character keeps a person constantly aware of it.

The centrality of the ideas included in *semteende* is revealed in Fulbe everyday talk in which the term is constantly confused with *pulaaku*. For example, the expression “*pulaaku walaa*” (“there is no *pulaaku*”) is usually uttered in situations where somebody has behaved in an unrestrained, shameful manner. The overlap between the terms was also reflected in many interviews – here is a Pullo woman’s answer to my question, “what does *pulaaku* mean?”

Pulaaku, if [someone] shows you the thing you want to have, *mbusiri* (gruel), you show that you don’t want to have [it]. What made you do like that – to not want to ask the word – is that you did *pulaaku*. You want to ask the word, don’t you? [But] you don’t, [there are] lots of people, you want it – – [but] you feel ashamed to ask. That’s it, to feel ashamed (*semtego*), that is *pulaaku*. You want a thing, you want it, you want it, you want, you refuse to ask. You, you don’t show anybody that you want. That is to do *pulaaku*.

Also, when I asked other people the same question, many of them started to talk about the shame of eating in front of one’s in-laws, as in the following example:

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

Pulaaku! So, as they married a girl, they went [to the husband's] home, if they prepared food, if they served it [to the new wife], she eats one mouthful, two, three, four, it is enough. May she not eat much. Because she came to her husband's hut, because she does *pulaaku* – – If you returned to your mother, you prepare *nyiri* (porridge), you eat until you are full. But if you went to [your] husband's hut, you eat little. You eat little for one month. [Then] you can eat much. Because may the Fulbe say: "That woman has a lot of *pulaaku*. Because she did *pulaaku* for one month. But other Fulbe, they do not have *pulaaku*. If she went [to her husband], there is not *pulaaku* even for two or one week. She eats quickly, quickly, quickly, well, well. They say: "That woman, there is no *pulaaku* [she is] like *kaaDo* (heathen)."

All that has thus far been said about *pulaaku* – both in my own statements and in the accounts of the Fulbe themselves – echoes Bourdieu's view of understanding in practice. According to Bourdieu, "the universe of discourse – – can remain implicit, because it is implicitly defined in each case in and by the practical relationship to the situation" (1990:87). In the same spirit, Charles Taylor underlines that, although people manage to frame representations of their world and action when challenged, the primary locus of their understanding resides always in practical activity (1993:50). In the case of *pulaaku* the point is critical; the fact that people do give explanations of *pulaaku* when they are asked to do so in no way wipes out the specific muteness that surrounds it and anchors it in practice. Moreover, the explanations in themselves have to do with practical logic as they, besides being often curt and based on negations, tend to jump immediately into the very midst of concrete everyday situations, rather than taking an analytical distance from them. This pattern is clearly seen in the above quotations in which my informants, rather than giving intentional, rationalising explanations for *pulaaku*, tend to give answers that take form in relation to their immediate bodily responses to some extremely annoying, but still imaginable situations. In this sense, the given explanations are far from representing any explicit rules to be followed in daily action, but, instead, emanate from the same kind of unarticulated background knowledge as the action itself (see Bourdieu 1990:14; Taylor 1993:54-55). The much used Fulfulde idiom "following *pulaaku*" (*tokkaago pulaaku*) exemplifies the point nicely: besides being a powerful rhetorical device in daily talk, the idiom refers also to the concrete following of bodily schemes in social interaction. To revise an analytical idiom

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

with a local one, “following *pulaaku*” is first of all a social practice,⁹ composed of embodied responses to urgent situations.

PULAAKU AS CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The idea of *pulaaku* as a kind of savoir-faire in emergent social situations locates it into the domain of cultural competence, a theme much discussed in performance studies. A point that I want to stress first is that, among the Fulbe, the basis for the competent performing of *pulaaku*, as of many cultural competencies in different societies, is laid in childhood, since – as Hastrup (1995:92) puts it – “so many acts have been preformed during the process of enculturation”. Ultimately, the learning of *pulaaku* could be thought to start with simple toilet training, expanding later to self-control regarding other necessities of life as well as the expression of emotions.¹⁰ The crucial point is that the purpose of learning to master one’s body is not to make it an isolate but to prepare it for confronting others. Thus, for a Fullo child, learning to distinguish between proper and shameful bodily behaviour, and to understand how this behaviour correlates with the category of person one is dealing with, is a particularly intersubjective venture and takes a lot of trial and effort in everyday life with others.

In the same way as, during childhood, learning *pulaaku* is profoundly a practical matter, the later mastery of it is grounded on the same tacit foundation. In fact, during my fieldwork I never heard anybody praised for his/her verbal knowledge of *pulaaku*. On the contrary, making a fuss about it can be even disapproved, as happened one day when I had spent an entire afternoon taping the words of a talkative old man about *pulaaku* and other related issues. When I returned to our camp at nightfall, some of the camp members, being slightly amused by the idea that I had listened to the man so long, asked me if the man had already “finished” (*timmini*) or – using another expression – if he was “replete” (*haari*). So, by employing idioms that are ordinarily repeated after meals, people drew an analogy between lavish talk and the shame of excessive eating.¹¹ More implicitly, they pointed at the fact that people with *pulaaku* are not those who are able to put it into words, but

⁹ I refer here to Wittgenstein’s phrase “[O]beying a rule is a practice” (quoted by Taylor [1993:47]), and to Taylor’s interpretation of it. According to Taylor, Wittgenstein insisted that “following rules is a *social* practice” (ibid. 48).

¹⁰ For a more detailed description of Fulbe child-rearing practices see Riesman (1992). I shall return to the discussion of Fulbe childhood in chapter 6.

¹¹ Lavish talk is criticised in other contexts as well. Fulbe often express their disapproval of a gabby person by saying “*haala DuuDi!*” (“there are too much words”).

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

those who voice it through their concrete acts.¹² Thus, rather than a recordable discourse, *pulaaku* is a direct moral knowledge reflected in bodily competence, which mediates a personal realisation of social values (cf. Jackson 1983:337).

If *pulaaku* is a form of cultural competence, it is logical to question whom this competence is actually addressed to. Who is the audience evaluating it? Principally, as was said earlier, a Pullo is supposed to play *pulaaku* on all public occasions so that it is only in the presence of his/her closest (matrilateral) relatives and friends that it can – and should – be ignored. In this respect one visible audience “observing *pulaaku*” could be defined as consisting of all people from other ethnic groups who deal with the pastoral Fulbe in the villages and market places. This last point needs, however, one specification to which I shall return in detail later. The specification, complicating the whole idea of performing *pulaaku* to outsiders, is that the pastoral Fulbe are not the only people in the area whose public behaviour is affected by *pulaaku* ideals. In fact, in the particular multicultural setting of Adamaoua, one can, by generalising, discern at least five groups whose relation to *pulaaku* is somewhat different from that of other groups. These are the pastoral Fulbe, the village Fulbe, other local people assimilated to the village Fulbe community, local people keeping a certain distance from that “Fulbeised world” and, finally, people who have arrived in the area only recently. Thus, the fact that the pastoral Fulbe deal with people from highly divergent cultural backgrounds produces differences between these inter-ethnic encounters as well.

Without attempting to deny the obvious importance of various encounters in multiethnic spaces, I propose, however, that for the pastoral Fulbe themselves, the crucial moments of “playing” or “doing Pullo” take place more often outside the village, that is, within the confines of camps sites. Because it is here that their performing of Fulbeness is most often observed and commented on: in the camp members’ everyday interaction, during the visits of neighbours, relatives and in-laws, on such social occasions as the Islamic festivities and the name-giving ceremonies for newborns. Let me elaborate my point by making use of Hymes’ (1981:80ff) ideas of performance. Drawing from folklore studies, Hymes sees performance as the realisation of known traditional material which is made possible by the abilities of competent members of a community. An essential point is that the performers assume responsibility to an audience that more or less shares their competence.

¹² Compare with Taylor who writes: “The person of real practical wisdom is marked out less by the ability to formulate rules than by knowing how to act in each particular situation” (1993:57).

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

Hymes specifies this competence further by distinguishing three dimensions of cultural behaviour, namely, interpretability, reportability and repeatability. Within each of these he sees “a continuum from a minimal to a maximal realisation” (ibid. 82) so that interpretation can range from classifying (“what”) to explaining (“why”), reporting from mere reporting to more elaborate describing, and repetition from doing to serious performing. Thus, among the three dimensions it is the last, repeatability, that Hymes regards as characteristic of the notion of performance. (Ibid., 83.)

Now, to return to social encounters in Adamaoua, all the other inhabitants are certainly able to interpret the public behaviour of the pastoral Fulbe in some way. Some of them – like newly arrived southerners who possibly do not have any regular contacts with the pastoralists – see the matter simply from the point of view of cultural difference or peculiarity, without any need for deeper consideration. But, while the interpretations of the newcomers remain mainly on the level of ethnic classifications – not to mention factual misunderstandings – there are a lot of local people, both Fulbe and non-Fulbe, who are capable of more subtle explanations concerning the kind of behaviour that is highly visible in the area they inhabit. Let us develop the idea still further by taking up the concept of repeatability. From Hymes’ point of view, performance is an act that can be done again – repeated – whether by the performer him/herself or by other competent members of his/her community. The idea matches well with our case as all the adult Fulbe are expected to master, or “repeat”,¹³ *pulaaku* in every situation that requires it. Thus, when a Pullo is “playing Pullo”, others base their judgements on their own knowledge of how to do it. Principally, all this holds equally true for the pastoral Fulbe and the village Fulbe, although there are subtle differences between the groups in realising *pulaaku* ideals in practice. But, there are also many other people in Adamaoua who, in order to “Fulbeise” – to be identified as members of the village Fulbe community – repeat *pulaaku* ideals in their everyday interaction.¹⁴ From this perspective *pulaaku* can be thought of as a kind of “behavioural consensus” (Burnham 1996:48) that many people of

¹³ I shift the notion of repeatability somewhat away from Hymes’ folkloristic context because he is especially concerned with performances based on linguistic competence. The emphasis on the realisation of “tradition” through doing or performing – whether uttering a Chinookan narrative in Hymes’ case or playing *pulaaku* in mine – is, however, similar.

¹⁴ The historical process of Fulbeisation – the assimilation of people of diverse origins to the village Fulbe community – will be discussed in chapter 3. Here I want to point out only that among the features that are considered as central in this process – urbanisation, the use of Fulfulde language, conversion to Islam, and adjustment to *pulaaku* behavioural ideals – it is the last, conforming to *pulaaku*, that has had the least analytic attention.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

mixed backgrounds consider worth observing. This does not, however, remove the fact that there are great differences between people in how competent they actually are in this observation. For example, a person of non-Fulbe origin who has started to conform to the *pulaaku* behaviour code only during adulthood can certainly not master it with such ease and grace as the one who, being born in a Fulbe neighbourhood, has internalised it into “a habitus capable of playing with the rule of the game” (Bourdieu 1977:201n). A big difference between the two cases is also that among Fulbe – or people who have been socialised as such – *pulaaku* concerns much of daily living with one’s “own people” as well as with “outsiders”, while among many non-Fulbe it is restricted to public or, “Fulbeised” encounters.

Following Hymes’ reasoning has led us thus far to the conclusion that *pulaaku* is a cultural competence shared to different degrees by people from various backgrounds. As strategic cultural behaviour aiming at certain social ends, playing *pulaaku* can be a matter of “truly or seriously performing” (Hymes 1981:83) for both Fulbe and non-Fulbe, irrespective of how competent people are in it. On the other hand, people have quite different views concerning how closely *pulaaku* should be observed in practice and the pastoral Fulbe are probably the best-known people for taking so much trouble to perform it correctly. In fact, non-Fulbe and many village Fulbe often ridicule the pastoral Fulbe as obsessive followers of complicated behaviour patterns – a stereotype embodied in the frequently uttered phrase “*ils compliquent*” (“they complicate”). From their own point of view, however, adhering to *pulaaku* is a sign of moral superiority in a historical situation where other kinds of superiorities – such as social or political – are out of their reach. In this respect *pulaaku* is a much more serious performance for the pastoral Fulbe than for others as it provides them with a concrete means to affirm their cultural and moral distinction – and so “to preserve some self-respect” (Fabian 1990:19) – in practice. Interestingly, this holds true also in comparison with the village Fulbe who have succeeded in proving the idea of Fulbe racial supremacy by more powerful means, that is, through their long-term political and religious hegemony in Adamaoua.

SHARING SHAME AND IDEALS

The particular weight that the pastoral Fulbe put on the proper performing of *pulaaku* makes it an intragroup matter. It is one’s pastoral fellowmen who – better than anyone else – are capable of considering and evaluating one’s *pulaaku* behaviour as well as sharing it with him/her. But there is more to be shared here than mere cultural competence. The embodied motivation

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

behind performing, the question of knowing “how to do *pulaaku*”, is not a question of cognition only. It is the “knowledge of the body” (Jackson 1983), deeply anchored in the sense of shame. This implicates that a shameless act affects also those pastoral Fulbe who witness it. Thus, what is shared is not only the joy of competent performance but the feeling of failure as well.

The last point is crucial because it shows the domain in which the contrast between different audiences of *pulaaku* comes out most clearly: although anyone can comment on another person’s *pulaaku*, only a Pullo can identify the shame of another Pullo in his/her own body. Thus, what often follows somebody’s failure is a moment of collective self-discovery (Palmer and Jankowiak 1996:247) which, while arousing embarrassment among the pastoral Fulbe themselves, can pass unrecognised by other people present. As I understand it, it is in this context that the attitude that Mead (1934:154) called the “generalized other” operates in its most concrete form among the pastoral Fulbe: in the moments when the Fulbe see themselves in the embodied responses of their own people (cf. Palmer and Jankowiak 1996:247). To what extent individual shame is shared depends, however, on the relationship between the shamed actor and other pastoral Fulbe witnessing his/her act. In this regard, the following division is proposed. First, in the case of closely related people, a shamefully behaving person often brings other Fulbe into an awkward situation. On the other hand, when the actor is more distant, those disapproving him/her can – at least retrospectively – attempt to externalise their embarrassment. This happens, for example, when the actor is from another lineage and other pastoral Fulbe locate the source of his/her shame in that particular lineage. Finally, when the person acting shamefully is non-Pullo – for example a Gbaya or a Hausa – the situation is still less perplexing for the pastoral Fulbe and the collective embarrassment can be replaced with feelings ranging from disdain to pure amusement.

Although the grouping just presented can serve as a suitable tool for getting an idea of how differently the Fulbe can respond to other people’s shameful behaviour, the feeling of shame is still too unpredictable to follow simple ethnic alignments. Often in an emergent situation the bonds and tensions between different people are not self-evident but follow their own logic. Much depends also on who serves as the audience that prompts one’s shame to come to the surface. I give you an example. After some serious damage that the termites had made to the roofs of my two huts I employed two local Gbaya men to mend them. One day when they were working on the roof of my “kitchen”, I and a young pastoral Pullo girl who lived with me invited them to coffee in the other hut. The men drank and ate eagerly and finally one of them finished an entire bread stick. The Pullo girl, who had been sitting in the corner, left the hut, highly embarrassed. Later, as we were

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

talking about the incident, I understood that what she went through was the feeling of shame caused by the Gbaya man's excessive eating. The man himself was hardly aware of the girl's feeling – let alone sharing it with her. It was something that happened between the girl and me – the shame was triggered in the girl by my presence.

The moment when the individually caused shame is collectively shared by the Fulbe can be seen as an extreme instance of the concrete intersubjectivity peculiar to *pulaaku* behaviour. In everyday life, however, this intersubjectivity does not always lie in sharing the factual shame, as with the girl in the above example. More often, it is based on *semteende*, that is, on the shared awareness of the ever present risk of getting into a shameful condition. As has become clear earlier, what the Fulbe actually try to escape is showing certain – bodily as well as social – dependencies that are inescapable in human life. From this perspective, playing *pulaaku* can be seen as genuine performing in the “Western theatrical sense” as the kind of personal autonomy that is at stake here is highly imaginary and beyond the reach of human efforts (cf. Schieffelin 1996:86 n19). Nevertheless, shrinking *pulaaku* into mere “shared pretence” would not do justice to its meaning as a vital part of people's everyday experience. Because as such it is real, as people keep performing it, keep “turn[ing] to it with a will” in William James' 1950:297) words. In the rest of this chapter I shall give a concrete example of such performing.

“IS YOUR BODY WELL?": PULAAKU IN GREETINGS¹⁵

Most anthropologists make their initial effort to approach the people in the field by greeting them in the local fashion. The pastoral Fulbe had a lot of patience with such efforts of mine, as probably with those of many others, as well as a vigour for showing how to do it, the latter quality making those dialogues somewhat different – straighter I would say – from their mutual

¹⁵ While writing this subchapter, I have been well aware that Riesman, in his Fulani ethnography, has written many pages on greetings (1977:167-176). I shall give a full recognition to his ideas by referring to them when needed. Besides, I want to add some points of my own as the subject at hand is so closely connected to the discussion of performativity. Some of my additions arise understandably from regional differences between Fulbe groups.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

greetings. Still, my impression is that, for them, the meaning of greeting me did not differ much from that of greeting each other. In Riesman's words about the Fulbe, "[b]eing ready to respond to greetings – symbolises a readiness to participate in other aspects of the relationship existing between those who greet each other" (1977:181). Thus, while even my clumsiest attempts to greet were taken as a positive sign of the kind of readiness that Riesman talks of, I had difficulties justifying my casual absent-mindedness when I had forgotten to greet the people in the nearest huts at dawn or after having returned from the village. But greetings involve more than maintaining single relationships. As Riesman says, they form a central part in that spoken word through which the Fulbe society is maintained from day to day (ibid. 221). "[W]ithout greetings Fulani society itself would cease to exist, for they are an essential and integral part of ongoing social relations" (ibid. 174). The communicative function of Fulbe greetings that Riesman so poignantly emphasises does not, however, mean that greetings were a means to give critical information to others. On the contrary, while greeting, the Fulbe, as so many people in different parts of the world, want to express that everything is well in their life – regardless of what their actual condition is (cf. ibid. 169).

On How the Fulbe Greet

Let us now have a closer look at what the pastoral Fulbe in Adamaoua actually say when they greet. First, in the beginning of the greeting people usually refer to the time of day by inquiring for example "did you sleep well?" or "did you spend the afternoon well?"¹⁶ Then they continue by asking "is [your] body well?" ("*jam Bandu?*"), often repeating the question again in a strengthened form "is [your] body very well?" ("*jam Bandu booDDum?*"), as if to confirm the previous reply. It is also possible to begin immediately with a question concerning bodily health and even to limit one's greeting to that single question, which happens when people prefer to greet shortly, for example when they greet from a distance. But normally people inquire about more than that and one typical way to continue is to ask additional questions related to one's physical well-being, such as, "how is it with tiredness?" ("*noy comri?*") or "how is it with the cold/heat?" ("*noy peewol/gulDum?*"), or to one's activities such as "how is [your] work?" ("*noy kuugal?*"). Finally, people ask about the condition of the respondent's own camp members and other relatives – the range of these questions varying according to the situation. It is also common to replace some of these questions by Islamic wishes, such as

¹⁶ Unfortunately, I have no authentic greetings on tapes as the idea of writing about the subject came only after finishing my fieldwork.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

“may God give you good health! (*Alla hokke jam!*)” or “may God be good to you!” (*Alla woonane!*”).

The Islamic wishes are answered with the simple word *barka* (blessing). As regards the various inquiries made during the greeting, some of them can be responded to with a negation – such as “there is no tiredness” (*comri walaa*) or “there is no heat” (*gulDum walaa*) – as well as with the word “*koyDum*” (“easy”). Most of them, however, are answered with the simple word “*jam*” (“well”) or “*jam, walaa koo-Dume*” (“well, there is nothing [wrong]”), which can then be followed by the Islamic phrase, “*maadalla*” (“as God wills”). While the latter phrase expresses the acceptance of one’s fate, the often repeated word *jam* embodies another central idea behind greeting, namely the aspiration to maintain the impression that everything in life harmonises with *pulaaku* ideals. From that perspective, greetings conform firmly with *pulaaku* behaviour as they regularly reproduce an imaginative reality, a subjunctive mood of “might be” (Turner 1987:41), the intersubjective sharing of which is so important in Fulbe everyday interaction. When people greet each other this imagined world appears in the idea of one’s body as being unreachable by any earthly trouble or pain as well as in assurances that all of one’s kinsmen are just fine. For me, perhaps the most startling places to listen to these affirmations were the two local hospitals where people kept on changing their “all is well” greetings with expressionless faces while sitting beside their dying relatives. Nevertheless, one day when a Pullo friend stopped off at my place in Tibati on her way back to her camp from the hospital, where she had just lost her child, I found myself doing exactly the same: greeting a grief-stricken person in a most formal manner as if to help her – at least momentarily – to get back to the world of ordinary social relations.

A much more cheerful memory that illustrates how children grow into sharing ideals through greeting is that of a little Pullo girl who, while learning to talk, repeated the word “*jam*” every time when she was asked something. In the same way *jam* was also among the first *Fulfulde* words that my own son adopted in Cameroon as people tried to “socialise” him by continuously encouraging him to respond to their greetings. Indeed, one can even say that, among the pastoral Fulbe, children learn to greet simultaneously with learning to talk. In greeting they learn more than just saying some words correctly. First, they learn a particular mode of ceremonial dialogue (Urban 1986), the mastering of which is imperative for communicating with others. Second, by coordinating their own utterances and actions with those of others, they learn a lot about being together in general – about the rhythm, and what Alfred Schutz (1967) has termed the simultaneity, in direct social interaction.

Let me elaborate the last two points by taking a more systematic look at the greeting performance. To start with, when two or more Fulbe meet they

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

usually do not start to greet each other immediately but only after some chatting about this and that. Also, when a visitor arrives, s/he is given enough time to take a seat and calm down before greeting.¹⁷ It is as if people need time to prepare themselves for attending to the particular subworld that the act of greeting produces (cf. James 1950). This shift in attention is made by distinct communicative means such as lowering one's voice and one's eyes (cf. Bauman 1975:295). It is also usual to start – or to frame, in Goffman's (1974) terminology – the greeting performance by calling the person to be greeted by his/her name, like “*too, Usumaanu – –*” (“so, Usumaanu – –”). This happens especially when many people are present and it would otherwise be difficult to discern whom the greeting is addressed to.

In greeting performances people answer to inquiries in the same inconspicuous way as these inquiries are made: by lowering their voice and eyes. These reciprocal signals give the performance a strong sense of distance and thus, in a curious way, differentiate greetings from many other forms of face-to-face interaction. As Schutz writes: “– – in the face-to-face situation I literally see my partner in front of me. As I watch his face and his gestures and listen to the tone of his voice, I become aware of much more than what he is deliberately trying to communicate to me” (1967:169). On the contrary, when two Fulbe greet they try to stay physically and emotionally as detached from each other as possible by talking monotonously and looking down in different directions. It is not unusual either that people greet from behind the hut walls, thus escaping even the slightest risk of having eye contact with those greeted.¹⁸ Whatever the case, the expressionless verbal exchanges make greeting a highly stylised and formal communication as people try to escape from revealing anything intimate or extraordinary (see also Riesman 1977:172-173).

Although the restrained greeting patterns are somewhat more emphasised when young people respond to the greetings of older people, the hierarchical element in these gestures is outshadowed by the more general, distancing meaning they have. Instead, a much clearer way of showing deference is to

¹⁷ Thus, unlike Riesman (see e.g. 1977:173), I did not get the impression that people have to be ready to greet in whatever circumstances. Partly this might have come from our different attitude towards greeting: while Riesman felt the immediate response to greeting as “a heavy obligation and an imposition on [his] freedom”, I took people's eagerness to greet me as a sign of respect and consideration. Indeed, when someone happened to greet me hastily and without true attention, I was easily offended.

¹⁸ As Riesman says, “[t]hat is especially the case when those who are inside are of the opposite sex from the person outside” (1977:174). I have observed that greeting through hut walls is particularly optimal when people greet in-laws of the opposite sex because of the strong *semteende* that is felt in the presence of persons belonging to that category.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

kneel when responding to another person's greetings: the fact that only the person who is hierarchically lower in the relationship performs the gesture leaves no room for misinterpretation. Another fact that speaks of the same difference is that when there are many people to be greeted those who are lower in the generational hierarchy often respond as a group to the greeting of an older person. These collective responses are characteristic of moments when people gather together – for instance to celebrate a name-giving or an Islamic feast – and the air is filled with the overlapping repetition of greeting phrases, the monotony of which is broken only by a slight intonation of the word “*jam*”.

Greeting as a Model for Smooth Interaction

The special place that greetings have in Fulbe social gatherings makes them comparable to what Greg Urban (1986) has analysed as ceremonial dialogue in South America. Drawing from the studies of several scholars – and his own research – Urban explores different forms of these ceremonial dialogues in five Indian societies, ranging from the ceremonial greetings and the so-called war dialogues of the Shuar to the dyadic origin-myth telling of the Shokleng. In his analysis Urban brings forth two conclusive points. First, paying attention to the context of use, he argues that all of the dialogues are employed in situations where solidarity is an issue, that is, the possibility of conflict exists. Second, inducing from the first point, he states that ceremonial dialogues function as models for solidary interaction more generally. (Ibid. 372, 379.) The obvious difference between the ceremonial dialogues analysed by Urban and the Fulbe greetings is that, while the former are reserved for specific social occasions, the latter constitute a central element both in feasts and in everyday life. Thus, the Fulbe greetings are a more routine behavior but that does not exclude their ceremonial or ritualised character, similar to the South American examples. Furthermore, the ceremonial quality of these greetings is intensified when there is a feast and people attend to thorough and lengthy greetings all day long. As Riesman (1977:169-170) observes, the greetings are longer when the greeting people have not seen each other for some time, and this certainly holds true for social occasions where people come from long distances.

Riesman's point takes us back to Urban who argues that the use of ceremonial dialogues is typical of relationships in which the actors are “in social terms maximally distant” (1986:380), because it is exactly in the context of distant relationships that there is “an ever-present possibility of conflict” (ibid. 372). A similar distance can be found on occasions when Fulbe greet people with whom the social tie has temporarily lapsed (Urban

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

1986:380), as is often the case in religious or other sorts of social gatherings. But, as Urban also notes in the case of the ceremonial dialogues in South America, the Fulbe greetings can be used in other, less-distant relationships as well (cf. *ibid.* 380). Indeed, this takes place continuously when greetings are exchanged in the midst of daily routines between people who constantly see each other. And although these daily greetings tend to be shorter than those performed at feasts, ultimately, they never lose their basic ceremonial character. I observed this in Fulbe camps day after day as people who otherwise behaved among themselves in a most informal manner – such as mothers with their sons or women with the younger brothers of their husbands – literally stiffened their face and limbs for the moment of greeting each other.

As has become clear thus far, Fulbe greetings contain formal elements that mark them with a strong sense of distance in most different contexts: in feasts as well as in everyday life, between strangers as well as between kinsmen or friends. To my mind, this distance, more than being a sign of pure reserve, speaks of mutual respect as it is during the act of greeting that people show a heightened regard to each other's bodily autonomy. Thus, while taking part in the greeting performance people take part in sharing broader *pulaaku* ideals as well. Here again there is a parallel with Urban's argumentation: like the ceremonial dialogues, the Fulbe greetings can be understood as providing a model for social interaction more generally. I conclude with two points to clarify this.

First, greetings constitute a clearly framed and frequently repeated social practice during which the performance of the illusory state of bodily autonomy is carried to an extreme. As such, they can be viewed as a "pure" model of what ideal group life should be (see also Riesman 1977:172). But, to be accurate, the model does not refer to any concrete efforts to achieve the performed state, but to the performance itself. It refers to the fact that the ideals that find their exaggerated expression in greeting should be performed – and so maintained – in other domains of social interaction as well.

Second, Fulbe greetings form an example of a coordinated social practice as people who greet have to accommodate their words and gestures to those of each other. Urban names this kind of interaction dialogical because it involves "the coordinated efforts of two speakers" (1986:376). In Fulbe greetings this coordination follows a predetermined scheme as people's utterances and bodily reactions are highly anticipated. Here a further inference could be made, namely that the greetings can be seen as a model for coordination also in those spheres of social life where the interaction follows more undetermined routes – such as in ordinary chatting (cf. *ibid.*).

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

What is basically involved here is the talent of consideration. This means that, in the same way as people are attuned to each other while greeting, they are expected to take others into consideration in other forms of face-to-face relationships.

Let me complete the second point by applying Taylor who, while principally sharing Urban's ideas, makes a distinction between "mere coordination" and what he calls "dialogical action" (1993:51-52). According to Taylor, what differentiates the two is that during dialogical action people not only coordinate their acts with those of others, but place themselves in a common rhythm and thus bring their component actions together to form an integrated agent (*ibid.*). All this describes nicely what the Fulbe experience when they greet each other: a moment of intensified reciprocal attention¹⁹ during which the individual words and gestures are merged into an integrated, collective flow. The moment of monotonous repetition of greeting phrases then epitomises the Fulbe ideal of smooth group life in which everybody, without individual self-assertion, takes part in the collective effort to support each other in the daily attempts to master oneself and thus to avoid bringing shame on the whole group.

Reframing the Greeting Performance

As clearly framed and regularised social interaction, Fulbe greetings do not leave much space for creative variation. Thus, in order to engage in greeting in a more improvised manner, the greeting performance has to be shifted from its conventional performing context, that is, it has to be recontextualised (*cf.* Bauman and Briggs 1990). As Bauman (1975:301) remarks, in a process of this kind the structured performance is turned into something else by reframing it, for example, as imitation or play. Depending on the skills and motives of the performers, the new outcome can also constitute performance in its own right (*cf. ibid.*). Another closely connected issue is the question of reflexivity. One view, advocated by Bruce Kapferer, is that in order to reflect upon performance the participants need to get both physical and experiential distance from their own and other people's action (1984:186-187). This argument relates with the above discussion of recontextualisation because

¹⁹ In formulating my thoughts about greetings as well as about other forms of face-to-face interaction among the Fulbe, I have been inspired by Schutz's ideas of what he calls direct social relationships. He writes: "In the living intentionality of the direct social relationship, the two partners are face to face, their streams of consciousness are synchronised and geared into each other, each immediately affects the other, and the in-order-to motive of the one becomes the because-motive of the other, the two motives complementing and validating each other as objects of reciprocal attention" (1967:162).

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

when people attain sufficient distance to reflect upon their performance, they have already moved from the actual performing context to an alternative one in which reflection is possible (ibid. 203). In the following I shall elaborate these theoretical ideas in relation to some examples from my own data.

As has come up earlier, Fulbe greetings constitute a model of *pulaaku* behaviour even in most of those socially defined relations in which restrained behaviour would otherwise be considered inappropriate. One exception to the pattern can be found in the mutual interaction among the youth – my own observations being mainly based on socialising with girls. For example, among themselves, the young girls often play with the generally accepted pattern by greeting in a most unrestrained manner. This they do by modifying their gestures rather than the actual greeting phrases: they giggle, jostle against each other and utter their short dialogue with a teasing tone in their voice. As an example of a somewhat different manipulation of the greeting performance, I remember a young woman who once, surrounded by her female friends in the hut of her cousin, imitated one of her kinswomen. The thing that especially stuck in my memory of the hilarious show was the way in which the woman performed a caricature of greeting: her face hidden in her scarf, she approached the imagined other person with short crawling steps and finally uttered the greeting phrases with a distinctively thin and hurried voice. The gestures of the woman recalled vividly another performance that I had observed several times in Tibati when my Hausa-Fulbe friends burlesqued the greetings of the pastoralists. In the beginning of their performance, the Hausa women, in the same way as the above pastoral woman, hid their faces and approached each other exceedingly hesitantly. Then, during the actual greeting, each of them overacted a strong feeling of embarrassment every time another asked a new question – a play that tended to continue with more and more greeting forms.²⁰

Another context in which there seems to be room for more improvised playing with greetings among the pastoral Fulbe themselves is *denDiraagu*, the joking relationship between real or classificatory cross-cousins. Principally, the interaction between *denDiraaBe* (cross-cousins) is in direct opposition to *pulaaku* behaviour as it involves acts that appear as most unrestrained or “shameless”. However, as Riesman (1977:124) also brings out, the reciprocal behaviour between *denDiraaBe* should not be confused with the true spontaneity that characterises close matrilineal relations – or the

²⁰ What made the Hausa-Fulbe women’s keen-sighted jesting about the cattle Fulbe greetings possible in the first place was that these people repeat the same greeting forms, or, to be more accurate, the villagers’ simplified and shorter version of these forms, in their own social interaction.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

relationship between giggling age-mates for that matter – because the spontaneity between *denDiraaBe* is deliberately enacted. One relationship that exemplified this kind of “over-naturalness” (ibid.) during my fieldwork was that between two older men who – through a link that I could not precisely trace – regarded themselves as cross-cousins. Living in camps that were located next to each other, the men met almost daily and engaged often in long, improvised greetings with each other. During the greeting the men sat or stood face to face, almost stuck to each other, and shook hands rhythmically.²¹ They uttered – sometimes nearly shouted – the greeting phrases with an emphatic voice and their exaggerated, nearly offensive gestures made the greeting extremely amusing.

In the above examples the greetings are modified from the manner in which they are conventionally performed in two ways. First, in the case of the young girls and the old cross-cousins, the performance builds on qualities that directly conflict with *pulaaku* behaviour, such as emotionally charged acting and close bodily contact. Second, in the case of the imitating women, the burlesque exaggeration of *pulaaku* traits reverses their meaning. The examples differ from each other also regarding to what degree the performance is factually reframed. Thus, while the giggling girls make fun of “tradition” in their play of greetings, they do not actually shift the performing context but rather greet and play at the same time. The same thing can be said of the cross-cousins who, although parodying the conventional greeting style, are still truly greeting. On the contrary, in the performance of the woman who jokes about her relative, the greeting is already removed from its initial context and reframed as imitation. Finally, along with the play of the Hausa women, the greeting is performed totally outside the cultural context that generated it and reframed as inter-ethnic mockery.

Another way to consider the above performances is to look at them from the point of view of reflexivity. In order to do this, it may be reasonable to restart from the ordinary greetings. These belong to encounters that Schutz terms “pure we-relationships” which, “instead of being observed” or “grasped reflectively”, are “lived through” (ibid. 1967:170). In other words, when people immerse themselves in greeting in the restrained, conventional manner, they momentarily lose their hold of alternative realities (cf. James 1950; Kapferer 1984) and consequently also the distance required for reflection. On the

²¹ In fact, shaking hands – albeit in a more modest way than in the case of *denDiraaBe* – is not a totally unknown practice during ordinary greetings either. Usually it is among older men and when these men greet other men such as village Fulbe or Hausa. Many people, both men and older women, also shook hands with me after not seeing me for a while.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

contrary, on occasions such as those described in the above examples the actors are able to get distance from the ordinary greeting style and thus reflect upon it. But how does this distancing actually happen? Kapferer makes the point that in the Sinhalese demon exorcism rites the distance needed for reflexivity is achieved by those who, in certain phases of the rite, stand apart from the ritual activity and are thus able to observe it from the standpoint of everyday reality (1984:191).²² What makes our examples different from Kapferer's is that, in them, reflection is not based on outside observing but on the action itself, as people comment on the conventional practice by performing it in modified ways. Thus, while in the Sinhalese case people "recontextualise" the demonic by shifting their own attention concretely away from the central ritual events to such activities as gossiping and card playing, in the Fulbe play of greetings the shift of standpoint takes place within the limits of the very action to be reflected upon. In this sense, the Fulbe examples come closer to Turner's – as well as Clifford Geertz's – central idea that reflexivity in performance is often grounded in people's devoted participation in it. In performing, man reveals himself to himself, as Turner says (1987:81).

The fact that, in certain contexts, Fulbe greetings are open to reflexive modifications does not, of course, mean that people are totally free in choosing how to behave in the reflexive frame. Perhaps most clearly this is seen in the case of the old men who, if they want to play with greeting, are supposed to do it in a way peculiar to their relation as *denDiraaBe*. In this sense, it is their joking relationship that forms the structure that promotes reflexive action of a specific kind (cf. Kapferer 1984:188). On the other hand, in the case of the young jesting girls, the playing is not regulated according to any clear expectations and thus their performing is of a more impulsive nature. The same can be said of the young woman whose imitation was completely spontaneous. Nevertheless, in the same way as for *denDiraagu*, the informal relationships among the youth certainly serve as a context in which reflection is made possible. Here, it is important to note that the possibility does not necessarily lead to concrete acts. Thus, cross-cousins do not start to joke every time they meet – not even those who often do – and the same goes with the funmaking of the youth. Much depends on cultural competence, as people are different in regard to their verbal or other performing skills. The old men and the young imitating woman were persons who had a distinct

²² Kapferer's point can be seen as a counter-argument to Geertz's idea that it is those who participate in "deep play", those "deeply experientially and emotionally engaged in the central action" (Kapferer 1984:180), who can really understand, and thus reflect upon, what is going on in performance.

Pulaaku: Performed or Embodied Culture?

talent for the comic, a discursive medium which fosters reflexivity, as Kapferer (ibid.) has noted in the case of Sinhalese demon exorcism rites.

Through the active manipulation of conventional greeting forms, people do not reflect merely upon the greeting but upon *pulaaku* more generally. In that sense the above examples are moments when the actors are led to contemplate the very premises through which they organise much of their everyday living with others. The distance that, for example, the young woman attained through imitating – or mocking – the customs of her own people raises the more general question of agency. In other words: to what extent do people actively define the emerging situations (cf. Bauman and Briggs 1990:69)? I shall return to this question in the final chapter, after examples from other spheres of Fulbe social interaction have been presented.

3 PEOPLE OF THE BLESSED CATTLE

It has been mainly by “following” their beasts that the Fulbe have spread from the Senegal Basin to regions beyond Lake Chad. Concomitantly, the division of labour between the nomadic pastoralists and the sedentary farmers of the area has offered a solid footing for local “primordial” classifications (cf. Comaroff 1987:51). The wide-spread process of sedentarisation and Islamisation among the pastoralists – as well as the integration of local people into sedentary Fulbe society or vice versa – has, however, rearranged the dichotomy, bringing about internal divisions among the Fulbe groups themselves. The turns in the recent history of the people of this study – the seminomadic pastoral Fulbe in the southern fringes of the Adamaoua Plateau of Cameroon – reflect these historical processes of economic and cultural differentiation. Before turning to my actual research area, I shall take a few steps back and say some words about the historical process which brought different Fulbe groups into Cameroon.

NOMADS, *JIHAD* AND THE PROCESS OF SEDENTARISATION

The Fulbe of contemporary Cameroon belong to the eastern Fulbe¹ – or to the Adamawa² Fulbe as they also are called. The differentiation of these “Fulbe of the east” (Mohammadou 1981:231) from the western groups started to take shape gradually after the tenth century when a large number of Fulbe started to move from Senegal eastwards. The signs of the split between the nomadic and the sedentary groups were already seen in the earliest

¹ Eastern Fulbe is a general label which refers to all Fulbe who live nowadays in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and The Central African Republic (see e.g., Dupire 1981).

² For the sake of clarity, I shall follow Mohammadou in distinguishing the terms Adamawa and Adamaoua from each other (Mohammadou 1981; see also Boutrais 1993:9). Thus, when talking of Adamawa, I refer to the former Adamawa Emirate, i.e. to a territory which the Fulbe conquered during their holy war (*jihad*) in the nineteenth century and which covered regions from today's Nigeria (the Benue valley) and Cameroon (the plain of Diamare, the Mandara Mountains and the Adamaoua Plateau). When talking of Adamaoua, on the other hand, I refer to the special highland area in Cameroon (named Adamaoua Plateau or Adamawa Highlands in the literature) as well as to the province of Adamaoua/Adamawa located in that area. For more information on the terminology see Azarya (1978:237 n13) and Boutrais (1993:7-9).

People of the Blessed Cattle

migrations to Sokoto and Bornu in Central Sudan. Although the pastoralists continued their nomadic life in the new western pastures, there were also urban Fulbe belonging to *TorooDBe*, the clan of Islamic clerics and aristocrats,³ who started to settle in the cities of the local Hausa and Kanuri people between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴ The sedentarisation continued in the following centuries as more Fulbe became socially and politically integrated into the local sedentary societies through matrimonial alliances. This process was intensified during the *jihad*, the Islamic holy war (1804-1830), when large groups of Fulbe took active part in the war and contributed widely to the rise of West-African Islamic states. (Azarya 1978; 1993; Mohammadou 1981.)

The contribution of the nomadic Fulbe to the *jihad* – as well as their later role in the politics of the states that were formed during it – varied group by group. The initiative came, however, from the sedentary *TorooDBe* who, in order to conquer new regions in the name of Islam,⁵ mobilised their non-Muslim pastoral kinsmen in the bush. The mobilisation was crucial for the war. As Yoshihito Shimada (1993:89) observes, in the areas where pastoral Fulbe were numerous the Fulbe *jihad* reached the level of state-formation. The factual result of participation for the pastoralists themselves was more modest however. Although some of them gave up pastoralism and settled in villages after obtaining religious and political recognition during the *jihad*,

³ To be accurate, the term *TorooDBe* (“those who pray together”) refers more to “a cast-like social group devoted to Islam rather than an ethnic group” (Shimada 1993:93 n7) and so covers learned Muslim people from varied ethnic origins. Among the Adamawa Fulbe, however, the term is used in the general meaning of the Fulbe of Futa Toro, that is, a group of Muslim Fulbe who originate in the Senegal Basin (Mohammadou 1976). This is despite the fact that also in Futa Toro, as Shimada (1993:93 n7) notes, “although Fulbe and *TorooDBe* often intersect each other, they are not synonymous”.

⁴ Most scholars agree that the first Fulbe to arrive in Bornu were not cattle herders but literate sedentary Muslims. An often cited historical source in this matter is the Kano chronicle which claims it was during the rule of Yakubu (1452-1463) that the first learned Muslim Fulbe groups came into Hausaland (see e.g., Azarya 1978 and Bonfiglioli 1988). Other sources trace the arrival of the first individual Muslim Fulbe to the court of Bornu earlier, that is, back to the thirteenth century (Hopen 1958; Lacroix 1952; Mohammadou 1981; Shaw 1905; see also Mohammadou 1981 for oral traditions that refer to the presence of the Fulbe around Lake Chad even in the seventh century). Whatever the truth, it should be noted that the emphasis given to the role of the town dwelling Fulbe compared to that of the nomadic groups in the first migrations can partly derive from the fact that the arrival of the learned Muslim Fulbe into the centres of power was observed – and thus also documented – more quickly than the movements of their nomadic relatives in the bush.

⁵ The interpretations given of the Fulbe *jihads* vary from “political revolution against oppression and misrule” and “cloak for racial conquest and imperialism” (Smith 1966:410) to the official Fulbe view of religious purification.

People of the Blessed Cattle

there were many others who continued their traditional nomadic life after the war. It can even be said that most of the pastoralists joined the war for quite pragmatic purposes by embracing the call of Sheehu Usman dan Fodio, a Muslim Fulbe cleric from Gobir who launched the Fulbe *jihad* in the hope of extending their pastures eastward – as well as of securing more peaceful conditions for their pastoralism in the regions they already inhabited.⁶ Indeed, the situation of the pastoralists in Hausaland at that time has been characterised as intolerable; besides the general disdain that the sedentary people felt for the nomadic Fulbe, the Hausa chiefs imposed a heavy cattle tax (*jangali*) on pastoralists⁷ and set specific restrictions for the movement of their cattle. (See Azarya 1993; Bonfiglioli 1988; Hopen 1958; Stenning 1959.)

Although it is understandable that for the pastoral Fulbe the *jihad* was, in Angelo Maliki Bonfiglioli's (1988:34) words, "the beginning of an enormous hope for change, for revenge against all forms of exploitation and disdain", in fact, the war mainly reinforced the ongoing development. Bonfiglioli (*ibid.*, 65-69) emphasises the crucial impact that the religious movement of the *ToroDBe*, with its political and demographic consequences, had for the pastoralists in the long run; the more the Islamised Fulbe settled among the local people, the more pressure was put on those Fulbe who were still engaged in cattle herding to leave and search for new, more remote pastures. All this promoted the shaping of new social and cultural entities as the pastoral groups were increasingly distanced from their sedentary kinsmen who, in turn, started to intermix more and more with the people they once conquered and converted to Islam. Thus, following Victor Azarya (1993:43), the *jihad* laid the basis not only for an ethnically marked hierarchy between the local groups and the Fulbe invaders, but also for a new kind of hierarchical stratification among the Fulbe themselves.

FULBE ROUTES TO CAMEROON

Although the historical split between the sedentary and the nomadic groups among the eastern Fulbe can be traced from their long common history in Western Sudan, the way in which the Fulbe of contemporary Cameroon are divided into villagers (*Fulbe wuro*) and pastoral bush dwellers (*Fulbe ladde*) is

⁶ According to Bonfiglioli (1988:36), in Bornu, this pragmatic attitude of the nomadic pastoralists was one of the main reasons for the limited success of the war as, after any battle won, the nomads were eager to disperse and return to the bush to their cattle.

⁷ The cattle tax was one of the practices for which Usman dan Fodio condemned the Hausa especially – a deed with which he surely won the sympathies of the pastoralists (see e.g., Bonfiglioli 1988:56).

People of the Blessed Cattle

of quite recent origin. To put it more precisely, the current division is based on the migrations of two culturally differentiated Fulbe groups which arrived in Cameroon in successive order. The first of them – the group that nowadays forms the sedentary Fulbe society of North Cameroon – had virtually finished its migration from Bornu into the region by the turn of the nineteenth century. The second group, known as the pastoral Fulbe or the Mbororo, started to move into Cameroon in the second half of the nineteenth century from Bauchi, and their migration into the region has continued up till recent times. Although my research is focused on the latter group, in the following, I shall draw the general outlines of both migrations, as the current situation of the pastoral Fulbe in Adamaoua can only be understood in relation to the local history that was shaped by the sedentarised Fulbe before the arrival of the pastoralists.

The Formation of Muslim Fulbe Chiefdoms in Adamawa

There is historical evidence to support the view that the Fulbe joined the history of what forms contemporary Cameroon probably centuries before the *jihād* (Lacroix 1952; Mohammadou 1981). Mainly this pre-*jihād* migration originated in Bornu from where the Fulbe started to move gradually southwards, to areas that were later to form the Emirate of Adamawa.⁸ As with many other regions, the first migrations into Adamawa were slow and peaceful, and, for a long time, the mostly pagan pastoralists lived on friendly terms with the local people on whose land they herded their cattle.⁹ In the 18th century, however, the situation started to change. An initial reason for this was the increasingly unstable political conditions in Bornu; as the empire started to decline, the situation of the Fulbe radically worsened (Abubakar 1977). This, in turn, resulted in the intensive migration of the Fulbe into

⁸ For oral traditions that speak of some Fulbe groups that entered Adamawa without ever reaching Bornu, see Strümpell (1912).

⁹ The main interest of the pastoral Fulbe in new areas was to obtain land for cattle grazing and for this purpose they needed the guarantee from the local chiefs to defend their grazing rights both against the local people and against new Fulbe arrivals. There were regional differences concerning the payment of tribute and grazing dues as well as in how closely the pastoralists were integrated in the local societies. As Abubakar (1977:39-40) observes, one sign of reciprocity on the part of the Fulbe was providing animals for ritual sacrifices for those on whose land they grazed their herds. It was also common that the local chiefs gave their daughters in marriage to Fulbe leaders (*arDo'en*; pl. of . *arDo*) as a sign of friendly relations (see Abubakar 1977; Lacroix 1952; Njeuma 1978). See Abubakar (1977) for further examples of the reciprocal relationship between the pastoral Fulbe and some local agropastoral groups in Adamawa in the pre-*jihād* period – as well as for relations that were more conflict-ridden.

People of the Blessed Cattle

Adamawa, the peak of which was reached during the last quarter of the eighteenth century (ibid.).

Besides the difference in scope, the migration wave before the turn of the nineteenth century differed from earlier Fulbe migrations also in its social composition. Thus, compared with the earlier arrivals, a greater number of those Fulbe who came into Adamawa during this later period had already practised Islam and led an urban sedentary life in towns while living in Bornu (Mohammadou 1981). Another distinction was that, like those rare Muslim clerics who had arrived in Adamawa earlier, the Islamised newcomers were much more sensitive to mistreatment on the part of the local non-Fulbe than their nomadic predecessors. Becoming increasingly frustrated by their inferior position, the Muslim Fulbe started to revolt against their non-Fulbe rulers in Adamawa. These turbulent events finally led to the founding of the first Fulbe dynasties in the region. (Abubakar 1977; Azarya 1978; Lacroix 1952.)

After the Fulbe *jihād* was proclaimed in Sokoto in 1804, the regional revolts in Adamawa were soon legitimated for religious reasons. Moodibbo¹⁰ Adama, a Pullo marabout from the Upper Benue valley, having returned to his people after ten years of Islamic studies in Bornu, was sent by some local Fulbe chiefs (*arDo'en*) to Shehu Usman dan Fodio, the Caliph of Sokoto, to find out what was to be done (Abubakar 1977 quoting partly East 1934). In Sokoto, Usmanu appointed Adama as the leader of the *jihād* "in the lands of the east", whereupon Adama came back to his fellow Fulbe and urged them to join the

¹⁰ *Moodibbo* is a word traced from Arabic meaning, "learned in the scriptures" (Migeod 1927:13). It is used for a man who has received higher education in Islam and who teaches it to others.

People of the Blessed Cattle

war (ibid.).¹¹ After some initial discord¹² Adama's call started to bear fruit. Thus, in the following years, the Fulbe dynasties in Adamawa managed to harness the overall discontent of the Fulbe in the region and unite the forces of both urban and semi-nomadic groups. This enabled them to establish their power in regions they already inhabited (the Benue valley, the plain of Diamare) as well as to expand their domination southwards into new territories (Adamaoua Plateau). The conquests led to the foundation of lamidates, autonomous Fulbe chiefdoms, whereby the invading Fulbe conquerors started to rule over diverse local populations. Around 1810 these lamidates – Banyo, Tibati, Tignere and Ngaoundere – were united into the Emirate of Adamawa which was named after its first emir, Moodibbo Adama¹³, and subjected to the Sokoto Caliphate. (Abubakar 1977; Azarya 1978; Mohammadou 1981; Shimada 1993.)

The particular historical shape that the Fulbe *jihad* took in its south-eastern edges in Adamawa had special features that differed from the

¹¹ Although it has been emphasised that Adama's motives for leading the war were basically moral or religious, his own life history is interestingly connected to an incident in which the frustration of the Fulbe in their situation in Adamawa somehow culminated before the *jihad*. The incident is related to a custom of *jus primae noctis* – “the right of the first night” – that was practised by the Bata chiefs around the Benue region. According to the custom, any newly married Fullo man had to allow the local Bata chief or prince to spend the first night with the bride (see Abubakar 1977 and Njeuma 1978). It was Ardo Jobdi, the head of a Fulbe group in Bundang, who, refusing to yield to such a practice, slew both his daughter and the local chief who demanded her. Finally, the episode led to a battle during which Adama's father died (Migeod 1927). It was shortly after these events that Adama returned from Bornu into the Benue valley to find his father being killed (ibid; Hogben 1967).

¹² It took some time before Adama managed to get the local Fulbe leaders on his side. Abubakar (1977) gives two reasons for this. First, the rich cattle-owning *arDo'en* were reluctant to participate in a large-scale war for fear of losing their cattle (ibid.:49). Second, as the Fulbe were politically segmented and the groups led by *arDo'en* highly autonomous in decision making, it was difficult for many *arDo'en* to accept the leadership of others – especially a person from a different lineage (ibid, 51). The last point is also emphasised by Adeleye (1971) who states that the leaders of the more influential WollarBe and Yillaga clans opposed the idea that Adama, a member of a minor Ba'en clan, should come to power (ibid.:31). However, as the news of the Fulbe success – both in Hausaland and in the north Benue region where new Fulbe migrants from Bornu had invaded – reached the Fulbe leaders, and also Adama started wars against the Bata, the leaders finally started to support Adama and his local *jihad* (Abubakar 1977:48-49, 51). See also VerEecke (1985) for an interesting discussion of how the descriptions of some Fulbe religious elders differ from those of historians regarding the events that led to Adama's rise to power.

¹³ The Fulbe themselves generally called the region of Adamawa *Fombina* (a Fulfulde term meaning “south”), denoting its location on the southern fringes of Sokoto. Concomitantly, Adama was called *Aamiiru Fombina* (“the Emir of the South”) or *LaamiiDo Fombina* (“the supreme chief of the South”), although more often people called him simply “Moodibbo”. See Hogben (1967), Mohammadou (1981) and VerEecke (1985).

People of the Blessed Cattle

situation in Sokoto and Bornu. First, compared with Hausaland where the Fulbe arrivals encountered developed economic and political centers in such centralised Hausa states as Kano, Katsina and Gobir, the conditions in Adamawa at that time were very different. There were no centralised states with urban centres, but a situation which the French colonial officer Pierre-François Lacroix later called “*l’anarchie villageoise*” (1952:54), embracing a host of independent and often quite isolated small chiefdoms and village communities that defended their independence fiercely.¹⁴ Second, when the Fulbe entered into Sokoto and Bornu, they met people who were already more or less Islamised, while in most parts of Adamawa it was the Muslim Fulbe themselves who first introduced Islam to local people.¹⁵ This, in turn, resulted in two different modes of social integration. In the first case it was the Fulbe who, during the pre-*jihad* period, settled in the cities of the Muslim Hausa, adopted the local customs, the centralised political system as well as the Hausa language, and only later – as their cultural self-esteem developed through their religious reform – started to distinguish themselves from the Hausa on grounds of their more developed Islam (Waldman 1966). By contrast, in the case of Adamawa, it was the Fulbe lamidates that formed the first centralised political-religious entities in the region. (Abubakar 1977; Azarya 1978; Lacroix 1952; Njeuma 1978.)

Despite Adama’s presumably spiritual motivation for the war, compared to the various local *jihads* in West Africa, the Fulbe *jihad* in Adamawa has often been characterised as an especially racial and political venture (Shimada 1993). This distinctive quality, as well as its success, had much to do with the marked differences in political apparatus described above. The advanced administrative and judiciary systems that the Fulbe first adopted from the Hausa and the Kanuri and then refined during the *jihad* (Abubakar 1977; Paden 1973) gave them a clear advantage over the highly heterogeneous and uncentralised local communities in Adamawa. The advantage was further strengthened by the fact that the Fulbe were not basically interested in Islamising the people they conquered. On the contrary, as Lacroix (1966) observes, in Adamawa, the Fulbe showed a clear tendency to monopolise Islam in order to sustain their own supremacy. As a result,

¹⁴ As Abubakar (1977:42) notes, the absence of economic centres – and subsequently the scarcity of regular markets – made the marketing of cattle products difficult for the pastoralists in Adamawa. Besides, due to the fertility of the land, there was not an interest in the manure as there was in more northern regions. Both of these factors played their part in a situation in which the economic reciprocity between local people and the Fulbe pastoralists was weaker in Adamawa than in Hausaland.

¹⁵ As well as to those nomadic Fulbe who pastured their cattle in Adamawa and were still pagans when their Islamised brothers arrived in the region.

People of the Blessed Cattle

Fulbe identity was confused with a Muslim one as the Fulbe harnessed Islam for the maintenance of their own ethnic boundaries (cf. Burnham 1996).

In Adamawa, there were regional and inter-ethnic differences in the status that various people had under the new Fulbe rule. Azarya (1978:23-25, 238-239) distinguishes four categories of people according to their overall relationship with the Fulbe conquerors. First, there were the few Muslim non-Fulbe populations who either resisted Fulbe *jihads* – as the Mandara did – or formed a respected minority in the Fulbe Muslim community – as was the case with the Kotoko. Second, there were those pagan non-Fulbe populations who tried to resist the Fulbe. In some groups – such as the Laka, the Duru, the Fali and the Bata – the resistance collapsed and they suffered from extreme disorganisation and exploitation through enslavement.¹⁶ Others – such as the Mundang, the Tupuri and the Matakam – were more successful but they were forced to move into the hills or other marginal areas inaccessible to the Fulbe and live in constant fear of their attacks. Finally, there was a third category that consisted of pagan groups – such as the Dama and the Mbum – that did not generally resist the Fulbe but tried to co-operate with them.¹⁷ In practice it meant that these people accepted the Fulbe dominion in their region and paid them an annual tribute that included slaves, for which the Fulbe recognised their local autonomy.

Many of those people who voluntarily accepted the Fulbe rule were ready to go even further in order to improve their status by actually trying to become like Fulbe. This happened through the process called Fulbeisation (Burnham 1972; Schultz 1984) in which the conquered people of Adamawa converted to Islam and adopted the Fulfulde language and certain Fulbe cultural ideals, such as their behaviour codes and clothing.¹⁸ This assimilation was not, however, so welcome among the Fulbe themselves who strove for the maintenance of their own cultural and political supremacy. For example, in

¹⁶ Capturing slaves was a common practice during the Fulbe *jihad* and it continued throughout the period of Fulbe dynasties (see Kirk-Greene 1958). Some of the enslaved people were kept as domestic slaves and used as household servants, agricultural labor or herdsmen while others were sent to emirs and minor chiefs as a compulsory tribute. As Azarya (1978:34) notes, Adamawa was the most important slave supplier in the whole empire of Sokoto. For more on slavery in Adamawa, see Burnham (1980b)

¹⁷ Exceptions to this policy can, however, be found. See, for example, Froelich (1954) on Mbum resistance.

¹⁸ This process – in which people of non-Fulbe origin finally start to call themselves Fulbe – formed a sharp contrast to the evolution in Hausaland where both the Muslim Fulbe as well as the pagan people who were on their way to Islamisation were Hausaised, assimilated into the Hausa ethnic group. Thus, in Hausaland, Islamic identity was not confused with Fulbe identity as was the case in Adamawa. See more in Azarya (1978).

People of the Blessed Cattle

the case of Islamisation, the Fulbe were jealous of their privilege of being genuine Muslims compared to their slaves and other subject people whose Muslim status was of very recent origin and whose worship was much more superficial by nature. On the other hand, in their mutual power struggles – as well as in their attempts to get more independence from the Emirate of Adamawa itself – the new Fulbe lamidates needed allies from local groups. Indeed, as Azarya (1978:30) notes, there were people of slave status in official positions in all the lamidates of Adamawa, and in certain cases the Fulbe chiefs relied more on some of their subject people than on other Fulbe living in the region.

The Fulbe Rule during the Colonial Period

Finally, the European colonial command had some effect on the Fulbe rule in Adamaoua. During the German era – which covered the years 1899-1914¹⁹ – the overall situation in the lamidates was not radically altered.²⁰ This continuity was based on the fact that, although the main goal of the German administration was to “maintain the German domination in the land”, it did not have any interest in interfering in the everyday life of the local people (Lacroix 1952:43). Thus, although many Fulbe chiefs were deposed by the Germans, they were usually replaced by their own relatives and the power relations between the Fulbe and other groups remained intact. To a great extent, then, the German administration in Adamaoua can be characterised as one of indirect rule which strongly relied on the traditional ruling system of the Fulbe. It could be even said that German colonial rule reinforced Fulbe dominance as many local groups which had managed to somehow resist the Fulbe were now, through joint German and Fulbe military expeditions, put under colonial – and thus under Fulbe – rule (Azarya 1978:66). Besides, the Germans easily turned a blind eye to many local abuses, such as the continuing slave raids launched by the *laamiiBe*'s (sg. *laamiiDo*) private armies (ibid.; Azarya 1978:69, 74).

¹⁹ Germany was the first colonial power in the region to which the largest part of the Adamawa Emirate – as well as the rest of Kamerun – was appointed in the Berlin Conference in 1884. The new German Adamawa included such notable provinces/lamidates as Maroua, Rey Buuba, Ngaoundere, Banyo and Tibati, while the territory that was left to the British consisted of Yola, the capital of the Adamawa Emirate, and a small area close to it (Azarya 1978:53). The borders of German Kamerun were not exactly the same as those of the present day Federal Republic of Cameroon (see e.g., the map in DeLancey 1989:16).

²⁰ Some details of the German penetration in Adamaoua will be discussed later in connection with the history of Tibati.

People of the Blessed Cattle

The changeover of colonial rule to the French during the First World War²¹ did not cause any immediate changes in the way in which Adamaoua was ruled.²² Gradually, however, as the situation calmed down after the war, the French started to make modifications in the administration of their new colony. The modifications in French politics were based on the gradual change in attitudes towards the way in which the Germans had favoured the Fulbe as the middlemen of their indirect rule and thus left the local “savage” groups at their mercy. As Lacroix (1952) notes, a much more sympathetic attitude towards the non-Fulbe groups started to gain ground in the 1920's, which pushed the French to strive for more direct contacts with them. This tendency was strengthened by the fact that, in the French era, many local groups were anxious to get rid of the heavy tribute imposed on them by the lamidates and to be directly ruled by the French (ibid., 57-58). In Adamaoua the French acknowledged these aspirations by establishing several distinct cantons for such groups as the Gbaya, the Tikar and the Duru (Lacroix 1952:57-58). Accordingly, the taxation system was reorganised; while earlier most of the tax was received by the *laamiiBe* who sent a minor part of it to the German authorities, in the French era the customary tax collected by the Fulbe formed only ten per cent of the total amount and the rest went directly to the French colonial treasury (Azarya 1978:72).²³ Another measure, by which French rule gradually reduced the Fulbe influence, was cutting down the armies of the *laamiiBe* and replacing them with a local police force (ibid., 69). This had a suppressive effect on the slave raids, which the French opposed more effectively than the Germans had done (ibid., 74).²⁴

Despite the adjustments that the French made in their administration in Adamaoua, the overall socio-political scene did not change in any critical sense. One reason for this was that there were many groups that had already adjusted to the Fulbe rule and become an integral part of its hierarchy. Paradoxically, it was in the colonial era that the process of Fulbeisation – and Islamisation as an elemental part of it – was set in full motion. As Azarya

²¹ German Kamerun was divided into British Cameroons and French Cameroon in 1916. Most of the German territory went to the French, while the British became responsible for two narrow sectors in the west – Northern and Southern Cameroons – which were joined to their colony of Nigeria (DeLancey 1989:2-3, 15).

²² For details of how the displacement of the Germans and the establishment of the French colonial rule took place in Adamawa in 1914-1915, see Lacroix (1952:45-49).

²³ The largest share that went to the French consisted of two new tax types: a capitation tax that was imposed on the agricultural people and a cattle tax that was imposed on pastoralists (ibid.).

²⁴ Slavery was not, however, totally uprooted until the 1950's (Burnham 1996:174-175 n 4).

People of the Blessed Cattle

(1978:97) notes, this was a direct result of the colonial peace and easier mobility, so that people started to open themselves more to the outside world which, in Adamaoua, meant increasing integration into Muslim Fulbe society. This was a tendency that neither the Germans nor the French opposed as it made their own rule and the “harmonious equilibrium” (Lacroix 1952:58) between the Fulbe and other people much easier to maintain.²⁵

The Migration of the Cattle Fulbe to Cameroon

After the Fulbe migration from Bornu to Adamaoua there was still another migration to come, namely of those Fulbe – or Mbororo, as other people called them – who, while never taking part in the state formation, continued their pastoralism after the *jihad* and started to move into areas which now belong to the Republic of Cameroon only later. Thus, while the cultural hierarchy between the “town Fulbe” and the “Mbororo Fulbe” already existed elsewhere, in Adamaoua the division became relevant only after the latter started to migrate into the region in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hence we talk here also of a temporal hierarchy that took shape when a new wave of “post-*jihad*” Fulbe migrants arrived in an already established historical setting, that is, in the sphere of the Muslim Fulbe dynasties of Adamaoua. The prime mover behind this latter migration was similar to that of the earlier Fulbe migration from Bornu: the political unrest and mistreatment of pastoralists in the Hausa states where Fulbe herded their cattle at the end of the eighteenth century. As mentioned earlier, the *jihad* reinforced the already ongoing development as the pastoral groups were forced to move away from the areas where Sokoto and Bornu struggled for power (Bonfiglioli 1988:35-38).

When speaking of the second Fulbe migration to Cameroon – and from now on these people will be called the cattle Fulbe, the pastoral Fulbe or the Mbororo – it is usual to separate the arrival of three subgroups: the *WoDaaBe*, the *Jaafun* and the *Aku*. As René Dognin (1981:141) observes, the initial dispersal between these subgroups started to take place in one of the Hausa states called Kano where the pastoral Fulbe – having arrived from the west and known already as the Mbororo – had herded their cattle and established their wet season camps long before the end of the eighteenth century. Gradually the pastoralists started to disperse from Kano towards Sokoto and

²⁵ To avoid giving too harmonious a picture of the situation, it is worth mentioning, however, that political unrest and local resistance were not totally lacking in Adamaoua during the colonial rule. For example, Burnham (1980a; 1996) reports on Gbaya revolt in 1928 against Fulbe and French rule.

People of the Blessed Cattle

Zinder in the north, Bornu in the east and Jos and Bauchi in the southeast. Among the groups that were later to be represented in Cameroon, certain *WoDaaBe* moved eastwards to Bornu wherefrom some of them continued to northern Adamaoua and settled in the surroundings of Ngaoundere in the 1890s.²⁶ What interests us here, however, are the two other groups, the *Jaafun* and the *Aku*, who form the majority of the pastoral Fulbe population in Adamaoua today, as well as in the whole of Cameroon.²⁷

The *Jaafun* and the *Aku* are part of a single migration story in which two main migration waves and several subwaves from Nigeria can be discerned. The following description of these waves is based on Dognin (1981). Both of the main migrations originated from Bauchi where a group of pastoral Fulbe, calling themselves *Jaafun*, pastured their white cattle after having arrived in the region from Kano before the *jihād*. The first wave from Bauchi started in the 1840s, when part of the *Jaafun* moved towards Jada and Yola. About thirty years later they continued to Cameroon's Adamaoua where they moved between the territories of Banyo, Tibati, Tignere and Ngaoundere for several decades. After that some of them moved westwards to the Bamenda Highlands while others headed for the east, reaching Meiganga and the present day Central African Republic by the 1930s. When talking of the migration of the *Jaafun*, we must pay attention to the fact that the group of people that the term *Jaafun* refers to has been historically transformed. Thus, while originally the *Jaafun* were known as a lineage that was named after a village east of Kano²⁸, later the term has become a more abstract, subethnic category. The change happened gradually as the *Jaafun* moved out of Kano

²⁶ The *WoDaaBe* (sg. *BoDaaDo*) preferred to stay in northern Adamaoua because they wanted to keep their distance from other cattle Fulbe groups who settled in the south. Later, more *WoDaaBe* arrived and spread as far as the humid savanna zone south of Adamaoua and into the Central African Republic in the east (Boutrais 1986). In these new pasture areas – as in all places where they herd their cattle close to the *Jaafun* or the *Aku* – the *WoDaaBe* stay usually in the most remote pasture lands and follow longer transhumance routes than others (Boutrais 1988). This practice echoes a particular migration history that has separated the *WoDaaBe* from others well before the *Jaafun* lineage started to take shape in Kano.

²⁷ I shall leave the *WoDaaBe* out from a more detailed scrutiny as they are not directly connected to my study. Here it is sufficient to say that *WoDaaBe* are often generalised as the most nomadic and the less Islamised cattle Fulbe from which the other Fulbe in Cameroon keep the most cultural distance.

²⁸ The view is shared both by Dognin (1981:141) and by my informants. “The *Jaafun*, they came from Jaafun, so their village is called, near Kano”, one old Pullo man told me in Tibati.

People of the Blessed Cattle

and then from Bauchi and the term started to include more and more people from various lineages.²⁹

The second migration wave from Bauchi started about a century later when those *Jaafun* who had stayed in the region – and who were later to be called *Daneeji* – headed in two directions. Part of them moved towards Yola and Garoua in the southeast, while others, who got the name *Aku* when entering Cameroon, moved more south.³⁰ The latter group can be further divided into two more migration waves. The first *Aku* arrived, from the 1920s on, in the western parts of the Adamaoua Plateau wherefrom they later spread out all over the regions the *Jaafun* had already settled (Dognin 1981). In the 1970s there was still another *Aku* wave from Nigeria into the Bamenda Highlands. This wave – which I shall return later by examining the narratives told by my informants – continued first migrating eastwards, and then to more and more southern regions, to the humid Guinean savanna zone south of Adamaoua (Boutrais 1986).

The long migration period that has brought cattle Fulbe from Nigeria to Cameroon and beyond for over one hundred years has, of course, entailed numerous individual routes, historical episodes and social encounters. Often the pastoralists have advanced through Adamaoua spontaneously by what Derrick Stenning (1957) calls “migratory drift”, in the present case by extending their regular dry season movement gradually southeastwards and leaving the earlier, more northern wet season pastures behind. Sometimes, however, their movement has been of a more urgent nature as the cattle Fulbe have fled to new regions because of more or less intolerable circumstances. The migrations of the latter kind were frequent during the first decades of the *Jaafun*'s stay in Adamaoua, when such factors as the continuous power struggles between the lamidates, the arbitrary demands for cattle by certain *laamiiBe* and the raids of some local groups urged the pastoralists to change their grazing area time and again (Boutrais 1981). Soon, the measures of the colonial administrators came into the picture and started to affect, for better or worse, the situation of the cattle herders.

²⁹ Originally the *Jaafun* were known as a particular lineage that introduced the game of *soro* (that is, a kind of ordeal of male initiation during which groups of youth take turns at beating each other with sticks), but later the category started to cover more and more people originating from different lineages as they arrived in the same region and begin to practice *soro* with each other. For more on this process, see Dognin (1981).

³⁰ Because the majority of the *Daneeji* pastoralists were relabelled *Aku* in Cameroon – and those who kept the original name are often considered to belong to the latter group – for the sake of clarity, I shall give no special attention here to the *Daneeji* subgroup.

People of the Blessed Cattle

One interesting example from the colonial epoch is the history of Lompta, reported by Dognin (1981), Philip Burnham (1996) and Gulla Pfeffer (1936), of whom the following discussion is mostly based on Dognin. Lompta is situated on the south-west fringes of *Dadawal*, an area where all the *Jaafun* lineages present in Cameroon today lived before starting to spread into different parts of Adamaoua at the turn of the nineteenth century. It also forms part of the border district between Tibati and Tignere, an area into which the *Jaafun* fled the despotism of the *laamiiDo* of Tignere³¹ at the end of the 1890s. The flight took place during the period when the Germans were establishing their rule in the area, and soon Ardo Hoba, the leader of the new arrivals, asked for military support from the Germans against the local Niam-Niams, who made trouble by preventing the pastoralists access to the local mineral springs (*lahoore*) in Galim. The consequence was that, in 1906, the Germans expelled the Niam-Niams from the region and gave the *Jaafun* full rights to the *lahoore*, which was soon equipped with cement watering places for cattle as well as with a mechanical pump (Pfeffer 1936:155). Finally, in 1910, the Germans established the Mbororo canton of Lompta which extended to the territory of Banyo and was not subjected to the neighbouring Fulbe lamidates.³² Naturally these measures tempted more and more pastoralists to arrive in the region from Yola. The favourable period did not, however, last long as, after the Germans were defeated by the French in 1918, the latter restored the territory with its mineral resources to the Niam-Niams and reappointed their deposed leader. For the *Jaafun* it meant a payment of one beast per herd to the Niam-Niams for using the *lahoore* (*ibid.*).

The years that followed the Germans' defeat saw a lot of turmoil in Lompta. Besides the return of the Niam-Niams, there was a rinderpest epidemic, spreading from Yola, that tormented the great concentration of cattle in the area. There were also several power shifts among the *Jaafun*

³¹ Usmanu, the *laamiiDo* of Tignere, asked the pastoral Fulbe to pay him religious alms (*djakka*) as well as compensation for the use of the mineral resources of the area – both to be paid in cattle (Dognin 1981:145). According to Dognin (*ibid.*, 154), Usmanu even kidnapped Manyu, the *arDo* of the pastoralists who refused to pay, and demanded that his followers pay 500 beasts for his ransom.

³² In this sense “*Bezirk Lompta*” was an exception in German politics which favoured the sedentary Fulbe and gave them a free hand to rule other people – among which also the pastoral Fulbe should be counted. It fit, however, the overall German plan to ameliorate cattle husbandry in Adamawa (see Lacroix 1952:44-45). In the history of Cameroon, Lompta, Sabga in the south-west and Figuil in the north are the only Mbororo cantons where the pastoral Fulbe have not been under the rule of other people. For Sabga and Figuil, see more in Njeuma and Awasom (1990) and Mohammadou (1988).

People of the Blessed Cattle

arDo'en who moved back and forth across the Franco-British border.³³ Their wavering movements reflected the critical situation; the *Jaafun* were worried about French politics to sedentarise the pastoralists without any rights to the land. In addition, the French administration had a plan of creating a group that would encompass all the Mbororo of Adamaoua – both *Jaafun* and *WoDaaBe* – and be subjected to Lompta. To realise their plan, the French named a *Jaafun arDo*, Babba Haram, as “*laamiiDo* of Lompta” with the design of gathering the dispersed pastoral groups under a more centralised and stratified political system (cf. Burnham 1996:32). All this raised a lot of frustration and suspicion among the pastoralists and finally led to their mass migration during which many *arDo'en* with their followers and cattle left the region and headed either westwards or eastwards.³⁴ At the same time, by crossing the borders of the Fulbe lamidates, the pastoralists managed to escape the various taxes imposed by the Fulbe *laamiiBe*.³⁵

Till the 1950s, the movements of the pastoralists – of both “migratory” and “flight” type – were restricted to specific regions in Adamaoua. In the north, during the French era (1914-1960), the pastoralists with their cattle were not allowed to enter the region of Ngaoundere, as the French administrators

³³ The new border that was drawn between the French and the British territory in 1916 crossed the western fringes of Adamaoua, splitting the lamidate of Banyo. In the division, the Bamenda Highlands, an area where a lot of pastoral Fulbe migrated after the German rule, was incorporated into the British territory as Southern Cameroons. One year after Cameroon got independence in 1960, Southern Cameroons joined with the new Republic of Cameroon to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. See DeLancey (1989), Dognin (1981) and Lacroix (1952).

³⁴ The drastic change is well illustrated by Pfeffer (1936). Just before she visited Lompta in 1933, the number of cattle there had been reduced to 3,000 head from 100,000 head – the latter number being an estimation from the beginning of the German mandate.

³⁵ As Dognin (1981) observes, the privilege that the *laamiiBe* had – and to some extent still have – to receive different kinds of tribute was largely based on their double status as both religious and political authorities. Thus, in the case of the pastoralists, the tribute, usually paid in cattle, consisted of such payments as religious alms (*djakka*), a grazing tax (*cofal*) and a fee for using the mineral resources of the lamidate. Although principally the *djakka* was meant to be used as alms for the poor, in practice, the different payments were not separated and so all of them could be more or less used to cover the *laamiiDo's* own expenses. This more “secular” use of the *djakka* was emphasised in the colonial period when the European administrators tried to restrict the *laamiiBe's* tribute rights to that of the *djakka*. Interpreted by the Europeans as a private religious matter and thus not abolished, the *djakka* remained the sole resource with which the lamidates could finance their maintenance. (Ibid., 148-157.) It is interesting to note, as Burnham (1996:31-32) does, that those pastoral Fulbe *arDo'en*, whom the French administrators persuaded to sedentarise by nominating them as canton chiefs, soon adopted the custom of the sedentary Fulbe *laamiiBe* and started to extract a cattle tribute from their pastoral kinsmen. For an example from Lompta, see Dognin (1981:155).

People of the Blessed Cattle

wanted to avoid conflicts between different cattle owning groups, that is, between the pastoral and the sedentary Fulbe. In the south, on the other hand, the constant risk of trypanosomiasis formed a natural barrier for the movements of the cattle as preventive veterinary treatments were not yet available.³⁶ Another, more political factor in the south was that during the colonial period, especially under the rule of the French, the pastoral Fulbe were forced to stay in Adamaoua because the French wanted them to remain under the customary rule of the Fulbe lamidates. In Ngaoundere, the policy that forbids the entry of the pastoral Fulbe to the region has continued up till the present day.³⁷ In the south, on the contrary, the situation has totally changed after independence. The new Cameroonian administration has not restricted the movements of the pastoralists as the French did. Thus, since the 1960s, the pastoral Fulbe have been allowed, albeit at their own risk, to cross the southern borders of the Adamaoua Province and enter into such regions as the humid valleys of Mbam and Lom. (Boutrais 1986:146-148.)

TIBATI: EXCURSION INTO LOCAL HISTORY

From the general to the local, I shall now sketch the history of my research area, the subdivision of Tibati. I shall frame the specific socio-political structure which those pastoral Fulbe who form the subject of this study later entered. After the historical context is established, I shall look at the second *Aku* migration wave as told by my informants.

The subdivision of Tibati belongs to Djerem, one of the five divisions of the province of Adamaoua. Tibati is also a religious centre, a lamidate, the founding of which was closely connected to the Adamawa *jihad* and the Fulbe invasion into the region. In Tibati, as in all other parts of the Adamaoua Plateau, the jihadists belonged to *WolarBe*, a Fulbe clan whose descendants

³⁶ The distribution of the tsetse fly that spreads trypanosomiasis is limited to altitudes under 800 metres and thus, while threatening the cattle in the south, it does not exist in the higher altitudes of the northern Adamaoua (Boutrais 1986:145).

³⁷ To be accurate, it is not the pastoral Fulbe themselves, but their zebu cattle that do not have the right of access to the environs of Ngaoundere. The reason for this is that the sedentary Fulbe want to protect their own cattle breed that is dominant in the region. The policy of "rejecting" the pastoral Fulbe is not, however, a new phenomenon in Ngaoundere, nor even of colonial origin, but has its roots in the pre-colonial period (Burnham 1996:45 quoting Froelich 1954).

People of the Blessed Cattle

still form the majority of the sedentary Fulbe population in Adamaoua.³⁸ The early history indicates that the Tibati lamidate was victorious in many respects. The first *laamiiBe* of Tibati,³⁹ receiving support from the local Mbum people, conquered the Tikar and the Vute of the region and managed to extend the “zone of influence” of the lamidate (Lacroix 1952:29) south to Sanaga – a region far beyond the southern borders of Adamaoua (see also AN 4). Furthermore, with the strongest army in Adamawa (Njeuma 1978:215-216) the succeeding *laamiiBe* of Tibati managed to threaten the neighbouring lamidates of Banyo, Tignere and Ngaoundere, albeit with no decisive consequences. As Azarya (1978:30-31) notes, Tibati with Rey Bouba in the north, were the lamidates that tried most to detach themselves from the suzerainty of Yola. In the case of Tibati, the friction led to its temporary occupation by Yola and neighbouring lamidates (AN 4). The obstinacy of Tibati was, however, strong enough to keep it independent from Yola till the German conquest (Migeod 1927:18).

Tibati was the first rear area in Adamaoua for the Germans who started to conquer Cameroon from the south after it was appointed to them in 1884. Tibati did not, however, surrender easily – a fact that preliminary expeditions to the area had already confirmed (Kirk-Greene 1958: 34-36; Lacroix 1952:40-41; Njeuma 1978:209-211). But finally in 1899, after nine months of resistance, it had to recognise the obvious military superiority of the Germans (Lacroix 1952). The fall of Tibati was facilitated by the reluctance of other Fulbe to support it. There were several reasons for this. First, the reliance that the *laamiiBe* of Tibati put on such local groups as the Mbum, instead of leaning on their own Fulbe kinsmen, caused much resentment among the latter – to the extent that many of them withdrew to other lamidates. Moreover, the way in which Tibati continuously harassed other lamidates made the neighbouring *laamiiBe* quite unwilling to co-operate with it. Finally, there was an official prohibition imposed by the emir of Yola who, annoyed at

³⁸ The other Fulbe clans that migrated from Bornu to Adamawa but stayed in more northern regions – some also continuing further east to Chad – were *FerooBe*, *TorooDBe* and *YirlaaBe* (or *Yillaga*) (see Mohammadou 1976; 1981; 1988). What distinguished the *WolarBe* from the other clans was that they had not led any sedentarised urban life before the *jihad* but, instead, pastured their cattle in the Benue river valley – in the region which nowadays forms the borderland of Cameroon and Nigeria – at least since the seventeenth century. On the history of the *WolarBe*, see Abubakar (1977), Burnham (1996), and Mohammadou (1981; 1983).

³⁹ The first *laamiiDo* of Tibati, Hamman Sambo, arrived in the region from the north, along the valley of Faro. For chronologies – though somewhat conflicting – of the *laamiiBe* of Tibati, see AN 4, Lacroix (1952), Mohammadou (1978; 1981) and Strümpell (1912).

People of the Blessed Cattle

Tibati's insubordination, forbid all the Muslims and traders to enter its territory. (Njeuma 1978:214.)

For Tibati, one concrete consequence of the German conquest was that its territory was shrunk in the south so that the areas situated outside of Adamaoua were cut off from the lamidate. Concomitantly, the Tikar, living in those areas, were no longer under its rule (ibid., 1978:219). Aside from the annual taxes to be paid to the colonial centre,⁴⁰ the overall situation in the lamidate was not, however, altered – due to the Germans' indirect rule.⁴¹ But, gradually, the relatively strong position of Tibati vis-à-vis the other lamidates of Adamaoua started to grow weaker. The first seeds of the downhill were already planted before the colonial era, as the continuous hostilities between Tibati and its neighbours led to a decrease in population, either by death or flight. Another element that took its toll on the people was the heavy work in the construction of the road from Tibati northwards to Ngaoundere in the 1920's, for which the French used local labour levies (AN 6). In addition, there were certain administrative measures that significantly weakened the influence of Tibati, such as the removal of the administrative center of the subdivision from Tibati to Tignere in 1946. Although this shift did not last long – the center was moved again to Tibati in 1947 – the episode had long-term effects as the whole area of Tignere was detached from the Subdivision of Tibati at the same time.⁴² This embittered the *laamiiDo* with his followers and resulted in a new exodus from Tibati, leaving the village half empty (AN 7).

The misery of Tibati was a popular theme in the reports of the French administrators in the last decade of their rule in Cameroon. Whether it was described as “a very backward subdivision” (AN 8:35) or a post that could at

⁴⁰ Along with the German invasion, the ties of the lamidates of Adamaoua with Yola – which remained in the British territory – were finally cut and thus there were no more tributes to be paid to the emirate. Instead, each *laamiiDo* came directly under the German colonial administration (Azarya 1978:53). In the case of Tibati, the separation from Yola did not make any drastic change as its *laamiiBe* had always been quite reluctant to accept Yola's rule, paying tributes there only occasionally. Furthermore, as was already stated above, the taxes collected from local people still went to *laamiiBe* who transmitted only a modest part of it to the Germans (ibid., 72).

⁴¹ One administrative novelty was, however, that Tibati was attached to the German military post in Banyo – from which it was detached after the French conquest to be annexed to Ngaoundere (AN 11).

⁴² The pastures and mineral resources of Tignere had been desired by the *laamiiBe* of Tibati already in the pre-colonial period. The chiefs of Tibati even managed to prevent the post of *laamiiDo* from being filled in Tignere for many decades before the German era (Dognin 1981:144). Later, Tignere was attached to the Subdivision of Tibati when the latter was created by the French in 1932. Finally, after the administrative separation of Tibati and Tignere in 1946, the territory of the Subdivision of Tibati was limited to that of the lamidate (AN 7).

People of the Blessed Cattle

most appeal to “a beginner or a very relaxed and tired old functionary” (AN 7:23), the impression generally given was that of stagnation. Besides moaning about “the gross error” (AN 7:2) of detaching Tignere, the administrators appointed to Tibati repeatedly complained about the lack of money and other resources that went to neighbouring districts, due to the general disinterest in Tibati among the French (*ibid.*; AN 8). Still, the overall atmosphere in the region was considered to be warmhearted, with friendly chiefs and people who were content with very little:

A happy land not yet touched with politics, and in which people live peacefully, without searching for anything else than their well-being. A traveller who returns here after a long absence would not be surprised, in the bush – – , if not with the fact that the habitants are now dressed in proper clothes, while earlier they were content, the men, with some rags round the waist, the women, with some leaves. If he takes a walk on a path, he will find it cleared, the bridges repaired, the villages clean, the chief of the village surrounded by notables waiting for him on the border, carrying a chicken and eggs at the stop, the shelter being swept, with water and firewood close by. (AN 7:4, my translation)

In Tibati, the general tendency of the French to modify their colonial policy towards more active contacts with the non-Fulbe population resulted in the establishment in 1953 of three cantons, to be ruled by the Gbaya people (AN 11). This did not abolish indirect rule, but certainly softened the hierarchical setting as now the French made regular visits to Gbaya chiefs and observed their affairs more directly. The ambiguous balance that the French tried to keep between the new and old modes of colonial rule is obvious in their reports. On the one hand, they stressed the pursuit of “counterbalancing the Fulbe supremacy” by “emancipating” “the masses” (AN 1; AN 3; AN 6). On the other hand, they reminded of the importance of basing local rule on the traditional chiefs by educating them and by “affirming their authority vis-à-vis their subjects” (AN 8:7). Indeed, as one French administrator in Tibati noted, direct administration “would discord with traditional and religious principles

People of the Blessed Cattle

to which the inhabitants are still very attached” (AN 11:[6]).⁴³ Sometimes worries of this kind were over-emphasised as even the direct measures had consequences that were far from the expected ones. An illustration is the case of a Gbaya man whom the French appointed as canton chief in Beka; instead of making use of his position to support his own canton, the Gbaya chief was carried away by the process of Fulbeisation. In the words of one French administrator, the chief devoted his time to increasing his own prestige in the eyes of the neighbouring Fulbe chiefs by “playing *laamiiDo*” (AN 8:9).

Although the French modifications of indirect rule were made in the spirit of “the great values of modern civilisation” (AN 3:54), there were also more practical factors that urged colonial administrators to intervene in the Fulbe “feudal” rule (ibid.). Perhaps the most important of these factors was connected to the demographic change taking place in the area. For a long time, the population of Tibati had consisted mainly of sedentary Fulbe, Mbororo (pastoral Fulbe), Hausa, Gbaya, Mbum, Tikar, and Vute.⁴⁴ As seen in the French colonial reports, the proportion of the sedentary Fulbe had started gradually to decrease well before the middle of the twentieth century – somewhat similar remarks being also made of the Mbum, the Tikar and the Vute. On the contrary, a steady population growth was going on among the Gbaya, the pastoral Fulbe and to some extent also among the Hausa. (AN 5; AN 6; AN 8.) In addition, there were a growing number of functionaries, originating from the south, who kept their distance from the local population (AN 8).

⁴³ The French conformist attitude in regard to the traditional power setting in Adamaoua is well illustrated in reports in which they criticise the politics of the Norwegian Mission in the area (see e.g. AN 1; AN 3). As one French leader in Adamaoua put it, the Norwegians “sow dissension between the Fulbe and the autochthons” in the hope of “reducing the Muslim bastion and to convert new catechumens” (AN 3:5-6). He concluded later: “We do not think – – that we should, as is the wish of the Norwegian Mission, hasten the started evolution, at the risk of destroying rapidly the authority of the traditional chiefs and so open the way to disorder, by a total detribalisation and by economic anarchy which would certainly result from the former” (ibid.).

⁴⁴ The French classified these further into three groups: Semitic (Fulbe, Mbororo and Hausa), Sudanese (Gbaya and Mbum) and Bantu (Tikar and Vute) (see AN 5). Without elaborating its racial dimensions, the division illustrates some further differences between the groups. The first – the Fulbe, both sedentary and pastoral, and Hausa – are people who have migrated to the region from the north and north-west, from Bornu and Sokoto; they also arrived much later than the other groups. The Gbaya arrived from the east (Lobaye valley) and the Mbum from the north (basin of Lake Chad), the latter being the first of all the mentioned groups to be settled in Adamaoua, around the sixteenth or seventeenth century (see Bah 1992). Finally, the Vute and Tikar are both people who, after their arrival from the north, installed themselves in the south-west areas of Adamaoua.

People of the Blessed Cattle

As regards the growing population, the French paid special attention to the Gbaya – an apparent sign of which was the creation of three Gbaya cantons in the area.⁴⁵ A specific reason for this attention was the general colonial interest in improving the economy of Adamaoua by developing local agriculture and cattle husbandry. In Tibati, the Gbaya were the most active people in the former sphere.⁴⁶ In an analogous way, in regard to cattle husbandry, it was the pastoral Fulbe whose situation was constantly brought up in the colonial reports. This despite the fact that the state of pastoralism was much more modest than that of agriculture.⁴⁷ One obvious reason for this defect was the detachment of Tignere from the territory of Tibati in 1946; the new boundary was delimited on the road of Ngaoundere so that a large part of the pastoral Fulbe population withdrew to its northern side, to the territory of Tignere (AN 7). Furthermore, the loss of the northern pastures was particularly critical for Tibati as it was located on the borderline between highland and lowland areas. It was too risky to take the cattle into the southern pastures due to trypanosomiasis⁴⁸ and so most of the cattle spent the rainy season – when the risk was at its highest – in the north-eastern corner of the subdivision (AN 11). This natural restriction prevented Tibati from becoming a centre for pastoralism – a disadvantage that, despite the initial efforts of the French to increase veterinary services (AN 7; AN 8), was to be alleviated only in the 1960s when adequate medical treatment for the cattle became common in the area (Boutrais 1974:176).

In regard to pastoralists, one central theme in the colonial reports was their high mobility – a fact that naturally made it difficult to carry out any overall

⁴⁵ Indeed, the French spoke of the Gbaya as “an essential economic and demographic strength for Tibati” (AN 8:8) and saw the near future as a time when “the area would be almost entirely Gbayas” (AN 6:14). A contrary prediction was given for the sedentary Fulbe who, due to their low birth rates, would disappear from Adamaoua in two generations (AN 3)!

⁴⁶ It was also because of their high fertility rate that the Gbaya were considered an especially fitting group in this respect as the greatest hindrance to extend agriculture in Tibati was the permanent lack of labour (AN 5).

⁴⁷ For example, in the 1950s, Tibati was the main producer of manioc in the region, with such neighbouring districts as Banyo, Tignere and Galim being its clients (AN 6). However, the number of cattle in Tibati was much smaller than that of Ngaoundere, Tignere, Banyo and Meiganga (AN 2).

⁴⁸ The risk was especially high in the gallery forests of the southern area and it increased during the rainy season when the climate was favourable for tsetse fly (Boutrais 1974). On the contrary, during the dry season, a lot of cattle was taken south for transhumance – including herds from neighbouring subdivisions (AN 11). The presence of the latter did not, however, improve the economy of Tibati as the cattle tax was collected in the official domicile of the pastoralists, in the subdivision to which they returned in the beginning of the rainy season (AN 6).

People of the Blessed Cattle

population census in the area (see e.g., AN 8). In fact, there was a great wish among the French to see the Mbororo become sedentary and information about new kin groups settling down was always welcome (AN 6; AN 7). To be accurate, it was not the people as such but their cattle that the French administrators in Tibati wanted to keep in the region. In order to succeed in this, they tried to follow what they called the politics of flexibility (“*politique de souplesse*”) vis-à-vis the pastoralists (AN 8:8). Furthermore, the French sought to prevent other people from imposing any payments on the Mbororo, except the *djakka* privilege of the *laamiiDo*. Thus, many chiefs, both Fulbe and Gbaya, were condemned for demanding “illegal” payments such as a grazing tax – let alone fees for smuggling cattle from one subdivision to another (AN 6; AN 7). From the point of view of the French, the main benefit of all this was the cattle tax they received, which was naturally bigger the more the cattle stayed in the subdivision.⁴⁹

In all, as the reports show, the number of cattle – as well as of Mbororo – in Tibati gradually increased during the French rule.⁵⁰ In addition, the increasing role of the subdivision as a transit place for cattle to be exported south from the neighbouring districts strengthened Tibati’s position as a pastoral centre (AN 9; AN 10). But a lot was still to be done to realise the French dream expressed by an administrator who worked in the subdivision in 1957:

But still more than the qualitative improvement of cattle, we must, for the moment, think of the augmentation of herds. We count on the Mbororo immigration, coming from Nigeria, which would put Tibati straight with a dozen of thousands of heads. The success of the operation will largely depend

⁴⁹ To get more benefit from cattle, there was an effort among the French in the end of the 1950s – at least in Tibati – to modify the taxation of the Mbororo. The basic idea was to shift the pastoralists from the separate head-tax roll for mobile populations (“*rôle supplémentaire*”) to be surveyed and taxed like the settled agricultural people (“*rôle primitif*”) (AN 11:[5]). The plan did not, however, bear any long-lasting fruit as, after independence, the initial taxation system was maintained by the Cameroonian government. See more in Burnham (1996).

⁵⁰ To give some numbers from the colonial statistics, while in 1951 the estimated number of cattle in the subdivision of Tibati was 12,000 – 15,000 head, in 1954 the respective number was 16,000 – 18,000 and in 1957 14,000 – 20,000 head (AN 2; AN 6; AN 8). The French were well aware that these numbers were only rough estimates but still they give some sort of picture of the general development of pastoralism in the area. The relative proportion of the cattle of the Mbororo was estimated to cover 70-75 % of the total number, the rest of the cattle belonging to the sedentary Fulbe (AN 8). Finally, the increase of the pastoral Fulbe themselves was much more modest but still constant: the estimates give a population of 1,000 pastoralists in 1953 and 1800 in 1957 – 8% and 14 % respectively of the whole population of Tibati in that time (AN 5; AN 8).

People of the Blessed Cattle

on the tact of the *laamiDo* in regard to the newcomers. (AN 8:30, my translation)

Time proved the Frenchman's vision right, but only after he and his countrymen had left Cameroon in 1960. Indeed, it was not until the 1970s, when the harsh drought years in the Sahel pushed a great number of pastoral Fulbe to move, that Tibati received those "thousands of heads", arriving with their Fulbe herders from Nigeria.

LATER ARRIVALS: THE AKU WAVE OF THE 1970s

Aku, the migrants in the bush like us, we move, we go. It is us that they call *Aku*. "Aku came, new *Aku* came." They did not know us, they had not seen us much in their land. -- We all are *Aku* in the bush. If we hear that the land calls us to pasture, we hear there is land for pasturing, we go.

In the above quotation a cattle herder from Tibati illustrates the overall ambience of the last big cattle Fulbe wave from Nigeria to Cameroon. With the nameless "they" the man points to all those pastoralists who were already in Cameroon to receive the new arrivals from the 1920s onwards. What made these encounters historically significant was that they were sites for creating a new internal hierarchy among the cattle Fulbe in Cameroon. It was the early arrivals who, wanting to keep a cultural distance from the new pastoralists, started to call them *Aku'en* (pl. of *Aku*) – a word that refers to a greeting adopted by the latter from the Hausa. The new name came to represent the cultural difference that was partly derived from the longer influence of the Hausa culture on the *Aku* in Nigeria (Burnham 1996:99). Concomitantly, it was the new migrants who, in response to the mocking name *Aku* given to them, first started to use the generalising label "*Jaafun'en*" (pl. of *Jaafun*) for all those cattle Fulbe who had proceeded them from Bauchi to Cameroon (Burnham 1996:99). In these small ways, a hierarchical relation was constructed between those pastoralists who were already well on their way to "Fulbeisation", that is, sedentarisation and adoption of villagers' Islam, and those groups that were still relatively nomadic and sticking to customary pastoral practices.

The pastoralists who nowadays herd the majority of cattle in my research area in the surroundings of Tibati belong to *Aku*. More specifically, most of them belong to those *Aku* who migrated to the area during the last big migration wave in the 1970s. This wave, connected to the drought years of 1972-1974 in the Sahel, has been documented by Jean Boutrais (1977). In the following, I shall examine two cases that include the migration routes of two

People of the Blessed Cattle

men and one woman from Kano and Gombe to Tibati and locate their movements in Boutrais' more general scheme.

Gaani

The first example is the migration story of Gaani and his relatives. Gaani's migration history serves as the main story and information concerning some of his relatives is included to complement the picture of the larger kin group. Gaani belongs to *Tuubanko'en* (sg. *Tuubankeejo*), a cattle Fulbe lineage that today spreads across a vast territory reaching from Kano and Bauchi in Nigeria to Bouar and Berberati in the Central African Republic.⁵¹ None of my *Tuubanko'en* informants had an exact idea about how and when the lineage originated but some of them did know a story of how it got its name. People also shared a common view that *Tuubanko'en* derived their origin somewhere in the Emirate of Kano – a territory where great numbers of Fulbe had gradually migrated from Malle⁵² a long time before the *jihad* . As regards their forefathers, it was common that people could outline the migrations of only two generations before themselves. The *Tuubanko'en* located these migrations in the area around the town of Kano, especially east of it. Usually the migration routes were described roughly, that is by naming a few villages, such as Hadejia and Azare, near where the parents and grandparents of my informants had pastured their cattle in the past.

The oldest of my *Tuubanko'en* informants were born in the Emirate of Kano as well – in such places as Ikara, Azare and Darazo. This happened as late as the 1920s, meaning that the *Tuubanko'en* were among the last of those pastoralists who started to move from the Kano area southwards. Indeed, some of my oldest informants remembered their childhood as a time when many of their pastoral Fulbe neighbours left them behind and started to move straight towards Cameroon through Kontcha. On the contrary, the kin group of Gaani started the migration southwards gradually by descending first from Kano into the environs of the town of Bauchi before the 1930s. Afterwards

⁵¹ The two segments of the *Tuubanko'en* lineage that I have heard of are *Gayanko'en* and *Yeeranko'en*; Gaani belongs to the latter. My informants do not, however, consider *Yeeranko'en* as a segment of *Tuubanko'en* but see both as parallel segments so that while Gaani belongs to the former, most of his patrilineal relatives who live close to him consider themselves to belong to the latter. The obscurity in this reasoning is, however, that, when asked, Gaani usually tells people first that he is *Tuubankeejo*, as if it were a head lineage in which *Yeeranko'en* were included.

⁵² The Fulfulde word Malle (called Mali after the Soninke term by Europeans) refers to the historical territory of the Mandingo people reaching from the Senegal river to Timbuktu (Mohammadou 1976:290 n1). Usually, when I asked people "where do the Fulbe come from?", they first answered "from the land of Kano" and then, if reflecting on it longer, "from the land of Malle".

People of the Blessed Cattle

they moved from Bauchi eastwards, zigzagging along the railroad from one side to another on their way to Gombe. From Gombe they descended to Lau, situated on the shore of the Benue river, for one dry season, after which they returned north and continued from Gombe northeastwards. They crossed the Gongola river and reached the Biu plateau wherefrom they started to descend gradually, across the Benue river and through the Nigerian side of Adamawa, to the territory of Cameroon.

Despite certain inconsistencies in Gaani's accounts of his life and migrations, it can be said for certain that he left Kano in his early childhood, still "carried on the back", around 1927-1929. The migration of his family from Bauchi through Gombe to Biu took approximately twenty-five years; most of this time they stayed in the environs of the town of Bauchi where Gaani's mother and paternal grandfather died. In Bauchi Gaani also married his first wife and set up his own household. During the long migration towards Biu, Gaani moved with his father, his brothers and sisters, and his father's two wives. For part of the route they migrated with some relatives, among which there was Haruuna, a man that Gaani considered as his classificatory mother's brother (*kaawu*) and who later followed Gaani's route to Cameroon. Gaani's own father died in Biu, after which Gaani left the region with his brothers sometime between 1953 and 1955. Their first stopping place during the long descent from Biu to Bamenda in Cameroon was in the region of Jaada, some hundred kilometres southwest of the town of Yola. In Jaada Gaani lived near some patrilineal relatives, such as Haruuna's patrilineal first cousin Saale, with whom Gaani parted for twenty years when leaving the region. In Jaada he was also joined by some other, more remote relatives, among which there was a classificatory father's brother (*bappa*) whose daughter became Gaani's second wife. After a ten-year stay in Jaada, Gaani – with his new in-laws including three uncles of his new wife – headed for Wukari in the southwest where he stopped for two years. From there Gaani continued a little more southwestwards to Gbogo where he stayed about seven years, after which he migrated to the territory of Cameroon, in the Bamenda Highlands, around 1972. Finally, after some three years of wandering, Gaani left his in-laws in Bamenda and continued with his wives and brothers – one full brother and two half brothers – to Tibati, where he has stayed to the present day, that is, approximately twenty-three years at the time of my last visit with his family in 1998.

Gaani's migration history is comparable with those of thousands of other cattle Fulbe who have come to Cameroon's territory to escape the worsening situation in Nigeria during the last decades. In Gaani's case the actual time and place of crossing the border articulates closely with the big *Aku* wave of the early 1970s when great numbers of pastoralists fled the bad drought years

People of the Blessed Cattle

in Nigeria and entered into Cameroon through Bamenda. The migration as such was not, of course, any new phenomenon in the lives of these people as they were already moving inside Nigeria long before the drought because of the expansion of agriculture and the resultant demographic pressure. The courses of these intrastate movements were not, however, freely selected as the colonial state put restrictions on access to certain regions. As Boutrais notes (1977:129), this was the case in the plateaus of Jos and Mambila in the 1950s wherefrom the British administrators even expelled some pastoralists in the fear that too big a concentration of cattle would deteriorate the pastures in those areas. The consequences of the measures can also be seen clearly in Gaani's migration in Nigeria. First, as it was forbidden for the pastoralists to enter into the Jos area, his family was forced to take the route westwards from Bauchi in the 1950s. Second, his later route to Wukari followed those of many other *Aku* pastoralists who had chosen between the options of heading for Wukari or staying in Jaada when their access to the Mambila plateau was denied. In the second case, many of Gaani's relatives remained longer in Jaada and arrived in Wukari some years after Gaani himself. Some of these later arrivals, such as Saale's half brother, have stayed in Wukari till the present day.

Finally, the concentration on crossing the border at Bamenda in the 1970s can also be explained by official measures – by the closing of the more northern border in Kontcha, a place through which the cattle Fulbe had earlier entered into the territory of Cameroon. The measure was taken by the livestock service of the Adamaoua Province of Cameroon, due to the bad health condition of the cattle of the *Aku* who sought to come through (ibid.:133). Indeed, according to Boutrais (ibid.), thousands of head were waiting in vain for the permit to go through at Kontcha in 1972. Gaani's cattle was luckily not among those and he managed to enter into Bamenda in the same year, well before the masses of unhealthy animals started to pour into the same direction from Kontcha.⁵³

In Cameroon, the migration of Gaani's kin group followed the big *Aku* wave southeastwards. Thus, although Gaani himself finished his long migration in Adamaoua, in Tibati, many of his relatives continued to the Guinean savanna zone and reached the surroundings of Bertoua, some 250 kilometres southeastwards from Tibati. Furthermore, the natal family of Gaani's first wife migrated as far as Bouar and Berberati in the Central African Republic, where these people have stayed till the present. To return to Gaani's closer

⁵³ This was not the first time that Gaani's foresight and prompt action helped him to escape trouble. For example, his quick departure from Jaada saved his cattle from the rinderpest epidemic that made a clean sweep of the herds of many of his relatives.

People of the Blessed Cattle

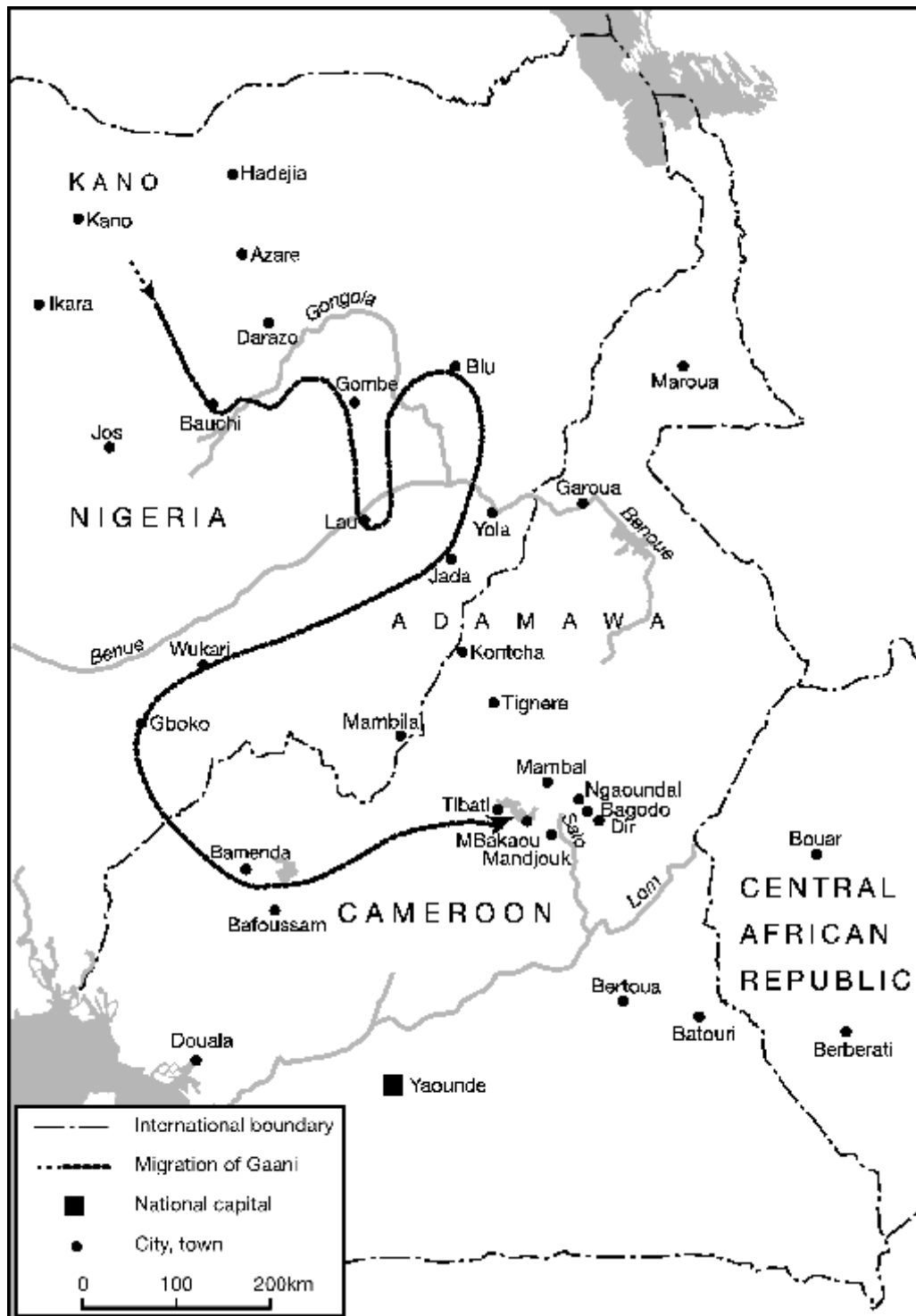
relatives,⁵⁴ after a short stay in Tibati, two of his three living brothers, sons of the same father, continued to Bertoua, while the third had earlier followed his mother's second husband to Bagodo, near Dir. About fifteen years after Gaani's arrival, still another group of his relatives arrived in Tibati. Some of them, like his paternal uncle Abdu who came from Banyo where he had stayed some thirteen years, settled in the Tibati region immediately. Others, like the above-mentioned Saale who stayed four years in Tignere before arriving in Tibati, continued with their families gradually to Bertoua, the last of them around 1990. The rush to Bertoua was not, however, a great success and so, little by little, the people started to return westwards. The first returnees, such as Gaani's two brothers and Saale's younger brother, stopped for some years around Ngaoundal – in such places as Mambal, Mandjouk and the Salo river – while others, such as Saale and the sons of Haruuna, remained in Bertoua longer and returned to Tibati directly in 1995. Finally, during my last visit to Tibati in 1998, I noted the return of Gaani's two brothers who were constructing their huts in the vicinity of Gaani's camp.

The migration of Gaani's relatives to Bertoua and beyond articulates with Boutrais' scheme of the big *Aku* wave: like numerous other pastoralists, the *Tuubanko'en* crossed the borders of Adamaoua and reached the humid valleys of Eastern Cameroon and CAR in the 1970s. As stated earlier, this migration was made possible by the improved veterinary services. The regions that Gaani's relatives entered – Mandjouk and the Salo river southwest of Ngaoundal, Bertoua in the Lom valley and Bouar and Berberati in CAR – are places that were not suitable earlier for permanent pastoralism because of the risk of trypanosomiasis. The same can be said of Gaani's home pastures some 10-15 kilometres southeast from Tibati which, like Mandjouk and the banks of the Salo river in the east, belong to the gallery forest area which is especially favourable for the tsetse fly.

The recent history of Gaani's kin group, the relatively quick return of a dozen extended families from Bertoua and Ngaoundal to Tibati – or in some cases even back to Nigeria to relatives who never entered Cameroon – is not in Boutrais' general frame. This does not necessarily mean that the returns are the sign of any significant trend, as back and forth movement is typical for pastoralists whose decisions about new pastures are always greatly effected by social ties. But in addition to the general joy of being together (*wondugo*) again, my informants were also able to give some urgent reasons for their return. First, people talked of the deterioration of pastures in some places in

⁵⁴ While Gaani's first wife, Nayo, was his close relative (patrilineal first cousin), most of her brothers and sisters were not because they had a different father – a man who was more distant to Gaani – due to Nayo's father's early death.

People of the Blessed Cattle



Map 2: Migration route of Gaani.

People of the Blessed Cattle

Bertoua due to overherding. Second, people mentioned the *jargiina*⁵⁵, a group of bandits that terrorises the cattle Fulbe in the bush by stealing their cattle and even killing their people. Third, when my informants told me about their flight from Mandjouk and the Salo river, they referred to a fatal disease that is transmitted to animals by the panicles of guinea-corn.⁵⁶ Whatever the reasons, the consequence was that, by the end of the 1990s, a dozen *Tuubankeejo* elders, whose routes had parted when they were young adults some thirty-five years ago in Yola in Nigeria, found themselves and their descendants of three generations gathered in camps on both sides of the road from Tibati to Mbakaou, in an area covering approximately twenty-five square kilometres.⁵⁷ Besides people, the area was packed with cattle, the bulk of which belonged to Gaani's eleven sons, whose animals formed the biggest herd in Tibati.⁵⁸

Iisa and Hajara

The second example is about a man and his wife, Iisa and Hajara. In the following I shall first examine the early migration of each of them separately and then turn to their joint migration as a married couple. Hajara belongs to *BooDi'en* (sg. *BooDi*), a cattle Fulbe lineage, the origin of which Dognin (1981:142) dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century on the Nigerian side of Adamawa. According to Dognin, the name of the lineage derives from Mboy, a village located some hundred kilometres north of the town of Yola (ibid.).⁵⁹ Thus, considering the early time that *BooDi'en* have lived as far south as in the Yola region, they were not among those cattle Fulbe who stayed in Bauchi till the twentieth century and who were later to

⁵⁵ *Jargiina*, or “*coupeurs de route*”, have become a serious problem in the frontier zone of eastern Cameroon. The name *jargiina* derives from the brand name of a blueing agent with which the bandits paint their faces before their attacks (cf. Burnham 1996).

⁵⁶ A related cause for the sudden death of cattle has most probably been certain toxic species of plants in the vegetation of fallow fields. The cattle get access to these species when the local farmers clear the gallery forests for cultivation. My warm thanks go to Mr. Djongwe Gaston, the head of the Livestock Service of Djerem Department, as well as to Professor Philip Burnham, both of whom kindly enriched my knowledge in these matters.

⁵⁷ My estimation concerns the location of the wet season camps.

⁵⁸ This information was given by Mr. Audu Kano, a veterinary nurse who has worked all his life in the area. According to him, a comparable herd could be found in Meidjamba, some twenty-five kilometres south from Tibati, and a still bigger herd in Tongo.

⁵⁹ On the other hand, Brackenbury (1924), based on his observations as a British colonial officer in Yola Province, Nigeria, distinguished “*Mbodien*” from “*Mboi*”, both of which he considered as “*Jaafumen*” clans of the Shellem district, close to Mboy.

People of the Blessed Cattle

be called *Aku* – as was the case with Gaani’s lineage, *Tuubanko’en*. Furthermore, although *BooDi’en* could be classified as *Jaafun* in the generalised sense, that is, when the latter term is used to refer to diverse groups of pastoralists that started to migrate to Cameroon’s Adamaoua some hundred years earlier, historically speaking they do not belong to the “original” *Jaafun* either. Hajara’s own understanding of the matter conforms to the historical, non-generalising lineage divisions; she does not locate her lineage in *Jaafun*⁶⁰ – let alone *Aku* – a stance typical for the pastoral Fulbe who do not use these generalising labels for self ascription. Irrespective of Hajara’s sound view, however, I shall link her migrations here with those of *Aku* because, in regard to timing, her arrival in Cameroon – as well as that of Iisa – articulates with the *Aku* wave.⁶¹ In addition, these days her daily cattle Fulbe network consists exclusively of people of the *Aku* wave to which the *Jaafun* gave way earlier by leaving Tibati – as happened in many other regions where the *Aku* have followed them (cf. Boutrais 1977).

According to Hajara, before her birth her kin lived in the surroundings of Numan and Bauchi. Thus, if Dognin’s view of the origin of the *BooDi’en* is accurate, Hajara’s forefathers have migrated “backwards”, that is, some 200-300 kilometres northwestwards from their supposed place of origin north of Yola.⁶² A back and forth movement of this kind is not, of course, anything exceptional in the lives of the pastoralists who continuously search for unperturbed and healthy pastures for their cattle. In the case of Hajara’s relatives, the search brought the people through Numan to Gombe where her grandfather was born, and then later to the surroundings of Bauchi where her grandmother gave birth to her father. Afterwards the family started to return eastwards and migrated through such places as Duku, Boojude, Kafareti and Gombe where the brother of Hajara’s father decided to stop and where his children and grandchildren have lived ever since. Hajara was born during the migration westwards, sometime in the beginning of the 1950s. She lived her first four years in the above-mentioned areas, after which her family –

⁶⁰ That these are historically separate lineages is also confirmed by Ndoudi Oumarou in Bocquené (1986). To return to Hajara’s case, there is, however, one thing about her natal family which reveals the close relation of her lineage with *Jaafun*: many of her close relatives in Nigeria are married to *Jaafun*, or to people that Hajara considers as such.

⁶¹ All in all, there seems to be no consensus among the scholars regarding the question of which of the two big migration waves *BooDi’en* should be located in. For example, while Dognin (1981) relates them to *Jaafun*, Boutrais (1988), in his article on the pastoralists’ migration to the Central African Republic, relates them to *Aku*.

⁶² Iisa, Hajara’s husband, distinguishes two branches of *BooDi’en*, one “in the right hand”, in Bauchi, and another “in the left hand”, in Gombe and more south in Jalingo. It is possible that his distinction is based on the earlier migrations of Hajara’s relatives.

People of the Blessed Cattle

including at that time Hajara's father with his three wives and their children – descended to the environs of Numan. After seven years in Numan, her father continued eastwards, crossed the border of Cameroon to live for a while in Demsa, after which he returned to the Yola region in Nigeria, passed through Jimeeta and finally died in Gurin. In those times one of Hajara's half brothers, Bello, had enough of the cattle diseases in Yola and migrated to Djombe, located north of Tibati, in Cameroon. All of Hajara's full brothers, as well as one half brother, stayed in the surroundings of Yola where they have lived till the present.

In Yola, Hajara's migration parted from that of her brothers. The phenomenon is common among cattle Fulbe women who – if they do not marry patrilineal first cousins who often stay near one's own brothers – are forced to leave their natal families at marriage. In Hajara's case, it was after her father's death that she was married, at the age of twelve, to her patrilineal cross cousin, that is, her father's sister's son. Her new family, which included Hajara, her new husband and Hajara's two co-wives with their children, lived for two years north of Garoua in Cameroon. After the birth of Hajara's first child, however, her mother Kande cancelled the marriage. According to Hajara, the reason for this was Kande's resentment because Hajara's in-laws refused to give their daughters in marriage to Kande's sons. Soon after the divorce, Kande brought Hajara "for a visit" to her sister in Batouri, in eastern Cameroon, sometime in the early 1970s. There Kande married Hajara off to Iisa who was living in the region at that time. Kande returned to Yola and left Hajara in Batouri from where Hajara's first child, a girl, was sent back to her father some years later.

Before meeting Hajara in Batouri, Iisa had wandered a long way through Nigeria and Cameroon. He was born in Shira, southeast from the town of Kano, sometime in the 1940s. Before his birth, his parents and grandparents had lived in the area between Shira and the Gongola river, in the surroundings of Darazo. In Shira, soon after Iisa was born, his parents divorced and he was taken to his father's younger brother, Yussufa, in Azare. According to Iisa, this was done in order to hide him from his mother who had threatened to take him back. From Azare, Iisa moved with his uncle to Garko, in the vicinity of the town of Kano. When he was around twelve years old, the wife of another paternal uncle visited Yussufa in Garko and asked him to give Iisa to her and her husband, Ardo Yakubu, as she did not have any children. Yussufa agreed and Iisa was taken from Kano to Tignere in Cameroon where Ardo Yakubu lived at that time. It was the latter who finally became Iisa's "father" in the sense of giving him cattle and teaching him pastoral work. Later in Cameroon, Iisa migrated with Ardo Yakubu from Tignere southwards, that is, through Doualayel and Galim to Tibati. From

People of the Blessed Cattle

there he continued east, first to Meiganga and later to Batouri, reaching the latter some ten years after having left Tignere.

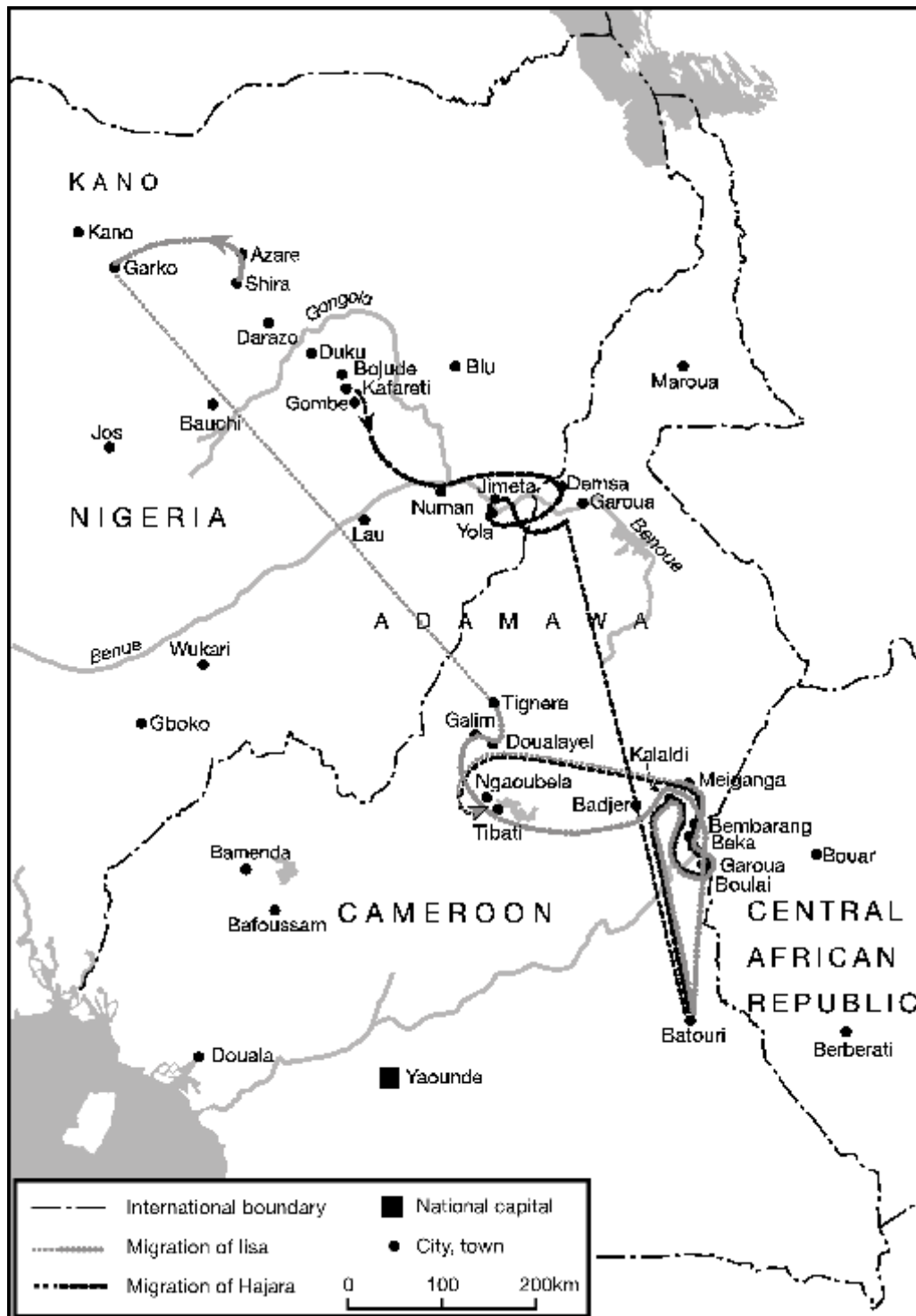
By the time Hajara's mother brought Hajara to Batouri, Ardo Yakubu had tried to get Iisa married for many years without success. The reason why Hajara's mother finally accepted Iisa as a suitable husband for her daughter was that Ardo Yakubu's wife – the woman who had become Iisa's "mother" – happened to be her maternal aunt, and so Iisa was comparable to a "cousin". What makes the case interesting is that, according to Hajara, Iisa is not *BooDi* at all, but belongs to a lineage called *Jallanko'en* (sg. *Jallankeejo*) – a fact that Iisa himself never confirmed. One thing that supports Hajara's view is that Iisa's kin lived quite far away from the area where the *BooDi'en* originated. Whatever the truth, Iisa never mentioned the name of *Jallanko'en*, but lead people to understand that he was *BooDi*.⁶³

During the first years of their marriage Iisa and Hajara lived in the area surrounding Batouri. They moved with a herd that consisted of cattle that Iisa received from Ardo Yakubu. Later, after Hajara had given birth to three children, they started to move northwards, in the direction of Meiganga. One reason for changing the area was that Hajara's two sisters lived west of Meiganga, in Kalaldi and Bajer. The move was not, however, very successful because soon after the family had arrived in Kalaldi, their cattle started to die.⁶⁴ In the following years Iisa's family moved through Bembarang, Beka and Garoua Boulai in which places their cattle Fulbe neighbours varied from *Tuubanko'en* to *WoDaaBe*. During that time – covering approximately the years 1983-1993 – Iisa gradually lost all his cattle, first through death and then by selling the rest of them. At the same time the number of Iisa's and Hajara's children increased to six and in order to feed his family, Iisa started to cultivate. Finally, his oldest son got to know an American missionary who, in the hope of getting the young boy into the Bible school of the Sudan Mission, brought the unfortunate family from Meiganga to Ngaoubela, a mission village located in the vicinity of Tibati. The

⁶³ To be accurate, Iisa did this by insisting that Ardo Yakubu, whom he called paternal uncle (*bappa*), was *BooDi*. Whether or not it was literally true – whether Ardo Yakubu was *BooDi* and thus not Iisa's real paternal uncle or whether he wanted to be considered as *BooDi* for some reason even though he was *Jallankeejo* – we cannot know. However, Iisa's and Hajara's case is an excellent example of how kinship can be produced through marriage, a theme to which I shall return in later chapters.

⁶⁴ I do not know for sure the special reason for the sudden death of Iisa's cattle. He himself once told that his animals died of rinderpest (*pettu*), while another time he referred to trypanosomiasis (*piyal*). It seems, however, most probable that his cattle loss was related to some of the cattle diseases that have broken out in the surroundings of Meiganga during the last decades, due to the heavy concentration of herders in the area (cf. Burnham 1996).

People of the Blessed Cattle



Map 3: Migration routes of Iisa and Hajara.

People of the Blessed Cattle

missionary encouraged Iisa to settle down in the bush close to the village by helping his family to construct a tiny camp for themselves. Without a single cow, the family has lived in the place ever since, making their narrow living by various ways: Iisa by selling bush herbs, his sons by selling firewood and occasionally herding other people's cattle, and the whole family by cultivating small plots around their huts.

What makes the two migration histories quite different from each other is that, while Gaani's migrations were always accompanied by some relatives, Iisa and Hajara have migrated the greater part of their lives apart from their kin, mostly as a single couple. The same contrast is also to be found in the recent situation: during my last visit Gaani was surrounded by a dozen camps of his *Tuubanko'en* relatives, whereas Iisa and Hajara lived far away from their people due to the fact that most of their relatives never left Nigeria and because other *BooDi'en* are extremely rare in the Tibati area. A further difference between the two cases is that Gaani's kin followed more closely the rhythm of the big *Aku* wave and Iisa and Hajara have not. Thus, there are always individual routes that do not completely fit into the "big story". Also, the migration routes of women are generally more discontinuous than those of men. This means that when married – and no matter how many times this happens – men more often continue migrating with the same people than women are able to do. On the other hand, there are also men who leave their families – whether of their own initiative or, as happened in Iisa's case, by force of circumstances.

In accounts that seek to trace the larger migration patterns of the pastoral Fulbe the details of individual destinies are often left unnoticed. As we have seen in the stories of Iisa and Hajara as well as in those of some of Gaani's relatives, in concrete situations people can easily escape the customary routes and follow less favoured directions. In such unexpected paths the relevance of belonging to some abstract migration groups can sometimes remain highly questionable. And whether these paths finally lead to happy reunions or end up in definitive separations can never be anticipated.

THE BLESSED CATTLE

The chapter in hand has taken the reader on a long historical journey, starting from the early history of the Fulbe in the Senegal Basin in the tenth century and ending up with the contemporary lives of two cattle Fulbe camps in the Tibati subdivision in Cameroon. As we have seen, much has happened in between, groups have split up and landscapes as well as world views have

People of the Blessed Cattle

changed. I shall now conclude the journey by returning shortly to one of its central components, the cattle, which have travelled with the Fulbe, split up and gathered together again with them, thus acting as true icons of the history of their masters.

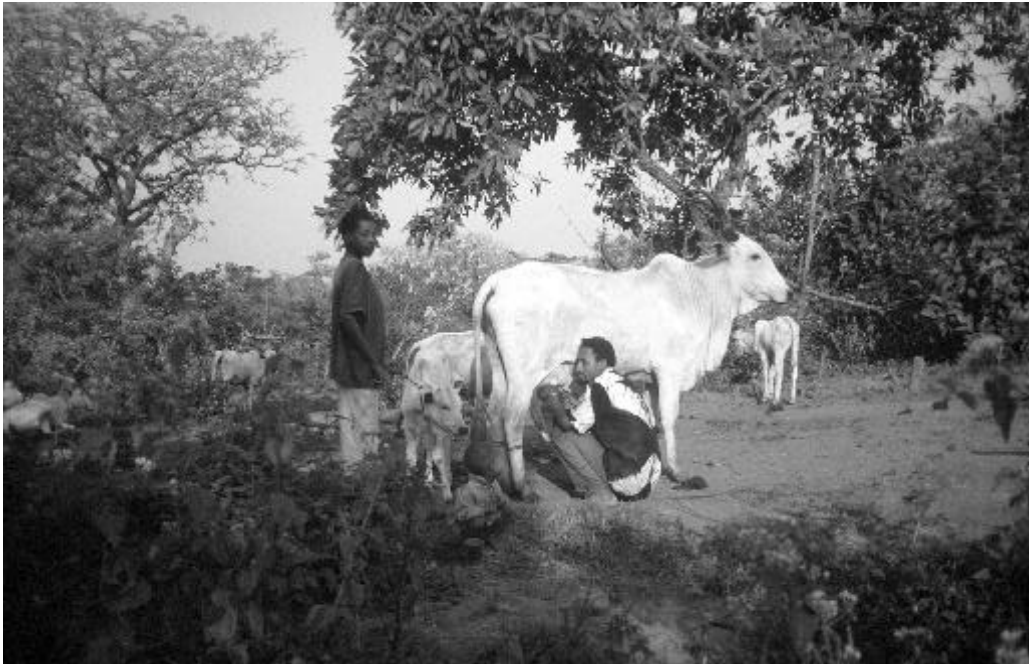
As was stated earlier, the initial dispersal between the eastern cattle Fulbe subgroups took place in Kano, from where the pastoralists started to spread into different directions in the eighteenth century. As Dognin (1981) observes, all of those cattle Fulbe who moved southeastwards and lived in Bauchi at the turn of the nineteenth century were known for their small short-horned white zebu cattle called *daneeji*. Later those who left the region first – and thus became the “*Jaafun*” of Cameroon – lost their animals and replaced them with the large long-horned red zebus, *boDeeji*, which they bought from the *WoDaaBe* of Bornu.⁶⁵ Those who stayed longer kept their white cattle and got the name *Daneeji* (“whites”) after the colour of their herds. The consequences of this split can still be seen in contemporary Cameroon. Whereas the *Jaafun* are known for their red cattle, the herds of the later arrivals, *Daneeji* – whom the *Jaafun* started to call *Aku* in Cameroon – still consist primarily of the same white stock as earlier in Nigeria. The close link that is made between the cattle and the herders is further illustrated by the fact that after the name of the people was changed from *Daneeji* to *Aku*, the white cattle soon started to be called *akuuji*.⁶⁶ Indeed, nowadays people in Adamaoua have contrary opinions about whether the cattle were named after the people or the people after the cattle.

As regards the village Fulbe, or the Muslim village people in Adamaoua in general, their cattle are of the *gudaali* breed, which is better suited to beef production and to a sedentary life than the *daneeji* and *boDeeji* breeds (Burnham 1996). This “village” breed is also known by the name *ngaundereeji* as the cattle of the village Fulbe is especially concentrated in the division of Vina, in the environs of Ngaoundere, where the entrance of the cattle Fulbe with their *daneeji* and *boDeeji* cattle has been forbidden up till the present. It is interesting to note that, along with sedentarisation, the *Jaafun* have replaced part of their *boDeeji* zebus with the *gudaali* breed of the village Fulbe and with cattle crossbred of *boDeeji*, *daneeji* and *gudaali* breeds (ibid., 99-100). In a similar vein, Boutrais (1988:45) has noticed that the cattle of the *Aku* in the Central African Republic has turned more and more red – which he

⁶⁵ The specific reason for the loss of the white cattle is unknown. According to Dognin (1981:142), one possible reason could have been an epizootic that had killed the cattle already in Bauchi.

⁶⁶ Following the same anthropomorphic logic, the *boDeeji* and *daneeji* breeds are sometimes called by a common name, *mbororoji* (see e.g., Boutrais 1974).

People of the Blessed Cattle



Photograph 2: A pastoralist man milking a white *daneiji* cow, his son and a herder keeping him company.

thinks derives from the eagerness of the *Aku* to imitate the more prestigious *Jaafun*. The examples show the central role that the cattle have in both maintaining and reshaping Fulbe identity.

As the Fulbe themselves say, in many respects the cattle have been – and still are – their true blessing (*barka*). To understand clearly the meaning of this idea, it should be noted that among the Fulbe, the word *barka* cannot be grasped as a kind of immaterial spiritual power only, but as something that can be seen in a materialised form. Thus, if someone is said to have *barka* it often means that he or she has a lot of descendants, cattle or some other kind of corporeal wealth (see also de Bruijn and van Dijk 1995:175 and Dognin 1975). In the Tibati district, the people who perhaps most often talk of the specific blessing of their cattle are the *Aku*. They claim that it is especially the white *daneiji* breed which has *barka* – referring to its qualities such as high milk yield and capacity for rapid reproduction.

Although one can today observe cross-breeding of *daneiji*, *boDeeji* and *gudaali* cattle also among the *Aku* of the Tibati district, there are still some almost totally white herds in the region. One of these belongs to Gaani,⁶⁷ the man whose long migration from Kano to Adamaoua we followed above. For

⁶⁷ To be accurate, during my fieldwork the cattle belonged to Gaani's sons as he had already distributed all his animals among his descendants before I met him.

People of the Blessed Cattle

Gaani and his family their herd forms a distinct source of pride because its pedigree can still be largely traced back to Kano where the forefathers of the family pastured their herds in former times. Being a quite particular place of origin, Kano does not, however, relate Gaani's herd only to the recent history of his own lineage but links it with the mythic past of the Fulbe people.

4 RECOLLECTING NIGERIA: MYTH AND HISTORY IN THE PRESENT

The cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua, through their migration, are familiar with three African nation states: Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic. Rather than as territories controlled by governments, the nations in question form distinctively marked landscapes for the pastoralists – both in a physical and social sense. This means that while moving through these landscapes in their history the Fulbe have passed through different epochs and pasture lands, as well as through changing ideas of sociality and moral virtues. In this chapter I shall examine the ways in which the events and sites of the cattle Fulbe mythical and historical past intrude into their present. The discussion will more or less follow Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) concern with how, through collective memory, the past is put to serve the ends of the present, or, using Michael Lambek's idea (1996), how people, through claims about the past, comment on their current relations.

RESHAPING THE ORIGINS

One of the central means of claiming a shared identity for a people is to invoke its common origin. Often, with time, the myths that go back to a remote past to justify the ways of the present are replicated in several versions to be used in different conditions. In the diverse versions of the myths concerning the origin of the cattle Fulbe one can discern grounds for seeing them as people endowed both with dignity and ignorance, or even disgrace. The two opposite stances echo the puzzling relation between the sedentary Fulbe and the cattle Fulbe as the myths told by the former about the latter are much less flattering than those that the cattle Fulbe recount about themselves. I heard several versions of the following myth from the sedentary Fulbe and Hausa in Tibati. This particular variant was told by Maimuna, a Hausa-Pullo woman during a moment when I was talking with her about a rumour that the cattle Fulbe are not allowed to enter the palace of the local *laamiiDo*. When I asked her about a possible reason for the prohibition the woman said in reproof: "Because they are like that". When I inquired what she meant by her comment the woman started to tell me the story.

A black woman went to a river to wash the clothes. A spirit emerged from the water and made the woman pregnant. As a result the woman gave birth to a son and a

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

daughter. As the children grew up, they started to ask their mother about their father. First the mother tried to evade the question but eventually she had to tell them the truth after which the children went to the river where they found their father. They stayed with him for a while but finally the father asked them to leave as he himself could not come to live among human beings but had to stay in the water. The father asked the children not to look back while leaving. After having walked a little way, the children were followed by cattle that started to emerge from the water. Finally, just when a big ox was about to rise from the water, one of the children turned around with the result that the ox fell back into the water. This ox would have been the one to be enough for all the people, but as it could not rise from the water, only the Mbororo have nowadays a lot of cattle. The children continued to town but while approaching it they reflected that they would not be allowed to go there with so much cattle. So, in order to keep all of the cattle to themselves, they preferred to live in the bush where they started to have children together.¹

As in numerous other Fulbe myths recounted in different parts of West Africa, the above story deals with two critical origins: the origin of people and the origin of cattle.² The explanations given in the story are also wide-spread; such themes as the incestuous origin of the people as well as the emergence of the first cattle from water are well-known in the earlier literature.³ As regards incest, the cattle Fulbe in Adamaoua did not, however, associate it with themselves but with the origin of the *WoDaaBe*, the highly nomadic cattle Fulbe group from Bornu. A motif that my informants did not mention was the idea of their father being a water spirit.

“We Come after Arabs”

The story told by the Hausa-Pullo woman in Tibati can be considered part of a larger mythology by which the sedentary Fulbe have sought to prove their difference from – and superiority over – the cattle Fulbe, while being at the

¹ The narratives that are not translated word by word from tapes are printed here in italics. As regards substance, they are still faithful to the original narration.

² A third origin discussed often in these myths – a theme which I shall not go into deeply here – is the origin of the language, Fulfulde. A basic idea repeated is that the two children, who then became the first ancestors of the cattle Fulbe, started to talk to each other in a language (Fulfulde) that their parents could not understand (see Dupire 1962 and St Croix 1945).

³ In the origin myths of the cattle Fulbe, incest happens either between siblings or between mother and son (see Brackenbury 1924, Dupire 1962 and St Croix 1945). For the theme of the first cattle emerging from water, see Dupire (1962) and St Croix (1945). Local versions of this theme, which I recorded in Tibati, will be discussed in the text.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

same time forced to admit the historical relatedness between the two people.⁴ One popular way to resolve the dilemma is to claim that, while all the Fulbe are united by a common black mother, what separates them are two different fathers. The narrative confirming this claim is the story of Ukba. As the story goes, Ukba was an Arab scholar – and a messenger of Prophet Mohammed – who, during his trip from Mecca to the Western Sudan, married a black princess. The princess bore him several children who then, representing different lineages, became the ancestors of the village Fulbe.⁵ There are two ways to continue the story. The first merges with the above myth so that it was the wife of Ukba who went to the river and had children with the water spirit – children, who then married each other and became the parents of the first cattle Fulbe. In the second version the father of these children was not a water spirit but Ukba's slave who married Ukba's wife when Ukba himself returned to Medina.⁶

In relating the Fulbe to Arabs, the story of Ukba reflects the way in which the Fulbe origin myths have been gradually Islamised by building up a mythical

⁴ During my stay in Cameroon I met only one person, an urban Fullo man from Ngaoundere, who totally denied the common origin of the two groups. The man, a teacher of Islam, justified his view with three elemental differences between the groups. First, he argued that the village Fulbe are much more warlike people than the cattle Fulbe who have always preferred to escape in a conflict situation. Second, he referred to the fact that while among the village Fulbe pre-marital relations are forbidden, the cattle Fulbe do not acknowledge that kind of restriction. Third, the man claimed that, contrary to the village Fulbe, the cattle Fulbe practice sexual relations between siblings and between parents and children. When I asked the man why is it then that both people resemble each other and speak the same language, he explained it by their historical mixing through intermarriage.

⁵ The historical identity of Ukba is a much discussed theme. As Tauxier (1937) argues, there are two historical persons who have probably served as models for the progenitor in the Fulbe origin myth. These men, both called Ukba, were involved in the conquest of North Africa by the Arabs in the seventh century (Lacroix 1954). It is, however, certain that neither of these men ever set foot in the Sudan belt and thus the idea of them having been somehow related to Fulbe is quite impossible. When it comes to the origin of Ukba's African wife, one of the most repeated definitions is that she was Bajomagu, a daughter of the chief of Malle (see e.g. Brackenbury 1924; Strümpell 1912). There are also sources that refer to her as being of Bambara or Beriberi origin – and even a story that identifies her as a Jewish princess from Sinai (Dupire 1962; Delafosse 1912). In addition, the various myths that associate the origin of the Fulbe through their first ancestors with West Africa and the Middle East, there are also many "scientific" theories that derive the origin of the Fulbe from the most various places, ranging from Syria and Ethiopia to India and Polynesia. Summaries of these often quite fanciful theories can be found in Brackenbury (1924) and Tauxier (1937).

⁶ The water spirit version can be found in Dupire (1962) and St Croix (1972). In the version told by St Croix, however, the actual father was unknown and the role of the water spirit was mainly to give the cattle. Here the cattle was given to one boy who was forgotten in the bush by his mother and who later married an Arab girl. For the versions that talk about the slave origin, see Brackenbury (1924) and Strümpell (1912).

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

connection between the Fulbe origin and Islam. If initially the process concerned mainly the village Fulbe, its effects have long been seen also in the myths that the cattle Fulbe tell of themselves. In the Tibati region the pastoralists did not seem to be too concerned with the question of their common African mother, although they did not usually oppose the idea if I mentioned it.⁷ They did, however, pay attention to her black skin which, they said, made them darker than their Arab father who, again, was a person in whose identity they were not especially interested. The overall idea of an Arab background was, on the contrary, certainly a point to be emphasised. A common idea among my informants was that earlier the Fulbe were one with the Arabs, that is, they were of the same lineage. What then separated the two people comes out in the following discussion between four old cattle Fulbe men:

* They [the Arabs] are the elders, then we [come after them]. Our lineage [is] one. What prevented us from becoming Arabs is the [lack of] knowledge through learning. They, they learned. [But] we, we just took care of cattle, our animals. That is the only thing we know, we move, we go in the bush. [But] they, they construct [houses], they stay [in one place]. Ehhee! Their animals [are] close to them. [But] we, on foot we migrate.

** Desire prevented us [from becoming Arabs]!

* Desire prevented us.

*** Here land, land, here land, land, all the way from Bornu.

** Desire prevented us!

* We get much, we go round and round. If [others] went still [farther], they say: "it is better down there". I heard from another man: "come". He takes us to a [new] land [that] is better. You go, you get. That is why [we] leave, we go again.

In the discussion the difference between the Fulbe and the Arabs is expressed in the idiom of desire (*suuno*); it is the desire of the Fulbe for cattle that prevented them from becoming learned men like the Arabs. Thus while in the case of the Arabs it is the cattle that stay close to people, with the Fulbe it is the people who move on to get more cattle. As the discussion further shows, the special desire for cattle is repeated in the desire for pasture land. Indeed, the cattle Fulbe are very jealous of the bush (*haajugo ladde*), as they themselves say. This desire for land is fulfilled only by incessant movement towards new pastures which prevents the Fulbe from setting down and devoting their time to religious learning.

⁷ As an exception to this, some of my cattle Fulbe informants claimed that it was their common mother, not father, who was an Arab.

From Town to Bush

The idea of desire corresponds with the contents of the above myth told by Maimuna, the sedentary Muslim woman, who emphasised that it was the greediness of the cattle Fulbe that prevented them from entering a village or town and becoming cultivated town dwellers. In their own narratives, however, the cattle Fulbe explain their greediness in such a way that makes it close to a moral virtue. Furthermore, while in the village people's emphasis the desire for cattle prevented the cattle Fulbe from *entering* the village, the pastoralists themselves talk of *going out* from it. "The desire for cattle made us go out, to leave the place", as one of the above men said. Thus, if not totally conflicting, the two interpretations of the cattle Fulbe origin have a clearly distinct emphasis. What the village people stress is locating the actual origin of the cattle Fulbe outside the village, first by the union between the black woman and the water spirit and then by the union between the siblings – both of which took place in the bush. Instead, in their own narratives the cattle Fulbe claim to be originally sedentary town people who then abandoned town life for the sake of cattle. Thus, what they themselves want to bring out is that it was exclusively the moral commitment to cattle and the welfare of the herd that made them choose the bush. The idea is nicely elaborated by another old man reflecting on the origin of his people:

The cattle Fulbe, all the Mbororo who stay in the bush, they all are cattle Fulbe. They do not stay [in the bush because of] being born in the bush. They were born in the town, they are town people. [It is] because of the wealth, [because of] searching for the wealth of cattle [that they stay in the bush]. So, we stayed in the town, my cattle is there, I do not have trustworthy children who would take care of the cattle. Some [of the cattle] fall ill, there is no medicine, they just die. – – some of your children like the cattle, but others do not, they want only to roam around the town. [So, it is] you, the father, who have to work. You are in the town, your child is in the town, who then takes care of the cattle? Some [of the cattle] go, fall into a trap, some fall ill, die, some go, calve [which] kills the mother. If you are [present], you take care of calving, so that it calves well. But you said [that] someone takes care on your behalf all the time, people, the children of the bush take care [of your cattle] on your behalf all the time, as herders. Some [of the herders] slaughter, eat, some slaughter, kill, wait for the butcher [to pay them] 5,000 CFA francs,⁸ "thank God". [The herder] says to you, "it died". You wait, the day after he says "again [another] died". Ahaa! It is he who slaughters [and] sells [your cattle] to butchers, to those outside. He destroys your wealth. Does that cattle

⁸ At the time of my fieldwork 100 CFA francs equalled one French franc.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

increase? And like that, how do you take care [of the cattle] yourself? Here, your cattle, in the morning you saw them, in the evening you saw them. Some of them did not come back, all you know. In the morning you have to go [and] search [for the lost cattle]. You go, you find, you come back. And how, when you are in the town, does it work? Is it good? So, this is why we have to stay in the bush, only because of the cattle.

Sometimes, besides emphasising the moral quality of bush life, the cattle Fulbe refer to the precedence they have over the bush as first settlers. One cattle Fulbe woman illustrated the point in a somewhat startling way when talking of the nomadic *WoDaaBe*. The woman claimed that the *WoDaaBe* did not initially belong to the pastoralists but, instead, after originating from a union between father and daughter, they bought a remedy⁹ with which they masked themselves to resemble the cattle Fulbe and then settled amongst the latter in the bush. What makes the claim quite puzzling is that among the Fulbe of Adamaoua the *WoDaaBe* are generally considered to be the truest bush people of all. Hence, through her claim, the woman tried to get rid of the negative attributes associated with bush life by declaring that the *WoDaaBe* – people who represent these attributes most – are not originally bush dwellers. Indeed, what the *WoDaaBe* did was, in her view, an imitation of the moral transformation that her own people went through when moving from town to bush. What is also interesting is that the same woman stated that, besides the *WoDaaBe*, the “real” cattle Fulbe also had gone through an ethnic transformation, being originally Kanuri who, following the order of the Prophet Mohammed, left the town and settled in the bush with cattle.¹⁰ Thus, through these different town-bush transformations the woman managed to touch on some central issues regarding the identity of her people.

The importance of the claim for originating in town is reflected in the fact that the cattle Fulbe do not push the time of leaving the town back to an indefinite past somewhere in Malle. On the contrary, while Malle is often considered as the place wherefrom Fulbe, Hausa and Kanuri originated, it was from the walled town of Kano, the pastoralists argued, that they themselves moved to the bush, and some even situated the event in the time of their own grandparents. The imaginary claims of this kind might be related to the

⁹ The woman used the word *bindaaku*, which refers to a technique of writing Koranic verses on a tablet and then washing them off. The resulting liquid of ink is then utilised as a medicine by drinking it or washing one's body with it.

¹⁰ Kanuri (also known as Beriberi in Hausa and *Koole'en* in Fulfulde) is a term that the inhabitants of Bornu use of themselves. In the areas where the cattle Fulbe have cohabited with the Kanuri the reciprocal relations between the two people are well-known (see e.g. Dupire 1962).

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

factual mass migration of the cattle Fulbe from the Kano region that started in the turn of the nineteenth century (Dognin 1981). These claims are certainly an attempt by the pastoralists to indigenise the narratives once heard by locating the mythic events in regions that are somehow meaningful in their own lives. For my informants the town of Kano is a most rewarding place of origin: while its surroundings are the actual birth place for many old people, it ties family histories to a collective Islamic past in a landscape where renown Fulbe heroes defended their faith and their people in the time of *jihad*. Accordingly, another place to which people referred in this context was Sokoto where also two of my informants – as well as Sheehu Usman dan Fodio, the Pullo hero who declared the holy war in the region – were born. Indeed, those cattle Fulbe in Tibati who did not talk of Malle presented Kano and Sokoto as places wherefrom all the non-Arab people who pray, meaning here Islamic daily prayers, originate – and a few traced the origin of the Arabs to Kano as well.

Creation of the Cattle

In the cattle Fulbe origin myths not all the themes are as delicate as incest, and so there has not been an urgent need to transform them. In general, the themes connected to the origin of cattle are more neutral than those concerning the origin of people. For example, while the motif of the water spirit has disappeared from the myths because it alludes to a subhuman origin for the people, the element of water as the origin of cattle has been more persistent.

In the beginning of the world, the cattle resided in a big water – a river or a sea. Every nightfall they came out from the water to eat grass. One night a Pullo came into the place and saw the animals emerging from the water. But when the animals saw him, they immediately returned into the water. The Pullo made a plan to get the cattle out from the water. He brought salt and potash and put these in a trough which he laid down on the spot where the cattle emerged from the water in the night. When the animals came again, they started to eat from the trough. The Pullo repeated this every night so that the animals got used to him. Then he kindled a fire near the trough. When the animals came to pasture again, they gathered around the fire because the mosquitos stayed away from the smoke. One night the Pullo removed the trough and the fire a little farther away from the water. When the cattle came, they noticed that the trough was taken away, but as they smelled the salt they found it. Little by little the Pullo removed the salt and the fire farther and farther away from the water. He also began to accompany the cattle to the river as they returned into the water, and came to meet them and call them into shore by nightfall. When this had continued for a while, the Pullo guided the cattle away from the brink of the water, to a humid forest. There he showed them a watering place where they could

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

drink but which was so shallow that the animals could not disappear in it. So the cattle abandoned the big water and gradually forgot it. From the forest the Pullo continued with the cattle forwards. One day they arrived in the town of Kano. In Kano, there was a man called Barkinsaanu, "a chief of the cattle", who originated from Sokoto. The man had built a big enclosure where he put the animals as they arrived in Kano with their Pullo herder. Every morning the cattle were taken out to pasture to return again to the enclosure by nightfall. As the Fulbe saw the cattle, they started to buy them, one heifer and one bull each in turn. They took their new cattle out from the enclosure and started to build their own cattle corrals and tie cattle on a cattle rope. Little by little, as the cattle got used to the bush, they were let to pasture there freely. As the number of the cattle increased, the Fulbe sold calves again to other Fulbe. That is how all Fulbe got cattle.

The above myth told by some elderly informants provides a sensible description of how man domesticated cattle. A central role is given to the man, a Pullo, who manages to tame the animals through his own forethought. Thus, when compared with the myth of the water spirit, it is the agency of man and not the intervention of any higher – or lower – forces that is at work here. The central elements that can be found in every cattle corral are also present: the fire, the salt trough and the cattle rope by means of which the union between the man and the animal was gradually sealed. This gradual advance of domestication is also seen in the movement through different spaces. First, the cattle abandon the big deep water which represents the state of extreme wildness. Then the herder guides them to a forest with a shallow water in which the cattle could no longer sink – a detail signifying that there was no return to an untamed state anymore. Finally, the animals arrive in the town of Kano – the site of complete domestication.

While this theme about the domestication of cattle in the bush is known from previous sources (Dupire 1962; St Croix 1945; Stenning 1959), I have not come across any published narrative that details the later events in the humid forest and in Kano in the above way. In Dupire (1962) and St Croix (1945) there are references to other people – such as Hausa and Beriberi – from whom the Fulbe have acquired their cattle, but allusions to events taking place in town are absent. What the above narrative thus suggests is a double domestication: both the people and the cattle as their main denominator go through a parallel evolution. This is also reflected in the implicit analogy¹¹ between the walls around the town/people and the fence around the animals.

¹¹ I prefer here to talk of implicit analogy because in the particular situation in which the above narrative was tape-recorded the narrators did not explicitly use the Hausa term "*Birnin Kano*" ("the walled town of Kano") as they did in many other contexts.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

The idea of acquiring cattle through the hands of others refers to the critical relatedness between the village and the bush, as the pastoralists have always been dependent on other local populations – be it farmers or urban merchants – for selling cattle products and buying cereals, bulls to be fattened and other necessities. In the above narrative, in the characterisation of the person through whom the final domestication as well as the transmission of the cattle into the care of the cattle Fulbe took place, two elements are blended. First, his arrival from Sokoto might refer to a Fulbe origin – which was actually claimed by one of my informants – as the place is closely associated with Sheehu Usman dan Fodio who sometimes, at least in Tibati, is referred to as the one who assigned the Fulbe their cattle. What speaks against this interpretation, however, is the remark in the end of the story that *all* the Fulbe acquired their cattle as a consequence of this mythic trade.¹² Second, the Hausa title, *barkinsaanu*, refers to a Hausa origin – an explanation that would not be surprising in view of the considerable influence that the long co-existence with the Hausa both in Nigeria and Cameroon has had on the pastoralists. Indeed, some pastoralists claimed that, before migrating to the bush, their grandparents lived alongside the Hausa in the town of Kano. But to understand the special role that the man, if considered as Hausa, is given in the myth, one does not have to go into mythical history. On the contrary, a male figure who first acquires cattle from a Pullo and then sells it to other Fulbe reflects the current situation in Adamaoua where the Hausa retailers still have a crucial role in the local cattle markets.

While taming cattle is undoubtedly an important theme in the above narrative, the concluding events refer to something more than simple domestication. The cattle are not domesticated merely from wild beasts as companions of people, but as companions of *Muslim* people who, for example, have distinct rules of slaughtering cattle in a proper way. What thus comes out of Kano is the cattle of the faithful who originate in town. But while in the above narrative the idea of the “Islamisation” of cattle comes out only implicitly, through the reference to town life, there are other myths in which the connection between cattle and Islam is much more explicit. Indeed, in the following narrative that I heard from one pastoralist in Tibati, the town people are not always needed for the interaction between the cattle Fulbe and divine forces.

¹² This remark could be interpreted to mean it was the cattle Fulbe who sold some cattle to village Fulbe. The same idea is repeated in a myth, recounted in Dupire (1962:33), in which the boy who received cattle from his water spirit father gave some of them to his half-brother, the son of Ukba.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

When God had finished the creation of the world, the Mbororo said to the Prophet Mohammed: "Prophet, we do not have anything to eat." The Prophet replied: "You all, with Hausa, you are alive. What do you still want?" The Mbororo replied: "Here we stay with suffering, there is nothing we could eat, hunger kills us." Then the Prophet asked: "What do you want to eat?" The Mbororo answered: "Whatever you bring us." The Prophet brought them land to cultivate. All the Mbororo, all the Jaafun started to cultivate the land. But then they said: "We do not know how to do this." The prophet asked if there was anybody who knows how to cultivate the land. The Hausa said: "We know." All the black people said: "We know." Then the Prophet said to the Mbororo: "Here, build a hut to enter when it starts raining." The Mbororo said: "We do not know how to build." So, it is better that they seek shelter from the rain under a tree. Then the Prophet asked the Mbororo to cut bundles of hay and twigs to sell. The Mbororo said: "We do not know how to do it." But Hausa, they started to cultivate the land, they started to cut hay and twigs and sell. They did all this and got a living. But the Mbororo continued to ask the Prophet: "So what now? You did not bring us anything to eat. What will you give us?" Then the Prophet brought a cow, he brought cattle. He said: "Look at this. You wander, you know how to do it, you wander over all lands for ever. Will you?" The Mbororo said: "Yes, we will." Then the Prophet asked them: "But what will you build?" The Mbororo answered: "If we have eaten enough, we put shoots of corn with grass on branches and cover it with fronds of palm. So, if we have slept on that, and we have wealth (= cattle), and we are replete, then we ask for nothing more." The Mbororo said that their hands cannot cultivate, but if there is a cow, they will take care of it, they will follow the cow. This was the origin of the cattle of the Mbororo.

What differentiates the above myth from the myth of the domestication of cattle, is that the active role of ordinary human beings is pushed into the background. It is now the divine agent – the Prophet Mohammed – who assigns cattle to the Fulbe. Thus, the Fulbe put their destiny in the hands of the divinity, although at times making him quite perplexed about what to do with these people who still ultimately want to make their own choice. Other comparable myths that my informants told me repeat the same motifs: there is a divine figure – be it God, Prophet Mohammed or Sheehu Usamaanu – who distributes to each group their share or, to use the Fulfulde word, their "way" (*laawol*). Then these ways are passed down in each group from parents to children by showing (*hollugo*): the way of cultivation, the way of school or learning, the way of government, the way of hunting, the way of cattle, and so on. What is often emphasised in these myths is the divine act of writing so that the different ways assigned to different people are legitimated by writing them down – an act that presumably refers to the authority of the Koran. This emphasis on writing is most understandable among the cattle Fulbe as the great majority are illiterate and both religious and official documents are incomprehensible to them without the interpretation of others.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

The special regard for written texts was nicely expressed by a cattle Pullo man who, instead of using the Fulfulde word *laawol*, talked of different “*adires*” (according to the French word *adresse*) which the God wrote for each group so that they can find “what to eat”. In another example, in a story told by a cattle Pullo woman in her forties, the theme of writing came out in the following way:

* It was the Prophet Mohammed who created the cattle and gave [it to the Fulbe]. He said: “Since I created [the world], I can give you what you eat in your life on the earth.” He wrote [words on] a white paper that he put in a big water. [It] flew, [it] entered the river. He said: “The seed that I put to flow there, [it] remains to protect all the people in their lives on the earth. I gave it to be of use.” A sheep came out [from the water], a cow came out [from the water]. [The Prophet said]: “You eat, you drink, you celebrate the name-giving, you marry a woman with it.” [It was] like that.

Myths and Islam in Adamaoua

In the above myth the relatively recent themes of Islam and writing are connected with the much more ancient theme of the big water. It is a matter of guesswork why the water element is so persistent in the Fulbe myths.¹³ What the myth shows, however, is that with Islamisation Fulbe origin myths are not simply substituted with new ones. On the contrary, there are motives that are saved by incorporating them with current themes of which Islam is certainly the most notable. In other words, for the cattle Fulbe, Islam has become the primary site for preserving the most cherished pieces of their mythic history.

But besides being a parking place for archaic motives, Islam itself provides highly valued mythologies through which the cattle Fulbe can nowadays ground their place in relation to other people. A delicious example of this is offered in the following:

The Prophet Mohammed founded the pastoral Fulbe. He said: “Now we all have people, but we do not have a woman.” They cut a rib of man from which they created a woman. They created Hawwaawu and Faadima Jaara. They saved the right hand for the cattle Fulbe and the left hand for the Gbaya. Mohammed sent

¹³ The theme of the big water has often been associated with a factual lake or sea area that would somehow be connected to the history of the Fulbe. For example, Dupire (1962:29) has referred to the Niger river basin, and even to the Red Sea as it is located along the African pilgrims’ way to Mecca. Mohammadou (1981:236) in turn states that the fact that certain cattle Fulbe groups consider Lake Chad as the big water of the myth could refer to an ancient Fulbe settlement in the area.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

Jesus Messiah to the Gbaya and asked him to stay with them and protect them together with Hawwaawu. Faadima Jaara together with Mohammed and Sheehu Usman dan Fodio would then stay with the cattle Fulbe. It was the Prophet Moses who sent Mohammed to Fulbe to see what they are doing and then to return and tell Moses what he saw. Now, the black people follow their prophet Jesus Messiah. They do mission work. Because everyone who follows the left hand should work with the mission and everyone who follows the right hand should work with Fulbe, Hausa and cattle Fulbe.¹⁴

Among the myths that I heard during my fieldwork the above narrative is the one that comments specifically on the current inter-ethnic relations in Adamaoua. There are, however, two contextual aspects connected to the life of the woman who told the story. First, at the time the son of the woman was a pupil in the local Bible school supported by the Lutheran mission. Thus, a particular situation in her own family – a situation that was in no way honourable in the eyes of other local cattle Fulbe who looked askance at kinsmen who converted to Christianity – was reflected in her “how things should be” narrative. She knew that I was aware of their delicate situation as we had discussed the issue many times before. Second, a contributing factor was that I was white and thus, irrespective of my own behaviour, at least somehow connected to Christianity. Indeed, although aware of my distinct interests, people usually considered me as a classificatory relative of the American and Norwegian missionaries who worked in the region.

But besides the personal concerns that might have influenced the woman’s choice, the above narrative reflects contemporary issues in Adamaoua as well. Undoubtedly the most prominent issue is the cultural division between Muslims and Christians which, in the myth, is represented by the division between the cattle Fulbe and the local Gbaya farmers with their distinct mothers and prophets. What the split reflects is not, however, merely a local setting created by the most recent migrations, but a more persistent sociocultural structure that is the base for how the Fulbe have distinguished themselves from *haaBe* (sg. *kaaDo*), that is, the indigenous groups in the habitats they have entered in the course of their migrations. While earlier the term *haaBe* referred principally to all indigenous African people of non-Fulbe origin, nowadays it is often restricted to mean non-Muslim Africans – or those

¹⁴ In the translation of narratives, as regards historical or mythical figures that originate outside Fulbe mythology, I have employed English forms of their names whenever I have been aware of those. For example, in the original version of the above narrative the narrator used such Fulfulde terms as *Annabiijo Mohammadu* (the Prophet Mohammed), *Iisa Almasihu* (Jesus Messiah), *Sheehu Usumaanu* (Sheehu Usman dan Fodio) and *Annabi Muusa* (the Prophet Moses).

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

that the Fulbe regard as such.¹⁵ This shift is also revealed in the above myth as the Hausa, who since the arrival of the Fulbe have formed the indigenous *haaBe* population in northern Nigeria, are now considered to belong to the “non-black right hand people” with village and cattle Fulbe and are thus contrasted with the Gbaya farmers who, in turn, represent the *haaBe* element for the Fulbe in Adamaoua. This incorporation of the Hausa into the local inter-ethnic Muslim community where the village Fulbe still maintain the leading position is not simply derived from their Muslim identity, but is the result of long-term co-operation and intermarriages between the two groups as well. Indeed, to return to the Gbaya in Adamaoua, many of them have converted to Islam (cf. Burnham 1996), which does not prevent the local Fulbe, both villagers and pastoralists, from lumping the religiously heterogeneous group – consisting of Christians, Muslims and animists – together under the general label of “*haaBe*”.

The coexistence of the two world religions is also reflected in the devoted name-dropping by which the woman enlivened her story. Mohammed as the messenger of Moses¹⁶, the two co-wives as the mothers of Christians and Muslims,¹⁷ the motif of creating woman from man’s rib, all refer to this link. Of course borrowing names and themes from the Bible can partly derive from the fact that some of them are also found in some form in the Koran. But, as I never heard other cattle Fulbe mentioning the above motifs, it is more probable that their source can be traced from the connection that the woman had to the Christian mission through her son. Thus, the woman mixed stories that she had heard from her son – or his class mates from the Bible school who often visited his family – with other elements, such as the division between the people of the right and the left hand, which here implicitly refers to the superiority of Muslims over Christians. In that way she, quite

¹⁵ This change is well illustrated in the Fulfulde dictionaries from different epochs. Thus, while Taylor (1932:106) still defines *kaaDo* as “a non-Fulani negro; slave; member of a subject race”, Noye (1989:141) specifies the term to mean “pagan, i.e. black non-Muslim”. Despite this change in connotation, the notion *kaaDo* can still be considered as the main stereotype representing “the negative of the Fulani” (Riesman 1977:116).

¹⁶ This detail is most probably an adaptation of a more established version according to which the Prophet Mohammed sent Ukba to Africa, see e.g. Awogbade (1983).

¹⁷ This motif refers most probably to Sara and Haagar, the two wives of Abraham in the Old Testament.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

spontaneously, converted the myths told in the local Bible school into the “origin story” of her own people.¹⁸

Performing a Mythical History

None of the myths presented in this chapter are separable from the context in which they have been told. Analytically the context can be divided into two domains. First, there is the immediate context of a given narration including narrator(s) and audience with their specific interrelations and individual life histories. Second, there is the overall sociocultural context of Adamaoua in which the cattle Fulbe live today. What should not be forgotten is that the myths presented above were all told in an arranged situation in which the people were asked about the origin of the cattle Fulbe and their herds. I never heard people telling origin myths outside that specific context, suggesting that these myths do not – at least not nowadays – form any popular folklore being told around “evening fires”. But apparently these myths are told – and consequently transmitted – as most of the people recall similar motifs when they are encouraged to do so. This does not mean, however, that there exists a general consensus on what motifs are told and in what form. Often I got the impression that at the moment of telling these stories, people were selecting from different versions that they knew. This came out most clearly when there were several persons speaking and the narration meandered from one course to another. On such occasions people were eager to interrupt each other when suddenly recalling a detail that deviated from what had been told. It was not unusual either that those present heard a given version for the first time.

Sometimes a particular standpoint could also be chosen for the sake of a casual audience. A clue to this was given when my research assistant asked a pastoral Fullo man about the origin myths of his people in the presence of a Muslim Hausa visitor. After the man had talked of the migration of his ancestors from the legendary town of Kano, he was asked about the myth of the cattle that came from the big water. The man, seemingly embarrassed, exclaimed that the story is pure nonsense and that there is nothing that comes out from water except fish! The incident opens up the question of how central the origin myths are as a means of performing identity. This performance was not originally addressed to the Hausa man as it was by

¹⁸ When the woman spoke of the people of “the right hand” she used the Fulfulde word “*jungo nyaamo*” which, when directly translated, means “the eating hand”. Thus she referred to the hierarchy between the right and the left hand as it is only with the former that one touches food while the latter is reserved for cleaning the genitals and anus.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

accident that he and the interviewer visited the Pullo man at the same moment. This coincides with the general position that the discussion of origins does not belong to their interaction with other people. Thus, in the unexpected situation, the Pullo man tried hard to scorn themes that would refer to the delicate link of the pastoralists to the bush and water and present the difference between the cattle Fulbe and the Muslim village people in a pointed way. Although I was not present when this happened, the fact that his effort was well received can be heard on the tape when the Hausa visitor utters accepting sounds and words in the background while the Pullo man is talking. On the other hand, as regards my own presence, I am inclined to think that it had far less effect because my position in the local hierarchy was quite peripheral. Furthermore, I started to tape such interviews when people already knew me well.¹⁹ Thus, when people were telling me the myths, rather than trying to manipulate the impression they were giving of themselves (cf. Goffman 1959), they participated in a kind of mental play through which they commented on their current situation with its increasing pressures to integrate into sedentary society. This does not mean, however, that people did not modify themes to suit current social existence. An example of this is the theme of incest, with villagers talking of incestuous pastoralists and pastoralists of incestuous *WoDaaBe*²⁰, and in that way each side justifies their own moral superiority in relation to a culturally defined savage other.²¹ But to return to my role as an interviewer, instead of being an audience whose response should be taken into consideration, my presence served as a reminder of that other audience that, if physically absent, was present in my informants' talk – what Mead (1934:154) would call “the generalized other”. This generalized other was the pastoral community itself, and in that sense the interviews of single persons and groups of cattle Fulbe men or women did

¹⁹ Another related question is the possible influence of my research assistant, a male university student from Ngaoundere, as he recorded part of the origin myths without my presence, some months after I had finished my field work in 1996. I would, however, like to emphasise, that the versions in question were already familiar to me from my own fieldwork; it was because my own notes of these myths were partly insufficient, that I asked the assistant to record them (I also recorded additional versions of the myths during my short return visit in 1998). Furthermore, all the persons whom my assistant interviewed were my own informants, who knew that the myths were being recorded for me. The informants in question also knew the interviewer whom they had met in my company earlier.

²⁰ In Tibati, claims of incest are not restricted to people's mythical origin but apply to the present day as well. Several times during my fieldwork I heard the village Fulbe as well as the Christian Gbaya accusing the Mbororo men of having sexual relations with their sisters.

²¹ The discrepant views of who is the savage reflect the hierarchy between the Fulbe groups and are thus homologous to that hierarchy (cf. Siikala 1991:140).

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

not differ from each other in any essential way. Thus, with me, it was not me but my informants who became their own audience when I requested them to engage in myth-telling. Concomitantly, their narration involved a good deal of performative reflexivity (Turner 1987:24) when their narratives reflected upon some crucial concerns of their contemporary society.

But the strength of the mythical themes not only lie in their capacity to provide tools for reflecting on changing social circumstances; what is equally relevant is their relation to continuity. As Jukka Siikala (1991:4) states, narrative things have no duration without the duration of their referent which exists outside the narrative or myth. This means that the consequences of the events that are recorded in narratives are still part of people's culturally meaningful landscape. In the case of the cattle Fulbe, this landscape is still filled with camp fires, pastures and watering places, elements that are also cherished in their ancient myths. There is also the landscape of the village or town, and the changing – but still enduring – ties between the bush and the village form as integral a part of contemporary pastoral life as in the narratives of the mythical past.

In the above discussion I have brought up the reflexivity and creativity that permeates the myth-telling of the cattle Fulbe. Instead of repeating myths of more or less identical form, my informants created mythical narratives or stories by combining elements, the mutual order and relations of these elements varying from one narration to another. In these narratives it is often difficult to draw a sharp distinction between the myths and the reflexive talk concerning them as both components are often intertwined in narration. But, despite all the discrepant factors, the above myths cannot be considered as random mental constructions but as a negotiation of mythical history. This history is not pushed to a remote and indefinable past but, instead, it is taken along with people to new times and places by mingling mythic events with recent history, as the narratives concerning Kano indicated. In that sense my informants' talk of the origin of their culture and society did not differ much from the way they talked of their own recent past in Nigeria – a theme to which I shall now turn.

RECOLLECTING NIGERIA

When the pastoral Fulbe of Adamaoua talk of Nigeria their words are full of paradoxes. In many myths the land of Nigeria (*leddi Niijeeriya*) is elevated to a sacred site where many Fulbe customs reached their refined state. In people's memories and other sorts of projections, however, it often gets quite different connotations, ranging from the picture of a happy innocent past to

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

the representation of savage ignorance. My argument is that the contradictory images that the pastoral Fulbe have of the past in Nigeria can only be comprehended in relation to their current situation in Cameroon. In the following I shall elucidate the point by examining people's reflexive talk about these two landscapes.

The Unspoken Pre-Muslim Past

As the discussion of origin myths has shown, the way people recall their mythical past each time can be highly selective: people remember items that are worth remembering while ignoring others. Indeed, shared identity is always partly created through forgetting, as Janet Carsten (1995), among others, has emphasised. As regards the pastoral Fulbe of Adamaoua the importance of forgetting fits their contemporary identity as devout Muslims. When I asked people about their and their forefathers' relationship to Islam in Nigeria, they tended to give answers like: "my parents and grandparents have prayed (*juulgo*) as long as I can remember". With phrases of this kind people offered the idea that nothing has changed, that their practice of Islam in Nigeria was identical with their present day religious activities in Cameroon. These assurances were in sharp contrast with the villagers' doubts about whether the pastoralists pray in their remote bush camps at all.

Due to selective remembering – and thus narrating – among my informants we cannot know for sure what was the factual role of Islam in their daily life some fifty or sixty years ago in Nigeria. Some clues can be found in the literature; for example Sa'ad Abubakar (1977:37) talks of the Mbororo of Adamaoua who long regarded Islam as the religion of the elders (*mawBe*) so that, while the older people performed – at least part of – the daily prayers, the youth were free to devote all their time to the cattle. Abubakar also mentions the selection of thirty elders, each of whom would fast for one day during Ramadan. The problem with these kinds of statements is, however, that they are often highly generalising and do not include information concerning the context in which they are gathered. Thus, it is not possible to apply their details to specific periods or lineages as different lineages adopted Islamic practices in different circumstances and at a different tempo during their migrations from one region to another. For example, Ndoudi Oumarou, a *Jaafun* Mbororo from Cameroon, witnessed a noticeable increase in his kinsmen's practice of daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan over twenty years, in the 1960s and the 1970s (see Bocquené 1981).

Although the pastoral Fulbe in the Tibati region were not inspired to talk of any "apprenticeship in Islam" when I asked them about their religious practices earlier in Nigeria, clues of their changing relationship to religion still

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

came up in other ways. For example, when people talked of a certain custom which they had in Nigeria and I asked them why they do not practice it anymore, a typical answer was that “the elders” or “the land” or “Cameroon” prohibited it (“*Kamaru haDi*”). These expressions pointed at those cattle Fulbe elders – mostly *Jaafun* – who had settled in Adamaoua earlier and redefined the limits for appropriate behaviour, even for those pastoralists who were to arrive later in Cameroon. One practice that was put under a ban was *soro*, the baton-beating contest among the adolescent boys, to which I shall soon return in more detail. It is interesting that while the reason for the prohibition of customs like *soro* was their claimed non-Islamic nature, my informants never referred to this link. Once, for example, I heard some cattle Fulbe men explaining to an American missionary that *soro* was banned in Cameroon because the cool climate of the country makes it much more dangerous there than in Nigeria. When talking with me, however, they condemned the elders in Cameroon – or “the owners of the land” as they also called them – for destroying some of their valued customs. When the past in Nigeria was then evaluated against this image of the “prohibited life” in Cameroon, it was easily seen as the antipode. Some people, for example, characterised life in Nigeria as “pure happiness” (*belDum meere*), a state in which the pastoral Fulbe were unaware of any “civilising” pressures set from outside. One repeated example of this innocence was that in Nigeria, older people danced along with the youth, a custom that the pastoralists have given up almost totally in Cameroon. “Old people danced in Nigeria because they did not know”, as one old man said.²²

Sometimes, however, the idea of pre-Cameroonian innocence was converted to a more dubious ignorance. By this I refer to those rare moments when the pastoral Fulbe directly pointed at their failing in religious duties. Such was the case, for example, when one of my informants recalled a time when his parents prayed only once a day. Indeed, the worship failures that people presented to me had practically always to do with the daily prayers or the Ramadan fast which form the most central ways of performing one’s Muslim identity among the pastoralists in Adamaoua. But much more common than associating the defective stage of Islam with the past of one’s own relatives was to project it to more distant referents. One way to do this was to refer to *WoDaaBe*, the nomadic pastoral Fulbe of Bornu:

²² As regards the division between more and less prohibiting landscapes, it is interestingly repeated inside Cameroon itself. This came out in conversations with some educated cattle Fulbe who originated in Bamenda. In their eyes it is the province of Adamaoua that represents the utmost backwardness in the country. “Adamaoua is a land of prohibitions”, as one politically aware Mbororo woman said to me in Yaounde.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

They (*WoDaaBe*) do not boil the milk. They do not boil. Not until now, now people, as they have read the book of Arabia, they know what to do in the world. Some, till now, they do not boil the milk, while others do. Because people, they joined other Fulbe, they saw what Fulbe do at the present, they do well. But others, they did not come out, they are just in their own lineage, they do not know what the Fulbe do. They just follow the ways of their own lineage. They do not boil the milk on the fire, they do not boil their butter on the fire, they do not eat *nyiri* (porridge), they just dry their butter in the sun, they drink with milk only. Like that they do.

Here a most mundane everyday practice – the boiling of milk – is given religious motivation. Concomitantly, the people who do not follow such practice are condemned as ignorant. Such way of expanding the religion to justify – or doom – most various daily routines is quite common among the pastoralists for whom, as the above words of “coming out” refer to, Islam represents a great civilising force that gradually opens their culture to the outside world. In addition, the often-repeated religious justifications strengthen the division between the past and backward Nigerian ways and the more cultivated ways of Cameroon. While in the talk of most of my informants it was the lot of the *WoDaaBe* to represent the former, I met others for whom the category of *Aku* served the same purpose. Indeed, for some people the image of the *Aku* of Nigeria as uncultivated bush people compared to the more Fulbeised *Jaafun* has become a relative concept representing people who come – both in the spatial and cultural sense – behind. Once when I asked an *Aku* woman about her group, she refused the idea of belonging to the *Aku* and insisted that the *Aku* are separate people, who did not start to enter Cameroon until well after other pastoral groups. In her description the woman conjured a neat evolutionary scheme in which the *Aku* played the role of the relics of the Fulbe past as people who have smaller cattle than others and who build their huts from the leaves of the *barkeehi* tree and not out of grass as others do. Later, when the talk shifted to *Aku* women, my informant got excited and painted a rather uncultivated picture of them:

In the earlier times, if they [the *Aku* women] milked their cows, they did not boil the milk on the fire. They just stored it and let it sleep, they drank. So, now that they have entered Cameroon, they have started to put the milk on the fire, they boil, they shake a gourd, they remove the butter. – – Before, the *Aku*, from the time of their origin, the man prays, but the women do not pray. In the morning, they [women] bring water, they wash their eyes only. They do not pray. But their husbands, since earlier times, they pray, you see. But because they did not tell with their mouths: “my wife, it is better that you

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

pray”, they did not say to [their women]. But as they wandered about in different lands, they saw women praying, men praying, they saw that Fulbe were learning, that their children were learning. Now they have become good cattle Fulbe. Now the *Aku*, their children learn, they celebrate *inde* (= the name-giving ceremony), they celebrate *do’a* (= the completion of the Koranic school) as the cattle Fulbe. So, now they are good.

What catches one’s attention in the middle part of the above quotation is the way in which Islam is represented through the behaviour of the women. This reflects a more general pattern of evaluating the spiritual stage of the cattle Fulbe, as their women have constantly been the object of moral criticism ever since the Muslim reform started to take place in West Africa in the eighteenth century. A noteworthy example is offered by Sheehu Usman dan Fodio himself who already in his pre-*jihad* writings disapproved of the nomadic women doing such things as dancing, wearing skirts too short and visiting market places (Johnston 1967, cited by Bonfiglioli 1988). Marquerite Dupire (1963:47) gives a more recent but comparable example from Niger where, at least some forty years ago, the sedentary Fulbe mocked the dress and behaviour of the nomadic *WoDaaBe* women. They said, among other things, that the fringe of young *WoDaaBe* girls is arranged to prevent them from touching the ground with the forehead. Thus, similar to the above-quoted informant, the criticsers paid attention to the crucial act of praying.

Besides the daily prayers, the above quotation brings out two other ritual practices – *inde* and *do’a* – that the woman associated with Islam.²³ Indeed, the way in which she described how the people become “good cattle Fulbe”, good Muslims, brings out clearly the idea of Islam as a series of properly accomplished performances. During my fieldwork, a striking example of the importance of proper performing was offered to me by an old couple who, after consulting a Hausa man with Koranic schooling in Tibati, started to pay back the daily prayers that they had failed to perform in their early adulthood in Nigeria. This they did by duplicating the number of bows and genuflections in each daily prayer for a period of one year as their teacher advised them to do. There are several reasons for their devotion to engage in this extended worship. One of these was presumably their old age which, together with the weakening health of the husband, oriented their thoughts towards the approaching death. A more worldly motivator is to be found in the overall social setting in Adamaoua in which the pastoral Fulbe still have to make many extra efforts in order to prove the candour of their faith to other local

²³ To be accurate, while the name-giving ceremony (*inde* or *indeeri*) nowadays includes such Islamic elements as praying and the presence of a Koranic scholar (*mallum*), its origin can be traced back to the pre-Muslim era.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

Muslims. In the present case, however, the calibre of the extended performance could not be directly assessed as most of the prayers took place in the privacy of the performers' bush huts far away from the villagers of Tibati. But the fact that the couple turned to a Hausa man with their worship problem in the first place has certainly much to do with pastoralist aspirations to be accepted as faithful Muslims by the standards of the wider Islamic community of Adamaoua. These aspirations were further confirmed by the couple's own impression of the Muslim village people, namely, that they pay back prayers in a similar way.

But what is at least as interesting as the dynamics of current relations is how the old couple, through their performance, related the concerns of the present and the hereafter with the affairs of the past. It seems that, in a situation where the details of the "less Muslim" past are often too delicate a theme to talk about, the extra prayers formed an alternative site for the couple to meet with their unspoken memories. As such, then, their case serves as an example of the important role that bodily practices can have in remembering (see e.g., Cole 1998). But more than that, it illustrates the active role that people can take in shaping their lives – both past and present – through performance. Indeed, the peculiar thing in the couple's deliberate performing was that its purpose was not merely to foster present impressions but to modify those that were shaped earlier in Nigeria. By bowing down in these extended prayers, the man and the woman engaged in a special kind of reflective action which enabled them to recall and *redo* their pre-Muslim past at the same time.

The Two Landscapes

For the pastoral Fulbe life is in many ways easier in Cameroon than it used to be in Nigeria. Perhaps the most important reason for this is the humid climate of Adamaoua. It enables the pastoralists to stay with their herds most of the year in the same place so that only part of the camp members move out for transhumance for three or four months, while others – especially the old – stay in the main camp all year round. "In Cameroon there is no migration, we sit and rest", one old woman said when comparing the long wet season of Adamaoua with the short four-month rains in Nigeria. Besides sparing the pastoral Fulbe from excessive heat and constant moving with the camp, the long wet season of Adamaoua also lightens their daily workload. It shortens considerably the time that the men have to follow the cattle in the bush in search of grass and thus enables them to spend more time in the camp. As a result, certain tasks that in Nigeria belonged to women have now been taken over by men. Undoubtedly the most arduous of these is the construction of

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

huts. Indeed, as many older women recalled, the construction and deconstruction of women's huts and men's shelters took a considerable amount of women's time in Nigeria. In Cameroon, where the huts – for both sexes – are more solidly but less frequently built than in Nigeria, the building work is shifted from women to men, whether to the cattle Fulbe men themselves or to paid Gbaya or Hausa workers. A similar shift in gendered work has happened to milking, which in Nigeria was basically the work of the cattle Fulbe women while in Cameroon it has been exclusively taken over by their husbands and sons.²⁴

The intensified sedentarisation has also brought about changes in the socio-economic organisation of the pastoral community. One such change, observed by Dognin (1975) in Cameroon and by Moses Awogbade (1983) in the Jos Plateau in Nigeria,²⁵ is the concentration of decision-making in the hands of the household head, that is, the father. As Awogbade (*ibid.*:22) notes, due to the extended authority of the father, it now takes some ten or fifteen years more for a pastoralist man in the Jos Plateau to set up his own autonomous camp than it did in the past. Similarly, Dognin (1975:310-311) notes that the pattern of segmentation of families through the out-migration of young adult men has drastically declined as the pastoral Fulbe have migrated to Cameroon. Another change, related to the increased authority of the father, is the emergence of the atomistic three-generation camps, each pursuing its own economic interests without significant pastoral co-operation with other camps (Awogbade 1983:21-22). One historical reason for these tendencies was the colonial peace that decreased the value of lineage co-operation in defence matters and offered the pastoralists the possibility for dispersal (see e.g., *ibid.*; Azarya 1978; Hopen 1958). Another reason can be found in the sedentarisation itself: in regions where the humid climate enables a more sedentary way of life there is not such a need for co-ordination of seasonal movements as in dryer areas.

The trend towards the "privatisation" of pastoralism is nowadays a topic of conversation. The cattle Fulbe whom I talked with traced its roots back to the time when the first among their neighbours started to migrate from Kano and Bauchi to Cameroon and beyond. One old man recalled his childhood in Bauchi as a time when he constantly heard of leaving people, including his

²⁴ Another change is that while in Nigeria the cows were milked twice a day, in Cameroon it is done only in the morning.

²⁵ Due to its altitude, the natural conditions of the Jos Plateau differ considerably from the conditions in its surrounding areas in Nigeria (Awogbade 1983). With its humid savanna climate, the Jos Plateau can be compared to the Adamaoua of Cameroon.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

own relatives, who “disappeared into the land of Congo”.²⁶ “Can you see, now we have dispersed”, he sighed after recalling his childhood with elders who finally migrated from Nigeria leaving his own “fathers” (*baabiraaBe*) behind. In these separations the man saw the dawn of a new era that sharply contrasted with the past when the cattle Fulbe still led a more neighbourly life. He described this contrast between the past and the present in the following way:

What made us happy in Nigeria – – is that we all lived together in one compound (*saare*). The cattle, the place was good to graze a lot of cattle. In that time there was no agriculture. The field did not yield any crop, – – [people] did not cultivate. We gathered together, we spent the day, like we do [now] in this hut. We were plenty! Some children sat on the grass hearing what we were talking about. So, women, they all gathered together, they spent the day in another place. Some [women] went to the market place spending the day there. Others, the elders, stayed in the compound. So now, look, we came [in Cameroon], we stay in separate huts (*suudu*). [That is] wicked, [that is] not good. A man has no wealth, there is not enough food. He can eat only little, because there is no wealth, isn't there? He lives alone, doesn't he? So, if he lives alone and falls ill, how can people from other huts find it out? He suffers, doesn't he? He has no wealth, how can he be brought to the hospital? He has to go to people to get money to go to the hospital. Food is scarce, there is no money. So, if he goes [to the hospital], isn't he obliged to ask for a loan? So, if food is scarce, can you see, the children go to sleep in hunger, also his wife, can you see, they go to sleep in hunger. So you see that it is not good! In God's eyes it is not good like that, the camp [should] be large. Like we live now, there is no food, my children, all the relatives, and us, we gather to eat together. My children gather with other children to eat together. So it is with the women, the mothers of children gather together to eat. [And] we, the elders, we gather together, we eat. The boys too, they gather together. So if they did not cook, will my children eat? – – And how, if there is only a single hut, two huts, one hut, there is no wealth, [and the camp] is little, [how] can there be happiness? In the name of God, there is no happiness. So, in Cameroon, this is all that I have seen. [In] Cameroon, [people] stay [in one place], but there is no love [for one's own kin].

The quotation serves as a typical example of the nostalgia that so often colours people's memories of Nigeria and contrasts them with the contemporary life in Cameroon. In the description the organisational changes of the pastoral community are concretized in the shape of two different

²⁶ When the cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua use the expression “the land of Congo” (*leddi Kongo*), they do not refer to the actual nation state of Congo Brazzaville but to the Central African Republic where many of their relatives live nowadays.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

campsites: one full of life, huts and people, and the other tiny, miserable and isolated. It should, however, be pointed out that in the contrast the man did not refer to any total loss of wealth and happiness among the pastoralists in Cameroon. This would not have made any sense as there were wealthy cattle camps in his neighbourhood. Instead, he wanted to pay attention to the moral loss that the pastoral community has gone through in new circumstances. Thus, it is not the lack of wealth but the lack of *enDam*, the love and care for one's own people, that, in his view, makes life different in Cameroon. It makes people reluctant to share food and campsites with others, thus putting those in trouble in the shameful situation of begging for help from outside. It is illustrative that ideas of this kind were expressed by pastoralists who were relatively poor due to the past cattle losses in their families: their condition made them much more vulnerable to decline in the social safety net than their well-off relatives who never complained of similar issues.

Yet, there were still other ways to be nostalgic about the past and criticise the present common to both more and less fortunate pastoralists. One of these was talking of food. Some people never got tired of describing the delicious dishes that the pastoralist women conjured up from milk, butter, guinea corn, maize, beans, peanuts and various wild fruits in Nigeria. Even when it came to the long period in the dry season bush, there were those who insisted that with milk and butter one remains replete all day long. Contrary to the abundance in Nigeria, the food in Cameroon was regarded as extremely monotonous. One reason mentioned often was the constant use of manioc which constitutes a prominent share of people's daily diet in Adamaoua.²⁷ Besides, the pastoralists complained of the scarcity of dishes. "Nowadays our foods are only two: *nyiri* (porridge) and *mbusiri* (gruel)", as one woman said. What was missing, however, from her definition was the increased consumption of meat, which has become still another popular topic of conversation:

In Nigeria, [people] do not eat much meat, there is no desire (*suuno*) [for it]. But here, there is a lot of desire [for eating meat]. If one spends one month without receiving meat, my Tea, he is nearly ready to eat a snake! But in Nigeria, if we celebrated *indeeri* (the name-giving ceremony), we ate once, there was nobody to taste the meat again. We drank water only, or milk. So,

²⁷ Tibati with its surroundings has traditionally been one of the main producers of manioc in Adamaoua. This does not, however, mean that other foodstuffs such as maize, rice, guinea corn and potatoes are not – at least seasonally – available. People prefer to eat manioc simply because it is cheap to buy in the region and yields a good crop. This holds true also with pastoralists regardless of the fact that they constantly complain of being tired of eating it.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

that is why I said that there is a lot of desire [in Cameroon], because I have seen it with my eyes. There [in Nigeria), if there was meat left in the evening, we threw it away. Or then we gave [it] to others.

Again, in the above quotation from an old woman, the landscapes of Nigeria and Cameroon are contrasted through moral argumentation. This particular statement is very powerful because the communal cattle sacrifices still form a central practice through which the feeling of togetherness in the pastoral community is reinforced. Thus, by contrasting those who gather together to have their decent portion of the communal animal sacrifice with those who are constantly haunted by the desire for gorging on meat, and then by locating these agents in the two landscapes respectively, the woman made a clear statement concerning lost sociality in contemporary Cameroon.

But what reasons did the people give for their claims about the decay of traditional solidarity? Why does all this happen especially in Cameroon? Interestingly, the local view of the causes for the present status quo does not particularly differ from what scholars have suggested as regards the privatisation of pastoralism. In the pastoralists' eyes it is the eased sedentary life far away from the hardships of the dry Nigerian bush that gives people the opportunity to lead a more selfish and non-caring life. But what is at least as important is that it also gives them much more time to socialise with the villagers. Indeed, the "atomisation" that has started to take place in the bush camps in Adamaoua coincides with the reverse trend in camp-village relations. To settle down on the road to Tibati ties a pastoral camp to village affairs much more solidly than was the case when its members were moving from one place to another most of the year. A concrete example of this change was given to me in the dry season camp of a young man who proudly told me that in calm weather he could hear the prayer calls from the mosque of Tibati in his campsite. But besides these positive feelings of being part of a wider community, living near villages has also aroused quite opposite reactions. It could even be said that the increased contacts which the rapid sedentarisation process has brought about have strengthened the ambiguity towards village life. Here I refer to the twofold position in which the cattle Fulbe strive for villagers' acceptance – for example, by being good Muslims – and try at the same time to find ways of keeping cultural distance from them. To integrate is to lose autonomy and, as the pastoralists well know, the consequences of recent developments are not always favourable. On the contrary, the hierarchical inferiority of the cattle Fulbe in relation to the villagers has deepened and it has been a long time since the grandparents of my oldest informants still had their own pagan slaves (*maccuBe*) who worked in their masters' fields and took care of their herds in Nigeria. Again,

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

Cameroon has become the landscape of change which is reflected in people's way of comparing their former independence in Nigeria with their contemporary position in Adamaoua. I quote an old pastoralist man:

All of us, Fulbe (= pastoral Fulbe), followed our own relatives. We followed our own people, a big *arDo* (chief). We did not follow the *Huya* (the village Fulbe). But now in their own land, we have to follow, haven't we? Didn't we come into their land?

The strengthened feeling of dependency is also present in a quotation from two pastoralist men who talked about the current situation in which the new campsites always have to be approved by the *laamiiDo*, the local Muslim chief, who also charges the cattle Fulbe when they move. The men contrasted the present condition with the more honoured position of pastoralists in Nigeria:

* In Nigeria wherever you want to stay, you can do it. You agree with people – –, nobody says anything to you. *LaamiiDo* in Nigeria, they do not vex Fulbe at all.

** – – not at all. They are afraid of Fulbe. They praise Fulbe. But here they do not, they approve the use of force, they chase your cattle.

It should be added that the present situation, in which the cattle Fulbe have become increasingly dependent on the whimsies of the local *laamiiDo* while at the same time the influence of their own *arDo'en* has crucially diminished, is especially characteristic of Adamaoua. In other regions of Cameroon the power relations can vary highly as those of my informants who had lived in eastern Cameroon before settling down in Tibati well know. One man who had lived several years in the regions around Bertoua emphasised that there were no *laamiiBe* (pl. of *laamiiDo*) in the area, only “the general of the brigade, the doctor, the prefect and the tribunal” – all offices and institutions established by white people. So, in the absence of a local Muslim chief in the area, the cattle Fulbe are able to follow their own *arDo'en* who nowadays move between their bush camps and village houses. In Adamaoua, however, the conditions are different and, due to the strong position of the *laamiiDo* and the dependency of the *arDo'en* on his favours,²⁸ the work of the latter has

²⁸ Compared to other Muslim chiefs in West Africa, the *laamiiBe* of Adamaoua are known for the particularly strong power that they have traditionally had in both the religious and political sphere (see more in Lacroix 1966). Besides the *laamiiDo*, there are nowadays, of course, various government officials in the divisions of Adamaoua. The cattle Fulbe are however quite suspicious to about approaching such authorities as the prefect and the subprefect and prefer thus to rely on the traditional chiefs of the area.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

been corrupted. For example, one pastoralist, wealthy in cattle, told me of several clansmen who had tried to flatter him by buying clothes and other gifts so that he would accept them as new *arDo'en*. They also tried to cheat him when asking him to give them cattle and money to be taken to the *laamiiDo*. The man emphasised that since he arrived in Tibati some twenty years ago he has never followed any *arDo* but, instead, he has always paid the required fees directly to the *laamiiDo* – and encouraged his sons to do the same as well. But, besides saving money and not wasting it on greedy *arDo'en*, a clever pastoralist understands also the more general value of being directly related to the *laamiiDo* in Adamaoua:

Now, all the Mbororo they follow *arDo*, but in our lives, we follow *laamiiDo*, because it is better [to follow him]. It is better that we follow the *laamiiDo* of Tibati. But all the *arDo'en*, when they came here, their work was ruined and there is suffering. And how, if you are a catcher of little fish, how can you go to a big river? You have fished, you did not get big fishes. So, isn't it the *laamiiDo* who is the big river? If you arrived at his place, as you have arrived here, don't you see, [it is as if] you had waken up there. Doesn't the *laamiiDo* know you? So, all the offices, the judge (*alkaali*), they know you, don't they? If you went to Ngaoundere, they know you, don't they? Isn't it like that? So we, we follow only *laamiiDo* Barkindo²⁹, we do not follow *arDo* at all.

The quotation reveals the contradictory fact that, in order to carry out their devotion to “follow” their cattle, the pastoral Fulbe are always forced to make compromises with the surrounding centers of power. The shift from following their own *arDo'en* to following the local *laamiiDo* is a strategic compromise typical for the pastoralists in Adamaoua and it has partly intensified the atomisation process in the region as single camps have started to take care of their obligations to the *laamiiDo* without any intraclan go-betweens. This does not, however, mean that the pastoralists do not understand the irony of the situation. On the contrary, among my informants the *laamiiDo*'s greediness for pastoralists' cattle was mocked at least as much as the ways of the false *arDo'en*, and the possibility of flight in the case that the demands of the former got too heavy was always regarded as worthy of consideration. But, after all, in the changing landscapes of moving pastoralism the cattle Fulbe will always need a certain amount of opportunism which, however, means constant redefinition of their own moral limits. While there are people who have the authority as well as the talent for putting a good face on changing practices, there are others who are not in a similar position. As will be shown

²⁹ During my fieldwork Barkindo was the *laamiiDo* of Tibati.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

in the following, one such group – a group that is especially criticised for exceeding the moral limits by taking questionable advantage of the changed circumstances of Adamaoua – are the young people.

From Soro to Manslaughter: Cameroon and the Undisciplined Youth

The cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua are certainly not the only people in the world who criticise their youth for moral decline. What makes this quite universal pattern interesting in their particular case is that it reflects the overall concerns that these pastoralists have when coping with the changes that moving to Cameroon has brought into their lives. Thus, when finding fault with their youth, the pastoralists do not actually criticise their own offspring as such but rather the present circumstances that, in their view, have made the young cattle Fulbe give up traditions. One condition to blame is simply the long wet season in Adamaoua which, while reducing the daily need for taking the cattle away from the camp in search for grass, lightens especially the work of the adolescent boys thus giving them more time for other activities. In the eyes of many older pastoralists the consequences of this liberation have been disastrous as many young men have become more and more exposed to the temptations of villages and towns. In extreme cases they have abandoned their families and disappeared in big cities.

To give an example, one old woman told me that during her stay in Cameroon more than ten of her young male relatives have moved to Yaounde, the southern capital of the country. Without questioning her sincerity, it can be added that the woman could certainly not be sure that all of these young men had gone exactly to Yaounde as those who leave often stop keeping contact with their relatives. However, once when I was visiting the capital, I managed to find one of those relatives of hers, a man called Muusa, in the big cattle market of Yaounde where he was working.³⁰ I told him greetings from his own mother who was seriously ill during that time. He promised to go to see her in one week which he never did – or at least not by the time I revisited Tibati two years later. At the time when Muusa left Tibati, that is six years before I met him in Yaounde, he was married with one son. Some time after his disappearance his wife – who was actually the daughter of the woman who first told me about all this – moved to the Bamenda Plateau with a new husband. Instead, Muusa's son stayed with

³⁰ When entering towns, the young cattle Fulbe men often look for a job connected to the cattle business. Such was the case also with Muusa who was in charge of the daily care of the cattle that was transferred from the north and waiting to be sold in the big cattle market of Yaounde. Muusa's sister in Tibati told me of having heard that people in Yaounde call him "*kaliifa na'i*" ("the caliph of the cattle").

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

Muusa's parents following the general patrilineal pattern among the pastoral Fulbe. As such, Muusa's situation resembled that of many other disappearing young men as they often leave after getting married and having one child.³¹ The logic behind this particular timing is that it is only after setting up his own household – which takes place when the wife returns from her parents with the first child – that a man is given the full rights and responsibilities of a grown-up man. Besides the psychological effect of “becoming an adult”, the new status offers him the questionable opportunity to sell his cattle, i.e. his “inheritance advance”³² from his father's stock, and so be able to afford his journey away.

But the youth can do much harm even when not totally leaving their kin behind. They can spend their time in the village leaving the herd to its fate in the bush. Even worse, they can fool around drinking beer, picking a quarrel with their knives, and thus getting into deeper and deeper troubles. Again, when complaining of such misbehaviour of their youth, the cattle Fulbe restrict it exclusively to their present domicile. “Cameroon is pleasant but it destroys children”, they say. Besides referring to the easier climatic conditions, the expression points also at socially created circumstances. One such factor which people explicitly bring up is the ban on *soro*, the baton-beating contest which still forms a common practice among the adolescent pastoralist boys in Nigeria. Historically the ban can be dated to the period when the *Jaafun* Fulbe started to spread around Adamaoua from Lompta. As Burnham (1996) says, the reason for the ban can be related to the efforts of these pastoralists to meet the religious expectations of their new sedentary Fulbe neighbours in Cameroon. The interesting thing is, that while those *Jaafun* elders who forbid *soro* among their followers³³ did it because they considered it as non-Islamic and related to licentious behaviour among the

³¹ When a person leaves his kin without a trace the people say “*o dilli dandi*” (“*o dilli*” meaning “he has gone”). I have not managed to get any local explanation for the word *dandi*, but in Noye's (1989) dictionary it is translated as “having one child with someone”. Thus, the expression “*o dilli dandi*” could possibly refer to the above-mentioned situation in which a person leaves his family or kin after the birth of his first child.

³² The term derives from the French word *préhéritage* which Dupire (1962:152) employs for the cattle inheritance system of the pastoral Fulbe. As such, the term points at the difference between the cattle Fulbe and other Muslim people in the Sudan belt: while among the former each son inherits his share of the father's stock at the time of his first marriage, in the latter group the division of inheritance – whether this consists of cattle or other sorts of wealth – is postponed to the moment of the father's death.

³³ According to Burnham's (1996) *Jaafun* informants in the Mbere Department, *soro* was initially banned by Ardo Idje, a famous *Jaafun* leader, after he had migrated with his followers from Lompta through Belel to CAR in the 1920s. See also Ndoudi Oumarou's similar view in Bocquené (1986).

youth (ibid:109), my *Aku* informants in Tibati saw the consequences of this policy exactly in the opposite way. But before elaborating the point I shall say a few words about *soro* as a cultural practice.

Among the different cattle Fulbe groups *soro* is mostly practised by the seminomadic Islamised pastoralists such as the *Jaafun* and the *Aku*.³⁴ There is no certainty about its origin: while E. A. Brackenbury (1924:274) has brought up the possibility that the custom has been borrowed from some neighbouring pagan groups, Dupire (1970:457) has referred to a more endogenous origin. She suggests that the practice derives from the time when the *Jaafun* still lived in North Nigeria and their adolescent herders used to leave for transhumance with the cattle. As she notes, the long transhumance served as a period when enduring bonds of masculine solidarity were created between the young herders who spent their time in the bush by playing their flutes and fighting each other with their herding sticks. Furthermore, it formed a male initiation, a test of manhood so to speak, during which the young men had to manage on their own, their diet consisting almost exclusively of milk.

In the actual *soro*, however, the stick beating was transformed from a private play in the bush into a public, strictly regulated spectacle which took place after the young herders had returned from the dry season transhumance. While, according to F. W. de St Croix (1942:45), *soro* could be organised either during Islamic festivals or such kin based celebrations as the name-giving ceremony or a marriage feast, my informants associated it mainly with the former. One woman, for example, stated that during her youth the young men gathered for *soro* three times per year: once in the end of Ramadan, once during the ram feast (*juulde Layha*) and once some time between these two. What was – and still is – a prominent feature of *soro* in Nigeria is that it is a social exchange between two lineages, each of which invite the other in turn. As my informants explained, one lineage could have several *soro* partners at the same time. On what grounds these partners were chosen remained, however, unclear to me. For example, while some of my informants emphasised that it is not practised between lineages that consider each other as classificatory cross-cousins (*denDiraaBe*), there were others whose examples of their *soro* partners proved the opposite. In a similar manner St Croix (1942:45) has noticed that while some lineages do not intermarry if

³⁴ In this regard a difference is often made between the nomadic *WoDaaBe* and that of other cattle Fulbe groups of which the former practice *gerewol*, a sort of beauty contest among the young boys, and the latter *soro* which has more to do with physical endurance. On *gerewol*, see more in Dupire (1962; 1970), Reed (1932) and Vieillard (1932).

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

there is no *soro* performed between their members, there are others who do not perform it with groups with whom they intermarry. In both of his cases, however, the practice can be connected with mating and marriage, and the active role that girls have as an audience can be observed in both of them. Thus, examples can be found of those girls who come to watch *soro* in order to estimate the bravery of a possible marriage partner from another lineage (Dupire 1970; St Croix 1942), as well as of others who ardently encourage their own brothers and cousins while insulting ruthlessly those lads from the opposing group who show any signs of cowardice (Bocquené 1986). Indeed, “no Jafun woman will marry a man who has not passed this test of manhood”, as L. N. Reed (1932:439) noticed a long time ago among pastoralists in Bornu, and his observation still concerns the groups that have continued to practice *soro*.³⁵

What then actually happens during *soro*? I quote the pithy description by Brackenbury (1924:274):

The test consists in undergoing a severe flogging without flinching in the presence of the clan, including some of the women. – – The youths flog each other with rods (*Losol*) of the Tamarind tree. The youth to be flogged stands in front of the crowd holding a looking glass in his hand and stroking his long locks of hair, while another youth strikes the bare chest or back of the candidate with great force five or six times (some claim to have received thirty strokes), frequently drawing blood. The candidate has to gaze into the mirror unmoved. The candidate must not flinch in the slightest. If he does, he fails, is greeted with derision and has to try again at a later assembly. The scars often remain for life.

Except for two cases – a woman who told that young boys were dancing and receiving strokes at the same time and a man who mentioned that the boys were beaten by several persons in the course of a single gathering – my informants’ descriptions of the *soro* of their youth in Nigeria were quite similar to the above. Among men the memories of it sometimes came up when I asked them about *pulaaku* virtues such as *munyal* (patience) and *ngorgu* (bravery) which they then associated with moments when they, as young men in Bauchi, stood unmoved in front of the audience while their *soro* partners were beating them. Provided with such self-possession the men distinguished themselves from the village people – both Fulbe and Hausa – who “if beaten,

³⁵ It should be added that whatever happens during *soro*, it does not effect the execution of the infant betrothal (*koobgal*) between the first cousins (cf. St Croix 1945:46). But even these appreciated marriages can break down if a girl decides to flee with a certain *soro* performer.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

do not stand still but shit and flee”. “One [cattle] Pullo makes a whole village disperse”, an old man said when describing the disproportion in masculine qualities between themselves and the villagers. Women recalled *soro* with more contradictory feelings. As in the case of men, their descriptions entailed stories of youth who still, after having received several hard strokes, inquired indifferently if their opponent had beaten them at all – or of those who “were beaten till they fell on the ground unconscious, without uttering the slightest sound”. But, as much as with pride and joy for brave kinsmen, the memories of women were coloured with anxiety about their well-being. Indeed, the most crucial concern was not someone’s shameful escape but rather the ever present possibility that a young male relative would bleed to death while joining one *soro* after another in the neighbouring towns. Another related topic that attracted notice was the difference between the lineages as regards with the endurance of their youth, and guesses were made about the possible means – including the use of both bush herbs and witchcraft – by which young men of certain lineages managed to pass *soro* uninjured. One woman recalled the magical skills of the youth of *Iloranko’en* in the following way:

Iloranko’en, they do not know when they are beaten. *Iloranko’en*, they are not afraid of *soro*. Some of them, if they are beaten, they do not bleed, their bodies do not swell. Whether they drink a remedy, or whether they do something else, [I do not know]. They, [the *Iloranko’en*], play *soro* with *Sokkotanko’en*. A man is struck ten times, another twenty times, but still their bodies do not bleed.

The inconvenient thing for the *soro* partners is that if one beats his “unbeatable” opponent ten or twenty times without a visible result he is still supposed to endure the same amount of strokes from the latter when their roles are reversed the next time. Keeping in mind the risks – as well as the obsession that some youth have to test their limits at all costs – it is not difficult to understand the relief that many people, especially mothers, felt when there was no *soro* in Cameroon. “It is better that we came here, now our children rest, [and] you do not have to be afraid that someone goes to *soro* and dies”, as one mother concluded. Still, her comment did not reveal the whole truth. As she herself was aware, the new home country has its own pitfalls for youth which, according to most pastoralists, have turned out to be much worse than the side effects of *soro*. Indeed, the interesting difference that people see between the youthful activities in Nigeria and Cameroon is based on the fact that while *soro* undoubtedly involved risks for individuals it still represented a collectively approved practice that had its clearly defined rules. As comes out in Bocquené (1986), it was the *kori’en* (sg. *kori*) – the men who had just passed the adolescent age of *sukaaBe* (sg. *suka*) – who were in

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

charge of organising *soro* and whose responsibility it was to oversee that the beating did not get out of hand on either side. One example of this collective control was mentioned by a woman who told me how the lineages of *Tuubanko'en* and *BooDi'en* gave up playing *soro* with each other in Nigeria. The reason for this was the ban declared by the leaders (*arDo'en*) of both lineages because the practice had switched into uncontrolled beating and fighting between the respective groups.

Given the different aspects of *soro*, the current ways of performing one's youth are regarded as its opposite in several ways. In vocabulary the opposition is made by differentiating *soro* from *hiirde*, the latter being principally a general term for the occasions when young people spend an evening together, but referring here particularly to the way in which this is performed in Cameroon. In people's explications, however, this particularity turned out to consist simply of the fact that, while in Nigeria the gatherings of the youth included both *soro* among the boys and dancing (*wamarde*) by both sexes, the only regulated activity around which *hiirde* in Cameroon is centred is the dance. Interestingly then, in pastoralists' eyes it is the absence of *soro* as such that has led to unwanted consequences.

But what exactly is lost along with the ban on *soro*? And what is there to replace it? To start with, along with the ban on *soro* the pastoral community as a whole has lost a central institution that united the efforts of different age groups. As is known from earlier accounts, *soro* was an affair of the whole pastoral group; elder brothers and cousins supervised the young in the role of *kori'en*, fathers and uncles rewarded the brave ones with gifts of cattle (see e.g., Bocquené 1986; Vieillard 1932). The supportive role of others was remarked on also by my informants whose descriptions included such details as *kori'en* coaxing their adolescent followers to *soro* and young girls rubbing oil into the wounds of those beaten. What has been central is that it has encouraged the participant to control both fear and anger in the presence of others as it is equally shameful to flee and hit back. Indeed, the way in which the audience has supported those going through the trial of being beaten reminds of what Riesman (1977) has said about the social character of *pulaaku*. Namely that, besides being actualised through the awareness of the presence of others, the observance of *pulaaku* can be deliberately supported by these others. How this can take place during *soro* was nicely brought up by an old man who described how the people who had come to watch *soro* – including young girls, *kori'en* and some older kinsmen – used to come to sit right next to a beginner if they saw him running the risk of losing his temper while being beaten.

Now, along with the ban on *soro*, the social network that was earlier built around it has equally disappeared. Concomitantly, there is not such a

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

collective regard for youth's gatherings as before and some parents even emphasised that they are nowadays quite uninformed about where their adolescent children spend their *hiirde*. How then do people see the results of the change and the decreased attention on youth's activities? Here are the comments of two old women:

In *soro*] they (= young men) beat, they know there [in Nigeria] what is bravery. [But here] in their gatherings (*fijirde*³⁶), they play, they hit a person with a knife, is that good? So, the others then, in *soro*, one stands, beats his fellow five, six, seven, eight times. Then his fellow comes and stands in his turn. He beats him, he returns [in his place]. Isn't it good? Didn't they see his heart (*Bernde*)? If someone does not have courage, when they beat, [they say] "he is afraid, that one is afraid!" So that is why, you see, the young girls say that they like him. If he is brave, the young girls like him, [they] like him. But here, they just drink beer, they go their own way.

In Cameroon – – they do not play *soro*. Some get drunk and hit each other, but that is not *soro*. – – They only spend the evening together if they gather. So, there is worry, there is quarrel, they beat each other because of women. One hits [other person's] body, takes his knife, kills, [the other] will not recover. – – [If] a man talks with the woman of another man, [the other takes] stick, [or] knife, he does not talk. – – If someone gets angry, he just takes his knife and slits the stomach of his relative, *tirr*!!

The message of the two quotations is clear: the elimination of *soro* with its inter-generational bonds has deprived the adolescent boys of a principal social arena for developing such highly valued *pulaaku* virtues as bravery (*ngorgu*) and patience (*munya*). Indeed, in Nigeria *soro* formed a central means to discover a boy's true nature, to "see his heart" (*laargo Bernde*). What is then left in Cameroon can be summed up in two points. First, there is cowardice and mendacity – a situation where the young men do not show their intentions but "hide their hearts" as the cattle Fulbe themselves put it. Second, there is a lack of self-control, a visible sign of which being the sudden physical attacks on one's fellows that are often triggered by jealousy for women. In the above citations the new impulsive behaviour mode is embodied in the knife, a symbol of precipitate action that has replaced the collectively controlled stick-beating. This impulsiveness is further enhanced by beer drinking which has partially superseded the use of bush herbs as an encouraging agent.

³⁶ The direct translation of the word *fijirde* is "play". Quite often, however, the cattle Fulbe use the word as a synonym of *hiirde*, that is to mean the youth's get-together in Cameroon, as is the case also in the above quotation.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

In addition to beer drinking, there is another phenomenon in Adamaoua that represents the moral decay of the youth and gives cause for much more worry than alcohol. This is the dangerous practice of solvent abuse, with serious consequences for many youngsters, which I observed in the mission hospital near Tibati. Besides causing medical problems to themselves, the sniffing youth bring deep shame on their kin and people were often at pains to explain that the frenetic behaviour of their young relatives was caused by witchcraft. Indeed, the dazed young men hitting their heads against the walls or rushing about with a lunatic gaze in their eyes form such a glaring contrast with the cool and motionless *soro* candidates that it is not difficult to understand why many pastoralists are so puzzled by the fact their offspring can voluntarily engage in such madness. One old man said that the new drugs make the young lose their heads, that is, their reason, so that they do not even know whom they are hitting. He also referred to the commoditised nature of the practice by saying that a young person who buys himself solvents actually “purchases himself a sickness” (*soodgo nyaw*). His words bring out two contrasts that the pastoral Fulbe see between the new ways of drugging oneself and the traditional way of using certain bush remedies. First, the two practices have quite different consequences for the behaviour of the youth – and for conforming to *pulaaku* ideals. While the use of bush herbs is believed to enhance one’s capacity for self-possession, the effect of breathing in the vapour from solvents is quite the opposite. Second, the two practices represent an involvement with two different social worlds: while the use of a certain bush herb as a remedy against the risks of *soro* is a carefully kept intralineage secret, solvent abuse represents the uncontrollable forces from outside, a form of exchange that threatens the moral order of the pastoral community.

There are, of course, less drastic manifestations of the outside influences than the perilous solvent abuse. One feature that involves, again, especially the male youth is clothing and hair-dress, both of which have gone through apparent changes during the last decades. To focus here on the hairstyle, perhaps the most manifest sign that distinguished the young boys, the *sukaaBe*, from other cattle Fulbe males in Nigeria was their long braided hair which they cut only after having set up their own household and entering the age-class of *kori'en*. Along with the pastoralists’ migration into Cameroon, however, the long plaits have given way to a shorter non- braided hair-dress as the young men have started to shape their hair in a fashion that imitates – even if in an exaggerated way – the hairstyle of the young Christian villagers

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

with their accentuated fringe.³⁷ For many older pastoralists, who always make a close association between *soro* and braided hair in their talk, the change of the hairstyle of the youth symbolises the ever present risk of assimilation:

But here now there is no *soro*, there is no braiding of the hair. They only make a cowlick of hair like the heathens (*haaBe*). Now, isn't he a heathen [as] he knows how to release his hair? It does not reach [down as before]. Of him who releases his hair like our children do [now], they say: "But he is heathen!"

As many previous quotations, this one from an old woman reflects the general idea that the youth are especially susceptible to outside influences and thus to cultural change. As has been shown above, among the cattle Fulbe many fears concerning the future are projected especially upon the male youth. The paradox is, however, that, perhaps more than any other category of people, at their best the adolescent boys embody also such highly valued *pulaaku* attributes as bravery, self-possession and the fortitude to make autonomous decisions. Besides, the days of *soro* are not yet numbered. As I heard from some pastoralists, there are nowadays young men who travel to Nigeria for the sole purpose of joining the game. Not to mention the new pastures of the Central African Republic where, beyond the supervision of "the elders" of Adamaoua, so I was told, *soro* has been started anew.

Change and Continuity in Campsites

In the preceding pages I have examined how the recent changes in the lives of the cattle Fulbe are reflected in their talk of two different landscapes, Nigeria and Cameroon. As we have seen, the difference between the two is not seen as spatial and temporal distance only but covers many sociocultural aspects as well. Yet, there is never change without continuity and in the cattle Fulbe camps of Adamaoua this involves much more than some fleeting moments of telling stories of the mythical and historical past. On the contrary, the pastoralists have carried the Nigerian landscape along into their present in Cameroon in various ways. I shall now illustrate some of these.

To start with a linguistic example, in addition to actual reminiscence, Nigeria is present in people's everyday talk through numerous lineage and

³⁷ The way in which the most fashion-conscious cattle Fulbe youth had their hair shaped in Adamaoua during my fieldwork differed from the Christian young men's style in that, while the front part of the hair of the latter often formed an up going rectangular area that continued till the back of the head, the haircut of the young cattle Fulbe men was much softer forming a clearly distinct elevation in the front – and sometimes also above the nape of the neck. The shape of the front part brought to mind the upraised fringe that the cattle Fulbe women used to have in former times.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

forenames which daily remind of regions where their holders once lived. For example, the names of such lineages as *Jaafun* and *Dindima'en* derive from the names of the villages (Jahun and Dindima) from which these lineages originate, near Kano and Bauchi. In a similar way, people are sometimes given pet names, such as Kaduna or Lafia, according to the place where they have been born.³⁸ Keeping in mind the high mobility of the group, it is easy to understand the meaning of such names in remembering the past. In the same way as for the Ilongots of the Philippines, for the cattle Fulbe history is a chain of places, "a movement through space in which – – people walk along a trail and stop at a sequence of named resting places" (Rosaldo 1980:56; see also Carsten 1995:329).

But although the pastoralists in Adamaoua do not have any tombstones or other historical sites for remembering their past, they still have the landscape. A landscape that, although richer in vegetation than it was in Nigeria, still repeats the mytho-historical dichotomy of village and bush, the wilderness of the latter being interrupted only by campsites peeping here and there through the leafage. And even more than mere landscape the pastoralists have their everyday and seasonal practices to be performed in that landscape – practices that in pastures, bush tracks and in the different sections of the culturally ordered campsites bring Nigeria into the present.

One such practice that interestingly embodies both change and continuity is the yearly transhumance during the dry season which normally takes place between December and March. As stated earlier, the difference with former times is that, while in Nigeria people were on the move most of the year, slowing down only for the few months of rain, in Cameroon the rains last so much longer that the wet season camps have become permanent and only part of the camp members leave it with cattle for 3-4 months of transhumance. Another difference is that even the dry season camps are seldom very far away from the villages and other related camps. For example those transhumance camps that I visited were within a ten-kilometre radius from the main camps.³⁹

³⁸ Besides their official Muslim names, the cattle Fulbe are usually given pet names which somehow refer to the conditions in which they were born (e.g., the place, the season, or the time of day). These pet names are much more popular in everyday use than the Muslim names.

³⁹ During my fieldwork I never lived in a dry season camp. I considered it more practical to stay in the head camp with those who did not move and to make one-night visits to the dry season camps from there.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

The changes in seasonal migration patterns have also effected the outlook of the camps. As people stay more permanently in one place⁴⁰ they have more possibilities to build solid huts and gather various things around them. Huts are no longer tiny shelters put up of hay, but consist of low woven walls and a separate thatched roof. During my stay, one new style in both men's and women's huts was also to have the hut built in a quadrature floor plan and support it with a central pillar.⁴¹ The biggest overall change has, however, happened to men's "dwellings" which have transformed from light shelters near the cattle corral into big huts that sometimes contain such things as robust wooden beds and rattan armchairs bought from the villages. For women the change is not so drastic as they have always had their own huts. Still, a woman's hut in Adamaoua with its "scaffolds" (*danki*), shelves and beds all decorated with the most fanciful trimmings differs considerably from the modest standard of equipment that women's huts used to have in Nigeria. A quite new phenomenon is also the construction of a separate cooking hut in front of the main hut. All this concerns, however, only the wet season camps as the pastoralists still construct their dry season huts in the simple "Nigerian" manner. This is, of course, the most practical way as the transhumance huts are inhabited only for a very short period because people normally move several times during one dry season. And as in Nigeria, in the dry season camps women – if there are any – still construct their own huts.

The interplay between change and continuity is also visible in the layout of the camps. In Nigeria, the cattle Fulbe still set up their camps, at least they say they did, in a fixed order in which north indicated the senior status for both men and women.⁴² In men's case this involved a ranking of huts facing west, where the huts of the wives of the eldest brother were located in the north and those of the wives of the youngest brother in the south. In addition, in situations where all brothers already had their own units, that is, wife(s)

⁴⁰ This does not mean that people do not change the place of their wet season camp. On the contrary, it is quite normal to move the camp 500-1,000 metres – or even a shorter distance – every second or third year. I found this to have happened also to the second camp in which I lived: when I revisited Adamaoua two years after my fieldwork the people had moved some 500 metres deeper in the bush away from the road from Tibati to Mbakaou.

⁴¹ This style was favoured by some paid Hausa builders and it probably imitated the design of the village houses.

⁴² A similar gendered layout was found in the 1950s by Hopen (1958) in the pastoral Fulbe camps in Gwandu, in Northern Nigeria.



Photograph 3: Women's huts in a dry season camp.

with hut(s), the father moved to south next to his youngest son.⁴³ Women's seniority was not determined according to age but according to the order of their marriages so that in each brother's unit the hut of the first wife was located in the north.

In contemporary Adamaoua one can still find camps where the huts follow the above order. Often the huts are not, however, standing in a straight line but some of them are located more westwards and some more eastwards. Moreover, there are camps with huts built at random without any other cultural logic than the doorways opening to the west.⁴⁴ One reason for this randomness is perhaps the emergence of men's huts: while earlier the men's shelters were situated near the cattle corral, westwards from the women's huts, nowadays men have their own huts which some prefer to build behind or front of their wives' huts and others between those. It is not uncommon either to see camps where one brother has moved out of the rank altogether with his wives and built up his unit in front of or behind them. Another

⁴³ This detail brings to mind the camps of the nomadic *WoDaaBe* clan in which the seniority among brothers is indicated by south-north order. On *WoDaaBe* see more in Dupire (1962); for a somewhat similar case among the pastoral Fulbe in Jos Plateau, see Awogbade (1983).

⁴⁴ In their daily prayers, if praying inside, the cattle Fulbe use to bow towards the back wall of the hut, that is, eastwards, as east is considered the cardinal point of Allah. The factual location of Mecca is, however, in the northeast.

variation that I saw was to build the whole camp in a circular form. For example, in one three-generation homestead the huts of the chief and his two wives formed the centre of the camp while the huts of the sons' wives were located around the hut of the respective mother. As the married sons were still relatively young and did not have many children, their own modest huts were located near their cattle corrals, somewhat away from the camp.

But whatever inter-generational or intracamp motives the cattle Fulbe have for setting up the huts in a certain manner, when I asked them for the reason for the change, their answers referred elsewhere. One commonly mentioned reason was *bokasa*, a plant that has spread from CAR to Adamaoua and deteriorated the soil so that in many places it is impossible to find enough place for putting up a camp according to the traditional order.⁴⁵ There were also those who did not mention any particular motive at all but said that nowadays people simply construct their huts in the best possible place that they can find.

While the layout of the wet season camps has become more and more variable, the dry season camps are still usually put up according to the north-south order. One reason which makes this possible is that the transhumance camps are often quite small – consisting of a few women's huts and one men's shelter only – and so there is not such a need for an extended area for a long line of huts. Another reason can be found in the location of these camps: they are often set up deeper in the bush where *bokasa* has not yet entered. Be that as it may, the overall look of the dry season camps certainly comes much closer to the ancient camps in Nigeria than to those in which the pastoralists nowadays spend the rainy season in Adamaoua. Indeed, sometimes the old men – with a nostalgic tone in their voice – identify the contemporary dry season camps with their former dwellings in Nigeria “with the straight north-south lines of women's huts”. This identification does not, however, apply to camps only but to the whole dry and dusty landscape around them as the short hot dry season of Adamaoua also physically repeats what was a more normal condition in Nigeria. Furthermore, it repeats the mobility of the people as the only thing that matters is to move on with the hungry cattle to new transhumance camps and pastures, the exact location of which is not willingly told to outsiders.

⁴⁵ *Bokasa* (lat. *Eupatorium*) is a plant that can spread very quickly in those savanna areas that are intensively exploited by cattle. It forms impenetrable thickets and makes cattle herding impossible so that the pastoralists are forced to leave and search for new pastures – where they then transmit the seeds of the plant (see more in Boutrais 1986). According to Mr. Djongwe Gaston, the head of the Livestock Service of Djerem Department, to a large extent it is the pastoralists themselves who have transmitted *bokasa* into the surroundings of Tibati while fleeing from the plant in Eastern Cameroon.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

All in all, the dry season in Adamaoua, with its specific social and practical arrangements, cherishes the memory of a more virtuous time when the cattle Fulbe still followed primarily their herds and not various agents of village life. When it comes to animals, a particular signifier of former times is the white *daneeji* cattle that have migrated with the *Aku* pastoralists to Adamaoua all the way from Kano. Belonging to a breed that is especially adapted to harsh climates and long transhumance, these animals remind their masters of the hardships in the dry Nigerian bush and, as true long-term companions of the pastoralists, represent continuity in changing landscapes. To employ Nadia Seremetakis' (1994:9) words, the small white shapes of the *daneeji* form "semantically dense objects" that embody the memory of the Nigerian past.

HISTORY IN THE PRESENT

In this chapter many examples have been given of how the cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua talk of their mythical and historical past. But, as Janet Carsten (1995:331) has stated, "stories about the past do not give us direct access to knowledge of the past" and accepting that statement involves the additional question of what these stories are then needed for. In the above discussion I have shown how the cattle Fulbe, both in myth-telling and in recollection of their recent history, engage in reflexive action during which they try to make sense of their contemporary situation. My inquiry has disclosed that for the cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua "*Nijeeriya*" and "*Kamaru*" form mental landscapes through which the pastoralists can reflect on quite contradictory ideas that they have of their past and present. Thus, while in moments of nostalgia Nigeria appears as the scene of a happy innocent past when the hardships of bush life united the kinsmen into a collective unselfish effort, in other contexts it can also represent backwardness, an uncivilised or heathen state which the pastoralists left behind when they moved to Adamaoua. Respectively, in relation to these images of Nigeria, Cameroon can be viewed either as the landscape of greed and moral decline or the site of the refined state of Fulbe culture and religion. The same polarity of meanings that comes up in memories is echoed in myths in which the sacred landscape of Kano in Nigeria serves, on one hand, as the place of the archaic pre-Muslim origin of the people and the cattle and, on the other hand, as the scene for the Islamisation of both.

But besides offering a site for cultural self-reflection, Nigeria is also a physical landscape that still concretely touches the lives of the cattle Fulbe in Adamaoua. This happens mainly through kin ties as many pastoralists have relatives who never left Nigeria but have stayed there up till the present. The ties between relatives living on different sides of the border are reinforced by visits made for various reasons. For the cattle Fulbe men in Adamaoua, one

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

reason for going to Nigeria is marriage arrangements; many pastoralists are ready to travel long distances to get a wife belonging to their own lineage, either for themselves or for their sons.⁴⁶ Women also are at least as eager as men to visit their spatially distant relatives in Nigeria. One particular reason for this is that women live, more often than men, far away from their parents, sisters and brothers. The emotional importance of these visits for women can be seen in the great joy with which they recall their trips. The way in which the women express the feeling of having been cared for by their relatives while visiting them interestingly confirms those collective memories in which Nigeria is elevated to a place of the socially virtuous past.

The ties between distant relatives are strengthened also by an opposite movement, that is by visits from Nigeria to Cameroon. In these visits one eye-catching detail is that women are quick to change their braiding styles when arriving in their destination.⁴⁷ They do this in order to avoid the disapproval of their Adamaouan relatives who avidly mock the clumsy and old-fashioned style of the Nigerian pastoralists. The mockery effectively repeats the idea of cultural evolution which transforms the ungraceful Fulbe styles and practices to more refined ones. The example of women's hairstyle illustrates the point because the way in which the hair of the cattle Fulbe women of Adamaoua is braided nowadays imitates the hairstyle of the Muslim village women of the region.

As the cattle Fulbe have expanded eastwards, the visits between relatives are not restricted to Nigeria and Cameroon but take people also to the Central African Republic. In my field area in Tibati, due to its location on the main road traversing Adamaoua, the expansion has one specific consequence: besides pastoralists who travel purposely to their relatives in Tibati, there are many of those for whom the region serves as a resting place on their way from Nigeria to CAR, or vice versa. During my field work I met many cattle Fulbe who stopped in Tibati at their old neighbours or distant kinsmen before continuing to their ultimate destination. In addition, I noticed that often the region served as a meeting place for travelling people. For example, one pastoralist from CAR came to meet his wife halfway in Tibati

⁴⁶ Actually, these trips are usually made more than once as, in addition to negotiation visits, the wife has to be fetched and then refetched after she has given birth and weaned her first child in her parents' camp.

⁴⁷ Those Nigerian pastoral women whom I saw visiting Adamaoua had a hairstyle in which relatively thick braids radiate from the top of the head into all directions. On the contrary, the hair of the pastoral women in Adamaoua is braided from front to back and the braids are thin. As regards men's hairstyle, the big change is that the young men do not have long braids anymore. There are many lineages that have given up the latter practice also in Nigeria.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

when she returned from her parents in Nigeria after the birth of the couple's first child.

What can be inferred from the above is that, compared to many other districts, the location of Tibati offers the cattle Fulbe who live there an excellent place for being in contact with other pastoralists and hearing news from distant camps. In addition, situated on halfway between Nigeria in the northwest and the Central African Republic in the southeast, Tibati is not exceedingly far from either of these places and so the local cattle Fulbe can now and then visit relatives in both of them. Consequently, it is not only of *leddi Nijeeriya* and *leddi Kamaru* that people nowadays have memories but of *leddi Ersia* or *leddi Kongo*⁴⁸ – both terms denoting to the Central African Republic – as well. But what is still more interesting is that, similarly to the recollection of Nigeria, the talk of CAR often exceeds individual memories and reflects more collective landscapes. Indeed, in the same way as pastoralists' talk of Nigeria can be fully understood only in relation to Cameroon, their talk of the Central African Republic is shaped in relation to the former two. Employing Sahlins' wording, the images that people have of all of these three territories can be seen as blending into a larger "mytho-practical landscape" (Kirch and Sahlins 1992) through which the ideas of morality, sociality and the autonomy of the pastoral group are reflected. Thus, while *leddi Nijeeriya* represents the socially virtuous as well as culturally autonomous pastoral community and *leddi Kamaru* its unsocial and dependent antipode, *leddi Ersia*, or *leddi Kongo*, can be seen as a more recently constructed landscape through which people reflect on the same opposition.⁴⁹

When the cattle Fulbe talk of *leddi Ersia/Kongo*, they place it on the same level with *leddi Nijeeriya* because both represent landscapes for unrestricted

⁴⁸ To my understanding, of these two labels, *leddi Kongo* is of earlier origin, as the pastoral Fulbe used it already in the time when they lived in Nigeria, for the remote southeastern areas where some of their kinsmen were migrating. On the contrary, *leddi Ersia*, being a modification of the French abbreviation for the Central African Republic (RCA), is a word introduced to my informants first in Cameroon.

⁴⁹ It should be noted that when the cattle Fulbe talk of *Nijeeriya*, *Kamaru*, *Ersia* and *Kongo*, they are not always aware of the exact location of the borders between the nation states. An illustrating case is the phrase *leddi Kongo* ("the land of Congo") which refers to the Central African Republic, and thus not to the actual Congo Brazzaville. Furthermore, I met people who considered certain northern areas of Cameroon as parts of Nigeria. One reason for this can be the climate as the dryer climate in North Cameroon resembles that of Nigeria and thus makes "the pastoral landscape" similar in both areas. Another reason can be found in the logic of individual migration histories. For example, I met one woman who had earlier migrated several times back and forth across the border between Nigeria and Cameroon in the north, and then later entered Adamaoua for good. The woman considered only Adamaoua, but not the more northern areas where she had lived before, as belonging to Cameroon. I met also people who considered certain areas in the southeast of Cameroon as belonging to the Central African Republic.

Recollecting Nigeria: Myth and History in the Present

pastoralism in that there are no village Fulbe to vex them with endless demands for cattle. On the other hand, it can also be seen as an altered version of *leddi Kamaru*: the same constraints that the village Fulbe and the *Jaafun* Fulbe have placed on the “non-Islamic” cultural practices of the *Aku* in Adamaoua affect these people in the Central African Republic as well, due to the strong local influence of the *Jaafun*. Even so, there are still sparsely populated humid pastures in the area into which the *Aku* pastoralists can escape the constraints of other Fulbe. As the talk of the revival of *soro* above showed, for the cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua *leddi Ersia/Kongo* has become a new representation of the happy past, a landscape that repeats the joyous memories of Nigeria.

5 SCHEMES FOR MOBILE LIVING

Due to their long nomadic history, the cattle Fulbe have a particular relation to moving. In the two preceding chapters this relation has already come out, first in the description of some concrete migration routes and then in the myths and memories in which movement often has a central place. In this chapter I pursue the same subject by looking at how movement shapes the daily experience of the cattle Fulbe both on the level of bodily practice and speech.

CULTURE ON THE MOVE

After settling in a cattle Fulbe camp, I quickly learned that pastoral life is about moving. Thus, while trying to find answers to my “real” question of “how the cattle Fulbe perform their culture” I concretely run after the performers – from hut to hut, from camp to camp, from camp to village. I followed people when they went to greet other camp members in the morning or gathered in huts to eat their evening meal. I followed young men to the cattle corral and went to meet them as they returned there from the bush with their cattle towards evening. I accompanied women to watering places as they went to fetch water or to wash clothes, and to the bush as they went to collect firewood. I accompanied those who had fields at a distance from the camp to their work there. I joined my camp members in their various visits to other camps. I joined women in their milk-selling trips to the nearby fishing village or to the Friday market in Tibati. I joined men at the cattle market in the bush. I followed sick people and their relatives to the two local hospitals. I saw people off to the road as they set out to travel to their first transhumance camp in the beginning of the dry season.

Finally, I did much of this moving also by myself, walking along the road and trampled footpaths, or searching my way through the bush into new camps by following little piles of cow dung – or fresh leaves that people had strewed on the ground because they knew that I would come after them. Often I also came across other people who then shared a shorter or longer way with me, depending on where they were going. Sometimes the walk was interrupted by an arriving bush taxi – or *taximoto* – which people did not hesitate to get into if there was the possibility or an urgent need to do so. But other times, when there were no vehicles in sight and our shared walking continued, my cattle

Schemes for Mobile Living

Fulbe companions often started to ask me questions about my people and my country – as if their own forward movement on the tortuous bush paths oriented their thoughts ahead, to remote and unknown places. I remember vividly an old man who, while we were walking together to the camp of his recently arrived brother, compared my current journey to his people with the pastoralists' own migrations. The man drew a clear parallel between these two as, in his eyes, they both served as a means for learning new things. "Without moving there is no wisdom", he finally concluded.¹

Contrary to the old man's sophisticated reasoning, I myself, at that time, regarded the endless rushing after people – or walking long distances to meet them in the first place – mainly as a waste of time and energy, outside the actual research. Only later I understood that moving around was an elemental part of my fieldwork. Indeed, while following people's footsteps I actually got an idea of how the cattle Fulbe, through their everyday kinetic orientations, create the social and cultural space around them.

One of the first things that I learned was that people's moving is gendered in many respects. By this I do not mean that the cattle Fulbe divide the physical space strictly into male and female spheres. On the contrary, men and women use the same paths when walking in the bush, and there are no rigid rules that prevent them from moving in certain parts of the camp because of their sex only.² But certain movements are gendered because men's and women's movements in space are differently oriented due to their distinctly gendered routines.³ Men's comings and goings are largely determined by the daily movement of the cattle as well as their own economic and religious transactions in the village. Women's movement has much to do with milk-selling and their daily routines at the watering places. What further emphasises the gendered nature of these kinetic actions is that, in heading for their various destinations, men and women usually move separately from each other.

¹ This was not the only time during my fieldwork when an informant associated acquiring knowledge with moving. Compare for example the quotation in chapter 4 in which a woman describes how the *Aku* became "good cattle Fulbe" by wandering about in different lands.

² It should be noted that the Fulbe have some unstated cultural rules according to which certain men do not enter the huts of certain women or vice versa – for example a man does not enter the hut of his son's wife or a woman the hut of her husband's older brother. However, these rules have not so much to do with gender as such but with the more complicated behaviour code of *pulaaku*, in which gender is intertwined with ideas of kinship, generation and age differences.

³ I talk here of movement in the restricted meaning of going from one place to another – from camp to bush or to village. Hence I put aside men's and women's everyday kinetic routines within the campsite which will be touched upon later.

Schemes for Mobile Living

By following people I also observed how, through spatial movement, the cattle Fulbe establish and reinforce social relations. In the campsites these relations can be concretely followed in footpaths that crisscross between huts inhabited by husbands and wives, their sons and daughters-in-law, or by various other relatives. Many of these camp paths continue to the bush, some of them leading to other camps belonging to relatives and in-laws living nearby or to neighbours from other lineages. By moving between huts and between camps people thus create a space of relatedness. They strengthen their existing kin ties by continuous visits to their relatives. They construct new ties by visiting recently arrived neighbours – sometimes also by marrying their daughters to these new acquaintances.

One thing that became very concrete to me while walking in the bush – especially when I walked alone – was that moving is not merely going forward but it is as much *returning* to familiar people and places. The idea of return could be seen as the “kinetic core” of all social relations – when people visit each other they return to someone and something that is already meaningful to them. Furthermore, and here I talk especially of the pastoralists’ empirical world, after one has returned *to* one’s kinsmen or neighbours living in other camps, one also returns *from* them and goes back to one’s own camp and camp members. The emotional weight that both of these regularly occurring returns have for the cattle Fulbe was nicely illustrated in people’s recollections of occasions when they, after having gone astray in the bush, had finally found a long searched for camp. Indeed, to distinguish smoke plumes rising up from familiar straw roofs in the distance after having been totally lost in a strange looking thicket – as I did several times – is a heart-stirring experience which immediately orients one’s body to strive to reach that meaningful view.

Finally, seen from the intergroup perspective, moving – both daily and seasonal – is a central practice that distinguishes the cattle Fulbe from other local people. It could be stated that, for the pastoralists, the constant moving as such is a central way in which they perform their culture. While saying all this, however, one has to keep in mind that there are different locals and thus also differing emphases in making the difference. For our purpose here it is perhaps justified to simplify the local cultural diversity and talk merely of two groups in relation to pastoralists, namely the villagers and the farmers.

First, it is the specific spatial orientation of the movement of the cattle Fulbe that differentiates them from those whom they call the village people (*himBe wuro*) – such as the village Fulbe, Hausa and the Mbum. To be more accurate, it is their moving between the specific sociocultural spaces of bush and village which articulates the difference between them and the villagers.

Schemes for Mobile Living

By walking with the pastoralists to Tibati, I myself concretely followed the way in which these people, through their oriented movement through space, reproduce the bush-village dichotomy. In other words, I followed how the pastoralists, by frequently visiting the space of others – the village people – transform spatiality into visible cultural difference. Second, in the case of the farmers, the “difference making movement” has, however, to be found from somewhere else than from moving between bush and village, as the farming people – such as the Gbaya – live outside the village and can thus be seen walking along the same bush roads as the pastoralists.⁴ One differentiating factor is the range of movement in each group as the cattle Fulbe still usually move longer distances than the local farmers. Another related point can be found in the gendered orientations discussed earlier – pastoral men’s movement with cattle and their wives’ movement with milk – which clearly sets the cattle Fulbe culturally apart from the cultivators.

Of course the same gendered orientations that differentiate pastoralists from farmers underlines the spatially constructed difference between pastoralists and villagers as well – or even more if one thinks of the overall restrictions on the movement of the village women due to their seclusion. An additional reason why I want to stress the cultural distinction between the pastoralists and the villagers is the historically shaped relation between these two groups that still profoundly influences the destinies of the former. Interestingly, during my fieldwork, no attempt was made on the part of the villagers to keep me unaware of the hierarchy built in the relation. The ironic remarks about “the white sister of the Mbororo” that addressed me when I arrived with the pastoralists in the village gave no space for guesswork concerning villagers’ view of the people I was hanging around with. Yet, if seen from the opposite angle, the hierarchy between the villagers and the bush dwellers finds its local subversion every time when the pastoralists, after the Friday market, turn their backs to the village of Tibati. By *returning* from the village to the bush and their cattle, the pastoral Fulbe engage in what could be called the walking performance of their social and cultural autonomy.

⁴ As regards dwellings, however, one difference is that while the cattle Fulbe camps are hidden in the thicket, Gbaya huts and houses are often constructed by the roadsides, even though their seasonal bush camps are located well away from the roads (see Burnham 1980a).

HOW TO DO THINGS WITH VERBS⁵

The cattle Fulbe do not merely move physically in space. Their daily talk in Fulfulde language is filled with the imagery of spatiality and movement as well. In the following I shall distinguish three aspects which all illustrate the meanings that this “moving language” has for the pastoralists in the construction of their social world.

Starting from the very basic level of daily experience, short questions related to moving are an integral element in cattle Fulbe everyday interaction. These questions are uttered when two or more people meet each other – whether unexpectedly in such spaces as on the road or in the village, or more predictably, for example when one visits the camp of the other. What these more or less rhetorical phrases – which people always utter before the actual greeting – contain is a simple question concerning the other person’s prevailing movement which is then followed by a short affirmative answer. For example, if people meet early in the morning, they ask each other: “You woke up, didn’t you?” A typical way of taking notice of newly arrived visitors is to repeat several times the question: “You came, didn’t you?” In a similar manner, on the way home, one is often asked by passers-by: “You are going back, aren’t you?”⁶ Or, when coming across somebody in the market place, one is asked: “You came to market, didn’t you?”, and so on.

As can be seen from the examples, these questions – as well as the affirmative answers given to them – are not made in order to acquire or produce information. Quite the contrary, instead of informing about something, they confirm clearly evident acts.⁷ A more productive way to understand the meaning of these particular speech forms is to locate them on the same analytic level with the movement to which they refer to. To make use of Bourdieu’s (1990:14) idea, both the factual kinetic actions and the

⁵ Being modified from the title of Austin’s well-known book, *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), the heading of this subchapter alludes to the power of language in constructing the social world of people. It does not, however, conform to Austin’s idea of “doing by saying” in the strict performative sense of the term, but, instead, refers more generally to the great emphasis put on verbs in the Fulfulde language.

⁶ These phrases are often repeated in a modified form during the actual greetings. For example people can ask while greeting each other “did you come well?” or “did your journey go well?” or “did you return well home yesterday?” The Fulbe greetings have been discussed in detail in chapter 2.

⁷ These kinds of questions are such a central element in the Fulfulde language that they have spread also among the other people in Adamaoua who have adopted this “lingua franca” of the area. Similar expressions are frequently used when people speak French. For example, when arriving in a Mbum or a Gbaya homestead, I was often asked: “*Tu est venue?*”

Schemes for Mobile Living

rhetorical phrases alluding to them could be seen as produced according to the same generative scheme prevalent in the cattle Fulbe culture, a scheme that emphasises moving. But while, in Bourdieu's view, all discourse can be seen principally as produced by the same schemes as actions are, in the case of the rhetorical phrases discussed here the analogy with practice is still more definite. Besides reflecting the same scheme – or corporeal orientations (Hanks 1993:139) – as the factual movements, the phrases embody the same diurnal rhythm as they do. A woman, on her way to the watering place after the morning meal, is asked: "You are going to the river, aren't you?" Young men, returning from the bush with the cattle at nightfall, are asked: "You came back from herding, didn't you?" Together, the movement and the questions that verbally reproduce that movement thus divide the day into moments of distinct spatio-temporal activities. The constantly repeated questions concerning people's diurnal starting points and destinations exemplify in a very concrete way Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962:193) definition of speech as a "phonetic" gesture that brings about a certain structural co-ordination of experience.

The idea of movement is not, however, limited to distinct rhetoric questions addressed to people coming and going. It covers many other sorts of talk as well. This is due to a more general Fulbe pattern of reflecting upon experience through spatio-kinetic images which can be seen as structuring diverse discourses among the pastoralists. The pattern is built into the Fulfulde language itself, with its highly elaborated verbal system that emphasises movement. As such then, it represents an example of what Ernst Cassirer (1953:212) has called a verbal language with its emphasis on "terms of direction" and "the expression of motion".

In Fulfulde, the focus on movement is manifested in two ways. First, it can be seen in the frequent use of verbs that refer to movement, especially those expressing leavings, returns and enterings between people and between places.⁸ But, second, it can also be discovered in many other kinds of verbs. This comes from a common pattern of adding infixes to simple verb roots in order to derive verbs that indicate a certain modality of action (Noye 1974; see also Nelson 1984). For example, from a certain infix it can be immediately understood that the referred action is done in a certain manner (*-ir*, *-or* infix), or that it is a repeated or intensified action (*-it*). Furthermore, there are infixes that express that the action is collectively performed or that it includes an aspect of finality (*-id*, *-od*). With Fulfulde verbs it is also possible to express the idea that the action is performed in a certain location (*-ir*, *-or*)

⁸ The Fulfulde language includes a rich variety of verbs that indicate that the action has a spatial starting point and destination.

Schemes for Mobile Living

or at a distance into which the person has first moved to accomplish it (-oy). (Nelson 1984; Noye 1974; Jungraithmayar and Abu-Manga 1989.)

The capacity to store contextual information in verb roots gives Fulbe talk a particular tone. It provides everyday conversations with a strong sense of dynamic spatiality in which persons and objects are in constant flux between different places that are simultaneously present. The dynamic tone is further emphasised by a distinct intonation in speech by which accent is put on the verb.⁹ Indeed, in the beginning of my fieldwork, when my knowledge of Fulfulde was still very limited, I managed somehow to follow people's conversation by picking up verbs that I relatively quickly learned to distinguish from the rest of the talk.

The specific qualities of the Fulfulde language and its verbal system embody what, in William Hank's (1993:139) terms, can be called the social orientations constitutive of Fulbe habitus. These qualities form central tools for the Fulbe in organising their experience.¹⁰ But, besides embodying built-in orientations, Fulfulde, as any language, provides its speakers with the means to construct the surrounding social world also in a more objectifying sense. This means that, in addition to repeating unreflectively the grammatical patterns of their language, people also deliberately talk about issues and practices that have cultural relevance for them. At this point it may not be surprising to say that the cattle Fulbe frequently engage in talking about their

⁹ The point is further stressed by the frequent use of the so called qualitative verbs in Fulfulde. These verbs describe a person or thing or give information about the action in the similar way as adjectives and adverbs do in many other languages. For example, in Fulfulde, "to be good" or "to be small" is often expressed with a single verb (*woodDgo*; *famDugo*) – and even when these verbs are not used they are substituted by participles without employing the verb "to be". Also such expressions as "to have not done something for a long time" or "to have done something before" are expressed by a single verb (*wayrugo*; *meeDgo*). Similarly, the comparative form of adjective is expressed by a verb form (*Burgo*).

¹⁰ As an attentive reader might have noticed, when speaking of the qualities of the Fulfulde language, I have not always restricted my statements to the pastoral Fulbe, but, in certain points, have referred to the Fulbe in general. The reason for doing so is that Fulfulde is not organising merely the pastoralists' experiences, as it is also the native language of the village Fulbe, and spoken by many other people as well. It should be emphasised, however, that the aim of the present study is to understand the pastoral Fulbe social world, and thus detailed intragroup comparisons in the studied area would need a further research with fieldwork organised in a different way. Thus, in accordance with the given aim, I have related the question of language use to observations that I have made among the pastoralists by giving examples of their particular life-world. It is also worth remembering here that Fulfulde is historically a "pastoral" language, that is, a language of people moving around with cattle, and many of its features should be considered by keeping that specific history in mind. These specifications apply to the discussion of Fulbe greetings in chapter 2 as well.

Schemes for Mobile Living

moving. In the following I shall illustrate this point by comparing two types of cattle Fulbe narratives that both focus on movement.

NOMADS IN THE *HIJU*¹¹

The grammatical pattern outlined above of adding various spatio-kinetic information to verb roots presumably has to do with the long nomadic history of the Fulbe in western Sudan which has equipped the people with a particular faculty for perceiving distance.¹² It has also supplied a rich spatial imagery which can be seen in daily talk as well as in many Fulbe narratives, especially in those that deal with travelling. I shall now look at two genres of travel narratives: the migration stories and the stories that the cattle Fulbe tell about their pilgrimage to Mecca. My focus will be on the latter, the pilgrimage stories – or *hiju* stories as I also call them – which can be considered as a relatively novel form of narrative among the cattle Fulbe in Adamaoua.¹³

The concept of pilgrimage refers to a special kind of journey closely related to the idea of moving. In pilgrims' accounts it is often spatially oriented movements – such as departures, arrivals and returns – that form the frame for the story by binding one's home and the visited places and shrines together into a more or less chronological narrative. The pilgrimage journey is not, however, merely spatial in nature but encompasses other kinds of movements such as spiritual journeying from secular to sacred time and status movement, as happens when a Muslim pilgrim is transformed from a layman into a respected *alhaji*.¹⁴ Nevertheless, in the following, the emphasis will be on the spatial aspect of the pilgrimage which has specific connotations in the Fulbe pilgrims' experience.

Victor Turner (1974:198) noted the potential for pilgrimage journeys to become a paradigm for other kinds of behaviour. His argument is echoed in

¹¹ *Hiju* (Arab. *hajj*) is the Fulfulde word for the pilgrimage to Mecca.

¹² It is interesting to note how, in Adamaoua, certain patterns – such as infixes added to verb roots – are nowadays more frequently used by the pastoral Fulbe than the village Fulbe and some, for example the distantive *-oy*, almost exclusively by the former. For the distribution of certain Fulfulde grammatical patterns in the region, see Lacroix 1962.

¹³ It is recent because the integration of these people to the local Muslim community has taken place only during the last three or four generations and thus going on pilgrimage is a quite new phenomenon among them.

¹⁴ A good introduction to these issues can be found in both Morinis (1992) and Turner (1974:166-230).

Schemes for Mobile Living

Carol Delaney's (1990) article, "The *Hajj*: Sacred and Secular". Delaney compares two kinds of journeys made by Turks: the annual journeys of Turkish migrants back to their natal villages and the pilgrimage to Mecca made by Turkish villagers from Anatolia. Delaney draws an analogy between the journeys as both embrace the idea of return and are motivated by "a pervasive mood of longing" (ibid. 516) for the sacred homeland – a place represented by both Mecca and the natal village. She then puts these two places into a hierarchical relation by suggesting that, for the Turks, it is the *hajj* that serves as a model which implicitly shapes other journeys – such as the migrants' annual journeys back home (ibid. 514).

Keeping in mind the idea shared by Turner and Delaney, the cattle Fulbe pilgrimages offer an interesting case for comparison. I propose that, among the cattle Fulbe, the semantic relation between pilgrimage and other journeys goes the other way round than in the Turkish case. In the Fulbe case, it is the *hijju* story that is fashioned by other stories or, to repeat what was said above, by the more general Fulbe pattern of reflecting upon experience through spatial and itinerant images. However, as a description of physical journeying the Fulbe *hijju* story can be seen to parallel other travel narratives. Here I would like to compare it with one particular type of travel narrative, the Fulbe migration story.

Among the Fulbe, the migration story is presumably a very old oral genre, the popularity of which is understandable due to the long nomadic past of the people. Although the Fulbe pilgrimage story must be of more recent origin, there is such a close resemblance between the two that the latter could be viewed as a specific version of the former. I shall now illustrate this resemblance by using two quotations from a migration story:

We came, we spent the wet season in Gombe. Then [we spent] the dry season, we went, we migrated into Lau, on the big Benue river. We passed the hot season, we passed the tornado season, we gathered together with Abdullaahi who came out [from Bauchi] with my fathers, with my uncles. We went, we spent the wet season in Alkalere. We came back, we passed the hot season, we passed the tornado season, we separated with Abdullaahi and Dubu, they turned back to Gombe, where we spent the wet season. But we, we went, we spent the wet season in the land of Gombe. They, they spent the wet season in the land of Alkalere, in the land of Bauchi, we separated. Then we spent the wet season in the land of Gombe, they came fast, we migrated, we passed the hot season, then we spent the wet season in the land of Biu. Then we spent two wet seasons in the land of Biu. We spent one wet season, we, we found them on the river, then my father died. Then we turned back, we spent the wet season in the land of Yola.

Schemes for Mobile Living

Then we left for Wukari. In Wukari I moved on with Nyalli's fathers. And then we separated, I crossed the border and went into the Bamenda Plateau. They went back, they turned back, but I went away, I came to this place. Then I reached where I now live. So, now, can you see, up till now I am here, now I have stayed here for twenty years. Then the children of my maternal uncle, they rejoined me, they found me here. Then, after a while, their father came back here. Then I got Yamusa's people [they] came back here with Juuli's people, they came back. They found us here, me with Oori, with Abbo, [as] we came here first.¹⁵

The next three extractions are from a pilgrimage narrative. The first describes the start of the pilgrimage journey, the second the pilgrim's arrival at Medina, and the third his return back home.

I started from here (= from the camp), as they had said that tomorrow we go. We went by canoe, they gathered for going, we left. We reached Tibati, we spent the day [there], we prayed the midday prayers. – – We spent the night in Tibati, then [we] woke up, [we] left. They brought four cars. We got into the cars [and travelled to] Ngaoundal. We went, we stayed in Ngaoundal till the train arrived [and] took us to Ngaoundere. Like that we went, we got vaccinations in Ngaoundere, we spent the night there. We woke up, we spent the day, we rested there, we slept, till [we had stayed] two days. So then, in the morning we got into the car, we went there where the aeroplanes are. Early in the morning! So, the sun was rising, it glowed a little. It (= aeroplane) came, it [waited for us]. We came, we got into the aeroplane, it took us, we went to Garoua, it put us down in Garoua. It took new people, then it flew. We went to Maroua, it took a lot of people, [they] entered, it was filled [with people]. From there it flew, we moved to Mali. The sun was like that, then we

¹⁵ The migration narratives of the cattle Fulbe abound with such often repeated Fulfulde verbs as *ummaago* (to start from), *dillugo* (to leave), *yahgo* (to go), *taargo* (to go round), *wargo* (to come), *jippaago* (to stop at), *naastugo* (to enter), *jooDaago* (to stay), as well as *wartugo*, *so'itaago*, *loraago* and *hootugo* (to return, to turn back). Still another recurring verb is *eggugo* (to move, or to migrate), with which – as well as with the respective noun *eggol* – the pastoralists refer to a variety of changes of location, such as to the often recurring relocations which were typical for their more mobile pastoralism earlier in Nigeria, to their transhumance to the dry season camps, as well as to longer migrations into totally different regions or even to new countries. A more specific verb of going to transhumance is *hoDgo*, besides which the pastoralists use repeatedly such qualitative verbs as *ruumgo* (to spend the rainy season) or *seeDgo* (to spend the dry season). For lengthy migrations, there is also the Fulfulde word *perol* (flight), denoting danger caused either by ecological catastrophes or by political or ideological conditions, in the latter case Prophet Mohammed's flight being its archetype (Stenning 1957:59). Although many of the hasty moves of the cattle Fulbe during their gradual migration from Nigeria to Cameroon come up to the standards of *perol*, my informants never used that particular term in their migration narratives, but spoke always of *eggol*.

Schemes for Mobile Living

got off in Mali, on the other side of Mali. We got off in Jedda, in the land of Mecca.

So, we got off there (= in Medina), we prayed the midday prayers, we prayed the afternoon prayers. – – We got something to chew, we ate. [Then] we started [again], [we] got into the cars, [there] cars emerge, the aeroplanes do not continue [further]. We slept, we finished [sleeping], so far we have not reached Medina. You run [to get] a car. Now we are about to arrive at Medina. We reached Medina, our canvas, it was midday. When we arrived, [they] got up at the gate of our canvas. Then we go, we are there, since Jedda [the others] had left us. When they got cars, they went away. But us, we did not get cars, I with three young men. [But] when we got a car and then we found [them]. Then, [as we reached] the gate of our canvas, they came out, look, it was Riiga, Hajja, the wife of Alhaji Gambo, who appeared to us. We asked “where?”, she said “it is here, there is water”. She said “look, enter there, look, [there is] washing water, look, [there is] drinking water”. We entered there, we washed ourselves. – – After finishing [washing] we came out. Then we went there, to the road where the mosque is. Then we greeted [other people], [then] we left for the big mosque.

I had now finished that path there, I started, I prayed in Mecca. We moved around the stone of Kaaba, we said farewells. I finished, so today, since yesterday midday I said that as [soon as] I get porters to get my things in Jedda [I go]. I came back, I woke up, I got on the car, I got off in Jedda in the afternoon. I prayed there, the afternoon prayers in Jedda, I prayed there. We dispersed after we had prayed the evening prayers. At night we got up, we stood, we slept while standing. – – [We] woke up as the sun had risen up like this, then I went, I got on the aeroplane. I got off in Ngaoundere, after the afternoon, they prayed the afternoon prayers. [There were] the people who had come to meet me, Alhaji (= narrator’s big brother) who did not go [to Mecca at that time]. They sent, sent [somebody to search for me], we were praying, in the place where the aeroplanes stay, now they come! – – They closed [the door of the aeroplane], we came out, all of us goers. We came out, then I came out like that. I came out, I went, Yuuna (= narrator’s little brother) took me by the hands, then Alhaji took me [by the hands]. – – They tapped [on my shoulder]. We gathered, I got on the train. Then I came back here, late at night. I arrived at night like that. The child who was [sleeping] in [my] hut, he came out! He opened [the door] for me. [So-and-so said:] “I bring you hot gruel”. I drank till I felt replete. [So-and-so said:] “I prepare you porridge”. [I ate] till I felt replete. [The people] took me into the hut, [then] they dispersed, I slept.

What the above quotations show is the semantic and structural similarity between the two genres. Both follow a progressing chronological order built on the alternation of the regions left behind and regions entered. Both have the

Schemes for Mobile Living



Photograph 4: Pastoral Fulbe men and women gathered for a communal prayer led by a Hausa *mallum* at the end of Ramadan.

same rhythm that oscillates between setting out, going forth and halting. At first glance, however, there would seem to be one marked difference between the genres, namely, the difference based on the emphasis that is put on the pilgrim's return in the pilgrimage stories. So, it could be stated that, whereas the pilgrimage follows typically a circular scheme of departure, arrival, communion and return (cf. Morinis 1992:20), the migration is recounted as a more linear proceeding. A closer look gives, however, a more versatile picture of the latter. Thus, although in the migration stories the general trend is to go spatially forth, these stories are still filled with episodes of returning. Indeed, in the first two quotations one can discern constant back and forth movement, especially between the dry and the wet season pastures. In addition, attention is repeatedly paid to separations and reunions between people, a feature that stresses the importance that sociality has in structuring the migration experience.

Interestingly, the Fulbe *hijju* stories parallel their migration stories also in these latter aspects. First, as can be seen in the last two quotations, the pilgrimage is coloured by the same kind of social oscillation between getting detached from one's people and then rejoining them again. Second, the pilgrimage stories are filled with a similar back and forth movement. In that sense, to characterise the Fulbe pilgrimage narratives by a simple "going, staying and returning" scheme would oversimplify. Indeed, the interesting

Schemes for Mobile Living

feature in these narratives is that the arrival in the holy town of Mecca does not slow down the movement but, on the contrary, makes it even more intensive. This intensity is reflected in the remarks about the crowds of walking people or about the hectic traffic of Mecca where “there are cars like sandals”, as one Pullo pilgrim expressed it. I would assume that the pattern is partly related to the fact that nowadays the journey to Saudi Arabia is made by air. Thus, the emphasis on the physical movement which is typical in migration stories would, in the case of pilgrimage accounts, have shifted from the actual travelling into the pilgrimage area. Be that as it may, in their talk of visiting the holy places, the Fulbe put great emphasis on the movement both between and at the shrines. The pilgrimage area and its rituals afford a rewarding arena for this as can be seen in the narratives which are filled with descriptions of moving from shrine to shrine and going to prayers:

I found [the big mosque] filled [with people], [some people] carried children on the back, [some people prayed] for forgiveness. – – Then the imam came and called us. We prayed, we finished praying. Then he stood up, he stood once, we prayed their prayers, [the prayers of] the people there. We prayed. We returned to our canvas, when we entered they prayed there. – – So, then we went to Mecca. From Medina to Mecca [the trip lasts] from the morning till the night. [It was] in the night that I reached Mecca. When we arrived, we continued, we went, we drank, we moved around the stone of Kaaba. We finished that seven times. Then we drank [water from the spring of] Zamzam. We ran between Safa and Marwa. Then we came back – – when we came back it was morning. We, all the time, all the time we come back, we moved around the stone of Kaaba. We drink the water [from the spring] of Zamzam, so, so, till the day of praying came.

With the ritual steps between the sacred places, the pastoral Fulbe, together with other pilgrims, repeat Prophet Mohammed’s life experiences in the holy towns of Mecca and Medina. Often, however, the constant repetition of movement overshadows the theological motivation of the performance.¹⁶ One old woman made these comments while she showed me her view masters from Mecca:

* I stayed in Mecca eight days. I returned to the breast of Kaaba again. – – Look, here, a man is carrying a child, an old man, he carries a child. – – And

¹⁶ My view of the pastoralists own understanding of their *hijju*, as well as the overall relation between pilgrimage narratives and migration narratives, goes somewhat against the often expressed idea that pastoral Fulbe employ Islamic schemata as interpretive paradigms for their own patterns of movement. My differing stance is exclusively based on my own field material, that is, on my informants’ narration. I thank Professor Philip Burnham for reminding me of views that vary from my own position.

Schemes for Mobile Living

when he comes out from there, he goes, runs, runs, goes round the house of Kaaba.

** And after that what did you do?

* After that I ran between Safa and Marwa, look, so much people, look – – there, [they] go around, run, run, run, go around, run, run, run, go around –

–
– –

** Why do they run between Safa and Marwa?

* Because they do so. When they go, they run between Safa and Marwa. – – There, Safa and Marwa, up, they return again, they run between Safa and Marwa, down, like that.

The above talk illustrates nicely Alan Morinis' observation that, in sacred journeys, the question is often about something other than an intellectual quest. "It is experience that counts" (1992:21), as he says. For the Fulbe, the experience of constant bodily movement between and at the shrines provides much of the spiritual gratification of the pilgrimage. This idea is reinforced in a story – a kind of counter example – that I heard in Adamaoua. According to the story there was a Pullo man who had sinned a lot by oppressing other people. Without regretting his bad deeds he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. In Mecca, while others were praying and performing the rituals, the man realised that he could not move. I quote the story-teller: "He went to Mecca. He went and stood in one place. – – He could not get ('o *heBaay*') Mecca." The man came back home and, following the advice of a learned man (*moodibbo*), he made a sacrifice and repented his sins. Then he returned to Mecca, but the same happened again – he could not move, he could not pray, he only stood still. Finally, he was obliged to come back home without any blessing.

In all of the above quotations from Fulbe *hijju* stories the individual experience of the pilgrimage to Mecca is evaluated through local ideas of a meaningful life at home. In the earlier quotations this is shown in the repetition of daily prayers, in parting and remeeting with people, as well as in moving back and forth between culturally meaningful spaces. In the story of the ill-fated Pullo pilgrim the idea of a successful pilgrimage is correlated with the ability to make oriented movement with one's body. The same theme is echoed by the old woman, who, while watching view masters from Mecca, paid much more attention to acting pilgrims than to the factual shrines. Both the sad example of the paralysed pilgrim as well as the factual memories told by different Fulbe pilgrims draw their strength from the same central quality of the semi-nomadic pastoral life as the migration stories do, that is, from the experience of moving.

6 SCHEMES FOR LIFETIMES

In pastoral Fulbe culture full personhood is closely related to specific cultural ideas of personal autonomy. In people's discourse these ideas are expressed in at least two ways. First, the development of personal autonomy is articulated through the concepts of *pulaaku* and *hakkiilo*. Second, the levels of this autonomy, characteristic of various phases of the life cycle, are associated with different types of mobility. This chapter examines these questions by going through the life cycle of pastoral Fulbe men and women with its ritualised turning points.

RELATING TO OTHERS THROUGH *HAKKILO*

During my fieldwork in Adamaoua, one of my clumsiest efforts to “be a Pullo” took place when my five-year-old son and I, having just arrived in the camp where I stayed most of the time, were served *nyiri* (porridge) for the first time. After I finished eating, I told my son to do the same. Despite my several requests, however, he refused to stop before our plate was empty. In an apologetic voice I explained to the head wife who had served us the meal that my son does not know *pulaaku*. The woman was extremely amused and exclaimed: “Does the stomach of a child know *pulaaku*?”

The above incident, which always amused my camp neighbours, discloses the general Fulbe view that little children are not expected to master the social decorum of *pulaaku* – being thus free to show their bodily needs, such as hunger, in the presence of others. As in many other cultures, among the Fulbe proper conduct is assumed to be learned gradually. Among the pastoral Fulbe in Adamaoua this assumption is further emphasised by the fact that there are practically no collectively performed initiation rites during which specific cultural instructions are given to young boys and girls.¹

¹ To be accurate, of course the name-giving ceremony (*indeeri*) can be considered an initiation ritual as it incorporates the seven-day-old child into the pastoral – and larger Muslim – community. Due to its central importance for the parents of the newborn, it will be discussed in a more appropriate context later. Another practice that could be considered as an initiation ritual for the young is the circumcision of boys which, however, often nowadays lacks the educative function.

Schemes for Lifetimes

The Fulbe put a central value on bodily self-control acquired during childhood, and the fruits of this gradual learning process are not restricted to the sphere of the bodily functions of “skin-encapsulated” persons in an individualistic Western sense (Jackson 1989:48). Rather, the “learner” here can be defined as the social body projecting beyond itself and the purpose of learning, far from making the body an isolate, is to prepare it for approaching or confronting others.² Thus, while learning bodily autonomy a Fullo child learns a great deal about social relations as well. He learns to distinguish between proper and shameful bodily behaviour and to understand how this behaviour correlates with the category of person one is dealing with. As has been mentioned earlier, the persons in the presence of which one gradually learns to show great reserve belong to such categories as patrilineal relatives and in-laws, while those with whom there is no need for self-control include such persons as one’s siblings and matrilineal relatives.

In the Fulbe view, learning to master the proper social conduct in each situation particularly demands a talent for *hakkiilo*, which is one of the everyday behaviour centred key traits of *pulaaku*. In the literature *hakkiilo* has been defined with various attributes such as intelligence, care and forethought, wise personal management and sound common sense (Kirk-Greene 1986; Stenning 1959; Taylor 1932). An especially appropriate definition of *hakkiilo* in the present context is “social sense”, a term used by Riesman (1992)³, because it captures the Fulbe idea of the close interrelation between intelligence and social sensitivity. In his study of child-rearing practices among the Jelgobe Fulbe in Burkina Faso, Riesman argues that, according to the Fulbe view there, the children begin to develop this talent for “sensitivity to social contexts” (ibid., 170) between the ages of five and seven. Until that age they are not forced to behave in any particular way as they are by nature considered “to be irresponsible, [and] to lack self-control

² My statement is inspired by Merleau-Ponty’s ideas of spatiality of the body as well as Hanks’s related critique. Merleau-Ponty (1962) argued that the body is inseparable from its surrounding space and emphasised that spatiality implies that bodily existence is always existence or orientation outwards: embedded in the world, the body directs actively towards it through movement (ibid., 100-102). Hanks, in his study of language use among the Maya (1990), criticises Merleau-Ponty for his “subjectivist semantics” (ibid., 531 n23) and suggests a more social view of corporeality. According to Hanks, Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on the individual body as the basic ground of reference (ibid., 84), leads to an overemphasis on “the isolability of the acting subject” (ibid., 132). What is then needed, he argues, is to “bring corporeality to the next level of social space” (ibid., 85), that is, to the level of intersubjective experience.

³ The form that Riesman uses here is *haYYillo*. I hold to the form *hakkiilo* as it is the more usual way to write it and also consistent with the way in which the word is pronounced in Adamaoua.

Schemes for Lifetimes

and social knowledge” (ibid., 169).⁴ The interesting point that Riesman brings up is that, although children partly learn to do things by imitating their parents, for the Fulbe to have *hakkiilo* is basically a conscious choice. Thus, once the children have been brought up, it is a matter of their own decision whether or not to accept (*jaBgo*) the way their parents have shown to them (ibid., 170-171, 178).

Based on my own fieldwork experience in Cameroon I largely agree with Riesman’s argumentation. In congruence with his ideas, my informants cherished the idea that well-behaving children – those with *pulaaku* and *hakkiilo* – are those who “follow father’s and mother’s path” and it was quite clear to them which of their children have followed the parents in that sense and which have not. The people were also eager to describe how a particular child had in some way indicated that he had started to develop his *hakkiilo* earlier than expected.

I also subscribe to the paradox noted by Riesman (ibid., 142) that children, with their gradual social maturation, understand that their enlarged sense of social relations and obligations does not make them equals with their elders but, on the contrary, reveals to them their dependency on adult persons. But it is equally important to note that the category of adults upon whom the children should rely is by no means insignificant. An illustrative example was offered to me in a tiny cattle Fulbe camp which was – partly due to the absence of cattle – situated on the fringes of a village. Because of the special location of the camp its members – a man, his wife and their six children – had more everyday dealings with the farmers and other sedentary people than the local pastoralists on the average. The situation made the mother worried about the moral development of her children, especially that of the nine-year-old daughter Hawwa who showed a keen interest in villager’s life, imitating their dances and dawdling in the village whenever she was sent there on little errands for her parents. Hawwa was also quick to socialise with the Gbaya farmers who frequently walked past the camp on their way to their fields or to the village and then later back home. Once when I was visiting the family, a farmer named Basiiru passed the camp carrying fish that he had bought in the market. Basiiru greeted us and Hawwa went to accompany him a little

⁴ Apart from social interaction, *hakkiilo* is also needed in practical everyday tasks. Thus, as I noticed in Cameroon, in talking about someone’s *hakkiilo* one can refer both to his social and practical skills. Sometimes the term can be used in order to express what a person is good at, where his *hakkiilo* is located, as in a phrase with which one Pullo woman once described another person to me: “*hakkiilo maako haa kuugal maako*” (“her *hakkiilo* is in her work”). When it comes to the development of children, social and practical skills develop naturally at the same time, giving the child a feeling of increased self-confidence (see also Riesman 1992: 142).

Schemes for Lifetimes

way. But when she did not return, the mother sent Hawwa's older brother to search for her. Finally the brother found her in Basiiru's camp where she was sitting and staring at the fish sizzling on the fire. When the mother heard what had happened, she became furious and shouted to Hawwa: "You leave your mother and father and follow other people for the sake of eating!"

Hawwa's character, curious and disposed to outside influences, led her often to situations in which the other family members could do nothing but regret the poor stage of her *hakkiilo*. Their judgment was reasonable in that she was well over the age when the basic *hakkiilo* virtues such as forethought are supposed to begin to develop.⁵ Hawwa's failure in the above example was that she was obviously ready to eat "in public", in the presence of a man who did not even belong to her own group. In addition, she did not hesitate to openly lean on the resources of that man to satisfy her hunger. Besides so degrading her own bodily autonomy, she also disgraced her parents – and ultimately the whole pastoral community – by choosing other people to count on for her basic needs. What the example then reveals is a kind of commensurability between individual and collective levels of autonomy. Thus, individuals who act "with *hakkiilo*" are not merely considered as making wise decisions for their own good but simultaneously supporting the welfare and the autonomy of the whole group.

Although the above observations support Riesman's view of *hakkiilo* – or its absence – as a conscious choice, I would not take the idea of "conscious decision making in choosing one's behaviour" among the Fulbe to such an extreme as he does. One reason for my caution is the ambivalence that often coloured my informants' talk on the matter. Indeed, among the Fulbe, mastering the proper social code is not always considered simply a matter of choosing to follow what one has learned. One intervener here is God (*Alla*) who is seen as the agent mediating the transmission of the virtues of the parents to the child.⁶ Another suggestion of blurred agency can be found in the language used when the cattle Fulbe refer to a person's social maturation by saying "his/her *hakkiilo* has come" (*hakkiilo maako wari*) – a phrase that suggests an involuntary act. Principally this idiom does not conflict with Riesman's ideas as he situates the deliberate following of the parents' way in the age over six, that is, when the child is already expected to have *hakkiilo*.

⁵The age between six and eight seems to be crucial, because it is during that period that a child shows a significant level of autonomy for the first time, which is considered to be possible only through the *hakkiilo* that provides a person with a sense of shame.

⁶ This idea is articulated when the *mallum*, during the name-giving ceremony, prays that God will provide the newborn with the "*hakkiilo* of the mother and *hakkiilo* of the father".

Schemes for Lifetimes

However, in Adamaoua I discovered that people often use the same phrase when talking of adult persons changing their life stage – such as young men and women leaving the dance behind and beginning to have children and then older men and women starting to have grandchildren⁷ – as if a special, elevated version of social sense emerges at every turning point in the life cycle. Seen from this point of view, to learn the meaning of social relations and to increase one's self-confidence and autonomy through this knowledge is a life-long process (cf. Riesman 1992:147) as every time a person's situation in life changes he has to check his stance towards his fellow-men and adjust his behaviour accordingly. There is, however, one decisive moment in the life of a Pullo when he or she is once and for all turned into, as I would say, a transformed stage of autonomy, namely the birth of the first child. But before discussing that crucial event, I shall take a short look at the cattle Fulbe youth.

YOUNG LIVES

In Adamaoua a cattle Pullo boy enters the male age grade system by becoming a *suka* (“a lad” or “a young man”; pl. *sukaaBe*⁸) at the age of seven. This transition from childhood to youth is marked by circumcision which is performed by a local Hausa barber – or sometimes even a nurse in the local hospital. One boy is circumcised at a time, and the operation is not followed by any celebration, the only specific activity being to feed the recovering boy with fatty food such as meat and butter. In Adamaoua the practice of circumcision does not have any educative function either, and the pastoralists still associate it more with a boy's passage into youthful virility⁹ and bravery than with any religious ideas. On the other hand, it is probably not by chance that the age of circumcision is seen as a critical period for the

⁷ Besides using the noun *hakkilo*, people often used the corresponding verb form *hakkilgo* (to take care) in these expressions.

⁸ More often the young, still unmarried, men are called *derke'en* (sg. *derkeejo*) which basically refers to youth in general.

⁹ For my informants the idea that a man could “go to a woman” without being circumcised was absurd.

Schemes for Lifetimes

development of *hakkiilo*, and it is usually soon after being circumcised that a boy starts to get more responsibilities in cattle herding.¹⁰

Circumcision is not, however, the thing that the pastoralists themselves first associate with the idea of becoming *suka*. Instead, when I asked them about how little boys are turned into youth in their community, they most often started to talk about a practice that is publicly much more visible than circumcised sex organs, namely, the dance. Thus, as I was repeatedly told, little boys become *sukaaBe* when they start dancing – or “enter the dance” (*naasta wamarde*) as the local expression goes. Indeed, to dance in villages or at a cross-roads with others is a “*sukaaBe* matter” and every little boy waits impatiently for the day when he can join the dancing group. The dancing youth brings us again to the idea of moving and it is during the *sukaaBe* period that the cultural image of moving bodies is given its highest expression. One woman described the days of youth as constant going around (*waancugo*) and defined a *suka* in the following way:

He goes to the dance, he goes to a gathering, he goes to a place of *indeeri*, he goes. There is nobody to prevent him [from going]. He does not ask the father, he does not ask the mother. He just gets up and goes.

Thus, besides wandering during the days in the bush with cattle, the *sukaaBe* walk long distances into towns, villages and celebrations in distant camps to meet their age-mates and dance with them. This passion for moving implies an idea of a special youthful autonomy and the *sukaaBe* refuse to ask their parents' permission when it is time to go.

After the more or less carefree years of a *suka* a young man moves gradually to the age class of mature men called *ndotti'en*. This change coincides with the time that his first child is born and he himself starts to take full responsibility for his family and his herd. Here again, my informants

¹⁰ There are big regional differences in the timing and the practical details of male circumcision in the various Fulbe groups in West Africa. The age of circumcision varies from three to fifteen (see e.g., Brackenbury 1924; Dupire 1962; 1970), and as Dupire has observed, in many areas the age of circumcision has been advanced due to Islamisation. Regional differences exist as well regarding whether the boys go through circumcision in a group or one by one. While Brackenbury (1924), Bocquené (1986) and St. Croix (1945) report group circumcision among certain cattle Fulbe in Northern Nigeria and Cameroon, during which the circumcised are under the charge of an old man till the wounds are healed, Regis (1997) tells of secret circumcision camps of the sedentary Fulbe of Northern Cameroon in which the boys are also given religious education. Mention can also be found of specific communal feasts with cattle sacrifices to be arranged after the circumcision (see e.g., Labatut 1978 and St. Croix 1945). On the other hand, Dupire (1962) observed in the 1950s among the nomadic *WoDaaBe* Fulbe in Niger how a single boy was circumcised without any particular ceremony.

Schemes for Lifetimes

connected the change in a man's status with his relation to dance. Thus, while a boy becomes a *suka* by entering the dance, he leaves his *sukaaku* ("youth") behind by stopping dancing, or by "going out from the dance" (*wurta wamarde*), as the people say. The exact moment of this termination is a matter of individual choice and I have seen several men still dancing while having one or two children. On the other hand, by continuing to dance for too long the men risk being mocked by others and the idea of "dancing *ndotti'en*" provokes much mirth among the pastoralists, especially among young girls.

One thing that has partly afforded the young men the opportunity to slightly postpone the time of "growing up", that is, finishing the dance, is the disappearance of an age class called *kori'en* (sg. *koriijo*). Earlier in Nigeria this age class formed a sort of liminal period between youth and full manhood (*ndottaaku*).¹¹ A specific practice that marked a young man's entrance into the group of *kori'en* was cutting off his long braided hair – the distinct physical characteristic of *sukaaBe* – after the birth of his first child. One woman recalled that the haircut was performed by kinswomen and losing the braids always made the young men cry. She also told how, after the haircut, a group of *kori'en* wandered from one camp to another, dancing and playing their tam-tams (*mbaggu*) in each camp while bulls were slaughtered for them. After two months of touring they returned to their homes and their dancing¹² was over for good.

Burnham (1996) has associated the disappearance of the *kori'en* age class in Cameroon with the ban of other customs practised by junior age classes such as *soro*, the baton-beating contest of young men. In chapter 4 it was described how, in Nigeria, it was the task of *kori'en* to organise *soro* for *sukaaBe*. This particular task was not, however, the sole reason for abandoning a whole age class. More than that, the *kori'en* gradually "disappeared" because the ritualised anti-social and licentious behaviour connected to their age class (ibid., 109) was disapproved of in Adamaoua, especially by the *Jaafun*, those who arrived earlier and were more Islamised. The most visible practice that remains of *kori'en* is choosing a leader, called *persidan* (according to the French word *président*), for the dancing youth. During my fieldwork the closest of these leaders was living in Ngat, located some thirty kilometres from Tibati. I was introduced to him during the Muslim ram feast (*juulde Layha*) when I asked the young cattle Fulbe men for

¹¹ An example of a still more elaborate male age grade system that was in use among some pastoral Fulbe in the Jos Plateau in Nigeria in the 1980s can be found in M. O. Awoghade (1986).

¹² By this I mean the dance of youth. In Nigeria adult men – as well as women – still had their own dances which they danced in certain intragroup celebrations.

Schemes for Lifetimes

permission to tape-record their songs. The leader, who was probably somewhat older than the *kori'en* in Nigeria, immediately took charge of the whole thing, guiding me from one singing group to another and tape-recording his own talking performance – including hilarious presentations of some singers – at the same time. Indeed, his noisy style was like descriptions that I had read earlier about joking *kori'en*,¹³ and his way of putting forth his responsibility for the whole young feasting cattle Fulbe group echoed the days when the tutoring role of the now abandoned age class was still socially recognised.

Although bulls are no longer slaughtered in honour of *kori'en*, the feast arranged for those who have completed the Koranic school and are thus afforded the title of *mallum*, has somewhat similar functions. Principally this feast, called simply *do'a* (“prayers”), can be organised for people of all ages. However, as it is most often 18-25 year-old men who reach this stage of Koranic knowledge, the feast usually takes place when they would have been celebrated as new *kori'en* had they lived in former times. I myself never took part in a *do'a* celebration. According to people’s description, it is organised in the camp of the young man’s parents – or of one of them, if the ritual is arranged for several men¹⁴ at the same time. As in any other cattle Fulbe feast, rice is cooked, a bull is sacrificed and prepared, and food is distributed among people. After the meal the Koranic teacher gives the just graduated a religious lesson, and all those present pray for him. After that the new *mallum* is given gifts – for example a bull, a heifer or a sheep from his father and uncles, and money, clothes, sugar, etc. from other guests. Finally the new *mallum* sits down in his mother’s hut where people come to congratulate him and to give some additional gifts of money. The most important thing is, however, that by approaching the new *mallum* the guests take on themselves the blessing he is now charged with.

The gifts of money that the guests bring to the feasting camp are later distributed among all camp members. However, the gifts of cattle are for the new *mallum* himself. In wealthy families these gifts can be quite generous. I was told, for example, that a few years before my arrival the son of my camp neighbours had received twelve head. The cattle gifts can thus considerably enlarge the young man’s herd and thus increase his pastoralist status. At the same time, the new *mallum*, irrespective of his age and the amount of his

¹³ Vivid descriptions of the *kori'en* behaving shamelessly can be found for example in Bocquené (1986).

¹⁴ I am talking of *do'a* as a ritual organised for men as it is still extremely rare among the cattle Fulbe women in my fieldsite to complete the Koranic school. In fact, during my fieldwork I met no woman who did so.

Schemes for Lifetimes

cattle, is expected to behave worthy of his status – a status into which dancing with *sukaaBe* certainly does not fit anymore.

Although the abandonment of the *kori'en* age class has somewhat blurred the idea of when exactly a young man should become an adult, the division between *sukaaku* and *ndottaaku* remains significant. One of the basic functions of the division between these two main male age classes is to separate the generations, which means that the groups can be understood only in relation to each other. Furthermore, the division reveals the tension between juniors and seniors which is structurally embedded in Fulbe society and which, as Burnham argues (1996), is still to be seen in inter-generational disputes despite the ban on such disapproved “junior institutions” as the *kori'en* age class and the practice of *soro*.

Compared to boys whose transition from childhood to youth is marked by circumcision at the age of seven, for girls there are no specific rituals to mark their increased sense of autonomy – or *hakkilo* – at this point in time. There is an “age class” for girls, called *budurwa'en*¹⁵ (young girls), comparable to that of male *sukaaBe*. But there is no specific age when the girls are thought to enter into it and some of my informants even said that a girl becomes a *budurwa* as early as when she starts to walk.

The high mobility that the cattle Fulbe identify with the *sukaaBe* age class can, to a certain extent, be associated with the *budurwa'en* as well. This is most obvious in the dance which is a central youthful practice for both sexes. However, the adolescent boys travel longer distances in order to dance and also participate more often in the dances in their home area than do the girls. In the Tibati area there are always more boys than girls dancing in the market places. On the other hand, the difference between boys' and girls' mobility is partly a matter of discursive underlinings. Thus, while boys and young men are considered to be restless and mobile by nature, there is a certain inclination to see girls and young women – at least from one's own lineage – as more immobile. This idea of immobility is not restricted to “less dancing” only, but is associated with a more reserved attitude that the girls should have towards youthful roaming around more generally, an attitude that is closely related to the local Muslim ideas of female chastity.

¹⁵ *Budurwa* (sg. of *budurwa'en*) is borrowed from the Hausa language, meaning “unmarried girl of marriageable age (lit. virgin)” (see Abraham 1962). The term *surbaajo* is the equivalent in Fulfulde, but *budurwa* is much more used by the pastoral Fulbe I know.

Schemes for Lifetimes

Whereas the beginning of the *budurwa* period is open to diverse explanations,¹⁶ there is not the slightest doubt about when it ends, that is, with the beginning of the girl's first pregnancy. This and other critical periods upon which a young woman's future autonomy is basically founded will be discussed in detail in the following.

THE MESSAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN

For the cattle Fulbe in Adamaoua, the birth of a child is always good news, but especially so when the newborn is the first child. In Tibati people often, when hearing about a newborn first child, exclaimed in delight: "*Teegal wooDi!*" ("the marriage is good!"). Indeed, for the Fulbe, the birth of the firstborn is the major proof of a sound marriage as it is only through children that the marriage is considered as being successful. Well before that happy event, however, certain ritual arrangements have to take place.

Koggal of Faadi

In July 1995 I attended a name-giving ceremony (*indeeri*) in a wealthy pastoralist camp of four brothers. They had all set up their own households with wives and the newborn was the third child of the second wife of the third of them, Usumaanu. In the afternoon when the name of the child was already announced and the sacrificed meat was ready to be consumed, some young women started to put up a rudimentary hut in front of the hut of the newborn child's co-mother by erecting four long branches of a *barkeehi* tree and tying their tops together. Other women, while watching the action, talked about a new marriage and the coming of a new bride. Unfortunately at that point I had to leave for a short trip to Yaounde. Back in Tibati I heard that, after I left the feasting camp, some older women – the paternal grandmother of the

¹⁶ Even though the absence of girls' initiation rites before the marriage procedure is quite striking in today's Adamaoua, it is quite probable that this has not always been the case. For example in the 1950s Stenning (1959) reported a ceremony called *tuppai* among the *WoDaaBe* Fulbe in Northern Nigeria in which the ears of nubile girls were pierced in preparation for their first participation in the dance of the youth. Although girls' ears are, at least in Adamaoua, nowadays pierced in their early childhood, Stenning's mention is congruent with the quite common idea that young boys are allowed to enter into the dance only after being circumcised. Stenning also mentioned that the beginning of a girl's menstruation was recognised through a change in her hairstyle. Among the pastoralists in contemporary Adamaoua, however, a woman has practically the same hairdo throughout her life, the only change being the replacement of the hair band by a square during the first pregnancy.

Schemes for Lifetimes

newborn included – had danced for a while with a calabash on their heads and a few men had rewarded their short performance with coins. Some time later I inquired from an old woman if the new bride had already arrived. She started to laugh and said that the bride will come only after two years.

The building of the hut which I observed in the midst of *indeeri* feasting, and the dance of the old women that followed it, are all that is left from the long child marriage procedure which was a common practice earlier among the cattle Fulbe.¹⁷ The specific ritual in which the symbolic building of the hut takes place is called *koggal*¹⁸; the name derives from the *koggal* marriage, that is, from the arranged first marriage which this ritual starts off. According to the accounts of older people, the way in which the *koggal* ritual was performed in former times exceeded the brief display that was witnessed in Usumaanu's camp. For example, one *BooDi* woman told how, during her youth in Nigeria, in *koggal* a mat of palme fibre was placed in the *barkeehi* hut (*suudu barki*) set up by women. Then some little children lied down on the mat and milk was sprinkled on them. Finally the children were covered with a white cloth. The same woman also emphasised the ritual role of old women who, by singing their special song called *innanjomba*¹⁹, represented the bride's family in *koggal*. The following sketch is based on my notes of her description:

When singing innanjomba during koggal the old women praise the lineage of the groom who married the bride. They praise the lineage of the mother because of giving the bride. They beg people to give them kola nuts, soap, candies, money and perfume. They beg people to give them two mats of palm fibre, one of them to be given to the mother of the bride. They beg people to give them a big calabash, they take it and put a lot of gruel in it. They take another, smaller calabash, they bring butter which they put on the top of the calabash with gruel. The lineage of the bride gives this gruel to the mother of the groom in the place of koggal, in the place of the bride's mother. At the doorway of the hut of the bride's mother, on a mat of palm fibre, they do like that. The old women distribute the meat. They give one hind leg to the bride's mother and the other hind leg to the groom's mother. They give the forelegs to people to eat. The old women take seven big calabashes in the middle of

¹⁷ As Burnham (1996) observed among the *Jaafun* in Cameroon in the 1960s and Dupire (1962) among the *WoDaaBe* in Niger in the 1950s, infant betrothal was earlier a very common practice among these groups and the first marriage was often arranged in the name-giving ceremony of the future bride. Detailed descriptions of those ritual practices that preceded *koggal* in former times can be found in Bocquené (1986) and Dupire (1962).

¹⁸ By writing the word as *koggal* I follow the way in which my informants in Adamaoua pronounced it. Other forms that I have seen used are *kobgal* (Bocquené 1986), *koobgal* (Dupire 1962; St Croix 1945) and *kooggal* (Stenning 1959).

¹⁹ The term *innanjomba* could be freely translated as "mothers' gathering".

Schemes for Lifetimes

the place of koggal. The groom's people give 2,500 CFA francs and put the money in the calabashes. The money will be distributed between the little brother, the big sister, the maternal aunt and the big brother of the bride. When the groom's people want to leave, the bride's mother gives them a calabash with milk inside and maize, cotton, millet, a leaf of barkeehi tree and cow dung on the cover. The calabash is taken to the groom's mother²⁰ who distributes the milk with a calabash spoon between all the women of her camp.

When compared with the detailed description above, the *koggal* arranged in Usumaanu's camp was obviously of a more modest type. In the latter the role of the women was curtailed to hut-building, dancing and collecting some coins from the male audience – they distributed no meat, nor was there any further ritual exchange between the bride's and groom's families such as the “calabash business” reported above. Another difference – which the above sketch does not directly show – is that while earlier the *koggal* was a feast arranged for that particular purpose alone, the episode that I observed in Adamaoua was a sort of a supplementary performance that took place in the midst of another ritual.

The curtailed *koggal* in Usumaanu's camp is an example of the wider ritual change that is going on among the cattle Fulbe in Adamaoua. This change entails a decrease of cultural elements that are considered to be non-Islamic and, as both Dupire (1970) and later Burnham (1996) have observed, affects the marriage practices as well. Burnham (*ibid.*, 111-112) notes the gradual disappearance of many marriage rituals that were earlier performed during the future spouses' childhood and early youth. As one main reason for this disappearance, Burnham sees the influence of the “more orthodox Fulbe Muslims” who disapprove of the long duration of the marriage process because it prevents the husband from “achieving full rights of co-residence” and “exclusive sexual access to his wife until after the final stage of the process following the weaning of the couple's first child” (*ibid.*, 111).

The cultural pressure noticed by Burnham was also reflected shortly after the *koggal* in Usumaanu's camp in the comments of some pastoralists who tried to convince me that the bride will arrive in two or three months. But contrary to these assurances, the bride, named Faadi, who was actually the daughter of Usumaanu's older brother, Buuba, and now to be married to Usumaanu's son Aamadu, did not show up in a short time. She came, as I heard later, more than one year after I left Cameroon in March 1996 – thus

²⁰ The calabash with milk and other goods is a return gift for a similar calabash present that was brought to the bride's mother earlier, that is, when the groom's relatives come to ask for the bride's parents' approval for the marriage. This information is from the same woman as the above sketch.

Schemes for Lifetimes

in about two years, which is actually the traditional time lag in the *koggal* procedure. For Faadi the distance was rather short as she lived in the same camp as her groom, and so the only thing for her to do was to shift from her father's side to that of her uncle. When I revisited Tibati in 1998, the situation was however altered as the whole camp had split up and the distance between the new camps of the families of the young husband and wife was about one kilometre. During my visit Faadi also gave birth to their first child and the *indeeri* ceremony for the new baby was held in her father's camp.

To return to the symbolic hut-building for Faadi in Usumaanu's camp, there were still other elements that distinguished it from the traditional *koggal* ceremony. First, the *barkeehi* hut was built on Usumaanu's side of the camp, in front of the huts of his two wives. This clearly deviated from the customary place to celebrate *koggal*, that is, in the camp of the bride's parents. One reason for this could be that it was just practical to carry out the *koggal* performance in the place where the guests were already sitting. Still, the question arises as to why such a socially relevant – and in this case easily arrangeable – rule was not followed. Another point was that there was no sacrifice of a specific *koggal* bull but, instead, the men slaughtered two bulls – one from Usumaanu's and another from his older brother's herd – which were then cut up and prepared together. This can be interpreted in two ways. It is possible that Buuba wanted to solemnise the *indeeri* feast of the child of his younger brother by donating an extra beast to be sacrificed. But it is also possible that one of the animals was slaughtered for *indeeri* and the other for *koggal*, even though the latter motive was not explicitly expressed.²¹ Whatever the truth behind these speculations, it can be said that the feast to which people were expressly invited was *indeeri*, and many of the guests – including both cattle Fulbe and Muslim Gbaya neighbours – were truly astonished while watching the sudden erection of the *barkeehi* hut.

If it is true – as I am disposed to think – that the *koggal* of Faadi and Aamadu was wrapped up in the *indeeri* celebration in order to stress the meaning of the latter as an appreciated, public Muslim ritual, the question arises, why then bother to perform it at all? The question becomes even more relevant because *koggal* is nowadays a rarely arranged ritual in Adamaoua and people are in no way expected to perform it. Another thing that speaks against the performance of a “non-Muslim” ritual here is that Usumaanu and Buuba were both respected *alhaji'en* (pl. of *alhaji*) and the most fervent Muslims in the family. Indeed, if one wants to seek motives for arranging

²¹ To be added, sacrificing more than one bull for one ritual is not uncommon in camps wealthy in cattle.

Schemes for Lifetimes

koggal in the case at hand, one should search for another reason than public or religious approval. What I propose is that the specific motivation here has more to do with intracamp relations than any outside pressures or influences.

The relationship between the two brothers was a close one. Buuba and Usumaanu, being the first and third son in the family, were the ones frequently seen together, biking side by side on the bush road or walking together in the Friday market. It is thus easy to see the marriage of Faadi and Aamadu as a long-expected seal between the families of the two brothers. It was especially important for Buuba as he was the oldest son²² in the family and desperately waiting for the moment when one of his sisters or brothers would have a child of marriageable age to marry one of his own children. The difficulty was that his three oldest children were all daughters and so he had to wait for a nephew old enough to marry his daughter. Finally, when his third daughter²³, Faadi, reached the proper age²⁴, the *koggal* was arranged for her and Aamadu who was the oldest among the male cousins and approximately the same age as Faadi. Indeed, there were arguments concerning the age of the future couple as the ideal for first marriage is that the groom is two or three years older than the bride. Some girls even argued that the *koggal* was arranged hastily because otherwise Faadi would soon understand that Aamadu is too young for her and thus she would not accept the marriage with him anymore. Despite these discordant notes, however, nobody denied the ultimate value of the marriage which – as a union between patrilineal first cousins – represented the most respected form of marriage. Seen from that point of view, the *indeeri* of Usumaanu's newborn son, as a publicly recognised Muslim ritual, provided a most suitable frame for reinforcing the family ties through the celebration of Faadi's and Aamadu's future marriage.

Coming for the Bride

One day in March 1996 it was time for Adama to leave her parents and go to live with her husband, Raago.²⁵ The person who was to come for her was Raago's mother, Moowa, whose hut I was watching so that I would be ready

²² Buuba was the second child in the family following an older sister who had no children.

²³ In the absence of suitable patrilineal cousins, Buuba's first two daughters were married to their more remote relatives living some fifty kilometres eastward.

²⁴ The *koggal* is traditionally arranged when the bride is approximately eleven or twelve years old.

²⁵ If the cattle Fulbe marriage proceeds in the "traditional" way, the groom's relatives come for the bride about two years after the performance of *koggal*. In any case the bride is brought to her groom's camp at the age of thirteen or fourteen, depending on her parents' opinion of when she is mature enough to make that critical move.

Schemes for Lifetimes

to join her when she was about to go. We left at noon – there was no hurry as the way to Adama was only about three kilometres. Besides, as Moowa emphasised, it would have been useless to leave earlier because the young bride would be too ashamed to appear before sunset anyway. Thus, after arriving in the camp of Adama's father, we sat a few hours in the hut of her mother, Hapsatu, while the young bride herself was hiding from us in the hut of her sister-in-law. The time passed quickly however, as Hapsatu showed us the things that she had bought for Adama with the money that Raago's father had donated for that purpose. The things included a little metal suitcase, a sheet, two pillows, two mats of plastic fibre, a plastic bottle, a torch, a purse, two pieces of cloth, a scarf, a pair of sandals, a pair of earrings, a bracelet, two bottles of skin cream, two soaps, an eye liner, a lipstick and a mirror. Moowa accepted the things – as well as the fact that the money given (30,000 CFA francs) was not quite enough for Hapsatu who still wanted to buy her daughter a wrist watch, a blanket, a stool and batteries for the torch.

The things that Hapsatu showed us are typical of the first part of the “indirect dowry” that is nowadays given to the young cattle Pullo bride as she moves to the camp of her new husband.²⁶ I use “first” as there is still another, bigger indirect dowry – to be discussed later – that is given when the woman moves back to her husband from her parents' camp after weaning the first child. The qualitative difference between these two is that while the “second” indirect dowry consists mainly of utensils with which the woman can start her own household and cooking, the first indirect dowry has more to do with the young wife's personal needs, hygiene and self-decoration, as the above list demonstrates.

What unites these two successive dowries is that they both belong to new types of marriage payments, which have increased in importance along with the increased sedentarisation and Islamisation of the pastoralists. As Dupire has noted earlier (1970:29), one clear change has been the decrease of cattle sacrifices during the marriage procedure and the increase of gifts given by the groom's family to the bride's family. The two indirect dowries that are nowadays given also among the cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua thus reflect this change. Together they constitute the main part of the gifts to the bride's family, gifts that, in Dupire's words, have “taken the form of bride price” (ibid.).

Adama's and Raago's marriage followed the current Islamic conventions also in that it had been earlier confirmed by a *mallum* in the presence of two witnesses, one representing Adama's kin and another that of Raago. Among

²⁶ Among the cattle Fulbe, in the case of the first wife, the indirect dowry is usually paid by the husband's parents and, for succeeding wives, by the husband himself.

Schemes for Lifetimes

the cattle Fulbe, this “tying of marriage” (*kaBBal*) is sealed by the distribution of kola nuts among those present and by the groom’s representative paying the *rubu* – the marriage fee of 5,000 CFA francs²⁷ – to the representative of the bride. At the same occasion, it is also possible to pay the money for the first indirect dowry as well as to give additional gifts to the bride and her family.

Although there is no religious obligation to sacrifice cattle in order to confirm a marriage, my cattle Fulbe informants emphasised that one year before the bride’s arrival the groom’s father should sacrifice a bull.²⁸ Indeed, people openly showed their moral disapproval of those parents who prefer that the groom’s family give them money instead of sacrificing an animal when marrying their daughter. Adama’s parents were criticised also, namely for having asked that the cattle sacrifice would be substituted by 20,000 CFA francs that would be added to the money for the first indirect dowry. Another theme for endless debates was the claim that some parents “ate” (*nyaamgo*) – used for their own purposes – part of the money that was the indirect dowry for their daughter.

Although it was often quite difficult for me to find the truth behind these accusations, the criticism in them still reflected some deeper cultural ideas. Here I refer to the moral difference that the cattle Fulbe see between transactions mediated by cattle and transactions mediated by money. From that point of view, the substitution of the communally shared cattle sacrifice by an extra sum of money as well as using part of the indirect dowry money for other purposes than for building up a household for the bride can both be interpreted as signs of an erosion of social values. This is despite the fact that those asking for such a substitution are often less fortunate pastoralists in desperate need of money. In addition, as I observed in Tibati, it is specifically in families short of cattle that the question of marriage fees is brought up. It is not surprising then, that it is often the lot of the relatively poor pastoralists to be scorned as lowering themselves to the level of villagers because their marriages have become “pure commerce” (*coggu meere*).

But let us finally return to fetch Adama, who – as any cattle Pullo bride – had nothing to do with the factual negotiations of her “bride price”. After

²⁷ There are different definitions regarding the contents of *rubu*. Contrary to Ndoudi Oumarou’s (see Bocquené 1986:264) and my observation that the word refers primarily to a certain amount of money (*ceede rubu*) given to the bride’s family *in addition to* the money to be spent on the indirect dowry, Dupire (1970:29) and Burnham (1996:112) use *rubu* to include the whole indirect dowry, whether consisting of money, gifts or sacrificed cattle.

²⁸ Admittedly, I do not know for sure whether this bull sacrifice is expected if *koggal*, with its traditional cattle sacrifice, has been performed.

Schemes for Lifetimes

Moowa had accepted the things that Adama's mother had bought, we still had to wait for her father's permission to go. When his agreement came, Moowa started to collect Adama's new things in order to bring them home. While leaving, Moowa and I took a different path to the main road than Adama who was accompanied a short way by her sister-in-law and younger sister. All the way Adama showed extreme reluctance to the whole project – she crept slowly some fifty metres behind us, fled into the bush with every by-passing car and bicycle, and stopped every time her mother-in-law impatiently called her name. When we finally returned, it was already dark. Before dawn, Adama had already fled back home.

Despite Moowa's overt irritation, there was nothing peculiar in Adama's stubborn behaviour. On the contrary, by showing extreme restraint and shyness in the presence of her new mother-in-law, she behaved exactly the way she was expected to. Indeed, while we waited in the middle of the road and Moowa cursed Adama's slowness, she herself could hardly conceal the mixed feelings of embarrassment and amusement when I asked her if she had done the same thing as a young bride. In another context Moowa would probably have proudly told – as others did – about the time of her youth when young wives showed much more reserve towards their in-laws than they do nowadays. For example, one woman told me how, in her lineage, the young wife's two or three days' escapades back home continued for one month. With Adama, however, Moowa went to take her back two days later and appealed to Adama's parents that the girl would not flee anymore, as she herself was too busy to run after her daughter-in-law. Adama did not flee. Early the following morning I saw her pounding maize in front of Moowa's hut.

Celebrating the Firstborn

When I revisited Tibati in summer 1998, my friend Nafi had a welcome companion in her hut. She was Nafi's daughter, Hureera, who, after seven years of marriage, was finally pregnant. Following the custom, Hureera had come to spend the last months of her first pregnancy in her parents' camp. As expected, during these last months Hureera did not visit other people or the market place, but stayed at the campsite with her close kin.

Arriving in her parents' camp, Hureera had finally left her carefree life as a young *budurwa* behind. Now she was called *boofiiDo*, a "hatcher". This critical *boofiiDo* period, upon which Hureera's future autonomy was founded, would cover all the time she stayed in her father's camp, that is, till the weaning of her firstborn child.

Soon Hureera gave birth to a baby girl. Following the custom, seven days after the birth Hureera's family arranged a name-giving ceremony, *indeeri*, for

Schemes for Lifetimes

the child. When I arrived it was morning and the women were gathered in and around the grandmother's hut and the men respectively in and around the hut of the grandfather. As any young mother in the same situation, Hureera had "escaped" from the place earlier and left her baby in the care of the grandmother, who was sitting in her hut with older female guests while the younger women were outside arranging the cooking place. Between the huts of the child's grandparents there was a sheep tied to a tree. Hureera's older brother had given the animal to be sacrificed later in the day, after the actual naming rite.

Organised in this way, the sacrifice actually departed from the order commonly followed in *indeeri* feasts in Adamaoua, when the sheep is slaughtered early in the morning but cattle only after the name-giving and prayers. This order echoes what Dupire (1970:160) has observed earlier in the name-giving ceremony among the *WoDaaBe* Fulbe of Niger, namely, the performance of separate "Muslim" and "traditional" rites. Among the *WoDaaBe* the split can be seen in the temporal delay as, while slaughtering the sheep – considered as a Muslim sacrifice – is performed on the seventh day after the birth, slaughtering of cattle takes place only when the larger pastoral group gathers for their annual *worso* meeting during the wet season. In Adamaoua, where the pastoralists do not practice these annual gatherings anymore, the split is less evident, but it can still be discerned in the mutual order of the two sacrifices. An interesting detail is the priority that my informants gave to the cattle sacrifice. For example, when I asked people how *indeeri* is performed they always spoke of the cattle sacrifice but quite often forgot to mention the sheep. The same priority came up when people talked of name-giving ceremonies in which only a sheep was slaughtered, as there were always those who, in the absence of cattle sacrifice, complained and said afterwards that "*indeeri* was not performed". So it happened also after Hureera's child's *indeeri* although everyone knew that the condition of Hureera's family was such that there were practically no cattle to be sacrificed.²⁹ Whether appropriate or not, complaints of this sort reflect the

²⁹ Hureera's father had lost practically all his cattle earlier and although her older brother had managed to acquire some cattle by herding part of the cattle of a wealthy relative his herd was still too small for making sacrifices. One thing that somewhat calmed down the grumblers in this unlucky situation was that the father of Hureera's baby, living on the road to Banyo, had promised to come to slaughter a bull from his herd later. There was nothing incredible in his promise, as it is quite usual among the cattle Fulbe that both the mother's and the father's kin slaughter a bull in the *indeeri* of the first child. However, when the distance is long the father's relatives do not usually participate in the ceremony which is then arranged totally by the mother's family. The opposite situation – the father's family taking charge of the ceremony – holds true in the case of succeeding children.

Schemes for Lifetimes

deep attachment that the cattle Fulbe have to their traditional cattle sacrifices. Indeed, the Muslim idea that a great part of the sacrificed animal should be given as alms (*sadaka*) to the poor (Stenning 1959:117) has not gained much ground among the cattle Fulbe in Adamaoua for whom the ritual slaughtering of cattle and the distribution of the meat among those present still has more to do with the unity of the pastoral group than with any wider religious ideals.

Let us return to the actual *indeeri* feast of Hureera's child. After having spent some time inside the hut the men – including the grandfather and the *mallum* – came out and the women followed. The men and women squatted down in front of each respective hut; the grandmother with the baby in her arms. The *mallum* uttered two names of which Nafi, the grandmother, proposed one. Finally the other name, Aminatu,³⁰ was chosen by the men. Nafi whispered “*Alla mawni*” (“may God make you grow up”) into both ears of the child after which the *mallum* conducted the collective prayers³¹ which people “accepted” (*jaBgo*) by raising their hands, palms up, and then by “washing their face with his words”³² three times. Kola nuts bought by Hureera's near relatives were distributed to all present and finally the sheep

³⁰ This was the “big name” (*inde manga*) given to Hureera's baby, that is, the Arabic personal name that is given to the child according to the day of the week on which he or she is born. Besides this name given by the *mallum* according to the Muslim custom, there is also another name, “the little name” (*inde peetel*), which is often more frequently used in daily talk than the Muslim name. This second name is usually given to a child by one of the grandparents according to the circumstances under which the child was born. For example, a person who is born during one of the daily prayers can be called Juuli (*juulgo* = to pray), or a person who is born during the milking hour, can be called Bira (*Birgo* = to milk). The little name can also refer to current phenomena outside the daily camp life – for example one boy in my neighbourhood was named *Polbia* after Paul Biya, the president of Cameroon.

³¹ One prayer form to be uttered here is (my direct translation from Fulfulde): “May God give the child the intelligence (*hakkilo*) of the mother and the father. May God give the child a long life. May God make him love his mother and father. May God make illnesses easier for him. Amen.”

³² I borrow this expression from de Bruijn's and van Dijk's (1995:191) study of the pastoral Fulbe of Central Mali. As these scholars put it, what happens when an Islamic teacher (*moodibbo*) utters a blessing during the prayers is that, first, people hold their hands up in order to “catch” his words and then, second, they bring their hands with the words to their faces in order to internalise these words (*ibid.*, 195, n27). The expressions that my cattle Fulbe informants in Adamaoua used for the same practice were the following. First, by raising their hands up, people “accept the prayer of the *mallum*”. Second, by rubbing – or washing – their faces with their hands they “help the *mallum* to accept the prayer”. What makes these translations somewhat inaccurate is that, while the verb *jaBgo* can be directly translated as “to accept”, it still encompasses a more internalised dimension and thus, in the above usage, refers to a reciprocal support taking place between the *mallum* and other people praying as both seek to internalise the content of the prayer.

Schemes for Lifetimes

was slaughtered. All day little gifts – mostly money and soap – were given to the baby and her mother by both male and female guests. The gifts were accepted by the grandmother who later bought clothes for the baby with the money received.

I had to leave before they slaughtered, but the same practices related to the handling of the sacrificed meat that I have observed in other name-giving feasts most probably followed. In *indeeri* – as in any other cattle Fulbe celebration in which an animal is sacrificed – men cut up the carcass, take one or both of the forelegs, roast these over a campfire near the cattle corral, and consume that special meat among themselves. They give the rest of the meat to the women, who cut it into cookable pieces and prepare the meat – as well as rice – in cooking pots. Finally, women divide the food – the rice and the sauce with pieces of meat – into fit portions to be delivered to each age group, to men and women respectively. Often, if there has been enough meat, portions of raw meat are also given to departing guests to take home. Well before the common meal, it is also a customary practice to offer the people maize or manioc gruel cooked with milk.

Still another central practice during the *indeeri* celebration is to shave the hair of the baby with a razor blade, which is done after the actual name-giving and prayers, but usually before consuming the sacrificed meat. Traditionally, this shaving has been the task of older women, such as the grandmother, and I have seen a few *indeeri* feasts in which the women still do it. However, nowadays, if there is money to pay for it, a Hausa barber from the village is usually called to perform the job. The presence of a Hausa barber in *indeeri* has, to use Stanley Tambiah's concept, "performative potency" (1985:162) because it points to the social status of the parents). Indeed, even in those cases in which I saw the old women perform the task, people often gave the impression that the absence of the Hausa barber is somehow unintended – for example by saying that a certain person had forgotten to call him, or simply that this time he had not been found. But whether the shaving is performed by a professional barber or by the child's old female relative, the common practice is to throw the hair into a calabash filled with milk and some *barkeehi* leaves. Finally a woman – often the mother's sister-in-law – throws the

Schemes for Lifetimes

contents of the calabash onto the roof of the mother's hut, high above its doorway.³³

After shaving the baby's hair, it is also common to make several short incisions on his or her body with the same razor blade used for the shaving.³⁴ The body parts on which these scars are made are usually the head, the area around navel, arms and lower legs, sometimes they are also made inside the mouth.³⁵ The number and the specific location of these body marks differ from one lineage to another, but the explanation given for them is always the same: the mother's diseases are believed to leave the child's body along with the blood bleeding out from the incisions. Finally, charcoal is rubbed into the incisions; I have also seen the twig of a *barkeehi* tree bent around the child's head to heal its wounds.

I have observed these details both in *indeeri* feasts for the firstborn and in those for succeeding children. In fact, the birth order of the child does not make any concrete difference in the performance as the same things are done every time in approximately the same way. The similarity does not, however, eliminate the particular meaning attached to the *indeeri* arranged for the firstborn child who will always be aware of his or her special position among siblings. This special position of the firstborn – which can be derived from the fact that it starts a new reproductive cycle and so turns two persons into parents and founds a new filial generation – is not, however, something unique to the pastoral Fulbe. For example, Meyer Fortes (1978) has shown how in many African societies the various practices deriving from the special status of the firstborn and the ambivalent relationship with his or her parents denotes “the ineluctable fact that the continuity of society depends upon the eventual demise and replacement of the parental by the filial generation” (ibid., 147). In the case of the cattle Fulbe this inter-generational tension is shrouded by the virtue of *semteende*. For Hureera – as for any parent in her group – it would have been most shameful to show any feelings towards her firstborn in public, to call the child by name, or even to give the slightest hint of the fact of being related.

³³ When asked, my informants commented on this practice, for example, by saying that the milk-hair mixture is thrown up in order to make the child grow up. In some cattle Fulbe groups the whole calabash with its contents is buried in the cattle corral, and in still others part of its contents are consumed by adult men (see Dupire 1962; 1970). Despite the differences between these practices, they all seem to be connected to the analogy that the pastoralists draw between the fertility of cattle and fertility of human beings.

³⁴ I have never seen these incisions made by a woman, but only by a paid male barber.

³⁵ Sometimes also the uvula is removed – a custom that is borrowed from the Hausa.

Schemes for Lifetimes

There are three key agents involved in the *indeeri* ritual. First, there is the child whom the ritual transforms from the undefined status of newborn into a social person, that is, a member of the society. Here the child is actually incorporated in three overlapping – if not totally nesting – societies which can be distinguished from each other on the basis of scale. Thus, high up the scale there is the pan-ethnic Islamic society of Adamaoua³⁶ in which the child is joined through the acts considered as Islamic – such as uttering God’s name when slaughtering the animal, choosing the Arabic name for the child and finally performing the collective prayers. Then the child becomes a member of the cattle Fulbe society at large when its hair is shaved and thrown into the milk in the calabash.³⁷ Finally, in *indeeri* the child is attached to a certain lineage when the lineage marks are incised on the child’s skin.³⁸ The collective consumption of the sacrificed meat effects the last two memberships. However, one noticeable detail that differentiates these two from the Islamic parts of the ritual is that, while the child is incorporated into cattle Fulbe society and into the particular lineage of his/her father by concrete operations done on such body parts as skin and hair, the acts that make the child a member of the Muslim community derive much of their ritual efficacy from uttered words.³⁹

Second, *indeeri* is a ritual occasion in which the status of the father and the mother of the child is confirmed. The *indeeri* of the first child is especially crucial as it transforms the young man and woman into an adult stage of autonomy at one go. But the births of other children are important also. Every succeeding *indeeri* feast reinforces the adulthood of the parents – even if especially so in the case of the first two or three children. The gradual maturation into parenthood is also reflected in the gradual change taking place in the parents’ stand towards the ritual. Thus, whereas it is unthinkable that the young father and mother would take part – or even show up – in the *indeeri* of their first child, gradually, in the *indeeri* feasts of succeeding

³⁶ We could also talk here of the Islamic community in a more global sense as the cattle Fulbe are well aware that Islam exceeds the limits of Adamaoua – as well as the wider limits of “the lands of the black people” (*leddi Bale’en*).

³⁷ The importance of this particular act is nicely brought up by Ndoudi Oumarou (Bocquené 1986:118) who, reflecting upon his own membership in a *Jaafun* Fulbe community in North Cameroon, says that, at least in former times, nobody could claim to belong to the “bush Fulbe” if he had not been “shaved in milk”.

³⁸ Besides the mother’s diseases that – according to the local explanation – leave the child’s body through the bleeding incisions, it is also the mother’s lineage which, through the same operation, gives way to the father’s lineage to which the child is then incorporated.

³⁹ The Islamic rites, while “doing by saying”, come closer here to Austinian performatives in the strict linguistic sense of the term (see Austin 1962:6).

Schemes for Lifetimes

children, they start to “hang around” in the place of celebration. Even then, especially in the case of the following one or two children, they prefer to avoid spaces where they could attract notice and stay in the periphery of ritual activities, for example by sitting silently in an outlying hut.

Third, the name-giving ceremony is the most frequently arranged life cycle ritual in which performing is highly collective in nature. Indeed, for an outsider, in the midst of *indeeri* activities, it is often quite difficult to discern between “hosts” and “guests” as practically all people present take part in different preparations: women fetching water and cooking, men bustling around the slaughtered animal(s), children collecting firewood and so on. People also contribute to the ceremony by bringing gifts to the baby. Besides money and soap, which both men and women can give, a special gift that the women guests bring with them is milk – which is then collected into one big calabash in the feasting camp⁴⁰. All these activities speak about the fact that the birth and the welfare of the child concerns – and at the same time reflects – the whole pastoral community. “We obtained joy because of the child” (“*en heBi seyo Bingel*”), one old man answered, when I asked him about the reason for arranging *indeeri*.

Finally, *indeeri*, besides being a special occasion for the various agents involved, is a central ritual articulating cultural difference. Among the life cycle rituals of the cattle Fulbe, *indeeri* comes closest to the corresponding ritual in the local sedentary Hausa-Fulbe community: both are called by the same term, both take place on the seventh day after birth, in both the *mallum* chooses the name, kola nuts are distributed and the hair of the child is shaved. It is this similarity in outline – with differences in certain details – that makes *indeeri* a special occasion for cultural self-reflection. For example, while one of the most central single rites in the *indeeri* of the pastoralists is to moisten the child’s hair with milk and throw the shaved hair into the milk, in the Muslim villagers’ name-giving ceremony there is no milk or *barkeehi* twigs, and the hair to be shaved is washed with water and soap only. Concomitantly, the milk that the pastoralist women bring with them into the celebrating camp is missing in the villagers’ ceremony and is replaced by other gifts.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ndoudi Oumarou obviously talks of this particular milk when saying that, among the *Jaafun* Fulbe in the Benue valley, the milk in which the hair of the baby is thrown is collected from all the calabashes that women have brought with them and thus it represents “all the reunited cows” (Bocquené 1986:118).

⁴¹ Regis (1997:254) has observed how, in the *indeeri* feast among the village Fulbe in Maroua, women guests bring with them millet grain which is then poured into one large enamel bowl. Although the actual gift is different than among the pastoralists, the idea of uniting the contribution of all women guests into a single container is the same.

Schemes for Lifetimes

Another difference between the two groups is that in the *indeeri* celebration of the villagers the segregation of men's and women's activities is taken further. In the Hausa-Fulbe quarters in Tibati the men's part of the *indeeri* celebration took place early in the morning in the mosque where the name was given and kola nuts and bonbons were distributed, the latter to be taken home to the children. After the men's call at the mosque, it was only women who came to visit the child's female relatives, gave gifts of money, and were present when the child's hair was shaved by a barber. Finally, the meat and the rice that were bought for the feast were distributed among women guests who did not, however, consume it on the spot but took the food home with them.⁴² In comparison, although the division of tasks and space is gendered in the cattle Fulbe *indeeri* as well, the men's and women's celebration takes place simultaneously, and within the limits of the same camp space, as both observe the factual name-giving rite and share the same ritual food. Indeed, a distinction found among the pastoralists' *indeeri* is that much more emphasis is put on the general ungendered idea of belonging to a specific people – an idea made concrete through the ritual usage of milk, meat and the blessed leaves of the *barkeehi* tree.

⁴² Even if the villagers' way of delivering food here does not exactly match with the Islamic idea of almsgiving, it still comes closer to that than the cattle Fulbe way of consuming most of the sacrificed meat together in the place of celebration.

Displaying the Wealth of the New Mother: Bantal

Though the actual relation between a parent and the firstborn is hidden in public, it is made clearly visible through the material presence of the mother's hut, which the mother receives only after having returned from her parents after weaning the firstborn child. The event is given full recognition through two rituals, *Bantal* and *defol*. The first of them, *Bantal*, is performed in the natal camp of the new mother, just before she leaves her parents with her first child. What follows is based on my observation of the *Bantal* of Raabi in March 1996.

Raabi was Bakari's fourth daughter and married to her third cross-cousin, Dawda, as the second wife. Even before their marriage Dawda and Raabi lived close to each other as their parents' camps were constructed practically side by side near the road from Tibati to Mbakaou.⁴³ The proximity of the two camps did not, however, annul the "rule of avoidance"; during the weaning period Dawda was not allowed to visit Raabi and their first child in Raabi's father's camp. Following the custom, the day of *Bantal*⁴⁴ finally terminated the separation.

On the day of Raabi's *Bantal* the same people living nearby, whom I had seen in many other cattle Fulbe feasts in the neighbourhood, were gathered in Bakari's camp. These people included Raabi's and Dawda's patrilineal and matrilineal relatives as well as pastoralists from other lineages. As is common on these occasions, there were also some "surprise" visitors. One of them was Raabi's paternal uncle Gooje who, although living in Ngaoundal, happened to be around because he was visiting the local hospital where his wife was under medical treatment. Another was Raabi's older sister from Mandourou. Still another, Dawda's older sister, had come all the way from Wukari, Nigeria.

I arrived at Bakari's place with some of my female neighbours, each of us carrying a gift to the new mother. At the destination the gifts were collected

⁴³ The parents living in these camps were Bakari and Dawda's mother Keeha only, as Raabi's mother had died earlier and Dawda and his brothers refused to live with their father, who lived with more distant relatives in a nearby camp. All these people had arrived in the region about one year earlier from Bertoua. I do not know for sure if the two camps had been located as close to each other in Bertoua as they were in Tibati.

⁴⁴ In another context (Virtanen 1999) I have used the term "*wassugo*" for the same ritual. The reason for abandoning its use is that people never utter this term in a noun form, but in certain verb forms (e.g., *wassi*, *wassay*) only – for example when expressing that certain people have performed, or will perform, the ritual. Thus *wassugo* is an infinitive that I myself derived from those verb forms that I have heard. But as I have not managed to find references to the term in any dictionary, I prefer now to use the better known term *Bantal* (often written in the form *Bangtal*; see e.g., Bocquené 1986 and Taylor 1932), a term which was familiar also to my informants.

Schemes for Lifetimes

in one place, after which the guests were served manioc porridge and meat. This time the meat did not come from an animal slaughtered on the spot, but was bought in the market. There was nothing aberrant in this procedure as the cattle sacrifice does not form any standard part in the *Bantal* ceremony, and it is possible to refrain from serving meat altogether. However, people seldom interpret this “liberation” literally, but tend to serve meat in different kinds of communal gatherings if they have the means to do so.

Soon after people had finished eating, Raabi’s new wealth was laid on the ground to be admired. The wealth derived from two distinct origins. First, there were gifts that – mainly female – guests had donated. Second, there were things that were bought with the 80,000 CFA francs that Dawda had given for the second indirect dowry of Raabi. The core was composed of household utensils: bigger and smaller calabashes⁴⁵, iron pots, enamel bowls, plastic cups, containers and pails, hand worked calabash covers, and head pads for holding the calabash on the head. There were also other things that Raabi would need for setting up her own hut, such as mats of palm and plastic fibre, a sheet, two pillows, a mattress and a blanket. Furthermore, there were sickles, soap, a veil, pieces and bolts of cloth, as well as pieces of crochet-work that some female relatives and friends had crocheted for the new mother. Finally, a close male relative of Raabi’s dead mother had brought wooden poles that he had decorated with paint. These poles were later used to erect a scaffold (*danki*) for Raabi’s prettiest household utensils – a piece of furniture that embellishes the hut of every married woman. Among the cattle Fulbe it is usually the women themselves who take charge of this decoration, and in the case of the first *danki* it is often done by the woman’s mother. Thus, the male relative substituted for Raabi’s dead mother by painting the poles. “He became her [Raabi’s] mother”, one woman commented about this specific arrangement.

The objects were put on the ground in two separate rows: those bought with the “second indirect dowry money” (*ceede Bantirde*) in one, and those given as gifts in another.⁴⁶ It was the female guests who first approached to take a closer look at the objects. After having done so, the women gave way

⁴⁵ In Cameroon, as in other parts of western Africa, calabashes – made from shells of pumpkins – are fabricated into various sorts of utensils. Of these Raabi’s new wealth included one big calabash with a cork for churning butter (*jollooru*), a couple of big calabashes for carrying milk (*tummude*), smaller calabashes with a handle to be used as spoons (*horde*) and still other small calabashes for drinking water or gruel.

⁴⁶ There is no qualitative difference between these two categories of objects. For example household utensils can be both bought with the dowry money and donated by guests. However, usually the most valuable things – such as mattresses, blankets, big calabashes and cooking pots – belong to the first category.

Schemes for Lifetimes

to the men, still keeping themselves within sight. Dawda's mother Keeha – here acting in the status of Raabi's aunt⁴⁷ – together with Dawda's older sister, picked the items up one by one, mentioning the name of the donator of each gift while showing it to people. Raabi's father Bakari and her paternal uncle Gooje, who were squatted next to the exposed things, nodded their heads during this display. Finally, when all the items had been gone through, Gooje gave his approval of the things that Keeha had bought and, referring to the gifts, praised the lineage for its generosity.⁴⁸

Later in the evening, after the guests had left, Raabi's new wealth was tied up and loaded on a pack ox⁴⁹ and moved into her new hut in Dawda's camp. She followed with the child, who died of poor health only a few days later. The sad event did not, however, change Raabi's position and she continued to live as a married wife in her hut in her husband's camp.

As is often the case after these kinds of occasions, there were many subsequent comments about Raabi's *Bantal*. A typical critique concerned the

⁴⁷ It would have been the task of Raabi's mother, if still alive, to buy the things and then show them to people. But as she was dead, Keeha replaced her in both tasks. Keeha could not, however, have done it in her status as Raabi's mother-in-law. Instead, here she acted as Raabi's paternal aunt (*goggo*) – a kin category by which she was also defined in relation to her daughter-in-law.

⁴⁸ Here again, the kin roles were somewhat blurred, as the things that are bought or donated to the new mother should principally be approved by the male representatives of the new father's patrilineage, and not that of the mother as now happened. What mixed this arrangement was that it was the father and his relatives – and not the new mother's relatives as is usually expected – who bought the things. So, the situation demanded a sort of inverse checking from the side of Raabi's family that the money was not misused. On the other hand, both Gooje and Bakari were also Dawda's patrilineal relatives and so Gooje could also have represented Dawda's family during the ritual.

⁴⁹ Earlier, when the cattle Fulbe still moved frequently, the ox or oxen employed here were allotted to the new mother so that she could transport her things on their back every time the camp moved. Nowadays – whether in the case of *Bantal* or when people migrate or practice transhumance – the things are often transferred with a bicycle or a car, depending on the distance. The change in transport practices has not, however, reduced the importance of the act of tying up the things (*haBBugo kaaya*) on an ox in *Bantal* which ritually repeats the whole idea of contracting, or “tying”, a marriage (*haBBugo teegal*). For example, one woman told me how some years ago, in the *Bantal* of her daughter, the things were first tied on a pack ox and then detached again to be carried by several young boys and girls to the nearby road where a taxi would take them to the camp of the husband. As regards terminology, earlier the things of a woman that were carried by an ox when the camp moved were called *kaakoy*. I heard two versions of how the term is understood nowadays, though not often employed in everyday talk. Most of my informants regarded *kaakoy* as a general term for the woman's wealth exposed in *Bantal*. A few others restricted the term to refer to mats and bedclothes and used a distinct term *makkoy* for the cooking utensils. Still somewhat varied definitions of the term *kaakoy* (often written in the form *kaakol*) can be found in Dupire (1962:57), Stenning (1962:57) and Issa and Labatut (1974:28).

Schemes for Lifetimes



Photograph 5: *Bantal*. A kinswoman showing the male representatives of the husband the objects that has been bought for the young wife.

gifts, or rather the lack of them, as there are always those guests who come empty-handed. Some old women also found a good opportunity to contrast the past, when the new mothers got “fifty soaps and two hundred plates”, with the present when, as one woman declared, “no gifts are given either when a woman is going to, or returns from giving birth, not even when her *Bantal* is celebrated”.

In spite of the usual complaints, Raabi’s *Bantal* ceremony with its obvious display of wealth and food was generally well accepted. That it was performed in the first place was a positive matter, as there are also cases in which the new mother moves to her husband without any specific social recognition. One such move actually took place in the vicinity on the very same day, when the wealth of another new mother, Diidja, was transferred to her husband’s camp. Contrary to Raabi’s *Bantal*, however, Diidja’s things were moved on the quiet without the knowledge of the neighbours, who were all gathered at Raabi’s father’s camp. According to one version, told by Diidja’s mother-in-law, some people from the husband’s camp went to see the things before noon, but there were no things left, nor was any food served. This was because Diidja’s mother had tied the things up in secret early in the morning, after which Diidja’s brother-in-law had fetched them with his bicycle and taken them to Diidja’s husband’s camp. I am not totally convinced that any official delegation from the husband’s side had arrived, but the silence in which all

Schemes for Lifetimes

happened certainly raised questions among people. As I understood on the basis of gossip, the reason for not performing the ritual had to do with the bad relations between the respective mothers-in-law, a relation which had already generated a few witchcraft accusations by the husband's mother, who had refused to go to fetch her daughter-in-law.

Another, still quite different case in which *Bantal* was not performed in the expected manner was that of a woman called Munyi whose first child died at the age of six months. The death thus occurred during the period while the young mother was still staying with her baby in her parents' camp. Two months after the sad event Munyi returned to her husband without any public recognition, and it was only after her untimely return that her mother-in-law⁵⁰ started to buy things for her second indirect dowry.

The special arrangement by which Munyi returned to her husband without the *Bantal* resulted from several related factors. On the one hand, there was no reason for Munyi to extend her stay with her parents after the premature death of her first child. On the other hand, it was presumably a more practical choice for Munyi to return to her husband – and so to enable possible future pregnancies – than to sit idle and wait until the second indirect dowry was paid by her father-in-law and all the necessary things bought to complete her wealth. The factual absence of the child was, of course, the main reason to not perform *Bantal*. Indeed, the central role that the first child has come out clearly in the case of Raabi, whose *Bantal* was moved forward when people understood that her sickly baby may not live long.

In Munyi's case it should be added that the premature death of her first child did not deprive her of her status as a married and delivered woman. I left soon after her return to her husband so I was not able to follow how things proceeded afterwards. People affirmed to me, however, that, although the *Bantal* was skipped, Munyi's wealth would be finally on view in her *defol*, that is, in the ritual which finishes the whole first marriage procedure.

⁵⁰ It was Munyi's mother who asked Munyi's mother-in-law to do it on her behalf, as she herself was in poor health.



Photograph 6: A woman's wealth that has been displayed in her new hut for the *defol* ritual.

Starting a Household: Defol

One month had passed since Mairama's *Bantal* was celebrated in her father's camp in Mandourou. Now that she was settled down and had furnished her new hut in the camp of her husband Hammadu, it was time to invite people to celebrate her return. The *defol*⁵¹ ceremony would ritually mark Mairama's new status as a *kaabo debbo*⁵², that is, a wife and mother of full standing.

When I arrived in Hammadu's camp on the morning of the day of the ceremony, there was a constant flow of women moving in and out of Mairama's hut. They entered the hut to admire the same pristine things that had been displayed earlier in Mairama's *Bantal*. This time the appreciation was left to women only, as it would have been unthinkable for male guests to enter the hut of a young woman. But for female guests the aesthetics of the hut of a pastoral woman was revealed in full array. Two beds were wrapped in well-shaped curtains and covered with skilfully folded sheets and blankets.

⁵¹ The term *defol* can be translated as "cooking". Another term for the same ritual is *kapiri*. I have not managed to unravel the etymology of the latter term.

⁵² The term *kaabo* is derived from the verb *haabida*, "to have given birth" (Taylor 1932). According to Noye (1989) it can be used for a woman or a female (a cow, a mare, etc.) that has had a child (or a calf, a foal) so that it can be expected that she (it) can have more offspring in the future.

Schemes for Lifetimes

Two scaffolds were set up, fitted with shelves trimmed with crocheted lace edgings and filled with dozens of calabashes, enamel bowls and lids adorned with mirror fragments. About twenty calabash spoons were placed in a row on the wall. String bags filled with little calabashes and colourful head pads were hanging down from the ceiling. The volume of the wealth was such that most of it would remain there unused, to be admired only.

Suddenly, while I was examining all that beauty with some other women, two elderly kinswomen entered the hut with pieces of untidy and broken aluminium vessels. They placed their junk on one of the scaffolds amidst Mairama's sparkling pots and plates, and justified their deed by saying that otherwise the co-wives – Mairama had two of them – would become too envious. A lot of laughter and cracking of jokes followed, after which Hammadu's first wife came in and threw the rubbish out.

The incident reminds of the grandmothers dancing and collecting money during the *koggal* of Faadi and Aamadu. People told me also about other occasions, such as some *indeeri* feasts for the firstborn child, in which the old women had been joking, dancing and carrying their dirty worn out loads.⁵³ Sometimes the old women still complement these performances by singing their traditional *innanjomba* songs. But whether they involve singing or not, the humorous displays that occur from time to time during these celebrations echo the central – and more consistent – role that the elderly kinswomen had earlier at certain ritualised points in the first marriage procedure.

In addition to joking grandmothers, there were also other women with central roles in Mairama's *defol*. The most important of them was Mairama herself, whose new status was shown by her active participation in the organisation of the feast. This differed radically from the evasive attitude that she was expected to have earlier towards such rituals as her *koggal*, the *indeeri* of her firstborn, and her *Bantal*. Concomitantly, Mairama's female age-mates who had earlier stayed aloof from any ritual connected to Mairama's marriage, because they were sharing her sense of shame (*semteende*), now eagerly helped her to arrange the feast.

The active role of the young women could be observed already some days before the ceremony when Mairama and her friends walked from camp to camp to invite people to her *defol*. On the morning of the actual feast the same young women, together with older ones, swarmed around the fireplace that was set up in front of Mairama's new hut. A central activity taking place

⁵³ A comparable description can also be found in Ndoudi Oumarou's (Bocquené 1986) account of a *Jaafun* marriage procedure in which the old women tried to prevent other people from setting up a bed for the new bride by detaching the legs of the bed, throwing the bedclothes on the ground and staining the blanket with cow dung.

Schemes for Lifetimes

at the fire was cooking the rice and boiling the milk brought by female guests – rice and milk forming the main food served in *defol*. Here, as in *Bantal*, a cattle sacrifice is not a ritual requisite. This time no bull was slaughtered nor were any critical comments uttered about the missing meat. Instead, some old women mentioned the lack of milk and complained that not enough women attended the ceremony to help in cooking.

Cooking rice and boiling milk does not, however, make *defol* a specific ritual among the cattle Fulbe. When looking back on my stay in Adamaoua, I remember only one celebration – the *indeeri* of the second child of one poor pastoralist – in which manioc porridge was served instead of rice. In all other celebrations rice, as well as milk in one form or another, was always served. The question of what then makes rice and milk so distinctive in *defol* can be approached by taking a closer look at one specific detail of how they are served.

After the rice was cooked at the fireplace, some young women put a big portion of it in Mairama's biggest calabash. They worked the rice into the shape of a ball, dug a deep hole in the middle of it with a pestle, filled the hole with oil, and, finally, covered the whole thing with another, smaller calabash. Then three of Mairama's friends, somewhat younger than herself, set out, the first of them carrying the big calabash with rice, the second carrying calabash spoons and a bowl filled with boiled milk, and the third carrying smaller plates for eating. After walking for a while they stopped in front of a hut from which an old man, Hammadu's patrilineal uncle, came out. He greeted the young women who then left the dishes on the ground. It was the men sitting inside the hut – including Hammadu himself, his father, two of his patrilineal uncles and some of his older brothers – whose task was to accept the meal. After the young women had returned from the men's hut to the fireplace, the rest of the food was delivered to other people present as in any other celebration.

Concluding from the above description, the particular weight of the rice and milk served in *defol* is based on the fact that they – even if prepared and served collectively by several women – represent the transformed agency of one specific wife and mother. This transformation is ritually produced in the approval of the food by the husband along with some representatives of his patrilineage. Thus, by accepting – and consuming – the first portion of the food,⁵⁴ Hammadu and his male relatives empowered Mairama to take full responsibility for the tasks that her new status required. From now on she would be in charge of cooking, whether for everyday meals in the camp in her

⁵⁴ In Bocquené (1986), Ndoudi Oumarou describes a case among the *Jaafun* Fulbe in which it is the husband who eats the first mouthful from the plate brought by the wife. Hammadu may well have done the same thing, but I am not able to confirm that.

Schemes for Lifetimes

turn, or on ritual occasions as happened for the first time in her *defol*. Furthermore, she would have milk from her husband's cows that were allotted to her and would be able to decide its use. Principally, if not secluded as Mairama was, she would also start selling milk from the same cows in the surrounding markets and decide on the money earned during these trips. But whether including milk-selling or not, to perform all her new tasks Mairama would need the things that were now exposed on the decorated shelves in her hut – as well as those that were brought into use by her first cooking.

There was still one performance left to animate Mairama's *defol*. It burst out when the women were just about to finish serving the food to the rest of the guests. This time the young maidens took the floor by loudly starting to abuse the young women of Mairama's age. According to their own words, the reason for their irritation was that they had not been served any rice and so they were hungry. What followed was screaming and fighting between the two groups, which show was interrupted a few times when the maidens withdrew to "negotiate" into the hut of Hammadu's third wife.⁵⁵ When walking back to the fireplace, some of the "hungry" maidens were supporting themselves with a stick or pestle as if they were elders without any strength left. Some even fetched firewood and three stones from the bush in order to set up their own fireplace for cooking. There were still others who started to pound rice in a mortar. Finally, after much bustle and noise, the young women calmed down and left the camp with other guests.

The way in which women of various ages put themselves forward during Mairama's *defol* was clearly more vigorous than their behaviour in other marriage rituals that I observed in Adamaoua. Part of the difference can of course be accidental – at certain times people just tend to jest more than at others, no matter what they are celebrating. However, the fact that the performers were exclusively women, and that their joking fell more or less on Mairama and her status group, spoke of a more consistent type of ritual action. Here, the particular visibility of young women is notable; in no other marriage ritual do they make their social existence known to others in so manifest a way. Indeed, although I managed to participate only in two *defol* rituals during my fieldwork, distinctive to both was the visible role of the young women – and especially at the fireplace, both in cooking and in big talk. It was their noisy performance that articulated the difference between the married maidens and the wives of full status. The only young woman who had nothing to do with the bustle was Mairama herself. In congruence with the

⁵⁵ Hammadu's third wife was actually older than Mairama, but as Hammadu had married her after Mairama, her status was that of third wife and so the maidens identified with her in their play.

Schemes for Lifetimes

virtues of *semteende*, she did not even taste the rice that was served in her *defol*. Instead, with a gentle smile on her face she moved smoothly in and around her hut, keeping an eye on her child and casting an understanding look now and then at the cacophonous cooking place, as was worthy of her new status.

Married Men, Married Women

In the above examples we have followed how, through the different phases of the first marriage procedure, the new couple is gradually transformed from carefree youth into the status of adult members of their society. This change is made explicit by the couple's appearance on the scene in *defol* – after having been totally absent in the earlier rituals performed for the sake of their marriage.⁵⁶ Throughout these rituals it is specifically the change in the wife's status that is concretely brought out, from the very act of erecting the symbolic *barkeehi* hut for the young bride in *koggal* to the display of the furnished and decorated hut of the new mother in the camp of her husband. On the contrary, the change in the husband's status is not expressed by any ritual, nor it is so clearly articulated in the layout and the daily life of the camp at this phase of his life cycle. The same contrast can also be observed in the contribution of other men and women to marriage rituals. As we have seen, the ritual role of all sorts of women is much more visible here than that of men, whose task is mainly to approve what the women do, whether that involves dancing, showing gifts or serving food. Indeed, even the sacrificial slaughtering of the bull – which is a major ritual task of men and forms a central part in every *koggal* and *indeeri* celebration – loses its central relevance towards the end of the marriage procedure so that finally, in *defol*, a cattle sacrifice is not required and meat as ritual food is replaced by "female" milk.

The minor emphasis that is ritually put on the transformation of the husband's status does not, however, mean that the birth of the first child is of more minor importance for the father than for the mother. On the contrary, the series of rituals in which the firstborn baby is first socially

⁵⁶ In the case of the husband this applies to his first marriage only. When it comes to his marriage with the second – or third – wife, he is usually present to organise the rituals, for example slaughtering cattle if necessary. In the case of a divorced wife who enters a new marriage, the first socially recognised ritual is the *indeeri* of her first child with the new husband. If she has already had a child or children in the previous marriage, she is not expected to flee when people celebrate the *indeeri* of her first child in the new camp. Nobody prevents her, however, if she has decided to flee, as some actually do.

Schemes for Lifetimes

recognised and then “returns” to the father’s camp with the mother transforms the status of both his/her parents simultaneously. In a comparable way, the ritual introduction of the newly built hut of the new mother in *defol* announces the transformed autonomy of both the wife and the husband, at the same time sealing their mutual dependence.

What is particularly relevant for the husband in the first marriage procedure is that it is only with the firstborn that he gets full rights to decide about his herd, even if he has taken care of his cattle long before becoming a father. But, although becoming a father moves a man, to use Fortes’ (1978:135) words, “from the status of filial dependence to one of independence tied to responsibility for offspring” – and for his herd as well – he is still supposed to act and make decisions according to the values of *pulaaku*. This includes respect towards the older generation, especially towards one’s own father. The contradiction lies in the fact that, although a man is assumed to respect the will of his parents, his new level of autonomy should be respected also. If he decides to act against the opinion of his father there are no concrete ways to prevent him from doing so. One central indication of his changed position is that, after having accepted the wife which his parents have chosen for him, he is free to choose a second wife by himself as well as to repudiate the first one.

The independence of a married man in choosing a second spouse is well depicted by one marriage procedure I followed in Adamaoua. A Pullo man called Ibrahim was waiting for his second wife, Salaamatu, to return from her parents after she had weaned the first child. I was told that Salaamatu’s parents were sorcerers and that they had tried several times to kill Ibrahim’s first wife by witchcraft. Ibrahim’s mother, who lived in the same camp as her son, was especially agitated by the situation and she repeated to me that if Ibrahim wants his second wife back he must leave the camp and live alone. Later I heard from the oldest man of Ibrahim’s patrilineage that the parents of the latter had asked him to join in a kin meeting in which Ibrahim’s future should be decided. The old man had refused the invitation because – as he explained to me – if two persons love each other nobody has the right to prevent them from staying together. The wife of Ibrahim’s brother emphasised to me that Ibrahim’s parents have no means to stop Salaamatu from returning and Ibrahim’s brothers could never abandon him because of his marriage (cf. Riesman 1977:241 on a similar case in Burkina Faso). People’s talk about Ibrahim’s marriages highlights the significance of the first marriage in dividing the life cycle into stages of dependence and autonomy. At the time I met Ibrahim, he had already proved that the adult level of “his *hakkilo* had come” by marrying a patrilineal parallel cousin who was chosen by his parents and who had borne him two children. This empowered him to take full

Schemes for Lifetimes

responsibility for his life, which was shown in his autonomous decisions concerning his marital relations no matter how much uneasiness all this created in his immediate family.

While the birth of the first child transforms the parents into “real” adults, the degree of this new maturity is still gradually deepened by each following childbirth. Maurice Bloch’s (1992:75) observations of the Zafimaniry of Madagascar offer a comparable case as marriage in Zafimaniry society is reinforced through the birth of every child. Bloch describes the wife’s movement between her natal and her marital home when she returns to her parents for her three or four first deliveries. Each of these departures can be seen as a threat to the marriage because the mother has to be persuaded to come back to her husband with the newborn.

Among the cattle Fulbe, it is only in the case of the first child that a woman returns to her parents’ camp to give birth. Concomitantly, it is also during this phase that divorce is more frequent than afterwards. In Adamaoua I followed many moments of uncertainty when husbands and their close kin were waiting for the day when they would go and bring the wife and the first child home. One old couple never got tired of telling me of how the marriage of their oldest son Yaa’u ended unluckily. The old man, a poor pastoralist named Maato, had married Yaa’u to the daughter of his sister near Saminaka, a town situated in the area between Kano and Jos in Nigeria. When enough time had passed since the young wife had returned to her parents to give birth to her first child, Maato travelled the long way from Tibati to Saminaka to bring his daughter-in-law with the grandchild back to Tibati. However, when he reached the camp of his brother-in-law, he found out that his sister had decided to refuse to give her daughter back to Yaa’u, because “Cameroon was too far away”. For Maato there was nothing else to do but to return back home empty-handed. Yaa’u had lost his wife, and he himself had wasted a lot of money by travelling long distances while arranging his son’s marriage.⁵⁷

There are of course many marriages that do not break up. An important factor here is the distance: a woman is often less demanding in her marriage if her parents and brothers are close enough to support her. But even in those happy cases in which the wife does return with the firstborn, it still takes several more years for the marriage to be settled, each new child increasing its firmness. The stability of marriage produced by children coincides with the stabilised status of both parents as every new child increases the autonomy of both the father and the mother. As has already come out, this gradual

⁵⁷ I am not aware of whether Maato later demanded his grandchild for Yaa’u who, as the father, had full rights to the child.

Schemes for Lifetimes

maturation into full parenthood can be observed in the gradual change in the parents' stand towards the *indeeri* feasts of their children. In former times the same feature seemed to permeate the whole relationship between parents and their first children. Indeed, according to my informants, in Nigeria women felt ashamed of their first three children.⁵⁸ During my fieldwork I met many older women who still continued this practice. However, nowadays in Adamaoua it is mainly towards the firstborn that the mother – as well as the father – show utmost reserve.

MATURE LIVES

When I asked my cattle Fulbe informants to portray a *ndottiijo* (a full-grown man), they tended to give a rather visible definition: *ndotti'en* are those who already have their own camp, wife and children and who grow a beard. Principally, a man becomes *ndottiijo* only when his son or sons are old enough to relieve him of the work of pasturing cattle, so that he himself can devote his time to such responsible tasks as managing his own household and organising cattle herding. One visible sign that nowadays marks this responsible status is the big solid hut that a man constructs for himself when he has at least two wives and several children.

A *ndottiijo* can also be defined as a man who does not dance anymore. This refusal to dance is explained by *semteende* in the presence of one's own children, that is, by the shame separating generations. From the point of view of the difference in the life styles of young and mature men, becoming *ndottiijo* can be further understood as a process of calming down: in giving up the dance – and in handing the cattle down to the care of sons – the daily movement of men becomes more restricted. At the same time, however, the mature men become free to devote more time to “the mobile activities” peculiar to their status. This includes such practices as visiting markets and the mosque, as well as going to see relatives and friends in neighbouring camps. In one camp in my neighbourhood the people had even erected a specific shelter where the elderly men from other camps regularly came to spend the afternoon together.

Another specific reason for the *ndotti'en* to leave their camps is to represent their families in various transactions with other local groups. One frequently occurring transaction was negotiating disputes with Gbaya farmers. Most often these disputes, in which the Gbaya claimed that the cattle caused

⁵⁸ Several old women underlined to me that a woman can not be a “real” *kaabo debbo* until she has given birth to at least three children.

Schemes for Lifetimes

destruction in their fields, were settled by the *laamiiDo* and his councillors because the cattle Fulbe were quite suspicious of approaching such administrative authorities as the *sous-préfet* (fr.) whose responsibility it was to mediate these disputes. In addition to disputes with farmers, there were also various other reasons for the *ndotti'en* to visit the *laamiiDo's* palace, such as paying various tributes. Whatever the cause of *laamiiDo's* summons, these visits were made without delay.

When moving from one place to another in his close surroundings a *ndottijjo* uses his bicycle, which can be seen as a central symbol of the mobility of mature men, at least for those who can afford one. Of course, for visiting more distant relatives – which these men also do – the *ndotti'en* employ heavier vehicles such as bush taxis and sometimes trains. The trips to distant relatives form an important activity in mature age because future marriages, whether for the *ndotti'en* themselves or for their children, are often negotiated during these tours. There are also other motivations for setting out, such as the death or illness of kinspeople, or the simple joy of going to greet those whom one has not seen for a long time.

Principally the term *ndottijjo* covers adult males in quite different life situations, ranging from men in their twenties who are just starting to learn what it is to run a household and have a herd of one's own, to those much older men who have their own autonomous camps and offspring of two or three generations.⁵⁹ This wide range of *ndotti'en* is partly due to the ban of *kori'en*, the mediating age class which in former times clearly distinguished mature manhood from young adulthood. It seems, however, that the earlier distinction between *kori'en* and *ndotti'en* still exists in people's way of differentiating older and younger *ndotti'en* from each other according to their respective tasks. Thus, such activities as marriage negotiations with relatives or reconciliations with farmers always belong to the older men. It is an older *ndottijjo* who represents his sons in official matters even after having distributed his cattle among them.

A man's life cycle is finally terminated with the age class called *nayeeBe* (sg. *nayeejo*), "the old", consisting of the oldest among the mature men. The close connection between autonomy and mobility is also disclosed in this final phase during which men's physical movements have become considerably restricted. The visible symbol of the *nayeeBe* is their walking stick (*sawru*⁶⁰) with which they walk short distances, being too weak to climb on a bicycle. Due to their weakened strength, the old men have given up their responsible tasks and, as

⁵⁹ In addition, the term *ndottijjo* is also used in a pejorative sense when talking about a person of any age considered too old for a certain activity.

⁶⁰ The same term is actually used for the herding stick of the young *sukaaBe*.

Schemes for Lifetimes

one pastoralist described, just “sit” (*jooDaago*) in the camp, dependent on others who carry food to them from the market. They have thus “returned” from autonomy into a state of dependency. The only thing left is the *hakkiilo* of the old age: staying in one’s place and being with one’s grandchildren.

Shifting the focus to the life of a pastoralist woman, after having settled in her married life as a *kaabo debbo* with a couple of children, she gradually moves into the age class of mature women called *inniraaBe* (sg. *inniraaajo*⁶¹). The cattle Fulbe ideas about the beginning of this phase are quite vague. Some women gave me a simple but undefined explanation that a woman becomes *inniraaajo* after giving birth to three children. Others emphasised age saying that every woman will be *inniraaajo* after having turned thirty even if she is childless. For example I was usually defined as *inniraaajo*, being over thirty and having one child during my fieldwork – although there were also some women who regarded me as *kaabo debbo*. Here, as in the case of *ndotti’en*, the age class can be divided in two: younger and older *inniraaBe*. The older ones can further be defined as including both women who have already passed their reproductive life and those older infertile women, who have never been able to become *boofiiDo* and *kaabo debbo*. Nonetheless, childless pastoral Fulbe women can never have the same kind of prestige and influence in their families as grandmothers with many children and grandchildren. In the case of those women who have managed to have offspring, it should be added that life transitions are not limited to what happens in a settled marriage; it is the number of children that counts here, irrespective of the number of marriages that the woman has left behind.

In chapter 5 we saw how distinct gendered routines lead men and women in different directions. Especially in the first years of their family life, men’s destinations are largely determined by the daily movement of the cattle while women move mainly between the camp, watering places and milk-selling places. In these gendered activities, the sexes are equally busy and mobile. However, a big difference is found later, when the men shift their daily orientation from prosaic cattle herding to more organisational and social tasks. The difference is that at this mature phase women do not “calm down” or change routes and activities so drastically as men. Thus, although they do

⁶¹ In Adamaoua two plural forms are used for the term *inniraaajo*: *inniraaBe* and *innira’en*. As regards the etymology of the term, Stenning (1959:159) has translated the plural form as “lit. ‘mothers’, those who have borne more than two children”. Following Taylor (1932) and Noye (1989), other words with the same root are, for example, *inna* (mother), *innugo* (to name), *innoreego* (receive the name of somebody) and *innitoraago* (give one’s genealogy). One practice that unites the first two words can be found in the *indeeri* ceremony as it is the grandmother who selects the newborn’s name amongst those proposed by the *mallum*.

Schemes for Lifetimes

start to visit distant relatives much more often, just like the men do, at home they continue to move with milk along their familiar paths and stopping-places as long as they have the physical strength to do so. Indeed, it is only when the old women have become too weak to set off for milk-selling that they can be called *nayeeBe*.

It is partly because of this “smoother” change in mature women’s lives that aging and losing power is a less painful process for them than for their husbands. This difference can also be approached by looking at the concrete consequences that the maturation of sons and daughters has for the father and the mother respectively. The tension between a father and his sons is more probable because their filial bond reproduces the patrilineage by replacing the father, who can do nothing but observe the increase in his sons’ influence at his own expense. A comparable situation is lacking in a mother’s life; her own adult daughters are not there to remind her of her decreasing influence for the simple reason that they almost always leave their parent’s camp through marriage. Thus, a young woman’s new autonomy produced by motherhood can be put on public display, first during *Bantal* in her parents’ camp and later during *defol* in her husband’s camp, without the threat of depleting the vitality of her mother (cf. Fortes 1978:147). Nor is there such a large-scale inter-generational transfer of property that could weaken the power of the mother as in the case of the father giving away his cattle.

Instead, the life of an aging mother is mostly affected by her new daughters-in-law who increase their autonomy through begetting children. This does not necessarily erode the strong emotional bond that the mother has with some of her sons, deriving from their long co-residence. It is through this bond with her son(s) that the mother seeks to have influence on the camp life in a situation where her own husband is already more or less powerless – or even before that if the couple has conflicting interests – and her new daughters-in-law threaten her position.

The threat from the daughters-in-law materialises with every firstborn grandchild because the grandmother loses a portion of cow’s milk; her sons are supposed to give it to their wives. In Adamaoua I observed how, in camps where young husbands had decided to seclude their wives, certain mothers took advantage of the situation and started to sell milk “belonging” to their secluded daughters-in-law. In so doing they managed to enlarge their own influence by creating a new kind of interdependency and to improve their personal economy through the milk business. Indeed, the old cattle Fulbe women in my field site never hesitated to walk ten kilometres with their calabashes if they had some milk to sell. Still, the same women easily handed over household tasks such as cooking to their daughters-in-law because – as they said – their bodies have become weak.

Schemes for Lifetimes

A recent practice has become a significant turning point for an increasing number of cattle Fulbe in their mature age. This is *hijju*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, which the pastoralist men and women set out on usually while being *ndotti'en* or *inniraaBe*. A practical reason for making the trip in old age is that younger pastoralists seldom have enough cattle to sell in order to afford the trip. In the case of *ndotti'en*, there are two slightly different means of paying for the pilgrimage: while the younger *ndotti'en* pay for the trip by selling their own cattle, an older *ndottiijo*, who has already dispensed all his cattle among his sons, is obliged to ask for the needed cattle “back” from his own children. The *inniraaBe* going to Mecca almost always lean on their sons, without always being able to claim back something that had been formerly their “own”.

Performed during a particular age, *hijju* is a specific life cycle ritual for those men and women who have already established their position in their kin group with a relatively large number of descendants. It represents the culmination of religious maturation by producing male *alhaji'en* and female *hajja'en* (pl. of *hajja*) who are filled with the divine blessing (*barka*) of Mecca, and other people seek their share by being in contact with them. The big majority of cattle Fulbe can never achieve this highly esteemed status as the pilgrimage project is far too costly for most of them. Indeed, most of the pastoralists have to content themselves with the same lot as Hassan, a pastoralist man from Tibati who was humorously called *alhaji gurka* (“the *alhaji* of manioc”). He was a member of a respected lineage that had already generated several *alhaji'en* in the region. For Hassan himself the situation was somewhat embarrassing as he was the eldest male member of the lineage and so he held the most respected position in the lineage hierarchy. Still, he had patrilineal cousins who – having much more cattle – had managed to go to Mecca. Even worse, several of the sons of these cousins had already been on the pilgrimage, while Hassan himself was doomed to die without seeing the holy town. Instead – as his tragicomic nickname suggested – the poor man’s “pilgrimage” was restricted to walking around his tiny manioc field by which he made his modest living.

Travelling to Mecca exceeds all other mobile activities in any phase of the pastoral life cycle, both spatially and in esteem. Thus, *hijju* represents a particular – and particularly honoured – mobile practice that considerably enhances a person’s religious and social prestige. However, the practical consequences of the pilgrimage are somewhat different for men and women. In the case of male pilgrims, they can, after sacrificing a bull when returning from Mecca, continue the same activities connected to their *ndottiijo* status as they did before their *hijju*. The female *hajja'en* however are expected to

Schemes for Lifetimes

leave behind their mobile activities, especially milk-selling trips, and start a more quiet life around the campsite.⁶²

But irrespective of how much old people are able to improve their status – whether by going on pilgrimage or by manipulating changing values and situations at home – no one escapes aging and death. The cattle Fulbe face these realities with humour. I heard a vivid example of this once when I was talking about age classes with some elderly men. When the discussion shifted from the life of *ndotti'en* and *inniraaBe* to old age, the considerate talk turned into noisy joking and the men started to call each other by the term *mbaatuDo* (“a dying one”), a final “age class” of dying people. Still, even among the toughest wise crackers, weakening health and the idea of approaching death creates anxiety. My final example illustrates the especially fragile situation of pastoralist men.

When I revisited Adamaoua in 1998, I met one of the above joking elders, a Pullo man in his seventies who had suffered from serious health problems for some time. The strong medicine that he got from the local mission hospital did not make the situation any easier, as it caused him a severe gastric disorder which weakened him rapidly. Some of his close relatives told me that a few times at night the man had fallen into a state of confusion without recognising people. During these fits he kept repeating two phrases: “I go back to my [paternal] uncles” (“*Mi hootan haa bappa'en*”) and “I go back to Mecca” (“*Mi hootan Makka*”). These words – which nicely linked mundane and religious longings – revealed the sources of his ultimate consolation in a desperate situation. With a strong feeling of being rejected by his own sons, he found comfort from the idea of returning to his paternal uncles – a kin category that represents the nucleus of a pastoral group and a central source of social and material security for the Fulbe. In addition, when referring to Mecca, the key symbol of eternal happiness, he expressed the idea of returning to one’s spiritual home.⁶³

In its tragedy, the story reflects a situation that many Fulbe men have to face when getting old and losing their influence on others. This man had much to lose as he was an *alhaji* with one of the biggest herds in the region and with a substantial number of descendants. When I first met him three

⁶² I talk here of expectations that people expressed during discussions. Where I conducted my fieldwork there was only one cattle Pullo woman who had been to Mecca – a fact that tells of the rarity of the female pilgrims among the pastoralists in Adamaoua. So, with my data, no generalisations concerning the life of *hajja'en* can be made. I can only say that the *hajja* whom I knew continued her “busy life” after her pilgrimage and thus totally ignored other people’s moral judgements.

⁶³ The Fulfulde term *hootugo*, that the man employed in both phrases above, means literally “to go back home”.

Schemes for Lifetimes

years earlier, he had already distributed all his cattle among his sons, two of whom have been in Mecca by now. Finally, during my last visit, the same man, whom I remembered as a warmhearted and humorous person, was so trapped by feelings of frustration and unworthiness that he was planning to consult a local healer because of the possibility that his sons had bewitched him.

FROM AUTONOMY TO SOCIAL PERSONHOOD

Among the cattle Fulbe the social person is understood as evolving over the whole life course. The gradually maturing person can be seen as being produced both through the gendered daily practices peculiar to different life cycle phases and the specific initiation rites, during which the turning points of the cycle are socially recognised. Among the cattle Fulbe the emphasis is more on the former as it is mainly through everyday practices that people both learn and perform their age-based and gendered social standing in the group. As has been shown above, there is, however, one series of cattle Fulbe rituals which have a crucial place in both men's and women's life course, that is, the rituals that are performed at the time of a person's first marriage and the consequent birth of his/her first child. By going through them, the individual cattle Fulbe men and women gradually achieve the stage of full adult personhood in their society.

The rituals highlight the paradox built into the idea of personhood whereby a Pullo, in order to become a person in the *social* sense, has to first become *autonomous*. Indeed, the stress that the Fulbe put on personal autonomy contrasts with the widely shared idea that in African societies the person is in large part constituted through those relations that define his/her respective status in the first place (see e.g., Riesman 1986). Among the Fulbe the contradiction works also the other way round, so that in order to become autonomous a Pullo desperately needs others. While this point is perhaps most clearly emphasised during the marriage rituals, it can be discerned at other moments as well. The tension between personal autonomy and relatedness to others forms a basic dilemma in Fulbe life that occupies people's minds in every phase of the life-cycle.

A concluding question remains: what does the social recognition of a person's changed life cycle status say about sociality itself? None of the rituals is performed merely in order to move a person from his/her individual status to another, nor only to redefine his/her new status in relation to other social persons. Instead, what is taking place is the articulation of relationships at quite different levels. For the cattle Fulbe the life cycle rituals offer a central arena for commenting on such institutions as kinship or age-based friendship,

Schemes for Lifetimes

as well as a ritual domain for articulating cultural difference vis-à-vis other local groups.

7 CO-WIVES THROUGH MILK: GENDER AND *PULAAKU* IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In this chapter the discussion shifts to the everyday practice of the people. The emphasis will be on women's lives – on their pastoral activities and interaction with others. The question that underlies the ethnographic description is how the cattle Fulbe women seek to live up to *pulaaku* ideals amidst the multifarious demands of their daily life.

GENDER, GENERATION AND SHAME

A point that is often brought out by anthropologists writing on gender relations among the Fulbe is the clear-cut segregation of the sexes in various Fulbe societies all around West Africa. In Adamaoua I confirmed the point by paying attention to the same phenomenon as Dupire (1963) and Riesman (1977) had done earlier in other regions: when an adult Fullo man and woman meet in public by accident they behave in an extremely restrained manner, if not as total strangers. That they do so regardless of their actual relationship has been explained by the fact that in public places men and women represent primarily their “pure” gender categories and not so much their other positions such as those defined by kin ties (ibid., 208).¹

Although the avoidance of the opposite sex in public resonates with the Islamic ideal of the spatial separation of men and women, among the Fulbe the cultural motivation behind the practice has to be looked for elsewhere. When a pastoralist woman or man prefers to keep in the company of the members of her/his own sex in such places as the market or the hospital yard, her/his preference is much more motivated by *pulaaku* than by any wider

¹ Riesman (1977: 208) understands gender relations as taking place in public “when more than two persons are together and at least one of them is of the opposite sex from the others.” I find his definition a bit inaccurate as one can find many situations in which the representatives of opposite sexes – like a mother with her sons, a brother with his sisters or even a woman with her husband's younger brothers – do not have to behave according to the “public ideal” if they do not have another audience. It is precisely because the audience is most often absent in places such as women's huts that these spaces are considered private. On the other hand, I can't imagine any place where a woman could behave in a relaxed manner with, for example, her husband's elder brother even though they were by themselves, that is, without a third person.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

religious ideas. To be more accurate, the avoidance in public can be related to *semteende* – one of the three key traits of *pulaaku* – and so it can be understood as a way of avoiding shame. The particular thing to be avoided here is showing one's dependence on others – particularly on the opposite sex – which is considered a central source of shame among the Fulbe. One episode that I followed during my fieldwork highlights what forms this dependence and its moral evaluation can take.

One day I was accompanying two cattle Fulbe women who were taking the daughter of the one to a local Pullo healer to be cured. As we were sitting in the hut of the healer's wife, Hadiidja, we saw a visitor, probably another patient, approaching the hut of the healer. When the visitor left, Hadiidja sent her little daughter to her husband's hut. I did not pay much attention to the event until later when the two women started to talk about it in their own camp. The one who had stayed several days in the healer's place with her daughter told how Hadiidja sent her own daughter to her husband's hut every time the husband had received guests. According to the teller, the reason for Hadiidja's behaviour was that, through her daughter, she was asking her husband for part of the money that he had possibly received from his patients. The women, who were seemingly irritated and embarrassed by Hadiidja's behaviour, expressed their disapproval by uttering a phrase – often used in Adamaoua – “*o semtataa*”, which means “she does not feel ashamed”.

The example speaks about the relation that is located at the deepest core of the whole issue of shame, namely that between husband and wife. It is because the mutual dependence of spouses is so obvious that it has to be hidden. To borrow Dupire's (1963) idea, the avoidance that is expected from spouses towards each other in public has nothing to do with lack of interest, but with the socio-moral code that “demands a lifelong attitude of restraint between husband and wife” (ibid., 65). To be constantly dependent on one's spouse to satisfy a need such as hunger or sexual desire is a delicate issue because it never stops reminding a Pullo of the incompleteness of his/her autonomy. In Hadiidja's case the question of shame became even more striking because her behaviour revealed her situation which was especially tragic: her husband had lost his cattle so that Hadiidja did not have any milk to sell, nor had she managed to find any other means to earn money by herself.

The strong reaction that Hadiidja's behaviour caused among the other women is another example of the strong intersubjectivity of the feeling of shame among the pastoral Fulbe. Riesman (1977:184) has stated that a Pullo not only tries to prevent situations in which he himself would feel ashamed but as well he does his best to keep another person from falling into a similar condition. To my mind, the two purposes merge into one as a shameless act

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

affects also those Fulbe who witness it. Thus, when a Pullo supports another in the latter's efforts to avoid shame s/he is at the same time saving him/herself from the collective self-discovery (cf. Palmer and Jankowiak 1996:247) that often follows somebody's failure and arises embarrassment in others. In Hadiidja's case the move was hers as she herself was, in a quite unforeseeable way, causing the collective annoyance through her "revealing" behaviour. The point was not, however, that she should have hidden her difficult and powerless situation from others who did not know it – because they did. Rather, by "playing independent" she could have saved the women from the embarrassment that her way of disclosing her state now was causing. By performing the ideal of "an uninterested and autonomous wife" she would have given the others the possibility to share it with her – this sharing of *pulaaku* ideals being a central concern in Fulbe everyday interaction.

What made Hadiidja's conduct even more condemnable to her criticsers was the fact that her husband was monogamous. As the two women emphasised to me, Hadiidja could well have shown more patience in waiting for her share from her husband's daily earnings, as there were no other wives who could "grab" it from her. But despite a certain logic in that argumentation, I am not sure that the women would have approved of Hadiidja's behaviour even with the presence of a co-wife. On the contrary, to be respected, a pastoralist woman is expected to show indifference towards her husbands' resources in public, no matter how much tension towards co-wives there might be in the privacy of her own hut. These expectations were reflected in humorous stories that both men and women told me about disagreeing pastoralist co-wives attacking each other – or even the husband – with a pestle or whatever their hands could get a hold of. Another way of commenting on the subject was to mock women from other groups – such as white people – whose jealousy over their husbands makes them behave in the most uncontrolled ways. These amusing creatures can certainly be contrasted with the ideal picture of a reserved pastoralist woman. But it is not a question of ideals only. In my observation, many cattle Fulbe women, when facing an intracamp conflict, prefer to retreat – for example by travelling to their parents – rather than engage in a noisy, open quarrel. In fact, a "sudden" visit to distant relatives is an act that receives much more understanding than any loud expression of opinion.

As an institution, polygamy has clearly increased in popularity among the cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua in recent years. During my fieldwork I observed this change in two ways. First, there was a clear difference between generations. While it was not unusual for men in their sixties and seventies to be married to one woman only, most of men in their late thirties had two wives. Second, among the wealthiest pastoralists there was an even more

drastic change: in 1998 several prosperous cattle Fulbe men had acquired a third wife, a phenomenon that I had not come across among the pastoralists in 1996.²

To be able to afford several wives certainly increases the status of a cattle Pullo man – both in the eyes of his fellow pastoralists and in the eyes of the villagers. For pastoralist women, however, the consequences of increased polygyny are more dubious. Thus, even though, on the one hand, polygyny can be a sign of the prosperity of the camp for a woman in the same way as it is for a man, on the other hand, it is also likely that the tension between co-wives increases in accordance with their number.

Besides rivalry over the husband's emotional and material attention, there is another, less visible intricacy created by polygyny. Along with the increasing number of wives, the age difference between the spouses becomes larger.³ The repugnance of young women to marry an old or mature man (*ndottiijo*) became very clear to me when discussing the issue with the women. Inversely, when a young woman in the neighbourhood was married to a man of her own generation, other women sometimes exclaimed: "She was lucky! She was not married to a *ndottiijo*!" Comments of this sort refer to the consequences of the husband's physical aging. At the same time, they point out the inconvenient psychological condition in which a young woman is put when married to a man considerably older than herself. *Semteende*, the sense of shame, becomes much more pronounced than it would be in other circumstances for a few related reasons. First, there is the shame between spouses characteristic of every marriage. In addition, there is the shame built into the relationship between generations which raises the restraint that the wife shows towards her husband here to a considerably higher level. Finally, a further dimension of shame is revealed if, on top of it all, the young woman is married to an elderly man of her own patrilineage, a social category towards which *pulaaku* behaviour is particularly expected. Indeed, the young girls, when reflecting on the idea of being married to a *ndottiijo*,⁴ often compared

² This concerns my direct observation. I did hear people talking of some older pastoralist men with three wives in the vicinity. That I did not meet any before 1998 indicates that the phenomenon was still relatively rare among the *Aku* pastoralists in the Tibati region during my fieldwork.

³ This, in turn, is related to the fact that cattle Fulbe men – irrespective of their age and number of their wives – usually prefer to marry young maidens who have just reached marriage age.

⁴ When employed by young girls, the idiom "to be married to a *ndottiijo*" is not restricted to those men who are factually old. Instead, it refers more generally to all men who have passed their youth (*sukaaku*) – thus also to men in their late twenties.

this less attractive alternative with a marriage to one's own *bappa* (paternal uncle).

A marriage with a man not belonging to one's own generation thus creates a situation in which the wife is forced to deal with her *semteende* in a particularly sensitive way. This is due to the synergy between two forces: gendered and generational shame. As regards the latter, there are frequently occurring situations for observing it. An especially restrained "generational relation", which every wife as well as every husband has to face, is the relationship with in-laws. Due to the patrilocal residence pattern of the Fulbe, the practical consequences of this relation are more tangible for a wife than for a husband. Thus, while a man continues to live near his emotional supporters such as his mother, brothers and younger sisters when married, a woman has to face the feelings of strangeness and alienation all at once when leaving her near kin and starting to live in her husband's camp. Indeed, the newly married woman has to constantly keep in mind her shame in front of her in-laws and – in cases of polygamy – her separateness in relation to her co-wives. Autonomous acting is thus in many ways more crucial to a married woman than to her husband in patrilocal camp life, appearing first mainly in the young wife's extremely restrained bodily behaviour and later on in her separate activities vis-à-vis the other camp members.

But however consequential the relations with in-laws or with an elderly spouse are, there is still another, more significant relationship permeated by generational shame, namely the relation between parents and their children. I shall now turn to the dynamics of this particular relationship through examples from the lives of cattle Fulbe mothers.

The expectations of composed motherhood come into force already in the very act of childbirth: virtuous women do it alone and without the slightest sound. This ideal is repeated in the hero stories that women tell of each others' deliveries. A typical example of these was told in a dry season camp in which a woman called Jumei had given birth to her third child the day before I visited the camp. The wives of Jumei's husband's brothers loudly praised the brave childbirth which took place in the middle of the morning bustle. As the women told me, when they were leaving to fetch water from the river, Jumei did not appear but shouted from her hut that she is not coming this time because there is still water in her container. When the women returned from the river they found out the reason for Jumei's refusal to join them: she was sitting in her hut with a newborn baby whose umbilical cord was already cut. I heard another story from a young woman, Saidatu, who recalled the night when her little sister was born. It was already late in the evening and Saidatu – being five or six years old at the time – was going to sleep in her mother's hut. It was pitch-dark so that Saidatu could not see

her mother, but while lying in the bed, she started to chat with her about this and that as she was accustomed to do before falling asleep. This time the mother was not, however, very keen on taking part in the conversation but, instead, commented on Saidatu's words only with short agreeing breaths. In the morning Saidatu found her mother with a newborn baby girl. It was only much later that she understood that her mother was so quiet because she was in the middle of labour.

In both of these stories the heroine succeeds in the most appreciated detail of the childbirth, namely in going through the whole process unnoticed. When I once asked an elderly pastoralist woman if, among her people, there is a person to support the mother during her labour, the woman resented my question and said that there is nothing to be done. "What is there to stare at?", she finally snorted. I have no idea of how her own deliveries had gone, but obviously the irritation that my question aroused in her had something to do with more widely shared *pulaaku* ideals, especially the one concerning controlled and autonomous bodily behaviour. For a pastoralist woman, it would be most shameful to be observed in the vulnerable and more or less uncontrolled condition in which her body is put during labour. Thus, the best performance here is the invisible one as a woman can never be sure if she can perfectly master the course of events during the critical moments of childbirth.

A special situation where the ideal of unnoticed delivery cannot be reached is childbirth in hospital to which the cattle Fulbe often resort in the case of complications, especially if the woman is giving birth for the first time. Due to its "publicity", childbirth in hospital is always a puzzling and shameful experience for a pastoralist woman. According to the information I received from nurses in the local mission hospital near Tibati, young cattle Fulbe women are disposed to flee from the place before the zero hour.⁵ In the camp, however, the situation is more tolerable, especially in the case of the first childbirth when the young mother stays with her parents and has the support of her own mother. In addition, the cultural expectations of a well-performed childbirth are not taken so literally in the case of a primipara at whose moans people wink more easily than they would do in the case of a more mature parturient.

⁵ The nurses told me of young cattle Fulbe women who had fled from the hospital in the middle of labour to deliver in the bush or – if it was too late to go so far – behind the nearby school building. Some nurses emphasised that because of the high risk of fleeing it is often necessary to bind the legs of the delivering cattle Fulbe woman so that she cannot run away.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

But although there is sympathy for a woman who is not capable of perfectly following the *pulaaku* code during her first childbirth, later on, with the child's growth, expectations regarding the mother's conduct towards the firstborn grow considerably. These expectations are well documented in Fulbe folklore which is full of stories of mothers showing the utmost indifference towards their firstborn. One story that I heard was about a young mother who was visited by another woman soon after her first delivery. The visitor did not know about the new child and, by oversight, sat down on the baby who was sleeping on the bed. The mother turned a blind eye to the whole thing and started to greet the guest with a steady voice. During the long greeting ceremony the baby was choked to death.

The story exaggerates but still hits the point. The firstborn is tabu for the mother – as well as for the father – and will remain such till the end of his/her life. The latter point was brought home to me in the camp of an old couple, Keela and Weeti, who lived in my neighbourhood. Once when taking part in an *indeeri* arranged for their son's daughter I noticed a strange woman in her late thirties busying herself with the other women around Weeti's cooking place. I also paid attention to the fact that Weeti was totally unconcerned with the stranger; she did not look at or speak to her, nor did she introduce the guest to me. Later I recalled Weeti's reserved conduct and asked a neighbour who the stranger was. I was told that she was Weeti's and Keela's firstborn daughter, Haliima, who lived some forty kilometres away.

After the feast, Haliima stayed a couple of days in her parents' camp. I spoke with her only once, on the day of her departure, and wished her a good trip back.⁶ I also proposed that one day I could accompany her mother when she decides to visit her daughter. Haliima looked at the distance, smiling sadly, and said: "A mother never comes to see her child." More than two years later, when I revisited Weeti and Keela, they were eager to tell me the latest family news about births, marriages, illnesses and so forth. Knowing the "rules", I did not expect them to mention the name of Haliima. Still it struck me when I heard later – again from a neighbour – that during my absence Haliima had died.

Weeti and Keela, sharing the specific ideas attached to the first child in their culture, could of course do nothing but hide – or suppress – their sorrow about Haliima's death. Furthermore, Weeti herself had been a firstborn. I remember vividly how she once described the feelings of anger and frustration that she felt as a young firstborn child when crying and shouting at the

⁶ My reserve towards her could partly be explained by the fact that I was quite close to the old couple and felt indecisive in those embarrassing situations in which Weeti, the mother, was always around.

expressionless face of her mother, till the day she accepted that her mother will never answer her in the presence of others. Weeti's own status as the firstborn also came out indirectly in the pronounced way in which she sympathised with Habiiba – one of her daughters-in-law – who lost her third child, a five-month-old baby girl. Weeti emphasised that Habiiba's sorrow was especially deep because she was now also going through another, earlier tragedy. Weeti was referring to the death of Habiiba's first child which had occurred a few years earlier. At that time it had not been possible for the new mother to express her grief for her child, due to observing the *pulaaku* code towards the firstborn.

The death of her third child gave Habiiba the sad possibility to grieve for her firstborn, and reveals how the “grip” of *pulaaku* gradually slackens with each subsequent child. I have earlier referred to the difference that can be observed between generations: while elderly women show reserve towards the first three children, in younger generations the same conduct is usually applied to the first child only. In practice, however, the cultural codes are often improvised and individuals come to different decisions according to the situation and their personal sense of propriety. Two examples will illustrate this.

In one *indeeri* ceremony that I attended the mother of the baby stayed carefully in her hut, which was located on the back edge of the camp. The mother, Altine, was relatively young – her oldest child was about five years old at that time and the newborn baby was her third child- and for a woman of her age such a total retreat during *indeeri* is no longer expected in Adamaoua. This was also brought out by Hawwaawu, the wife of Altine's husband's brother, who found Altine hiding in her hut. Popping into the hut, Hawwaawu, being some ten years older than Altine, exclaimed in surprise: “Do you still feel ashamed?” (“*A semti haa jooni?*”). There were also other older women who wondered at Altine's behaviour. The only comment that Altine could offer was that if she would behave in another way, people would laugh at her.

Sometimes a woman extends the reserve that she shows towards her own children to certain other persons whom she considers comparable to these. Laafia's conduct in the *indeeri* of the child of her niece, Ummaamatu, attracted my attention. We were sitting in Ummaamatu's hut with another elderly woman. After a while the old woman wanted to go to the hut of Ummaamatu's co-wife, called Nyebbe, and asked Laafia and me to join her. Laafia refused, justifying her unwillingness by the fact that Nyebbe was her child. At first Laafia's logic confused me. Ummaamatu was her niece but Laafia sat in her hut without any problem. However, there was a clear difference that explained Laafia's conduct: Ummaamatu was Laafia's

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

brother's child while Nyebbe was the child of Laafia's sister. The difference was crucial as, among the Fulbe, a special significance is given to mother's sister who – by embodying the unstrained matrities – is parallel to the mother. Thus, Nyebbe's relation to Laafia was comparable to that between child and mother, so Laafia behaved as she would have done with her own daughter.

As with Altine's conduct in the first example, Laafia's refusal was motivated by certain Fulbe ideas of kinship and parenthood. What the two women shared with each other was that both of them took these ideas further than was culturally necessary in their situation. In the latter case this was manifested in Laafia's way of applying a certain rule of contact to her sister's daughter that many other women apply solely to their own daughters, and some even apply it to their first daughter only.⁷

A mother's reluctance to enter her daughters' huts indicates generational shame peculiar to women – men do not have such restrictions concerning their sons' huts.⁸ This difference has its historical reasons: men's huts are a quite recent phenomenon in cattle Fulbe camps, and it is still through their herds, or the size of their camps, that their adult autonomy is recognised. Therefore, the hut does not have the same historical significance for a man as for a woman, for whom it forms an ancient and well-recognised sign of her adult status. A woman's unwillingness to enter her daughter's hut can be understood through that deep-seated symbolism: in an embarrassing way the hut refers to the daughter's fertility and thus to the replacement of the reproductive autonomy of the mother.⁹

I have proceeded from examples of how *pulaaku* colours the husband-wife and the wife-affine relationship to how it is applied in the interaction between a mother and her children. Analytically these two types of examples can be classified as illustrating culture-specific conduct between two pairs of social categories – the first based on gender difference and the latter two on difference between generations. At closer look, however, such division is

⁷ At this point it should be added that there are people, both men and women, who purposefully deny the *pulaaku* code towards the firstborn. According to my knowledge, these pastoralists are still relatively few, but the thing that combines them is their ambition to be considered true Muslims. These people deviate from the *pulaaku* code, for example, by calling their firstborn by his or her proper name – and then justify their “non-*pulaaku*” behaviour with a Koranic reference. I was also told that a parent who refuses to talk to his/her firstborn when nearing the end cannot go to heaven.

⁸ Also mothers can freely enter the shelters or huts of their own sons.

⁹ This avoidance does not work the other way round: daughters are always welcome to visit their mothers and are met with a similar warm reception as sons. Another thing is that even a mother's reluctance to visit her daughter's hut does not have any notable practical consequences as married daughters usually live in another camp – and often also in another region.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

simplifying as the examples of generational shame always refer to the husband-wife relationship as well. Indeed, the restraint that a woman shows towards her father-in-law and mother-in-law derives from the special status that these two have as the procreators of her husband. In a comparable way, by openly showing her relatedness with her first child(ren) in public, a woman would draw attention to their origin, that is, to the union between herself and her husband.

MILK AND MONEY IN MOTION

One day I proposed to Safia, a pastoralist woman in her fifties, that she pick any incident or time of her life and tell me about it. The following passage is extracted from the narrative that resulted from my proposition.

I want to tell you of the time I lived in Banyo. I was very happy to live in Banyo! Since the time I did not know them, I did not know the town of Banyo. When I take the sour milk [and] go to sell it, they say: "Oh, your milk is sweet! Your milk smells sweetly! Do you boil it in a cooking-pot?" I say to them: "Yes, I boil [it] in a cooking-pot." They say: "If you are coming also tomorrow, bring your milk [with you]!" --

[Next] morning, I carry [the milk calabash] on the head again, I go, I sell. I go ahead of all other Fulbe [women]! I [sell milk to] one person, I [sell milk to] another person, I do like that. All the time I bring them [milk], they buy, till I reach the nurse (*dofa*) of Banyo. I carry the milk. A nurse, another woman, wants me to bring the milk [to her]. She says: "Leave your calabash there, in the house of the nurse." I put the calabash [on the ground], I sit down. They give me a chair, I sit down. They do their work, I do not understand what they are saying. I do not understand French. -- But I understand a little -- such as money, if there is only little, like 400 or 500, I understand what they say. They talk, they talk, they talk. -- They do their work, they finish. The woman says [to other women who work with her]: "You come, you join [the others], you buy all the milk, but do not pay her on credit. She is my friend, I do not want you to owe my friend any money." So, they come, all of them bring [something], somebody a bowl, I measure, another a bottle -- a bottle of medicine that has finished and they have washed it -- they bring [the bottle], I measure in it. The rest, she says, I can take to her house. I carry the milk, she walks in front of me, I follow next to her, I reach the house, she opens [the door]. She brings a bowl, she says: "Do not measure, pour as such." They pour. She fetches money [to pay] the milk, she brings [it] and gives [it] to me. [She gives me] also presents, she brings rice, she brings soap, she gives me.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

So, to be there before all other Fulbe [women], I return to the market place. I sit there, I wait for them. They, all of them who left, go, sell and come back. They come back, one by one, and we gather together. When we have gathered, those buying flour have it measured, those buying rice have it measured. They buy everything that is to be bought and put [their purchases] in their calabashes, we all buy. We put [our calabashes] on the head, we stand up, we leave [to return home].

The topic that Safia chose is anything but extraordinary. Instead of evoking a memory of some unforgettable event, she recalled her weekly milk trip to the market of Banyo,¹⁰ reflecting thus upon an activity that can be considered as a most routine practice for a pastoralist woman. Still, what she succeeded in capturing in her description is the passionate agency that is put to work when a woman takes her calabash and leaves the camp to sell milk.

Let us however start from the overall structure of the narrative which nicely reveals the socio-spatial choreography of a pastoralist woman's market day. In the morning the woman leaves the camp with her calabash filled with sour milk to be sold in a nearby village or town. Arriving there she starts to sell the milk to her personal clients. After having finished her milk business, she walks to the market place to spend the rest of the market day with other pastoralist women and to do her shopping. Finally, the women start their way back home together.

The choreography of Safia's narrative is repeated every day by numerous cattle Fulbe women in various regions of West and Central Africa. Besides practical action, the same structure can be found in other narratives created according to the same design. Safia's milk trip narrative is built upon the same kinetic scheme of "set out – go forth – halt – go back" and the same social scheme of "separation – reunion" as the examples of other travel narratives discussed in chapter 5. Thus, in the same way as a pilgrim leaves his/her relatives to travel to Mecca or a cattle Fulbe camp separates from other related camps to search for dry season pasture, a pastoralist woman leaves her husband and other camp members – and finally other pastoralist women – behind in order to pursue her own gendered interests. Concomitantly, when these interests are achieved, she – as do the agents in the travel narratives – returns to people from whom her distinct action momentarily separated her.

The market day of a pastoralist woman – as well as the culturally structured way of narrating it – cannot be totally grasped without taking

¹⁰ Banyo is the administrative centre of the Mayo-Banyo Division and located about eighty kilometres northwest of Tibati. Safia's recollection dates back to the 1980's when her family lived for about ten years in the vicinity of Banyo, wherefrom they then moved to the surroundings of Tibati at the turn of the 1990's.



Photograph 7: Milk-sellers on their way to the market.

account of its most decisive moving force: the calabash filled with milk. It is the milk that orients the woman's socio-spatial movement during her market trip – finally also when it is sold, as the empty calabash can then be refilled with the objects that the exchange has generated. Indeed, the cultural meanings attached to milk among the cattle Fulbe embrace the classic attributes of the gift as outlined by Marcel Mauss (1990), surpassing at the same time any simplistic dichotomisation of exchange forms.¹¹ To employ Marilyn Strathern's (1988) idea, milk is the gendered gift of the cattle Pullo woman, a symbolic substance in which the woman's influence in her society is objectified. This objectification – to follow Strathern's view a little further – is based on the value of the milk, both in the woman's subjective regard and as an object of her own creation.¹² Let me elaborate these two qualities.

¹¹ I have discussed this particular point earlier in my MA thesis (Virtanen 1993) in which I examined the cultural meanings and practical consequences of the circulation of milk in the gift and the commodity spheres of exchange among the *WoDaaBe* Fulbe of Niger. My overall conclusion was that, from the point of view of a *BoDaaDo* woman, the division has not much relevance as both by distributing milk inside the pastoral community and by selling it to "outsiders" the woman reinforces her autonomy in her own group. After having done fieldwork among the cattle Fulbe of Adamaoua, I am inclined to say that the same general conclusion can be drawn in their case as well.

¹² I comply here with Strathern's following definition: "By objectification I understand the manner in which persons and things are construed as having value, that is, are objects of people's subjective regard or of their creation" (1988:176).

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

The first quality, the woman's subjective concern with milk, is nicely pointed out in Safia's narrative in which the milk that she sells is valued according to similar qualities as people value in the physical body. The sweet smell that is associated here with Safia's milk is also an attribute of a woman who takes care of her personal beauty by keeping her skin clean and soft with perfumed soap and body cream.¹³ Sharing thus certain human attributes with the woman, milk is an extension of her person, its power being based on the paradoxical fact that the more milk flows through the hands of the woman in different transactions with others, the more it becomes an undetachable part of her social identity.¹⁴

The second quality, based on the cultural understanding of milk as being created by the woman, can be seen as functioning on different analytic levels. First, there is the technical process in which the "raw" milk is transformed into edible and saleable food. In the above narrative this transformation is referred to in the clients' speculation about whether the good quality of Safia's milk derives from its boiling. Another reference to the same point is that the milk that Safia goes to sell is sour, which is actually the most usual form in which the cattle Fulbe women sell milk. Below Sippi, a young pastoralist woman, describes the processing of cow's milk:

* You fetch, you shake *kosam* (= milk), [you] boil [it] hard. When it has cooled off, you take another bowl – – another that has already slept, you pour a little of it [into the just boiled milk]. When you have poured a little, when you wake up, it has slept. When it has slept, you take, you separate the cream, you beat [the rest] up. *Pendi* (= sour milk), it has become *pendi*. – – When they have milked the cows, [the milk] that you boil, they call it *BiraaDam* (= fresh milk). Its name is *BiraaDam*.

** And when you shake [the sour milk in a gourd to get butter from it], the butter is separated as such?

* When I have shook the butter (*nyebbam*), I separate the butter, – – I put [the butter balls] on the surface of the milk, I go and sell.

¹³ A similar analogy can be drawn between milk and human skin according to the colour: milk is often valued according to its whiteness, and the most esteemed skin colour is light.

¹⁴ In formulating this statement I have drawn both upon Mauss' (1990:10-13) view of the gift as a morally, physically and spiritually undetachable part of the giver, and Strathern's (1988:177-178) idea of mediated exchange that is based on the difference between the giver's and the recipient's social identity. Also Weiner's idiom "keeping-while-giving" would fit in the woman-milk context, although Weiner herself pointed at a somewhat different setting while using it (Weiner 1985).

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

The quotation introduces three distinct outcomes from a woman's dairy activities: boiled milk, sour milk and butter. The transformation proceeds in the following way: first the milk is boiled, then part of the boiled milk is "put to sleep" for one night to become sour milk, and finally the butter is separated from the sour milk by shaking the latter in a gourd. All of these products differ from the initial substance, that is, the fresh-drawn milk. In terminology, however, the boiled milk is not differentiated from the fresh milk as they both are called *BiraaDam* – a word which refers to the act of milking (*Birgo* = to milk). This might be explained partly by the fact that boiling milk is a relatively recent practice among the cattle Fulbe women so that any term for the new "product" has not yet been introduced.¹⁵ On the other hand, boiled milk can also be understood as a transitory substance because it is seldom sold as such; the milk that is drunk in the campsite is often sour, for example when consumed in gruel.¹⁶

Besides being a technical process, the transformation of the cow's milk into various cultured products follows a specific socio-spatial scheme. In other words, the female milk can be understood as being created in certain space(s) through the acts of certain people. The key relation here is the one between wife and husband through whose gendered spaces the transformation proceeds. The process is set forth at dawn in the cattle corral where women, after preparing the morning meal, come to fetch the milk bowls that their husbands, after having milked the cows,¹⁷ have set on the ground for them. Thus the milk is detached from the male space to be moved into the female

¹⁵ My informants claim to have started to boil the milk only after having arrived in Cameroon. It is interesting that this particular practice has quickly become a sign of cultural superiority in relation to those who do not observe it.

¹⁶ This does not mean that milk is never consumed fresh-drawn, because it is, especially by children who drink it, for example, at dawn when men are milking the cows. As regards boiled milk, a special occasion in which it is drunk as such is *defol*, one of the women's life cycle rituals discussed in chapter 6.

¹⁷ Among the pastoralists who nowadays live in Adamaoua the task of milking has shifted from women to men only in Cameroon – earlier when these people still lived in Nigeria it was women's work. The shift seems to follow a more general tendency among the cattle Fulbe, according to which the more sedentary the group gets the more milking is taken over by men (see Waters-Bayer 1988). It might be concluded that through this development the right to decide about the milk would shift from women to men. This view is echoed for example in Hopen's (1958:99) mention that in certain Fulbe groups in northern Nigeria in the 1950s the men decided to take charge of milking because, in their view, women left too little milk for the calves. However, when I discussed the topic with my cattle Fulbe informants, both men and women insisted that it was the women who refused to continue milking in Adamaoua on the plea of the hardness of the work. It is probable that the idea was adapted from the earlier arrived *Jaafun* who, for their part, had borrowed the idea from the local village Fulbe.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

space, that is, into the shade of the woman's hut where its storing, "sleeping", and further processing takes place. In the hut the woman feeds her little children with fresh or boiled milk, sour milk and gruel, and puts portions of these different milk products into bowls to be carried to the huts of other camp members. Finally, it is in her hut that the woman, after her morning routines, fills her calabash with sour milk and butter balls to head for the nearby village or market place.

The movement of milk reveals a central route that the woman follows in her daily routines. It is not the only route she walks along – women go also to the river to wash clothes, to the bush to fetch firewood, to other camps to visit neighbours, and so on. But it is certainly the route that the cattle Fulbe themselves consider as the most "female" one. To repeat their favourite saying, "the feet of a woman follow milk", and it is this specific following that constitutes spatial and performative frames for the pastoralist woman's everyday life.

The milk business keeps women literally on their feet. During the rainy season in Adamaoua it is not unusual for a woman to leave the camp four or five times a week and walk from twenty to thirty kilometres a day to sell her dairy products.¹⁸ The long distance that the women often have to walk was also brought out by Safia, who in the end of her narrative – left out from the above quotation – counted seven rivers to be crossed before reaching the home camp when returning from Banyo. This high mobility of cattle Fulbe women makes their daily experiences in a sense comparable to that of men who wander long distances in the bush with their cattle. But at the same time, it also separates them every morning from their husbands who, after milking the cows in the cattle corral, take their herds to pasture and watering places, to return only at sunset.

Following milk thus implies a daily schedule filled with rather different tasks, roads and spaces than that which the men use while following their cattle. It also refers to a woman's autonomy by excluding the idea of following

¹⁸ In regions where there are not customers, the pastoralist women sometimes travel elsewhere to sell their milk. In Adamaoua this concerns certain areas where the Gbaya – whose traditional diet does not include milk – are the main inhabitants. For example, in the surroundings of Ngaoundal – located some ninety kilometres westwards from Tibati – there are cattle Fulbe women who, during the dry season, travel about 110 kilometres by train to sell their milk in Ngaoundere.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

others, thus leading a woman on paths of her own.¹⁹ The whole idea is materialised in the shape of the calabash swaying on top of a woman's head and women tend to carry it always while moving in public – even when it does not contain milk. A revealing example of this was given to me by the milkless Hadiidja – the healer's wife – who preferred always to take her calabash with her when going to the village. Moving with milk can thus be seen as the opposite of shame: it is through the calabash that other people know that a woman's steps have a direction or purpose and she is not – as Hadiidja herself put it – “only roaming around” (*waanca meere*).

A rather solitary picture has been given thus far of a pastoralist woman pursuing her own gendered interests. But as Safia's narrative reveals, finally the woman always returns to those from whom the milk business momentarily has separated her. To be accurate, what is narrated is a spatio-temporal division between a woman's “individual” and “social” pursuits. It would be misleading, however, to make a complete split between these two spheres of activity because what actually takes place here is that milk ties these spheres together. Strathern (1988:178) defines mediated relations as being created by objects that stand for the effect of the donor upon the relationship. Among the cattle Fulbe it is the milk that mediates the effect of the woman by flowing through different spheres of her activity.

Perhaps the most fundamental flow of milk takes place when a woman distributes milk to her own children. In this daily practice two relations are mediated: the mother-child relation and siblingship. In fact, feeding one's own child with cow's milk does not differ from breast-feeding as they mediate the same maternal effect, expressed by the Fulbe by the term *bandiigu enDam*, that is, kinship through milk.²⁰ The effect is concretized in *sakiikeeku* – the bond between the siblings from the same mother and father – which is the

¹⁹ In certain concrete situations women do follow men. For example, when the camp is moving, men with their cattle leave before women and little children and accordingly arrive in the new place first. Also on those rare occasions when a man and a woman accompany each other in public the man walks ahead. This hierarchy is verbalised in the word *debbo* (woman) which comes from the root *rew* (*rewde* = to follow, to obey). On the etymology see Dupire (1963) and Noye (1989).

²⁰ In Fulfulde terminology, kinship mediated through milk (*bandiigu enDam*) is contrasted with kinship mediated through blood (*bandiigu yiyam*), the latter concept referring to kinship traced through the father. As regards the word *enDam*, it can be translated both as mother's milk and affection between relatives. Other words with the same root (*en-*) are, for example, *endu* (breast), *enDugo* (pity, be kind to), *denDiraagu* (the relationship between cross-cousins), and *pendiiDam* (sour milk). For Fulbe kinship terms and their etymology, see also Dupire (1970) and Barry (2002).

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

most stable relation in a cattle Pullo's life.²¹ In addition to one's children, the woman distributes milk – often in the form of gruel – also to other camp members such as her husband, parents-in-law, and sometimes the unmarried children of the latter. Whereas the women of the same camp – such as co-wives and the wives of brothers – can take turns in cooking the evening meal, the distribution of milk products usually occurs in a smaller circle as each woman takes care only of those closest to her.

While the daily distribution of milk in the camp points at the most central relations in a woman's everyday life, there are other, more ceremonial occasions in which the milk marks her relatedness in the larger kin group. Examples of this form of mediation were given in the previous chapter in which I described certain rituals where the female guests bring milk that is either consumed, as in *defol*, or used for distinct ritual purposes, such as for washing the hair of the newborn baby in *indeeri*. Besides the life cycle rituals, milk is served on other social occasions such as religious feasts. In all, sharing milk is a central indication of sociality in various celebrations and the women who portion milk to guests are thus important agents for social relationships.

Milk is a convenient substance for mediating relations also because it is easily turned into money. Indeed, to understand fully the meaning of milk for a pastoralist woman, one has to follow both the flow of milk and the flow of money earned with the milk. One way to look at the latter is to consider the milk transformed into milk money (*ceede kosam*) as a central substance on which a woman's autonomy is based. The fact that the women continuously state the importance of selling milk to have money of their own supports this view. The autonomy created through milk money has not, however, much to do with daily material needs because it is the men who are the main food providers in the households.²² Rather the importance of milk money for a woman is based on the fact that it flows in a sphere of activity which is left to her own decision. It is illustrating that the woman hides the money in her

²¹ The same point has been underlined by De Bruijn and van Dijk (1995) who have argued that among the Fulbe pastoralists in central Mali the relations that are formed through the mother's milk are the most enduring ones in times of ecological insecurity.

²² Men provide their wives with corn which – with milk – forms the basis of the cattle Fulbe diet. Women's contribution to daily food is much more modest as the primary ingredients they buy are the vegetables and spices needed for preparing sauce. For sauce women also use wild herbs that they collect in the bush and manioc leaves which can be found in the fields.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

hut²³ – where the milk also “sleeps” under shelter – and simply refuses to tell her husband either the amount of her savings²⁴ or her plans for using it.

Where does the milk in the form of money then actually flow? To start with, women spend a significant part of their milk money buying clothes for themselves and their children, as well as other things to decorate their own and their children’s bodies, such as sandals, ornaments and cosmetics. Special occasions when savings are spent on these articles are the Islamic celebrations such as the ram feast and the Ramadan feast, for which even the poorest pastoralists dress up.

Further objects to which women tend to devote their time and money are their huts and I was repeatedly amazed to see the results of their art of decorating interiors in the bush. The phrase “*o fawni suudu*” (“she decorated the hut”) refers to this devotion, and it is used either for a new mother who decorates her hut for the first time before her *defol* or for any woman who does the same thing for a special reason such as in the end of the dry season²⁵ or when having extra money to buy new things for her hut. In both cases the phrase contains admiration for a woman who is capable of managing her life in a respected manner.

In an absorbing way then the cattle Fulbe women sell their principal resource to buy things with which they define the outlines of their autonomy in bodies and in spaces through decoration. An impressive example of the importance that women attach to this sphere of activity was given to me during one of my visits to Hadiidja, the healer’s wife. As I entered her hut, she, to my great surprise, proudly introduced her new *danki*, that is, the scaffold on which a pastoralist woman keeps her prettiest household utensils. Hadiidja had strived hard to realise this dream of hers. She had cut branches of suitable trees on the river bank and erected the scaffold in her hut with them. From the river she had also collected *joojeere*, whitish earth with which

²³ The etymology of the word *suudu* (hut) is derived from the verb *suuDgo* (to hide).

²⁴ As to factual sums, one youngish woman estimated to me that during one rainy season, being the busiest milk-selling period, she earns about 40,000 CFA francs. In one day a woman’s earnings can reach up to 2,000 CFA francs, supposing that the calabash is full to the brim and includes enough butter balls. A well equipped milk-seller carries with her also sugar lumps and *dakkere*, steamed maize meal, both of which she then mixes with the sour milk and serves to clients who consume it on the spot.

²⁵ For a pastoralist woman the cleanness and decorativeness of her hut is of central concern especially during the rainy season, while for the dry season some women even pack most of their utensils into pieces of cloth in order to preserve them from dust. In the beginning of each rainy season women also fix up the floor of their hut by rolling a mixture of mud, cow dung and a herb called *gubuDo* (lat. *Ceratotheca sesamoides*) on the ground to make it flat and firm.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

she whitened the stands of the scaffold.²⁶ Little by little she had also managed to save money to buy blue and red paint with which she decorated the white stands.

Hadiidja's eagerness to erect a new scaffold was somewhat surprising. First, it is usually the women of reproductive age who devote their energy to decorating their huts and not the older ones – like Hadiidja herself – whose huts resemble more often messy storerooms than exemplars of interior decoration. Second, the scaffold is a central place where the milk calabashes, as well as the things bought with the milk money, are put on display. But Hadiidja had no milk to sell, and her money was extremely scarce to invest in such decoration. Indeed, while I was admiring her new piece of furniture, her husband was nagging outside the hut about wasting scanty money. From Hadiidja's point of view, however, erecting the scaffold can be perceived as a true Austinian performative by means of which she sought to rehabilitate her dignity as a cattle Pullo woman. Thus, although the paint was most probably bought with the husband's money, Hadiidja was, through her act, still comparable to other cattle Fulbe women devoting their time and resources to the same activity.

The flow of money does not stop at the woman's hut door. Part of it continues smoothly to her natal camp. Sippi described this in the following way:

When you sell milk, you get money, you hide it. Then, clothes arrive [into the market place], you notice [them], you buy, you have them sewed. If you are able to sell a lot of milk, you buy good things for your hut. – – If you go to your mother, you buy clothes to your little brothers and sisters. You buy your mother a *wudere*²⁷ and clothes. You buy your father sugar and tea. You bring him, you have bought [the sugar and tea] with kola nuts, if he chews [them]. He is happy [because] his child returned home, isn't he? – – The children of your big brother, the children of your little brother, if you get money [from the milk], you buy him, you bring, you serve him a platter [of food], when they have circumcised him. – – If you are elder, if you have money, you buy rice, you buy oil, you serve him a platter [of food]. You serve a platter [of good food]. You go, they say: "Aah, the big paternal aunt (*goggo*)!" Your big brother is happy. [He] is so happy!

²⁶ The cattle Fulbe women also use *joojeere* to whiten the brims of their calabashes. In certain clans, such as among the *Daneeji*, the decorative designs engraved on the calabash are whitened with the same substance.

²⁷ *Wudere* is a drape of cloth that the woman wraps around her hips and uses as a skirt.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

The amount and frequency of the gifts given here depends of course on how many resources the woman has at her disposal. Another determining factor is how far from the natal family the woman actually lives – those relatives living nearby are visited more frequently than those located far away. In Tibati I observed also a more regular sort of gift giving aimed at concrete economic support. For example, one pastoralist woman used to reserve part of her daily milk money to assist her penniless younger brother who had a wife but not a single cow. Another, an elderly woman, was selling milk from her son's cows to help him buy food so that the son – whose wife was secluded and thus prevented from milk business – was not forced to sell so many cattle as he would have been without his mother's contribution.

There are also various other people who receive their share from the women's milk business. One group is the young wives setting up their own households in which project other women take part by giving gifts in various marriage rituals, especially in the *Bantal* ceremony. Women give gifts also to other persons in a specific situation, such as gifts of clothes to those having completed the Koranic school, and gifts of money to those travelling to Mecca. In the above quotation the paternal aunt gave a gift of food to her newly circumcised nephew.

Finally, the flow of milk extends the limits of the cattle Fulbe community and mediates the pastoralist woman's relations to the outside world. It is through her milk business that she socialises with people from other groups, both in her neighbourhood and in the village. In the area around Tibati it is often the Gbaya women who pop in to visit the cattle Fulbe women in the bush, and vice versa. Usually the visit includes economic transactions; it is common that the cattle Fulbe buy manioc meal from the Gbaya.²⁸ Often also the Gbaya buy food stuffs from the cattle Fulbe, such as small portions of sour milk, pumpkins, and whatever other products the latter happen to cultivate.

The particular relationship between the Gbaya and the cattle Fulbe women in Adamaoua²⁹ can be understood as a local version of the wide-spread exchange relation between the farmers and the Fulbe pastoralists of West and Central Africa. Indeed, the term *cippal*, which nowadays refers to the retail of milk for money, has been used in former times for the traditional

²⁸ While little portions of manioc meal can be paid by the cattle Fulbe women themselves, the bigger amounts are always paid by their husbands. Even in the latter case women can be in charge of the concrete transaction. For example, in one camp it was the elderly head wife who bought manioc from the Gbaya women for her son's families.

²⁹ Comparable relationships are occasionally established also with other people living in the Adamaouan bush. I observed, for example, some pastoralist women exchanging foodstuffs with the Mambila women living in the vicinity.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

barter in which pastoralist milk products were directly exchanged for cereals from the farming population. The exchange of food can sometimes also escape both the form of retail and barter and appear instead as gift giving. For example, one pastoralist woman received several portions of manioc meal from her Gbaya neighbours during a sickness. The occurrence reflects the particular spirit of the relationship between the cattle Fulbe and the Gbaya: exceeding the limits of pure market exchange, it is understood as *soobaaku*, a sort of institutionalised friendship³⁰ between these two groups of bush dwellers.³¹

In villages and market places milk-selling comes closest to pure market exchange. This concerns especially occasional clients, both women and men, who pay for their portion of milk with cash and the transaction is over. But, as in the neighbourhood in the bush, the cattle Fulbe women have their regular customers in the villages with whom bonds of friendship are created. Safia's description of her encounter with the nurse in Banyo gave a glimpse of the great value women attach to personal relations outside the pastoral community.

There is still another noteworthy web of relations mediated by the milk business. It is *adaasi*, a money-go-round in which the best-earning milk-sellers take part. Although it may happen that the pastoralist women put up an *adaasi* among themselves, more often each woman joins an *adaasi* group of Gbaya or Hausa-Fulbe women with whom she socialises while visiting villages. Many women prefer the latter course, which is consistent with the overall separateness and secrecy that colours a pastoralist woman's milk business as she aims to keep the resources inside her hut, for herself and for her own children. The following example of a milk-selling trip will elaborate the point and take us finally back to the campsite.

³⁰ The particular quality of the relation is confirmed in the beginning of each visit as the greeting parties address each other as *soobaajo* (friend).

³¹ The *soobaaku* relationship between the cattle Fulbe and the Gbaya is not restricted to women only. Similar relations are also established between men, even though the frequent quarrels caused by the cattle damaging the Gbaya fields can make these bonds somewhat problematic. When it exists, however, *soobaaku* between cattle Fulbe and Gbaya men is usually actualised when a pastoralist man employs a Gbaya to do farming work, hut construction, etc. According to Burnham (1996), the *soobaaku* bonds between men and between women are interrelated so that "as part of their *soobaajo* link, the Gbaya will perform services such as house building or fencing for his Mbororo bond-friend, and the men's wives will regularly exchange milk products for manioc and other Gbaya agricultural produce" (ibid., 82). According to my observation, the exchange does not necessarily involve spouses, as the cattle Fulbe women can establish their *soobaaku* bonds independent of their husbands' relations. For *soobaaku* relations between Gbaya and the cattle Fulbe women, see also Burnham (1980a).

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

One day in January 1996 I was accompanying Binta, the head wife of a relatively prosperous cattle Fulbe camp to a nearby fishing village called Libboun. Binta had managed to get some milk from her son's cattle, which were occasionally pasturing in the neighbouring bush. This gave her an exceptional opportunity to sell milk and earn some money – exceptional because her husband was old and had already divided his cows among his sons. As an experienced milk woman, Binta left early in the morning so that she would not encounter the midday sun, and also because at this time Muslims were fasting for Ramadan. I followed Binta's quick short steps as she hurried along the twisting road. Every time she approached a house she called out "*kosam wari, kosam wari*" ("milk came, milk came"). While we were resting after having sold milk to some Kotoko³² women, another pastoralist woman happened to arrive carrying her calabash. As we greeted her I noticed that Binta called her *nawliiko* (co-wife). The Kotoko women looked at Binta inquiringly. My surprise was probably even greater because I knew that the woman was Binta's matrilineal relative. Binta – seemingly enjoying the embarrassment created by her words – laughed and blurted out: "Isn't she my co-wife through milk?"

Binta's joke was at the same time funny and confusing. What puzzled me was that she seemed to link two central but incompatible cultural ideas together. Why call your matrilineal kinswoman a co-wife when these categories are loaded with opposite meanings of affection and competition? In order to answer the question – or rather to indicate that it is wrongly put – one specification is needed. In the given situation it was not Binta but I myself who paid attention to the maternal connection, although I am inclined to assume that she knew of my awareness of the kin relation which made her trick even more amusing. Be that as it may, basically her joke was not about the kin connection at all. Nor was its meaning restricted to co-wives whose mutual competition takes place in the limits of the campsite where the milk of the husband's cows is divided between them. Instead, Binta's joke referred to the competitive relationship that exists between all pastoralist women carrying milk from house to house for potential customers. It pointed at the fact that, when it comes to a woman's daily efforts to ensure the prosperity of her hut, other ties often become a secondary matter.³³

³² The Kotoko are among those northern people who have arrived in the region along with the increased fishing industry after the construction of the dam in the village of Mbakaou in 1967.

³³ The patrilocal construction of the camps leads to a situation where matrilineally connected adult women like full sisters don't usually live near each other to provoke competition. The competitive aspect could also be dropped out of the mother-daughter relation.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

To conclude, whatever meanings Binta intended to communicate with her joke, her words, and my efforts to interpret them, reveal the range of relations that milk can mediate. At the one extreme, it mediates the bond of affection between persons united through a close matrilineal connection. At the other extreme, it mediates separation by creating a competitive relation between the agents involved, the milk-selling women. The opposition between these relations does not, of course, make them mutually exclusive. On the contrary, every pastoralist woman's attitude towards her kinswoman can vary from affection to rivalry, depending on what the definition of their relation in each situation demands from her.

Women's Cattle

For a cattle Pullo woman, the essential condition for a successful and smoothly running dairy business is regular access to milk. Traditionally this access has been guaranteed by marriage, as it is the milk from the husband's cows allotted to each wife which the woman can decide by herself. As to running the daily milk business, it does not, however, make a big difference where the milk actually comes from. For example, I knew several women who sold milk from cows belonging to villagers from Tibati because their husbands were hired to take care of the herds. Such was the ownership of the cows which enabled Safia to make her daily milk trips to Banyo.

Apart from allotted cows, there are also cattle that women own by themselves. In numbers these animals are few – to the point of being a cause of joking among their owners. Cattle is given to girls according to very different principles than for boys. In the case of a boy, the foundation of his herd is laid at the age of seven, when a cow, called *hooreeji*, is chosen for him from his father's herd, so that at the time of his first marriage there is already a little herd waiting for him. In the daughter's case, the father chooses a cow for her as well, but only when she has given birth to her first child.³⁴ Even before that, another cow (*sadaaki*) has been given to her by her husband as a seal of their marriage, which increases the number of her cows to two.

The earlier timing of men's inheritance makes it sure that a woman's cattle can never reach the same size as that of her brother. Besides, although principally neither the cow given by the father nor the *sadaaki* cow – or their offspring – can be sold without the woman's permission, her exclusive power

³⁴ When it comes to terminology used for animals obtained by different means, I was somewhat surprised at the shallow and conflicting knowledge that women had in these matters. For example, the same terms – *sendereji* and *sukkalji* – could be used for both the cows allotted to wives by their husbands and the cattle originating from the cow given to a woman by her father. Because of this confusion I prefer not to use these terms in the text.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

to decide about her cattle is not always respected in practice. It is illustrating that usually a woman does not hurry to move the cow given by the father to her husband's camp but, instead, is inclined to keep it and its calves in her father's care even years after the birth of her first child. In these matters a husband is never as trusted as one's father, and I followed several cases in which a man undeniably had quite a careless attitude towards his wife's animals. In one of these a woman called Salma owned, in spite of her young age, four head of cattle, two cows and two bulls. Of these, one cow and one bull were from the herd of her deceased father, while the other two Salma inherited from her brother, Yaaya, who died suddenly. Later the bull that originally belonged to Yaaya was taken back from Salma to be sacrificed in Yaaya's commemoration. It was not difficult for Salma to accept this loss; in a similar way her other brother had been forced to give back two cows from his respective inheritance so that Yaaya's debts could be paid. A much more bitter pill for Salma to swallow was that her own husband, Yirima, and his mother, being in urgent need of cash, decided to sell one of Salma's cows. They assured her they would pay it back to her later, which they never did.

Another point to be noted in Salma's case is the way in which her brother's thirteen head of cattle were distributed after his death. Salma, who had one child at that time, got one cow and one bull, and her brother got six cows. There were also two younger sisters who both received one cow. Finally, three cows were given also to Salma's husband Yirima which can be explained by a few related reasons. Principally the cows would have gone to Yaaya's paternal parallel-cousin, but Yaaya's father did not have any brothers, and so Yirima – being Yaaya's paternal cross-cousin – was the next appropriate male inheritor. Furthermore, the fact that Yirima was preferred to Yaaya's other paternal cross-cousins was based obviously on his status as Yaaya's brother-in-law; the young men had also been good friends living practically in the same camp. The interesting thing is that the distribution of Yaaya's cattle among his sisters, his brother and his male cousin was proportional to how a father's cattle is distributed among sons and daughters. Thus, no matter where the inheritance comes from, the ruling idea is that, while for a girl one or two head – a number comparable to the cows given by her father and husband – will suffice, more cattle are always given to a boy, who is considered to need every possible cow for the construction or replenishment of his herd.

Irrespective of how many or few animals women manage to acquire and keep, there exists a general consensus of what they finally do with them. The central point is that women's cattle underscore the same maternal ties that are mediated by milk. Thus, if a woman has managed to build herself a little

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

herd, her principal aim is not to spend it for buying clothes, food etc.³⁵ Instead, usually the woman distributes most – if not all – of her animals among her own children. A concrete example of how this distribution proceeds is given by Dudu:

My cattle – – all of the cattle came from my father. No cattle came from my marriage, [they] came from my father. They came from my father, my father begot us three. One boy died. When the boy died [he] left me with Dooya. The number of cattle increased, then Dooya grew up and got her hut, I went back, I gave Dooya – – our father's wealth. So she kept [cattle] for herself, our father's [cattle]. I myself also, I kept for myself, our father's [cattle]. So the number of cattle increased till I grew up, till they married me, till I started to have children. Then I divided, I gave Alhaji Dere. Another also, Abdu, when he grew up and set up his camp, I divided, I gave to him. I gave him two. For Alhaji I gave three. So, after a while, Kariimu, for him I gave two. So, the time passed, again, for Aadamu also, I gave him four. So, it took some time, Ismaila, I gave him three. Then the time passed, also Saidu, Saidu I gave him two. So Kaduuna was left. To Kaduuna I gave four. So the number of cattle increased, I stayed with [the cattle]. Still [some] were left. [Some] were left [and stayed] with me. I stayed, I kept [cattle] for my daughters. I gave A'i two cattle. After a while I still gave cattle to their elder brother. – – Then I gave their elder brother one cow. I said: "When that cow calves, give it to A'i." Then the cow calved, he gave [the calf] to A'i. So, A'i, now, if that cow calves, I said: "The day when God lets Rugeiatu come, you, you detach [the calf], you give Rugeiatu."

In a way typical for a pastoralist woman, Dudu emphasises her father's contribution to her cattle, disregarding totally her husband's worth in these matters. In Dudu's case, however, the emphasis can partly be explained by the fact that her father's contribution was bigger than it usually is. This, in turn, was due to his early death which restricted the number of his children to three – and the direct heirs to two daughters as the only son died while still a baby. I do not, however, believe that all of the father's cattle went to the daughters, as he had brothers who must have received their share. But this does not exclude the fact that, for a cattle Pullo woman, Dudu was still exceptionally wealthy in cattle which gave her scope for subjective consideration when distributing her animals among her children. The consequences of this are clearly seen in her tendency to give a little more cattle to her favourite children than to others. Of the lucky ones, Ismaila and Kaduuna were still living with their mother during my fieldwork, the former

³⁵ On the other hand, it is quite accepted for a woman to sell an animal to pay for a trip to her far off relatives, which some women do now and then.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

co-operating with Dudu daily. Also Aadamu was close to Dudu, receiving her mother's support whenever possible. Of Dudu's daughters, A'i got no less than three head, and was responsible for giving a calf – or probably more – to her little sister later when this woman would return to the parents to give birth to her first child. In addition, cattle was most probably given also to a third sister, Maisama, whom Dudu however did not mention because of Maisama's status as her firstborn child.

The quantitative differences between the cattle that Dudu gave to her favourite children and others, on the one hand, and to her sons and daughters, on the other hand, were not big. The equivalence between sons and daughters was further emphasised by the fact that Dudu gave, as any pastoralist woman would have done, cattle to each child only when the child had grown up. A point of comparison can be found very close by, namely from her husband who, while having given the standard number of one cow to each daughter, reared animals for his sons little by little so that, at the time of setting up their own households, each of them had a herd of some thirty or forty head.

Finally, the pastoralists' continued rapprochement with the Muslim villagers has influenced their views of their women's relation to cattle. In earlier studies it has been brought out how the adoption of the Maliki system of inheritance, in which the daughter inherits half of her brother's share, has improved women's position among the more sedentary pastoral Fulbe in Nigeria (Hopen 1958; Waters-Bayer 1988). In my data, however, there is not the slightest indication that the pastoralists in Adamaoua in Cameroon will reshape their inheritance practices towards a system of that sort, and so the bulk of the cattle is still transferred from fathers to sons. In addition, during my fieldwork I even observed a tendency among some pastoralist men to substitute the *sadaaki* cow with a gift of money and so further cut down their wives' connections to cattle. The question could also be raised whether the two systems of inheritance are commensurable at all as they are based on quite different principles. Whereas among the villagers, the wealth of the father is distributed only after his death, pastoralist men and women are expected to transfer their cattle to their sons and daughters as soon as they reach their social adulthood through marriage. For the cattle Fulbe, changing over to the villagers' system would thus not simply mean a redefinition of gendered property. More than that, it would radically modify the generational dynamics in their society and challenge people's basic ideas of how social relations are constructed in the first place.

SECLUSION OF WOMEN: PUZZLING DEPENDENCIES

The idea of pastoral women moving with their calabashes has its opposite, namely, those women secluded in camps. The practice of seclusion (*dambugo*) is recent and still quite marginal among those cattle Fulbe I know. Yet I noticed that a clear increase in female seclusion had taken place in those two years that I was away before revisiting Adamaoua in 1998.

When a husband secludes his wife, that is, demands that she stays in the camp, the latter is naturally prevented from going to villages to sell milk or to buy goods. Most women find the new practice annoying and show their opinion in one way or another. When Daadaaji, a youngish woman in my neighbourhood, heard from her husband that she was not allowed to go to the market to sell milk anymore, she first challenged the new rule by heading immediately for the nearby fishing village. When she returned, her husband informed her that if that happened again, their marriage would be finished. Daadaaji got extremely irritated and, with the help of her mother-in-law and her husband's co-mother, started to pack all her things in order to travel to her parents. Finally, when all was ready, she sat down and gave up the whole thing. After that I never saw her challenging her husband's will in such a way anymore, although she continued her "next year I shall start again" bravado whenever the issue was taken up in the camp. I met also other women similar to Daadaaji who openly complained of being secluded. When Jubey, the wife of Daadaaji's husband's brother, saw me for the first time after having been secluded, she kept on asking me: "From where will I now get money?"

Still others were so embarrassed in the new situation that they attempted to hide the fact of being secluded from me. The embarrassment was also shared by some mothers-in-law who tried hard to make credible excuses – such as "cows dried up" or "there are more urgent things to do now" – when I asked them why their daughters-in-law do not visit the market. One secluded woman once dropped me a hint about her state by uttering: "I only sit" (*mi Don jooDa tan*). With her simple metaphor she pointed to the opposite, namely to the whole series of doings that used to structure her daily life before seclusion: the dairying tasks in the hut, walking with the calabash through the bush and finally selling milk in the village. At the same time she was ironically drawing a parallel between herself and the Muslim village women whom the pastoral women disdain because of their very same "sitting". A similar disdain can be found in the following passage in which an elderly cattle Pullo woman named Namooda describes the current life of her two sisters-in-law who have moved to live in the village with their husband:

I do not know what they do. They, they just sit. There is no bargain, there is nothing. – – Others, they sit, they are of no use. Even the soap, the husband

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

buys and gives them, so that they can wash clothes. Even the piece of cloth they wrap [around their hips], the husband buys [and] gives. They just sit. They are of no use.

In her description Namooda identifies her sisters-in-law with sedentary Hausa-Fulbe women. She has an apparent reason for this: the women in question have left the bush behind and adopted the village women's immobile life style. Namooda also states clearly her own opinion about the given change by equating women's sitting with uselessness. Her words contain no empathy which can partly be explained by the fact that, at least according to Namooda herself, her sisters-in-law are not secluded, but sit in their huts of their own will. The tone is entirely different when she moves on to describe the lot of those women secluded in the bush:

Nowadays, whether in the village, they seclude their wives, or in the bush, now look Buula, he does not let his wife go. She stopped going to the village, didn't she? Thus, [if you] submit to the village, you are obliged to seclude your wife, aren't you? They do not sell milk. They do not go anywhere. He (= the husband) digs a well in the camp. [As to] firewood, he goes, he buys, he brings [the firewood in the camp]. So, where they (= the women) would go?³⁶ They just sit, don't they? [As to] others, they do their trade, don't they? They do what is useful for them. They get their clothes, they get – – their earrings, things for their children. Don't you see that they get? So, [the secluded women], they only sit. – – And the husband takes (= buys) [things for them and] brings [them]. Is that good? No, that is not good at all!

In the latter passage, Namooda gives an explicit motive for why her kinsmen have started to seclude their wives in the first place, namely, their submission to villagers' ideas. Namooda's view is easy to accord with. Indeed, the efforts of some cattle Fulbe men to reconcile women's seclusion with bush life have much to do with their interest in bringing their society culturally closer to that of the Muslim village people. In my field site, the men who practised seclusion were relatively young and had regular contacts with Islamic teachers (*mallum'en*) living in Tibati. One of them, named Hamidu, emphasised to me

³⁶ Here Namooda refers to complete seclusion in which a woman is not allowed to leave the campsite at all. Thus, two different versions of seclusion can be distinguished so that, besides the stricter version which is typical of Muslim villagers, there is another, less restrictive version which is more often used among the pastoralists. In this second "bush", version the only forbidden thing is to sell milk in the market, and so the women are still allowed to fetch water from the river, collect firewood in the bush, visit their relatives quite freely, etc. In situations where an explicit difference is made between these two versions, the former is called *dambugo*, and the latter *surgo*. In everyday talk, however, the pastoralists usually talk of *dambugo* even in the latter case.

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

that men actually work much more than women who have only four tasks: to take care of children, to cook, and to fetch water and firewood. He insisted that his wives need not go to the market because he can provide them with everything they need. He also gave a practical religious reason for the seclusion by explaining that women tend to forget the afternoon prayers while passing time in the market places. I understood Hamidu's argument concerning women's minor tasks as yielding to the tendency of the Muslim village men to express their pity for pastoral women's work load. It also disclosed the fact that for cattle Fulbe men the efforts to get closer to the Muslim villagers' ideals include new practices that redefine the limits of autonomy for their wives, as well as for themselves. To provide one's wives and children with clothes, for example, creates new dependencies that make the men look more self-sufficient vis-à-vis the others in the household. "Food has returned to men", as one pastoralist woman aptly commented on the practice of seclusion through which part of women's autonomy is transformed to supplement that of the men.

But submission to villagers' ideas is not always in the men's interests only. A startling view point was offered by the healer's wife, Hadiidja, whom we saw earlier asserting the utility of carrying a calabash in public places. When I met her two years after that statement, her ideas were radically modified. She was suddenly convinced that the whole milk-selling business was evil:

What makes milk-selling a bad thing is that, if you go to sell milk [and thus earn] money, [then] you have manioc measured, you buy bread, you bring it home and give your husband, and he eats, it is bad. Because the book of God says that you should wait that your husband buys, brings, gives you, and then you eat. He does not eat what the wife has bought while going out and [then] brings [him], [because] God did not say like that. – – Because if you have got money through milk-selling, and you bring it to the camp, you have brought the devil's wealth [into the camp]. That money is bad. No matter if you have had manioc measured, [or] bought kola nuts, meat, fish, clothes, it is [all] bad. If your husband does not agree, it is bad. Because the book (= Koran) forbids to carry milk, to sell it, to walk around with it, it is bad. – – Because, if you have come to sell milk, all men detach money and buy milk. So, you take that money, you take it to your husband's camp, so you take fire to him. Because that money is not from your husband's wealth. That is money of the devil.

It seems that in two years Hadiidja had totally denied her people's time-honoured tradition of milk-selling and, at the same time, demonised a fundamental part of pastoral women's agency. To hear such a sermon from a cattle Pullo woman was at first astounding. But when I considered her outburst in its proper context, it appeared more comprehensible. First, Hadiidja was able to ignore the material and emotional value of selling milk

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

because milk did not play any significant role in her own life anymore, as the family had lost its herd long ago. Second, Hadiidja had gradually become bitter about her husband, whom she accused of having “eaten” their children’s inheritance and thus having left the family empty-handed. She did not hesitate to challenge the *pulaaku* code, but handled the problem in public by asking for material help from the American missionaries with the plea that her husband refused to take care of the family. Furthermore, she went to meet the village head to complain of her husband’s failure to fulfil his duties towards his family members, although this move did not lead to any juridical measures. It was in that discouraging situation that Hadiidja so eagerly clung to ideas underlining the husband’s role as the exclusive provider of the family – ideas which, if realised, would have removed her everyday troubles at one go.

Although for a cattle Pullo man the seclusion of wives is a way to show his increased self-sufficiency in a material sense, the connotations of this practice do not point to the “profit” side. The inconvenient fact remains that by secluding his wife the man admits his fear of her unfaithfulness, and admitting this fear includes showing dependency, which means shame. I was given an illuminating example of this while talking once with an older Pullo man about the practice. The man, called Luko, was seemingly amused at those poor men who secluded their wives without being able to buy them even a pair of sandals. He did not however disapprove of seclusion as such. Instead, Luko made a distinction between two morals that can be found behind the practice:

If a man demands his wife to sit in the camp, [so that she] does not walk around, he must be very wealthy. The wife seeks clothes, seeks food, seeks money, or for example a relative comes, or a friend, or they arrange *indeeri*, or make a cattle sacrifice – -. He detaches wealth, he gives (= pays). [If] he has forbidden his wife to walk around, [in those circumstances] it is all right. But other men forbid their wives for nothing! It is only the man’s jealousy that has forbidden the wife to walk around, [so that] she cannot see another man and say that the other man is good, [and] that [her own] husband is bad. – – They seclude, some seclude well with wealth, [and] the wife sits well. Others, they forbid, the wife sits for nothing. [She] sits for nothing, it is only jealousy, only foolishness!

He also made clear what is wrong with the new practice compared to former ways:

Earlier I did not know [about seclusion] at all. You look for your wealth. The woman looks for [her] wealth. So if you are together, you look for wealth, you just have it. It is like that. So, another [man] closed his wife [inside the camp]

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

for nothing – -. The woman is hungry, she is not allowed to go around [and] sell things. [She] does not sell, she is not allowed to cultivate. Another woman – -, she cultivates, – - [she] eats another sauce. Then, the husband forbids her, do not roam around, do not roam around. He closes her [inside] for nothing. One day there is no food, she eats pitch black sauce, is that all right? Isn't that wicked? Doesn't he close her [inside] for nothing? So, if you close the hut, there is no food, what have you thus closed [inside]? Isn't it mere bush that you have closed [inside]?

The above talk can be understood as a critique of those fervent cattle Fulbe men who insist on secluding their wives regardless of circumstances. In Luko's opinion, the new custom is justified and brings honour to its practitioner only if it does not involve material distress for those "closed inside". Otherwise the whole idea turns upside down as it discloses his weakness regarding the whimsies of his own emotions, instead of showing a man's material independence and generosity,. There were also men whose opinions were even stricter than Luko's, like a man in his fifties who declared that the whole practice of seclusion does not benefit the cattle Fulbe at all. But if minor variations in opinion are not taken into account, a friction can be discerned between the two views – one which sees women's seclusion as increasing men's autonomy and another that feels the practice shows the lack of it. This division of opinion reflects the difference that still can be observed between generations in their ways of balancing between pastoral gender models and the way in which the village people define Islam and status.

LIVING UP TO IDEALS

The pastoral Fulbe women's everyday life is full of occurrences that force the women to seek ways to live up to the gendered and social expectations of their society. The above discussion started with examples from the sphere of intimate relations, that is, the ways the pastoral women apply – or are expected to apply – *pulaaku* in relation to their husbands and children, among the latter especially to their firstborn. What emerged was a cultural ideal of autonomous personhood, or, to be accurate, a performance of such a state of being, manifested in a pronouncedly indifferent behaviour as regards the given relations in public.

The same ideal was further echoed in the succeeding discussion which revealed the central meaning that milk, as well as milk money, has for a pastoralist woman in pursuing her own gendered interests separate both from her husband and from other pastoral women. The picture became, however, diversified, as attention was turned to the ways in which the milk flows

Co-Wives through Milk: Gender and Pulaaku in Everyday Life

through different spheres of the woman's activity, mediating relations of various kinds. What then comes out is that through the same *pulaaku* ideals which, at the level of appropriate conduct, produce the appearance of autonomous or separate persons, the cattle Fulbe women also bind themselves, as well those others to whom they are related through milk, into the pastoral community.³⁷ While this binding takes place usually through the daily, as well as more ceremonial, distribution of milk, examples have also been given of more casual gifts of milk, or milk money, to less fortunate relatives. The latter practice, besides mediating relations, also concretely supports the receiver in his/her own efforts to live up to *pulaaku* ideals.

Finally, for the pastoral Fulbe of contemporary Adamaoua, the central dilemma is not merely how to live up to traditional pastoral ideals. As the discussion of the recently introduced practice of female seclusion has shown, the people have to deal also with the reorganisation of these ideals. While being secluded, the pastoral women are introduced to a radically altered everyday schedule, cut from many socio-spatial spheres of her previous activity. As such then, the new expectations leave much less room for performing a "self-supporting" pastoralist woman, thus depriving her of some basic constituents in her daily interaction with others. More than that, while being denied her milk money, the cattle Pullo woman is left without a central means to mediate social relations in her society.

³⁷ I thank Professor Karen Armstrong for encouraging me to elaborate this idea.

8 “OUR PEOPLE”: PERCEIVING AND PERFORMING RELATEDNESS

During my short revisit in Tibati in 1998 a strange woman popped into the hut of a friend of mine. Having barely entered, the woman started to complain about all the possible things that had gone wrong in her life. She rolled up her shirt to show her withered breasts and belly asking how she could still get pregnant, as all her children have died. She counted with her fingers how many marriages she has been forced to leave behind. She turned around to show her thin body claiming that people do not give her any food. She also complained that if she prepares *nyiri* by herself, others refuse to eat it, suspecting her of witchcraft.

After the somewhat embarrassing performance I was informed that the woman, called Heewi, had suffered from evil spirits for years. Heewi had been married three times, each marriage having ended in divorce as the husbands, one after another, got exhausted with her erratic behaviour. Contrary to her own announcement, her children were not dead, but were living with their respective fathers, two in Ngaoundal, one in Bamenda and two somewhere in Nigeria. Heewi had thus arrived all alone from Ngaoundal where her last marriage had just broken up. Now she was staying in the camp of her cousin where her cousin's mother, Heewi's maternal uncle's wife, looked after her.

Heewi's return to her relatives can be compared with another coinciding return, namely that of a woman called Siuso who had arrived from Tignere, located about a hundred kilometres from Tibati to the north. Siuso did not have any children of her own, and her husband had recently died in Mecca. So she had decided to return to spend her old age with her eldest brother. It seemed that, in spite of her sad lot as a childless woman, Siuso had easily taken her place at her new home. One sign of this was that she replaced her brother's dead wife in different rituals in which she was quickly known as a most humorous “grandmother”, cracking jokes and playing tricks in every possible situation.

Heewi was at least as chatty as Siuso, explaining the details of her life to anyone ready to listen. Yet, her condition was far from Siuso's social circles. An apparent clue to this was that, while for Siuso a big hut was erected in the middle of the camp just next to her brother, the dwelling offered to Heewi resembled more a shelter than a hut, and it was located away from others, in the middle of the manioc fields. There Heewi, cut off from her children and

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

avoided even by those living next to her, cultivated her little plot and prepared her meals that she ate all alone. Lacking thus the basic daily experiences of sharing, Heewi’s situation represented a total inversion of what, to her people’s understanding, a good life is composed of. Due to her emotional instability, Heewi had totally failed in what Siuso so skilfully succeeded at, namely, in reorganising her existing relations in new circumstances.

In this chapter I shall carry the dilemma faced by the two women further by examining the various rhetorical and practical forms that people’s aspirations of being related to others take among the pastoralists. My discussion will focus on the cultural understanding of *lenyol* (lineage), a concept which – with the social practices perceived through it – forms the central representation of relatedness among the cattle Fulbe.

THE RHETORICS OF “OUR LINEAGE”

Among the cattle Fulbe there is the custom that, if a child is born when a lot of relatives from both the father’s and mother’s side happen to live in the vicinity, he or she will be called *Lenyol*. The given condition is regarded as a most blessed one. Besides the fact that there are a lot of aunts and uncles giving gifts in the *indeeri* ritual, a child who is born “in his/her lineage” (*haa lenyol maako*) is believed to have luck also in the future life.

The custom is one example of the centrality of the notion of *lenyol* in cattle Fulbe everyday discourse. Modifying William Hanks’ (1993:139) idea, the concept of *lenyol* can be seen as a central element in the pastoralists’ identity rhetorics through which they construct the social world by taking up a position in it. Furthermore, what is distinctive about this concept is that it can be employed when talking of various contextual positions, ranging from quite recently divided kin groups to whole nations. As to the latter scale, the term *lenyol* was employed in my presence, for example, when people discussed the difference between those white people who were at least somehow familiar to them, such as the Americans (*himBe Amirka*) and myself. More often, however, the widest entities referred to as *lenyol* were the different ethnic groups in the region, such as the Fulbe, the Gbaya and the Hausa. Next to that, a special, contextual position was taken in relation to the Fulbe *wuro* (village Fulbe) whom the pastoralists considered as being a separate *lenyol* from themselves, that is, Fulbe *ladde* (bush Fulbe).

In the self-definition of the pastoralists of contemporary Adamaoua, however, the most relevant entities for which the term *lenyol* is used are the cattle Fulbe kin groups, perceived as patrilineages, that were established after

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

their common *Jaafun* history in Nigeria in the nineteenth century.¹ For example, most of my informants, besides claiming to belong to the general category of *Fulbe ladde*, defined themselves exclusively in terms of *lenyi* (pl. of *lenyol*) that started to move into Cameroon during the second migration wave, that is, from the 1920s on.² Of these, my closest contacts in the area around Tibati were with the lineages named *BooDi'en*, *Siromanko'en* and *Tuubanko'en*.

The distinctions made between these lineages³ form part of intimate everyday differentiation in which the cattle Fulbe draw boundaries between neighbours or relatives in diverse situations. Besides offering a subject for chatter, this border drawing also has practical consequences in people's lives. One of these derives from the importance that one's *lenyol* has in the choice of marriage partner(s). Indeed, during my fieldwork I met many pastoralist men who made considerable efforts to find a woman belonging to their own lineage – even while searching for a third wife.

Among the cattle Fulbe, to claim to be married to a person from one's own lineage is a moral statement that articulates with a wider discourse in which “our lineage” (*lenyol amin*) is differentiated from strangers. This rhetoric does not lose its moral weight by the fact that lineage is always an imagined entity. On the contrary: the moral strength of the idea of “our lineage” is effective enough to draw in people from the fringes of social relations. In practice, as Dupire (1970:304) has observed, this happens often through intermarriages between neighbours which gradually transforms people from diverse origins

¹ Instead of patrilineages, these kin groups could, of course, be called patrilans, because their members cannot trace genealogical links back to the time when the groups were established. However, I prefer to translate the term *lenyol* consistently by the concept of lineage to emphasise the way in which the cattle Fulbe themselves employ the term.

² By using the term “exclusively” I refer to the fact that the cattle Fulbe living in the surroundings of Tibati usually avoid calling themselves *Aku*, the name given to them by the *Jaafun* who preceded them in Cameroon. Indeed, it did not seem to be contradictory for my informants to see themselves as members of quite recently founded lineages and at the same time to locate the pastoralists who arrived earlier under such a highly generalising label as “the *Jaafun* lineage” as if these were all comparable entities – while the word *Aku* was not understood as a name for a lineage at all. The imbalance can partly be explained by the practical situation in Tibati: *Aku* form the prominent majority of the cattle Fulbe population in the area and thus the ingroup divisions among the *Aku* are much more tangibly present than those among geographically distant *Jaafun*. But more than that, the phenomenon talks of different perspectives from which particular Fulbe identities get their pertinence. Thus, the differentiation from *Jaafun*, which has evolved along with the historical separation, is based mainly on the mental image that the *Aku* have of the former as a kind of “middle distance collective other” as compared with such Fulbe groups as Fulbe *wuro* and *WoDaaBe* who are culturally “more distant” from the *Aku* than the *Jaafun* are.

³ In the rest of the chapter I shall use the term lineage – or *lenyol* – exclusively with this historically specific meaning.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

into relatives. Because of the mobility of the cattle Fulbe this process has a strong spatial dimension: the intersecting migration paths bring different people together and separate them again after a period of cohabitation. The pattern creates a mental topography of “our lineage” in which clusters of especially dense lineage ties are discerned at a certain moment. For example, during my fieldwork the members of one camp near Tibati associated their lineage, *Tuubanko'en*, with five geographical spots that were situated in different parts of Nigeria, Cameroon and the Central African Republic. It is towards these kin clusters that people direct their attention when searching for spouses for themselves or for their children. The spatially distant lineage ties are not, however, remembered only when spouses are needed. Reciprocal visits are made between distant camps for numerous other reasons and remote relatives are constantly present in everyday talk. Because of this specific mobility of pastoralists' social life, the idea of what Bourdieu (1977) calls “practical kinship” is not limited in their case to spatially close relatives, but stretches vast distances as individuals and groups turn to their faraway kinsmen in pursuing their practical interests (cf. *ibid.* 35).

In daily life and discourse the widespread kin network represents a moral miniature of the whole pastoral community: emerging as a distinctive lineage, it claims to observe the Fulbe moral principles better than any other comparable unit. The idea of the moral superiority of one's own lineage is present in various everyday situations in which people's undertakings are evaluated. Sometimes it is brought out tactfully as when subtle distinctions are made between lineages according to their ways of performing rituals. Sometimes the moral tone is more explicit and the judgement is concluded by the frequently repeated phrase, “in our lineage they don't do like that” (*haa lenyol amin Be ngaDataa bana nii*). During my stay in Tibati people disapproved of neighbouring lineages because of such things as their badly behaving youth or their reluctance to give gifts on ceremonial occasions. Furthermore, certain lineages were overtly condemned for their involvement in witchcraft.

At the same time people tended to protect their own lineage and refrain from telling about the misfortune of their kinsmen in public. I once revealed to a middle-aged woman that a certain family belonging to her lineage had gone through a period of particularly hard trials that had brought shame on its members. The woman assured me that she would never tell anybody about it as the family in question belonged to “her own people” (*himBe am* = my people). This in spite of the fact that the woman first got to know the family through me and no actual kin relation could be traced between them. The strong empathy that the woman felt towards the family can be explained partly by the fact that she herself, married to another lineage, lived far away

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

from her own kin and thus the idea that her “own people” were living and suffering somewhere in the vicinity especially moved her. At the same time it shows that the special affinity that people feel towards their own lineage does not necessarily call for any immediate, practical relation but can be based on a fairly imagined affiliation. In this respect, for the cattle Fulbe belonging to a lineage echoes the awareness of a wider ethnic affinity (cf. Bentley 1987), that is, an affiliation with other cattle Fulbe people. This awareness is also manifested in their terminology, as the pastoralists constantly use the term “our people” (*himBe amin*) for their own lineage, thus paralleling the lineage with the wider category of “bush people” (*himBe ladde*), a term which indicates the cattle or “bush” Fulbe (Fulbe *ladde*) in general.⁴

PERFORMING PATRIKIN

Among the cattle Fulbe, the idea of patrilineally related people comes up on different levels of the social structure. At the interlineage level people often discern clusters of two or three lineages that they consider to be descended from brothers of the same father.⁵ In a comparable way, when they talk of a single lineage as “our lineage”, they refer to a group of people related to each other through patrilineal ties. Both of these ideas should, of course, be treated as abstractions. To focus on the latter, the idea that a certain cattle Fulbe lineage that is spread out over several nation states is a patrilineage in the strict sense of the term, that is, consists exclusively of patrilineally related people, is highly fanciful. The same holds true for single regions where a certain lineage is represented. A brief survey would quickly reveal that, for example, of those *Siromanko’en* who frequent the Friday market of Tibati, many would not be able to track a concrete patrilineal connection with each other.

Yet the idea of patrilineage has its tangible manifestations. Camps are formed according to patrilineal ties which are then further reinforced by arranging marriages between brothers’ children. Often, however, the close patrilineal nucleus consisting of the families of a father and his adult sons is complemented with more heterogeneous elements which, again, are transformed into kin through further intermarriages. In the following I shall

⁴ These parallels can be further contrasted with the category of “village people” / “village Fulbe” (*himBe wuro* / Fulbe *wuro*).

⁵ I have also heard some people saying that these lineages have the same navel (*jaabuuru maBBe gootel*), an expression referring to full siblingship instead of a mere paternal tie.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

illustrate these processes by taking a closer look at two camps located on opposite sides of Tibati.

Camp(s) of Jibirilla and His Sons

The first case is a composition of two related camps. The first of these was led by an elderly pastoralist named Jibirilla and the second by his eldest son Maamuda. Jibirilla lived with his two wives and seven of their sons, four of whom had their own families. The second camp had been set up some years earlier when Maamuda and three of his full brothers with their families moved five kilometres' from the father, as the number of the cattle had become too big to keep around one single camp.

Together the two camps form a textbook example of a virilocal residence pattern in a patrilineal society. It should be emphasised, however, that the patterns described was based on observation at a certain point in time. In earlier phases of his migration history Jibirilla had lived with various companions ranging from his wife's relatives to his own maternal second cousins. After my earliest observation Maamuda's camp also received more or less permanent extra members. Among these was Maamuda's old kinsman who, due to his obvious senility, did not get on with his own sons. Another was Maamuda's nephew from Tongo who came to stay with his maternal uncles in order to learn the Koran under the supervision of *mallum* Garba, Maamuda's younger brother. In addition, there was Tanko, Maamuda's second cousin, who had moved there already before my arrival, and to whom I shall return in the end of the chapter.

The virilocal residence pattern guided Jibirilla's sons' grouping in their transhumance camps during the dry season of 1995-1996. In the beginning of December, several weeks after the end of the rains, three of Jibirilla's sons moved with their cattle into a dry season camp located seven or eight kilometres southwest from the main camp. After some days, two other brothers followed them so that there were only two sons left to stay with Jibirilla. One month later another brother, who was living in Maamuda's camp, joined the five brothers, or actually four as Ari, the eldest son of Jibirilla and his second wife, had already left the place and moved to the camp of his father's classificatory maternal cousin, Jalabi. In the end of January three of the brothers left the dry season camp and moved momentarily back to their father, soon after to join Ari, who, in the meantime, had moved with Jalabi into a new dry season camp located some five kilometres east of Tibati. In the middle of February one of the two brothers, of those still staying in the first dry season camp, returned to Maamuda, while the other continued to the new dry season camp. Finally, in the middle of March, the brothers gradually started their return to their father, except for Ari, who decided to stay with

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness



Photograph 8: Paternal half brothers visiting the Friday market of Tibati.

Jalabi.⁶

In a way, Ari's new camp resembled those tiny “satellite” camps – consisting of a single family or two kinsmen with their wives and children – which emerge during the dry season to be joined later by a larger kin group if the conditions in the area seem promising. On the other hand, Ari's gradual separation from the others during the dry season parallels Maamuda's earlier

⁶ For the sake of clarity I have restricted the above description to men's movement. As for women and children, they usually move into the dry season camps some days or weeks after the men. Sometimes the women can also return to the main camp earlier. For example, one of those three brothers who momentarily returned to Jibirilla's camp left his wife and children there to rejoin the others all alone, because the wife was weak after having delivered in the first dry season camp.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

move, and could also be seen as the initial phase of a future separation. Another question that remains open is whether Ari’s stay with Jalabi was only temporary or whether it finally led to a more permanent form of co-residence.

The strong patrilineal ties that guided Jibirilla’s and his sons’ residential arrangements were further reflected in their marriage preferences. Of the total of twenty-one marriages that were in force in the camps during my fieldwork,⁷ three represented the most respected form, that is, a marriage between patrilineal first cousins. Furthermore, there were four other first cousin marriages, two marriages between second cousins, and nine marriages consummated with more remote but still identifiable relatives. In twelve marriages the spouse was traced from the father’s side and in four from the mother’s side. In all twenty-one marriages – including those three in which no kin tie could be traced – the spouses were chosen from Jibirilla’s and his sons’ own lineage.

Camp of Saani and Nayeeri

The camp of Saani was located near the road to Bantai, about fifteen kilometres north of Tibati. Originally the camp was named after Buhaari, who had married Saani’s mother, Yaanayel, after the death of Saani’s father. Buhaari had arrived in the area in 1984, to be joined eight years later by the families of his brother-in-law Nayeeri and sister-in-law Ganye. Afterwards Buhaari continued with his first wife northwards to Doualayel, while his second wife Yaanayel as well as his in-laws, Nayeeri and Ganye, from his first marriage stayed in the camp by the road to Bantai.

At the time of my fieldwork, Yaanayel, Nayeeri and Ganye were still living in the camp that Buhaari had left behind earlier. Thus, although the place was now generally known – according to Yaanayel’s elder son Saani – as “Alhaji Saani’s camp”, it included two kinds of people, those “of Saani” and those “of Nayeeri”. On Saani’s side of the camp there were Yaanayel, Saani with his two wives, their sons, daughters-in-law and unmarried daughters, as well as Saani’s younger brother, Umaru, with his two wives, all of their children and two daughters-in-law. In addition, there was Saani’s second wife’s son, Gaagare, from her earlier marriage, as well as his wife and their child. The people living on Nayeeri’s side included Nayeeri, his wife, his son Idi from his earlier marriage, and Idi’s wife, as well as Nayeeri’s sister Ganye, Ganye’s ex-daughter-in-law Biiba, Biiba’s son Aliu – who was also Ganye’s grandson – with his two wives, and finally Biiba’s two unmarried daughters from her second marriage.

⁷ These include Jibirilla’s two marriages, his sons’ eighteen marriages, and the marriage of his oldest grandson.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

What we observe here is a camp with two distinct sections which do not initially relate to each other through any concrete patrilineal connection. As one neighbour put it, Saani and Nayeeri were not related through *bandiigu* (kinship), but only through *lenyol*. Thus, although both men happened to belong to the same lineage – called *Jallanko'en* – the practical reason for their co-residence was that, in Saani's childhood, his mother married Nayeeri's sister's husband. As regards the internal structure of the two sections, however, they were both built upon a close patrilineal tie. On Saani's side the co-residence was based on the siblingship between two full brothers, Saani and Umaru, who withdrew from their stepfather's migration at a certain point in time. During my fieldwork their fraternal tie was further reinforced, when Saani married off his daughter to Umaru's son. On Nayeeri's side the patrilineal link was less apparent but still existed between Nayeeri and the dead husband of his sister Ganye, as these men were patrilineal first cousins. Thus Nayeeri was also patrilineally related to his sister's children and grandchildren, the eldest living male of whom was Ganye's grandson Aliu.

Yet, even these two patrilineally built entities had their internal inconsistencies regarding both those people who, according to patrilocal logic, should be there and those who should not. Perhaps the most noticeable in the first category was the absence of Nayeeri's adult son who had moved away with his mother after Nayeeri's second wife had accused the latter of witchcraft. As to the second, there were two of Biiba's daughters from her second marriage, though it is highly possible that they will return to their father after they grow older. There was also Gaagare, the son of Saani's second wife from her first marriage, who had followed his mother's new marriage because he was on bad terms with his own father. Finally, there was Raamatu, the child of Saani's ex-wife Hurey, whom Saani's mother, Yaanayel, had adopted.

Of the “foreign” elements, Gaagare and Raamatu were, however, quickly transformed into relatives through marriage. The former married Ganye's granddaughter, and the latter became the wife of Ganye's grandson Aliu. Thus, the two marriages, besides providing a more recognised status in the camp for Gaagare and Raamatu themselves, also strengthened the bond between the two sections. In the latter respect, the marriages in question actually continued a process that had already started in the previous generation. The key person was Saani himself, as both of his present wives were chosen from Nayeeri's relatives, the first wife being Nayeeri's sister's – and at the same time Saani's own stepfather's – daughter, and the second the daughter of Ganye. The same tendency was continued in the next generation when Saani's son from his first marriage married the daughter of Saani's second wife, the granddaughter of Ganye.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

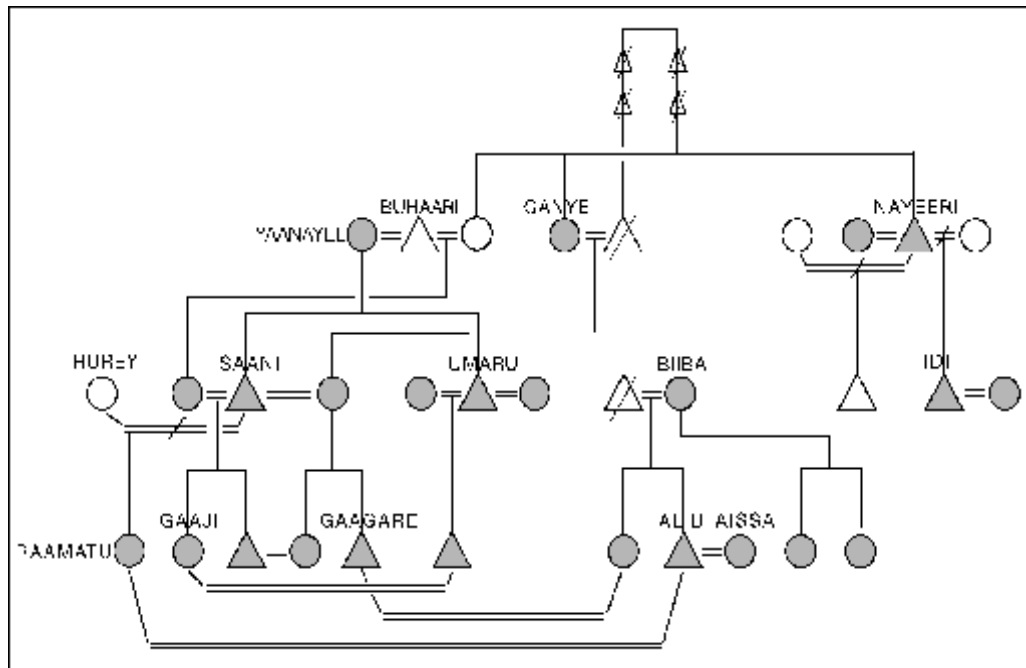


Figure 1: Kinship relations between Saani's and Nayeeri's people. The shaded figures represent persons who were living in the camp at the time of the research.

The continual social bonding in Saani's camp brings to mind Dupire's earlier observation about how agnatic kinship and neighbourhood interrelate. According to her apt statement, the Fulbe become agnates by

being neighbours and marrying each other, but they also become neighbours and spouses because of being agnates (Dupire 1970:304). In Saani's camp this pendular process was reflected in the diversity of marriages. Besides one patrilineal first cousin marriage, there were two marriages between the members of Saani's and Nayeeri's patrilineal kin, which, in the long run, will produce patrilineal ties between these kin groups. The pattern differs clearly from that in the camp of Jibirilla where most of the female members were recruited into one single patrisegment from relatively close paternal or maternal kin. A further difference between the camps is that, while in Jibirilla's camp spouses were chosen exclusively from Jibirilla's own lineage, in Saani's camp there was a marked tendency to marry people outside the lineage of Saani and Nayeeri. Indeed, in only three of the thirteen marriages in the latter camp were both spouses *Jallanko'en*. What is equally striking is that the ten spouses chosen from "outside" belonged to eight separate lineages.

As for the possible motivation for marrying "strangers", I am not able to point out any single reason for its popularity in Saani's camp. Having examined the marriage cases one by one, there are diverse reasons related to individual life histories. First of all, not all of the intralineage marriages

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

included spouses from outside the camp. Instead, three of them took place between Saani’s and Nayeeri’s sections, because Gaagare and Raamatu – as well as Gaagare’s sister who was married to one of Saani’s sons – were not of *Jallankeejo* origin, but belonged to *Ba’en*, which was actually the lineage of Saani’s mother, Yaanayel. It should also be stressed that the present analysis has focused on marriages at a certain point in time, and thus information on earlier marriages is lacking. Indeed, if the divorced spouses were included, the overall picture of marriage preferences in the camp would be different. For example, Umaru’s first wife had been *Jallankeejo*, but, after her departure, Umaru’s lineagemen had refused to give him more of their daughters, accusing him of indecent behaviour. At least one – and presumably more – of the five women who had left Nayeeri earlier were from his lineage.

Finally, in every lineage there are those who stick to their youthful fancies by marrying their sweethearts from the neighbourhood at the expense of a respected status in a cousin marriage. In Saani’s camp one such person was Aliu’s second wife, Aissa, who had ignored all of the marriage proposals from her *NaatirBe* kinsmen – as well as her parents’ threat of buying her nothing for a marriage with a non-kin groom – to follow Aliu into a camp of strangers. Another was Saani’s daughter Gaaji, who had refused to consummate the marriage with her paternal uncle, Umaru’s son. Her self-willed behaviour had, however, unthought-of consequences, when her angry parents declined to cancel the marriage. As another young wife in the camp explained to me, Gaaji was thus doomed to “practice her bordello” (*waDa bordel maako*) with neighbouring boys, while a further marriage was denied her.

MATERNAL CONNECTIONS

Above I described two camp compositions: one in which the membership was largely based on close patrilineal ties, and another in which other factors considerably shaped the camp structure. The data reveals also that a strong emphasis on agnatic relations correlates with the increased importance of maternal kin. The correlation is slightly indicated in the choice of marriage partners: while in Jibirilla’s camp four spouses were primarily counted from the mother’s side, in Saani’s camp there were only two such spouses, those of Gaagare and Saani and his first wife’s son.⁸

⁸ Here, as elsewhere, the marriages are classified from the husband’s point of view, and so those cross-cousin marriages where a female camp member is married to her mother’s brother’s son are not included in the above figures.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

Factually, the difference between these two figures was much more notable. This is due to the Fulbe endogamous marriage system, which supports marriages between patrilateral parallel cousins. As Bourdieu (1977:30, 44) has noted, in a system of this kind, a special situation often occurs in which the distinction between patri- and matrilineage is blurred and the child can be attached to the same lineage both through his/her father and mother. In a similar way, the kin relation with a spouse chosen from one’s own lineage can be frequently traced from both sides. The phenomenon can be easily observed in Jibirilla’s family. As Jibirilla’s first wife was his FBD, all of their children who were married to Jibirilla’s patrilineal relatives were, at the same time, married to the relatives of their mother. Taking all these maternal connections into account, the marriages with maternal relatives in Jibirilla’s camp amount to ten.

Besides the paradox created by close endogamous marriages, there are also other processes that reinforce the meaning of maternal ties in camp life. There are, for example, always those who, because of migration or in the case of the parents’ divorce, prefer to follow their mother, as Saani’s stepson Gaagare did. Or, there are mothers who stay with their sons instead of following a husband, a choice made earlier by Saani’s mother Yaanayel.⁹ The special relatedness of maternal kin which these preferences exemplify is not, however, limited to the mother-child relation, nor even to siblingship. It concerns various other maternal relatives as well, and can be discovered in places where one would least expect to find the necessary conditions for maternal sentiments, as the following two examples indicate.

When I made my first visits to Saani’s camp, I also met his two wives, Aisatu and Haliima. At that time I had no idea of the complicated kin relations within the camp. I knew however that both of these women were married to Saani, and that Saani had seven children with Aisatu, but none with Haliima, who had already passed the child bearing age, having had three children with an ex-husband. Despite my shallow knowledge of the two women, I immediately paid attention to their way of doing things and visiting places together – quite exceptional between co-wives. Besides, Haliima insisted that I should take a photo of her, Aisatu, and the baby of the latter. She also tried to trick me several times by saying that the baby was hers. In the beginning I thought that the relation between the co-wives was so relaxed because Haliima did not have any children with Saani and was thus not

⁹ It is illustrating that Gaagare, when I asked him about his lineage, mentioned the name of the lineage of his mother. I never asked the same question from Yaanayel’s sons Saani and Umaru, but many of their neighbours connected them with Yaanayel’s lineage.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

competing for cattle for her children with Aisatu. However that was not however enough to explain why their friendship seemed to be so intimate, the overall conditions making this quite senseless for co-wives. Later on, after having grappled with the camp members’ genealogy and their quite varied marital history, I perceived that Aisatu was the daughter of Haliima’s mother’s sister. Thus the women were matrilateral first cousins.

In another camp an unexpected closeness was colouring the relationship between a wife and her mother-in-law, Rekia and Amina. From the beginning I noticed a kind of mother-daughter feeling in their mutual communication. Photography was revealing again because Rekia did not pay the slightest attention to the fact that I took pictures when she was braiding the hair of her mother-in-law. This was in contrast with my general experience of mutual hair braiding between close friends – let alone the shame of taking pictures with one’s in-laws. Finally I found out that Rekia was married – against all cultural options – to her mother’s sister’s son. Thus her close mother-in-law turned out to be her maternal aunt.

In pastoral Fulbe society where the patrilineage represents the public, “articulated” sphere of social life, maternal ties easily remain more hidden. Nevertheless, they still have an important role in manoeuvring everyday camp life, as was shown by the cases above. The women’s matritie overrode marital “correctness” by ignoring the presumed conduct toward in-laws and co-wives. Their mutual affection brought out the fact that one can always expect relatively unreserved conduct when dealing with maternal relatives, especially with mother’s sister and her children, who embody the matritie in sharp contrast to the more restrained relations with patrilineal relatives.

In a less apparent but still significant way, also the maternal kin living at a distance has a place in people’s lives. As regards the most important maternal relatives, that is, one’s mother and full siblings, it is most often the pastoralist woman who, due to the virilocal residence pattern, is compelled to leave her closest kin at the time of her marriage. The long distance from parents does not, however, prevent her from feeling strong relatedness to her natal kin. The bond is always there, and becomes stronger every time the woman pays a visit to or stays longer with her own kin.¹⁰ It is during these visits that a woman can share her joys and grieve for her sorrows, as did Asawe, my neighbour’s niece, who had come all the way from Nigeria to mourn her grandmother’s death that had taken place almost a year earlier in my neighbour’s camp. “She came to cry”, people explained.

¹⁰ Among the cattle Fulbe, the woman remains a member of her father’s lineage all her life, no matter if she shares a kin tie with her husband or not.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

Relatedness to one’s natal family is also a source of great pride, and women talked to me willingly about the gifts that they had received when visiting their own kin.¹¹ A specific value as “maternal supporters” is given to full brothers, which is partly due to the residence pattern whereby the mother and the father usually spend their old age – together or separately – with one of their younger sons. Thus, when the parents have died it is the camp(s) of the brothers that replace the natal “home” for women. Doole, an unhappily married woman far away from her kin, was constantly dreaming of the abundance of things that were waiting for her if one day she managed to go back to her brothers. For her – as for many other cattle Fulbe women – the natal home and its living memory in the form of brothers had become an image of a kind of Eldorado onto which one can project one’s hopes and yearnings in days of distress.

Though spatially dispersed sisters provide minor material support for a woman as compared to her brothers, both of them are equally important in an emotional sense. The fact is illustrated by the following quotation from Jemma, an elderly woman who told me about a journey that she had made some years earlier to Nigeria. After a lot of inquiries, sitting in taxis, and walking in the bush, Jemma had finally found the camp where her sister’s family lived at that time:

– – I went to Duusenkuura, I found them there. I found our big sister. She sat [and] churned. [She] shook the milk, [she] shook the milk, till [she] saw me coming in the distance. I came, she said: “You came.” So, I came from far away, today I came, after ten years. She sat down, she brought a mat, [and] put it down for me to sit. Then she went away from the place she laid the mat, she walked, she went around. She went around, and I stood watching her, she went around, she walked, she did not put [the mat] down. She looked here, [the place] did not suit her [for putting the mat down]. She went away, she looked, it did not suit her. She went like that when I took hold of her, I said: “Stand still! Bring one mat, let us open it out. Come, sit down.” – – I took the mat, I opened it out, then I sat down, she came and sat down. She was about to unwrap [another mat] that she held [in her hand], but she did not put it down. She went ahead, she did not put it down there, she went ahead, she did not put it down. Then I took hold of her. I said to her: “Bring, bring it here, look, here is shady”. I placed [the mat] down, we sat down. – – We sat there,

¹¹ The women were also proud to show the reserves of things they were storing for the eventual visit of their own daughters. It is worth noticing that the overt expressions of relatedness with maternal kin form a sharp contrast to the shame connected to dependency on one’s spouse or in-laws. For example, the cattle Fulbe women receive gifts like clothes also from their husbands, but a feeling of embarrassment prevents them from boasting about these gifts in public.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness



Photograph 9: Joy of *sakiikeeku*. A pastoralist girl (right) carrying the baby of her older sister (left) during a visit.

we spent the day there. I spent the day with her. I spent four nights [with her]. --

The sudden emotion which Jemma’s sister acted out in her restless rushing around the camp yard when Jemma unexpectedly appeared speaks nicely of the deep affection between daughters of the same mother. It should, however, be specified that the sister whom Jemma met after ten years was her full sister, that is, both maternally and paternally related to her. The same holds true with the earlier example: the brothers whom Doole so sorely missed were both her mother’s and her father’s sons. Even so, the strong emotional relatedness that structures the interaction between full siblings (*sakiraaBe*) makes their mutual bond, as well as the overall attitude towards one’s natal family, more “maternal” than “paternal” in practice.¹²

In people’s talk, however, emphasis on the maternal bond does not invoke positive associations only. For example, when something questionable takes place when a woman visits her natal kin, the episode is often referred to as

¹² The meaning of full siblingship (*sakiikeeku*) as a central relation for representing the maternal tie is emphasised in practice because, due to the virilocal residence pattern, the children who share the same mother but have separate fathers usually do not spend their childhood together.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

something that happened “when she went to see her mother”. Such was the case when I was told how Saani and Haliima became a couple. They met while Haliima was “visiting her own mother” who lived in Saani’s camp, and, gradually, these visits led to Haliima’s decision to abandon her first husband and marry Saani. Another story of a dramatically ended sojourn with one’s mother was told about Saani’s ex-wife Hurey. Once, after paying a visit to her mother, Hurey turned out to be pregnant. Later she gave birth to a baby girl named Raamatu. Saani, when realising that the child was not his, divorced Hurey who, however, refused to take her daughter with her. Finally, Saani’s mother Yaanayel adopted the girl, who thus grew up in Saani’s camp where she also stayed after being married.

For Saani, Raamatu’s presence had long served as a reminder of the undesirable effects that a woman’s visit to her mother can bring about. During my fieldwork I observed various situations in which these effects were anxiously anticipated, for example when an old couple wondered if their daughter-in-law will ever return from a visit to her mother after leaving their son in anger because of a new co-wife. I also followed up cases in which there was good reason for distant in-laws to be worried, such as when young women during their *boofiiDo* period left their firstborn child in the care of their mother and hurried to meet a lover at the dance.

Apart from creating momentary trouble in single camps the above cases can be seen as reflecting a larger structural tension that exists between patrilineal and matrilineal kinship among the cattle Fulbe. Indeed, the latter represents an ever-present threat for the patrilineage, the unity of which is symbolised by cattle and culturally represented by men who try to keep the cattle within the agnatic kin lines. The threat coming from the maternal ties mediated by milk is not, however, caused only by wilful women. A concrete manifestation of how men’s decisions can work against patrilineal concord is the way the camps are often divided, that is, through the separation of half-brothers (Dupire 1962:281). The pattern was disclosed in the segmentation process which was going on among Jibirilla’s sons during my fieldwork. It was also quite clear how the process would continue in the future to people living in Jibirilla’s neighbourhood. They assured me that the perpetual discord between Jibirilla’s wives will lead to a situation in which the sons, after their father’s death, will break up in two segments of full brothers, each segment gathered around their mother and being respectively led by the eldest sons in the two sibling groups.

DENDIRAAGU: RELATING THROUGH PLAY

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

A further kin relation in which both paternal and maternal ties are taken into account is *denDiraagu*, or *denDiigu*, the relationship between cross-cousins. Here, as in the case of patrilineal parallel cousins, the relation permeates different levels of social structure, extending from the factual kinship between the maternal uncle’s (*kaawu*) and paternal aunt’s (*goggo*) children to whole lineages that are considered as being related to each other through a cross-cousin relationship (*denDiigu lenyol*). What unites the different levels is that each of them can be understood as a joking relationship: in performing their relation, the given parties engage in “shameless” mutual joke cracking, a quality which is in clear opposition to the restrained *pulaaku* behaviour. For example, there are pairs of kinsmen related through a factual *denDiigu* bond, as well as pairs of friends belonging to “cross-cousin lineages”, who, each time while meeting, end up making fun of each other. There are also groupings within a single lineage who consider themselves as cross-cousins, and whose mutual interaction can thus suddenly “heat up” in certain situations.

My first experience of a collective *denDiigu* performance goes back to Raabi’s *Bantal* ceremony discussed in chapter 6. As is usual for such dramas, the excitement increased unexpectedly after Raabi’s new wealth had been shown to the representatives of her patrilineage. While the women were still chatting on the ground, I noticed that one of the female guests called Dooya suddenly “stole” a calabash and a bucket from Raabi’s new wealth, informing the others that she will go home. What followed was a noisy confrontation between several persons.

In the middle of the tumult triggered off by Dooya’s move, two separate altercations could be discerned.¹³ The first was directly related to Dooya’s action. Dooya insisted that she could take the things because they belong to her husband Baago. It was Raabi’s paternal uncle Gooje who intervened by asking Baago if he has already chosen a *sadaaki* cow for his wife, as Gooje’s own people have provided the wife with a hut (represented by the calabash and the bucket in the joke). Baago answered that he has not done so. Gooje exclaimed how is it possible that someone is about to arrange *defol* for his wife, although the *sadaaki* has not yet been named. He insisted that Baago should bring a heifer and tie it to a tree before being permitted to take the things from the camp. The dispute continued back and forth: the men arguing with each other, Baago promising to bring the heifer after sunset, Dooya taking and bringing back the containers by turns, and so forth. Finally, Deelu, Raabi’s sister-in-law who had come for a visit from Nigeria, took the scene by claiming that, in Nigeria, people do not give a heifer as *sadaaki*, but a bull. Her

¹³ The following description, based on my own observation on the spot, is completed with information received from other guests some days after the event.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

comment caused a lot of amusement after which an old woman named Juuma blamed Deelu of having caused the whole mess. Juuma suggested that someone should look for a rope and tie Deelu to a tree to be released only after the heifer has been brought to the spot.

The other altercation circled around Raabi herself. It was started by Deelu’s younger sister Daaso, who loudly expressed her joy about the new co-wife. Daaso revealed that she will buy a blanket in which she can wrap up Rewre, the old head wife, and throw her out in order to join the young Raabi. Juuma broke in by wondering why Daaso would go in for such foolishness and divorce Rewre whose marriage she had earlier supported with gifts. Daaso denied that she had given any gifts to Rewre. Juuma emphasised that if one does not keep the head wife, one cannot keep the second wife either, and so, if Daaso wants to throw one wife out, it is better to get rid of both at the same time, so that she can stay all alone. After Juuma’s long monologue Daaso regretted her plans and gave up.

Finally Rewre, who had been listening to the two women’s heated conversation, announced that her husband has divorced her and married another woman. She added that she will not return home anymore, but will stay just where she is. Again Juuma took part in the play by reminding that Rewre had already accepted Raabi as her new co-wife after living with her and seeing her character. Then she asked Rewre whether she had married Raabi only to divorce her later. Rewre understood Juuma’s point, admitted to being ashamed, and said that she regretted her behaviour.

In the noisy display different levels of the *denDiigu* relation were acted out. The crude words with which Daaso made fun of the “old head wife” were actually addressed to her cross-cousin, as Daaso’s mother was Rewre’s father’s sister. Dooya’s gabble was pointed at the whole lineage: belonging to the *Gorkanko’en* lineage, Dooya was the only person standing for a distinct lineage from the rest of the people who were all *Tuubanko’en* – the two respective lineages being considered as cross-cousins. Most of the joke cracking took place, however, between representatives of three distinct *Tuubanko’en* segments, the mutual cross-cousin relation of which people traced back to two generations. The first of these segments were represented by Gooje, Juuma and Raabi, the second by Baago, and the third by Daaso, Deelu and Rewre.

FRAMING RELATIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The *denDiigu* performance in Raabi’s *Bantal* ceremony revealed an extemporaneous way of picking up certain cross-cousin relationships to be played with at an opportune moment. What enables such an unpredictable

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

choice in the first place is the wide range of relatives usually present in the cattle Fulbe celebrations. Furthermore, due to people’s overall preference for endogamous marriages, a particular relation that is brought out in a certain situation is often only one among those kin ties that two persons can trace between each other. Thus the performativity of the cattle Fulbe kinship is not restricted to cross-cousin relations only, but embraces other relations as well, when people pick one among paternal, maternal and affinal frames and attune their behaviour accordingly. To employ Sahlins’ wording, on the diverse occasions in which the cattle Fulbe bring out their kin ties, it is “the act [that creates] an appropriate relation” (1985:xi), though the range of relations to be performatively created here still places limits on performing, which is thus ultimately prescribed by rather “compelling rules” (ibid., 28).

The meaning of multiple relatedness, which is so typical for the cattle Fulbe kinship system, cannot, of course, be shrunk into people’s calculating choices between kin ties in different situations. On the contrary, the overall idea of taking part in a web of relations is of great value, and does not always need any further specification. The idea is epitomised in the term *bandiigu* (kinship), and often, when I asked people to define what unites (*hawtugo*) person A with person B, they answered with the simple phrase “*Be bandira*”, meaning “they are related to one another”, or “they are kin”.

Another standard way of answering my kinship questions followed the model “A calls B with the term x”, such as in the phrase “*o ewna mo goggo*” (“he/she calls her paternal aunt”). Sometimes an answer of this kind gave direct knowledge of a blood relation, for example, the above phrase can refer to an actual kin tie between a man and his father’s sister. Other times, however, a given term exemplified a classificatory use of kinship terminology, such as when the specific kin tie, from which the use of the term derives, was formed in an earlier generation. There are also cases in which the given term has nothing to do with consanguinity. Among the cattle Fulbe, a good example of this is the way in which people often call their in-laws – as well as the in-laws of their close relatives – with the same terms as their own blood relatives. In such cases the above phrase (“*o ewna mo goggo*”) would not refer to one’s paternal aunt, but to the wife of one’s paternal uncle, or, alternatively, to the wife of one’s father, that is, one’s co-mother.¹⁴

It should be stressed that when the cattle Fulbe describe two persons’ mutual connection in the above way, they are not always aware of what the chosen kinship term in a given case precisely denotes. Instead, they base their definitions on the practical knowledge of how people, by naming and

¹⁴ In all of the the above mentioned cases the term *goggo* can be substituted with its synonym *yaagorgol*.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

perceiving each other through kinship terms, construct the web of their everyday relations. Often also, when people classify their own relations through kinship terminology, they adopt the term that another person – such as a husband or a parent – uses, and thus ignore the term that would better characterise their own personal bond with the person in question. In Jibirilla’s family, for example, his first wife, all of her sons and their wives called Faadimatu, the wife of Jibirilla’s paternal uncle, by the term *googo* (modification of *goggo*). To give another example, a young woman living nearby, Suumo, whose father’s mother was distantly related to both Jibirilla and his first wife, called all of Jibirilla’s sons with the term *bappa*, that is, paternal uncle. Suumo used this specific term because she was related to them on her father’s side, even if through the father’s maternal relatives. But it is equally possible that, by calling Jibirilla’s sons *bappa’en* (pl. of *bappa*), Suumo was simply following the way in which Jibirilla’s grandchildren – some of whom were Suumo’s age-mates – addressed their paternal uncles.

Marquerite Dupire (1962) has argued that if two Fulbe are related to one another on both the father’s and mother’s side they most likely disclose the patrilineal connection. Based on the foregoing, the view sounds rather simplistic. Instead, there seems to be a diversity of tracks on different levels through which people variably define their mutual connections. In fact, my informants, when asked to specify a close consanguineal relation, did not prioritise the paternal link, but usually mentioned the closest kin tie, whether paternal or maternal.

The increased preference put on close kin relations is equally reflected in the marriage preferences. In Adamaoua, the marriage between patrilineal parallel cousins (*BiBBe baaba’en* or *BiBBe bappa’en*) has maintained its position as a highly valued marriage form, and the same holds true for the marriage between cross-cousins. Perhaps the most conspicuous change from earlier times is that nowadays marriages are also arranged between sisters’ children (*BiBBe yaaye’en*), a choice which was traditionally regarded as comparable to incest (Dupire 1970:196), and which many pastoralists in Adamaoua still oppose. One reason for the gradual fading of the taboo can be found in people’s conversion to Islam which, as a moral code, does not forbid the MZD marriage,¹⁵ though I never heard any explanation related to religion. Instead, those people who did approve these marriages always pleaded *enDam* –

¹⁵ The point has been brought out by Dupire (1962:271), who argues that the avoidance of MZD marriages is characteristic of the nomadic Fulbe, while the more sedentary Fulbe – being more devoted to Islam – ignore the prohibition.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

affection between relatives – as a reason for favouring them.¹⁶ But whatever reasons there might be for adopting a traditionally disdained marriage form, a great part of the cattle Fulbe in contemporary Adamaoua seem to favour all sorts of first cousin marriages over marriages between more distant cousins.¹⁷

THE LIMITS OF RESPECTABLE RELATEDNESS

In spite of the fact that the cattle Fulbe share the camp with brothers and marry their close relatives, kinship does not count for all social relations. As we have seen, kinship is not always the cause but often the effect, and people also have close contacts with persons who never become their relatives. In articulating such “non-kin” relatedness different idioms can be used. For example, one old man employed the idea of *pulaaku* which – as a way of living together without conflict – can unite people from different lineages, finally turning them into *deerDiraaBe* (siblings). Another man spoke of *enDam*, thus extending the term that most often refers to affection between close relatives to cover other devoted relationships as well. Still one woman explained that her family had at some point lived with some non-relatives simply because of “being happy” (*nana belDum*) with them.

The examples extend the present context of relatedness from “our lineage” (*lenyol amin*) to “our people” (*himBe amin*). In fact, there is no principle which forbids cattle Fulbe in different lineages from socialising and even marrying one another, with the exception of *WoDaaBe*, with whom many people from other lineages want to keep a certain distance. To a certain extent the same is true about mingling with people from other groups, the *soobaaku* relations with the Gbaya and the exchange of services with the Hausa being good examples of inter-ethnic bonding. A decisive difference is that the cattle Fulbe would never refer to the two latter as *himBe amin*, a category they reserve exclusively for speaking of themselves.

To understand the specific relatedness attached to *himBe amin*, the discussion should not be restricted to discursive categorisation. Drawing

¹⁶ Reasoning of this kind reveals the ambivalence of the term *enDam*. On the one hand, the term refers to mother’s milk and maternal ties that the MZD marriages represent. On the other hand, it refers to affection between kinspeople in general and thus embraces both maternal and paternal relatives.

¹⁷ This tendency differs from the preference lists presented in earlier studies (Dupire 1962; Stenning 1959) where the most valued is the marriage between first patrilineal parallel cousins, then follows the marriages between more distant patrilineal parallel cousins, and finally the cross-cousin marriages of a different sort. For comparative cases of the Fulbe marriage preferences, see de Bruijn and van Dijk (1995:396 n16).

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

cultural boundaries by including or excluding people from the given category is always connected with people’s daily experience. In the everyday world of the cattle Fulbe, it is the pragmatics of living in the bush that shapes their relatedness into a specific spatial experience by opposing it to the village life.

According to my informants’ apt definition, a “real” Pullo is the one who “does not sleep in the village” (*o waalataa haa wuro*) but returns daily to the bush to his/her kin and cattle. Indeed, for many cattle Fulbe – as well as for many village people – the stories of those pastoralists who never returned but vanished into villages and towns appear as a realisation of Koranic prophecies, foretelling that the world is drawing to an end. What this prediction suggests is that the movement of the cattle Fulbe from bush to village conflicts with the very premises upon which the social universe is constructed. The same idea was reflected in the pastoralists’ reactions when the talk touched upon those relatives who had left the bush behind. For example, one woman, when asked to name all her children, totally “forgot” to mention one of her sons who had vanished to Yaounde some years ago. But even in the case of those who were ready to tell, the stories of urbanised kinsmen were somehow hazy, as if people did not really want to know the details of how their relatives actually manage in the village.

One interesting feature in people’s narratives of those who have left is the way in which these narratives are gendered. The stories I heard about men were of two sorts. In the first a young man vanishes suddenly, most probably into a big town, after which the abandoned relatives never hear of him again. In the second, a man, having already fixed his position in the pastoral community, leaves his cattle as well as most of his relatives in the bush, and moves with some close family members into a nearby village. Stories about women seldom deal with those women who moved to a village with their cattle Fulbe husbands. Instead, the “standard” narrative is about a pastoralist woman who decided to move away from the bush all alone, to be married to a villager.¹⁸ A repeated motive in this particular narrative is that the critical decision made by the woman ensued from her milk-selling trips, during which she originally met her future husband who was often her client.

Neither the men nor the women of these stories received much sympathy from the narrators. The mere idea of a young man who totally abandons his past – as well as future – life with relatives in the bush is bewildering, or even absurd, for most of the pastoralists. The older men, moving to a village with some close relatives, receive more understanding, as, in their case, the people

¹⁸ It should be added that in people’s narratives no literal difference is made between moving to a village and moving to a town, as both spaces are called with the same term, *wuro*. Concomitantly, moving to both is expressed by the same idiom, *naastugo wuro*.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

staying in the bush are not ignored completely. Instead, the leaver’s interests are now split between village and bush, and so he seeks to maintain his contacts with his bush-dwelling relatives, to whom he also often entrusts his herd(s). Seen from the pastoralist point of view, however, the fact remains that these men, by taking a fancy to a more urban way of life, take sides with the village, and thus discard the traditions of their own people.¹⁹ The same holds true for the pastoralist women who are ready to give up their “milk-centred” life in order to follow a marriage with a stranger in the village.

What is common to the persons in the given narratives is that all of them have somehow denied the forms of relatedness distinctive to their own people. This denial is represented by two further separations. First, a man who moves into a village loses his close relation with his herd which, in the long run, will destroy the animals. As one old pastoralist put it, the cattle do not accept their owner’s departure: if the animals are looked after by another person in the bush their number gradually decreases, or, if they are taken near the village, they run away. Second, a person’s move into the village is often followed by marriage with an outsider, and thus the value of the traditional union with a relative – or a non-relative cattle Pullo – is denied. This aspect is most critical for women, for whom the irrevocability of the move is emphasised. For example, in several stories the women wanted to return to the bush after a broken marriage in the village, but were rejected by their relatives.²⁰ For men the situation is somewhat different, and I never heard a story of a man who faced such a tragic rejection. Nevertheless, it is quite common that a man, after having settled down in a village, seeks additional wives from among his new neighbours, an act which can also have dubious consequences. For example, if there are older wives who still live in the bush, their own and their children’s future can be threatened as the husband is forced to sell more and more cattle in order to meet the expenses of village life. Some of these men are also overtly mocked because of failing to see the insolence of their urban wives who devour their wealth to the very last cow.

¹⁹ Nowadays many of the *arDo’en*, the traditional leaders of the cattle Fulbe, lead a similar kind of double life by having both a camp in the bush and a compound in the village. During my fieldwork I heard many pastoralists making fun of these *arDo’en* who do nothing but imitate the villagers’ life style. Some also argued that nowadays it is better to follow the local *laamiiDo* instead of an *arDo*, because the urbanised *arDo’en* have given up advocating for their own people, and the *laamiiDo* has the power anyway.

²⁰ In the stories that people told me of cattle Fulbe women’s inter-ethnic marriages, most often the women were married to Hausa men. One central reason that my informants gave for the break up of these marriages was the pastoralist women’s reluctance to calm down and give up wandering, as is expected from Muslim women living in the village.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

But in spite of the allure of village life, its pull can also be resisted. Such was the choice of Tanko, who was the son of Jibirilla’s cousin as well as the nephew of Jibirilla’s first wife, and who had arrived in Tibati some months before I started my fieldwork. Tanko’s father lived in the Central African Republic, in a village somewhere near the town of Buar where he had moved from the surrounding bush about ten years earlier. The father had not, however, taken this particular son to the village, but left him in the care of his grandmother in the bush. There Tanko started to herd his father’s cattle under the supervision of his paternal uncles. But due to the father’s eagerness to sell off the animals, their number started to diminish considerably. Thus, one day, one of Tanko’s uncles asked him to join his father in the village, as his herding skills were not needed anymore. Tanko got angry at the mere idea, and decided to accompany a visiting kinsman who was about to start his long way back home to Tibati. There he settled in the camp of Jibirilla’s eldest son Maamuda, whose cattle he started to herd. The new start was a success, and so, by the end of my fieldwork, the young man had already managed to acquire a tiny herd through his herding post.²¹ Moreover, things had proceeded to the point that Maamuda was planning to travel to CAR in order to bring Tanko a wife from among the daughters of Tanko’s uncles.

Tanko’s phases represented a kind of hero story for people in Jibirilla’s neighbourhood. Indeed, the young man, when refusing to join his own father in the village, chose something that is ultimately much more valuable in the pastoralists’ eyes than single relations. To use a local idiom, by following the bush, he followed all the things represented by the bush: the cattle, a cousin marriage, and – through these – the whole pastoral community.

Tanko’s story is captivating also in that it illuminates the basic Fulbe dilemma of autonomy and relatedness on its different levels. On the one hand, there is the young man’s adult autonomy that gradually appears as he manages to construct a herd of his own, and then to plant seeds of a prospective camp and a family by getting married. Here the process of social maturation becomes even more emphasised as it involves the critical decision to not follow one’s father’s way (*laawol baaba*). On the other hand, Tanko’s individual decision intersects with a more collective issue as, through the rejection of the village, it aligns him with the ideal of an autonomous pastoral group. As such, his choice does not, of course, remove the fact that a big part of the collective autonomy of his people is illusory; the pastoral group will always be enclosed by – as well as dependent on – the surrounding sedentary

²¹ In Adamaoua, a herder is usually paid one two-year old bull, worth ca 50,000 CFA francs, for half a year’s herding. The herd that Tanko managed to build up so quickly included animals that Maamuda paid him as a salary and animals that Maamuda and other relatives donated to him.

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

society. Nevertheless, it discloses the critical limits within which this unavoidable dependency can be culturally handled. One final story – a true counter example – will further illustrate these limits.

Near my field site in Adamaoua there was a local bible school supported by the Lutheran mission, targeted especially to pastoral Fulbe. Some young men who had left their camps in order to join the school became the object of numerous discussions. Some pastoralists, refusing to give their daughters as wives to these students, expressed their disapproval of their kinsmen’s dependency on white people by saying “*Be fotaay wuurnugo bee hoore maBBe*” – “they can’t feed themselves with their own heads.” By pointing at the fact that the men had abandoned the bush life with the cattle and relatives to follow missionaries, and that they were not ashamed of depending publicly on the latter for eating, the phrase talked of an autonomy – as well as respectable relatedness – lost in all conceivable ways.

FROM DIFFERENCE TO UNITY

Perhaps more than through any other concept, it is through the concept of *lenyol* that the cattle Fulbe deal with the basic human question of belonging and setting apart. What makes the given word particularly appropriate for this purpose is that it embodies difference at both the specific and general level. By referring to single pastoral camps as well as to the variety of peoples in Adamaoua – or even to the remote communities of the white people – it denotes entities of very different scale.

But, as important as making distinctions between various entities, the concept of *lenyol* embodies the idea of unity. To start from the more or less imagined level, it incorporates pastoralists from different regions and lineages into the cattle Fulbe community. To abandon and replace this community with the village life defies the very limits of the moral universe of the people. At the level of everyday discourse, however, the idea of unity is most frequently linked with *lenyol amin*, a concept which alludes to the pastoral Fulbe kin groups perceived as patrilineages. Yet, instead of a community united by patrilineal ties, what has emerged is a view of people related to each other through a myriad of bonds. The contradiction is that together all the different connections – whether paternal, maternal, or affinal – strengthen the ultimate meaning of patrilineage. To put it differently, the meaning of *lenyol amin* – “our (patri)lineage” – is an especially loaded representation as it denotes people related to each other in such a variety of ways. It is through the web of multiple relations that the patrilineal nuclei of a father and his

“Our People”: Perceiving and Performing Relatedness

children are attached to distinctive patrilineages with a name and a history, and the idea of a patrilineally related people is made a meaningful whole.

9 CONCLUSION

This study has examined how the pastoral Fulbe of Adamaoua perform their culture in diverse instances of social interaction. In doing so, it has followed the given people in both the ordinary and ritual spheres of their social life, from everyday greetings and market trips to myth-telling and the celebration of marriages. In the course of the inquiry, a cultural scheme has become apparent, through which the various spheres of activity are interrelated. This has been referred to as the scheme of “autonomy”. While making analytic use of the term autonomy, I admit that its careless application easily slips into sketchy Western arguments about people’s positions, based purely on their ability for autonomous decision-making in their own matters. However, if used more reflectively, the term can highlight local ways of perceiving personhood, as well as the wider social entity of the pastoral group, with its borders, its presentation in space and its evolution through time.

In pastoral Fulbe culture the ideas related to autonomy are central because persons are valued through their ability to conceal their shameful dependency on bodily needs as well as on other persons. Both of these abilities are an integral part of *pulaaku*, the public behaviour code of the people. Analytically, the dependencies – or rather their invisibility, understood as autonomy – can be classified into two separate discourses. The first refers to bodily autonomy, or preferably “autonomy from the body”, as it is observed in the total control of bodily demands, which is an outcome of enculturation during childhood. The second, reproductive autonomy, is achieved gradually as men and women gain their adult autonomy through an increasing number of dependents, that is, through their own children.¹ Finally, in old age, people start to lose their hold on both of these as, gradually, their reproductive autonomy is replaced by that of their children, and their aging bodies refuse to function according to the expected code.

In Fulbe talk and comprehension, the two discourses of autonomy are, however, interlaced. Both are expressed by similar verbal idioms, both are connected to the progression of the life cycle and both speak about shame. From the life cycle perspective it is the bodily autonomy, manifested in the virtue of *semteende* and made possible by the emergence of *hakkiiilo* in

¹ I am indebted to Timo Kaartinen whose comments allowed me to clarify the analytic distinction between these two discourses.

Conclusion

childhood, that is the precondition for a successful adulthood and smooth relations with others in general. This means that, although in analytical terms reproductive autonomy can be seen to be achieved merely by having children, in pastoral Fulbe thought the attainment – and maintenance – of adult independence is as much the result of constant social vigilance and re-performance of ideals in everyday interaction.

The preceding point alludes to the central paradox that pervades different spheres of pastoral Fulbe activity: the great emphasis that is put on such individual virtues as bodily self-mastery and restrained behaviour in the presence of others is ultimately a group ideal that enables social interaction. To put it differently, personal autonomy, which the reserved conduct is designed to communicate, can be seen as an ideal to be shared and supported as a fundamental constituent in the everyday sociality of the pastoral Fulbe. Indeed, people's constant attempts to adjust their actions to the given code and to support their fellows in the same pursuit is what performing the pastoral Fulbe culture is about, and the specific *pulaaku* performativity thus generated cannot be understood without considering its deeply social character.

Another challenge of *pulaaku* – especially from the point of view of performance studies – lies in the fact that it breaks the analytic distinction between “secular living” and “sacred living” (Turner 1987:25), between ordinary life with its routines and ritual or aesthetic performances. By playing *pulaaku*, people evoke an imaginative reality in everyday interactions: the liminal is not set apart in privileged spaces and times but performed in the middle of daily routines. Edward Schieffelin's (1996:61) discovery relates to the same issue when he describes a continuity between the performance as ritual and performativity as everyday manoeuvring, a continuity that can be observed between the “ritual” and “routine” spheres of the cattle Fulbe social life as well.

The fact that *pulaaku* refers to a state of being that is highly imaginary and pretended also raises questions about the sincerity of the performance. Indeed, it seems quite sensible to associate someone who presents himself in public places as a totally self-contained person – as an utterly impossible creature in the physical world – with Goffmans's “cynical” performer who “has no belief in his own act” (1959:18). The question is not, however, about faked appearances; the pastoral Fulbe would never expect anybody to take their *pulaaku* performance for granted, that is, as an actual state of affairs. The decisive point is that it is not *pulaaku* with its various ideals as such, but playing or performing *pulaaku* that forms an essential part of pastoral Fulbe reality, to the extent that social life without performing it regularly would be quite difficult to imagine.

Conclusion

The pivotal role that *pulaaku* performativity has in organising much of people's direct interaction into culturally identified experiences does not, however, mean that it permeates all of it. As has been shown in the preceding chapters, strict conformity to the *pulaaku* code is only one frame and is not applicable in every situation. Here an analytic tripartition can be made: first, there are those situations in which *pulaaku* can be considered as following a kind of internalised or embodied rule (cf. Taylor 1993); second, there are other situations in which room can be left for more improvised or ironic playing of *pulaaku* – or even anti-*pulaaku* for the sake of pure amusement or the pursuit of personal interests; and third, there are situations in which *pulaaku* behaviour is considered inappropriate. Another angle from which to look at the differently interpreted events is to assess how certain behaviour is anticipated – whether belonging to the “*pulaaku*” sphere or not – during these events. Thus, some frames governing the interaction (Goffman 1974:10-11) can be considered more or less prescriptive, such as certain kin relations which determine to a great extent the way in which two persons – as representatives of specific kin categories – behave in the presence of each other. Other frames, in turn, have more to do with situational alignments that people take up for themselves and others (Hanks 1990:194; Goffman 1981:128). While, in both cases, the framing can take place through similar communicative means there are big differences between events in regard to how much there is place for agency, that is, for people's active negotiation of the situation (cf. Bauman and Briggs 1990:69).

Without meaning to undervalue the question of human agency, the key issue here is not how freely people can challenge *pulaaku* ideals and thus reframe more and more spheres of social interaction. First, although in pastoral Fulbe society – as undoubtedly in many others – the frames for different types of behaviour are quite fixed, all people are given creative contexts in which they can somehow be distanced from, and thus reflect upon, those limitations that the cultural conventions set for them. Second, from the Fulbe point of view, it would be misleading perhaps to lay too much stress on the separation between restrained and unrestrained acting, spontaneous and enacted play, *pulaaku* and *denDiraagu* behaviour, and so on, as all of these modes of action form intrinsic elements in the same world of experience. In James' (1950) terms, they do form different realities but not competing ones, as people are accustomed to shift constantly between differently framed situations. And although the contrast between playing *pulaaku* and playing with *pulaaku* seems to be huge, the pastoral Fulbe have, after all, no difficulties in engaging in both with the same devotion.

As important as it is to see *pulaaku* as a public behaviour code that binds individuals into the pastoral community, it should also be viewed in the wider

Conclusion

sociocultural context. Indeed, it is in relation to the multiethnic society of contemporary Adamaoua that *pulaaku* obtains its relevance as the central representation of difference for the pastoral Fulbe vis-à-vis others. Appraised in that specific context, it is more appropriate to extend the meaning of *pulaaku* from a mere behaviour code to its broader local usage in which it encloses a wide range of social practices that differentiate the pastoralists from other local peoples. A central determinant here is the structural opposition between bush and village, as it is in contrast to the villagers' way of life that the specificity of the pastoral Fulbe practices can be identified and spatiality transformed into cultural difference.

Finally, when considering the meaning of *pulaaku* for the cultural differentiation between the pastoralists and the villagers, the relativity of the concept cannot be ignored. On the one hand, there is a constant discursive contest between the *pulaaku* of the pastoral Fulbe and the *pulaaku* of the village Fulbe, the former emphasising the importance of adhering to the strict behaviour code and pastoral traditions as its core elements. On the other hand, the increased integration into sedentary society has pushed the pastoralists to incorporate "village" elements into their conceptions of an honourable life, a process which has resulted in variations in the content of *pulaaku* as well. Undoubtedly the most significant discourse in this respect is Islam, and it would be difficult for the pastoral Fulbe in contemporary Adamaoua to imagine their life without the performance of central Islamic practices such as the daily prayers. It is also interesting to note that nowadays in the pastoralists' critical comments about villagers' morals, the lack of *pulaaku* is often replaced by the lack of the divine blessing of *barka*, a rhetorical shift through which the pastoral Fulbe extend their own moral superiority to cover religious piety as well.

But, although there is no principal inconsistency between the present-day comprehension of *pulaaku* – especially in relation to the non-Islamic non-Fulbe *haaBe* population – and adherence to Islam, there are situations in which some *pulaaku* customs are challenged because of their claimed non-Islamic quality. The marriage rituals are a good example, as there is continuous renegotiation going on concerning which of these rituals are appropriate and which a good Muslim has to abandon. It should be emphasised, however, that the various Islamic festivities also provide an excellent context for carrying on traditional practices. Milk is circulated in pastoral camps at the end of Ramadan and the dancing youth gather in villages during the ram feast, both examples reflecting how Muslim and pastoral ways blend in the life of the people.

To conclude with the question of audience: in the present case who is it and what is it for? In the preceding ethnography a wide range of scenes have

Conclusion

been discovered, from those in which the whole meaning of performing is based on the concrete presence of others to those in which the idea of audience has, in Mead's (1962) words, become part of the performer's own attitude. On the one hand, the discussion has emphasised the role of the pastoral Fulbe as a most competent audience in both interpreting and identifying with their own people's performances. On the other hand, the village, with its sedentary people, offers a context in which the pastoralists can reflect upon their own distinctiveness from and relatedness to village life. Whether to define the villagers as an audience or only as something from which the pastoral Fulbe can reflect back upon themselves, remains a matter of definition. The same applies to the more general question of how to define ethnic performances. Does, for example, the *pulaaku* that the pastoralists play, both among themselves in the bush and amid other people in the village, become a representation of cultural difference only in the latter case? My answer is that the idea of difference is present in all the performances described in this study. Every one of them is a self-reflective commentary upon the fact that there is another audience somewhere: people without pastoral traditions or people without *pulaaku*.

GLOSSARY

<p><i>adaasi</i></p> <p><i>alhaji</i>, pl. <i>alhaji'en</i></p> <p><i>Alla</i></p> <p><i>arDo</i>, pl. <i>arDo'en</i></p> <p><i>baaba</i>, pl. <i>baaba'en</i>, <i>baabiraaBe</i></p> <p><i>bandiigu</i></p> <p><i>Bandu</i></p> <p><i>Bantal</i></p> <p><i>bappa</i>, pl. <i>bappa'en</i></p> <p><i>barka</i></p> <p><i>barkeehi</i></p> <p><i>belDum</i></p> <p><i>Bernde</i></p> <p><i>Bingel</i>, pl. <i>Bikkoy</i>, <i>BiBBe</i></p> <p><i>BiraaDam</i></p> <p><i>Birgo</i></p> <p><i>boDeeji</i></p> <p><i>bokasa</i></p> <p><i>boofiiDo</i></p> <p><i>budurwa</i>, pl. <i>budurwa'en</i></p> <p><i>ceede</i></p> <p><i>dambugo</i></p> <p><i>daneeji</i></p> <p><i>danki</i></p> <p><i>debbo</i></p> <p><i>defol</i></p> <p><i>denDiigu</i>, <i>denDiraagu</i></p> <p><i>denDiraawo</i>, pl. <i>denDiraaBe</i></p> <p><i>dillugo</i></p>	<p>money-go-round of women of various ethnic origins in Adamaoua</p> <p>title given to a man who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca</p> <p>God</p> <p>pastoral Pullo chief</p> <p>father</p> <p>kinship; consanguinity</p> <p>body</p> <p>ritual that is performed in the natal camp of a new mother just before she returns to her husband with her first child after weaning</p> <p>paternal uncle</p> <p>blessing</p> <p>(<i>Bauhinia reticulata</i>); a shrub the branches of which are used in various pastoral Fulbe rituals to give blessing</p> <p>happiness</p> <p>heart</p> <p>child</p> <p>fresh milk</p> <p>to milk</p> <p>large, long-horned red zebu cattle breed (<i>Eupatorium</i>); a plant that deteriorates soil and pastures by forming impenetrable thickets</p> <p>"hatcher"; woman who has returned to her parents to give birth to her first child</p> <p>young girl</p> <p>money</p> <p>to keep wives in seclusion</p> <p>small, short-horned white zebu cattle breed</p> <p>scaffold for a woman's household utensils</p> <p>woman</p> <p>ritual that is performed when a woman has returned to her husband from her parents with her first child after weaning</p> <p>relationship between cross-cousins</p> <p>cross-cousin</p> <p>to go</p>
--	--

Glossary

<i>djakka</i>	(religious) alm
<i>do'a</i>	"prayers"; feast arranged for a person who has completed the Koranic school
<i>eggol</i>	transhumance, migration
<i>enDam</i>	maternal bond; affection between relatives
<i>Ersia</i>	the Central African Republic
<i>ewnugo</i>	to call someone by a name
<i>goggo</i>	paternal aunt
<i>gudaali</i>	stocky zebu cattle breed that is well-suited for beef production
<i>haaBe</i> , sg. <i>kaaDo</i>	non-Fulbe people; African non-Muslims
<i>haBBugo</i>	to tie
<i>hajja</i> , pl. <i>hajja'en</i>	title given to a woman who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>hakkiilo</i>	care, forethought
<i>heBgo</i>	to obtain
<i>hiirde</i>	(youth's) get-together
<i>hijju</i>	pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>himBe</i>	people
<i>hoore</i>	head
<i>hootugo</i>	to return
<i>Huya</i> , <i>Huyaajo</i> , pl. <i>Huya'en</i>	pejorative term by which the pastoral Fulbe refer to village Fulbe
<i>inde</i>	name
<i>inde</i> , <i>indeeri</i>	name-giving ceremony
<i>innanjomba</i>	special song that is sung by old women in marriage rituals
<i>inniraaajo</i> , pl. <i>inniraaBe</i>	mature woman
<i>jaBgo</i>	to accept
<i>jam</i>	"well" (a term used in greetings)
<i>jihaad</i>	Muslim holy war
<i>jooDaago</i>	to sit, to stay
<i>juulde Layha</i>	Islamic "ram feast" during which a sheep is slaughtered to celebrate the offering of Abraham to God
<i>juulgo</i>	to pray (the Islamic daily prayers)
<i>kaabo debbo</i>	a wife and a mother of full status; a woman who has returned from her natal camp to her husband with their first child
<i>kaawu</i>	maternal uncle
<i>Kamaru</i>	Cameroon
<i>koggal</i> , <i>koobgal</i>	arranged first marriage; ritual that starts off the arranged first marriage
<i>Kongo</i>	"Congo"; term used by the pastoral Fulbe to refer to the Central African Republic
<i>korijjo</i> , pl. <i>korien</i>	man who has just passed the adolescent age
<i>kosam</i>	milk

Glossary

<i>kuugal</i>	work
<i>laamiiDo</i> , pl. <i>laamiiBe</i>	Pullo superior chief
<i>laawol</i>	way
<i>ladde</i>	bush
<i>lahoore</i>	mineral spring
<i>leddi</i>	land, country
<i>lenyol</i> , pl. <i>lenyi</i>	lineage, clan
<i>mallum</i> , pl. <i>mallum'en</i>	a person with Koranic schooling
<i>mawnugo</i>	to grow
<i>mbusiri</i>	gruel
<i>meere</i>	mere
<i>moodibbo</i>	Islamic learned man
<i>munyal</i>	patience
<i>naastugo</i>	to enter
<i>nagge</i> , pl. <i>na'i</i>	cow
<i>nayeejo</i> , pl. <i>nayeeBe</i>	old person
<i>ndottaaku</i>	mature manhood
<i>ndottiijo</i> , pl. <i>ndotti'en</i>	mature man
<i>ngorgu</i>	bravery
<i>Nijeeriya</i>	Nigeria
<i>nyaamgo</i>	to eat
<i>nyiiri</i>	porridge
<i>pendi</i> , <i>pendiiDam</i>	sour milk
<i>pulaaku</i>	Fulbeness; Fulbe code of ideal public behaviour that refers to restrained and self-controlled bodily conduct
<i>rubu</i>	marriage fee that is paid by groom's representatives to the representatives of the bride
<i>sadaaki</i>	cow that is given to the wife by her husband as a seal of their marriage
<i>sakiike</i> , pl. <i>sakiraaBe</i>	full sibling
<i>sakiikeeku</i>	full siblingship
<i>semteende</i>	modesty, reserve, shame
<i>sentugo</i>	to feel ashamed
<i>soobaajo</i>	friend
<i>soobaaku</i>	friendship
<i>soro</i>	baton-beating contest that is practised among the adolescent pastoral Fulbe boys in Nigeria
<i>suka</i> , pl. <i>sukaaBe</i>	adolescent boy
<i>sukaaku</i>	(male) youth
<i>suudu</i>	hut
<i>suuno</i>	desire
<i>teegal</i>	marriage; Islamic marriage ceremony
<i>waancugo</i>	to roam around
<i>waDgo</i>	to do
<i>wamarde</i>	dance

wargo
wooDgo
wuro

Glossary

to come
to be good, to be beautiful
camp, town, village

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abubakar, Sa'ad
1977 *The Laamiibe of Fombina: A Political History of Adamawa 1809-1901*. Ahmadu Bello University Press.
- Adeleye, R. A.
1971 *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its Enemies*. London.
- Austin, J. L.
1986 [1962] *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Awogbade, Moses O.
1983 *Fulani Pastoralism: Jos Case Study*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited.
1986 The Fulani of the Jos Plateau. In: *Pastoralists of the West African Savanna*. Mahdi Adamu, A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, eds. Manchester: Manchester University Press; International African Institute.
- Azarya, Victor
1978 *Aristocrats Facing Change: The Fulbe in Guinea, Nigeria, and Cameroon*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1993 Sedentarization and Ethnic Identity among the Fulbe: A Comparative View. In: Paul Eguchi and Victor Azarya (eds.), *Unity and Diversity of a People: The Search for Fulbe Identity*. Senri Ethnological Studies 35. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.
- Azarya, Victor, Egushi, Paul Kazuhisa and VerEecke, Catherine
1993 Introduction. In: Paul Eguchi and Victor Azarya (eds.), *Unity and Diversity of a People: The Search for Fulbe Identity*. Senri Ethnological Studies 35. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.
- Bah, Thierno Mouctar
1993 Le facteur peul et les relations interethniques dans l'Adamaoua au XIX siècle. In: Jean Boutrais (ed.), *Peuples et cultures de l'Adamaoua (Cameroun)*. Paris: ORSTOM.
- Barry, Aboubakar
2002 Le lien de sève et la maison paternelle: Aux racines de l'identité des Peuls JafunBe du pays samo. *L'Homme* 163: 137-156.
- Barth, Heinrich
1965 [1857] *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa. Vol. 3*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.
- Bauman, Richard
1975 Verbal Art as Performance. *American Anthropologist* 77 (2): 290-311.
1992 Genre. In: Richard Bauman (ed.), *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communication-centered Handbook*. Oxford:

Bibliography

- Oxford University Press.
1992 Performance. In: Richard Bauman (ed.), *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communication-centered Handbook*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bauman, Richard and Briggs, Charles
1990 Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19: 59-88.
- Bentley, G. Carter
1987 Ethnicity as Practice. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1): 24-55.
- Bloch, Maurice
1992 Birth and the Beginning of Social Life among the Zafimaniry of Madagascar. In: Göran Aijmer (ed.), *Coming into Existence: Birth and Metaphors of Birth*. Göteborg: IASSA.
- Bocquené, Henri
1981 Note sur le pulaaku. In: Anon. (ed.), *Itinerances en pays peul et ailleurs: Mélanges réunis par les chercheurs de l'ERA 246 du CNRS à la mémoire de Pierre Francis Lacroix. Tome II: Littératures et cultures*. [Paris]: Société des Africanistes.
1986 *Moi un Mbororo: Ndoudi Oumarou, Peul Nomade du Cameroun*. Paris: Editions Karthala.
- Bonfiglioli, Angelo Maliki
1988 *DuDal: Histoire de famille et histoire de troupeau chez un groupe de Wodaabe du Niger*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.
- Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1990 *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boutrais, Jean
1974 Conditions naturelles de l'élevage en Adamaoua (Cameroun). *Cahiers ORSTOM XI* (2): 145-198.
1977 *Une conséquence de la sécheresse: Les migrations d'éleveurs vers les plateaux camerounais*. Sécheresse en Afrique 2. African Environmental Special Report 6. London: International African Institute.
1986 L'expansion des éleveurs peul dans les savanes humides du Cameroun. In: Mahdi Adamu and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (eds.), *Pastoralists of the West African Savanna*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
1988 *Des Peul en savanes humides: Développement pastoral dans l'ouest Centrafricain*. Paris: ORSTOM.
- Boutrais, Jean (ed.)
1993 *Peuples et cultures de l'Adamaoua (Cameroun)*. Paris: ORSTOM.
- Brackenbury, E. A.
1924 Notes on the "Bororo Fulbe" or Nomad "Cattle Fulani". *Journal of the African Society XXIII* (XCI): 208-217.
- Broch-Due, Vigdis and Rudie, Ingrid
1993 Carved Flesh – Casted Selves: An Introduction. In: Vigdis Broch-Due, Ingrid Rudie and Tone Bleie (eds.), *Carved Flesh / Cast Selves*:

Bibliography

- Gendered Symbols and Social Practices. Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women 8.* Oxford: Berg.
- Bruijn, Mirjam de and Dijk, Han van
1995 *Arid ways: Cultural Understanding of Insecurity in Fulbe Society, Central Mali.* Amsterdam: Thela Publishers.
- Burke, Kenneth
1968 [1945] *A Grammar of Motives.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burnham, Philip
1972 Racial Classification and Ideology in the Meiganga Region, North Cameroon. In: P. Baxter and B. Sansom (eds.), *Race and Social Difference.* London: Penguin Books.
1980a *Opportunity and Constraint in a Savanna Society: The Gbaya of Meiganga, Cameroon.* London: Academic Press.
1980b Raiders and Traders in Adamawa: Slavery as a Regional System. In: J. Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell and Mott.
1996 *The Politics of Cultural Difference in Northern Cameroon.* Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Carsten, Janet
1995 The Politics of Forgetting: Migration, Kinship and Memory on the Periphery of the Southeast Asian State. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)* 1 (2): 317-335.
- Cassirer, Ernst
1953 *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Vol 1: Language.* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Cole, Jennifer
1998 The Work of Memory in Madagascar. *American Ethnologist* 25 (4): 610-633.
- Comaroff, John L.
1987 Of Totemism and Ethnicity: Consciousness, Practice and the Signs of Inequality. *Ethnos* 52 (1987): 301-323.
- Csordas, Thomas J.
1996 Imaginal Performance and Memory in Ritual Healing. In: Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman (eds.), *The Performance of Healing.* New York: Routledge.
- Delafosse, Maurice
1912 *Haut-Sénégal-Niger (Soudan français): Le pays, les peuples. les langues, l'histoire, les civilisations. Tome 1.* Paris: Larose.
- DeLancey, Mark W.
1989 *Cameroon: Dependence and Independence.* Boulder: Westview Press.
- Delaney, Carol
1990 The *Hajj*: Sacred and Secular. *American Ethnologist* 17 (3): 513-530.
- Dognin, René
1975 Sur trois ressorts du comportement peul. In: Théodore Monod (ed.), *Pastoralism in Tropical Africa.* London: Oxford University Press; International African Institute.
1981 L'installation des Djafoun dans l'Adamaoua camerounais. / La djakka chez les Peul de l'Adamaoua. In: C. Tardits (ed.), *Contribution de la*

Bibliography

- recherche ethnologique a l'histoire des civilisations du Cameroun. Colloques Internationaux du C.N.R.S. 551. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.*
- Dupire, Marquerite
1962 *Peuls nomades: Etude descriptive des Wodaabe du Sahel nigérien*. Paris: Institut d'ethnologie.
1963 The Position of Women in a Pastoral Society: The Fulani WoDaaBe, Nomads of the Niger. Denise Paulme (ed.), *Women of Tropical Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
1970 *Organisation sociale des Peul: Étude d'ethnographie comparée*. Paris: Plon.
1981 Réflexionssur l'ethnicité peule. In Anon. (ed.), *Itinerances en pays peul et ailleurs*. [Mémoires de la Société des Africanistes] 2.
- Fabian, Johannes
1990 *Power and Performance: Ethnographic Explorations through Proverbial Wisdom and Theater in Shaba, Zaire*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Fine, Elizabeth C. and Speer, Jean Haskell
1992 Introduction. In: Elizabeth C. Fine, Jean Haskell Speer (eds.), *Performance, Culture, and Identity*. Westport: Praeger.
- Fortes, Meyer
1978 The Significance of the First Born in African Family Systems. In: Anon. (ed.), *Systèmes de signes: Textes réunis en hommage à Germaine Dieterlein*. Paris: Hermann.
- Froelich, J.-C.
1954 Le commandement et l'organisation sociale chez les Foulbé de l'Adamaoua. *Etudes camerounaises* 45-46.
- Goffman, Erving
1959 *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.
1974 *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
1981 *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Halbwachs, Maurice
1992 [1941/1952] *On Collective Memory*. Ed. by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hanks, William F.
1987 Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice. *American Ethnologist* 14 (4): 668-692.
1990 *Referential Practice: Language and Lived Space among the Maya*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
1993 Notes on Semantics in Linguistic Practice. In: Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone (eds.), *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bibliography

- Hastrup, Kirsten
1995 *A Passage to Anthropology: Between Experience and Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Hogben, S. J.
1967 *An Introduction to the History of the Islamic States of Northern Nigeria*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Hopen, C. Edward
1958 *The Pastoral Fulbe Family in Gwandu*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchinson, Sharon E.
1996 *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hymes, Dell
1981 Breakthrough into Performance. In: Dell Hymes, "In Vain I Tried to Tell You": *Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Issa, Adamou and Labatut, Roger
1974 *Sagesse de Peuls nomades*. Yaoundé: Editions CLE.
- Jackson, Michael
1983 Knowledge of the Body. *Man* 18: 327-45.
1989 *Paths Toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- James, William
1950 [1890] *The Principles of Psychology. Vol 2*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Jungrathmayr, Herrmann and Abu-Manga, Al-Amin
1989 *Einführung in die Ful-Sprache*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- Kapchan, Deborah
1996 *Gender on the Market: Moroccan Women and the Revoicing of Tradition*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kapferer, Bruce
1984 The Ritual Process and the Problem of Reflexivity in Sinhalese Demon Exorcisms. In: John J. MacAloon (ed.), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Kirch, Patrick V. and Sahlins Marshall
1992 *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kirk-Greene, A. H. M.
1958 *Adamawa Past and Present: An Historical Approach to the Development of a Northern Cameroons Province*. London: Oxford University Press.
1986 *Maudu laawol pulaaku: Survival and Symbiosis*. In: Mahdi Adamu and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (eds.), *Pastoralists of the West African Savanna*. Selected Studies Presented and Discussed at the Fifteenth International African Seminar held at Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria, July 1979. Manchester: Manchester University Press; International African Institute.

Bibliography

- Labatut, Roger
1978 Contribution à l'étude du comportement religieux des Wodaabe Dageeja du Nord-Cameroun. *Journal des Africanistes* 48 (2): 63-92
- Lacroix, Pierre-François
1952 Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire des Peul de l'Adamawa. *Etudes camerounaises* 37-8: 3-61.
1962 Distribution géographique et sociale des parlers Peul du Nord-Cameroun. *L'Homme* 2 (3): 75-101.
1966 L'Islam Peul de l'Adamawa. In: I. M. Lewis (ed), *Islam in Tropical Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Lambek, Michael
1996 The Past Imperfect: Remembering As Moral Practice. In: Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds.), *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York: Routledge.
- MacAloon, John J.
1984 Introduction: Cultural Performances, Culture Theory. In: John J. MacAloon (ed.), *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- Mauss, Marcel
1990 [1925] *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: Norton.
- Mead, George Herbert
1962 [1934] *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice
1962 *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Migeod, C. O.
1927 *Gazetteer of Yola Province*. Lagos: The Government Printer.
- Mohammadou, Eldridge
1976 *L'Histoire des Peuls Férôbé du Diamaré Maroua et Pétté*. African Languages and ethnography III. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.
1978 *Traditions Historiques des Foulbé de l'Adamaoua. Vol IV*. Tokyo: ILCAA.
1981 L'implantation des peul dans l'Adamawa: Approche chronologique. In: C. Tardits (ed.), *Contribution de la Recherche Ethnologique a l'Histoire des Civilisations du Cameroun*. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
1983 *Peuples et royaumes du Foubina*. African Languages and Ethnography XVII. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.
1988 *Les lamidats du Diamaré et du Mayo-Louti au XIXe siècle (Nord-Cameroun)*. African Languages and Ethnography XXII. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.
- Morinis, Alan
1992 Introduction: The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage. In: Alan Morinis (ed.), *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*.

Bibliography

- Westport and London: Greenwood Press.
- Nelson, Roland
1984 *An Outline of Fulfulde Grammar*. Ngaoundere: Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne du Cameroun. Unpublished manuscript.
- Njeuma, Martin Z.
1978 *Fulani Hegemony in Yola (Old Adamawa) 1809-1902*. Yaounde: CEPER.
- Njeuma, Martin Z. and Awasom, Nicodemus F.
1990 The Fulani and the Political Economy of the Bamenda Grasslands, 1940-1960. *Paideuma* 36: 217-233.
- Noye, Dominique
1974 *Cours de Foulfouldé: Dialect Peul du Diamaré Nord-Cameroun*. Maroua: Mission Catholique; Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.
1989 *Dictionnaire Foulfouldé-Français: Dialecte Peul du Diamaré Nord-Cameroun*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.
- Ogawa, Roy
1993 *Ethnic Identity and Social Interaction: A Reflection on Fulbe Identity*. Senri Ethnological Studies 35. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.
- Ortner, Sherry B.
1990 Patterns of History: Cultural Schemas in the Foundings of Sherpa Religious Institutions. In: Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (ed.), *Culture Through Time: Anthropological Approaches*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Paden, John N.
1973 *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Palmer, Gary B. and Jankowiak, William R.
1996 Performance and Imagination: Toward an Anthropology of the Spectacular and the Mundane. *Cultural Anthropology* 11: 225-258.
- Pfeffer, Gulla
1936 Die Djafun-Bororo, ihre Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Sesshaftwerdung auf dem Hochland von Ngaoundere. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 68: 150-196.
- Reed, L. N.
1932 Notes on Some Fulani Tribes and Customs. *Africa* 5 (4): 422-454.
- Regis, Helen
1997 *Bad Sauce and the Withholding of the Rains: Medicine and Cultural Pluralism among the Fulbe of Northern Cameroon*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Tulane. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.
- Riesman, Paul
1977 *Freedom in Fulani Social Life: An Introspective Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1986 The Person and the Life Cycle in African Social Life and Thought. *The African Studies Review* 29 (2): 71-138.
1992 *First Find Your Child a Good Mother: The Construction of Self in Two African Communities*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Z.
1982 The Things We Do with Words: Ilongot Speech Acts and Speech Act Theory in Philosophy. *Language in Society* 11 (2): 203-237.
- Rosaldo, Renato

Bibliography

- 1980 *Ilongot headhunting 1883-1974: A Study in Society and History*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ruel, Malcolm
1987 Icons, Indexical Symbols and Metaphorical Action: An Analysis of Two East African Rites. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 17 (2): 98-112.
- Sahlins, Marshall
1985 *Islands of History*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Schechner, Richard
1988 *Performance Theory* (rev. ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Schieffelin, Edward L.
1996 On Failure and Performance: Throwing the Medium Out of the Seance. In: Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman (eds.), *The Performance of Healing*. New York: Routledge.
- Schultz, Emily A.
1984 From Pagan to Pullo: Ethnic Identity Change in Northern Cameroon. *Africa* 54 (1): 46-63.
- Schutz, Alfred
1967 *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. [Evanston, IL]: Northwestern University Press.
- Seremetakis, C. Nadia
1991 *The Last Word: Women, Death and Divination in Inner Mani*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1994 The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory. In: C. Nadia Seremetakis (ed.), *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shaw, Flora L.
1905 *A Tropical Dependency: An Outline of the Ancient History of the Western Soudan with an Account of the Modern Settlement of Northern Nigeria*. London: James Nisbet & Co. Limited.
- Shimada, Yoshihito
1993 *Jihad as Dialectical Movement and Formation of Islamic Identity among the Fulbe*. Senri Ethnological Studies 35. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.
- Siikala, Jukka
1991 *Akatokamanawa: Myth, History and Society in the Southern Cook Islands*. Auckland: The Polynesian Society.
- Singer, Milton
1972 *When a Great Tradition Modernizes*. New York: Praeger.
- Singer, Milton (ed.)
1959 *Traditional India: Structure and Change*. Philadelphia: Publications of the American Folklore Society.
- Smith, M. G.
1966 The Jihad of Shehu dan Fodio: Some Problems. In: I. M. Lewis (ed.), *Islam in Tropical Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.

Bibliography

- St Croix, F. W. de
1972 [1945] *The Fulani of Northern Nigeria: Some General Notes*. Westmead: Gregg International Publishers Limited.
- Stenning, Derrick J.
1957 Transhumance, Migratory Drift, Migration: Patterns of Pastoral Fulani Nomadism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 87: 57-73.
1959 *Savannah Nomads: A Study of the Wodaabe Pastoral Fulani of Western Bornu Province Northern Region, Nigeria*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Strathern, Marilyn
1988 *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Strümpell, Kurt
1912 Die Geschichte Adamaus. *Mitteilungen der Geographische Gesellschaft in Hamburg* 26: 46-107.
- Tambiah, Stanley J.
1985 *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Tauxier, Louis
1937 *Moeurs et histoire des Peuls*. Paris: Payot.
- Taylor, Charles
1993 To Follow a Rule... In: Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone (eds.), *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Taylor, F. W.
1932 *A Fulani-English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press.
- Turner, Victor
1974 *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
1987 *The Anthropology of Performance*. New York: PAJ Publications.
- Urban, Greg
1986 Ceremonial Dialogues in South America. *American Anthropologist* 88 (2): 371-86.
- VerEecke, Catherine
1985 Towards an Ethnohistory of the Adamawa Fulbe in the 19th Century. *Annals of Borno* 2: 163-179.
- Vieillard, G.
1932 Note sur deux institutions propres aux populations Peules d'entre Niger et Tchad: Le soro et le gerewol. *Journal de la société des africanistes* 2 (1): 85-93.
- Virtanen, Tea
1993 *Karjan ja maidon kadonneet merkitykset: Sosiaalisen vaihdon näkökulma afrikkalaiseen karjanhoitajakulttuuriin*. Unpublished MA thesis. University of Helsinki, Department of Cultural Anthropology.
1999 Ambiguous Followings: Tracing Autonomy in Pastoral Fulbe Society. In: Karen Armstrong (ed.), *Shifting Ground and Cultured Bodies: Postcolonial Gender Relations in Africa and India*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.
- Waldman, Marilyn Robinson

Bibliography

- 1966 A Note on the Ethnic Interpretation of the Fulani *Jihad*. *Africa* 36 (3): 286-291.
- Waters-Bayer, Ann
1988 *Dairying by Settled Fulani Agropastoralists in Central Nigeria: The Role of Women and Implication for Dairy Development*. Kiel: Wissenschaftsverlag Vauk.
- Weiner, Annette
1985 Inalienable Wealth. *American Ethnologist* 12 (2): 210-227.

Archival References

Archives Nationales, Yaounde (AN)

- AN 1: Region de l'Adamaoua: Rapport annuel 1952
AN 2: Region de l'Adamaoua: Reponse au questionnaire de la mission d'inspection [1952]
AN 3: Region de l'Adamaoua: Rapport annuel 1953
AN 4: Subdivision de Tibati: Histoire du Lamidat de Tibati (1934)
AN 5: Subdivision de Tibati: Rapport annuel 1953
AN 6: Subdivision de Tibati: Rapport annuel 1954
AN 7: Subdivision de Tibati: Rapport annuel 1955
AN 8: Subdivision de Tibati: Rapport annuel 1957
AN 9: Subdivision de Tibati: Rapport economique, mois d'octobre 1957
AN 10: Subdivision de Tibati: Rapport economique, mois de decembre 1957
AN 11: Subdivision de Tibati: Rapport annuel 1958

NAME INDEX

- Abubakar, Sa'ad, 51n, 52, 53 & n,
54 & n, 64n, 101
- Abu-Manga, Al-Amin, 136
- Adeleye, R. A., 53n
- Armstrong, Karen, 220n
- Audu, Kano, 76n
- Austin, J. L., 16 & n, 17, 134n,
167n, 207
- Awasom, Nicodemus F., 61n
- Awogbade, Moses O., 97n, 106 & n,
123n, 151n
- Azarya, Victor, 25, 48n, 49 & n, 50,
52-55 & n, 56 & n, 57-58,
64, 65n, 107
- Bah, Thierno Mouctar, 67n
- Barry, Aboubakar, 205n
- Barth, Heinrich, 15n
- Bauman, Richard, 11 & n, 12, 22,
39, 43, 47, 251
- Bentley, G. Carter, 226
- Bloch, Maurice, 180
- Bocquené, Henri, 26, 77n, 102,
114n, 115, 117-118, 148n,
150n, 152n, 155n, 160n,
166n, 169n, 175n, 177n
- Bonfiglioli, Angelo Maliki, 49n, 50
& n, 58, 104
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 14, 26, 30, 34, 135,
225, 233
- Boutrais, Jean, 48n, 59n, 60, 63 & n,
68 & n, 70, 71, 73-74, 76-77
& n, 83n, 125n
- Brackenbury, E. A., 77n, 86n, 87n,
114-115, 150n
- Broch-Due, Vigdis, 12n
- Briggs, Charles, 43, 47, 251
- Bruijn, Mirjam de, 84, 164n, 205n,
243n
- Burke, Kenneth, 17n, 19
- Burnham, Philip, 6n, 34, 55 & n,
57n, 58n, 61-62 & n, 63n,
64n, 69n, 70, 76n, 81n, 83,
97, 114 & n, 133n, 143n,
151, 153, 155n, 156, 160n,
209n
- Carsten, Janet, 101, 122, 126
- Cassirer, Ernst, 135
- Cole, Jennifer, 105
- Comaroff, John L., 48
- Csordas, Thomas J., 16
- Delafosse, Maurice, 87n
- DeLancey, Mark W., 56n, 57n, 62n
- Delaney, Carol, 138
- Dijk, Han van, 84, 164n, 205n, 243n
- Djongwe, Gaston, 76n, 125n
- Dognin, René, 58-59, 60 & n, 61 &
n, 62n, 65n, 76-77 & n, 82 &
n, 84, 91, 106
- Dupire, Marquerite, 48n, 86n, 87n,
90n, 92, 93n, 95n, 104, 113n,
114 & n, 115, 123n, 150n,
155n, 156, 160 & n, 162,
165n, 171n, 189-190, 204n,
205n, 225, 231-232, 238, 242
& n, 243n
- Fabian, Johannes, 10, 34
- Fine, Elizabeth C., 13n
- Fortes, Meyer, 166, 179, 184
- Froelich, J.-C., 55n, 63n
- Geertz, Clifford, 46 & n
- Goffman, Erving, 10, 12-13 & n, 14
& n, 16-17 & n, 18-19 & n,
20, 21n, 22-23, 39, 99, 250-
251
- Halbwachs, Maurice, 85
- Hanks, William F., 11n, 135, 146n,
223
- Hastrup, Kirsten, 28, 31
- Hogben, S. J., 53n
- Hopen, C. Edward, 49n, 50, 107,
123n, 203n, 215
- Hutchinson, Sharon E., 7
- Hymes, Dell, 13-14 & n, 15, 20 & n,
33 & n, 34

Name Index

- Issa, Adamou, 171n
Jackson, Michael, 29, 32, 35, 146
James, William, 36, 39, 45, 251
Jankowiak, William R., 11, 14n, 20-22, 191
Jungraihtmayar, Herrmann, 136
Kartinen, Timo, 249n
Kapchan, Deborah, 11n
Kapferer, Bruce, 19, 43, 45-46 & n
Kirch, Patrick, 128
Kirk-Greene, A. H. M., 25, 55n, 64, 146
Labatut, Roger, 150n, 171n
Lacroix, Pierre-François, 49n, 51 & n, 52, 54, 56-57 & n, 58, 61n, 62n, 64 & n, 87n, 111n, 137n
Lambek, Michael, 85
MacAloon, John J., 11 & n, 12n, 13, 17 & n, 18
Mauss, Marcel, 201 & n
Mead, George Herbert, 19 & n, 20-22, 35, 99, 253
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 135, 146n
Migeod, C. O., 52n, 53n, 64
Mohammadou, Eldridge, 48 & n, 49 & n, 51-52, 53 & n, 61n, 64n, 71n, 95n
Morinis, Alan, 138n, 142, 143
Nelson, Roland, 136
Ndoudi, Oumarou, 77n, 101, 114n, 160n, 166n, 167n, 175n, 177n
Njeuma, Martin, 51n, 53n, 54, 61n, 64-65
Noye, Dominique, 2n, 97n, 113n, 136, 174n, 183n, 204n
Ogawa, Roy, 15n
Ortner, Sherry B., 14-15
Paden, John N., 54
Palmer, Gary B., 11, 14n, 20-22, 191
Pfeffer, Gulla, 61, 62n
Regis, Helen, 28, 150n, 168n
Reed, L. N., 114n, 115
Riesman, Paul, 25-27 & n, 28-29, 31n, 37 & n, 39n, 40 & n, 41-42, 44, 97n, 118, 146 & n, 147 & n, 148-149, 180, 188-189 & n, 190
Rosaldo, Michelle Z., 16n
Rosaldo, Renato, 122
Rudie, Ingrid, 12n
Ruel, Malcolm, 16n
Sahlins, Marshall, 15-16 & n, 128, 240
Schechner, Richard, 12n, 13 & n, 18
Schieffelin, Edward L., 11-12, 17-18, 36, 250
Schultz, Emily A., 55
Schutz, Alfred, 39-40, 43n, 45
Seremetakis, C. Nadia, 12, 125
Shaw, Flora L., 49n
Shimada, Yoshihito, 49 & n, 53-54
Siikala, Jukka, 19n, 99n, 100
Singer, Milton, 11 & n, 12
Smith, M. G., 49n
Speer, Jean Haskell, 13n
St Croix, F. W. De, 86n, 87n, 92, 115 & n, 150n, 155n
Stenning, Derrick J., 26, 50, 60, 92, 140n, 146, 154n, 155n, 163, 171n, 183n, 243n
Strathern, Marilyn, 201 & n, 204
Strümpell, Kurt, 51n, 64n, 87n
Tambiah, Stanley J. 16n, 165
Tauxier, Louis, 87n
Taylor, Charles, 30, 31n, 32n, 42, 251
Taylor, F. W., 97n, 146, 169n, 174n, 183n
Turner, Victor, 9-11 & n, 21 & n, 22, 38, 46, 100, 138 & n, 250
Urban, Greg, 39-42
VerEecke, Catherine, 53n
Vieillard, G., 114n, 118
Virtanen, Tea, 169n, 201n
Waldman, Marilyn Robinson, 54
Waters-Bayer, Ann., 203n, 215
Weiner, Annette, 201n