Globalisation and the Genesis of Values

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My lecture is based on fieldwork, in Jamaica and among Western Arrernte in Central Australia. I begin with two images, two statements of value, and then sketch some general ideas in terms of which these images are significant. I mention anthropology, globalisation, and ideas about the genesis of values. Next I return to the images and the events that they reflect; local events that are also shaped by trans-national relations. I examine the values and forms of status portrayed in these images, the types of struggle and rendering of life that each one suggests. I conclude with some general remarks on globalisation and difference, and their study in anthropology.

My topic is not global values that surely involve the values of the market and possibly new claims for a universal human rights. Rather, I focus on local events. How do peripheralised people retain esteem, the values that ground status honour? When people are marginalised or forced to change, how do they sustain their own moral being? If there is struggle in being sovereign and in contests around status honour, the lives of the colonised and marginalised clearly have a story to tell.

Images I

One night in 1977 I was walking back to my yard along a darkened lane in Kingston, Jamaica. It was very late and I was with some other women. We had been to a devotional meeting at a local Pentecostal church that involved prophecy, prayer, tongues and singing, Bible reading and dancing in the spirit. These meetings

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mostly went all night although this particular one had broken up after 3.00 am. It was a turbulent time in Kingston. Local gangs had become involved in party politics. The gangs were armed and violence was rife. The government was in decline, its lines of credit to America had been withdrawn, and unemployment was rising. Just the previous morning I had noted the demoralisation in my neighbourhood. It was reflected in the fact that no-one was prepared to remove a dog that had died in our lane. The maggots had begun their task but the smell was still overwhelming. People complained and covered their noses as they passed, but no-one would move the dog. At different hours, several people going to work had exclaimed that the dog was 'naat mi responsibility'. As we walked along the lane, slowly approaching the dog, I asked one of my female companions what it meant to be a 'saint'. In the darkness she turned to me and said with glowing pride, 'Well, m'dear, it means that we are livin' in heaven on earth. We are saints livin' with the livin'-dead-walkin'.' Like her I put my hand to my nose as we stepped across the maggoty dog. At the same time, I realised that she could be describing an ancestor as well as a saint. West African ghosts like angels and saints live among terrestrial beings, and to be a celestial being living with the living-dead-walking, the transient and the unenlightened, was an age-old cultural aim. Like its predecessor, Zion Revival, Pentecostalism in Jamaica has re-occupied a cosmos left vacant by African ghosts. Successive waves of revivalism have been the vehicle in which a notably African notion, that central transcendent beings can also be immanent in acolytes, has been sustained in Jamaica. The status that my friend was forging with her particular spiritual gifts involved a revaluation of values both old and new. Clearly, in Weber's terms, her world was not de-mystified.

Around twenty years later, I was at Hermannsburg in Central Australia. I had returned to find my old friend and language teacher in a poor state. Being too old to care for children, she was often hungry. She had little to give to her relatives and there were few who would give to her. She was slowly slipping out of life, unable to sustain the dedicated service that embodied relatedness. Nonetheless she hung on in a determined way. Soon after my

arrival she moved in with me. She ate cereal and eggs every morning, chops or steak for dinner, and in between went 'walkin' round' visiting relatives. I drove her into Alice Springs to see a dutiful grand daughter. We also went to some outstations and one pastoral lease so that she could re-activate the reciprocities of kinship. Soon, she felt better again. Small of frame, she gathered confidence and stood in her children's camps issuing orders. We had been to the supermarket and I was her camel for the day dragging shopping home. We came upon a crowd that ringed two young women fighting. Each had a fistful of the other's hair and both were screaming. My friend said in a soft voice '*Kunye, lhentere lakenhe ngirre* (Sad, just like whitefellas)'. It was not fighting women that disturbed her or even illicit sex, both quite common in Arrernte life. Rather, she was disturbed by a heightened 'velocity of sex' created when 'young girl' were 'runnin' round' unprotected. This concern was linked to another, diminishing respect for the old and for the kinship terms that encoded Arrernte etiquette. Both phenomena reduced the ability to manage sociality and specify statuses in an Arrernte way. Her perception of whitefellas was of people living 'one alone', as isolated social beings who lacked these capacities. As I watched her watching the girls I knew she was seeing a decline towards chaos in which she implicated whites. Curiously, her reaction recalled for me Isaac Bashevis Singer's portrait of the disorder that Jewish villagers sensed beyond their own domains in nineteenth-century Poland. And just as Singer implied for the Jews, the larger order in this circumstance articulates with the minority one creating ambivalence. My friend valued Arrernte kinship but came to me for food.

Both of these images portray the genesis of values not *ex nihilo* but through struggles to re-render the self in the course of momentous change. People encompassed by the West and peripheralised in a global world seek to re-interpret life in ways that are feasible. Imagination shapes the symbols in terms of which people articulate their moral feelings, the values to which they cling or which they try to redefine. Never a solitary act, valuing involves others, often more powerful others who constrain

or alter lives. Nonetheless, all people have the capacity to value, to sustain ideals and orientations bringing status honour. Thereby they modify change or at least refuse abjection.

The vehicles for these ideals can be old or new. Either way, the domains from which they are drawn are central to people's lives and are governed by historical context, gender, locality, and the like. Pentecostalism, relatively speaking, is a new form of status. It was introduced to Jamaica from the United States. Nonetheless Jamaicans, and Jamaican women in particular, have used it in specific ways to address their heritage. Arrernte kinship is an old form re-defined that also carries significance for women. Always central to hunter-gatherer life, kinship now acts as a bulwark against market society and the bureaucracies intended to mitigate the market's impact. Local values are drawn from domains made important in the course of change. They reflect features of that change and people's response to it.

Some ideas

In Max Weber's view, the West has been a particular like others, and yet not like them. By virtue of its development of science, its rationalism and capitalism, it has acted as a voracious machine consuming or at least transforming all who engage with it. As a result, the West produced 'cultural phenomena having *universal* significance'. Or at least Europeans *think* this, Weber artfully observed. His view touched Ernest Gellner, for many years Professor in Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. Gellner argued against the anthropological doctrine of 'the ultimacy of forms of life'. He observed that not all groups are 'cognitively' equal and clearly believed that science would prevail as the sovereign knowledge of the world. Weber's and Gellner's views point to the condition that some have seen as the nemesis of anthropology: when the diversity of cultures declined as stateless and pre-industrial societies were encompassed in nation states, and even powerful others incorporated Western knowledge, how could there be, still, a discipline of anthropology? How could there be an *anthropology* of the images I have sketched?[1]

This 'west and the rest' view has prevailed within anthropology. It involves an enduring dialogue built on two ideas. The first is the notion that some have described as the 'billiard ball' view of the world; a world in which bounded (and colourful) cultures roll around in self-contained ways. The second idea is that many of the smaller billiard balls have been destroyed or radically transformed by the rise of capitalism with its base in the north Atlantic. The dynamic in this latter model is mostly one way. Capitalism, the voracious machine, spares only a few of the billiard balls, those incidental to its concerns or simply out of reach. Anthropologists have tended to stress one or the other aspect of this circumstance.

The reformulation of these issues in terms of 'globalisation' has moved the debate along. The new term refers to some of the same phenomena as 'Western capitalism' and yet there are differences. Globalisation, like world-systems theory, proposes not simply one dynamic emerging from the north Atlantic. Rather, it underlines relations between societies. As the centre of a world economic system constantly adjusts itself, regions that were once obscure can be brought into prominence while previously important sites wane in their significance. Moreover, capital and people alike, albeit in different ways, move or are moved around at an ever increasing rate. This more fluid view of a fluid world, that need not mask the constants of power, gives the sense that sustaining local and particular cultures is not simply a zero sum game.

This fluidity links to the second factor that distinguishes 'globalisation' from earlier phases, and renderings, of capitalism. Globalisation is taken now to involve not simply an economics but also an aesthetic dimension. It is not only in the market but also in communications and art and performance. As Fredric Jameson has observed, globalisation is cultural as well as economic. And typically these two dimensions capture different aspects of the process:

> [The cultural aspect of globalisation involves] celebration of difference and differentiation ... a new richness and variety of cultures in the new world space.

> ... on the other hand, [when] thoughts turn economic, ... what comes to the fore is increasing identity (rather than difference): the rapid assimilation of hitherto autonomous national markets and ... a picture of standardisation on an unparalleled ... scale.

Jameson underestimates the economic possibilities of globalisation both for good and for ill. Nonetheless his argument is that the process is socially and culturally complex.

Globalisation redefines anthropology's stock-in-trade for there is no economics without concomitant cultural production. Literacy and the market shape a particular person objectified by commodities and cash-producing practice. Yet, in the face of nation states, the market does not simply assimilate. People's engagement with the market remains diverse, both within nations and between them. As a consequence, economic Identity contains within it propensities to Difference even though the production of cultural Difference increasingly beckons to market Identity. Globalisation remains 'ill-defined and ever-emerging'. Culturally, the world is not spent yet.[2]

These discussions have signalled a dramatic change in the focus of anthropology. The study of bounded societies has become quite rare and the study of interrelations the norm. Sahlins formulates the issue nicely when he comments that the 'tradition' once studied by anthropologists now often makes its appearance as 'a culturally specific mode of change'. And through these modes of change, people seek not to escape globalisation but rather 'to create a differential space within it'. In these formulations the positions of 'the West' and 'the rest' converge as they also begin to shape a revised account of difference. My own contribution to this concerns the genesis of values.[3]

I came to anthropology from moral philosophy, reacting against rationalist treatments of value. My argument was that valuing something is not simply a reasoned choice or an intuition. It involves patterns, practices with legitimations. The practices are orientations, dispositions to act that realise social order. The legitimations are both conventional and reasonable. They are embedded in forms of life that can change and engage each other so that values are not merely relative or particular. But neither

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are they timeless nor simply universal. Rational judgments are exercised in contexts and contexts mediate the exercise of reason. Weber appealed as a social scientist because he was aware of this.

In anthropology, my attention was drawn to peoples from particular and local cultures encompassed in the process of nation state formation. In value terms these peoples are especially interesting, for their experience of power generally involves the repudiation of some values and a reaching out for others. West Africans brought to the New World, introduced to slavery and severed from the cultural hinterlands of peasant cultivation, lineage organisation and totemic-cum-ancestral worship, could not sustain this panoply of values when their practice was forced to conform with rigid labour regimes. Aborigines in Central Australia who objectified their very being through land and relatedness, through intersecting semiotics of country and kinship, received a forceful blow when they were overrun by Europeans. These settlers brought a culture that was deaf to totemic rite, and to the complexities of being a relative with rights and duties in different estates. These people have had to change and yet sustain some coherence in their lives. And central to this experience have been changes in orientation, changes in values. People have had to emend the forms of moral authority that constrain them and the forms of status to which they aspire.

I found that anthropology explains the reproduction of values better than the genesis of new ones. I read Emile Durkheim, who argued that at least some values are experienced as 'moral authority'. We do not choose to maintain these values but rather, as Charles Taylor puts it, assume that their transgression reflects on us rather than the values. This is one way in which cultures become particular and one explanation for the fact that cultural confrontations between peoples are wrenching for the less powerful. The conquerors can render life in conformity with their values. The less powerful must redefine their selves not merely in terms of, but certainly with reference to, the newly salient order. This is a complex process, not because different cultures have mutually exclusive values but rather, as Dumont argues,

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because they have different hierarchies of value. These are the different modes in which some values encompass others. For example, many different cultures sustain values of relatedness and individual autonomy, but the relations between these values and others as systems are variable. Dumont describes values in terms of encompassing orders.[4]

Nancy Munn provides a more phenomenal account of value as social significance realised in practice. Her position indirectly summons Marx, in particular his proposal that human energy applied to things changes them, constituting value. Taking a less material view, Munn proposes that practice can have positive or negative value to the extent that it expands or reduces 'intersubjective spacetime'. Spacetime is the realisation of sociality wherein a 'community' creates its own significant ends. Yet ultimately these ends are defined by '*governing premises* about the appropriate and possible relations of power in ... society'(my italics). With this remark Munn returns to Dumont's hierarchies and Durkheim's moral authority: systems of value wrought through encompassing orders. Munn's account is processual but does not address significant change.[5]

What happens when these systems are disrupted or frustrated through conquest or subordination? Do people just fall apart, and if they do not, how do they persist? Often in these milieux values become more explicit. People strive to defend who they are, even as they are forced to change in conscious and unconscious ways. Daniel Miller, with a debt to Hegel, describes this in terms of transience and transcendence. Rapid and radical change brings awareness of a present time different from the past and the future. With transience also comes the sense that values will be made and re-made. Yet transience, Miller suggests, is counter-balanced by transcendence, the creation of social 'bulwarks' against 'the ephemeral'. Faced with fear and flux, people strive, in Miller's view, for 'a sense of continuity'. They forge forms of 'incorporative sociality' in opposition to transience.[6]

The philosopher Hans Joas specifies matters further when he remarks that the genesis of values is found in people's *imaginative* efforts to transcend their selves; new orientations produced in

practice and yet projected beyond the self. Imagination involves the idealisation of contingencies, ideas captured and stabilised in symbols that re-present them to the self as non-contextual and enduring, as goods embedded in social life. Imagining, in an old formulation, involves new models of reality.[7]

In sum, the genesis of values occurs in the experience of transience and the striving for transcendence that brings imagination into play. This process is stabilised through new symbols drawn from appropriate social domains. At least potentially, these new symbols and values can become elaborated systems. But among subalterns, value conflict and status struggles are the order of the day. As Bourdieu and R. T. Smith have stressed, often status struggles occur in emergent and contested domains that are formed and defended in the interstices of power. And often subalterns sustain values that seem anomalous, forged as they always are in the midst of social constraint. Nowhere is this process more apparent than among people colonised and then peripheralised. Having had their social orders undermined, and their own sense of moral being challenged, they struggle in diverse ways to redefine values and concomitant forms of status. This is perhaps what Sahlins means by creating 'differential space' within globalisation.[8]

Images II

I determined to speak about Pentecostalism in Jamaica and kinship in Central Australia for two different reasons. First, they emerged at different times as foci for my research. And second, within their respective milieux, both these domains have been seen by others as anomalous. Identified as a conservative import from the United States, Pentecostalism in Jamaica has been seen as a major block to nation state politics. Social scientists have remarked that if only Jamaicans spent the money invested in churches on their political parties, the nation would be different. Similarly, Aboriginal kinship as a distributive system is seen as a major block to remote Aborigines engaging market society. Many observers feel that Aboriginal people should move towards

occupational differentiation and individual accumulation. A lack of education and of trade and professional skills, along with a surfeit of human capital in kinship, creates local political problems as well as economic ones. Therefore there are calls to return to radical assimilation for Aborigines. Just as in Jamaica numerous comments suggest that Pentecostals block social progress, kinship is seen as an impediment to Aboriginal development.

My position on these issues does not concern the intrinsic good of either Jamaican Pentecostalism or Arrernte kinship. Nor, in an account of change, could I possibly endorse the view that Gellner has criticised, that any specificity of value constitutes a sustainable milieu. Rather, my comments are referenced to Marx's famous maxim that people make history but not in circumstances that they choose. For people radically peripheralised, this view suggests that we attend not only to their values, but also to their contexts, the types of event and social relations they have had to face in forging current orientations. My point is that both Jamaicans and Aborigines already have changed, and their forms of value and status are no more nor less rational than those of other populations. It may be quite reasonable for Jamaicans to remain Pentecostalists, albeit with various conflicts and contradictions in their practice. If Western Arrernte are to change again, and it is my view that they should try, then it seems to me that they need kinship as much as they need to discard it. In both these cases, only those who experience contradictions can resolve them. With these remarks, I return to my imaged events and the conditions in which they were forged.

An integral part of globalisation has been the making of nation states and sometimes, in the latter part of the twentieth century, their unmaking as some of the local economies they wrought have become less viable. While this is a national concern for Jamaicans as sugar and then other sectors failed, in Australia the issue is regional. The failure of pastoralism in the Centre provides a familiar and pertinent example. In both these cases, limited natural environments, small populations, and barriers to or dislike of migration, along with national indifference, have made people marginal. At both these sites, Jamaica and Central Australia, to

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mix some metaphors of the hand, the invisible hand of the market having writ, moved on, and people struggle to adjust their lives.

A dimension of this struggle often remarked upon is the production of art and performance. In the absence of capital, the peripheralised still cultivate art and make themselves known to the world. Interestingly, both Jamaicans and Western Arrernte have their particular forms. For Jamaicans they are reggae music and a less known but vital tradition of naïve painting. Reggae has become a music for the Third and even Fourth world. Jamaica's naïve art, focussed on slavery and redemption, has produced one of the Third World's great national collections. In Central Australia, Namatjira's watercolours became an icon of Aboriginal creativity and adaptation. Recently they have been eclipsed by the acrylic dots of other groups in Central Australia. These startling products of the local and global have drawn worldwide acclaim, and encouraged the Arrernte to move on too. The Hermannsburg Potters, mainly women, have re-rendered Arrernte art in the form of spectacular pots decorated in ways that recall and also go beyond Namatjira. Creativity in art has its complement in daily life. Religion in Jamaica and kinship in Central Australia are two such social domains, art's pragmatic counterparts.

Pentecostalism came to Jamaica from the United States in the second decade of the twentieth century. It began an exceptionally rapid expansion in the late 1930s that continued to the 1960s, when it levelled off as the dominant form of Christianity in the society. Jamaica's engagement with the United States came in the wake of waning British influence towards the end of nineteenth century. The rise of the banana industry and American finance for sugar in Cuba and the Panama Canal fostered a new engagement with the region. These developments were reflected in Jamaica by the rise of male itinerant labour. The slaves emancipated in 1838 had sought to become independent cultivators but land was scarce and still controlled by plantations. Small farmers therefore divided their time between cultivation and paid work elsewhere. Women worked mainly on the tiny farms and maintained Jamaica's regional markets. When men pursued the openings created by American investment in the region, women expanded their work in cultivation.

They sustained the hillside farms alone.

This process was disrupted by the Great Depression that caused the expulsion of most Jamaican labour from its toeholds overseas. As men flooded back to Jamaica, women were displaced from their rural positions and sought, instead, service employment with a burgeoning middle class that had prospered through the trade links with America. Rural working women who had had 60 years of freedom from racialised menial employment found themselves returned to that position.

The experiences and responses of men and women were different in these circumstances. Itinerant labour overseas fostered, on the men's return, the growth of unionism and Rastafarianism. Unionism in Jamaica became exceptionally powerful and Rastafarianism became its symbolic existential counterpart increasingly concerned with notions of Africa. The women's position was different. Unlike their male counterparts, these urbanising women had little experience of mass, disciplined labour relevant to unionism. Nor did the 'Back-to-Africa' nationalism entirely address the interpersonal racialism in a maid's encounter with her mistress. These urbanising women came from milieux that were local and magical, infused with a creole cosmology: an animated world of ghosts with its Biblical pantheon of prophets forged by the emancipated as they broke away, both from the plantations and their mission guardians. Religious rite was a response to suffering and also a means to a better life. Women therefore rendered their experience in ritual terms and Pentecostalism, opposed to the ecclesiastical mores of the middle class and endorsed by a modern America against the old colonialism, became their vehicle.

I was drawn to study Pentecostalism in Jamaica not only because it is the majority religion but also because it presents a conundrum. With its links to the 'moral majority' in the United States, I wondered how such a religion could be reconciled with the fact that most Jamaican children are born out of wedlock and raised in matrifocal families. Moreover, social life is infused with an idiom of sexuality, referred to as 'rudeness'. How could such a 'bad' society that spurned British pietism adopt Pentecostalism

as its majority religion, and what exactly did it mean to its exponents? The answers to these questions also reveal how women have defined Pentecostalism as a status domain for themselves that addresses men, and their circumstance as New World Africans. The religion allows them to value themselves in dialogue with these reference points.

Though many pastors are men the religion's majority following is female with an ethos undoubtedly feminine. Moreover, I learnt quite rapidly that women position their practice of Pentecostalism in particular ways. Most of the women who are known as saints and command status in the church are women of at least early middle age. These are women who are filled with the spirit and manifest spiritual gifts including tongue speaking, prophecy, healing and spiritual dancing. Although young women are prominent in the church many of these are saved without being sanctified; that is, filled with the Spirit in such a way that allows the development of spiritual gifts. Young women saints are rare and often socially mobile into the middle class where they can command a husband. For other young women, the saints say that they are 'too young' to be sanctified, too young to receive the Spirit. Saints can be quite explicit on this point, noting that a young woman sanctified backslides easily, beckoned by a man to be his 'baby mother'. It is therefore better that young women not tarry 'too hard' seeking the Holy Ghost. It will come in time. And in fact, it does come for many women at the time when they terminate their child-bearing, often in their thirties, and begin to seek a pre-eminent status through ideas of spirituality rather than sexuality. In the course of this process they interrogate the institutional legacies of Pentecostalism with their New World experience.

Jamaican Pentecostalism like other Jamaican Christianities is the site of an intersection of two powerful mythologies. One of these is the Biblical myth of the fall that genders sin to the disadvantage of women. The burden of the fall from Eden is placed on the shoulders of Eve. The other is a Jamaican origin myth that explains Jamaica's colour-stratified society. This myth sees the genesis of modern Jamaica in the act of white planters

and their staff taking black slave women as concubines, thereby producing a brown middle stratum that split the ranks of the black enslaved. Jamaica's black majority has been subordinated and the ideological focus of the myth is clear. It not only makes women the locus of sin, like its Biblical counterpart, but also a source of Jamaica's stratification.

In this ideological climate, and against the backdrop of women's struggle in economic life, feminine control of sexuality is paramount and the Pentecostal status of sainthood is crucial. The ritual process for women of being saved and sanctified is a route to sovereignty of the person in which New World African notions of immanence and the body play an important part. Women with children born out of wedlock know and experience their bodies as changed through the rites of Pentecostalism. They thereby throw off the impediments to higher organisational status placed in their way by other churches for whom the married state is paramount. The metaphorical rendering of woman as vessel they take and use in their own way. They see themselves as embodied beings who capture the Holy Ghost in the womb whence it travels to the heart and into the blood to transform and energise them for a new ritual life. Xenoglossy is the sound of the Spirit forcing itself out through the mouth. The practice and embodiment of women overshadows the ritual presence of men and turns back the imputation of myth.

Elsewhere I have written at length of the discourse that these mythologies promote within Jamaican Pentecostalism. I have also written of my unease with Pentecostalism as a principal domain of status for working class women. Sainthood comes for some only through sexual renunciation. In addition, women re-define a local milieu, not a trans-national one still dominated by America. Yet Pentecostalism organises lower class women and offers individual mobility for some.[9] A recent mayor of Kingston who was also, prior to her retirement, first secretary in the Department of Health, is a notable Pentecostal saint.

Western Arrernte women sometimes describe another as *arrekwetye kngerre*, a big woman, and Lutherans have promoted *arrekwetye mwarre*, a good woman.[10] Some speakers have settled

on a creole (kriol) term, 'a good one', to describe a mature, adept woman. A 'good one', like 'Mum Shirl', is a woman boss to her domestic group. Usually such a woman is a grandmother, someone who has lived through the period known as 'runnin' round' and entered into the period known as 'settlin' down'. Today she and others like her are hubs of Arrernte sociality, a circumstance that demonstrates both change and continuities.

The suppressed anger of my friend, watching a particular excess among 'young girl runnin' round', reflects the concern these women feel that the young may not follow them. In this regard, being 'just like whitefellas' references both an image of European women as dependent, and also the colonial practice of Aboriginal women attaching themselves to a white pastoral worker who usually did not acknowledge his children. Though today following a man around is normal practice for young mothers, who place their children with relatives, especially grandmothers, as girls reach their thirties the practice is criticised. Some 'young girl runnin' round' must become good ones as their own mothers and sisters age. This tension between generations and between genders indicates that this status order is a precarious one.

David Schneider once said that 'the first step in understanding mothers is in understanding the special place which food has in the family'. Mothers, he meant to suggest, are generally thought of as good cooks. His subsequent observations suggest that commensality is a symbol of kinship easily distinguished from production. Yet this was not the case in Aboriginal society.[11] Mothers among other women were also the producers of food and, in the practice of production, the moment of gathering food was also the moment of commensality as children walked with their mothers, aunts and sisters, and sometimes their grandmothers. That which was not consumed was taken back to feed husbands and relatives who remained in camp. Gender relations, and especially polygyny, were also about labour relations in Aboriginal Australia. In resource rich societies, including the Western Arrernte, accumulating wives forged ritual relations, assisted in controlling young men, and no doubt gave sexual pleasure. In addition, wives with their growing children were also a workforce,

possibly, in the early years, placed at the service of a father-in-law and later commanded by his son-in-law.

This is not to say that women had no autonomy. Hamilton proposes otherwise in her account of a dual system in which men's and women's production revolved around different technologies and different products. Western Arrernte women, in small kin groups often related through mother-daughter pairs, foraged for bush foods, reptiles, grubs, eggs and occasionally birds brought down with a stone or stick. These foods were supplemented by cakes made from ground grass-seed baked in camp fires. The cakes were significant when men were staging major rituals that required resourcing over weeks. This set both the season and places where such rites could be performed. As a consequence, though men made women's grinding stones, women also had influence. Grinding stones could not be carried and were passed from one generation to the next consolidating mother-daughter links and requiring affinal interaction.

Hamilton's observations on rite are also pertinent. Women's ceremonies, that involved their own designs and songs, further defined a dual system. The women's domain was not equal in power to the men's, who hunted larger game, had extensive ritual and physical command, and exchanged knowledge, meat and other goods in order to cement supra-local relations. And yet these women's lives were specified and vital to the larger order. Merlan has suggested that these relations were 'unequal but non-colonising'. Men and women knew who they were, and were also unequal.[12]

The change in Western Arrernte women's lives has been extensive. Most observers comment on rite. Notoriously, there has been little continuous women's rite at Hermannsburg. Modest elements of knowledge and performance wax and wane through links with the Western Desert and northern Anmatyerre and Warlpiri. But a women's ritual complex these days is dominated by Lutheranism. A photograph of women potters by a 'significant' place has them standing by a rock believed to show Jesus' footprint inscribed on Arrernte country. These changes could occur because the other components of women's life changed.

The power of 'white' flour had its first impact on Western Arrernte women. The labour intensity and knowledge of environment involved in foraging was rapidly undermined by settlement and rationing. Settlements represented for women a new order of production that drew them away from grinding stones into the making of damper. In out of the way places, abandoned grinding stones are scattered across the country. The power of refined sugar was no less important. The labour intensity involved in gathering fruit and other sugar sources, honey ants and *peraltye*, a lerp deposit on gum leaves, indicates the practical and symbolic power encased in European settlement. In his study of the meaning of sugar, Mintz has argued that sugar as stimulant and tea as appetite suppressant acted like a narcotic for England's industrial classes. The impact of flour, sugar, and tea, on the Western Arrernte had to be enormous.[13]

Permanent settlement stripped the surrounding terrain of the food women had gathered. Periodic droughts were intensified by the impact of Europeans. This included the arrival of rabbits, and cattle bringing the seeds of exotic and virulent grasses embedded in their hooves. Where pastoral herding allowed men some opportunities for hunting and ritual practice, women at the mission were increasingly confined. The mission communal dining room made further inroads. It collectivised the Arrernte and, using control of production and commensality, defined people as 'one alone', or individuals, rather than as relatives. Going bush for foraging became known as 'picnic' or 'holiday'. And although some women did develop resource rich worker-boss relations in their domestic role, many recollect domestic work in a disparaging way. Craft work that was group-based and often involved clusters of kin leavened this situation, as did the holidays that took women with their children and men back to more familiar places.

The unhappy nature of these changes was that women gained physical respite but suffered loss of previous roles. Domestic kin relations had been realised through economy, and local production was embedded in kinship. This integrated complex was undermined and, with it, women's status. The collapse of women's ritual life is an index of decline. And although men and women

shared their Lutheran knowledge, in its practice women were thoroughly subordinate. Seeking to meld traditions, Lutherans held men's camps for their Arrernte evangelists. There were no camps for women. Though Western Arrernte women remark that the Lutherans stopped infant bride bestowal, they also emphasise their reduced status in the mission, even below white women. Tellingly, they observe that outside the church, although they sang within it, white women seldom greeted them.

The humiliations involved in this were augmented by prevalent venereal disease brought by white men. The tenor of the times was captured for me in a recent spat between a southern Arrernte woman and a pastor's wife. The pastor's wife had brought the news that the woman was too old for the popular 'choir trip'. The Arrernte woman heaved her frame around, threw up her skirt, lifted her leg above her head and said, 'What's wrong with me? I'm clean.' The old woman hit her mark. The pastor's wife was humiliated.

Notwithstanding the decline of pastoralism in Central Australia, for women the passage from mission tutelage to welfare bureaucracy has been significant. In 1961, child endowment and supporting mothers' pensions became available.[14] Women were often widows young and drew widows' pensions too. Now, with unemployment benefits, women can think of themselves as potentially autonomous. Through both demanding and giving, mainly among female kin, they can use food and cash to support a viable hearth again. Some have become 'good ones'.

Resources are invariably scarce and women work with a growing population, limited welfare and the superior status of men . Being a good one involves sustaining generalised exchange among bilateral kin. Over time, it involves the diffuse and balanced performing of relatedness that converts categorial relations into social value. On a regular basis one asks for and also gives welfare cash and food. Western Arrernte use a term, *ngkweltye*, meaning 'crumb' or 'scrap', to refer both to food and cash. 'Eh, I'm family (*rame rame*), your mother's brother's daughter's son (*mare*). You got somethin' for me?' While women deal out to some, they are also asking others for *ngkweltye*. 'Give me somethin', I'm your

little sister (*tyeye*)!' As in foraging over a terrain, one demands in the hope that there 'might be something' in a kin relation. This realised and reproduced network is a source of credit in times of need, and also a field in which a woman is seen as a carer of kin. Networks build on matrifilial and affinal relations as well as patrifilial ones forged across Aboriginal estates in a past economy. By virtue of permanent settlement, motorised transport and a new range of 'crumbs' and 'scraps', these networks are also an innovation with greater density and lateral extension than was possible before.[15]

To give too much, being 'soft' or 'easy', undermines one's own position. To give too little to too few dries up credit. It is a compliment to say of a woman 'I can ask 'im for something, he won't tell', meaning to ask for food and not be abused. On the other hand, to say 'he only looks after 'imself' is a denigration. Good ones are most often grandmothers because it is only with experience that women learn to command a network used for foraging cash and kind. By maintaining equanimity both in giving and denial they are able to secure a hearth in the face of limited resources. These women stabilise Western Arrernte society.

Sahlins points to the tension in this generalised exchange: 'the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite', and giving confirms obligation rather than extinguishing debt.[16] This, in conjunction with the size of networks, and the fact that a husband may contribute to a hearth while his wife must feed him, can make women's demanding sharing a fraught and even violent affair. Unstable marriages among the young leave older women caring for many children, and men can be difficult. Sometimes they ask for cash and spend their own on items of prestige: cars, petrol, grog and clothes, and ceremonial events. Thus equipped, they interface with agencies, especially land councils, in a more powerful milieu. The relatively gendered nature of local and extra-local life marks a parallel with the past. Yet unlike their predecessors who foraged across country, women today lack the luxury of feeding children and themselves largely in the absence of men. Not all men are mean to their wives but a husband's death can be a release. When widows grow old, however, their

fortunes can change again. Like the very young, they are sometimes sacrificed by daughters and daughters-in-law as they in turn feed their children, grandchildren, and husbands. The elderly give but receive little and hunger is a common experience.

Welfare, articulated through kinship, is not really a form of production comparable with the past. It is only a euphemism to say that foraging welfare is like foraging across a terrain. Women retain their kinship role redefining its values, but they no longer sustain their own means of production. For this reason, being 'a good one' is a status order built on shaky foundations until women can convert some of the value invested in kinship into other skills and education. Nonetheless, the social resilience of this new attempt at economy through kinship demonstrates the way in which subaltern women can find new vehicles to re-imagine and value selves in the course of major change. It is therefore unfortunate that only a few women have the time and confidence to become community leaders; even more unfortunate that such Aboriginal women are commonly understood by legislators only as abject dependents rather than as producers within their own domain.

Conclusion

Anthropology's forebears who focussed on difference did not have in mind maggoty dogs and fists full of hair. Nonetheless, I have used these images to draw attention to some forms of value that may seem anomalous. The feminised and embodied nature of Pentecostalism in Jamaica makes it a different religion from its American counterpart. A Jamaican saint is self-consciously that, a saint living in heaven on earth. Performance rather than moralising is prominent in the Jamaican version. Women have captured this performance and made it a status order of their own in a way that suggests an African past rather than a European one. The role of women in Arrernte bilateral kinship and the way in which commodities and cash now objectify kin relations make older women crucial to society again. 'Good ones' have worked to sustain relatedness in a circumstance where a transition from

kin-based to market-based society has come adrift. This transition is precluded by a cultural response to marginalisation in an economy and society that finds the problems that Arrernte face too hard to contemplate. Masked by the fact that the labour force was women, too few citizens care that an economic infrastructure has been destroyed without an effective substitute. In the meantime, welfare cash and commodities become an environment for women accessed through the production of kin.

I have suggested that anthropology, once conceived as the study of bounded cultures, is now more concerned with inter-relations and the course of change. One studies not bounded traditions but rather specified modes of change. This shift in the discipline reflects a change in the world, a long and enduring change currently described as 'globalisation'. I have implied in this discussion that anthropology must learn about globalisation but probably should use that knowledge mainly to illuminate the 'culturally specific modes' in which people respond to change. This applies especially to those peripheralised by globalisation and rendered as subalterns in a global world. Grasping how such people constitute a social milieu and give new value to their lives is especially important.

My proposal in this discussion has been that the genesis of values is central to maintenance of status honour. Noting struggles around status honour, social dramas of power and displacement, gives insight into the way in which people start to build anew the orders of a social life. In both the examples discussed, women struggle to transcend conditions thrust upon them and thereby deploy imagination in forging new ideas of what it is to be a valued person. In much of my recent work I have described these struggles as part of the politics of moral order, always present in society but especially marked in societies with a colonial past. This type of analysis has been at the core of the discipline. It is anthropology's role not simply to celebrate difference or solve the problems of the world but, rather, to reveal the abilities of people in contexts that are strange. Not all ways can be or should be sustained, but before such conclusions are drawn it is best to know who people are.

Let me make a final remark. The more traditionally oriented in anthropology are still diffident about studying change. I think that this is so because anthropologists themselves sometimes contemplate histories of conquest, dispossession and the like, and tend to see the people hurt as merely abject. I am no match for Julia Kristeva. Her discussion of abjection, however, suggests to me a few ideas that may have plagued various colleagues: that some among the peoples they have studied now struggle to redefine themselves. Such people, Kristeva might say, live 'without borders'. Vulnerable, they can confront a 'meaninglessness' that 'crushes' them. In the two field areas where I have worked these types of thing could be said. In a milder vein, some colleagues call people like Jamaicans and the Arrernte 'boring', or else suggest that the people themselves are morally culpable for not holding on to tradition.[17]

Clearly, these views are false and rest on the assumption that culture is a zero sum game of wholes possessed, or lost. Nonetheless, some turn away in embarrassment. Other anthropologists of good will make all difference 'resistance'. They assume that in the absence of wealth and state politics, forms of proto-organisation will always be prominent. In an interesting discussion, Veena Das takes an idea from Wittgenstein that, 'dazzled' by the rule as it appears in language, '[we] can never get outside it; [we]must always turn back. There is no outside; outside one cannot breathe'. Das takes this comment in a broader way and, inadvertently I think, re-interprets it. She observes that, as social beings, we cannot live beyond sociality and thereby must re-render it. In her account of a Punjabi Hindu widow, she uses this motif to address the widow's life. Suffering both misfortune and injustice, the widow neither falls apart nor musters physical revolt. Rather, she turns back on her circumstance and works to re-value it, in practice and imagination.[18] Luckily, human social beings with a cultural capacity are like that. Therefore I am confident that change will always generate worlds to interpret, and work for anthropologists.

Notes

1. See M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London, 1958, p.13, and E. Gellner, 'The Politics of Anthropology' in *Anthropology and Politics: Revolutions in the Sacred Grove*, Oxford, 1995, p.26.
2. See F. Jameson, 'Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue' in *The Cultures of Globalization*, eds. F. Jameson and M. Miyoshi, Durham and London, p.57; see also pp.67–76 for further relevant comment.
3. M. Sahlins, 'Goodbye to *Tristes Tropes*: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History' in *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays*, New York, 2000, pp.476, 494.
4. See E. Durkheim, 'Moral Obligation, Duty and Freedom', in *Emile Durkheim, Selected Writings*, ed. A. Giddens, Cambridge, 1972, pp.108–22. Also see C. Taylor, 'The Person' in *The Category of the Person*, eds M. Carrithers, S. Collins and S. Lukes, Cambridge, 1985, pp.257–81, and L. Dumont, 'On Value (Radcliffe-Brown Lecture in Social Anthropology)', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 66 (1980): 207–41.
5. This insightful comment on Marx came from R. Firth, 'Work and Value: Reflections on Ideas of Karl Marx', in *Social Anthropology of Work*, ed. S. Wallman, London and New York, pp.177–206, especially pp.180–81. The quotation is from N. Munn, *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim* (Papua New Guinea) Society, Cambridge, 1986, p.20.
6. D. Miller, *Modernity: An Ethnographic Approach*, Oxford, 1994, pp.107, 132.
7. See H. Joas, *The Genesis of Values*, Oxford, 2000, p.164 and passim. Joas' comments on imagination are profitably compared with those of Geertz on symbolisation. See C. Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, 1973, pp.87–125.
8. See P. Bourdieu, 'Identity and Representation' and 'Social Space and the Genesis of "Classes" 'in *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge, Mass., 1991, pp.220–28, 229–51' and R. Smith, 'Living in the Gun Mouth: Race, Class and Political Violence in Guyana' in *The Matrifocal Family: Power, Pluralism and Politics*, New York and London, 1996, pp.165–83.
9 See D. Austin-Broos, *Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Order*, Chicago, 1997.
10 The orthography employed here was devised by the Institute of Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs. Its fullest explanation can be found in J. Henderson and V. Dobson, *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary*, Alice Springs, 1994.

11 See D. Schneider, *American Kinship: A Cultural Account,* Englewood Cliffs, 1968, p.15.

12 See A. Hamilton, 'Dual Social System: Technology, Labour and Women's Secret Rites in the Eastern Western Desert of Australia', in *Traditional Aboriginal Society: A Reader,* ed. W. Edwards, South Melbourne, pp.34–52, and F. Merlan, 'Gender in Aboriginal Social Life: A Review', in *Social Anthropology and Australian Aboriginal Studies: A Contemporary Overview,* eds R. Berndt and R. Tonkinson, Canberra, 1988, p.35.

13. S. Mintz, *The Sweetness of Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History,* New York, 1985.

14. See J. Collmann, *Fringe-Dwellers and Welfare: The Aboriginal Response to Bureaucracy,* St. Lucia, 1988, p.118.

15. See D. Austin-Broos, 'Places, Practices and Things: The Articulation of Arrernte Kinship with Welfare and Work', manuscript.

16. M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics,* London, p.194.

17. J. Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection,* New York, 1982.

18. V. Das, 'The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity', in *Violence and Subjectivity,* eds V. Das, A. Kleinman, M. Ramphele, and P. Reynolds, Berkeley, 1997, p.208.