

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

**Retiring to Paradise? Reassessing Liminality Through  
Leisure Migration to Spain**

**being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Social Anthropology in the University of Hull**

**by**

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## Chapter 1 -

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Retiring to a dream: Independence and the management of liminality.*

*'...I noted the features of this silent world: the memory-erasing white architecture; the enforced leisure that fossilised the nervous system; the almost Africanised aspect, but a North Africa invented by someone who had never visited the Maghreb; the apparent absence of any social structure; the timelessness of a world beyond boredom, with no past, no future and a diminishing present. Perhaps this was what a leisure-dominated future would resemble? Nothing could ever happen in this affectless realm where entropic drift calmed the surfaces of a thousand swimming pools.'*

(J.G. Ballard 1996:35)

Over the last forty years, we have witnessed the birth of a new phenomenon in the Western world, that of 'the dream retirement.' This study examines a group of (mainly) Northern European older people who move to Spain in search of the culmination of their life-project. Following years of working to the clock they move away from the 'rat-race' to find warmth, good health, company, friendship and enjoyment. Yet, as the opening quotation (from J.G. Ballard's novel set on the Costa del Sol) reveals, the experience is often judged negatively by outsiders. The Costa is portrayed as a slightly unreal world, a liminal zone beyond the 'normal' realm of work. This thesis, an ethnographic exploration of life for older migrants in Spain takes seriously

this 'unreal' world. It explores the negotiation of the designated 'free-time' at the end of the working life. The creation of retirement at a determined legal cut-off point (Myerhoff 1982:111) has forced a separation between working identities and identities in the life beyond, which previously had (if at all) a ragged boundary between them. In short, it is a modern-day rite of passage. Now, as retirement approaches, new questions come to the fore. Where *should* we retire? How *do* we negotiate that culturally created 'time off' at the end of the working years? *Do* we find satisfaction, companionship, hope and fulfilment of dreams? Perhaps more mundanely, what *do* we actually do with that time?

This thesis is an ethnographic study devoted to exploring the lives and worlds of older people who, in answering the above questions, chose to migrate to Spain from Northern Europe. Its focus is the new brand of 'woopies' (well off older persons) seeking the 'rewards' of leisure following a lifetime of working. They enter an interstitial space devoted to the pursuit of adult play (Babcock 1978:25). The thesis interrogates the reality of such rewards, looking at the tensions inherent in the 'freedom' sought within utopian spaces such as Spain. I reveal how the imagined freedoms necessitate some form of regulation, and I employ a re-examination of anthropological models of ritual to do so.

Such a project evokes all manner of reactions. Surely this is not the typical domain of an anthropologist? Would it not be more appropriate to move a few more miles inland (or even across the water to Africa) and find a 'real' subject? The nature and subject of this project however takes seriously the current reassessment of sites and topics within the discipline. Current processes of globalisation, including increased mobility of populations through expanded travel possibilities, not to mention the economic

rationalisation and restructuring of the late twentieth century are changing the face of the world as it was. New directions in the study of anthropology have developed in response, questioning the overwhelming emphasis in anthropology on studies of the peripheries. Instead, it has 'come home,' as much valid within Europe and more familiar terrain than other peripheral sites (see Goddard, Llobera and Shore 1992). A very welcome move, this project is, nevertheless, conducted in an arena where there is still a bias maintained towards the peripheries. In particular, anthropology still tends to selectively avoid certain studies and topics, as demonstrated through the scepticism towards study in tourist zones. Anthropologists in Europe have tended to focus on the periphery because these sites presented little challenge to the ahistoricism of anthropologists' method and theory (Cole 1977). Yet, the presence of tourists and migrants in certain zones of the peripheries have exposed the fact that the peripheries and the lives of their inhabitants are subject to change. The consequence of the contamination of the peripheries by change is that they are rendered unworthy of the anthropologist's gaze. I posit that changes in peripheries do not make them less interesting or worthy of study; on the contrary, this makes them rather *more* so. Secondly, anthropology has come to address questions of power<sup>i</sup>, particularly through the process of 'studying up' (Nader 1972). In addition, the discipline is having to come to terms with 'the emergence of new identities - consumer and media oriented, ethnic regional, national and migrant - and new subjectivities' (Ahmed and Shore 1995:13).

One such 'new identity' is the 'positive ager,' a stance which overturns traditional gloomy pictures of old age. Positive ageing involves a more fluid agency-based approach to the life course than has been previously expected (Featherstone and Hepworth 1991:371, Hepworth 2000:127). Stages of the life course are no longer naturally linked to particular age-appropriate

behaviour; the life course is more fluid, malleable and open to interpretation. The potentialities of the positive ager have been greatly enhanced by the spatialisation of leisure practices through globalisation. For instance, one retirement complex in Spain makes the migration process sound like a mere bus ride away to a new life<sup>ii</sup> (see Fig. 1). Of course, a leisured retirement is open only to a certain few. Yet, with demographic projections, the trend looks set to continue. The second world assembly of the UN forum on ageing anticipates that by 2050, an estimated 2 billion people will be over sixty, comprising 20% of the entire population (ILO 2002). Although the vast majority will be in the developing world (bringing its own challenges) there will be an enormous relative and absolute growth in the numbers of older people in the developed world. Many of these older people will be familiar with overseas travel, tourism and living abroad already. What implications will this have for the experience of old age in the developed world?

The study itself is based upon research in two sites – a village inland and a small coastal town to the East of Málaga. The migrants I researched were on the whole of an older age. Other researchers such as O'Reilly have emphasised that focusing on 'retirement migration' implies a unitary and exclusive categorisation of migrants on the Costa which omits the experiences of younger people (2000a:60). However, not taking into full account the fact of ageing threatens to overlook a significant feature of migrants' lives. In my study, I also aimed to look specifically at British migrants because they represent the largest groups in the area<sup>iii</sup> (King *et al* 2000:38) but I soon found it impossible to ignore the mixture of nationalities present. However, with reference to particular questions of national identity, I refer overwhelmingly to British, and particularly English. That said, I also examine other nationalities to reflect the social reality; I

# Vicinity

You only need  
available time and be  
willing to enjoy life.  
*We expect you!*



Fig. 1— A New Life a Short Ride Away.  
Source: *Sol Andalusi. Healthy Livings. Sales Brochure*  
2000

interviewed and mixed with North Americans, Canadians, Germans, Dutch, French, Swedish, Norwegians and more.

### I. Migr-age-tion

It may seem strange to the reader that as a young woman, I chose to research something so distant from my own experiences. Yet, my interest was initially stimulated by research within a residential institution for older people in the UK, dealing with the very old (Oliver 1999). I found in Spain a very visible alternative to this experience of ageing. On its coast was an active and (apparently, at least) close-knit community, multinational in social make-up and presenting a rather more exciting vision than the expectation of old age I had come to imagine was possible. The mobility of older people's lives impressed me, especially compared to the stasis of others I had seen; six months here, two months there, with many seeking the 'best of both worlds' in both Spain and their country of origin.

Studying such a group contributes to two main areas of anthropology. For one, it fosters an understanding of a particular type of migration process. Following the critical shift in anthropology over the last decades, there has been a growing interest in movement which has ironically put it 'on the map.' Previously, anthropology had demonstrated a sedentarist bias (Malkki 1995:14), or represented moving groups in terms of fixity (Rapport and Dawson 1998). Culture was represented through a series of spatialising tropes (within the doing and writing of ethnography) as an essential property of groups fixed in place. Now, anthropologists are taking movement into account as an ever-present reality of life. Numerous subsequent studies have documented the means by which groups negotiate identity through travel, and express a fluid, processual version of 'culture'

within that. Through movement, one is said, as Bhabha puts it, to 'recreate' oneself (1994:9); movement brings a reinterrogation of one's identity. I examine how such notions are central to the self-expression of migrants in their later years. As I discuss later in the thesis, much of the rhetoric of this new slant within the discipline mirrors the Western romanticism associated with travel.

Second, the thesis offers anthropological insight into the ageing process, investigating the new ways in which old age is experienced and managed. New expectations of retirement are explored in the daily lives of older people. Their strong communal social life is explored through ethnographic work within leisure clubs on the coast. Yet, attention is paid to the diversity of aged lifestyles, by looking at those who *avoid* such activities. For this group, the avoidance of communal identification is central in their self-presentation as 'independent' in ageing too. Living in the village, I conducted semi-structured interviews and did participant observation in the organised clubs and associations on the Costa as well as observing and participating in the more small-scale social interactions inland. I challenged existing research in the area (O'Reilly 2000a and King, Warnes and Williams 2000) by studying as much life in the inland villages as much as the coastal zones that are often read as typical of the area. Moreover, unlike most work, which looks at either age or migration, I look at the interaction of the two phenomena. In particular, I examine how within transnational and cosmopolitan *spaces*, the ideal of the *place* of 'Spain' is still important as it is employed as the site for good ageing. Rather than diminishing the importance of place as would be expected by much transnational literature, I aim to explore how the place, Spain, is a contextual basis for much identity negotiation among migrants.

Until now, anthropological literature is relatively scant in the area. Most relevant to my own work is probably that of O'Reilly (2000a). Other studies, such as Gustafson's work on Swedish migrants (2001), which addresses more specifically some of the implications of transnational living for older people, including how migrants are attached to multiple sites, at home in both Sweden and Spain (*ibid.*:371). King, Warnes and Williams (2000) explore the phenomenon of 'International Retirement Migration' (IRM) in four sites: the Costa del Sol, Malta, Tuscany and the Algarve. They give a comprehensive introduction, although the scope is perhaps a little too broad for the anthropologist's eye. Other research by Dwyer and Ackers (2002) looks at the policy implications of this new development. My study adds a new dimension to the overwhelming sociological impetus of this research by investigating qualitatively how independence and senses of freedom in retirement are realised through migration.

In investigating the pursuit of the ideal retirement, I show how this planned 'dream' is to be understood as a Western cultural phenomenon. Yet, as Campbell suggests, dreams or fantasies are by nature perfect, omitting any elements that would be inherent in life (1989:85). He argues therefore that true pleasure lies in the longing and not the achievement. This thesis explores the reality of the consumption of that fantasy. How does it bear up in reality? Are independence, autonomy and freedom achieved? Or do other conditions contradict it? If so, how is this tension managed? How free is one to really leave behind the structures of one's life? Does one's life history inevitably inform the experience of the present, as Hockey suggests? (Reed and Roskell Payton 1996:547). In a social milieu in which it is deemed that individuals' pasts are erased (Fitzgerald 1986:219) does one even really *want* to disregard the achievements and identities of one's previous life? Can one be really free?



## II. Liminality and Ritual Theory

The third contribution is to anthropological understandings of ritual theory. I explore the fundamentally ontological questions mentioned above with reference to Turner's conception of liminality. I suggest that Spain represents an anti-structural zone, with complementary modes of behaviour governing life in a permanent 'communitas'/social anti-structure (Turner 1974:45). For retired life is deemed to be an escape from the yoke of responsibilities. The anthem of life is, 'this is my time now.' The application and interrogation of Turner is therefore relevant on a number of counts. For one, the condition of tourism itself has been explained as a moment of liminality, a 'sacred journey' away from normal social conventions (see Graburn 1978). Other researchers have similarly suggested that for migrants, certain facets of living in Spain itself are best described as liminal. O'Reilly, for example, asserts that British migrants are 'betwixt and between' cultures and countries (2000a). Migrants have, as it were, 'opted out'; their time in Spain, whether permanent or seasonal is deemed as a break from the normality of the past. Finally, the condition of retirement itself is often described as having liminal characteristics, and this is even more so following the fragmentation of the life course. Blaikie, for instance refers to the term, 'middlescence,' a middle-aged in-between period which is 'characterised by liminality and identity-crisis' (1999:25). Retired migrants, outside of structured work existence, enter a 'new sphere'<sup>iv</sup> inhabit an arena governed by the norm of enjoying one's time there. The features of liminality clearly spill over into migrants' everyday life experiences.

The problem with existing research is that although liminality is employed as a descriptive term for migrants in Spain (O'Reilly 2000a), it is rarely explored in terms of its *implications*. Moreover, there is to date, little

examination of the means by which structure forms and ‘crumbles away’ through the very actions of individuals. The thesis asks, ‘how does anti-structural liminality condition migrants’ experiences of growing older, negotiating time, dealing with leisure, national identity, other people and ultimately death?’ Moreover I analyse this with an eye to exploring how far Turner’s conception of anti-structure is relevant over time. What happens when liminality is not the usual *moment* of aberrance, but endures? The thesis offers no simple answers but explores how in all the domains, whilst an anti-structural ideal is sought, over time, aspects of the structural pervade.

Migrants’ negotiations of liminality confirm Turner’s argument that anti-structure cannot endure. For, he points out:

‘under the influence of time, the need to mobilise resources, and the necessity for social control among the members of the group in pursuance of these goals, the existential *communitas* is organised into a perduring social system’ (1969:132).

Yet, what is striking is that neither Turner, nor anyone else has ever explained *how* or *why* this process occurs. This thesis is an attempt to wrestle with these questions. Looking at several different domains of life (the negotiation of age, leisure, time, national identity, death and the community), the thesis explores the uneasy balance between order and disorder, freedom and organisation and the ‘immortal antagonists’ (Turner 1969:130) of anti-structural desires and structural enforcement. In a variety of small-scale arenas, I analyse how this actually occurs. I elaborate these varieties in a little more detail in the outline of the chapters.

### III. A note on approach

The thesis explores the negotiations of the division between desired and avoided (or feared) forms of identification. The desired is sought, but ultimately entails some version of the less desired to be part of life. This being a general pattern, I would like to dispel any notion that my analysis attempts to provide a rigid or deterministic model of behaviour. Within all cases, extremes will surface at particular points in time, which I point out throughout. It would be wholly inappropriate to posit that migrants in Spain follow 'one' rule of life, and such a presentation would be at odds with the complexity, ambiguity and, at times complete about-turns in opinion and behaviours characteristic of the intricacies of social life that I witnessed. Having gone some way to outline a schema, I would like the reader to bear in mind that these situations and movements are always contingent, always changing and never determined. This said, I now outline the development of the thesis.

### IV. Themes of the thesis

The thesis explores how migrants negotiate a satisfactory age-based identity. To do this, older migrants must navigate a path between negatively perceived and feared images and good ones. They escape feared aspects of life in the UK, yet find that the enjoyment of leisure brings its own problems, not least because aspects of a 'tourist' lifestyle themselves have resonance with undesired lifestyles. The UK symbolises migrants' previous time-bound working lives, the possibilities of ageing 'badly' and the deterioration and death which lie in wait. Yet, the need to escape is not clear cut. The UK represents to migrants negative aspects of life, but it also stands as a reminder of the inevitability of the ageing process and represents safety,

care and belonging. Simultaneously, to live too far a leisured lifestyle would invite the classification as the second feared pole of orientation, 'the tourist.' The tourist is idle, fritters away his or her time and doesn't belong. Moreover, the tourist is seen to have no individual identity. No aspects of either identity fit migrants' desired self-conceptions as ageing well, in an individual and autonomous manner. Migrants must distance themselves from both extremes in various domains of life. Problems arise in negotiating the desired identity however, as the positive poles of orientation sought through leisure in an anti-structural zone are ambiguous. In seeking leisure, the migrant shares the pleasure principle of the tourist. As such it is a fine line between the desired lifestyle and the feared one. In seeking the desired and escaping the feared, multiple contradictions and ambiguities arise, and the thesis explores these ambiguities.

The thesis is divided into two main parts. The first part of the thesis (chapter two to chapter five) offers a theoretical framework and contextual background. Chapter two introduces the methodology of the research as well as the various difficulties and ethical considerations taken into account. In chapter three I review discussions of the need for an anthropological study of migration, whilst drawing attention to the ways in which much work on migration echoes culturally-specific romantic beliefs about movement. The sense in which such beliefs are held by many of these migrants themselves is explored throughout the thesis. Chapter four draws attention to the particular specificities of Spain as a context of migration. Through an explanation of the historical constructions of Spain in Northern-European thought, I employ Massey's (1992) approach to a sense of place as deriving from the social interrelations particular to a site. In doing so, I include a review of the selectivity of the anthropological gaze on Andalucía, which has selectively avoided certain features (the coastal spread, tourism

and the employment of 'culture' for development). I also outline the experience of early migrant 'pioneers,' and their reactions to changes in the social and environmental make-up of the area. Finally in chapter five, I elucidate how, as a consequence of both the history and current development of tourism, the place and governing atmosphere could be seen as liminal or carnivalesque. I begin to demonstrate the implications of this as an enduring condition, in particular revealing the processes whereby desired anti-structural conditions become structural by necessity.

The second part of the thesis develops the exploration of this phenomenon, showing that the 'freedom' sought in these arenas becomes, by necessity governed by some sort of 'check' because of the double-edged nature of 'the desired.' This is evident in the areas of attitudes to ageing, tourism and leisure, time, national identity, death and community relations. In chapter six, I explore how the ideal of 'positive ageing,' a more self-defined and independent means of ageing, is the overriding motif among migrants. Yet, I show how this anti-structural feature of freedom becomes, paradoxically a requirement in itself. Thus, they can never entirely be 'free.' In addition, there are certain expectations of how to age well, which I see challenged by the physical process of ageing. As in Williams' (1990) superb exposition of managing old age in Aberdeen, it is clear that old age is governed by a series of paradoxes and challenges. Likewise in chapter seven, I show how the identity of a 'leisured person' rather than that of the tourist is adopted, because to be like a tourist is to demonstrate signs which could be considered as ageing negatively. Yet, in asserting this distinction, a more structured orientation to life is necessary, with the application of a work ethic to enjoyment. Within each chapter what becomes clear is that there is a kind of structuralist division between 'feared' and 'desired' lifestyles. The poles of identity have metaphorical resonance. By this I mean, for example

that the fears of ageing badly are likely to share similar putative traits with other structured undesired poles, such as a tourist identity, a strong national identity and more.

Chapter eight examines the similar ambivalences and tensions between desired time-use and actual time-use. Migrants often indulge in the sense of limitless freedom represented and imagined of life in Spain. Yet, simultaneously, the sense of time as value, as measured and not to be wasted is upheld. This is because first, migrants are ex-workers, accustomed to a system of time that either they find hard to 'shake off,' or they find ontological security within. Secondly, in the later stage of their life, they are aware that time is, in effect, more precious, because there is less of it. Again the structured informs the anti-structural. Chapter nine explores the question of national identity. I explore how despite some obvious attachments, such as the use of English-run services, most migrants do not think of themselves as particularly nationally oriented. Rather they assert a more international or cosmopolitan engagement. Again however, I reveal how some version of national identity is evident in people's behaviours, and is, paradoxically even expressed within a cosmopolitan outlook. Chapter ten extends the preceding chapter in exploring the community reaction to death, in which statements about belonging can be read. Methods of dealing with death and bereavement are culturally informed and reveal the limits to possibilities of local belonging.

Chapter eleven is a slightly special case, because in a sense it relates more generally to the issues of the other chapters. It examines more explicitly the relationship between individuals and the wider social network. In a sense the community is an odd one; there is only a recent shared history, it is mixed nationality, and yet as self-proclaimed 'individuals,' most migrants

share the common goal of seeking 'the good life.' How is this pursuit of autonomy and freedom managed in contradictory conditions that sees a mass of people in a physical concentration all pursuing 'difference?' (Baudrillard 1998:156). Ultimately, versions of what the good life is clash, and the chapter examines the ways in which the inevitable disputes are dealt with. Central to this is the use of gossip, to both define the concerns and values of the community, and, contrastively to allow individual expression and power. Through community talk, a locally sanctioned behaviour, the tensions and threats of others' individuality are reduced to manageable concerns, whilst also allowing the possibility of individual expression of often forthright opinion. It has a dual purpose in loosely shaping the community group, whilst sowing the seeds for its undoing. It is a special form, which is both destructive and constructive of community, both structural (community-forming) and anti-structural in the unforeseen nature of its events and, ultimately in its upsetting potential. It expresses the paradoxes of the community of independence-asserting migrants.

The overriding atmosphere of social life in this context resonates with Sartre's play, *No Exit (Huis Clos)* (1989[1944]). Sartre considers three unrelated people, locked in a room in the afterlife, who know nothing of each other's histories. The dialogue captures the need for social belonging and social approval and yet also the suspicion and fear aroused by the meeting of unknown individuals with whom there are no common bonds or shared senses of history. Stripped bare of the accoutrements of their previous life, the dialogue captures the degree to which the individuals, despite their reluctance, paradoxically need other people to give shape and meaning to their own lives. As Hannerz says, 'meaning is socially validated. It is made something solid and real rather than an individual whim' (1992:128). I suppose this is the upshot of the thesis, that given culturally

driven imperatives for (anti-structural) independence, this must always be managed with a modicum of structured belonging, whatever that may be.

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**Notes:**

<sup>i</sup> Pina Cabral points out, 'we witnessed an increased interest on the part of anthropologists in the study of elite contexts...' (2000:1).

<sup>ii</sup> King, Warnes and Williams note, 'Advances in the mass long-distance travel market and telecommunications underpin the accelerating globalisation of work experience, vacations and potentially retirement residence' (2000:197).

<sup>iii</sup> King *et al* point out that in 1997, 34,225 British people received pensions overseas in Spain (2000:25).

<sup>iv</sup> Blaikie points out how the imagery of retirement evokes a transition to a new life, rather than a continuation of the old (1999:73).



## Chapter 2 - METHODS

### Introduction- Anthropology and Research Choices

In approaching the research for the thesis, I was informed by contemporary debates surrounding anthropological fieldwork. In particular, the last twenty years has seen a phase of soul-searching and evaluation in the development of the discipline (Ahmed and Shore 1995). Not only has its field of study altered, the methodology and nature of textual representation have also been questioned (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986). Perhaps the most lasting impression in the messy aftermath is an awareness of reflexivity in the gathering and portrayal of empirical detail. However much as researchers we are keen to get 'real' empirical detail, (Scheper Hughes 1992:23) the idiosyncrasies of the research enterprise are fundamentally researcher-specific. There are no 'wrong' or 'right' ways to research, but the very nature of these choices as context-, topic- and researcher-specific provoke a delineation and justification of them. In other words, the engagement of the researcher with the researched needs to be made explicit from the outset (Okely and Callaway 1992) and this chapter sets out to do that.

Dingwall points out how often it is not a conscious intention to be a qualitative researcher, rather one discovers one *is*, by virtue of working with other people whose work inclines that way (1997:51). This is certainly my experience. My study of sociology and anthropology at university had leant towards exploring monographs, whose hallmark was long intensive periods

of fieldwork and participant observation<sup>i</sup>. The texts that I read and the work that I admired extolled the virtues of the hermeneutic approach to research. My mentors in the university (Okely, Dawson and Hockey) had all undertaken in-depth fieldwork, and in a sense, I took it for granted that I would do the same. This is not something to regret; on the contrary, the 'occupational socialisation' (*ibid.*:51) convinced me that qualitative research is, as Hammersley and Atkinson state, 'not a marginal 'soft' method' used 'to bolster the findings of survey research,' (1983:237). Instead, it is the optimum method to uncover the complexity of social life. Yet in many studies (some valuable accounts notwithstanding, such as Hobbs and May 1993 and Watson 1999) it appears that the experience of fieldwork is the proverbial bed of roses (Hobbs and May 1993:1). Alternatively, the 'struggle' of fieldwork itself is employed as a key trope of authentication (Clifford 1988). Despite the latter case, I firmly believe that illustrations of when things did not go right (both as a result of others' reactions and my own mistakes and weaknesses) is an important component of reflexive research. This is because mistakes are often not lost opportunities; on the contrary, they reveal much.

### **I. Preparing for the field**

It is often posited that certain perspectives frame the methodology undertaken in any given study (Silverman 2001:3). In other words, existing assumptions and philosophical underpinnings shape distinctive views about how the social world functions (*ibid.*:2, Mason 1996:3). These are taken to the field-site and impinge on the data collected and how it is collected. Although I concede that researchers are influenced by previous theory and assumptions, one should not overstate the case. In fact results are entirely contingent on what one finds in the site.

There is one stance that I cannot be swayed from however, and that is the interpretivist approach. From the outset of the research, I believed that social phenomena are not facts to be explained, but experiences giving emergent meanings. Following the postmodernist critique of objectivism, the positivist approach to social science has long been discredited. The subjective position is, according to Hastrup, 'insurmountable' (1995:13); the anthropologist is always located within a system in which claims for detached neutrality are not valid. In accordance with this, most of my research and presentation was geared towards in-depth participant observation in ethnographic work, aiming to discover the emergent meanings of life in that site.

The focus of my study was influenced by both theoretical and personal interests, and a certain degree of serendipity. As I pointed out in chapter one, my experience of working in a residential institution for older people had led to a disappointment with wider social and cultural systems used to control the disorder wrought by 'ageing.' As an undergraduate, I devoted many hours of study to this topic. Around this time, I visited my elder sister who had moved out to Spain in 1994 to work as a carer for a woman disabled by multiple sclerosis. When her job finished, she stayed in Spain. During the visit, I became aware of the large numbers of expatriate elderly people living in the area, and saw a radical alternative to the passivity and marginality of ageing I had been confronted with in the UK. The sense of independence and agency demonstrated by the older migrants as well as their cosmopolitan social make-up presented a very interesting research topic. I wondered whether the spirited lifestyles derived in any way from their decision to migrate.

Prior to gaining funding, I designed my research proposal. As a result, before entering the field I had a broad idea of what sort of things I had hoped to find. Debates have raged about whether it is appropriate or not to have hypothesis-led research, in which a hypothesis is tested throughout the research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:20, Mason 1996:9), yet this decision was foreclosed by the necessity of producing a research proposal (*ibid.*:9). In the proposal I had formed a broad idea (informed by earlier observations) that older migrants replace 'age' as the primary source of identity in the diasporic site, in favour of other markers (such as nationality). However, this broad idea was held in the spirit of the flexible strategy of ethnography. Rather than being limited by prior misleading assumptions (*ibid.*:22) and committed to 'proving' the original assertion, I sought instead to develop theory as it emerged through the course of the research. At times, I wished that I had indeed 'proven' my ideas (as it certainly would have been much easier), although in the presentation of my findings, you will find that the original assertion, whilst still salient, plays second fiddle to other findings which became apparent *throughout* the research.

As I went on, I found increasingly that research assumptions are *always* provisional. In fieldwork preparation, I duly researched and wrote papers which bear little resemblance to the actual issues emerging from the research, and have all but abandoned them in the presentation of findings. For instance, part of my early preparation entailed getting to grips with the regional character of the Mediterranean as depicted by anthropologists. This included features such as the 'honour and shame complex' (Goddard, Llobera and Shore 1992:4-5). Although this has been a key feature in depictions of the periphery previously, I found it to be of little significance in *this* Spanish context. The selectivity of such accounts proved little use in

relation to my research (an issue I discuss in more detail in chapter four). Perhaps unconsciously I had already prepared myself to dispel these stereotypes, although in reality I am glad to have read them if only for an unforeseen added value. For, through familiarising myself with regional texts, I became cognisant of the degree to which migrants (as ‘amateur anthropologists’) echo similar observations and understandings of the ‘Mediterranean’ character as anthropologists<sup>ii</sup>.

In line with the flexible spirit of ethnography, preparing for the field involved not too much ‘extensive pre-fieldwork design’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:23). This does not mean to say however that there was *no* research design. As I discussed previously, to demonstrate intellectual credibility and to gain funding it was a necessary task (Mason 1996:9). Moreover, a degree of pre-fieldwork self-interrogation (*ibid.*:29) regarding my purposes and ideas was valuable, and the ideas also proved useful to ‘fall back on’ during research. However, this does not mean that one should be constrained by the research design. As time has moved on, and as the research began to speak for itself, I found that the focus slowly altered, reflecting the topics raised by migrants themselves during fieldwork. An example of the contingency of research design is demonstrated by the fact that one of my original concerns was to study residential homes in Spain. In reality, the impracticalities were manifest. There seemed to be very few homes in the area and these were only very expensive luxurious centres for the very wealthy, with all the attendant problems of access these present. The line of enquiry was soon abandoned in favour of a more feasible one.

## II. Method Choices and their Implications during Fieldwork

Anthropological fieldwork involves immersion in the area of study. On the advice of my supervisors, and to fit in with teaching commitments, I went out to the field as soon as possible to get acquainted. My fieldwork was untraditional in the sense that it was conducted in two phases, from August 1998 - end December 1998 and from June 1999 - end December 1999. Several follow-up visits followed, including a week and a month in 2000, and a week and six further weeks in 2001, to continue fieldwork, maintain contacts and see friends. I lived in a village, Freila, although I conducted research both there and in the coastal town, Tocina. Further research was conducted in a village even further inland, and I undertook a couple of forays into more inland sites at intervals throughout my research. These were a welcome relief from the pressures of researching in the same place, and gave me interesting comparisons. The three main methods I used throughout the periods of research were participant observation, interviews and the analysis of documents such as magazines and newspapers read by migrants. I also took photos at varying opportunities, and being a hoarder, collected brochures for products on the market to expatriate consumers. I explain my employment and timing of methods as well as the benefits of such an approach.

### II.i Interviews

Initially, I conducted semi-structured interviews. Although I was cautious that a reliance on interviews as information sources has its own problems, I found the approach beneficial. Not only did the interviews reveal certain features of the migrant population left uncovered by observing 'natural' sites, but more importantly, they facilitated participant observation through

meeting people. Once initial contact was established, further meetings allowing the developments of networks were facilitated. An additional benefit was that in the interview context I could explicitly introduce and address my role as a researcher, since one enters the interview encounter explicitly as 'researcher.' Ambiguity was eliminated in ways that it could not have been in other encounters. The honesty was usually appreciated, and many of the people who 'bared all' in interviews went on to become my friends. The role of interviewer also served, in the eyes of some, to grant me validity. The 'hanging-out' typical of anthropological research (Dingwall 1997:53) is not always understood by research subjects, and so initially, I adopted the 'clipboard stance' to get my face known, and let relationships develop following these. I do not know if this was even a conscious decision, but it worked. It also had the benefit of getting over the initial problem of accessing people who do not participate in the public 'scene' (and there are many) and for whom participant observation is impossible.

I conducted sixty-eight interviews, although this in no way includes the almost countless other similar interactions/informal interviews I had with other people. I first approached active and well-known people within the community, enabled through my sister's preparatory work. Already part of 'the community,' she solicited people who would be willing to meet me. Following this, sampling was via a semi-directive snowball strategy; i.e. I selected contacts from those suggested to me in order to get a wide coverage of different types of migrants. I interviewed fourteen people living in coastal urbanisations, twenty-two in flats or houses in the town, one person in a residential home, fifteen people in the village and fourteen people in the *campo* (country) area away from the coast. In no way could I cover all different types of migrants, so on the whole I focused on older people in these sites, rather than the lesser numbers of younger migrants in the area. I

did not focus on the hippie contingency, nor the seasonal workers, but almost exclusively on those who had retired to Spain.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured, allowing for the possibility of interviewees talking about what they felt was important. The questions I had were more like 'props' in case the conversation died out, but this rarely happened. In fact, I can only think of one interview that followed the more traditional path of a semi-structured interview, lasting around an hour. Most went on for three-plus hours, and some went on for the whole day, or in two cases even longer. I had in my mind that 'a completely unbounded and unorganised conversation usually ends up telling no story at all,' (Rossman and Rallis 1998:126) although I tried to restrict my interference. I did not want to sharply define the areas we would cover in the interaction, rather I wanted to stimulate interviewees to talk about broad issues (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:113). The advantages of this 'actor-led' approach are of course often counterbalanced by the disadvantages, not least in terms of inefficiency. I remember how in one interview with Kay, an American that went on all day, an hour and a half long conversational detour focused entirely on her cat's eating habits. Nevertheless, whilst one could say that this was not directly relevant to my research (and I screened these out in recording the interview), I felt that by giving time to listen and appreciate the interests of Kay, I was reciprocating her involvement in some way. A summary of the guiding questions I asked is presented in Appendix 1.

The conversations I had went beyond strictly information-finding interviews, and fostered intimacy and friendship which, after time, allowed the interviewee to be a little more candid than they perhaps would have been with a stranger interviewing them. In most cases<sup>iii</sup>, interviews were



held in interviewees' homes. This was most comfortable for informants, and also gave them the opportunity to show me how they lived. Often the informal conversations before or after the interview in its strictest sense were very useful (Rossman and Rallis 1998:124). People could be more open at home than in a public setting where they could have been overheard<sup>iv</sup>. Following interviews, I would often bump into the same people in clubs or groups, and, having shared a pleasant morning or afternoon together, the initial formality often found between strangers was lessened.

### II.ii Participant Observation

The interviews were however fitted around the main methodological activity, participant observation. Every week I attended a variety of the clubs and associations frequented by the older migrants. These included the British Legion once or twice a week, the American Club once a week, the International Club twice a week, and occasional visits to an Embroidery Club, art classes, ballroom dancing, church services and AGMs (meetings) of the groups. I also went to the All Saints celebrations, the *fiestas* of the village and town, and twice to the annual Remembrance Day ceremonies and American Club Thanksgiving Day celebrations. As Vandenhooonaard, who undertook a similar study pointed out, it is important in the retirement community to be 'visible in the community' (1994:124). I was out and about quite a lot, visiting people and meeting up with them outside of club events.

To fully appreciate the diverse experiences, I also participated fully in village life as a more or less ordinary resident would. In my first year I lived with a young Spanish family in the village, the implications of which I will return to later. I accompanied them many times in their activities during daily life, and gained access to a number of people who lived in the same



area. Also, out of financial necessity, I worked in a local bar for a couple of nights a week. This allowed me to get to a hub of village life without being obtrusive, enabling me to meet people, explain what I was doing without having to go and knock unannounced on their door. I also placed great importance on visiting certain people regularly. Some of these erstwhile informants I still keep in regular contact with and value now as friends.

### II.iii Document Analysis

The final data-source was an array of documents and visual images. I collected the free weekly papers for migrants and tourists, as well as the monthly magazines. Furthermore, when people volunteered, I accepted 'insider' written accounts (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:129), which ranged from poems to literary vignettes and lifestories, some of which are included in this text. I took photographs of various occasions and changes to the town and landscapes, which act as visual reminders to me of certain things, and more conventionally, serve as illustrations. Finally, I have kept in touch through regular letter-writing and sporadic email correspondence with a number of people from my fieldsites. These serve to maintain friendships and also keep me up to date with news and developments.

### II. iv Means of Recording Data

My data collection revolved around the usual dilemma of deciding how much time one should spend participating, and how much time spent recording data. I was aware of the possibility of interference and selectivity through relying on memory, so on the whole I made it a rule to record details as soon as possible following an event. At times I felt that this was a 'chore,' and at other times senses of guilt and inadequacy that my fieldnotes

were not detailed enough, an experience common to most anthropologists (Jackson 1990:11).

During fieldwork, I made my way through several multipurpose research notebooks, apart from my field-diaries, which I carried around with me. Although they were originally intended as an information source (containing a growing body of phone numbers, and bus timetables etc.) they acted as 'scribble space,' for odd bits of conversation, thoughts and themes, my 'to-do' lists as well as a few diatribes and ideas. Occasionally I look at them out of a sense of nostalgia as they are reminders of my daily life in Spain. As time passed on, however, I realised they are a valuable aid in themselves. In retrospect they have provided a material record of my own development throughout research and particularly my abandonment of certain lines of thought. On top of this, I had my interview and fieldnote record-books. I recorded interviews in shorthand verbatim form to quote during the thesis. I did not use a tape-recorder because the prohibitive time spent on transcribing day-long interviews in an already limited time-span for fieldwork. More importantly, people are highly sensitive about issues of anonymity (see chapter eleven), and to tape interviews would, I felt make people guarded about what they said.

### **III. Factors and Problems Affecting Data Collection**

#### **III.i Access and Impression Management**

For some researchers, access is sometimes difficult to obtain. On the whole, for me, it was fairly straightforward. In the town, I contacted the relevant 'leading lights' of the community in the initial stages, and they introduced me to the social clubs. However, on one occasion, I was denied access, and

this shocked and upset me. Yet, as I established previously, value can be drawn from problematic experiences during fieldwork. In fact, difficulties and blind alleys I met were revealing about the position, beliefs and values that the research subjects hold. The experience of being denied access, unpleasant as it was, proved to be very informative about the feelings of migrants. I recount the tale below.

Two weeks into fieldwork, I went into the International Club. As I walked in, a number of people turned around to look at me. I explained who I was and what I was doing. I was taken aback by the reaction of the man behind the bar (who I later found out was the chairman):

He said, 'No thank you, we don't want your sort around here.' Startled, I asked him to explain why he objected to me conducting research. 'People here keep themselves to themselves,' he said. 'They've had students doing this sort of thing before and they don't like it.' When I pointed out that I was visiting other well-established clubs in the area, his manner changed a little, he relaxed and told me that he'd discuss it with others and that I should come back on Saturday.

Feeling very humiliated, I left. I'd reached the corner of the next street, before I took a detour, avoiding the crowds to find a quiet place to cry, feeling lonely and disillusioned. At that point, a plane home seemed a very attractive option. The situation remedied itself, after Barbara, a popular lady whom I interviewed, and Richard, a long-standing migrant acted as my advocates. The next time I walked in with university papers and clipboard evident, although these were not necessary as Janet had put a word in for me. The same man was very friendly and welcoming, explaining that before they had had people in from the BBC, prying into their finances and all sorts. 'People don't want to feel like Big brother is watching them' he said, although I assured him at this point that this sort of detail I would not be after.

The anecdote is indicative of the suspicion that pervades certain relationships. Was I who I said I was? Nothing was known of my history, and it was only when I had the advocacy of others that I was allowed in. Then the manner changed, and I was immediately embraced into the fellowship. It also reveals how some migrants 'keep themselves to themselves' in a closed group.

In the village of Freila, access was less of a problem as I belonged by virtue of living there. In fact, one of the most serendipitous of experiences was the opportunity to live with a local family native to the village. Prior to my arrival in Spain, I had asked my sister to ask around if there was a Spanish family whom I could lodge with and improve my command of Spanish in daily living situations. I was restricted in finances and could only offer a small rent, certainly nothing like the extortionate fees that could be earned from renting a room in what is a desirable tourist site. The search was proving very difficult, and it was decided that I would rent a room at a *pension* in a village close to her house. I left the fieldsite for a week's conference and when I returned, my sister's friend had mentioned it to some men he worked with, one of whom was Eduardo. He and his wife, Ana Mari were interested in solving my predicament, and suddenly I found myself living in the middle of Freila village with her, Eduardo and their two young boys, Antonio (aged twenty months) and David (seven).

At this point, I was plunged into the loneliness of fieldwork. The initial excitement of setting up contacts etc. had worn off and I felt a sense of isolation. I was living with a Spanish family when, at best, my command of Spanish was fairly weak. As it transpired, this experience certainly shaped the whole path of my research. Through living in Freila and not in the town, I became aware of the village and town distinction that is crucial to many village migrants (discussed in chapters nine and eleven). More importantly, Ana Mari was popular in the village, and I was easily accepted by her friends and acquaintances, easing the loneliness and giving me insight into an arena that it is not easy to gain access to. To her friends, I was always first an *extranjera* (foreigner), but I was also to some degree '*la niña de Ana Mari*,' (Ana Mari's girl) which gave me a persona distinct from other foreigners. I

was not so much an anonymous foreigner, but had an identity through being associated with this family. Even now, I go back to stay there and when I meet people in the pueblo, I can say '*vivía con la familia de Colorin*' (I used to live with Colorin's family'), and this makes me more knowable via that connection. This of course may have led to bias, as my idea of the Spanish is also framed by my in-depth knowledge of that family. As others have pointed out to me, they are in many ways a lot more progressive than some, for many Spaniards in the area would not even think about letting me live in their home. Yet, most importantly, living there gave me a reference point for thinking about the veracity of migrants' stereotypes of locals.

Dubisch notes that in her experiences in Greece it was difficult to know whether she was a customer or guest (1995:189), and although my relationship with the family began as a business transaction, it soon transcended this. Watching the family's changing lifestyle over the last couple of years, being involved in occasions in their lives and being told their stories has also given me insight into another aspect of life, which I never would have had living in the realm of the tourist/migrant. It also gave me a 'get-out clause,' as many times, even amongst migrants, I was mistaken for an *au pair*, although the family never treated me as one. At times, it was a relief to slip into this role, whereby people stopped treating me as a researcher.

If anything, I found my identity as 'the researcher' the most problematic. I was interested in others and going to be writing about them, so in a sense I became a public figure. This meant I was often viewed with suspicion, as a kind of journalist (as demonstrated in the initial reaction at the International Club), or worse, as a voyeur. Others perceived me in the role of a critic (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:93) or judge of their way of life. Certainly,

I was a subject for discussion. Unsurprisingly, when 'in the spotlight,' I sometimes heard bad things about myself, along the lines that my undertaking was 'pointless' and that, by implication, I had probably chosen to be there for a long holiday (see chapter seven). This is best described by an anecdote:

I was sitting only a few feet away from somebody at one coffee morning who was very negative about what I was doing, after hearing me on the wireless. He said, 'well, that's all very interesting isn't it, but I wonder who's paying for this...?' At this point, I felt that I had to address this and put him straight for fear of embarrassment later as he obviously was not aware of who I was. I pointed out the woman on the radio was me. I told him I was working in a university in England as part payment for being able to do this, and my grant was a minimal amount. I was almost applauded by one woman who thought what I was doing, in her words showed 'spunk.'

On the best occasions and in my most forgiving moments, I could read these comments as an insight into the life-worlds of migrants. For instance, the man's reaction revealed that one had to have 'earned' the right to be in Spain, although the contrary reaction of the woman demonstrates the premium placed on possessing certain traits of grit, toughness and verve. Such insights were afforded by analytical distance but were nonetheless embarrassing and upsetting at the time.

As the above insight corroborates, the way that other's perceived me was vital. As a result, I had to undertake some 'impression management' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:78, Fortier 1999). Given the age difference between myself and many of the people I talked to, blunting our differences (*ibid.*:79) was important (although I point out later the value of 'difference'). I tried to dress casually but appropriately, trying not 'to look like a tourist.' On one occasion, I went into a charity shop where a lady I was friends with worked. The process of assimilation was easier as I walked out having done a swap of time for 'a sale' with an armful of clothes. Some women I talked to

referred to the ways in which they had changed their regional accents to fit in with the middle class population. Anyone who knows me will be aware that I have an accent kindly described as 'estuary,' but as I have never been able (nor desired) to modify this in my life, I had to make do with that. That said, the potential distractions of this were compensated for by my status as a university researcher. In other contexts, this would be perceived of as a disadvantage, but here, it seemed to count for something. For some people, I was at times viewed as 'the expert' during fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:93), and was asked, 'What can you tell us about *us*?'

The problem of impression management was made quite difficult by the differentiated nature of the population I was studying. I felt I was often split between loyalties, often with embarrassing consequences. I wanted to know as many people's points of views as possible, but conversations with one person's enemies was seen as fraternising with them. On many occasions I was addressed with the accusation that, 'you like somebody that I don't like.' An example of a compromising position I was put in is when I saw one informant (who had become a friend) at a fine art meeting. The last time I saw her, she knew that I was regularly going to the British Legion, and expressed her disapproval at how I was supporting militarism by helping out in collecting 'poppy' money at the airport. In the earshot of some people who attended the Legion, she asked me loudly in a friendly but nonetheless mocking manner how I'd got on. At the same time I did not want to disrupt our friendship, I worried that this had upset the others, who were also supportive towards me. Working in the bar presented similar problems. It gave me access to a different group of people, but I knew that for some people the image of me as a studious type was diminished as a result. Some disapproved of the expat crowd who went to the bar, and I was inadvertently grouped 'with them.'



I found myself compromised at times by the need to show empathy with what was said. The phrase 'don't you agree?' seemed to be commonly invoked following opinions. As Rossman and Rallis point out: 'The comfort people feel with others that think are like them....can be powerful in setting a tone for open communication'(1998:127). Sometimes, I felt I was playing a dangerous balancing act as I did not want to alienate myself from my subject, yet I did not want to become incriminated by opinions that I did not hold. At times, during fieldwork I felt that in participating and observing, my personality was subdued as I acted more like a 'sponge,' developing a kind of heightened ethnographic sensitivity, a nerve overload that was inspiring, but at the same time exhausting. In order not to disrupt the openness of some people when discussing issues, I suppressed my own opinions, which I often regret. For instance, one man launched a scathing attack on 'single-mothers,' unaware of my personal situation in which my own sister had recently returned to England with her young children following the breakdown of her relationship. In being a 'sponge' I often went along with behaviour that I would normally not have done. This sponge-effect was intensified by the 'layered' nature of the particular social reality I was looking at. For, as Bruner discovered in looking at tourism in Bali, when studying in a tourist location, one is existing in a heightened ethnographic situation (1997:172). Not only does one slip between the touristic and the ethnographic (as one is feeling the same sensations as many participants), but as he notes in Bali,

'complexity is multiplied in a many-layered reflexive voyeurism, in a thick touristic description. The tourists were looking at the Balinese, the ethnographers were looking at the Balinese as well as the tourists; the tourists were looking at the

ethnographers; and of course, the Balinese were looking at everyone' (*ibid.*:170).

This dilemma is even more apt in Spain. As I show in chapter eleven, the need to uncover information about others was not restricted purely to myself but was a salient feature of life for everyone in this newly created society. I was like everyone else in this respect, except it was my legitimate job!

The data obtained was undoubtedly influenced by my own identity, particularly my age, gender and nationality. Gender-wise, things were quite straightforward, as most of the people I spoke to were women, and I found it was easy to foster a rapport, particularly given their approval of what I was doing. My nationality and similarity of situation meant that in a sense, I could also do research on myself, because, like the migrants, I had, at least for some time, come to live in Spain. Particularly in studies of migration, the division between the subject and author is blurred (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996:18-23). At times I use auto-ethnographic insights in the thesis. For instance, in chapter seven, I refer to how I felt compelled to adopt a work-ethic in order to fend off a 'tourist' status. Whilst writing fieldnotes, I recorded my own thoughts in italics, including the same issues experienced by migrants. Going to the doctors, dentists, internet centre and so on were enough for me to experience similar frustrations to migrants. Even earlier experiences were definitive - I'd had a bad fall when I went out to Spain in 1995. Then, in hospital, I was unable to speak a word of Spanish, and recognised what a frightening experience it was when the ability to communicate is lost.

### III.ii Age

Of course the most significant factor of all was my age, which, paradoxically as Cohen points out, is often deemed irrelevant even by authors of literature on ageing (1994:142). When I began my research I was only twenty-two years old, which created a forty or fifty year age difference with the average migrant. Like any position, there are peculiarities involved in this difference, but it is crucial to acknowledge this difference (Titley and Chasey 1996:151). To begin from the weaknesses, I was no doubt aware of the limitations of my age to 'truly' participate. I was much more of a detached observer than some could be, for I was not undergoing the same processes provoking feelings and emotions of dealing with later life (see Hepworth 1998). My youth meant that I, like Ganguly, a researcher who documents problems of similar age differences, was viewed at times with amused indulgence or 'scientific' dismay. Equating youth with inexperience meant the sentiment was, 'could this be real scholarship [with someone this age]?' (Ganguly 1992:29). My youth also gave leeway to describe me in ways that migrants would not likely do if I was older. One woman, for example described me as a 'cunning young thing who comes and researches us!'

Of course, at times I was restricted by a generational exclusion. For instance, at one remembrance day service, the priest gave a sermon explaining how his father used to sit at the head of the table reading the Bible. He then asked, 'How many gold leaf Bibles are undisturbed now? The younger generation are sadly lacking in this direction.' Many of the congregation were murmuring agreement and nodding their heads, and I felt uncomfortable and worlds apart from the sentiments. At other times I was isolated by a lack of 'know-how'; for instance, although I could observe ballroom dancing, my participation was severely restricted by my inept

waltzing skills. At other times I had to remind myself of what I called 'generational relativity,' an awareness of attitudes formed as a product of their time. Sometimes, for example, I heard what I would call racist remarks, but had to remind myself that only my generation have been actively educated into regarding such sentiments as morally and politically incorrect. Cultural differences aside, many of the reasons for difficulties were more mundane and material. I faced the poverty of youth, having to catch buses, and walk (often miles in opposite directions) to interviews as I did not have transport. My slender means also meant that I did not have a telephone, which also increased the perception of me as unofficial and unserious.

Of course the perception of my youth had its advantages. People were less likely to take me too seriously and alter their behaviour on my account. Perhaps I was not seen as much of a threat as some older, more 'polished' researchers would have been? Also my presence at some occasions rendered me an oddity, and ironically, people actually sought me out to find out what I was doing there. The fact that I was not in the same age-cohort as the majority of migrants I spoke to also meant that, as some people did indeed express to me, there was a lesser need to 'keep up appearances.' As demonstrated throughout the thesis, positive ageing is 'normative' and to admit problems often challenged the desired image of independence. It was unimportant whether I was judging them as I was 'outside' that immediate realm, and sometimes I felt welcomed as someone beyond the same sphere. Moreover, given that everyone seems busy, I was desirable in that I *did* have time to spend with people. For one in particular, who has since moved, I was the only visitor she had apart from her cleaner. Little wonder our talks went on for days and it was sometimes difficult to leave.

There is also a suggestion that perhaps only older people should be used in researching older people (see discussion in Bytheway 1995:98). Whilst there are undoubtedly benefits to be gained from this, it is not necessary to be 'the same' as the people one is researching as insights can come from the differences in perspectives. Some material written about the difference in age-relationships reveals how the very cultural gulf between young researcher and older participant stimulates a particularly fruitful research encounter. Also, such a stance risks setting aside older people as 'different,' whilst actually I found that I was not restricted in forming friendships and confidences with people, older or otherwise. In fact, it was with some of the younger cohort in the town that I experienced greater differences, as they tended to be working in bars and thought I was weird for not wanting to drink several pints a day.

Hockey and James point out that culturally, old and young are in fact grouped together (1993:11). The closeness is fostered in relationships such as that of the older teacher/guardian and the pupil/child. Studying an elderly Jewish population in the US, Myerhoff points out how this bears out in research interaction,

'...they were the teachers and I, surrogate grandchild, was the student. I was deeply moved and saddened when people blessed me for merely listening' (*Ibid.*:1978:36, in Hastrup 1992:121).

Alternatively, old and young are projected as sharing the same characteristics as deviants or marginals (Hockey and James 1993).

In my research, both these interpretations of the coequality of old and young were manifested. At times, I was readily adopted into a child/grandchild role through being perceived as 'sweet.' I was often given validation that I was doing something good with my life at such a young age, and compared

with migrants' own children or grandchildren. I was given advice about what to do in the future, not to mention who to get married off to. I also often got adopted by groups of older women, and became the focus of *their* attention. For example, at one particular luncheon, much of the event was taken up by the efforts of three older ladies to fix me up, against my will, with the waiter. They were all telling me how 'they'd take him home if they could,' but I was also advised that I should have at least three boyfriends. After all, as Mary-Ann pointed out, 'You've got to have three strings on your bow!' Although the day was less about them than me, the event did lead on the car journey home to a fairly open and frank discussion about personal issues. Similarly, with the men, there was at times a joking relationship. As Whitehead (1976:180) points out, amongst young women and older men there is perhaps the most licence allowed out of all types of relationships, and we often shared jokes and insights.

An important point which is often overlooked is how the research actually affects the researcher. Without wanting to turn the discussion into a nihilistic 'confessional' (Rossman and Rallis 1998:198), it is worth considering this aspect. Some point out that the anthropologist undergoes a rite of passage in going to the field (Nash 1996:43). I suggest that this is even more acute for younger anthropologists, as it coincides with other processes of transition, particular to this often dramatic phase (in terms of maturation) of the life course. Whereas most people at my age are consolidating their experience, choosing jobs, forming friendship groups and more permanent places to live and so on, my years of fieldwork have been characterised by constant movement, with no stable home-base from which to move. The fieldsite became as much of a home as any I had. Moreover, the fact that being good at my job meant becoming good at being friends and extracting information meant that for a time following fieldwork, I felt like a fraud. I

was plagued by a feeling that I could never create friends, as I had genuinely done before, because I had learned *'the skill'* of social conversation. Secondly, it was often personally very difficult to be seen as an misfit and 'odd researcher' at some social occasions at this identity-defining point. I suggest the personal transition of fieldwork is heightened for young women in what is typically a time of 'becoming' anyway.

### III.iii Morals and Ethics

Perhaps one of the most sensitive issues in fieldwork is how to deal with the moral and ethical issues involved (see Fortier 1999). Although I was always open and explicit in my introductions, and everyone knew of me as a researcher, this knowledge faded as I became better established. Due to the nature of the site, interactions occurred often on a one-to-one level and often over a glass of wine. Intimacy naturally occurred. The best information came from people who had transcended the subject/researcher divide and were friends, and, I suspect, forgot about my role. Of course, in this setting, it was not Caroline Oliver the researcher they were speaking to, but Caroline Oliver, 'off-work,' outside of her job. The question of what I did with this information, of much richer essence than any material I collected when people were 'on-guard,' was a source of great discomfort. Awkward moments were created when these people asked me if 'I was researching them.'

Such a dilemma is more likely to arise out of contexts where many people do not really understand what an anthropologist does (as pointed out by Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:76). If people had heard of anthropology, it was the image of the exotic anthropologist that came to mind. For the Spanish people, when I said I was an anthropologist, they immediately

thought that I had come to study the archaeological remains in the mountains behind the village, reflecting the early tradition in Spanish anthropology of studying folklore and customs (Schippers 1998). They certainly did not expect an anthropologist to study the experiences of *guiris*<sup>vi</sup> in Spain! For some, then, my position was not as explicit as I had tried to make it. With this in my mind, I have kept some more private details of the sensitive kind out of my research, details revealed in moments when it was not at the forefront of anybody's mind that I was a researcher. As shown throughout the thesis, 'trust' (or the lack of it) is a major source of insecurity throughout the society, and I do not want to break anybody's confidence in the name of academic advancement. To substantiate this important point, other steps have been taken to ensure participants' anonymity. All names, locations and significant details have been changed in both text and visual records to avoid locating any individual. This reflects the spirit of the thesis which is not a commentary on the actions of any *particular* individual but a commentary on the wider society. The exception to this rule is when people have given me their own work (reports, poems, art work) or deserve acknowledgement for their actions. I refer to these people personally.

In terms of ethics, whilst much is written about the problem of access and engagement, I found the disengagement process the most difficult. I felt very guilty about adopting a 'one-night-stand' approach to research (Rossman and Rallis 1998:52), where I became very friendly with people, got what I wanted and then left. Particularly, as I have described, given the definitive 'in-between-ness' of the stage of life I was at, Freila was as much my home as anywhere. I felt in some way the 'plural vision' so typical amongst migrants (Constable 1999:224). This gave me many benefits, as for the most part, I could sympathise with migrants about what was going on in the village. I did however have to distance myself from these feelings in



order to write subsequent articles on the subject, as this was, after all a selective reading of the truth tinged by emotional reactions<sup>vii</sup>. Rapport writes convincingly, 'the competent fieldworker is he or she who learns to live with an uneasy conscience but continues to be worried by it' (1993:74).

I recall returning to Freila after a period away and being very upset when I went to the bar I had worked in to say hello to my ex-boss. He was no longer there; he had left the village and the bar had been taken over by an English family. Although they were very nice, I was upset that they were selling Mexican enchiladas there, capitalising on tourists, rather than it being how I had remembered it as a low-key place for the local Spanish and migrant crowd. At this point, I understood some of the sentiments the migrants expressed, sentiments that are multiplied by the ever-changing nature of the tourist site, which I had previously understood only in a non-participatory way. Hardest was the realisation that I had to consciously disengage, for this was not going to be my home again, and to write about the society I needed the 'attitude of detachment...that permits the sociologist to observe the self and others, to understand the mechanisms of social processes, and to comprehend and explain why both actors and processes are as they are' (Vidich and Lyman 1994:23). I recount my fieldnotes of one particular evening:

'I feel very very sad because I am cutting myself off. I know that it is dangerous to feel like last time I did when I was here, then I never wanted to go back. It was my home. But then, I know I couldn't stay here, not really. Still, I can hardly look at my friends. I finally feel, three years later that I have got the acceptance of those people who were less open to me, now I feel a real sense of betrayal to them...I can't go and talk to 'the group' as I can't belong there anymore. I feel that they think I am a fraud. I think they are right.'

#### IV. Analysis and Writing

Problems of objectivity are rife in the framing of subjective data. Whilst some hyper-subjectivists would suggest that objectivity is never achievable and should be abandoned, I still believe that it was important that my account would be, whilst not factually testable, still grounded within the (partial) reality that I observed. At first, I found the 'ordinariness' of the data quite disconcerting. In my first few months of fieldwork I remember feeling quite fearful that there was nothing interesting in the description of people doing just what they were doing<sup>viii</sup>. Over time, I learned that that was the point. Through time, similar themes in discussions become explicit. In post-fieldwork analysis, I did not use data-sorting programmes (e.g. Nudist). Instead, I took a far more laborious and time-consuming process of immersion in the data (Rossman and Rallis 1998:178). I coded discussion topics and observations into recurring themes (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:169). As a consequence, I read through the bulk of fieldnotes several times, with each time throwing up new observations.

Ethnography is however a literary enterprise rather than a 'scientific' one (Rossman and Rallis 1998:57, Grimshaw and Hart 1995:57). Prior to the 1980s, a common technique to claim scientific validity was the use of authorial tropes in writing, disguising the partial and power-laden nature of research (Clifford and Marcus 1986). In contrast, in the writing process, I took the perspectives of the actors on board. This did not mean that I would simply reproduce them descriptively, which would involve taking the actor's point of view as an explanation. This would be almost impossible anyway, for contradictions were rife within and between actors' perspectives. Instead, I considered observations inside their positions within wider general social processes (such as the history of migration in Spain and

the cultural understanding of old age), deconstructing the explanations I was given. Consequently, there is an authorial narrative. Whilst I use direct quotations from the participants, blending the first and third person in reports from fieldnotes, Clifford is right when he points out, 'quotations are always staged by the quoter' (Sanjek 1990:407). Ultimately they are used to support an analysis drawn by myself.

My analysis also uses the ethnographic present. In this context, the risk of presenting an atemporal 'other' (see Pratt 1986:33) is diminished by the proximity and familiarity of the research context. I draw on Hastrup's invocation, to 're-read [the ethnographic present] as an implication of shared time' (1995:21, *ibid.*1992:127). In terms of respondent validity, the thesis will be circulated amongst my informants and a summary of its findings presented in one of the club magazines. I have also agreed to present the findings of the research in person to migrants following circulation of the thesis to ensure that the research respects their views. That said, I did not wish for the thesis to be censored by a feeling of political correctness that may result out of dialogues undertaken during the process of analysis (Silverman 2001:92). The later presentations may lead to respondents wishing to counter the interpretations (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:196) and these will be engaged with willingly at that time.

Reflexivity however should not be something confined to the methodology chapter; as such, many discussions and self-reflections continue throughout. In the following chapter, I begin setting the scene by exploring the theoretical accounts of movement, particularly exploring its implications and meanings in contemporary consumer society.

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## Notes:

<sup>i</sup> Fardon describes these texts 'which convey a theoretical point embodied in an evocative image of place,' as 'the stable diet of undergraduate teaching syllabuses' (1990:28). He points out how Kapferer suggests they 'reproduce anthropologists.' (*ibid.*:28)

<sup>ii</sup> It may be possible to explore the resonances between anthropological and tourist gazes at Spain in future research.

<sup>iii</sup> Apart from two cases.

<sup>iv</sup> Of course, in other research arenas, privacy can only be achieved in public settings, for example for married couples interviewed individually. I interviewed married couples together in their home.

<sup>v</sup> His *apodo* (nickname) describing a species of bird.

<sup>vi</sup> A mildly derogatory but amusing term for a foreigner.

<sup>vii</sup> Hammersley and Atkinson point out how feeling at home should be read as a 'danger' signal, at which point social and intellectual distance should be maintained (1983:102), although I disagree fundamentally.

<sup>viii</sup> Hammersley and Atkinson observe, 'This is perhaps one of the hardest lessons to learn at the outset. One does not 'see' everyday life laid out like a sociology and anthropology textbook, and one cannot read off analytic concepts directly from the phenomena of everyday life' (1983:92).

## Chapter 3

### MIGRATION

#### *Shifting People and Shifty Anthropologists?*

#### Introduction

My aim in the first of two context chapters is to bring together an introduction to migrants in Spain with an examination of recent developments in anthropology to account for migration. In part one, I begin with a consideration of the specificities of the migrants to Southern Spain, emphasising the weaknesses of earlier anthropological thought to aptly capture their experiences. Previously, assumptions of a 'natural' link between place and culture would have difficulty to account for migrants' identifications. New developments have posited a de-essentialised and unfixed conception of culture which focuses on the fluidity and movement of social and cultural life. The first part of the chapter is largely a précis of recent anthropological literature on migration, as more appropriate to encapsulate migrants' experiences in Spain. In particular I show that for such migrants, movement represents 'freedom,' independence and heightened subjectivity. The migration process itself represents a break with a structured existence, and a metaphorical dive into an unknown and anti-structural space, with all the imagined possibilities for self-development. In the latter part of the chapter (part two), I explore how such ideals of independence are historically and culturally linked to the rise of individualism. Latter day manifestations of this involve consumerism and

cosmopolitanism. Movement is therefore a means of meeting a culturally-located ideal.

Despite basing much of my analysis on the theoretical developments regarding migration, I also argue that they are not wonder drugs to cure all problems of anthropology. Such problems and weaknesses were identified in the iconoclastic criticism of the Writing Culture theorists in the 1980s, and later developed in the works of Gupta and Ferguson (1997a) and Malkki (1995, 1997). Yet, throughout the chapter, whilst welcoming the insights of this academic stance, I problematise some of the liberatory potentials of migration posited. As such, I suggest that the evidence raised to support a focus on movement (which critiqued the 'Western' emphasis on stasis and fixity) is overstated. It would not be unfair to posit that at the same time as dominant thought of stasis reigned, there was also an *ideal of movement*, which derived from a particular genre of Western romanticism. As Durham Peters points out, 'there is an 'enduring metaphorical power of wandering in the fantasy life and social repertoire of the West' (1999:18). Most particular is the ideal that it is through movement that one realises oneself. With references to the practical and empirical details of migrants' reasons for moving and the results of migrating stated throughout this chapter, I suggest a parallel to anthropologists' desires. The migrants, I assert, echo the same Western liberal tendencies of anthropology to see movement as a 'good thing' for self-development. This suggests that the emphasis on movement, both practically and academically perhaps derive from the same genre of Western thought identified as appropriate to migrants; movement to confirm a sense of individuality. How much of a challenge then are recent theoretical advances *really* to male<sup>i</sup>, Western intellectualist hegemony?

The chapter begins with a critical précis of anthropological writing on

migration. The second part of the chapter historically examines individualism as 'the pursuit' of self-distinguishment (Rapport and Overing 2000:193). Centrally, I point out how in contemporary times, this has been met through consumption (of novelty) and cosmopolitanism. This reveals that many of the ideals deemed realisable through movement are culturally produced, confirming rather than challenging Western canons.

## PART ONE

### Anthropology and Migration

#### I.i Who are *These* Migrants? An Introduction

First, let me begin by introducing the particular migrants under study. The migrants in question are not typical of those usually studied within anthropology. When talking of migration in Spain, for instance, Rodríguez Rodríguez, Casado Díaz and Huber point out how one usually thinks of economic migrants (2000:119). This study analyses the relatively neglected flows of more affluent people from developed countries. These migrants do not necessarily seek economic betterment through movement but *choose* voluntarily to engage with possibilities the new site is deemed to offer. That said, to present the migrants under study in a short summary is not an easy task. For one of the most defining characteristics of Northern-European migrants in Spain is an amazing diversity of people involved. It could almost be said that for every couple of migrants who uttered similar thoughts, another couple could be found that raised diametrically opposed points of view. In no way are they an homogeneous group. If Nigel Rapport

found a number of variances in world-views amongst what he conceived of as a more 'settled' community in a farming village in the North of England (1993), how much greater the bases for diversity here. Differences range in terms of age, background, region, class, life-experience, history and, as Rapport would probably concur, in terms of the particular consciousnesses of individuals themselves, of course. Some migrants came to take a break from work, others to find work; some to seek companionship, others to escape it; some to exploit financial advantages, others to 'downgrade' their lives. No two migrants were the same.

However, for the most part (with some exceptions of course...) the retired migrants to Spain *can* be seen as a case in their own right for, in a sense they represent the epitome of Western success. On the whole, they benefit from wealth accrued during working lives. As King, Warnes and Williams point out, the phenomenon known as 'retirement migration' has dramatically risen in the latter twentieth century as a result of increasing affluence amongst some older people (2000:12,15). In fact, two-thirds of migrants in King *et al's* study were from social classes 1 and 2 (*ibid.*:76). In my study, I spoke mostly with people retired from successful jobs in the UK. On one occasion, I spoke with an apparently working-class migrant and his wife, who told me that originally he was a 'battery salesman' in Birmingham. After dinner the couple took me to their palatial mansion-style home, where the man admitted he supplied batteries to spy satellites for a considerable fortune. In addition to the large numbers of executives, there was also a selection of retired ex-servicemen, social workers, and teachers amongst others.

There was also a moderate number of expatriate workers, and a smaller number of ex-colonials, weary after a lifetime globetrotting<sup>ii</sup>, who had



retired, as one described to 'their bolthole in the sun.' For some expatriates, following the ends of contracts or retirement, it is not a natural step to return to one's place of origin. For instance, in a fascinating chapter on expatriates in the Cayman Islands, Amit-Talai points out how financial, political and emotional constraints operate on the ability or desire to return 'home' (1998:56). The same was true for a number of migrants who I spoke to; following a lifetime of transnational living, England (or Holland, or Sweden etc.) was no more home to them than any of the places they had resided in for work purposes. For instance, Bob, one of my interviewees had spent 35 years abroad. He had no desire to return to England, he had got used to a hot climate by living in Dubai, but wanted somewhere with European facilities. Spain was his ideal choice.

Certainly it is true that the majority of migrants were accustomed to travel and were well versed in managing cultural differences. Although other texts on migration have rightly pointed out the relative failure of migrants' integration into Spanish life (O'Reilly 2000a, King *et al* 2000: 137)(discussed later in the chapter) this certainly does not condemn them as having little ability to negotiate cultural differences. Rather, amongst migrants there was a well-established discourse of the ability to transcend cultural differences, whether this bears out or not in practice. Many times, the positive benefits of living amongst other nationalities were espoused. People acclaimed the cultural harmony of the European space. Such sentiments were expressed particularly in the urbanisations on the outskirts of Tocina, itself comprised of mixed-nationality *edificios* (buildings) and a small, local Spanish *barrio* (neighbourhood district). The urbanisations are self-contained whitewashed collections of houses, democratically organised and run by committees. The diversity of people and cultural backgrounds are seen as potential learning resources, as one woman coming from a segregated Bradford ironically

expressed, 'here you just get to appreciate the richness in cultures.' I explore these factors in more detail in chapter nine.

Most migrants, for whatever reason, believe that by coming to Spain they will benefit in some way. Most see it as a site in which they can learn something, or develop themselves, whether that be by learning a language, going to country dancing classes, by making pottery in the isolation of one's garden or even having the time to read. For example, Trish, a woman in her early forties, came to Spain to 're-evaluate' her life, and has benefited from what she asserts is the 'freedom' there. She has built her own house, converting an old mule-shed into a residence where she entertains visitors. Another, Hazel, an ex-schoolteacher who retired following ill health, is a keen member of the local arts group and embroidery club. She has no strong kin-links to England, following years of feuding with her brother. Susanna, a vibrant and lively ex-actress on the London stage proudly told me that she was a 'bit of an eccentric' who spent her time painting and managing her large house and grounds. Indeed, the standard opening phrase in interviews with migrants was the assertion that, 'well...I don't know how useful I will be, as I am not a typical migrant/not the norm/a bit different.' In the quest for freedom, migrants 'set themselves apart' (as in the Romantic period) for self-development.

### I.ii New Situations - Out With the Old

Now why should anthropologists be looking at such groups? And what are we as anthropologists to make of them? Furthermore, what are the chances of anthropological models adequately conceptualising the realities that such migrants face on a daily basis? Realistically, the odds are much better than before. For, anthropology has recently undergone a reinvention in the light

of postmodern criticism. For the purposes of this discussion, I draw attention to one of the major resulting critiques, that anthropology as a subject has ignored or marginalized movement. It has been widely asserted that traditionally, anthropologists have typically focused on small-scale, bounded and sedentary communities and people 'who stayed.' When they *have* studied the identities of people who moved, they have conceptualised these in terms of fixity (Rapport and Dawson 1998).

The problem was, anthropologists in the past have worked with a grand narrative of culture as a reified ideal that was located in a particular 'place.' Such conceptions have had to undergo fundamental revision. Processes of globalisation and the associated time-space compression, not to mention population displacement and mass movement has disrupted existing portrayals. The Boasian image for example of the world as comprised of discrete unified cultures (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a:1) presented as 'pieces of a mosaic' (Hannerz 1992:267) can no longer be maintained. It is a fiction sustained by a number of spatialising and localising practices, which anthropologists have recently questioned. For one, the 'exotic' was as likely residing in the same Western cores as the Westerners; to go 'there' and study 'them' was little more than a narrative fiction (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a:3).

According to Clifford and Gupta and Ferguson, the enduring image of cultures as discrete entities has been fostered by the trope of 'the field.' Gupta and Ferguson point to the centrality of fieldwork as the defining experience for any anthropologist, in which 'the field' is temporally and spatially separated from the anthropologist's 'home' (1997b:12). Difference is spatialised 'abroad' (*ibid.*:32). Clifford argues that the field (or more particularly the village) has, in anthropology, been equated with 'the

culture' in which, from a panoptical position, the ethnographer can 'read off' a representational sample of the whole culture (1992:98). It is empirically flawed mainly because it privileges the experiences of people who reside there rather than those that travel through it (*ibid.*:98,99). Certain realities and practicalities of fieldwork are erased from the picture. More often than not, the means of transport are missing, the origin of the researcher and the capital city are not revealed (*ibid.*:99-100). These details would reveal how the field is not the isolate it often appears, but is in fact linked in to regional, national and international systems (*ibid.*:99). Such localising practices, according to Appadurai, serve to 'incarcerate' natives, 'metonymic[ally] freezing particular groups as essentialised isolate figures representing particular traits and characteristics' (1988:37). These are often confirmed by regionalist perspectives (Fardon 1990). In this light then, Andalucía would be full of Andalucians battling about honour and shame, rather than the reality in which almost half of some *pueblos* are populated by foreign migrants and so-called locals who engage in extra-local practices and domains (see chapter four).

The sedentarist tendency of anthropology in 'privileging relations of dwelling over relations of travel' (Clifford 1992:99) has been furthermore entrenched by certain linguistic practices. Cultures have been made territorially fixed by reference to certain biological metaphors, with identity exemplified by reference to trees, roots, natural origins (Malkki 1997:57) or rhizomes, a perhaps more appealing metaphor which captures at least some essence of mobility (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:6,7). Yet according to Malkki, there is an overwhelming fixation on the 'natural' tie of people and territory (1997:57), which lends itself easily to seeing those uprooted as in a sense 'unnatural.' It is falsely implied that if one is uprooted from one's territory, one will wither and die (Okely 2000). Indeed as Okely points out,

for *some*, movement is not disruptive and destructive to cultural identity; rather (as in the case of gypsies), movement is crucial to it (2000). In the case of the British migrants in Spain, 'having moved' is a significant feature of their self-definition. Suffice to say, as Gupta and Ferguson point out,

'People have always been more mobile and identities less fixed than the static and typologising approaches of classical anthropology would suggest.' (1992a:37).

Indeed, and increasingly, travel and movement is a normal mode of life for many people. Processes of deterritorialisation, global flows of capital and labour, communication advances and the associated time-space compression (Harvey 1989, *ibid.* in Mountz and Wright, 1996) have created conditions in which migration processes are 'the actuality of the contemporary world' (Featherstone 1995:154).

Anthropology then has had some way to go to adapt to the new realities. But how new are they? As Featherstone has pointed out, such an existence of 'traditional' communities is questionable; its emphasis is merely a reflection of what has been empirically ignored. As Featherstone goes on to show, the concentration on sedentary bounded *Gemeinschaft* is based upon myth and selective presentation. Simply no attention was paid in traditional anthropology to the more everyday movements within these 'settled' communities (Featherstone 1995:131-132). Similarly, for others, transnationalism itself is not a new phenomenon at all (see discussion by Mintz 1998), although as Foner points out, 'it often seems as if it were invented yesterday' (1997:355). The neglect of such features could be linked to a desire in anthropology to preserve an 'other,' a nostalgic ideal of the settled community in contrast to modernity's fragmented, impersonal and changing *Gesellschaft* (Featherstone 1995: 132). Yet, in reality, a construction is all it is. In short, economic migration, travel and pilgrimage have always

been steady features of human life all over the world.

Recent processes of accelerating globalisation, or the exchanges of goods, knowledge, values, images, not to mention people, have however, become more visible and less easy to keep out of the picture. The implications of these challenges are still hotly debated within anthropology (Hastrup and Fog-Olwig 1997:1). Appadurai aptly summarises,

‘As groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their histories, their ethnic ‘projects,’ the *ethno* in ethnography takes on a slippery, nonlocalised quality to which the descriptive practices of anthropology will have to respond.’ (1991:191)

It is clear that following globalisation processes, and mass movement in particular, practices of syncretism and hybridity reveal the ‘continental theory plates of culture’ (Hannerz 1992:73) as mere fallacy. Cultures can no longer be seen as ‘hard-edged,’ arranged in some kind of world mosaic, as promoted by the likes of Benedict (Featherstone 1995:136), but are ‘liquid, emergent and open-ended’ (Hannerz 1992:17). Instead of the ‘tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous’ groups (Appadurai 1991:191), Appadurai insists the focus should instead be on the global flows, ‘the ethnoscaples’ or ‘landscapes of group identity’ (*ibid.*:191). He advocates a focus on deterritorialisation of both people and objects (*ibid.*:192).

For the purposes of this project then, I have complied as it were with contemporary thought that a focus should pay attention to ‘moving groups’ and movement as a feature in the lives of those who do not appear to move, at least geographically. Yet, to adopt a simple study of migrant peoples is still not good enough. For the existing conceptions used in migration studies

itself were not satisfactory. Migration theorists tended to employ the same bases of territorial fixity, asserting that social relations were linked to social loci, albeit in two or more destinations. The two locations of origin and destination were 'spatially demarcated communities...[in which migrants were]...capable of maintaining an involvement with only one of them' (Rouse 1991:12). Rather, we should be taking into account the *process* of movement itself. However this acknowledgement should not be stretched to the extremes of nomadology which would suppose that social life is more transient than it actually is. Fog-Olwig warns that Clifford and Appadurai's suggestions that anthropologists study transient places such as bars, airports or motels 'will primarily focus on the more short-lived and flimsy contexts of modern life and therefore risk exaggerating its transient and 'uprooted' character' (Fog-Olwig 1997:35). As Featherstone also comments,

'[we] should not switch to the opposite assumption that the normal condition of human beings is, or should be, one in which everyone is a 'nomad' or a 'traveller' (1995:144).

Yet, as advocated by Hannerz and Appadurai, attention should be paid to the flows, circuits and routes (Clifford 1997). The refocus should look at 'the social formations and disjunct subjectivities of persons with multilocal and translocal attachments' (Caglar 1997:170), or the lives of those 'who are making a home in homelessness' (Chambers 1994b:246). Notably amongst studies which have done this is Fog-Olwig's study of the impact of mass outmigration from the island of Nevis in the Caribbean (1993), which shows how Afro-Caribbean culture has become fundamentally global in nature (1993:179). She looks at the Nevisian community as a transnational/global network of relations, which overcomes inherent contradictions between local systems and previously imposed colonial institutions (1993:205). Through migration, the possibilities of socio-economic upward mobility are

possible, and yet the expression of this in sending various material goods and remittances back to Nevis does not threaten community solidarity as it would if personal advancement was within the local setting (*ibid.*:175). In terms of this study, the South of Spain represents a prime site for studying these cultural flows; demonstrating constant fluidity and interaction created by tourist flows (chapter seven) and visiting relatives, not to mention the movements of snowbird migrants and residential migrants themselves.

Perhaps one of the most important consequences of a focus on movement in the 'global ecumene' (Hannerz's term for the world as a region of persistent interaction and exchange (1996:7)) has been a rising concern with identity in anthropology (Sarup 1994:93). The collapse of the reified conceptions of culture and ultimately any notion of 'a' cultural identity has necessitated a focus on culture as processual. More particularly, attention has been paid to the ongoing negotiations of complex hybrid identities and pluralistic belongings fostered in intercultural exchange (Brah 1999:2), often in borderland sites (see examples by Alvarez 1995, Stokes 1998, Donnan and Wilson 1998). Anthropologists have looked more at the ways in which a migrant in a foreign place reconstructs and reconstitutes his or her identity. All identity is seen as contingent and changeable (Bhabha 1986:xvi), much departed from the security of modernist identities. This is reflected by an example during my fieldwork when one Danish woman remarked how she felt 'split in half, with her soul neither belonging in Spain nor in Denmark.' In the dialogue of identity-construction, Chambers suggests the migrant is,

'cut off from the homelands of tradition, experiencing a constantly challenged identity....perpetually required to make himself at home in an interminable discussion between a scattered inheritance and a heterogeneous present.' (1994a:6)

Following migration, there is a sharpening self-awareness, a realisation of



the difference between oneself and the 'other,' and a revelation of the self (Chambers 1994a:18-22). The implication of movement is that a plurality of visions is developed, one which, as much literature suggests, involves an existential interrogation into the nature of self and identity.

Contemporary processes have, as Massey (1992) has argued, forced people at the same time (or in place of thinking about identity) to reassess the meaning of 'home' (Bammer 1992). Rapport and Dawson argue, 'the idea of 'home' undergoes dramatic change at least' (1998:6). Previously, home was conceptualised as a physical place, solid, secure and bounded (see discussions by Bammer (1992:2) and Rapport and Dawson (1998:7)). Recent theorisations alternatively have conceived of home as a 'moveable concept' (Bammer:1992:3). Rouse, in his aforementioned study of Mexican migrants, for example suggests that 'home' can be plurilocal, demonstrated in a 'transnational migrant circuit' (1991:14) above and beyond any particular place. His study of Mexican labourers in both Aguililla and Redwood City emphasises the means by which home is neither the locale of the pueblo nor the destination in Silicon Valley, USA. Rather, people orient themselves first and foremost to *the circuit*, and are as much influenced by occurrences hundreds of miles away as by those in the immediate physical environment (*ibid.*:14). Such attachments can be seen particularly in chapters nine and ten of this thesis.

Rapport and Dawson similarly point to the unmappability of 'home,' asserting instead that home can be found in practice rather than place, for example felt 'in a routine set of practices, a repetition of habitual interactions, in styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in stories carried around in one's head.' (1998:7). Rather than home being the located and positioned place, stories, narratives and routines act as

'cognitive homes' (*ibid.*:8). Perhaps this is best explained by a sentiment from one ex-social worker in Spain, who told me, 'home is where I lay my hat. All my most precious things are here. There's nothing left for me in England, I'm settled here and I could never go back as I am a different person now.' Another expat, Robin, told me,

'It wasn't a problem when we came to Tocina. We'd been expats [in Rhodesia] for twenty-five years, away from our roots in other countries where they didn't speak the language. We had cut our roots with England. ...I could be plonked in the Sahara and it wouldn't be a problem. We are extroverts, but also by nature very solitary, and wary of being involved in a clique. I think you carry yourself with you don't you?'

Much of the remainder of the thesis is dedicated to the ways in which one brings with oneself the need for certain structures and traits of personality and character; could these be cognitive homes too?

Such innovative theorisations are welcome and a necessary counterpoint to perhaps a still detectable residual emphasis on maintenance of physical idealised homelands amongst migrant networks. There is perhaps an overwhelming attention paid to the creation and maintenance of existing relationships and ties, albeit within a deterritorialised arena. However, the reconceptualisation of 'home' in particular brings about an attention to some migrants who hold ambivalent feelings towards physical homelands. For some, the homeland is not an idealised place dreamed of by exiles and diasporic peoples but is a place from which to escape. Notably, Constable draws attention to the way in which 'home' (in this case, the Philippines) is viewed with ambivalence for Filipina women in Hong Kong. Her study shows how for some women there was a growing sense of personhood that was enabled by a repositioning of the women as breadwinners following

economic migration to Hong Kong (Constable 1999:14). The work of domestic service opened them up to a new world, which, for some, was a source of pleasure and freedom, away from the constricting gendered demands of their homeland. Through migration, they changed and would no longer fit in in a 'home' changed by their absence (*ibid.*:222). O'Reilly also points out in her study of British migrants on the Costa that Britain is often viewed negatively, as 'depressing and depressed' (2000a:164). Rather in Spain, an idealised version of Britishness can be lived out in new territories (*ibid.*). Perhaps a desired version of 'home,' in practices and modes of behaviour, can be transplanted (pardon the biological metaphor).

The postmodern refocus briefly sketched here is said to represent an inherently subversive 'challenge to the West and the Western episteme' (Chambers 1994b:246). For, according to theorists such as Bhabha and Chambers, the binary models and abstractions of the West ('place' 'culture' 'home' 'identity') are giving way to a dialogical reality of translocal attachments, creolised identities and new subjectivities. There is a decentring of the West's 'compendium of truth,' (Chambers 1994b:248) dismantling its monolithic authority. From the margins and junctures, new critical voices can be heard, or as Hannerz expresses, 'creolisation ...increasingly allows the periphery to talk back' (1992:265). In the following discussions, I examine a number of problematic issues that are raised if we are to accept these new terms of analysis.

### I.iii Not All Migrants are the Same

So far so good. This body of literature is certainly the closest to explain the predicament and realities of migrants in general and will be used throughout the thesis for constant reference. Yet, this is not to say it is

without a number of problems and shortcomings, especially regarding these particular migrants, which I will now address. When movement theory is considered within anthropology, whilst explicitly celebrated as subversive, there is a danger that in practice, it can be interpreted as offering up the same types of canons that it was intended to dispel. In this first criticism, I suggest that as a term of analysis, it may, despite any claims to the opposite, be used as a monolithic and 'flattening discourse,' to iron out the hierarchical differences in real experiences. I suggest the proliferation of studies of migrants has through force of number created a 'typology of the migrant.' Although this is arguably a result of features of migration itself rather than a failure of the theorising, it causes problems if we use the same reasoning in cases where the migrants do not fit these characteristics (such as in this particular study).

Anthropologists have a tendency to study 'archetypal migrants,' essentially seeing them as overwhelmingly young, male and 'communally-minded.' Other forms and experiences of migration are devoted less page space than considerations of either forced migration, or economic labour migration (c.f. Malki, 1995, Rouse, 1992, Mountz and Wright 1996). There are some alternatives, for example see Rapport and Dawson's collection, which includes Dawson's analysis of migrant minds in the lives of sedentary older people (1998:207-221). Some sociologists have argued that the dominant migrant figure has been the young, male, economic migrant, and that analyses have been gender-neutral (Kofman, Phizaclea, Raghuram and Sales 2000:3). It is only relatively recently that attention has been paid to female migration, even though as many migrants are female as male, and migration is increasingly feminised (Castles 1993:8-9). The phenomenon of migration is also often portrayed as a phenomenon done by younger people, in a uni-directional shift away from parents. Fog-Olwig, for example draws attention

to the way that younger people from the island of Nevis financially sustain their older parents through the process of moving and establishing themselves in jobs in the UK or US (Fog-Olwig 1993,1997).

Furthermore, despite notable exceptions such as Linger's study of migrant-homeland disconnections amongst Brazilians in Japan (2001), migration is also regularly seen in an idealised light as sustaining families or communities in a global network whilst involving the maintenance of strong links to the homeland (see for instance Fog-Olwig, 1993). Mountz and Wright (1996) for instance, in a study of transnational migrant networks of Mexican migrants from San Agustin to Poughkeepsie, New York, show how 'migration, rather than threatening existing social practices and works, augments them' (Mountz and Wright, 1996: 420). They demonstrate how the position of marginality migrants find themselves in fosters feelings of insularity amidst a tight knit community. The new site is essentially a 'home from home' using the same 'community structures and culture that accompany them' when they move (*ibid.*:409). Their analysis contains only a small nod in the direction of 'the dissenters'; those that *don't* adhere to this positive maintenance of the village from the diaspora, and seems to me an attempt to build an ideal of staticity and continuation of tradition, whilst nominally accounting for change (see alternatives in chapter nine). This is merely one example amongst a possible many.

Whilst this is the case in many instances of migrating, it does not encapsulate the experience of all. Most important for the purpose of this project is that the age-dimension of moving is neglected. Yet, not all migration is for economic purposes<sup>iii</sup>, and this overemphasis has created a weighted and biased impression of adaptation to new territories. In fact, movement upon retirement (rural-urban, sunbelt, IRM) is a common, and

growing phenomenon, which significantly alters the demographic structures of many locations (Wiseman 1980:141). Conditions are different too; for elderly migrants, a structurally-enforced lack of economic involvement may seriously impede integration, as well as create potential problems arising in linguistic competence in mastering a new language. Yet, in anthropology, little of this is considered, with the exception of O'Reilly (2000a) who gives some attention to challenges of older migrants and Gustafson, who reveals older Swedish migrants in Spain as demonstrating attachment to both countries (2001:390). Research on older movers tends to be in the gerontology or geography domain, with little cross-fertilisation in research across disciplines. Furthermore, again, little research has been done on expatriates (Amit-Talai 1998:44), not to mention movers who move for pleasure. Perhaps this is because anthropologists typically don't deal with such things. Yet, as a result, there are dangers in characterising 'the migrant experience' as a singular experience, as 'one.'

The discourse of potentiality inherent in many presentations of migration represents a championing of the subaltern. A problem arises when this is dubiously translated to *unmarginalised* groups. If one takes this dominant mode of study as a precedent, and employs the same mode of analysis regardless of the group migrating, problems may arise. For example, O'Reilly portrays the British abroad with warmth and sympathy, taking a welcome stance against the negativity of sensationalist reports on migrants in the British media. The account falls on sticky ground however when talking of migrants' feelings of 'marginalisation' whilst only paying cursory attention to Spanish reactions to the phenomenon. Migrants, she says feel 'marginalized by the Spanish' (2000a:152), albeit with the British migrants' complicity (*ibid.*:166). Taking the underdog perspective so favoured in anthropology should surely be used with caution in this case? Is it fair to use

the same frame of analysis used for immigrants and placeless peoples who reconstitute their identity for significantly more wealthy and privileged migrants, who have many more channels to escape 'marginalisation' if they so chose? Such questions becomes even more salient if one interprets the increasing recreation of the *Costas* of the World (through the import of British food, language and other cultural practices) as having resonance with past histories of imperialism. Whilst it is equally unsound to present stereotypes revealing the British in Spain as 'colonisers,' (O'Reilly 2000a:142) one must surely acknowledge power differentials. Even if this power is solely limited to the impact of 'linguistic colonialism' (King, Warnes and Williams 2000:132) or ecological colonialism, it is a form of power nonetheless. For, as Sibley rightly points out, power is expressed in the monopolisation of space (1995:xiii).

Such objections do not necessary entail a critique of the people who live such processes, rather they challenge the limitations of our intellectual apparatus to account for differences. In discussing British migrants on the Costa it seems impossible to avoid falling into the position of either the defender of the underdog (O'Reilly's stance), or an outright attack on their little disguised imperialist intentions. For instance, Jurdao Arrones, a native Spaniard, presents the same process as that discussed by O'Reilly, but this time as blatant imperialism, involving the exploitation of poor *campesinos* who signed away their land in Spain for a fraction of its value (1989). His book (1990) is provocatively entitled *España en Venta* (Spain for sale).

Processes of movement are informed by a variety of histories; some move out of economic or political necessity, whilst others move out of choice. The position O'Reilly arrives at is laudable in presenting the perspectives of the migrants themselves. However, the wider perspectives must also be

revealed, necessitating an acknowledgement of the economic and cultural status of migrants that lead to different interpretations and reactions in host countries. O'Reilly's presentation of British migrants' explanations that they are marginals pushed to the fringes of society (2000a:152) is one consistent with the general frames of analysing migration. Yet, how far their 'marginalisation' actually impinges on their lives and their possibilities of well-being is negligible when compared with impoverished economic migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers collecting food (and insults) by voucher payments. For the British, to have barriers to integration may be an annoyance, but it certainly does not hinder their abilities to survive, nor affect their material conditions of life. To use the same perspectives for analysis seems to be a worrying step towards disguising and neutralising the global power conditions in which all are embroiled. The history and role of their nationality or ethnic group has created the position in which they are received as migrants, and the consequent reactions to their reception which change over time, and we must build this foundationally into any analysis, as I attempt to do in the following chapter.

Ironically, when considering postcolonial subjectivities, the histories of the migrants who have been acted on in a colonial past *are* acknowledged and made explicit (an example again being Fog-Olwig's 1993 study). Another example is Keya Ganguly's study of Indian migrants in New Jersey. She says,

'I emphasise the postcolonial aspect of this particular community's constitution because I think the history of a colonial past substantially inflects the ways in which this community's members imagine and represent themselves' (1992:27-28).

Ganguly further points out,



'my friend Rishida regarded immigration as an escape from older narratives to a new beginning, and as a return to mastery. But bygones can never be bygones, and Rishida's present self remains inflected by the need to respond to and refuse the putative myth of native effeminacy and degeneracy. The impossibility of erasing difference here remains the ultimate irony' (*ibid.*:37).

If such detail of past history is made explicit, why is the relative and more powerful status of other migrants, the British in Spain played down as perpetuating 'stereotypes'? To talk of both groups as being defined as 'migrants' seems to overlook a vast number of enormous differences.

All this evidence supports Werbner's assertion that in looking at movement as a monolithic category, 'the class dimensions of a theory of global subjectivity have remained mostly unexamined' (1999:18). The creative potentials of migration (hybridity, new subjectivity etc.) hide the fact that for some, they are not so free to choose (Oliver, Jansen and Heller 2000). The era of globalisation and its dominant discourse on liberation hides the hegemonic inequalities that still govern movement and the possibilities within different diasporas. The neglect of such factors arises from an overzealous presentation of, according to Fabricant, 'images of unfettered mobility' (1998:26) and a 'porous world,' (apparently regardless of borders and constraints) which are nothing more than a fashionable trope. In a scathing criticism of Clifford (see page 29), she points out how despite 'an expressed concern' (as shown in 1992:101-103) Clifford is less interested in dislocation than privileged cosmopolitanism (Fabricant 1998:29).

Perhaps Fabricant overstates or misrepresents Clifford to a degree. However, there is some validity in the consequences that *can* come of the

new canons. Centrally, it is clear that the apparent challenge to imperialist discourse is *not* always validated through the experience of hybridity and cosmopolitanism. When Bhabha talks of 'the recreation of the self in the world of travel' (1994:9), Van de Veer comments wryly,

'What I find striking about these statements is that they seem to invoke the traditional romantic trope of the 'self made individual' who invents himself in the marginality of the American frontier.' (1997:95).

It is clear that for some migrants, there is an inherent subversive power offered through migration. Yet an overemphasis on the potentialities of migration (through hybridity and difference) is not as disruptive to modernist canons as one is lead to believe. I develop this in the following section, in which I argue that the celebration of difference can be read as an historically and culturally produced genre, no less Western than its precedents.

## PART TWO

### **Individualism, Travel and Cosmopolitanism**

#### **II.i Western Migrants and Anthropological Similarities: The Product of a Genre?**

The wholehearted adoption of the movement canon, whether by the migrants or academics derives, I suspect in part from a Western genre of thought that sees individualism achievable through travel. Both the migrants studied here and the academic migrants (drawn to anthropology,

with its emphasis on travel) have been influenced by a particular genre of thought. The academic convictions are in fact culturally rooted, as revealed by the fact that espousals of Western liberal individuals moving to Spain replicate very similar points. The migrants echo the same conceptions of travel and movement as chances for self-evaluation and the creation of 'something better,' displayed analytically in the work of Clifford and Chambers amongst others. Migrants have previously been treated as modern agents escaping the shackles of tradition, realising their own distinctive sense of individuality and bringing about modernity (Eades 1987:3,4). Although, apparently, anthropologists have moved on from these simplistic assumptions, is there not a residue of this tradition? Are we not seeing in movement studies *again* an example of the subject of study being a product of the ethnographer's desires?

The ends achieved through migration, arising most importantly out of the process of *being a mover*, are analytically displayed as a heightened subjectivity and self-awareness (Bhabha 1994, Chambers 1994a). The assumptions and typology of migrants creates a 'neo-noble savage,' a 'traditional' individual struggling with and against the demands of a modernity with its threats of fragmentation. Alternatively, there is a cocktail sipping expatriate (Werbner 1999:18), *au fait* with the ways of cultural others. In either case, the subjective struggles of the migrants involve a re-evaluation of personhood that sets migrants up as ideals of agency and individuality. Particularly important is the potential for distinctiveness and autonomy met through travel. Does this not then imply that those who *do not* move are in some way less self-aware than those who migrate and adjust to new territories? And if this is so, are we simply not echoing neo-Romantic judgements that sees travel and movement as something necessary for self awareness? The new canon has a danger of crystallising

into a binary polarity which sees movement as good and stasis as bad, which offers little but a reminiscence of Western, Eurocentric romantic visions of travel, with the apotheosis of self-development being the Grand Tour.

To reveal the histories influencing the adoption of movement by migrants, I chart the development of Western individualism and demonstrate the means in which it is achieved through consumption (including leisured travel). I show how such sentiments are espoused in reality by the migrants I study. The leisure migrants reflect the Western cultural allure to travel for moral betterment; the same allure that has tinged the academic look at migration. It is not a call for abandoning migration studies *per se*, but a realisation that like anything else, most intellectual thought is culturally nuanced. If one is to adopt a postcolonial de-stabilising subjectivity, it is through the recognition of our biases. As such, I begin with a history of individualism as culturally produced, and demonstrate, using the migrants as examples, how, in contemporary times individual distinctiveness is realised through cosmopolitanism and cultural know-how. Rather than seeing cosmopolitanism as posing a danger to orthodoxy (Hannerz 1992:255), we should also consider how, in some cases, it confirms it.

### II.ii. A Brief History of Western Individualism

This section involves an historical examination of the importance of the 'individual,' exploring individuality and individualism<sup>iv</sup> in Western liberal thought. In the latter parts I show how these have become related to consumption, in which the latest form of luxury consumption - leisured travel and cultural competence - is a product and producer of heightened individualism. Perhaps one of the most influential writers on the subject is

Marilyn Strathern. In *After Nature: English kinship in the late twentieth century* (1992) she charts the development of the concept of 'the individual,' (in England in this case<sup>v</sup>) toward its culmination in a hyper-individualism in the late Twentieth century. For Strathern, the individuality of persons is the first fact of English kinship, (1992:14). In contrast to other cultural forms of organising familial relationships, Strathern draws attention to the particular emotional and strong attachments formed between parents and children in the Western system. The consequence of these intense affairs promotes 'the child' first and foremost as 'an individual,' valuing the child as a possessing a personal, unique autonomy (*ibid.*:12), rather than as a being related to a wider kinship system. This is also marked out by other cultural representations. For example, even in the Western portrayal of the foetus, the image is one of isolation; the individual is solitary and disconnected from 'relationships' of any kind (the most obvious being to the mother, who is invisible in the portrayal) (*ibid.*: 50).

Individualism, and more explicitly diversity, became characteristic definitions of the English, following the drive for nationalistic understandings of different cultural groups in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to Macfarlane, the individual figure was the essential motif in English nationalist self-understanding. This individual was 'a person who can set him or herself off from proximity to and from relationships with others, and is thus created in being separated from the constraints of relationship itself' (Strathern 1992:13). England was a land consisting of rugged individualists, unaffected by other's opinions, who *respected and tolerated* a multiplicity of alternative opinions (*ibid.*: 30). The quintessential Englishman was one for whom home was his castle, over which he had complete control (Lancaster 1953: 9, Strathern 1992:32) in ensuring the ability to complete his own private plan (*ibid.*:30). As such,

Strathern comments, there is no real English 'type,' the English are diverse and heterogeneous (*ibid.*:22). As demonstrated throughout the thesis such characteristics are borne out in much of the behaviours of the contemporary migrants. In Spain today, there are many such 'castles,' many such plans, and, as noted before, much diversity.

Historically, English individuals sought self-sufficiency of domestic units and personal enhancement (*ibid.*:97). This reflected a wider approval of ideals of independence, autonomy and choice. As Strathern notes following a consideration of the novels of Austen, in polite society, appearing dependent revealed one as socially inferior. Contrastingly, to be independent and self-sufficient, to manifest the powers of choice, was regarded as evidence of a civilised existence (*ibid.*:100). As a result, the object of daily life was transformed to the pursuit of improving personal skills and talents. Reflected in the architecture of freestanding houses, similarly, people themselves became imagined as 'individual dwelling places' (*ibid.*:104) to be cultivated. Each individual had an interior that could be worked upon and improved (*ibid.*:105). Social roles and obligations were to some extent external to that unique individual (*ibid.*:125). A person grew in personal terms through the awareness of inner, emotional development and the improvement of one's personal talents (*ibid.*) Part of the process of development came through travel, most importantly met in the eighteenth century through the Grand Tour, with an excursion ticket equating to a 'civilising instrument'<sup>vi</sup> (Pimlott 1947:95). As for migrants today, skills and hobbies were deemed essential for one's self development.

This conception of the individual has direct links to the acceleration of consumption. Consumption changed in its nature around the eighteenth century. Around this time there developed a distinction between consuming

for necessity and consuming for luxury, or non-essential purposes (Friedman 1994:3). The desire for luxury consumption so manifest in contemporary society is therefore a relatively new one. According to Campbell, it arrived only out of the condition in which the economy was efficient enough to provide a surplus, which would guarantee the regular satisfaction of needs. Previously, pleasure was provided simply in meeting basic needs. Once basic needs were securely assured, pleasure itself became more of a scarce commodity. For the first time, pleasure became an object for pursuit in its own right (Campbell 1989:65). Anthropologists have focused their attentions then on the motivational structures governing the propensity to consume. In particular, influential theorists such as Veblen (1924:68-101) and Bourdieu (1984:230-256) explained the social motivation for luxury consumption as located in the drive for social distinction. Friedman notes for example, how Parsons and Smelser developed a social pressure theory of consumption, asserting that increased consumption by the wealthy was a result of a necessity to symbolise their positions as superior (Friedman 1994a:6). As I later develop in chapter eight, even time itself in Western industrial capitalism is a commodity that must be bought. The motive for buying (in this case, time) is assumed to be to show off one's cultural and economic capital (*ibid.*:9).

Contrastingly, and more relevant to this discussion, Campbell offers us a novel slant on consumption, which relocates consumption as a product of and producer of individuality. Rather than consumption being a marker for social prestige, consumption is located in *subjective* desire. Campbell asserts that the consumption ethic is essentially romantic in nature; it is linked to a modern experience of subjectivity in which a desire is created to purchase the new and the different (Friedman 1994:7,8). The drive toward luxury consumption, as discussed, was established by a 'shift in the parameters of

selfhood and consciousness' in the eighteenth century (*ibid.*:10), Following a disenchantment with the ideas of the metaphysical world (Campbell 1989:72) emotions were seen as located *within* individuals (as elucidated by Strathern above). Furthermore, the ideology of puritanism encouraged an individualistic ability to self-regulate and self-determine emotional experience. The possibility to be self-governing encouraged the fostering of the imagination, which was an essential ingredient for what Campbell calls 'modern imaginative hedonism' (1989:81). In this, delight is located in the *anticipation* of fulfilling mental images, free of blemishes and the failings of everyday life (*ibid.*:85). Should those dreams be fulfilled, they are always disappointing. He explains,

'The consummation of desire is thus a necessarily disillusioning experience for the modern hedonist as it constitutes the 'testing' of his day dream against reality, with the resultant recognition that something is missing. The real experience in question may yield considerable pleasure, some of which may not have been anticipated, but despite this, much of the quality of the dream-pleasure is bound to be absent.' (*ibid.*:86)

It is not the object *per se* which is the essential component of modern consumerism, but it is the individual pleasure received by anticipating it. Once achieved, disillusionment sets in, until we discover another novel object, which we can imaginatively desire. It is not consumption of products, but the consumption of *novelty*, which is the root of modern consumption (*ibid.*:94).

Moving forward in time, Campbell's argument has resonance with Strathern's assertion that in the late twentieth century, individuality is marked by the exercise of 'choice' (*ibid.*:152). Strathern suggests that in this



stage, the notion of the individual will be devalued, because people will no longer be, 'individual *per se*, but simply the repository of choices' (Strathern 1992:149). 'Individualness' will become a style prescribed, in which through the *exercise and display* of individuality one sees purely the result of a number of style choices. The object to pave the way for 'individuals' and their own capacity to make choices has meant that all that happens is that 'style' becomes of the essence. In effect, 'the individual disappears from a surfeit of individuality' (*ibid.*:170). In former versions of individualism, the individual was related to the world in a web of individual, culture, society and nature. Yet now, unlike in earlier epochs, the individual is no longer judged by any measure outside itself, because any link with nature or society is deleted from the picture. It is from this conclusion that she states that the hyper individualism of the late twentieth century is also the death of the individual (*ibid.*:150). Margaret Thatcher's statement, 'There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families' (1987) is flawed. For, Strathern points out, if 'one imagines away society as a collective plurality, then one imagines away the individual elements of which it is composed' (*ibid.*: 184).

This changes somewhat our conception of the individual *vis à vis* what it consumes. For one, no longer is consumption merely a display to others of what one is (a conclusion that Strathern arrives at given the decline of the 'society' concept). Instead, the emergence of the imaginative individual gives rise to the consumer as consuming certain products *because of what one him/herself wants him/herself to be*. The theory locates consumption as an individualistic pursuit, improving the 'quality' of that individual. This has resonance with the Romantic period, which ushered in a conception of the individual as a *qualitative* entity, a unique, autonomous, and self-determining being. The medium of pleasure, the aim of satiating hedonistic

desires was seen as not only justifiable, but morally good in uncovering the emotional and sentient perfect person. Similarly, to strive to try 'other' lifestyles and novel alternative existences to satisfy an intense individual longing is the condition of modern times (Friedman 1994a:10).

The migrants in Spain are each epitomes and examples of the influence of this cultural heritage. Given the backgrounds of many migrants (previously defined as powerful and successful) and their entering a life sphere in which independence is an issue, the social make-up is one of incredible diversity and heightened expression of individuality. The movement to Spain represents the consumption of freedom, the apotheosis of liberty and individual choice. In the historical explanations of Western individualism, according to Campbell's reading of consumption, moving to Spain is about expressing, through consumption (of a house or even the time to make a house) the individual distinctiveness of that person. However, Strathern's negative reading, which sees the contemporary replacement of 'individuality' with 'choice,' i.e. consumer choice, asserts that there is no real possibility for true individual expression. In migrants' lives, this translates to a fostering of nostalgia for diversity, and an ever more urgent need to fend off being seen as part of a homogenous horde. In order to try and achieve the novel and the diverse, they seek moral improvement and betterment through the medium of pleasure, particularly leisure and travel, with its liberal attractions of 'freedom' and 'difference.' Thus, if travel is an assertion of 'being different' or 'being novel,' it will be pursued and consumed. If the reading of Campbell, Strathern and Baudrillard are right, feelings of dissatisfaction are created when this novelty wears off, creating an ever more fervent desire to 'be' individual.

In Spain, as in Romantic times then, the personality is 'worked upon'

through various pursuits. The pursuits, however, are revealing. For, more than anything, it is about the desire to consume novelty; to be 'different,' and to value difference, especially marked in the living out of a cosmopolitan existence. Bear in mind that cosmopolitanism is, according to Hannerz, 'an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity' (1990:239). This perhaps explains why, even amongst those totally unintegrated in Spain, (with few exceptions) there is still the forceful assertion that they are integrated and *au fait* with cultural others. Here is the sticky moment in which the celebratory discourse of mixture, hybridity and internationalism as proposed by many anthropologists reveals itself as incredibly resonant with these same culturally produced longings of the migrants. Most importantly, in practice, it is through the idea of cosmopolitanism and travel that the novelty needed for realising one's individuality can be found, which has a strong resonance with the academic conceptions displayed in the first half of this chapter. The realities of 'Western-produced' cosmopolitanism met through migration potentially offers the stimulation and diversity to 'be' individual.

### II.iii Cosmopolitanism, Internationalism and Individual Identities

*'I think it would be very dull operating in a unilingual society...You can't beat the stimulus of a polyglot existence.'*

So commented Barbara, a widely travelled accountant, living in Spain for a predicted five years before moving on 'somewhere.' The same sentiment was repeated at a small sewing-group meeting, where the women talked of 'how interesting' it would be to have more nationalities, say Chinese or Japanese present there. Another woman echoed this, stating, 'I can't be

bothered with all that national nonsense. I just want to *be*. I want to mix with young, old, English, French, Spanish, I don't care as long as they are interesting.' These women were not alone in asserting an internationalist discourse, which, they suggest, and in contrast to the blandness of monoculture, holds its protagonists up as 'interesting.' Indeed, they could almost be living exemplars of Hannerz's assertion that, 'Cosmopolitanism is a willingness to engage in the other' (1990:239). For example, Barbara, like others, had a particular stance of tolerance towards others, developed through years working as a finance executive in many different parts of the world. Yet, as revealed above, these statements could be read as produced by a particular Western stance of individualism, which celebrates difference and diversity. This liberal stance is, for the most part, fairly commendable. Yet, as elucidated by Friedman, and as I develop, some consequences can ultimately ill-reflect the good intentions of the protagonists of (Western) internationalism. The thesis explores this in significant detail in chapter nine, so I limit my discussion at this point.

In a critique of Chambers *et al*, Friedman points out how the celebration of the transcendence of national differences can easily translate into a moralising discourse that vilifies those that don't transcend (1997:70-89). Those who are not 'cosmopolitans' are scapegoated as 'rednecks'; ignorant simpletons who create havoc and war in the world. The net result is that there is a reinscription of the class structure which puts those who have mastery of cosmopolitanism at the top, and those who have attachment to land as Balkan tribalists, condemned to the bottom. Cosmopolitanism and hybridity are socially selective processes, for, as Friedman points out, 'The urban poor, ethnically mixed ghetto is an arena that does not immediately cater to the construction of explicitly new hybrid identities' (1997:84). This translates to a binarism of those who stay and vegetate *vs*, those that move

and improve their mind. The hybrid and interstitial spaces are occupied by elites for whom, 'cosmopolitanism is the[ir] claimed prerogative...within the newly evolving global ecumene' (Werbner 1999:18). Instead, in a cautionary tale for enthusiastic liberals, we should be aware that 'travel *per se* is not sufficient to produce the kind of transnational and multicultural ideal celebrated in so many versions of postcolonial theory' (Fabricant 1998:38).

In actual fact, as Amit-Talai suggests, more attention should be paid to the limits of displacement and transience (1998:55,56), such as the black holes and legal loopholes that transnationalism creates. These can be positively or negatively exploited. King *et al* point out for example how many migrants in Spain are well positioned to exploit differently the choices raised by national or European healthcare rights (2000:90-123). Furthermore, some exploit possibilities of non-registration to avoid paying tax on income and property in Spain (*ibid.*:37), and thus appear totally registered in the UK. Dwyer furthermore points out how in deciding on treatments, migrants 'shop around' as it were to find the best deal in different countries (2000:374)<sup>vii</sup>, a feature also found in North American research (see discussion by Warnes 1991:55). Yet at the same time, the lack of knowledge and involvement in local issues and laws in Spain demonstrated by the international migrants means that many migrants feel a paralysis when confronted with their legal rights. Many businesses have exploited this black hole in legal responsibility that exists within the international scene, and, in practice, victims of non-violent crime have found it difficult to seek redress when companies are operating across national boundaries. For example, Lil, an elderly woman I interviewed, and thirty others each lost over £12,000 in a property deal in Spain. An attempt in the British judicial system to try the case failed to succeed, as the Canadian builders responsible simply did not turn up to court, and there was no legal means by which the courts could order them

to appear. Such laxness of sanctions fosters a maverick sense of irresponsibility and lack of trust, and leaves many feeling vulnerable, yet cruelly reminded of the possibilities for lack of accountability in this international grouping.

Following Friedman (1997) and Amit Talai (1998), perhaps there should be a check to the potential liberalising stance associated with the movement literature. Hybridity and creolisation are *not* a natural follow on from global movement, nor is it that movement is automatically liberating. In parts of the thesis, I point out the difficulties of a transnational living that are less accounted for in literature to date.

## CONCLUSION

Through their engagement with new global configurations, migrants are often seen as purposeful, creative agents, carving out new identities or repositioning old ones. However, as demonstrated throughout the discussion, there are a couple of aspects I take issue with in applying certain strands of the literature to the group of migrants I encountered in Spain. First, careful attention should be paid to how 'other' migrants are presented. Those that do not fit the characteristics of 'the migrant figure' (which has become something of a typology) should not be treated necessarily using the same language and frame of analysis. Second, we should be aware of the culturally produced nature of assertions of these freedoms derived from deterritoriality. The body of literature on movement derives from, or certainly has resonance with a Western cultural influence that sees the pursuit of expressions of individuality through the consumption of

'difference.' The canon has a danger of re-asserting a position in which autonomy is found through movement or consuming 'difference.' Does the academic or practical stance on the potentialities of movement really have the subversive power it is endowed with? It is, according to Friedman a stance limited only to a certain few, and less inclusive than the more optimistic readings imply.

These theoretical wranglings aside, for the purposes of this study, it could be posited that the migrants in this instance embody this historically developed longing for individual self-determination. They *are* emblematic subjective individuals, exercising autonomous choice in their decision to move overseas. They reflect the same convictions as some academics for heightened subjectivity through movement, in an era when nostalgia for diversity is on the increase. The lives of the 'mixed bag' of migrants are a struggle to develop identities in a new space, principally achieved through an emphasis on different 'personalities.' Free from the chains of work and the social situatedness of bonds of responsibility, the defining aspects of individuals are left behind in the homeland. The development of personality becomes the main 'task' in the diasporic space. It is also seen as a natural consequence of freedom, when, unfettered by demands, the individual can discover his/herself. The next chapter explores the significance of the place where this occurs.

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### **Notes:**

<sup>i</sup> Feminist scholars such as Morris (1988) and Kaplan (1996) have criticised 'the travelling trope' as replicating a privileging of ideas of travel, and adventure, associated with masculine icons, marginalising the notion of 'home' as a feminised space (Thompson and Tambyah 1999:221).

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- <sup>ii</sup> In King, Warnes and Williams' study, there was a significant representation of, 'people who have not lived in Britain very much, who have had mobile international careers and who have biographical backgrounds in the former British colonies' (2000:124).
- <sup>iii</sup> King *et al* point out that whilst it is right to focus on the 'largest and most problematic flows of labour migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers there are enough questions on International Retirement Migration to warrant more attention' (2000:27).
- <sup>iv</sup> Individuality referring to the distinctiveness of individual consciousness and individualism as a particular cultural norm professing self-development, respect for privacy and self-determination (Rapport and Overing 2000:178-179). In this context, both are complementary; the awareness of individual distinctiveness is expressed (and valorized) through individualistic pursuits.
- <sup>v</sup> Although to some degree, the observances can be generalised to other Northern Europeans.
- <sup>vi</sup> Graburn suggests in eighteenth-century England, the Grand Tour became a fully developed institution; the tourist motive for going abroad was not only cultural but 'highly educational and political' (1989:29). Aims were, for instance, 'to learn languages, manners and accomplishments, riding, dancing and other social graces' (*Ibid.*)
- <sup>vii</sup> I quote from one of Dwyer's Swedish interviewees, who pointed out, 'When you move abroad, you have to be curious and daring, but when it comes to returning to your home country you have to be very calculating and well organised. It's a kind of conflict I suppose' (2000:374).



**Chapter 4 -**  
**CHANGING PLACES<sup>i</sup>**  
**An Introduction to Context**

*'And yet...and yet...what had originally enthralled us, from our first day here, had been the discovery where the juggernaut of time had creaked almost to a halt.*

*Except for the arrival of television, the twentieth century had not yet made its way up the hill. It was Dalmácija's immutability which had made it precious to us, and to those of our friends who had visited it. But that immutability was now crumbling. Moreover its erosion had coincided with our presence here.*

*Was that a coincidence, or were we in some way responsible for what was happening? Perhaps our arrival here, like that of the conquistadors in the*

*Caribbean or of Cook in the Pacific, had tainted the very culture we admired. The fatal impact.'* (The Bottlebrush Tree. A village in Andalucía, by Hugh Seymour Davis 1996:283).

*'I greet passers by with a hearty Spanish 'hola!' They reply with a 'hello' or 'hi.'*  
(The Times Weekend. McClarence 1998)

**An Introduction to Place**

This chapter introduces the reader to the context to which migrants have moved. For, I suggest that the desire for diversity, individuality and heightened subjectivity through movement (as discussed in the last chapter) does not occur regardless of the place. In this chapter, I attempt to go against the grain of transnational analysis, with its tendency to neglect the

significance of *where* new identity-formations take place, imputing significance invariably in the homeland (e.g. Danforth 1995). Rather, in this case, 'Spain' with all its putative characteristics is fundamental to migrant experiences. Historically located in the Northern-European idea of 'Spain' has been the notion of anti-structure itself; escape, freedom, sun and fun, as well as a romantic and aestheticised 'culture' (in the old-fashioned sense) to be admired. The particular atmosphere, the smells, the noises, and sense-experience of the village or town, as well as the wider images and imaginings all feature highly in decisions to move, and in subsequent depictions of the experience. In this chapter then, I examine the attachment of individuals to the particularity of place (Shields 1991:16) or its 'character' (Massey 1993:68). Such a perspective challenges typical transnational thought, which on the whole sees attachment to land as *de facto* defensive and reactionary (see Massey 1992). Rather, following the social geographer Doreen Massey, I adopt an alternative reading of place which sees place-identity as provisional (1992:142), 'always formed by the juxtaposition and co-presence there of *particular sets of social interrelations*, and by the effects which that...produce' (*ibid.*:142)(my italics).

The structure of the chapter is as follows. Following a brief introduction to the context, I show how 'place' identity has been constructed within the academy. In a development of some of the themes introduced in the last chapter, I reveal some of the constructions and representations of Andalucía by anthropologists. If not entirely romantic, they are certainly selective, playing down crucial features of spatial population distribution, tourism development, and cultural commodification in the region. Yet, the construction of a Northern European idea of 'Spain' however has not occurred overnight. Rather the current interests of Northern Europeans have a long historical precedent, informed by years of settlement

(photographically depicted in *The Spanish Attraction* by Grayson 2001). Thirdly then, I chart an historical exploration of British real and imagined investments in Spain. I give a fuller history of early elite migration and interactions in the area, including the social construction of a romantic, aesthetic, and non-modern idea of Spain by literary figures. I present some of the original migrants in Freila and Tocina and show the style of interaction amongst themselves and locals, which have informed current behaviours of migrants. Following Massey's perspective, I analyse this part of Spain in terms of its 'uniqueness as a point of intersection in a wider network of relations' (Morley 1999:157). The 'place identity' of Spain is, as I argue elsewhere romantic and aesthetic (Oliver 2002). In the wake of economic and social transformation, this image is under threat.

The chapter ends with reference to an ethnographic examination of how place-identity is currently negotiated. I show how Northern European migrants currently residing in the village of Freila and acting as emblems of modernity, attempt nonetheless to preserve the constructed aestheticised version of 'tradition.' The defensiveness and desire to preserve the place-identity of the village is linked to the meanings that migrants attribute to place. These are of course affected by their own subjectivities and by their stage in the life-course in particular. The urgent defence of the area is one based on a perceived slippage from a distinctive place (for individuals) into an homogenising 'non-place' (Augé 1995) (for crowds) through tourism. I show how attitudes to place have resonance with, or mark out a number of significant features of personal identity. That aside, to begin, I introduce the geographical, physical and social features of the areas studied. I do so in a manner that draws attention to the sensuousness of place-experience, as informed by tourist images but also experienced through living there. Such descriptions are not merely 'a literary trick' to seduce the reader. Rather,

and contrary to some perspectives, they show the importance of setting when discussing migrant experience.

### A Brief Introduction to Place – Freila and Tocina

A (newly-established) website describes Freila as '*el pueblo más famoso de toda la Axarquía,*' (the most famous village in the entire Axarquía region) (<http://www.Andalucía.org><sup>ii</sup>). The village is perched at an altitude of 435 metres in the foothills of the Sierra, clinging tightly to a steep hill on one side and backed by a deep and vast gorge carved out by the river on the far side. Looking towards Málaga, there are a number of rippling hills, which soften the wide valley. The valley, which reaches over to the next village, just out of sight, is comprised of plots, at times rich with subtropical fruits such as avocados and mangoes, at other times dry and barren, laboured over in a daily grind by *campesinos* (peasant farmers). Sprinklings of scattered white *cortijos* (farmhouses) and grander palatial houses are randomly dotted around these hills, proliferating every year (see fig. 1). In the past, the village was reached only by a winding road. A year ago however, this changed, and the village is now easily reached by a smart new *autovía*, which has upset some people's former countryside views. Constant sights on this road are the local bus running people to and from Tocina, the town on the coast and the regular tourist buses, relentlessly bringing tourists to and from the village for a stroll, a beer, a couple of tapas, and a walk through the village. They follow a trail of decorative tiles explaining the history of the expulsion of the *moriscos* in the sixteenth century. Walking through the village they discover the plaza, the meeting point for the men and women of the village, a number of bars exuding scents of garlic, fish and potatoes. They might even catch sight of the odd migrant or two to share a brief chat over a beer with.



Fig. 1—The Panorama  
Over The Valley



Fig. 2—A Hand-Drawn Christmas  
Card Using a Spanish Old Couple as  
Material

*By Brenda Haddon*

The village of Freila *pueblo*, in the Axarquía, could be described as a typical example of a 'traditional yet modern' *pueblo blanco*. With around 2,150 inhabitants<sup>iii</sup>, it is a relatively large and, in comparison to others, fairly affluent *pueblo*. However, this was not always the case; it is only relatively recently and quickly that the village has been developed. This is because the *pueblo* has been incorporated into a drive by the regional government to spread the benefits of expanding coastal tourism (a significant contributor to Spain's GDP to inland sites). Recent projects have been undertaken to 'prettify' the town, with projects financed partly by the *Junta de Andalucía* (the Andalusian regional council) and partly by EU regional aid. Projects have included the repaving of areas of the old town, replacing underground pipes for drainage and water supply, illuminating part of the old village and establishing the village as part of the inland tourist route (*ruta del vino*/ wine route). The drive of different (local to supranational) government bodies to modernise the *pueblo* have materialised in the construction of a public swimming pool, an international language school, an outdoor sports stadium and one covered stadium. These provide venues for visiting 'big-name' rock bands in the summer season and the *feria* (fair). By all accounts, the village is a modern and cosmopolitan place, particularly given the presence of a number of Northern European migrants, attracted over the last thirty-five years by the beauty, culture and climatic benefits.

Cast your eyes towards the expanse of the Mediterranean, Africa beckoning beyond, and there lies Tocina, a larger hive of tourist activity, but still, some say, holding a pleasant 'Spanish' atmosphere. The growing expanse of hotels can just about be made out from the village, some 6 kms inland. Tocina, in contrast to Freila is a larger, sprawling tourist town. Walk through in the height of summer, and you are jostled by the tourists, who are regularly disgorged for two weeks relaxation in the sun. Stand at the

end of the marble effect *paseo* and cast your eyes either way. A number of rocky coves with beautiful sandy bays are there, as well as a large expanse of man-made beach at the far extremes of the town. Thirty-odd years ago and this was a fishing beach, with only one shack for refreshment. Now it is backed by 6 or 7 *merenderas* (cafes) selling enticing *mariscos, espetos y paella* (shellfish, grilled sardines and paella). Sprouting up in the hills behind is a mini-town of self-enclosed holiday-villages, complete with decorative water features and swimming pools. Some of these were originally retirement villages, designed especially for the growing contingent of mainly older 'residential tourists' as they are known by the government (see <http://www.sopde.es/economia/residencial/segmento.html>). Some live there all year round, others only for a couple of months a year and still others are rented out to friends and relatives. Other houses are second homes, owned by Spaniards, usually from the cities. This pattern of habitation is reflected in the apartment blocks which make up the rest of the town, some clinging to the coast line and others mixed in an area comprising English bars and shops, as well as neon-lit centres of nightlife activity for those brave enough.

## **PART ONE**

### **Visions of 'Place' I- the Selectivity of Iberian Ethnography**

The places of Tocina and Freila, as described above seem little accounted for in anthropological texts. In this section, I pay attention to the ways anthropologists have perhaps been guilty of propagating a presentation of 'the traditional,' replicating lay and commercial presentations of the region.

In particular, I show how they have avoided certain features of the reality of Andalucía today. The overview rests on two premises. First, I follow other critics, who suggest that the anthropologists' focus has reflected romanticist tendencies (Fabian 1983). The selective gaze ignores or downplays the crucial feature of coastal tourism development, the driving force of economic and social transformation in the area. Second, I suggest that anthropologists have downplayed the means by which 'culture' in Andalucía is constructed and commodified in response to the realities of economic transformation. I consider these points in turn.

Andalucía is one of the fastest growing regions in Spain, with the coastal area in particular exhibiting the greatest transformation. Málaga province has had the highest population increase in the last year in the entirety of Spain, fuelled in part by the large numbers of Northern European migrants and Northern African labourers (Salmon 1995:26). The population is now unevenly distributed, concentrated in urban centres and coastal areas, which swell massively during summer months (Salmon 1992:24). Anthropological studies have downplayed this cosmopolitan and international dimension of the population, instead focusing more on the more intellectually esteemed 'native culture.' Such a focus, one suspects derives from a long-standing disdain in anthropology towards tourism, as well as a difficulty in dealing with cultures and identities that appear less than bounded (see chapter three). I posit that Mediterranean ethnography should not see tourist or migrant development as incidental to the 'real' lives and culture of people. In fact, to ignore it is one of the greatest examples of selective and partial anthropological study.

As I suggested in chapter two, certain regionalist accounts frame the area. Texts present the area as a static, marginal and bounded region, lying (as



other Mediterranean sites) 'at the critical margins of Europe' (Dubisch 1995:186). Andalucía was considered the 'Sicily and Ireland of Spain' (Gilmore 1987:1). In the 1950s, Pitt-Rivers explored the honour and shame complex (Pitt Rivers 1971). According to early regionalist accounts, this was a 'Mediterranean' characteristic (Schneider<sup>iv</sup> 1981), which pervades Andalusian life. The concept asserts women as passively maintaining their sexual purity and virtue in the private realm, whilst portraying men as courting public prestige and honour. Subsequently, remote villages were studied in the structural Marxist mode, delineating similarly strict social stratification<sup>v</sup>, corporate village organisation and apparent rigid and unchanging axioms of division between sexes and classes. More contemporary texts, for instance by Brandes and Gilmore, have cast a gaze over the impact of flux on Andalucía (Brandes 1980:11). Yet again they assert how gender relations were *rebalanced* (and thus maintained existing inflexible divisions) following modernisation (Gilmore 1987:181). Such ethnographies have since been criticised for the perpetuation of essentialist Mediterranean stereotypes (see Herzfeld 1987, Llobera 1986, Pina de Cabral 1989<sup>vi</sup>, Pink 1997), stereotypes that resonate with those in much popular thought.

In reality, cultural, political and economic interaction, exchange and encounters have always been features of life in the Mediterranean (Ribas Mateos 2001:22). Recent interest in Andalucía has then lately come from migration scholars, looking at the importance of the unique position of the Mediterranean as the 'friction plane' (*ibid.*) between the richer North and the South following current political developments. For, it is here that 'Fortress Europe' has its outposts, marking the changing status of the country as one characterised by emigration to a country of immigration in the 1980s (King, Lazaridis and Tsardanidas 2000:5, Arango 2000:253). Ethnographic attention

is currently examining the experiences of such encounters (see Driessen (1998) on Moroccan migrants in Tarifa, Western Andalucía) and the ways that migrant culture is evolving (King 2001). Yet, simultaneously, and often overlooked by 'serious' anthropological scholars, is the ever-expanding number of migrants from the North of Europe to the South.

The demographic and social makeup of the region has been fundamentally altered over the last thirty years. For nearly forty years Spain was under the strong centralised nation-state of Franco, in a state of relative global isolation. As a result, Andalucía was technologically backward, with little industrialisation. Even in the wake of the repressions of the Franco years, when the path to democracy and pursuit of modernisation was seized upon enthusiastically, the (by now) autonomous region of Andalucía had the highest levels of unemployment within the EU between 1988-90 (Therborn 1995:200). However, by entering into the Common Market (in 1983) Spain became a recipient of aid that redressed regional inequalities (Dunphy 2000:183). At the same time it was forced into a new market orientation, an internationalised economy, and experienced a flood of consumer-goods imports, linking the region to the EU (Dunphy 2000:184)<sup>vii</sup>. The transformation is markedly different from the experience of a Northern European pass to modernity (Therborn 1995:5, King et al. 2000:10), never experiencing an industrial phase (Therborn 1995:173, Salmon 1991:23), being almost totally reliant on the service industry (in particular tourism) and quickly entering an 'era of mass consumption' (Rostow 1960). Andalucía in 1985 played host to an estimated 5 million tourists (Valenzuela 1988:44) and in Málaga province for example, two-thirds of the employed population work in the service sector (Salmon 1991:44).

It is strange then, that tourism and coastal development are seen as incidental to what goes on 'really.' The chosen sites of study by anthropologists almost reflect the same ploy used by the tourist industry in promoting 'inland Spain' as 'the real Spain.' Augé similarly suggests that the desire to look for an illusory past stability is a fantasy characteristic of the ethnologist tradition (1995:46). Although prior to this, Fraser also noted the presence of foreigners in Mijas (1973:163,183) the notable exception is Collier, who points out that despite their portrayal as 'traditional,' Andalusian villages were hardly ever isolated from wider regional and political market involvements, and were certainly not the pristine sights they were perceived to be<sup>viii</sup> (1997:46). Crain too explores the transformation of pilgrimages and pilgrimage sites in the face of touristic development (Crain 1992 and 1996). Generally, in more traditional texts, little is mentioned of tourism, an oversight curiously found in other Mediterranean monographs. For instance, Herzfeld's consideration of 'transformations' in the ultimate chapter of *The Politics of Manhood* does not mention any impact of tourism, despite the fact that the village is only a short distance away from a significant number of large tourist destinations (1985:259-274). To ignore it, at best smacks of intellectual snobbery, at worst demonstrates selective data-collection and bias. Again it reflects a tradition of isolating the object of study because of anthropology's theoretical weakness in explaining the incorporation of communities within the world beyond their boundaries.

Another important factor to consider is that central to tourist propaganda is the use of 'tradition' and 'culture' as synonymous with the region. Following development, the image still somehow pervades because progress has been remarketed as *complementing* existing ways. For instance, speaking at the World Travel market in 1999 José Núñez Castain, the

delegate for Tourism and Sport in the *Junta de Andalucía*, weaved an image of an harmonic synergy of 'tradition' and progress. He stated, 'The Andalusians wisely know how to combine the memory of a past full of tradition with the modern ways of a hospitable land that believes in progress<sup>ix</sup>.' (*Sur* in English, November 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 1999). Recent campaigns promote the *pueblos blancos* such as Freila, dotted around the hills behind the coastline and portrayed as last bastions of purity (Nogués Pedregal 1996:58), far removed from the urban sprawl and ugly modernity exemplified in the nearby Costa del Sol. Anthropologists have downplayed how tourist development and 'culture' are intertwined through the commercial exploitation of 'culture.' This preserves a dubious 'purity of the Mediterranean.' The idea has historical precedents in early interactions within the region, to which I shall now turn.

## PART TWO

### **Visions of 'Place' II- Historical Legacies and Early Migrants**

Given the recent burst of mass tourism in Spain, it may surprise some to know that the fascination for Northern Europeans for Spain has a long history. For example, during the last two hundred years there has been a steady flow of British through Spain, either as workers or travellers. Such history has shaped and influenced present-day interactions for migrants. In this section, I outline the historical precedent and introduce a number of 'original migrants'; early settlers to the area. In particular, I focus on the

history of the British in Spain, and more generally go on to chart the social constructions of Spain by foreigners in earlier times.

As early as the 1850s, there was already a moderate sized English contingent in Málaga (one hundred and twenty people), mainly working in factories and mines (Grice Hutchinson 1982:36). This small group was also boosted by the regular stops of seaman on temporary stays in the port of Málaga and the growing contingent of *trotamundos ingleses* ('English globetrotters' as documented by Krauel 1988). According to Grice Hutchinson, in 1850s Málaga there was already a growing hospitality industry. There was an English run hotel, serving, according to Grice Hutchinson, 'Harvey's sauce, pale ale, and Stilton cheese' (1982:32). The British presence in Spain at this time was not, however, particularly official; until 1831 for example, due to Catholic law which disallowed recognition for any other denomination or religion, there was no proper burial ground for Protestants. Instead, British people were buried at midnight, standing upright in the sand, to be eventually washed away (*ibid.*:10), a gruesome story recounted by many migrants today. Furthermore, although in 1850 a permanent chaplain was appointed at the Consulate, there was no permanent place of worship (*ibid.*:36). The then British consul, William Mark lodged a long campaign until a plot of land for burial was finally granted. Yet, it was not until 1891 that St George's Church was permanently established, which still stands in the grounds of the cemetery to this day. The English cemetery is an exclusive burial ground in use today, mainly for honoured members of the military residing in Spain. Elsewhere in the province, the port in Cádiz was a thriving base for ship-building and sherry<sup>x</sup> and fruit exports (Grayson 2001:23). In 1873, a British led consortium also bought the Rio Tinto mines in Huelva, imposing a 'form of apartheid' in terms of relations between locals

and migrants; the latter lived apart in 'La colonia Inglesa' (the English colony) (*ibid.*:43).

At the same time as the presence of the working contingent, there was a number of travellers and explorers, fascinated by Spain. Notable amongst these were Richard Ford and George Borrow, who analysed the Spanish way of life in their mid-nineteenth century accounts (*Handbook for Travellers in Spain* (1845) and *The Bible in Spain* (1843) respectively). Later, the literary gaze on Andalucía and Spain developed through writers such as Gerald Brenan, and later Laurie Lee (1969) and Ernest Hemingway (1954). Turning to the publication details of Brenan's *South from Granada* give clues to the book's content, which are curiously resonant with the sentiments of many current migrants. They explain how Brenan, famed for establishing himself in the *Alpujarra* area of Andalucía in 1919, 'needed to break free and find room to breathe, so to speak, in a country where he could acquire what he felt he so badly needed: self knowledge through a true education of mind' (1980). In the novel, Brenan discloses village customs, folklore and events shaping his time there. At the time of his stay, he was visited by elite literary figures such as Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and Bertrand Russell. Around those times, Málaga city was also fast becoming a cosmopolitan watering hole for the elite. According to Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson, who was born in Málaga, and had continued to live there for most of her long years<sup>xi</sup>, around the 1910s and 20s there was already a well-established English scene in Málaga, revolving around events such as tennis, tea and cocktail parties.

In order to explore the continuing historical development, I spoke to a number of people who were amongst the first to move into Tocina and Freila (although many 'original migrants' have moved on). I was told by one

English man that the first charter flight came from the UK to Spain in 1947. From that time onwards, according to him, 'a ghetto syndrome' started to develop with British people settling in Tocina and later Freila, and Germans settling further up the coast. He was brought up in Spain as the son of an engineer in Huelva, not speaking English until he was six years old when he was sent to school back in England. He was a British spy for a number of years, and then he decided to move out to Spain permanently in 1968, buying an old ruin. He recalled how his belongings were taken up to his house on a donkey, because there was no road then. Life was cheap and easy then, he said. The experience for migrants at this time was akin to being 'pioneers' and adventurers. To move to an undeveloped village was clearly 'not the norm,' particularly for the women who came on their own.

It would not be unfair to suggest that the early migrants coming at this time were of a certain ilk - mostly wealthy, educated and well-spoken. When I asked one migrant, Judy why she came, she replied, 'well, certainly not to lie in the sun. I came to LIVE here.' Nowadays, in her early eighties, she keeps away from most of the organised clubs. Her one exception is the fine art club. She pointed out to me, 'I hate the way they are organised. It's like by going there you are wearing a tag, being labelled, I didn't come for that.' Another woman, Kate, came out in 1963, following her divorce. She came because there were cheap flights, but found that she met and fell in love with a Spaniard. She recalled, 'in the 1950s, migrants were few and far between, and Tocina was just a village then. In 1963, when I came, there were half a dozen foreigners and very few tourists. There were two very small hotels.' When I knew her, she worked as a secretary to a lawyer, using her skills to translate for other foreigners, although she has since married and settled in England after more than thirty-five years in Spain. Another woman, Mary, came for many visits to Spain in the 1950s with her husband,

who worked periodically in Spain. When she first came, she was enchanted by Spain, and spent her time, as she described, 'hunting down romantic ruins' whilst her husband worked. On her original visits, she was introduced to 'the set' in Málaga, but said, 'the last thing I wanted was all these PEOPLE.' She did however add, 'they were *interesting* though, not like the ones you get now.' To arrive in Freila, where she lives now, she stuck a pin in a map in a reckless and unplanned move. She explained that in 1963 when she moved permanently, 'we weren't really serious about buying a house, but we went to see some old ruins, and that was it.' She has been in the *campo* around Freila ever since.

Certainly, most migrants recall those times as carefree, irresponsible and fun. Mary recalled, 'We had such fun then, there were people from all different walks of life and we ran around doing dotty things.' On one occasion, Mary was arrested and put in the local jail for a day for dousing a little boy in water. 'I know I was naughty then,' she laughed, recalling how she was known locally as being a *yegua* (according to her, 'a young mare without any brakes on') because of her reckless attitude. At this time, still under the autarchic and repressive government of Franco, the villagers were dependent on agriculture, economically underdeveloped and poor. Relationships between locals and *extranjeros* were tinged by a fascination on both sides<sup>xii</sup>. Judy recalled how people just kept staring at her when she first arrived, and she took up with a 'toyboy' years younger than her to stop the tongues wagging because she was a single, divorced woman. At this time, even behaviours such as wearing a swimsuit or entering a bar unaccompanied were seen as deeply scandalous.

Yet, despite their (at times) outlandish ways, foreigners' wealth and status allowed them a degree of respect, to the extent that they were emulated. As



the anthropologist Richard Barrett discovered to his good fortune in a Spanish village in 1963, 'the appearance of strangers...is a great event,' immediately provoking curiosity (1974:4). In Freila, foreigners were prized or integrated (at a respectful distance) into existing families. In response, the whole family tended to benefit from the foreigner's generosity. Mary recalls, for example how her husband was instructed to attend a wedding wearing a dinner suit. The other guests could not afford expensive clothes and his besuited presence esteemed the family concerned. Like local patrons, they were assumed to have 'a gentleman complex' (1974:27). As wealthier members of society, they were seen as strange versions of 'patrons' in the existing patron-client society (see analysis by Barrett 1974), and on some occasions fought over by villagers.

The outspoken ways of some migrants in the eyes of the Spanish was also at times employed as a mode of behaviour towards each other. Even from an early stage, a certain defensiveness of their private way of life was established in the face of change. Judy, for example, recalled how some new English migrants were keen to be accepted into the crowd. Following the construction of their house they invited Judy for drinks, but this was, Judy perceived, just because she was English. 'To hell with all that,' she exclaimed, 'Just because they had a double-barrelled surname.' She sent the invitation back to them with no explanation. Ten years later she had to apologise for her rudeness, when she met them and realised they were very nice. Other early migrants expressed the need to keep themselves to themselves, although this was not always the case. Robert for instance, nostalgically mentioned a couple of people in the original set and said sadly, 'It was a community then; everybody knew everybody, but now I don't know anyone.'

Hot on the heels of these migrants came a number of 'hippies' and bohemians following the 1960s counterculture movement. Some of these still reside around the area, as can be seen from the odd painted van by the side of the road. More are found inland, where they have fled following the perceived destruction of the coastal area. Added to this was a slow and steady trickle of other migrants who moved during the 1970s and early 1980s. The foreign migrants were often retreating from lives disrupted by the negative aspects of modernity, moving (particularly to the village) because of the 'simplicity' of the agricultural way of life and perceived 'traditionality.' One such migrant, Ed, a successful artist, moved to the village because of his own disillusionment at the changes prompted by the Thatcher years in the UK. This reduced his rural idyll, a village in Essex, to a commuting village, 'full,' as he described, 'of two hundred to three hundred estate agents.' In Freila, Ed's relations to locals were based upon a respect for and interest in a different way of life. He nostalgically talked about the village, explaining, 'the local people live a much more simple life, they have lived in the same place for seventy years and the contentment they derive from that is obvious. When our own time is valuable, to be in this timeless place is sheer contentment.' Migrants project a temporal traditionality upon people, similar to anthropologists (see Fabian's *Time and the Other* (1983)) that perhaps results from their Northern European desires (See discussions by Llobera 1986:25-33, and Pina-Cabral 1989:399-406).

In the early to mid 1980s a relative explosion of migrant numbers occurred, particularly congregating in the town. Factors precipitating this were the favourable exchange rate and inexpensive prices. King, Warnes and Williams point out, 'IRM<sup>xiii</sup> can be seen, at least in part, as a progression from the mass tourism boom which transformed international travel and holiday-making in Europe from the 1960s' (2000:81). The changes that

original migrants have seen is interpreted as a gradual intellectual drain, reflecting King, Warnes and Williams assertion that migrants in the 1970s were better educated than those in the 1980s (2000:83). Kate said,

‘Tocina used to be an oasis of good quality British people, with manners and money. They were people of the world. Now in the bars, you see the dregs, starting to drink at 12 o’clock. It comes from boredom, when people don’t prepare for their retirement.’

Similarly Judy felt that the area had been ‘invaded.’ As she told me recently, ‘the village has gone to the dogs.’ The invasion she refers to coincided with the onset of her old age, which forced her to consider whether she would go back. But then she says, after being there for nearly forty years, ‘where can I go?’

In current times, despite major changes and their ramifications, Andalucía still exists as an object of fascination for migrants, as well as playing muse to a number of contemporary novelists and artists. There is a growing genre of travel writing/‘expat abroad’ books, written about the novelist’s adjustment to life in Spain. They tend to draw elaborate portraits of a number of Spanish ‘characters’ as well as describing a number of ‘eccentric’ foreigners. Novels such as *The Bottlebrush Tree* (Seymour-Davis 1996), *Driving over Lemons* (Stewart 1999), and more recently *Mañana mañana* (Kerr 2001) are commonly read by migrants and tourists in Spain today. They describe life in small villages, little touched by change, and as sites for the realisation of individuality. When *Driving over Lemons* was released, Mary, an ‘original’ migrant sighed, ‘why didn’t I do that, I could have done that!’ Indeed, some migrants have done so, more often than not for their own pleasure. Many paint or draw ‘traditional’ Spanish scenes, or write poetry and short stories. Kate gave me a number of stories she had written based on anecdotes on

'how life used to be' in Spain, which had been published in some of the free magazines. They focused on topics such as, 'the village blacksmith,' 'the dignity of illiteracy' and 'courtship,' which wryly compares old courtship customs that she remembered to contemporary processes of dating. Fig. 2 is a hand-drawn Christmas card, by Brenda Haddon, of an old Spanish couple, showing how the social and cultural make-up of Spain is material for migrants' imaginations.

In both popular conceptions and media images, Andalucía holds a fascination for many as capturing the spirit of the nation as quintessentially Spanish. Part of its appeal lies in this image of a rural idyll, providing a site where the desire to meet a Southern European 'other' is met (Boissevain 1996:3). The Andalucían figure is projected as 'anti-rational.' For instance, one report in the Guardian on the city of Granada focused on the appealing chaos of the unsanitised surroundings, for those coming from a 'land of decent drains, tidy wires and clipped hedges' (Glancey 1998:36-38). Speaking of the unruliness of Andalucíans, he explained,

'They will shout too. The women of Granada, I'm sorry, really do, sound like cats on heat as they shout, ear piercingly, to one another across orange-scented courtyards: 'Mareeeeeiaaaah' for Maria. Have they no shame, no sense of civic decorum? No, which is why the towns of Andalucía are so special' (*ibid.*:36).

Finally, it could be argued that the historical external construction is, to some degree, confirmed by locals, who are complicit in internalising and promoting images of tradition. As MacDonald suggests in her discussion of participants in the tourist industry in the Isle of Skye, 'we should not underrate people's ability to play along with constructed images of themselves' (1997:155), and I would suggest that given the importance of

'culture' in development plans, this holds true, albeit more so in Freila than in Tocina. For instance, although several car break-ins occurred in the village whilst I was there, the local language institute offered free insurance, because, apparently, 'Nobody locks their door, unlike in most Spanish cities. Petty crime is unheard of and life is a lot more peaceful than in the major cities.' (Publicity booklet *Academia Internacional Freila* 1998:3). The shops in Freila sell locally made products, not disclosing that it is only very recently that people have learnt the 'traditional' techniques of making them. The women, for instance, are encouraged to attend traditional mat making classes, as well as embroidery classes, ironically using the sellable constructed 'tradition' as a means of emancipating them from the real 'traditional' constraints of being dependent on the male breadwinner.

Much of the lure of the village depends on tourists attending the many annual parades and displays, from the processions of the village patrons, *San Antonio* and *San Sebastián* to the flower displays in *el día de la Cruz* (the day of the cross) in May. According to Mintz, the year in Spain is marked by a series of ups and downs (1997:xiii), from joyful celebrations to sombre occasions. Now, due to the presence of tourists, fulfilling their folklorist desires (Boissevain 1992:7) these have become performative occasions, and so are much more elaborate and enjoyable than before. For instance in the *romería* (pilgrimage) of San Antonio in Freila, a growing number of people wish to participate, young and old, with men parading on horses and girls in flamenco dresses. This was rarer in the past, now more acceptable as a display of (post-Franco) regional identity (see Collier 1997:199). Last year's *San Isidro* celebration in Tocina was reported as the biggest ever. Dubisch notes of Greece (1995:182), and Boissevain points out that this revitalisation of tradition is wholly connected to modernity (1992:1). Yet, it also appeals to

the sense of pride Andalusians have in living in, as Mintz describes it, 'the best place in Europe' (1997:246).

### PART THREE

#### **Killing the Golden Goose? The Management of 'Tradition'**

The readings of place, as discussed, have largely rested on a constructed idea of Spain as a site of tradition. Yet 'traditional' Andalucía has moved with the times, and images of tradition are, in the face of reality, hard to maintain. The dramatic economic and political changes of the last twenty to thirty years have drastically altered the outlook and occupations of people in the region. According to Collier, Andalusians have enthusiastically adopted a modern perspective, in which rather than actions being prescribed by the community, villagers 'think for themselves' as masters of their own destinies (Collier 1997:6). Turning to Freila where this issue was more under dispute, the locals, as well as earning, have benefited economically from the commodification of land and property, particularly from selling houses in the older 'traditional' part of town and buying modern apartments (what Barrett calls 'imitation apartments of towns' (1974:101)) in the new part of town, complete with marble floors and polished furniture. In Freila, there is a fostering of a strong entrepreneurial spirit, directed towards the goal of personal and family improvement. Mass consumption, a practice almost emblematic of modernity itself, has been readily embraced in the village. In this section, I use ethnographic examples to reveal how such changes provoke reactions by migrants, attempting to defend the place-identity from the winds of change. Such attempts reveal

differences in local and foreign understandings that preserve a state by which foreigners are kept at a distance within an apparently cosmopolitan and international Andalucía.

Development means different things for different people. It has meant that many migrants who had moved into a relatively deserted and peaceful paradise as a haven from the stresses and strains of modern life have found it recently more like a construction site (see Figs. 3 and 4). The pavements of Freila and Tocina are now ripped open in the height of the tourist season, with literally hundreds of tourists everyday filing past their houses on wooden planks over the setting concrete of the new 'prettified' paving. Streets that were once trodden by mules are now full of teenagers on *motos*, with silencers removed, using the circular route paved around the village for tourists as a racing circuit. Some migrants suggest that in this way the Costa is 'killing the golden goose' of its success (see 'Can the Costa del Sol survive?' in *the Reporter* by Graham 1999:26). Even in Tocina, a more developed area by any account, there have been recent horror stories of the possible development of a McDonalds restaurant in the centre of town. Currently, Freila has a sign anonymously placed at the entrance to the village entitled, 'Freila for sale.'

Tension has arisen because disturbances are less negatively (or certainly more ambiguously) viewed by local Spaniards, who see the process as yet another temporary stage in a wider series of changes towards development. Partly, ever more development represents new sources of income - many of the villagers work in the burgeoning construction industry, or in tourist-services. Yet other consequences have occurred; house prices in the region have escalated, and wages for work have risen sharply. In the village, recent controversy has come about as a result of further development plans to



**Figs. 3 and 4 – Construction Work in the Village**



enlarge the village to cater more readily for mass tourism. Many of the criticisms facing the governments rest on the fact that developments are not in the style originally planned, more often hotels and apartment duplexes rather than individual, 'traditional' village houses.

Foreign migrants feel there is a danger that the village will be swallowed up and obliterated by the forces of capitalism and the negative aspects of modernity. Ed, for example, admits that the changes and developments in the village are 'devastating,' although, he sighs, 'unfortunately we were the start and part of it,' echoing Strathern's observations that those who go in search of 'the cosy community' in the UK are 'to some extent destroying what they are seeking' (1981:222). Like Judy, the earliest resident in the village who came when it was completely 'underdeveloped,' he likened the process to colonialism of the traditional by the West. The village, they argued, was 'being invaded' by outsiders exploiting the relatively new desires of the people. At all levels of the social hierarchy, newly available luxury consumer goods are now purchased on a grand scale. Investment in the family and the house is particularly important, with spending on luxury goods for the house (sophisticated electrical goods, furnishings), and on more public symbols of status (particularly new cars). Children in particular become the recipients of vast amounts of spending. The nature of the family has changed. With families smaller than previously, the children become objects for celebrating materially all the family's achievements.

At the same time extraordinary amounts are spent on ritual occasions of the family, particularly baptisms, first communions, weddings and houses for newly-weds. Reflecting Argyrou's findings concerning Cyprus (1996), the nature of these rituals has changed; for example in the village in the 1960s, weddings used to be held hurriedly at sunrise, with participants dressed in

black. This stands in sharp contrast to the lavish displays held now. At a recent first communion of fifteen children I attended, considerable sums were spent on suits for all the family and in echoes of the wedding ceremony professional photographs were taken. These were distributed to people all around the village and the visiting families from Barcelona, Madrid, Tarragona and other locales. Afterwards, the fifteen children were each treated to a celebration dinner at different local restaurants and hotels, with at least one hundred guests at each one. Thousands of pesetas and gifts were given in a mad flurry to each child. What was once a small occasion, marked by a modest communion ceremony, has now been turned into an enormous affair. Such events mark the changing nature of life in the village, and this apparent 'consumption fever,' as one migrant described it, is yet another example of a putative denigration of the area. In response to mass commodification and commercialization, a steady flow of migrants has responded by leaving the sullied village in search of other, (inland) less developed sites.

The strong commitment that foreigners have to protecting the 'original' character of the village reflects their particular view of tradition as Western aestheticism. In discussions about 'progress' in general and the development of the village in particular, they seek noise abatement and environmental protection. In retraditionalising the village, they promote an anti-modernist idea of tradition as conservation, tolerance and respect for privacy and peace. This contrasts with the ideas of traditional communality manifest in the village, ostensibly revealing little regard for privacy. The aesthetic vision was satisfied when they first came, although tension arose following this recent modernisation. For example, in Freila, distress was caused for some when the new aerobics class attended by the Spanish women in the village was held outside, with music blaring out in the

schoolyard at the bottom of the village. After complaints, the village was 'made quaint' again by moving the group inside.

Therefore, in response to the development process in Freila, Ed and others started a neighbourhood association, known as the *Vecinos de Freila* (based upon an old idea from the Franco years when neighbours grouped together as a body of *vecinos*, Waldren 1996:94). The composition of members is a mixture of foreign residents and locals, but originally it was the foreigners who were more committed. With the best of intentions it was intended as a forum for everyone to air their opinions rather than a group of foreigners dictating for the betterment of the village. The group organised the production of a magazine 'based on the idea of a parish magazine.' Its objective was to look at 'the traditional values of the community, the customs, the tradition, the style, the architecture and the underlying conflict with the need for change.' The first magazine was filled with articles detailing things that were destroying the village, for instance, the noise of the motorbikes, and the disposal of rubbish in the gorge at the back of the village. The group has since been involved in mounting a display of old photographs of the village. One American tracked down the names of people in those pictures to create a genealogy of the village, preserving and maintaining the heritage of Freila.

However, the group got off to a rocky start, even from its very inception, mainly as a result of the clashing ideas of tradition, which initially created an unintentional 'us-them' divide. The group started when some people were walking up to the plaza, a beautiful old square with the church of San Antonio at its head. This square, decorated with pebbles marking the signs of the zodiac and orange trees around the sides was, and continues to be the main hub of public life in the village. The foreigners were shocked to

discover that the earth was being pulled up for a renovation, without anyone knowing why. Ed admitted, 'the locals weren't as upset, I don't think as what we were.' In response, he admits, 'we acted in a very English way.' Moreover, they rallied around and held a demonstration in the plaza, tying placards to the church railings and lighting candles, using a notion of beauty that highlighted the destruction of the traditional (in this sense an aesthetic notion of tradition).

At the time, Spaniards became interested in what was going on, congregating to look at the foreigners who were lighting candles. However, the *extranjeros*' (foreigners') attempt to make a statement about the destructive effects of progress was based upon a fundamental clash of understandings of tradition. For the foreigners, Northern-European aestheticism was met with bafflement. The symbolic effect planned was not achieved; in Spain candles are mainly used for funerals (see chapter ten). The locals could do little but laugh. One woman explained, 'People didn't know what they were doing, it was very strange.' The use of a particular Western aesthetic tradition did not translate here. The lack of interest in 'tradition' by locals in this sense reveals fundamental differences in what is actually seen as 'traditional.' For the foreign residents it is an anti-modern neo-Romantic environmental perspective, which sees the traditional as 'pristine' and preservable.

What is interesting however is that this aestheticised version of the traditional is actually a product of modernity and capitalism, and thus preserves migrants in a state of modernity they may wish to seek respite from. Indeed, the 'expressivism' evident in migrants' reactions has, in the words of Joel Kahn,

'been a more or less constant presence in the history of modern culture, never resolved, taking different forms and being articulated by radically different political forces, but always an undercurrent that resonates particularly in times of perceived crises of modernity' (Kahn 1995:32).

Whilst Argyrou finds that in Cyprus this is a reactive critique from within by Greek-Cypriots resisting 'the West' (2002), in the *pueblos blancos*, it is thus far developed from without, by the outsiders<sup>xiv</sup>. The *vecinos* echo this romantic critique of the Enlightenment which expressed a sense of despair at the instrumentalist rationality and commodification developed in modernity (*ibid*:32). Yet, as Kahn shows, this critique is nothing if not modern, appearing first in the period of the modernist sensibility (Kahn 1995:24). It could be said that these 'moderns' from this position consume the 'tradition' of the village, wanting it kept as it was, and use modern Western aestheticism to do so.

By no means do the foreign migrants truly desire tradition (as a return to a pre-modern age). In fact, it is from an advanced position of modernity that they promote their traditionalist views. As a cosmopolitan blend of migrants of different nationalities, they are the very embodiment of modernity (Urry 1995:141). As such, it is only a selective idea of tradition that they seek to enforce, rather than a wholesale rejection of all the propositions of modernity. In political discussions for example, it is rather the very modern emancipatory and liberal ideologies of democracy that are valued, viewing tradition, in this understanding as a kind of shackle to be released from (although for some apparently not as far down the road as wrought by the Thatcher approach). On the one hand, they challenge the material repercussions of the onslaught of modernity, and at the same time, actively engage with the ideological ambitions arising from Enlightenment thought.

It is an ongoing struggle to see how far the *Vecinos de Freila*, as a 'democratic forum' translates its more Northern-European conception of democracy in the face of reluctance. One insightful foreigner explained, 'It's supposed to be a forum to air opinions. But it doesn't work like that with Spanish people. They don't write things down in magazines, and since when has 'airing your opinions' ever been a problem for the Spanish? They talk about these things all day long.' The *vecinos* arranged a serious protest meeting, objecting to a further construction that had exceeded the restricted storey level. This was held at the *ayuntamiento* and was attended in equal numbers by *extranjeros* and locals (about forty people in all). Of all the local people there, it was mainly opinionated women, with the men at the back of the meeting, smoking, adding little and not exactly feeling comfortable with this externally-organised imposition of democracy. At the meeting, one Spanish girl Cati commented to me on how many foreigners there were. 'As usual,' my English companion commented, 'why don't the people around here care? They talk about it on the street, but they never come to the meetings.' Cati shrugged and responded harshly, 'well then, Freila gets what it deserves then. They care about the town growing, but well if it gets too bad, they have to blame themselves.'

It was felt by the organizers (mainly foreign migrants) that they themselves had to motivate and push local people to exercise their democratic rights. The chairman of the meeting, Salvador, a Columbian, reminded people at the meeting about how they should 'leave the past behind,' and should consult with lawyers to take up their own grievances. In response, a confused local woman asked, 'Why must we go and see a lawyer when there is a law saying they can't do these things?' Although the ideal of democracy is cherished, people in the village are still very much scared of

'speaking up' because of a history of clientelism. Indeed, unlike the foreigners, they are still dependent on the local goodwill of the *ayuntamiento*, a highly personalised and local bureaucratic structure. One of the few people who signed the *vecinos* petition against the plaza has never been taken on by the *ayuntamiento* to do work since, and blames this on his involvement. One migrant explained, 'People won't get involved because they lose work or don't get their plans passed. It doesn't matter for us, as we don't need to make a living here or have children to look after. It's just a hang-on from Franco's time, they still live in a medieval system, afraid to speak up.' Even, as Sapelli comments on Southern Europe, 'modernisation has preserved and given new life to traditional structures' (1995:14), such as non-democratic clientelism (Dunphy 2000:183). One local woman, Maria, however informed people at the aforementioned meeting that when she had indeed ventured to complain to the *ayuntamiento*, she was treated like a nobody, in her words, 'like a child.'

The understanding of a modern political system is being negotiated uneasily, and foreigners themselves are not immune from the machinations of local politics, often kept at a distance as 'outsiders' from political involvement (see for example Waldren 1996:236). In Freila, whilst petitions from the *vecinos* are received agreeably by the *ayuntamiento* (local government), whether anything is done is another thing. For instance, a complaint about illegal car-parking was monitored at first, but then, as Ed explained, 'It's not kept up, and we don't know whether it's because there is no formal mechanism to enforce this, or whether it's other reasons, like the policeman knows the people involved. On the surface, it seems that we are dealing with people who look the same. But, on fundamental issues, we differ.' In this less aesthetic sense, tradition (as based on patronage and networks) is viewed as negative from their modern stance. Either way, the

differences of perception between locals and migrants are explicit, and reveal the problems of dealing with the rapid transformation. All of a sudden, the appeal of the place as 'traditional' is dying, whilst old structures still maintain power in the hands of local power-makers (never foreigners). The status of foreigners as wealthy, elite and respected visitors has quickly slipped. In these changing times, the demand for desires to be met must be negotiated against a changing reality in which it is less likely that the romantic longings of 'escaping moderns' can be met.

## CONCLUSION

### **The Selective Search for Tradition and the Defence of Place**

The chapter has demonstrated the ways in which Andalucía has long held a romantically-based fascination in the history of Northern-European imaginations. Recent tensions about development are a result of the sudden transformation of the area. The reactions are so strong because of the importance of historically-rooted particular associations with 'place.' Certainly, interactions of early modern migrants were based on self-perceptions of themselves as daring anti-modern-yet-modern pioneers in contrast to what they perceived as a 'traditional' place of 'traditional' people. Yet, at the same time, local people have used those ideas of perceived traditionality to modernise, often in ways that are at odds with some of the ideals of migrants. Migrants themselves, are caught in an unresolvable self-contradiction; their stepping outside of Northern-European modernity (escaping its negative aesthetic aspects) was only partial. Simply by being in the villages they found themselves as



representatives of systems that they have no desire to represent, and even may have wished to escape from.

The concerns about place refer to migrants' own fears of self-definition. As throughout the thesis I show, some fear that the area will become a bland 'non-place' (Augé 1995), full of people they do not know (perhaps explaining some hostility addressed by more established migrants to newer migrants). The changes in the area reduce the distinctiveness of the place; at one time, this was an exclusive and fashionable destination. Foreigners were seen as 'different,' slightly eccentric and exclusive. Now, however, there is the real possibility of becoming 'one of the crowd'<sup>xv</sup>. By pursuing the Costa-tourism line, rather than the 'real Spain line,' the area is seen as becoming homogeneous and lower-class. The changes mark a potential movement from place to non-place, from romantic-traditional to modern. In a sense, over the last twenty years or so, the Costa has increasingly been redefined in our social geography as a marginal place, 'placed on the periphery of cultural systems of space in which places are ranked relative to each other.' (Shields 1991:3) The stigma of the costa 'becomes indistinguishable from any basic empirical identity [it] might once have had' (*ibid.*:3). In the time of analysis, the area of Spain to the East of Málaga was caught in the tension between the two (Oliver 2002).

Over the years then, living in Spain has given way from a position of 'being different' (as a daring yet at times odd foreigner), to a dangerous, more homogenised tourist identity (a negotiation I look at in chapter seven). This explains how for some, there is a pressing need to mark oneself out as 'different' even in a mass, because of the historical precedent informing earlier migrations. Yet, even within the assumed homogenising impact of development, the ambiguity of Spain yet represents a space of freedom and

difference, even if that difference is in the company of many others. Throughout the rest of the thesis, I show how the concerns for distinctiveness and anti-structural elements of life historically manifested in 'place' are repeated with reference to age, tourism, national identity, cosmopolitanism and everyday life. Spain is used as a dream context for ageing, with particular romantic features of unstructured non-capitalist time (see chapter eight to see how these ideas are appropriated by migrants). It is also projected as a space to live in an international site of interesting people, as long as one can ignore the tourists (chapters seven and nine). Poles of desirable self-conceptualisation are attached to the idea of Spain. Even in an apparently internationally mixed and transnational scene, the power of evocations of particularities of this certain place, for migrants' self-definition is startlingly clear.

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### Notes:

<sup>i</sup> Some of this chapter appears in the article: Oliver, C. 2002 'Killing the Golden Goose? Debates about tradition in an Andalusian village' in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*. Special Issue *Modernity in the Mediterranean* (ed.) Mitchell, J. Vol. 12 No. 1. 169-189.

<sup>ii</sup> I have not given the link to preserve anonymity.

<sup>iii</sup> From the 1998 census (Source [www. Andalusia.org/](http://www.Andalucia.org/)).

<sup>iv</sup> Perhaps Schneider's account is an exception, as it portrays honour and shame as arising out of intra-community conflicts (1981:2) and the *encounter* of pastoralists and agriculturalists (*ibid.*:3).

<sup>v</sup> For instance, Price and Price looked at the ways in which the choices of marriage partners maintained the stratification system from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuance of economic polarization (1966).

<sup>vi</sup> Pina Cabral for instance points out how pub and bar behaviour in working class environs in England or Germany are 'far more agonistic and violent than in Andalusia' (1989:402).

<sup>vii</sup> Salmon comments, the evolution of the economy in Andalusia 'has been linked to changes in the structure and organisation of the national, European and international economy, while simultaneously being shaped by its own unique characteristics' (1991:36).

<sup>viii</sup> Reflecting Ennew's observation that some 'remote' areas have been wrongly defined as non-capitalist/traditional, despite being locked into capitalism. In her case, she looked at the Western Isles of Scotland.

<sup>ix</sup> Harvey, in her ethnography of the World Expo in Sevilla in 1992 suggests that the 'brand identity' (1996:115) of Spain is dependent on presenting both a primordial, essential cultural

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heritage as well as alluding to futuristic modern progress. The official guide of the complex confirmed how the 'complex of history steeped buildings encapsulates both innovation and tradition' (*ibid.*:21).

<sup>x</sup> Harvey, Osborne and Byass (Gonzalez-Byass) sherry brands get their names from English sherry-families (Grayson 2001:35).

<sup>xi</sup> She now resides in an exclusive older person's complex in Málaga, where I was introduced to her by a helpful migrant fascinated by her experiences.

<sup>xii</sup> This dualism accords to the categories developed in the Shetlands between Shetlanders and 'incomers' (McFarlane 1986:128).

<sup>xiii</sup> 'International Retirement Migration.'

<sup>xiv</sup> There is an environmentalist presence in Andalucía, and a growing one within the Axarquía, but to date it is relatively small.

<sup>xv</sup> Thrift suggests that there is a 'strong predilection' for those of a higher economic position to pursue a rural idyll (1987:78). I will explore these implications in more depth in chapter eleven.

Chapter 5  
ANTI-STRUCTURE, THE CARNIVALESQUE  
AND STRUCTURAL PERVASION

Introduction

In the last chapter, I explored how the nature of the area is presented to be changing from an imagined 'real Spain' into a 'non-place.' This development in the 'Costas' (or Mediterranean tourist sites in general) represents a wider global spatialisation of liminal zones. Liminal zones have historically been located in seaside resorts (such as Brighton<sup>i</sup> in the UK). They were places of 'permissive atmosphere' in which freedom from constraints characterised behaviour (Shields 1991:73). Through globalisation and mass tourism, the spatialisation of liminality has taken on an European dimension, with similar features of the anti-structural located on the margins of Europe, in the playgrounds of the Costas. I posit that, in some senses, the atmosphere in such places is deemed to be about enjoyment; a zone of everyday carnivalesque fun. One is liberated from constraints and hierarchical obligations of 'normal' life.

What is particular to the carnivalesque mode here, however, is its everyday endurance. Whereas the features of carnival are widely explored as moments of short-lived intensity of a definable duration, in a separate sphere, away from the mundane realities of everyday life (Dentith 1995:65), the carnivalesque here sustains over time. In fieldwork,

I began to question if this merriment was not permeated by solidifying tendencies and the need for order. One news report on the radio I heard recently captured this dilemma. It described tensions in the older person's enclave of Sun-City, USA, in which a number of amorous residents, pursuing their desires in the open-air caused upset and noise pollution to a number of neighbours. The latter angrily protested, ultimately enforcing legal controls. The 'freedom' of such utopian spaces obviously necessitates some form of regulation. Yet, once this regulation is established, I suspect, the countervailing ethos of enjoyment cancels out attempts to regulate life. For, anti-structure and structure are 'immortal antagonists' (Turner 1969:130).

I begin the chapter with a delineation of the theory of rites of passage, explaining why it serves as a useful starting point to examine the contradicting pressures of enjoyment and regulation in the lives of leisure migrants. I analyse how liminality impinges on the lives and relationships of migrants, explaining how the sense of fun and carnivalesque governs life. This analysis is strongly informed by the premises of Bakhtin, who employs the work of the French scholar, Rabelais, to clarify the nature of the carnivalesque (1965 in Morris 1994). I show a correlation between the contentions of Bakhtin, and modes of behaviour in the everyday lives of the migrants. However, I show how the camaraderie is more akin to Turner's conception of 'normative communitas' or 'structured-anti-structure.' In particular, I emphasise the relatively underplayed notion that, 'processes of structure, anti-structure, counter-structure and structuring can coexist and modify one another continuously over time in the same ritual field' (Turner 1974:279). In an ethnographic examination of life in the clubs and associations for older migrants, I pay particular attention to tensions in the social clubs, in

which structures are put into place; rules and norms are created, but are notoriously difficult to maintain.

Much of the difficulty in establishing structure derives from particular factors of the society. The age of members and the age-related attitudes for independence (as examined in chapter six) complicate matters. For, the embedding of structure in any given context is achieved through the depersonalization of personally created norms over time. Here, by contrast, one finds only the start of that process before it is 'nipped in the bud.' The historical entrenchment of norms is unlikely as the bearers pass on or step down from authority. Rules are also less bureaucratically distant, more personalised, more evidently 'humanly created' and thus more open to be flouted (and more urgently enforced). As a result, the structure/anti-structure fluctuation persists, continually offering possibilities for new institutors of social organisation, new rules and moves to solidify those norms of functioning, but also allowing the possibility of liberty and creative possibility in their (re)interpretation. In particular, the chapter criticises the Turnerian analysis which over-emphasises utopian possibilities of *communitas*. Rather, it is characterised by frequently disintegrative features. The disintegration of bonds, particularly caused by contestations of power, is as endemic to normative *communitas* as the harmony depicted.

In a sense, this is not a discrete chapter, as its observations have ramifications throughout the entire thesis. It merely introduces themes that are relevant in different domains time and time again. A prerequisite of these discussions is the comprehension of the concepts of structure, anti-structure and liminality to which I now turn.

## The Rites of Passage

Van Gennep states, 'The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another' (1960:2-3). Within anthropology the theory of rites of passage has been highly instructive for understanding these life-transitions and the rituals that accompany them (Turner 1982:24). 'Rites of passage,' as originally asserted by Van Gennep (1960) and developed by Turner (1969, 1974,1982) primarily involve the separation of an individual from a fixed social structure (Turner 1974:52). The individuals enter an ambiguous period of liminality, a middle state of being 'betwixt and between.' This is characterised by a state of *communitas*, an egalitarian 'communion of equal individuals' (1974:49). *Communitas* is a transient condition of common feeling (*ibid.*:274). One inhabits the liminal zone before a re-entry into social structure as a different status (adapted from Turner 1974:232). Originally identified to account for ritual processes (such as Ndembu circumcision rites (Turner 1967)) it has been extended to account for other eventualities, explaining phenomena as diverse as tourism, ageing, disability, and so-called 'new-age' alternative identities.

Liminality is certainly appropriate to characterise these migrant experiences. For migrants have, to some degree, 'opted out' (Turner 1969:112), existing outside the security of structured working life. When in Spain, they accord more to Turner's description of liminoid beings, being more individualistic and choice-oriented than liminars (1982:36). Like solitary artists, they voluntarily choose to live on the margins (1982:55). Whilst Turner explicitly excludes migrants from his original analysis on the grounds that they are marginals not outsiders (1974:233) in which the possibility of a 'final stable resolution of their ambiguity' is

unlikely (*ibid.*), I do not accept this. For many of these particular migrants, the UK or other destinations are potential sites for return (and resolution into structure) at a later point.

The atmosphere amongst migrants is best described as *normative* *communitas*. This is in contrast to the chaotic ecstasy demonstrated its precedent, *spontaneous/existential* *communitas* (a true moment of communal humanity). Normative *communitas* arises instead as,

‘under the influence of time, the need to mobilise resources... and the necessity for social control among the members of the group in pursuance of these and other collective goals, the original existential *communitas* is organised into a perduring social system’ (Turner 1974:169).

Thirdly, and less importantly for the purposes of this analysis, there is *ideological* *communitas*, a condition found in utopian models of society, which contain the right conditions for existential *communitas* (*ibid.*). Having established this framework, I show the implications in reality.

## PART ONE

### ‘Just Another Boring Day in Paradise<sup>ii</sup>’

*‘In the realm of kitsch, the dictatorship of the heart reigns supreme: kitsch is all smiles and cheers, relentlessly beaming and euphoric like an aerobics class, marching merrily onward to this future shouting, ‘long live life!’*

(Eagleton in Hirschkop and Shepherd 1989:186)



Early one hazy morning, rather bleary-eyed, I joined in an outdoor real-life water-aerobics class in the grounds of an aparthotel complex in Tocina. The above quotation could have been designed to capture the essence of this occasion. For, amongst the odd grouping of people, we hopped about, ridiculously grabbing hold of each other in a watery 'conga-dance,' with little care for age, status or nationality of the person in front. The various shouts of 'Oops,' with an English interpretation, Spanish exclamation, Dutch or French tinge merely added to the atmosphere, as did the occasional misplaced hand amongst the male and female melange. Following the class, I was given a lift back to my house by an older French man, who chatted happily as if he had known me all my life, without any of the embarrassment that might have been felt in more constraining national circles (as I explore in chapter nine). Unfortunately, the class was too far for me to travel to on a regular basis, but some time later, the instructor saw me whilst visiting the village. I found it strange, but curiously satisfying that she had remembered my name some months afterwards, after this one funny occasion that will stick in my mind for some time to come. The occasion was indicative to me of certain differences in behavioural mode in the Spanish migrant context as opposed to other more familiar contexts. For, it seemed that it held a 'structure-dissolving quality' (Turner 1974:263) and exemplified what Turner describes as the condition of liminality in its certain relaxing of boundaries and collapsing of status hierarchies.

Migrants in Spain are, in a highly enjoyable 'social limbo,' (Turner 1982:24), confirmed by geographical and cultural factors. For, according to O'Reilly (2000a), migrants in Spain inhabit somewhere that is not quite England, nor Spain, but somewhere in between (2000a:140). The social division between locals and '*extranjeros*' (foreigners) also constrains

many migrants to the social zone. Retired migrants often disrupt official and social prescriptions by moving (Wills in Hirschkop and Shepherd 1989:138) (for instance they may upset family-members by moving away<sup>iii</sup>). Following the 'tortures' of working life they envisage their move to a foreign *Shangri-La* or *El Dorado*, governed by the norm of enjoyment. Joined with others undergoing the same transition (Turner 1974:274), the migrants' state of being accords somewhat to 'communitas,' that which is 'spontaneous, immediate and concrete,' rather than 'norm-governed, institutionalised and abstract' (1969:127).

In Spain, life is fun. Antithetical behaviour, the celebrated preserve of the liminal is, to some degree the norm. Falk Moore suggests that some 'collectivities embrace particular indeterminacies as part of their credo, valuing above all individuality and spontaneity and a certain absence of rules' (1978:41), and migrants in Spain are such a group. 'Mainstream' rules are inverted and challenged (for instance, chapter six examines how imperatives to 'grow old gracefully' or decelerate with old age are turned on their head). Even amongst the more reserved clubs, the dominant atmosphere is one of entertaining conversation, jokes<sup>iv</sup> and repartee, in which a certain 'carnavalesque' mode is enjoyed.

Literature considering 'carnival' presents it as a second world, or second life, outside officialdom. This resonates with the organisation of the life course, in which an experience of 'the good life' is postponed to some time after retirement. I shall not delve too deeply into the construction of the Costa as a liminal space as others (notably O'Reilly 2000a) have done this elsewhere. Yet, Mintz comments, life in Spain seems to be 'an endless round of feast, fairs and holy days' (Mintz 1997:xiii), and outward projections of Andalucía largely emphasises licentiousness, and an

attitude that life is to be lived. The unending zone of leisure is governed by qualitatively different expectations than in the 'other world' of 'work time' (Turner in Babcock 1978:280), as elaborated in more detail in chapters seven and eight. These 'two-week package-holiday escape-zones' are viewed in the UK as marginal areas (see O'Reilly 2000a36-38), a view compounded by anthropologists who avert their gaze from the *Fuengirolas* and *Benidorms* of the world (as discussed in the introduction). Shield notes of such marginal places, 'they have been placed on the periphery of cultural systems of space in which places are ranked relative to each other' (1991:3). Seen as 'non-places' (Augé 1995), they are characterised by transience and movement. This is not merely an external construction. Migrants themselves perceived the site as 'a bit wacky,' 'unreal,' or (in reference to the village) as *la casa de los locos* (the madhouse).

The construction of the *Costas* as a global black hole, a hyperreal and frivolous non-place, or 'place apart' (Shields 1991:112) is exactly the interstice in society in which the carnivalesque can exist on the day-to-day. To demonstrate this, I analyse the infusion of talk and behaviour of migrants with a carnivalesque tone, as well as showing the events of daily life enjoyed amongst migrants.

### **I.i Aspects of Anti-structure: Discourse and Performance in Spain**

In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin notes a fantastic accumulation of superlatives within the carnival setting (Morris 1994:214). The tone and style of the fair within *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, for instance, is deeply rooted in praise and adoration, typical of that found to sell and market products (Bakhtin 1965:160). Extending this analysis to Spain, one finds

amongst the media and sales-agents in Spain, a proud glorification of the area and people, laden with superlative descriptions. For instance, Fig. 1 shows 'wonderful views as far as the eye can see.' Apparently, 'it's difficult to attempt to describe the beauty of the area -some say it's the closest to paradise on earth: The azure sky, the glittering sea.' The luxury homes on sale, 'are most people's dream of the perfect place to live' 'far from the hustle and bustle of the cities of northern Europe' (*the Marketplace*:August 1999). Such talk makes migrants feel proud of their home, and encourages a celebration of the paradise they live in.

The carnival discourse can be demonstrated in an analysis of the free weekly or monthly publications produced for the English speaking population. With titles such as '*the Entertainer*,' '*Streetwise*' and '*the Marketplace*,' these publications are parodies of newspapers, funded by advertising for properties and restaurants. Adverts are, however interspersed with frank and fearless commentary and opinions (Morris 1994:217) similar to the burlesque and no-holds barred approach found in the marketplace in Rabelais' writings. To give an example, in a letter to the editor of *The Entertainer*, one commentator was told he, 'oozes around with the sense of direction of a rotten carcass.' Reports make use of familiar colloquialisms, amusing ditties and some profanities. Bakhtin, in examining *Rabelais and his World*, said, 'the festive marketplace combined many genres and forms, all filled with the same unofficial spirit' (Bakhtin1965:154). Similarly, in these local texts, the people-orientated, non-official discourse, laden with superlatives prevails.

Most of the publications feature snippets of national or international news, and are, instead filled with stories, poems and advice. For example, *the Entertainer's* regular features included a column on pet care by *David the Dogman*, a column written by a foolish festive character,

# The Cerro Gordo's dream houses



## Wonderful views as far as the eye can see

The Cerro Gordo is one of the most beautiful places in the world. It dominates the Mediterranean between Nerja and Almuñecar, only an hour away from Malaga airport and an hour and a half from the ski resort of the Sierra Nevada and the ancient glories of the Alhambra de Granada. The Puerto Deportivo Marina del Este is close at hand and there are numerous sandy coves nearby where you can enjoy fresh fish, lightly fried in olive oil, washed down with a good local wine.

It's difficult to attempt to describe the beauty of the area - some say it's the closest to paradise on earth: The azure sky, the glittering sea, the scents of pine, musk, rosemary and jasmine; the glorious colours of the bougainvillea and the abundance of sub-tropical fruits and plants; the heat of the sun at noon, the light of a thousand reflections and that special moment when the sun sets over the sea and the coolness of evening approaches.

natural parkland, these luxury villas overlooking the bay are most people's dream of the perfect place to live. Each

villa has its own private swimming pool and garden and the traditional Andalusian architecture, typical of the Mediterranean coast of southern Spain, emphasises the feeling of space and freedom. But, above all, the wonderful views as far as the eye can see induce a feeling of peace and tranquility, far from the hustle and bustle of the cities of northern Europe.

Fig. 1—Paradise on Earth.  
Source: *The Market place Magazine*.  
Advertisement Feature August 1999

Dick, and also a feature on birds written under the pseudonym of 'lapwing.' All articles aim to present their stories in a funny, entertaining manner, pertaining to laughter in a bawdy, often *risqué* style, with a loosening of the norms of sobriety and etiquette.

The migrant scene is also peopled by a motley crowd (as explained in chapter three). As in carnival, there is space for all different types. For example, one afternoon I went to an association to meet the regulars. William, an ex-sergeant major dressed in designer suit, cravat and skiing sunglasses, was talking about his trip to South America. Roger 'the Hat,' a softly spoken East-Enders in his 70s was dressed in a baggy cardigan over a string vest and trousers. Bob, an ex-truckie, looking tanned and fit following a serious illness, wore jeans and trainers. Lucy, an indefatigably lively retired academic, wearing sportswear and looking some years younger than her seventy years told me, 'now look at him. Larger than life and twice as ugly.' Janet, William's wife, a glamorous well-dressed lady got up to leave. '*Hasta luengo*'<sup>v</sup> she called, perverting the Spanish farewell. No wonder many people told me that in Spain one meets and mixes with people who one would never usually meet. Here was the prerequisite to the carnivalesque: a meeting of peoples that would normally be found in separate domains.

The arbitrary meeting of people heightens a sense of migrants as having different 'characters,' which some may well 'play up.' Woodward points out how masquerading is common to this stage of the life course (Woodward 1991:147-166), as demonstrated also by Dawson's analysis of theatre, poetry and song in an Ashington club for the elderly (Dawson 2002). The performative element of one's personality may also be

emphasised in Spain through nicknaming. For example one couple were referred to as *Cod 'n' Chips*; another woman, *Miss Music* and another couple of women, *'the Aunties.'* Few people were acknowledged by reference to their surname, most were known only by their first name. The turnover means that names are difficult to remember anyway. These factors encourage informality as well as anonymity. Migrants are *'tabula rasa,'* in which the insignias (Turner 1969:95) and identities of previous lives have little import, fostering a clear basis for comradeship, egalitarianism and *communitas* (*ibid.*:95). Like initiands, they are stripped down to the essential self, apparently free of previous accoutrements. One man, Derek said,

'it's strange, I thought I'd be asked a lot more what I did for a job. I don't get asked at all, or hardly. Everyone is on a level here.'

Equality is a common motif of life; even the luxury residential complex in Málaga (of prohibitive cost) is called *Interpares*, a Latin expression meaning 'amongst equals.'

The *communitas* in Spain, however, is one that preserves individuality. Turner points out, '*communitas* does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms' (1974:274). This emancipation can also extend to dubious exercises of freedom (see discussion by O'Reilly 2000a:81). At times, if wished, unethical acts can be carried out without knowing who is responsible, such as strong criticism, defamation and more seriously, fraud. To give a simple example, one reader attacked another reader as 'odious,' and a 'moron' (*Sur* in English: 1999) by disguising him/herself under the pseudonym of *H.F.Rottweiler*. In another publication up the coast, *Jeanne n' Tonic* holds a regular slot<sup>vi</sup>.

In external constructions of the Costa, the stereotypical character *par excellence* of this carnivalesque site is the criminal or 'the rogue.' Amongst others, Ronnie Knight and Kenneth Noye have added to the image of the area as the *Costa del Crime*, exploiting the anonymity facilitated there. Da Matta explains that in the Rio carnival, the symbol of the rogue as always 'out of place' is central (Da Matta 1991:131). Similarly, Shields points out how the marginal zone of Brighton has had 'a lasting aura of petit criminality' (1991:101) and a 'seedy underside' (*ibid.*) comprised of brothels and ramshackle hotels for dirty weekends (*ibid.*:103-109). Fittingly, in Spain, it is the rascal living in the interstices and margins that is most readily associated with the area (see O'Reilly 2000a:72).

Da Matta points out that in carnival, the rule-breaker's roguery is often socially approved. Likewise in external constructions in literature such as 'Cocaine Nights<sup>vii</sup>' by J.G. Ballard, and films such as the recent *Sexy Beast* (with Ray Winstone playing a retired gangster tired of the wheeling and dealing of criminal life) the boisterous and more benign aspects of the criminal are emphasised. To many people, the *Costa* wouldn't be the *Costa* without a token bandit, or 'dark side' to it. For instance, at the International Club, one man joked about the area, calling his friends untrustworthy saying, 'I hate this end (of the coast); its full of crooks, robbers and badmen.' In my experience, I met only a couple of shady characters, including one (self-identified) 'ex-gangster' Kenny, who, like Ray Winstone's character was a semi-reformed character looking for tranquillity in a Spanish village. He told me of his friend in Marbella's offer of some undisclosed 'work' but decided against, 'rotting away in some jail in Marrakech as I'm too old for that sort of thing now.' The stereotypes endure because, in a sense, the rogue (notice: *not* the criminal) flagrantly rejects society's norms in an endearing and likeable



way, and as such is emblematic of other migrants' (less dramatic) demonstrations of non-conformity or the stretching of rules and norms.

### I.ii In Vino Veritas.

A central feature of the work of Rabelais is the ritual consumption of rich food and drink in feasts (Clark 1983:52). In Spain, again, much time is devoted to the regular partaking of meals out and alcoholic drinks, with lesser expectations of sobriety. At one meeting with Peter, I was explaining the aim of my thesis. 'What you will find,' he said in reply is that, 'the reason why most people come here is *this*,' as he pointed and tapped at the top of a bottle of wine. Of course this is, in reality scarcely a reason for migration, but there *is* a much-enjoyed relaxing of taboos on alcohol consumption. If Bahktin comments that in Rabelais' novel there is scarcely a page where food and drink do not figure (Morris 1994:228), equally in Spain, people regularly met for sociality only. Association-meetings often involve a luncheon, and at the very least, a drink or two. In one club the centrepiece was a painting - a caricature of different people - all distinguished by their red noses and inebriated condition!

Alcohol consumption is emblematic of a gentle mockery of social controls and is also a performance of non-conformity (McDonald 1994:15). Harvey notes that drunkenness can be associated with the breakdown and challenging of social conventions (1994:210). To partake of alcohol in this context is to join in with the spirit of things, and can be read as a statement of a community and egalitarian ideology (Macdonald 1994:137). One poem, published in *the Marketplace* magazine at the suggestion of a migrant, summarises the light-hearted celebration of

alcohol. Almost akin to a modern-day '*Liturgy of the Drunkards*,' as demonstrated by Bakhtin (Morris 1994:200) it follows,

*'The horse and mare live thirty years,  
And do not know of wines and beers.  
The goats and sheep at twenty die  
And never taste scotch or rye.  
The cow drinks water by the ton,  
At fifteen life is almost done.  
The dog at fourteen packs in,  
Without the aid of rum or gin.  
The modest sober bone-dry hen  
Lays eggs for years and dies at ten.  
But sinful, ginful, rum soaked men  
Survive till three score years and ten.  
And some of us – the mighty few  
Stay pickled till we're ninety-two.'*  
(The Marketplace: October:1998)

In some social contexts, the purpose of drinking is to 'get drunk' (McDonald 1994:103). In the West of France, for instance, according to McDonald, 'getting drunk meant behaving in a manner visibly different from the expectations of everyday life.' (*ibid*:103). For a lot of English migrants, everyday life and routine are still psychologically based in the 'other world' of England, so in Spain, there is a permissive culture of drinking. For a small few, drinking was excessive and problematic. This is because daily drinking is easy to slip into. In contrast to life in one's country of origin, where there is usually at least 'one' recovery day for heavy drinkers (Plant 1979:132) the perceived lack of temporal structure (see chapter eight) may make problematic the management of alcohol-intake. Equally, other problems may be caused if one does not follow the new norms. Mary, for instance, perceived that she was an outcast precisely because she did *not* drink.

The celebration of freedom in this domain merely represents a loosening of norms, not a total abandonment of them. As Shields pointed out in his

analysis of the carnivalesque at Brighton, the lewd innuendo of seaside postcards is actually a mode of self-regulation. At once, it emphasises the transgression of social codes, but yet enforces them by pointing out the embarrassment of being 'caught-out' (Shields 1991:98-99). Similarly, the exultation of the drinkers is extremely fickle. During my fieldwork over two years, I noticed a changing treatment of one couple. This couple were initially widely popular raconteurs, celebrated for their fondness of wine and their consequent spirited behaviours. It was said that 'they drunk like fish,' a comment which, similar to Shields' analysis, both celebrates and passes commentary on the action. Over a period of time, the positive evaluation of the two dwindled as they started to suffer the effects of age. Withdrawing from circulation, Wanda was described publicly and openly as suffering from senility, but, was privately thought to be in the 'advanced stages of alcoholism.' One woman commented privately to me one day, 'No-one wants to get involved and help them. They've now got a reputation as two alcoholics, old winos really,' following a number of noisy disturbances and events. Despite that, Wanda's funeral turned into an enjoyable social affair.

Having described certain liminal features of the site, I evaluate how far Turner's explanations of *communitas* are apposite when liminality sustains. An examination of club and association-life frequented by the migrants provides a useful starting point.

## PART TWO

### Limitations and Applications of Turnerian Liminality.

#### Structured Anti-structure in Club-life

*'I don't know why someone doesn't write a book about how alive everyone is here. They're all bounding around with so much energy. Its so different...anyone who would prefer to go to Florida after seeing this lot must be crazy...they're all brain dead there. Its because its all organised for them there, all this organised living...pah! There's bingo at two, charades at four, we'd go brain dead wouldn't we, playing bowls all day?'* American woman explaining to prospective residents the benefits of Spain as opposed to her native America.

The exciting plethora of things to do in Spain (from yoga to dancing and choir groups, karate to tennis and golf) is contrasted to expectations of a banal and controlled old age in migrants' homelands. Yet, ironically, the limitless possibilities in Spain are themselves organised into various club-like structures. As Turner rightly points out, 'the immediacy of *communitas* gives way to the mediacy of structure' (1969:129). In Spain, a repetitive social system (Turner 1982:50) is established through the clubs' routinisation of life. Yet, consistent with the condition of normative *communitas*, although the clubs are structures, they are 'anti-structural structures,' representing freedom as well as a nominal degree of order. The organisational modes endure until the time is right for a burst of anti-structure, at which time the structures are attacked and change or are dissolved. In Spain, therefore, life is lived in a dialectical movement between structure and anti-structure, which I begin to exemplify in this section.

When widening out Turner's analysis to a less phasal condition than ritual or pilgrimage<sup>viii</sup>, it is clear that in some states, the flux of structure and anti-structure is a fairly common condition. Falk Moore points out how for instance,

'in social order there is never full systematisation of laws and norms [equating to Turner's 'structure'], rather only a partial control. In place of a complete entrenchment of rules, one finds a constant process of 'making and reiterating social and symbolic orders' (1978:6).

Falk Moore suggests that what is crucial is the *process*, in which people try to fix indeterminate social reality, 'to harden it, to give it form and order and predictability' (*ibid.*:50). These are complemented by,

'countervailing processes [are those] by which people arrange their immediate situations (and/or express their feelings and conceptions) by exploiting the indeterminacies of the situation, or by generating such indeterminacies, or by reinterpreting or redefining the rules or relationships' (*ibid.*:50).

In Spain, as I examine, the full entrenchment of structure is unlikely because of flux, turnover, and the motif of independence, as well as the power-dynamics and contestations of club-life. I take these as two separate points.

### II.i Flux, Turnover, and the Motif of Independence

In Spain, there is nascent structural establishment in the otherwise liminal zone when people take on jobs and leadership roles. Dorothy Jerrome argues in her study of clubs in the UK that the absence of roles

and statuses in old age give 'a sense of both freedom and confusion' (1992:5, noted in Hepworth 1998:177). People take on roles to fill the gulf that may have been created through retirement and migration. Wishing to be able to contribute to a loose idea of society, they sacrifice time (see chapter eight) to perform jobs in clubs in a bid 'to keep things going.' Being a member of a club creates a sense of belonging to 'something bigger,' offsetting the isolation that may arise in the new site<sup>ix</sup>. Escaping one set of rules and systems, in the UK, people begin to create the rules and systems themselves, and these rules are of their own making. For instance, Fred, a committee member in an urbanisation, explained how the committee had created regulations to stop the disruptive behaviour of tourists and younger people. To maintain peace they 'had to insist emphatically that there's no reservation of space at the pool, no ball games, no flippers etc.'

Status is introduced into society by a residential and gerontocratic ideal. Those who have lived the longest in the area (who are therefore obviously older) are esteemed. In one club, one couple approaching ninety years each (who incidentally had established their relationship after meeting in Spain) were the 'mascots' of the club, the ideal of how things should be. One erstwhile high-ranking brigadier in charge of the Gurkhas in Burma continued to gain respect and status in this zone (see chapter nine). He described other members of the Legion as wonderful; 'They'd lay down their lives for me if I asked them.' Rather than being repositories of structure, the earliest migrants are the *creators* of them. Over time this loose ethos mutates into an hierarchical ideal, which must be accepted or challenged by newcomers. Ironically, the factor of age places migrants as outside structure, but itself becomes a basis of normative structure and hierarchy in the new context.

Some problematic realities of freedom and unbureaucratized rules make it necessary to introduce structures. In particular, freedom can also translate to a lack of responsibility. This fear is offset by the clubs and societies, which are governed by an ethos of care. These structures fulfil the need for a degree of responsibility in an arena of relative freedom. Examples are the British Legion, Lux Mundi ecumenical center, the American and International Clubs, the Anglican church and CUDECA, a charity set up by foreigners with local support on the Costa. The latter is funded by special social events, as well as charity shops manned by volunteers. Ian, the chairperson of the AGM of the British Legion rightly announced, 'its not all beer and skittles here you know.' Indeed, on many occasions I saw him and others acting as personalised representatives of structure, looking out for others with genuine affection and worry. In an increasingly ageing population, some responsible parties must be there to deal with (or even simply alert others) of the inevitable.

One of my closest confidantes, Barbara was a key figure in the organisation and sustenance of a number of groups. Whenever we met (which despite my busy schedule seemed to rely far more on her fitting me in!) she would tell me about her multiple responsibilities, being a committee member or key organiser in several clubs. On our first meeting she invited me to interview her whilst she attended the clinic in her capacity as a voluntary translator, a recent initiative of the expatriate community. She pointed out how society is an ongoing *creation* there. For instance, she said with regard to the translation service, 'we found out the jobs as we went on, we had no training.' Rather than 'lazing around drinking gin and tonics all day' (as would happen if life *were* a permanent carnival) she told me how most people are actively involved in groups and voluntary organisations. The clubs, she said, foster a sense

of 'community' and communal feeling. For example, there is an annual grand Thanksgiving Day celebration, which unites all the American clubs along the Costa, as well as the Remembrance Service in Tocina that attracts around four hundred people, enabling them to share in memories and recollect experiences (see chapter nine). All in all, the community seems at times very tight-knit, a factor I discuss in more detail in chapter eleven.

Despite the establishment of structures, their endurance is potentially threatened (particularly in smaller clubs) by 'the turnover' of people, and the consequent difficulty of 'keeping things going.' Mostly, people come because they are retired, and as one committed woman expressed, 'they don't want to get things going, and then when we do, of course people are always dying off.' The enormous amount of clubs to suit every hobby and interest under the sun (pardon the pun), can fragment as people move on, lose interest, die or simply don't have time to be involved in all the activities. Dorothy Jerome shows a similar observation in her analysis of elderly people's clubs in the UK, although in the Spanish context the fragmentation is complicated by the presence of 'snowbirds,' as well as people moving on. During my ethnographic study spanning three separate years in the same area, the composition of residents constantly changed and it was always a relief to see a familiar face. It is felt by the more permanent members that society is kept going 'in the here and now' (see chapter eight) and as a direct consequence of the effort of a certain few. For instance, in the Anglican parish committee, there were problems of stability, following a constant stream of replacement priests, one after the other. One churchwarden explained,

'we don't have the cash to make long term investments in the priests...they're constantly changing, its nothing that we



do that causes the fragmentation, but its very much up to us to keep things going. I think we do it very well!

Whilst more visible ephemerality of this society's members<sup>x</sup> could threaten the overall permanence, the mortality of members is managed to confirm its continuity, although I discuss this in more detail in chapter ten.

The difficulties of perpetuating structure are compounded by *communitas* itself, with its stress on 'personal relationships rather than social obligations' (Turner 1969:112). People who do take up organisational roles in the associations find them often thankless tasks. This 'work' obviously lacks any immediate gratification through payment. It is often physically and mentally draining, which is even more significant as the people are older and health considerations affect the ability to get the job done. It is even harder to commit when everyone else is enjoying themselves, a fact that becomes particularly acute when lack of gratitude is shown for their work. For instance, Barbara was upset when she informed another committee member, Sandra that she couldn't attend an important meeting. "Oh don't worry," Sandra dismissed breezily, as if it didn't matter at all... 'Well, if I'm so easily missed,' Barbara recounted to me, 'I wonder why I bother at all.' On another occasion, Sandra herself, a club-secretary, admitted to me the lack of commitment she felt from others. When I pointed out that they probably appreciated her hard work she said, 'Thanks! Thanks! You don't expect thanks for doing this task. Nobody gives you thanks!'

Sporadically, there is a crisis of jobs within the clubs, as people get too ill, too tired to carry on, and nobody wishes to fill in their place. Often, it is the older and less able people who bear the brunt, as the younger

newcomers are more intent on enjoying the novelty of the site. Barbara, for instance was lumbered with yet another task to fulfil that was abandoned by someone who though assigned the job, went away on holiday. She said, 'at the moment I'm trying to shed jobs, not take them on....but nobody's interested in taking things over.' Another woman Joy, suffering with arthritis, still found herself running around town putting up posters. She said, 'my friend told me to delegate. Good idea, but what happens when there's no one who wants to be delegated to?'

For some, the fear of involvement arises as club-participation may be read as congruent with the notion of being old, and thus something to avoid. Group membership also confirms a categorical identity, which goes against some migrants' ethos of independence (see chapters three and nine). Sarah, an ex-WRAF member went down to 'test out' the Legion, and said, 'they seemed so *old*. I think, I can't be as old as them, but I suppose I am, it's just I don't feel it, and I did when I was there.' Others uphold the motto that this is 'my time now,' (see chapter eight). It is not that people are workshy, rather the whole moving process is associated with the idea of shedding previous roles, responsibilities and duties. Josie, for instance, a retired social worker said, 'No. Now I feel that I can't waste my energy on organisational activities here. I feel like I've done my bit before and ended up a total wreck.' Similarly, David and Kate, a 'young-old' couple were involved in Lux Mundi ecumenical centre for some time, using Kate's capacity and knowledge as a nurse, but explained,

'it became too much of a commitment. When you are retired, you want your time to be free. You can say, 'I've done my bit, now's the time for myself. You know, to go

swimming in my own personal swimming pool, the sea,  
and enjoy myself!

If then jobs are taken, they may be done grudgingly, with great reluctance and a less than committed approach to doing them well. This again predisposes the structure to disintegration.

Consistent with Turner's view, the evidence reveals the constant battle between structural entrenchment and anti-structural dissolution. Van Gennep's strictly divided three-phase ritual, in which only one phase has predominance at any point before being supplanted by another is not pertinent here. Instead the two are joined in a dialectical relationship so that neither gains predominance but coexists with the other to the point that to draw temporal divisions of their existence would be futile (although for analytical purposes I try to point out stages of division). Until such time in which norms are more permanently established (perhaps through force of number) the tension will continue to govern life.

### II.ii Power-dynamics and Contestations

According to St John, at Confest, an alternative lifestyle festival in Australia, there is a familiar banner declaring, 'strangers are friends you have not yet met' (2001:52). This could well be the motif of migrants in Spain, for new members are welcomed into the fold of clubs or urbanisations with friendly acceptance. It would be tempting, St John asserts in his analysis of Confest, to theorise this as a state of vast *communitas* (*ibid.*) Yet, he points out, the multiple occupation of the zone by different groups and alternative identities makes this problematic. According to him, Confest is 'a 'realm of competing discourses' and

practices, an alternative cultural heterotopia rushing towards consensus and harmony, but also yielding discord and division' (*ibid.*:54). In spaces that perpetuate utopic ideals, one might readily find dissidence over the meaning of that site. Similarly, with reference to empirical examples, I suggest that Turner's analysis that downplays the potential for dissidence and the formation of factions, and suggests instead a rather more utopian interpretation. By ethnographic reference to realities of club-life, and other evidence (Sallnow 1981 and St. John 2001) I show how *communitas* is at times laden with 'endemic competition and conflict' (Sallnow 1981:163). In examining some points of Turner, one could lean towards a belief that he has accounted for such possibilities. For instance, he says, 'Liminality...may have a reverse effect, with a Hobbesian war of all against all, or an existential anarchy of individuals, 'each doing his or her own thing' (1974:285). Merely three pages later however, he curiously asserts that, 'anti-structure abolishes all divisiveness, all discriminations' (1974:288).

Although life in Spain is worlds apart from the bacchanalian enjoyment found at festivals such as 'Confest,' it is similar in that it represents a utopic 'dream,' (See Fig. 1). Examining the Spanish context, it is clear that the destination is sought after by an assortment of conflicting interest-groups. As well as older people seeking leisured retirement, tourists and hippies, one also finds Thatcherite success stories and Thatcherite avoiders, artists, poets, writers etc. who have different characteristics<sup>xi</sup>. These categories themselves fragment into a number of further distinctions. For example, tourists in Spain can be broken down into categories such as cultural tourists, sunbathers, and those more interested in the nightlife (see typology by Smith 1978:8-9 and discussion in chapter seven). It begs the question as to how all these people meet

their often-conflicting desires. Falk Moore muses, 'What happens when a community that idealises communal harmony is faced with internal conflicts and contradictions?' (1978:32)

It is worth quoting from St. John at length. He suggests that friction arises precisely because utopic sites are so cherished. He calls these liminal realms, 'alternative cultural heterotopias,' which have three characteristics:

- '1. They are primarily sites of 'otherness,' those which Foucault has called 'countersites.' They are destinations for expatriates of, and exiles from, 'the parent culture,' they are communities of resistance wherein displaced and rejected knowledge is celebrated (cf. Hetherington 1993:92), and where hedonistic consumption practices are licensed. This constitutes their difference in relation to adjacent sites - from which they are demarcated.
2. They are 'heterogeneous' spaces. Indicating a 'complex juxtaposition and cosmopolitan simultaneity of difference (Soja 1995:15), heterotopias accommodate variant alternatives, multiple 'utopics' -incongruous marginalia. Their habitués may subscribe to a vast range of alternative, or authentic discourses or practices. They are thus heterogeneous zones and thresholds, with variant expectations held by pilgrims/inhabitants. As such, there is rarely any certainty of outcome....
3. They are 'contested' spaces. Uncertainty and variant expectations condition disputation between inhabitants over the meaning of space. Conflict does not arise exclusively between inhabitants (organisers and

patrons) and non-inhabitants (external bodies), but possibly between inhabitants themselves. They may reproduce longstanding divisions or even beget fission.'

It is clear that *communitas* does not emerge from the egalitarianism of anti-structural sites *per se*. Sallnow (1981) corroborates such an assertion, disclosing in a study of pilgrimage in the Andes that instead of the revelation of normative *communitas* (as expected) discordant factions were created amongst different groups. Similarly, in Spain, there are at once regular feelings and expressions of *communitas*, as well as necessary contestations of what should govern that *communitas*. Yet, examining power in club-life shows how such disputes are both unavoidable and *necessary* to preserve the anti-structural ethos. They effectively function to halt the further entrenchment of structure as noted in the previous section as I reveal.

Negotiating roles and jobs within the clubs can be fraught with difficulty. One becomes a public figure, open to criticism. Many times I overheard criticism about the ways that things were run, even though much effort is invested in the organisational side of club life by people doing it for the 'sheer joy.' Tears can flow over small disputes, like seating plans and payment in luncheon clubs. This is most upsetting, because although the club-organisers are representatives of structure, the criticism itself is *not* structured, depersonalised or channelled through official means. Instead, it is personalised; failings are rationalised as an inherent failure of that person, often at vulnerable times when they are slowing down (and aware of it).

Maintenance of authority is awkward because power is personalised and unbureaucratic. Chairpersons or club organisers must aspire to be like

Weber's charismatic authority figure, for it is ostensibly their personal popularity which keeps them in power (Eisenstadt 1968:54). At times they have to adopt a more dictatorial stance than one would think necessary in such a leisured destination. Turner, in fact does admit, 'exaggeration of *communitas* in certain religious or political movements of the levelling type may be speedily followed by despotism, overbureaucratisation, or other modes of structural rigidification' (1969:129). In Spain (a site of freedom), many small inconsequential rules must be established to maintain order in the face of people able to destroy it. For example, in many of the trips arranged, people are allocated seats, or places at lunch, which causes disgruntlement when this does not fit personal plans. Small acts of resistance (like 'talking over' somebody when they were making a speech) are common, especially if someone is seen to be seeking self-importance and taking too much glory. Others refuse to join particular clubs because they see them as run by 'a small group trying to dictate.' Here in the clubs, there is often a sense that people in charge are fine to do their job, as long as they don't, as one woman expressed, 'get above their station, dictating too much without listening to the wishes of others.' This creates an inbuilt pressure for leaders to ironically try and avoid hierarchy. If hierarchy is overt, people rebel, more often than not with their feet, leaving the rejected clubs to exploit the other possibilities for recreation. Alternatively, they have been known to create other 'branch-off' versions of the original. Paradoxically, in egalitarian freedom, one finds a strong assertion and ongoing struggle for prestige.

The precarious position (and consequent imperative for demonstrations of power and sociability) of club-leaders is made all the more tenuous because of the competition between clubs. People take their jobs very

seriously, because they know if they fail to maintain membership by offering the most attractive trips and events, the club may die out. On the worst occasions, it was known that people resort to underhand tricks to sabotage others' plans. On one occasion, one woman and her husband were unfairly (and at their assertion, undemocratically) evicted from their jobs as travel organisers in one club. In response they set up their own travel club. Both this club and the replacement travel organisers of the original club organised a Christmas trip to Benidorm, at the same time and using the same hotel. The result was two different groups from Tocina, having travelled five hundred kilometres to stay in the same place, having little to do with each other. Hardly the spirit of *communitas*!

The spirit of competition is simultaneously maintained at much lower levels of the clubs. For example, in the British Legion, the annual poppy collection is organised so that the person who collects the most money wins a small prize, a principle created as an incentive to raise money for charity. It is taken very seriously by some. For example, I was elected to help out with Elise in the poppy collection, which was an ongoing process at Málaga airport for three to four days. We went to relieve a couple who had left Salobreña, some 65 km away at 6am, and had been at the airport since 7am. Upon arriving, we told them we would relieve them, so they could go for a cup of coffee and have a rest. At this point, they pointedly refused, abruptly telling us that we would 'pinch their queue!'

Myerhoff's (1986) study of an age-homogeneous society points out how similar dramas occurred. Her study of Jewish older people in Venice Beach, California portrays a group suffering a crisis of invisibility,



marginalised and unnoticed by the mainstream society (1986:363). The lack of established history as well as limited possibilities for continuity amongst her informants made it imperative to state who they were, and shaped how they defined themselves without the props of earlier identities (1986:266). The groups organised ceremonies to define themselves, such as parades in the outside community. Myerhoff noted antagonisms as recurrent features in preparing these. She suggests that they change nothing, but allow people to be 'heard from, seen, authenticated' (*ibid.*:268). In effect, 'a good fight indeed offered clear cut evidence of a continued vitality' (*ibid.*). Like Myerhoff's informants, migrants in Spain are also outside of wider society, and have difficulties in real integration (see chapter three). One of the Anglican priests in Spain explained conflicts in similar terms to Myerhoff's explanation,

'Often the people who come here feel estranged as they used to have grand positions. They come and are seen as nothing, just another person. Perhaps this is why some people seize on conflict and blow it up out of proportion.'

The 'great leveller' of moving to Spain is, whilst desired, also uncomfortable in the context of other considerations of ageing and social marginality from society (O'Reilly 2000a). Tensions emerge from the confusing flux of normative *communitas*.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter draws attention to both the liminal, carnivalesque and egalitarian features of this society, as well as some distinctive features of how that is both undermined and re-established in the structural-anti-

structural flux. The liminality of Southern Spain is as an enduring reality and not the typical 'short burst' variety. The distinct inability of the literature to account for possibilities when carnival 'drags on' means that many of the more 'transformative' readings of the phenomenon are inapplicable to the context of Spain. The distance of the inverted space in Spain means that it has less of the piercing commentating powers that the carnival has had in local and contextual inversions. The scathing critique of hierarchy and officialdom, as well as challenge to negative attitudes to age, is seen in this site as 'safe at a distance.'

When the experience of the liminal is a 'permanent break from the norm,' society exists in a constant dynamic, fluctuating in a permanent structured anti-structure. The following chapters follow this example, ethnographically detailing this fluctuation. Moving from an undesired element of structured life seen by informants as extant in the UK or other place of origin, they seek an anti-structural variant of that element of life in Spain. Systematically, however, the ambiguities of that 'desired' feature are revealed. In consequence, either the freedom from norms becomes almost normative itself, or a version of the 'left behind' and rejected element becomes re-established. In the next chapter, I show how positive ageing, itself a motif that represents freedom from societal expectations of ageing, may become governed by a series of prescriptions governing 'good ageing.' Valuing an escape from expectations, migrants themselves generate their own norms. According to Turner, this is the only 'way a group maintains its form over time' (1969:153).

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## Notes:

- i On the South Coast of England.
- ii An expression repeated to me on innumerable occasions during fieldwork.
- iii See chapter six.
- iv As Douglas points out, a joke frequently expresses 'communitas' (1975:104) and acts as a subversive attack to dominant structures (*ibid.*:95).
- v Translation of the real '*hasta luego*' is 'see you later.'
- vi Thanks to John Roche, an ex-student and migrants who passed on this information, based on undergraduate fieldwork in Murcia.
- vii Ostensibly this is a story about a man getting sucked into the underworld of the Costa, to break free from the boredom of the constraints of the society.
- viii Although he gives a cursory account of other social liminal phenomenon, as diverse as the beat generation, hippies, teeny-boppers and Bob Dylan songs (1969:112).
- ix King, Warnes and Williams point out, 'Individuals may find themselves living in what J.G. Ballard (1996) calls an 'affectless zone,' without conventionally defining activities and structures (work, family, neighbourhood etc.) This allows them to invent new roles for themselves. One role which is adopted by older people, some time after their arrival is that of a volunteer' (2000:148).
- x The situation is a microcosm of the 'problem' early death ritual theorists confronted, in that death rituals serves to 'protect' members from the dangers of death in depleting society (see chapter ten).
- xi O'Reilly, for instance draws attention to the non-homogeneity of migrants in her typology (2000a:52-59).

## Chapter 6 – AGEING WELL

*'Lets face it, if I was in England I wouldn't be going on cruises like I am now.'*

Viv, urbanisation-dweller in Tocina.

*'It's a matter of attitude. You have to prepare for your retirement from when you are a child. If you just work all your life and don't develop any hobbies outside, then you are going to get here, and within a few months you'll get bored and depressed.'*

Prospective migrant, greeted with murmurs of approval at a club luncheon.

*'...everyone in the Third Age, especially when he or she is threatened by the Fourth, ought to be aware of when and how to withdraw. To be properly sensitive to the judgement of friends, neighbours, acquaintances, and people at large, expressed, implied, or for reasons of delicacy merely hinted at, is a demanding duty.'* (Laslett 1996:194). *A New Map of Life*. (My emphasis).

### Introduction

In the anti-structural site of Spain, one finds living exemplars of older people who have 'shed their work suit and changed it for a tracksuit' (Blaikie 1999:175). Whilst in the UK, the discourse of positive ageing is beginning to influence thought and action, for many it is in the site of Spain that the desired freedom and independence to age well is deemed fully realisable in reality. The anti-structural space offers certain enabling conditions for good ageing. Bearing in mind that, as King *et al* point out,

'those that don't like it, leave,' (2000:117) most retired people<sup>i</sup> I spoke to during my research were overwhelmingly content and satisfied with the move to Spain and its potential for the future. The satisfaction, enjoyment and communal warmth was evident for all to see, a fact borne out by numerous studies which focus on the enhanced quality of life following international retirement migration (Betty 2001, Warnes, King, Williams, Patterson 1999). Their well-being is explained by migrants as largely a result of the positive attitude to ageing amongst the community.

Positive ageing represents an anti-structural ideal; after all, it is a discourse that celebrates the transgression of expected norms. However, as in the previous chapter, there are contradictions inherent in the desired anti-structural notions of 'freedom,' which compel the reintroduction of structural normative responsibilities. As demonstrated in the last chapter, when anti-structure endures, structure begins to form again. In this case, it is the anti-structural theme *itself* (positive ageing), which paradoxically becomes to some degree normative and 'structural,' raising contradictions of its own (for example between the choice of ageing as hyperactive or relaxing). In social expectations of ageing, there are ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in daily choices. I reveal how 'ageing well,' exemplified through being free and independent, becomes a new norm. How one should age positively is governed by any number of morally enforced expectations (revealed also in both Jerrome's (1989) and Williams' (1990) ethnographic studies of old people's lifestyles (Jerrome 1989:164)). Ironically, the features of this moralistic drive to 'age well' can actually bring about feared ageing. For, when the drive for activity is lived out, it becomes tiring, a fictive performance, that cannot be indefinitely sustained.

I begin the chapter with an examination of the changing conceptions of ageing then explore factors of 'positive ageing' as experienced in Spain. I point out how each factor is ambiguous. First, I look at how age is understood as an irrelevant social construction before showing how the chronology of age is still salient in other explanations. Secondly, I reveal how activity is employed to demonstrate ageing well, particularly with the development of busy social networks. Again, I point out how such activity can become counterproductive, creating expectations and social mores that contradict other opinions. Thirdly, I show how ageing well translates into a need to show independence as well as a preparedness for dependency, but also show how it can become a morally weighted expectation. Finally, I explore how the bodily aspects of ageing are downplayed, yet show how this introduces a prescription to 'manage' one's body, a considerable difficulty when the physicality of ageing impinges.

Now, it is clear that such moral imperatives are not solely found in diasporic situations; Dawson's example of a shared emphasis of the need to age well in older persons' clubs in Northeast England reveals almost identical observations (1990:211-243). In Spain, however there is a difference in that the imperative to 'age well' is spatially contrasted with negative expectations 'back home.' Amongst older migrants, there is a temporal, social and spatial deferral of feared aspects of ageing through displacing techniques. Unlike in non-migratory contexts, the site of Spain is employed purposefully to render age an *oppositional* category of 'good ageing' vs. 'feared ageing.' Feared ageing is located elsewhere; in the UK, Florida, Germany, in a residential home, or on the coast for those inland. Simultaneously, feared ageing is also located as the domain of the 'very old' or frail, the fate of those who do not possess the right attitude, or in the

future. The 'desired' ageing in Spain has to be lived out to fend off the alternative feared ageing, and, with such pressure, becomes the expectation.

Before I begin, a caveat. As many studies of retirement show, the social construction of age is mediated by gender, with the experience of retirement varying accordingly. My exposition often relies on the perspectives of women, for the simple fact that there were more women than men. Yet, the dilemma of finding a balance between societal expectations of roles (the need to be 'doing the right thing'), whilst also fulfilling one's own aspirations, personal desires and longings speaks more to women than to men (Ingrish 1995:43). Ingrisch points out that this tension has increased as a result of the changing socio-political context in which feminism has emerged as a dominant discourse. Indeed, in Spain, some of the women I spoke to have developed a feminist consciousness, or spent part of their lives influenced by, or influencing, the development of feminism. The chapter rests more on their experiences.

## **PART ONE**

### **The Historical Emergence of Positive Ageing**

I examine the ways in which in society at large, and in gerontology, sociology and anthropology in particular, conceptions of ageing have shifted. There are now new possibilities for different paths in later life, including the option of living in segregated retirement communities ('RCs' from this point on). Arguably, the coastal zone of Spain itself is not a

traditional 'retirement community.' Older people are not officially segregated into an age-homogeneous society. Yet, certain arenas of activity and housing are (often, seasonally) overwhelmingly populated by older people. Early urbanisations in the area were, for instance specifically designed to be retirement complexes, and future plans reflect this trend. This gives the society a distinctive flavour, one that is influenced by the requirements of older living. Discussions of retirement communities prove useful tools to offer insight into the ongoing evolution of coastal Andalucía.

Over the last few decades, understandings of old age have come under fundamental revision in the UK. Changes in family structure, relationships, employment experiences as well as the increasing affluence and aspirations (King, Warnes & Williams 2000:9,12) of many older people presents a different picture from more gloomy expectations of old age. Recent gerontological research has sought to dispel the myth that older people were a burden to modern society (Fennell and Phillipson 1988:43) since a society governed by admiration for youth and independence (Tinker 1981:9) had deemed older people to be a 'problem' (Jeffrys 1989:12). This was compounded by their 'structured dependency' (Walker 1980) within a capitalist system which enforced retirement from the workforce (Fennel and Phillipson 1988:54) and created policies that reinforced dependency (Walker and Phillipson 1986:3). An ideological capitalisation of 'dependency' inflated the implications of the growing numbers of older people in industrialised countries (Jeffrys 1989:17). Through political discourse and media attention (Bytheway 1995:53) a moral panic was propagated, ill-reflecting the reality of a growing but overwhelmingly self-sufficient cohort of older, active people. Bytheway suggests that gerontology itself has overemphasised the disengagement thesis, which sees older people, as a result of decline, drawing back from an active role in society (1995:31).



Arber and Ginn also point out that this dependency orientation has arisen out of classical sociology's preoccupation with waged work (1995:4) and the 'lack' then felt when outside of the economic sphere. Little attention has been paid to older people's agency in overcoming social prescriptions (*ibid.*:4, Webb and Tossell 1991:109).

Currently we are witnessing a reinterpretation of the nature of ageing. Older people themselves have offered an alternative definition of themselves, marking a move towards 'positive ageing,' with different norms of age-related behaviour (Featherstone & Hepworth 1995:31) (Blaikie 1999:175). For example they create new roles outside of work and continue their engagement with society via movements such as the 'Hen co-op,' a group of older women in the UK promoting the need 'to grow old disgracefully' (Hen co-op 1993:93). Retirement is reinterpreted as an exciting phase of life, where the motif is, 'it is my turn now,' (*ibid.*:111). One refuses to abide by societal expectations (adopting an anti-structural ethos?), instead developing one's own individual distinctiveness, behaviours extremely commonplace to the migrants in this study.

Such a reconceptualisation has come about due to a number of demographic and societal factors. For one, the increasing longevity of the population means that retirement is no longer a small, relatively insignificant phase of life. Coupled with a growing trend towards early retirement, retirement today can realistically make up almost half the lifespan. Secondly, we are witnessing the advent of 'woopies,' well-off older persons. Following the movement towards pensions as the responsibility of the individual rather than the state (Ginn and Arber 1999:157), many older people have a disposable income through private occupational pensions. Thirdly, ageing is affected by the shift to postmodernism. Rather than 'entering' old age at the

entry point of retirement (Walker and Naegele 1999:2), the life course is now increasingly deconstructed, with a blurring of boundaries between adulthood and old-age. This has meant a fantastic pluralism of lifestyles from which one can choose how to age. In retirement, one cultivates chosen lifestyles out of a range of options (Featherstone and Hepworth 1995:33). Of course, this is dependent on the availability of a sufficient income; those at the bottom of the social hierarchy are excluded from fully participating in the new developments<sup>ii</sup> (Featherstone and Hepworth 1991:374).

Featherstone and Hepworth chart 'positive ageing' as an image created and sustained by contemporary consumer culture. A 'softsell' approach to marketing is used for the elderly target market, offering positive advice as well as solutions to problems brought on by age (for an example in Spain see Fig. 1). They analyse the historical evolution of 'Choice' magazine, addressed to 'young-old' consumers since the 1970s. The content discusses sport, hobbies and pastimes as well as advertising solutions to the discomforts of old age. The third age is presented here as 'an extended plateau of active middle age' (*ibid.*:1995:46). Sawchuk describes how advertising groups perceive their older targets as 'the 'me' generation' who have changed 'from the conformist to the individualistic; from the ascetic to the hedonistic' (1995:184). Like good ageing, the drive of consumer culture, 'demands from its recipients a wide-awake, energetic, calculating, maximising approach to life - it has no place for the settled, the habitual or the humdrum' (Hepworth 1991:174). In Spain, similar techniques are in play. For example one brochure for a 'Healthy Living' retirement complex near Málaga promises health, security and quality of life, mixing these images with pictures of leisure, culture, and 'active ageing,' not to mention romance and companionship.

## Chilblains, also known as winter hands

Chilblains, also known as winter hands or winter feet, appear, as the name suggests, typically in autumn and winter. They are usually found on the back of the fingers and toes, often on the heels as well, and sometimes even on the nose and ears!

Exposure to damp cold (such as wet clothing), contact with cold metal and wind-chill can all cause this problem. It is aggravated by poor circulation: for instance, people with heart disease, with alcohol intoxication, those who are very young or very old, or those who are suffering from exhaustion.

### What do they look like?

The classic appearance is that of well-defined spots or patches, which are of a purple colour. In some patients they can form blisters, erosions and even ulcerate. These lesions can be quite painful. They usually resolve within 3-4 weeks, but can sometimes remain throughout the whole winter.

### Can they be treated?

- Avoid cooling down by wearing warm clothing in autumn and winter.
- Local treatment with creams which cause vasodilation, or which contain nicotinic acid.
- Nicotinic acid (a vitamin B), as well as certain vaso-dilating drugs such as Adalat.
- Severe forms sometimes benefit from local cortisone applications.

### What about prevention?

These measures can help prevent the occurrence in people who are prone to chilblains:

- Avoid extreme temperatures: don't sit next to a heater or an open fire, for instance.
- When coming out of a colder area, always bring the hands or feet back to temperature gradually.
- Rubbing them is not a good way of achieving this: it's better to put them against a warmer object, or under your armpits.
- Improve circulation by dipping them alternately in warm (37°C) and colder (15°C) water. Keep them in the water for three to five minutes, and do this about ten times per day.
- Sometimes massage and physiotherapy can bring relief.
- Warm clothing is of paramount importance: warm, cosy clothes, not too tight. Wear a cap or hat: a lot of heat is lost via your head, especially the forehead.
- Smoking reduces the blood flow to the limbs by vaso-constriction and as in so many instances, it is very harmful for your health - especially for your hands!

**BELGIAN, SOUTH AFRICAN, USA DIPLOMAS**  
**EASY PARKING (SEE MAP SPOT 58)**

**24 HOUR EMERGENCIES  
HOUSE VISITS**

**HOURS: 9.00 - 13.00; 16.00 - 19.00; SAT 10.00 - 13.00  
AND BY APPOINTMENT**  
**ENGLISH - NEDERLANDS - FRANÇAIS - DEUTSCH**

**Therapeutic Masseuse**  
**Pain alleviation - Sports injuries**  
**Natural spinal column cure**  
**Whole body reflexology**  
**Lymphatic drainage**  
**Depression - Anxiety - Stress**

**CONSULTATIONS:**  
**HOME VISITS: 10 am - 1 pm & 5 pm - 8 pm**

**General Practitioner**  
**(Perfect English and German spoken)**

**OPENING HOURS 10 AM - 1 PM  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

**DIABETES \* BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL  
CHILDREN'S DISEASES \* ECG  
MEDICAL CERTIFICATES FOR RESIDENCE  
AND WORK PERMITS**

**Dentadanés**

Danish dentist in Axarquia

**Consultation by appointment  
Open: 10.00 - 17.00**

Fig. 1— Health Advice and the Solutions to Health Problems.

Positive ageing, now so much influenced by consumer culture, has its origins in the theory of 'the third age.' Advocated by Laslett, there is a bisection of the category of 'old age' into the third age and the fourth age (Blaikie 1999:10). This posits people of the third age as active and independent. They enter a new definitive 'era of personal fulfilment' (Walker and Maltby 1997:4); the fulfilment achievable through mental and physical activity, education and leisure. Those of the fourth age (of seventy-five years and above) in contrast move towards eventual dependency (*ibid.*:17).

There are reservations about the overwhelming positivity inherent in the discourse of the 'third age.' Bury, for instance points out that the idea that ageing must be 'successful' is a very normative one (1995:23). Furthermore, the values deemed 'successful' by Laslett reveal themselves to be very middle class in orientation, not to mention individualistic and, at times, elitist (Bury 1995:23). Simultaneously, the third age/successful ageing approach pushes the fourth age into a more sequestered, and *de facto* more ominous and feared future. Paraphrasing Blaikie, Tulle Winton suggests,

'The 'positive' ageing discourse effectively eclipses consideration of illness and decline, yet final decay and death take on a heightened hideousness since these will happen, regardless of whatever cultural, economic or body capital one might possess' (1999:75).

Rather than challenging negative stereotypes, positive ageing is 'caught between resisting the mask of ageing and reaffirming the continued cultural repression of the declining body and by extension, of the ageing self' (*ibid.*:281). Yet, still, with all its contradictions and paradoxes, it remains a basic guiding principle for many, including migrants in Spain.

The new 'extended plateau' of middle age is enjoyed in a number of ways, not least through tourism, travel, and migration (ranging from retiring to the UK seaside (see Blaikie 1999:160) or to the Mediterranean). There is a growing trend of age-segregated societies, in which there is scope to live, 'like other people vacation,'<sup>iii</sup> (Vandenhooonaard 1994:23). Until now, these RCs (retirement communities) have been more common in North America, with Florida retirement condominiums and the 'Sun-City' phenomenon well-known (see Fitzgerald 1986). Yet in the UK, there is a degree of age-segregation in some locations where people have sought safety, health and moral rectitude. They recreate 'community' away from younger generations (Blaikie 1999:17) and modernity's more negative excesses; indeed 'community' is often used as a selling point of RCs (Laws 1992:96,97). One variant of an RC is 'Rvers,' a group comprised of older people touring around the states on the 'Recreational Vehicle' circuit. In mainstream society, they are seen as deviants 'spending their children's inheritance' (Counts and Counts 1996:60). Living such a lifestyle allows them to simultaneously belong to a pan-Rving wider community of travellers (Counts and Counts 1996:xvi), whilst pursuing a more individualistic lifestyle based on mobility and freedom.

As with positive ageing, the so-called segregationist impulses of older people are debated. On one hand, the dominant position assumed by sociologists is an optimistic one, for residential communities allow high levels of integration through the 'communality' that they offer (Vandenhooonaard 1994:121). According to Jerrome, friendship and peer support, in the face of losses incurred at retirement become more significant (1990:197, 1992:15), and the RC environment is one in which peer support flourishes. Biggs, Kingston and Nettleton's study of a RC in Birmingham, for example shows that residents felt it offered protection and security as

well as a close-knit community (2000:659). According to residents in their study, 'RC life can be an antidote to ageist narratives of dependency and decline' (*ibid.*:669). Living in a collective, they become complicit in creating a 'believable cultural story' (*ibid.*:671) about the values of the community.

Yet, such readings are not shared by all. Like criticisms of third ageing, more critical perspectives suggest that RC environments do little more than extend the boundaries of adulthood. Some older commentators see RCs as pressurising them into participating in activity; for instance, two commentators in Katz's study of RCs read the scheduling of activity programmes as a form of institutionalisation (Katz 2000:145). Furthermore, analysing Sun-belt communities in the States, McHugh argues that contrary to offering a 'radical critique to the dominant perception of the ageing process' (Hockey and James 1993:180), 'place-based images of ageing are mold and mirror of deeply embedded ageist attitudes and societal values' (McHugh 2000:103). Thus he suggests that set-aside places for older people foster a myth of 'the ageless self,' developed through the 'societal mantra' of being active and keeping old age at bay (*ibid.*:106). Rather than telling us anything about what it means to grow old, they perpetuate a myth of agelessness. Furthermore, far from empowering older people, RCs reduce them to 'a societal script,' an homogeneous and aggregate target market for corporate businesses, which confirms the dominant values of capitalism. McHugh points out, 'the Sun City packaged lifestyle of busy leisure represents the reward for a lifetime of work for those who most ardently embrace the Protestant work ethic' (*ibid.*:110) Once inside, there is a possibility to develop a 'fortress' mentality that includes anti-youth and racist attitudes (*ibid.*:110).

Blaikie argues that age-segregated societies introduce a conflict between freedom, individuality and community, in a 'culturally homogenous lifestyle enclave in which sameness rather than diversity is of the essence' (1999:178). Katz makes a similar point when he explains how seniors, whilst being encouraged to be active, are encouraged to be active 'along with everyone [else]' (2000:134). For the migrants, if such homogenising tenets are strong, they create problems for some migrants, being at odds with their strong sense of their own individuality (see chapter three), and their anthem that 'it is *my* time now.' Such an anti-communalism ethos does not sit comfortably with the communal living so esteemed in the sales talk of retirement destinations (see for instance Chaney 1995 and Ylänne-McEwen 2000). I explore how such conflicts are negotiated through the following ethnographic exploration of the principles of ageing well in Spain.

## **PART TWO**

### **Social Ageing in Spain**

#### **The Ambiguities of Positive Ageing**

In this ethnographic examination of living the discourse of 'positive ageing,' I identify four central interlinked tenets. Over time, these principles either cannot be sustained because of certain structural factors, or themselves become normative expectations of 'ageing well.' First, I examine the downplaying of chronology, followed by an examination of the need for activity. Third, I look at notions of independence and the assertion that 'one must be prepared,' before a final analysis of subjective attitudes to bodily experience and conceptions of the body.

## II.i Denying Chronology through Attitude.

*'You're as old as you feel. I feel about one.'* English man of 92 years.

A common introduction I had during my research was to try and guess the age of the person I was talking to. At times, I got this completely wrong, with usually 'the favour' going in the direction of my conversor by sometimes as much as ten or even twenty years. Most migrants enjoy the fact they 'did not look their age.' In Spain, prescriptive definitions of chronological and physiological age (Arber & Ginn 1995:9) are resisted, and biological age is slowed down. Old age is reinterpreted as something that is under one's power to manage, a purely subjective experience (Woodward 1991:148), to be performed in a particular way. One couple, a very active and energetic pair explained what they meant when discussing their less active neighbours,

*'they're old. Well, when I say old, I don't necessarily mean in age, but well, they're old. Other people we know are much older in years, but are younger.'*

There is a general consensus that a happy retirement is something that one has to have the right attitude to. Those who are unhappy are deemed that way because they do not adopt the right stance, which means adopting a youthful outlook. On one occasion, several women were complaining about the noise from the *discotecas* during the *feria*. Suddenly they realised they sounded 'stereotypically old' and mocked themselves. One laughingly mimicked the phrase, 'It wasn't like that in my day,' in a wizened voices whilst another exclaimed, 'Gosh, we sound like real old crones!' Studying women at a seniors' centre in Canada, Hurd (1999) observed similar opinions. The women stated collectively, 'we're not old!' and denied their



conformity to ageist stereotypes. In Spain, this attitude is confirmed by the tangible effects of the milder climate that reduces aches and pains and 'makes people feel younger.'

This social attitude to ageing implies a degree of flexibility over ageing as well as creativity in age-related behaviours. For instance, there is a creative metaphorical leap *vis à vis* other stages of the lifecourse, allowing the perpetuation of a symbolic youth<sup>iv</sup> in interactions through which the parallel link of childhood and old age is positively employed. As established in chapter two, there is a cultural metaphorical connection to youth (born of their dependency for those in the fourth age) (Hockey and James 1995:135). The parallel is often marginalising, for example in infantilising practices employed in institutions (Hockey and James 1993:9-44). By contrast, in Spain, older people exploit their similarity to adolescents, experiencing a liberating sense of irresponsibility and fun outside the working life. Older women refer to each other as 'girls' and 'young pups' and contradict societal expectations through an ethos of enjoyment (encouraged by the carnivalesque state described in chapter five). 'Younger' migrants particularly find themselves metaphorically likened to children or teenagers. When Barbara told Molly that she was seventy, Molly, considerably older, replied, 'oh well, you're just a spring chicken then!' The symbolic youth demonstrates that childish and mischievous behaviour can be appropriated to make enjoyable the experience of 'second childhood,' without it being totally marginalising (Featherstone and Wernick 1995:7). For men, this is often applied with the adoption of a 'Lothario' or 'Jack the Lad' attitude, or as another man described himself, 'an old retrograde.'

The theme of youth here is understood with a positive slant; understood as legitimising irresponsibility and enjoyment, in a slightly rebellious sense.

The youth motif in old age also transpires through discussions of relationships with migrants' children. At times, migrants stated how they exploited the absence of their offspring. The absent children are ironically projected to possess characteristics normally associated with the controlling parent. For instance, Derek pointed out to Bob how unlucky he was for, unlike him, he had the 'misfortune' of the presence of two women to 'watch what he was up to' (Both Bob's wife Amanda, and his visiting daughter were in Spain at the time). 'What are you talking about?' Bob replied, 'you've got *two* daughters in England.' At this, Derek responded, 'Ah ha, but they are like some dark force in the far beyond, over there....they can't see what I am up to, Thank God!' This echoes Stephens' observations in her study *Loners, Losers and Lovers: Elderly Tenants in a Slum Hotel* (1976), which found that older people may prefer to stay in less desirable surroundings for the 'illicit' pleasures (in the eyes of their children) such as alcohol consumption and sex this may afford.

The so-called irrelevance of chronological age is paradoxical however, as in certain contexts, age *is* a defining criterion. In fact, the organising principle of chronology still has immense salience. For example, in fieldwork, I built up a rapport with an older lady in her eighties, talking for many hours apparently unconstrained by externally defined age classifications. Over time, we built up and sustained a deep friendship that continues beyond the fieldwork experience, but on one occasion, we finally got around to talking about our respective ages. I couldn't believe how chronologically old she was, nor she how young I was. She concluded, 'it shows you, age really has nothing to do with it. They're only numbers.' Whilst stating the irrelevance of it, the mentioning of it reveals it as an issue, and the fact that we were both amazed reveals that chronology is an overriding factor.

Even if not biologically evident, ageing still however has a social salience because the visible deterioration of competencies of one's peers forces one to acknowledge it. Migrants measure their time spent in Spain *vis à vis* one's generational compatriots. Those who moved ten years ago are now aware for instance that, 'we are ten years older than we were,' (See Mullan's 1993 report which discusses problems facing some of these older groups). Similarly, those that have moved in recently are aware that, 'there's a different group here than ten years ago. Those before were more community oriented, and we're more outward looking.' Many of the older, more long-term residents are nostalgic for the past, especially given that many of the friends created within the age-cohorts have died or had to move as a result of failing health. For instance, the close friend of one woman (who has lived in Spain for over thirty years) moved to a residential home in Sussex as a result of failing hearing, so that he could read subtitles in English on TV, leaving her without any of her 'original' friends and lonely at times.

The society itself becomes fragmented along age lines and capacity for activity as the 'stages' and different 'groups' continually progress through the society (particularly given the absence of a younger adult group). One of the consequences is the creation of an 'older old' group. As Molly, who deems herself at eighty-four, an 'old fogey,' and 'antique' described to me the value of the society created,

'Its for the young old-age, that's who its good for, those in their fifties and sixties, you know who like all the 'association-mania.'

Such a statement demonstrates how the monolithic category of 'older people' fragments across a society that downplays the significance of the principle of chronology. The societal negotiation of ageing places people in

stages nearer or further away from the point of capitulation in which one becomes 'really' old.

Furthermore, simply by retiring in Spain, old age implicitly defines identity because migrants separate themselves into an age-cohort. At times, the migrants sustain a 'we-feeling,' based around a generational difference in attitudes (see Fig. 2, an article in the local free magazine pointing out how it is their own fault 'youngsters get it wrong'). Commonalities also arise from dealing with the reality of bodily ageing; one benefit of segregation is that people can confront the ageing process in the knowledge that others are too. Despite downplaying old age as an influential factor, it clearly does inform their perspective. In this sense, old age itself is felt, as one man in his seventies described to me, as 'something that happens.' He explained that whilst it is something that you share with others, it 'is not until you get there that you realise you have 'a completely different way of looking at things' than younger people. He went on,

'Of course no one wants it to happen, but it comes, you realise it immediately. Its when a young girl passes and you know they wouldn't so much as look at you. It's a different mentality entirely being old. When such a mentality comes upon you, you've got to know how to handle it.'

## Out of Proportion

Is it any wonder youngsters get it wrong? They sit there every day watching the news which may show - and often does - earth shattering events. War between two African countries, President Mugabe banning a life-saving drug against AIDS, the outbreak of tuberculosis in Britain. At the end of this and given the same amount of time and importance the youngsters hear the football results. Sheffield Wednesday scored one more goal than Tranmere Rovers (examples only!) so one is relegated to the next league.

No one tells them that this is trivial and the other news serious so in their young, immature minds football is an earth-shattering event, something to pay wrap attention to. Each score must be noted, each transfer considered, each purchase weighed with great care. So how can we, the adults who let it happen, be surprised when they get things out of proportion?

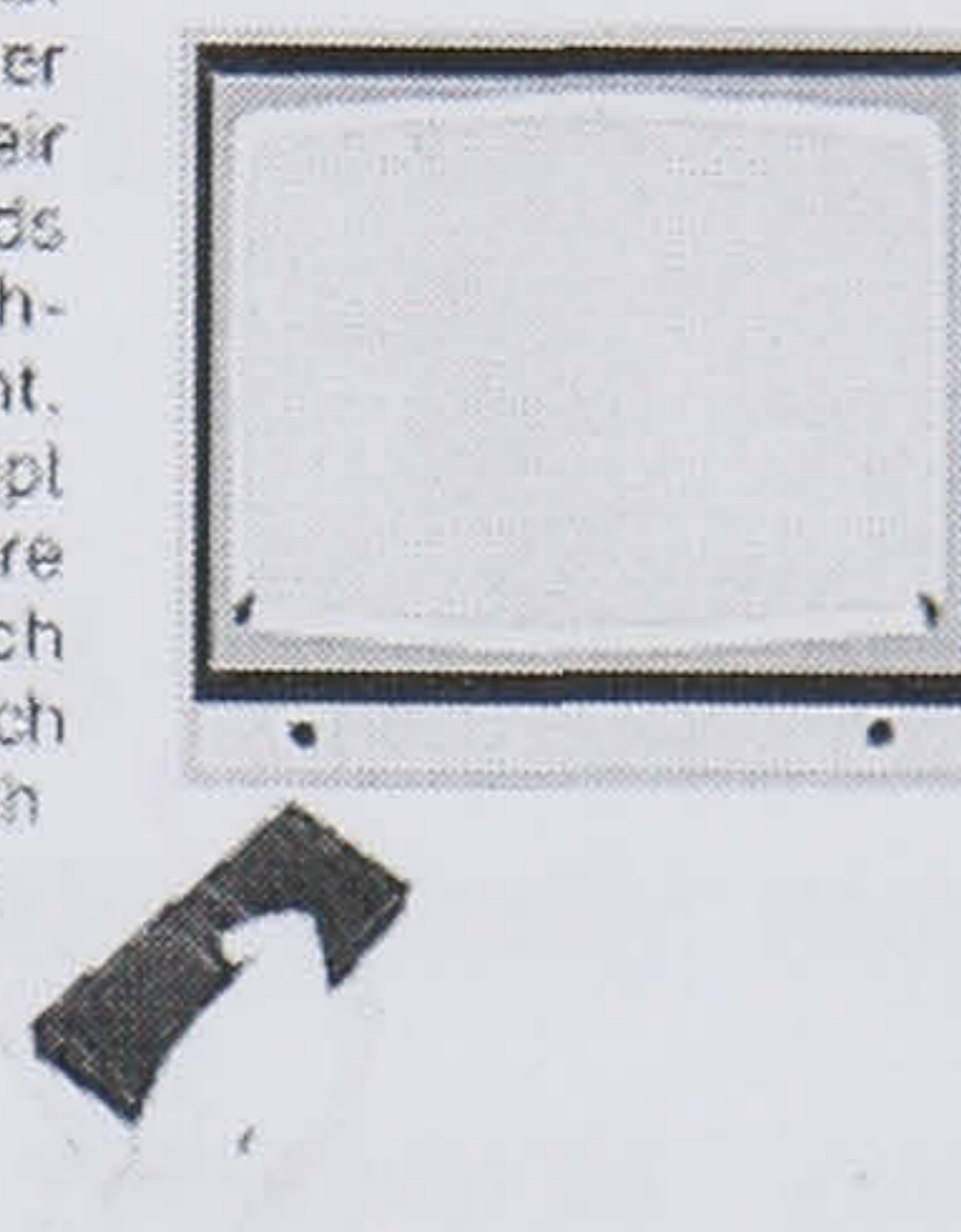


Fig. 2 - 'Youngsters get it wrong.' Article in *The Marketplace*, October 1999.

The common experience of ageing informs much of the discussions in clubs, based on illnesses and infirmities. Again, in the local newspapers, many articles are devoted to advice and explanation of conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and prostate care. At one extreme, this allows a positive and mobilising challenging of mainstream attitudes; for example, one man Steven, wrote an article based on his own frustrating experiences of dealing with inadequate wheelchair access. For some, however, the explicit realisation of the realities of chronological age counters the advances of positive ageing. Some were disgruntled with the public airings of facts of ageing. One woman, in her late fifties said,

'I do get bored. All the conversation revolves around operations and drugs etc. It gets me down sometimes...I feel left out, which is silly, I've got nothing to complain about, surely that should be good?'

As Blaikie points out, in age-segregated societies, many older people are uncomfortable with people of their own age, and miss out on the mutuality of intergenerational links (1999:178). Although age is apparently 'irrelevant,' ethnographic data suggests its pervasive influence.

### II.ii Denying Ageing through Activity and Social Links

The second factor of desired ageing involves adopting an active lifestyle (Katz 2000:135-153). The mild climate already may predispose migrants to fitness, through easing arthritis, rheumatic pain and diminishing the chances of winter 'flus and colds.' Furthermore, the vibrant social life encourages people to walk down to the centre in the sunshine or engage in sports (often communally in sports groups such as karate, or individually in walking and swimming). In an illuminating study of older Aberdonians, Rory Williams points out how amongst older people, activity was seen as a generator of good health. Defective parts of the body were mobilised through sheer determination (1990:33). In Spain, similarly, ritual activity (like swimming) had become a daily practice used to demonstrate continued vigour. Activity is socially esteemed. Barbara, for instance was praised by others for being so industrious and having so much energy. Privately Barbara sometimes admitted that the rushing around was a little strenuous, although she enjoyed her lifestyle. Another woman of around ninety years of age was lauded for attending many of the International club's events and trips. When Molly, a migrant with a more 'sedentary' inclination commented upon this woman's vigour on one of the clubs' organised trips to Granada, the woman let her in on her secret. Apparently, she kept her sunglasses on to hide from others the fact that she was actually sleeping on the bus. Molly thought this was a wonderful 'trick' to disguise the fact that she was tired by the highly esteemed activity.

Mental activity is also appraised as constituent of ageing well. Although the climate is deemed to keep one young, it was often suggested that those who move *just* for the climate without any interests, suffer sheer inertia and loss of their critical faculties. Many people join in Spanish classes, often with less real belief in the ultimate success of the classes than in the value of this as good mental exercise. One lady explained, 'I'm not very good at Spanish, but it keeps me alert, it keeps my grey cells ticking over'<sup>v</sup>. Dr. Dorothy Price (nee Berridge), herself a migrant, suggests that some migrants may suffer boredom as a result of being de-skilled in a new environment, whilst others 'revel in the new sense of youth.' She points out, 'there is no need for anyone to feel lonely or lacking in exercise' (1992). Especially amongst the women, activity is seen (and encouraged by others) as a means of overcoming the initial sense of disorientation and homesickness. Sonia, a lady married to Richard, a retired sergeant major, took over a job in the International club a few months after arriving, reorganising the video-rental library. She said,

'Its giving me another interest...I have to throw myself into it, otherwise I get homesick. If I keep myself busy, I don't miss my friends so much, or dwell on the comforts I miss, the central heating and the like.'

Jerrome points out, 'social participation entails an expression of a notion of ageing well' (1989:156), for to relinquish jobs and roles is associated with a surrender to ageing (*ibid.*:162). In Spain, clubs also offer potential for companionship and romance. Interaction is light and fun, and at times is akin to 'flirting.' This sometimes leads to the establishment of happy unions in a stage of life where romance is traditionally seen as something implicitly wrong or a focus for amusement (Hockey and James 1995:145). The new romances are looked upon fondly and recounted with delight by migrants,

prized as an example of the hallmarks of their society which would not be allowed 'back home.'

However, activity is not always for everyone. Rather, in accordance with anti-structure becoming structural, the expectation of activity can become constraining, and felt for some, as too onerous a demand at this stage of life. When talking to Molly in her quiet, small flat, furnished with furniture shipped over from England, she complained,

'I don't do anything extra apart from the International Club. I get too tired. I think that's sometimes a problem here, too many people being active. They try to forget they're getting old, but you know, when you get older, you need to be slowing down, to realise that you can't do everything you might like to. Instead, they speed up, rushing through everything they wanted to do when they were younger. No, I'd be too tired.'

She hinted that 'activity' is normative (as Katz 2000 also finds in his study of Canadian retirement clusters); she imagined that the avoidance of engagement and participation was deemed odd and needed explanation. Molly found that the demands of positive ageing contradicted her belief of old age as a time to put her feet up, echoing findings by Williams in Aberdeen. He notes, 'the idea of relaxation kept running into contradiction with the activist tenor of most nostrums for retirement' (1990:66). As, I feel sure Molly would agree, Bury and Holme suggest,

'Activism may not always be the only recipe for a good quality of life, and evidence suggests that a more 'passive' lifestyle may be compatible with a good quality of life at an advanced age.' (1991 in Bury 1995:23).



Equally, the social networks, whilst offering important sources of friendship, comfort and support, themselves define what life ought to be like. For some women, men are still felt to have the casting power in the society. O'Reilly explores how for women, moving to Spain involves making acquaintances rather than friends (2000b), a feat made more difficult if one is single. One younger single woman told me that she felt marginalised by other (married) women,

'women don't like you because they think that you are one of the single women who are out here looking for a husband. Of course if you are talking to their husband, you are going to sleep with them!'

She complained of feeling very isolated due to her single status, and even thought of setting up a 'singles' club. She stated, 'apparently there are loads of singles in Tocina, well, they don't like to announce themselves!'

Amongst some groups (more than others) a large number of participants are married. Whilst the discourse of positive ageing could be read as having resonance with alternative and reactive stances, overturning societal expectations of defined roles (such as feminism, gay pride etc.), in some circumstances, existing norms emphasising marriage and femininity were re-established. In Tocina then, despite an apparently thriving male homosexual scene, Elaine, a woman who lectured in Manchester on gay consciousness years ago confessed,

'well, with all that I did, 'be proud' and all that, here I am and I am too frightened to tell anyone at all that I am a lesbian. If they knew down at the Fine Arts club, few people would speak to me.'

This image is compounded by consumerist images of the sort of people who are welcomed (see fig. 3 advertising a RC in Spain). In Elaine's effort to fit



TERRACED HOUSES MEDINA AZAHARA



LA ALCAZABA APARTMENTS

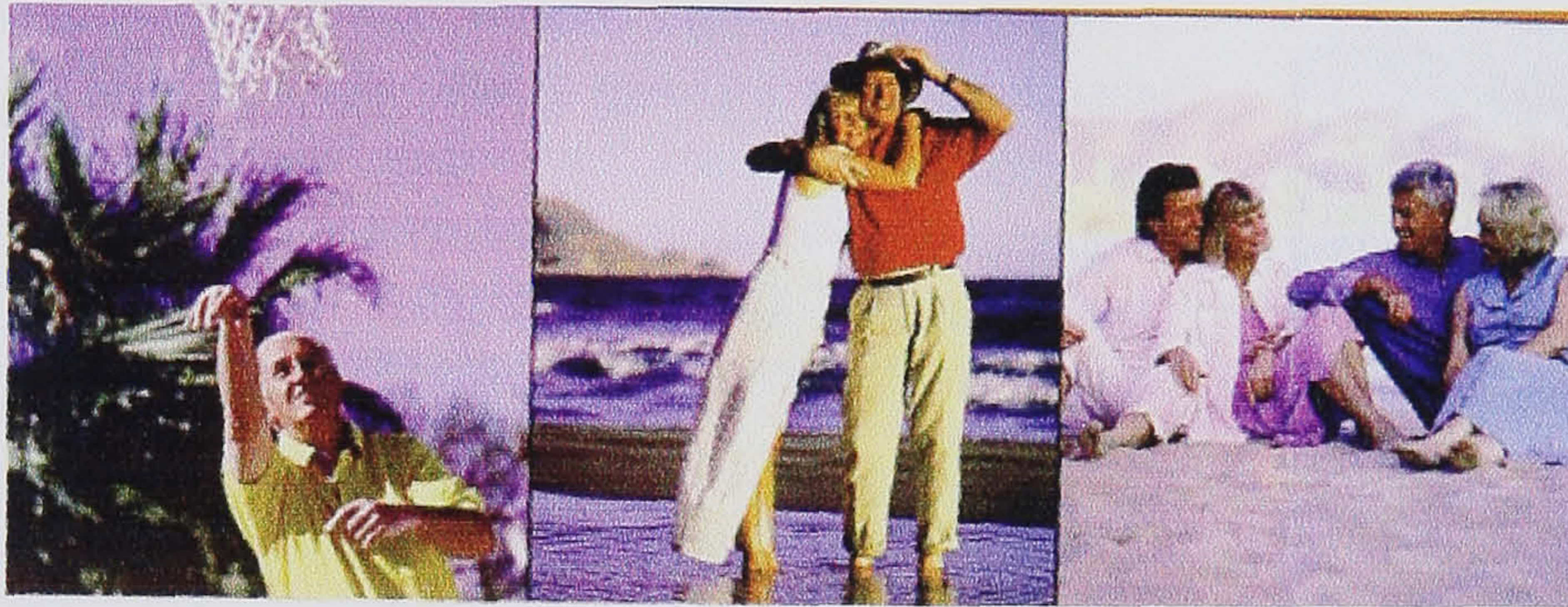


BUNGALOWS THE BALCONY OF EUROPE

Fig. 3 - 'Healthy Livings' RC Environment

in, she explained to me how, in contrast to usual, she wore makeup to a Christmas do. 'Everyone was completely shocked,' she said. 'How pretty you look, Elaine' they said. 'You mean I look the same as the rest of you,' she replied. For her, the society was one of conformity, and on many occasions she vividly expressed her dislike for the sacrifices she had to make in order to fit in. Unable to express her sexuality, during my fieldwork, she went on a visit back to England. '*Freedom*, they call it in Spain' she said. 'It's not free in Spain, at least in England I was free.' When she finally moved away from Spain, her initial reaction was relief. In a subsequent correspondence, she told me how good it was when she finally moved back to her native Sheffield, beginning the letter, 'finally I've escaped the gold shoes and matching handbag brigade!'<sup>vi</sup>

Despite Vandenhooonaard's reading that in age-segregated societies, one would expect strong integration, widows are an exception. Charting the experience of widows in a Florida retirement community she found that widows' friendships underwent a process of transferral following the death of a spouse, becoming firstly more distanced acquaintances, then often reduced to no contact at all (1994:121). The problem lies with the fact that many of the activities are 'couple-oriented' and that for widows to be invited along they feel that others are 'doing them a favour.' Similar stories exist for women in Spain, with some women becoming recluses following the deaths of their husbands, often left isolated without transport (Age Concern 1993:7). The ideal of heterosexual married partnerships is a feature in advertising, as demonstrated by the retirement complex advertisement (fig. 4). In all of the smaller feature pictures, the central inhabitants of the building enjoying the sun and facilities are heterosexual couples (blonde woman, grey-haired man) locked in an embrace, or holding the hands of



**Fig. 4 'Healthy Living' Desired Clientele.**  
Source: *Sol Andalusi. Healthy Livings. Sales Brochure 2000*

their grandchildren. A notable feature is the absence of single people, or in one case, the very peripheral placement of them<sup>vii</sup>.

Some women create strong networks of their own. For instance Joy talked of Lorinda, her friend, as 'the sister she never had,' echoing Jerrome's assertion that friendships can become important replacements for kin ties (1990:197). Some women compared themselves favourably with others who were married because they had solid friendships that could only develop in intimacy in these women-only groups. In many respects, it is within this communality that the independence so desired can flourish, with advice and support to encourage women to do things they had only ever done in a partnership. As a young and unmarried girl I often found myself taken up by these women, as 'like them.' They also felt that I should benefit from their experience, although much of their advice and stories made me blush. In one club, I heard of how an inebriated woman flashed her G-string to everyone at a party, and at another heard how a philandering man hid the knickers of one girlfriend under the pillow whilst seducing another. When I went out with these groups of women on their own, I noticed a very jovial atmosphere, with the women involved enjoying almost a rerun of their unmarried years, as well as reminiscences of married times.

### II.iii Downplaying Dependency, Asserting Independence in Relationships and Responsibilities.

*'When I get to that stage, I'll put myself in a home'*

Viv (as in introduction) (my emphasis).

The third element of positive ageing is the ability to retain independence. Some migrants' children adopt a position of guardianship born of fear that

things will go wrong. This is met with fierce assertions of independence. For instance, when Molly bought her flat in Tocina following an inspection-holiday, she did not consult her children. The family reacted strongly, assuming that she had, in her words, been 'twizzled.' In asserting a strong sense of independence, she countered that they (her children) 'couldn't quite believe that I was capable of doing things on my own.' For Chris, the issue of independence coloured a trip back to visit her family in the UK. During the stay, the children had organised a day out in Walton on the Naze for her benefit. During the trip, Chris was purposefully demonstrative and belligerent, because she felt her independence was being compromised. She exploded,

'I live on the Costa-del-Sol, why did they think I wanted to go to *Walton on the Naze!* I admit that whole day I was cantankerous, I knew what I was doing, but felt I couldn't stop my reactions. I just felt so aggravated that I was being told to do all these things.'

Molly admits that one of the advantages of moving was to actually be away from the responsibilities for her children. She said, 'It sounds silly, but you don't get involved in their problems. You tend to have the nice times, and as the saying goes, 'what the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't feel'.' For some adult children left behind, this can be read as desertion. One woman living in the UK explained that, as the youngest daughter of the family, she felt hurt when her mother moved, abdicating responsibility for her children, after being there for her siblings' children. That said, many find that the importance of the grandparent role (as described in Roberto 1990) is actually strengthened through migration, with grandchildren and children coming out to visit the Costa, often a more desirable destination than previous residences. They experience 'intimacy at a distance' (Jerrome 1990:194) and

'quality time' on visits. Some children even follow their parents by moving out to Spain.

For some migrants a small part of the motivation of moving is to escape dependency on kin in the future. Women especially feel they should *not* burden children with the responsibility of care, often following an experience of having been the primary caregivers for their own elderly parents (experienced by both Claire and Molly and repeated for other women). Molly stated that on her retirement at sixty, she couldn't go anywhere, as, being an only child, the responsibility fell to her to care for her dependent mother. Following her mother's death, she moved to Spain, both because her 'children had their own lives and it wasn't fair to burden them,' but equally because following her role as a carer, she felt it was time to do something for herself.

Sometimes however, it is difficult for some women to escape their role as carer even within the Spanish context. This is despite the fact that in other circumstances they would be the 'cared-for.' Even when Elaine was very ill following food poisoning, her German, older and infirm neighbour continued to ask her to do things for her. The older lady had a fall and was found dead a short while later, and consequently Elaine felt very sad and guilty. Despite being dependent herself, she still felt that she had neglected her duty. The tension was also articulated by men in a different way. For instance, Bob, a frail Canadian was living in his isolated house alone whilst waiting to join his wife who had moved to New Zealand to be with her children following the need for permanent kidney dialysis and ill-health. He used to put a piece of cardboard up in his window at night and if not removed the next day (if something had gone wrong), he said he hoped,

'somebody would come in and find him.' I asked him why he did not seek help, and although he said half of it was pride, it was also the fact that,

'everyone's old here. Its not fair to put on them, when you don't know which one of you is going to die first.'

Happily, after moving and the subsequent death of his wife, he returned to Spain to be near friends in a safer location in the town.

As I have shown, caring roles are personally undertaken by willing neighbours and friends to help people in difficulty. In the absence of such ties which are often established through club-based networks, problems may result. An example is Jane, who successfully renovated her house in the village and learned Spanish to communicate well. When I visited her following a stroke that left her with little capacity to remember everything that she had learned, she was very lonely and distressed. At this point, she was moving back to live with her sons. Often, when managing alone really does become a problem, children are very much a source of support, although of course this is not always the case. Bob (as mentioned above) found that following his wife's death, his family 'had their own lives' and he missed the social support of his friends in Tocina. Positive social ties sometimes act as a draw as much as kinship ties.

A small number of migrants of limited resources and no relatives get into difficulty; a scenario seen as something best avoided. It is seen as morally reprehensible if 'people don't prepare' for the eventual state of dependency. This is even more acute given that spatiality hinders assistance of elderly relatives by their families, with a reduction of time spent on care 'at a distance' (Joseph and Hallman 1998). This means some people will be left uncared for when they need it. Friends help, but are no substitute for family-support in experiences of decline (Young and Seale 1998). Such



factors are capitalised upon by the market, as this example of an article/advertisement in a free magazine for investment for long term care reveals,

'We are grateful to our partners, family, neighbours and friends for popping in and helping out when we are not feeling well. It's nice to have somebody to make a cup of tea, prepare a meal and tidy around the house while we rest and get better. The carer is happy to help out. It's only a few hours, for a few days of their lives. There is nothing like a bit of TLC - Tender Loving Care to make us feel good. A problem comes when TLC turns to LTC - Long Term Care - when you need help not just for a few days but for the rest of your life. Will the carers be able to adjust their lives to give the attention you need? Would they be prepared to? Of course, as an expatriate your potential carers may live hundreds of miles away. And how would you feel? A burden? Guilty that you were disrupting other people's lives?' (Savidge, Nov 1999.)

Clubs with a domiciliary service find that they bear the primary responsibility for members with little kin support. In a discussion paper (1997), George Brooks of the Royal British Legion in Spain, addresses the current position in Spain, in which:

- 'a) Due to the ageing of our members, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide care because of the lack of Spanish social services.'
- b) We cannot sustain long-term care for those requiring constant attention who are without funds' (Brooks 1997:1).

For some caught in the poverty trap, repatriation is deemed the only answer. I was told by George how repatriation had occurred on some occasions in very negative circumstances. During my period of fieldwork the British Legion was battling to develop a system of repatriation, funded by head office, for those who find themselves with no financial means to cover this themselves should the need arise. They believe their campaign is falling on deaf ears. Yet the need was revealed as particularly acute when

Charlotte, a popular member of the club developed Alzheimer's disease. It became clear that repatriation was needed. The health system, reliant on families to provide aftercare, could do little to help Charlotte, who in the end needed round-the-clock nursing. The burden fell onto her husband, Gerald, himself over eighty, a man with mobility problems and failing eyesight, not to mention meagre resources. It was down to The British Legion who stepped in to offer subsidised nursing for a few hours a day. By the time that repatriation was arranged, Charlotte was too frail to get onto an aeroplane and she died a few days later, although as George pointed out, she could have lived much longer. The problem is compounded by the importance of the motif of independence. George in the British Legion confirmed, 'people don't like to admit that they need help.' Gerald for instance, often turned down offers of help, and kept insisting that everything was fine, despite the problems he was undergoing in looking for his wife. According to external definitions of independence and quality of life, Gerald would most certainly be seen as dependent, yet he still subjectively felt and asserted (at least in public) that he was independent.

George Brookes, chairman of the Eastern end of the British legion raised the issue with me several times that, to date, there are no formal procedures for repatriation. The Age Concern report in 1993 suggested delegates felt 'they had been forgotten by their government' (1993:22), yet still recommendations from the report had, subsequently, all but been ignored. Part of the problem is however that for the most part, as he expressed, 'most people are fine.' O'Reilly points out that such reports and media attention over-emphasise or sensationalise problems (2000a:5,70). Yet, as the example of Charlotte clearly shows, as George suggested, 'some people slip through the net.' Wider media constructions portray these unfortunate few as 'not going in with their eyes open' (2000a:6). Yet these sentiments are not simply

external constructions, but is an idea as much propagated amongst migrants themselves. As a result of the lack of institutionalised provisions, it is felt that one should take it upon oneself to avoid the worst outcome of forced repatriation. A strong moral value is expressed that, 'one should plan for the future.'

#### II.iv Performing the Body?

Finally, I analyse how positive ageing is marked by a social performance of the body. Following the theoretical impasse in ageing research between social constructivist and biological-reductivist poles (Hockey and James 2002: *in press*), attempts are currently underway to deconstruct the dichotomy and understand social identities as embodied. As Hockey and James assert, biological processes are 'fundamentally social affairs' (2002: *in press*) and 'corporeal existence impinges on people's everyday lives.'


According to Blaikie, in the UK one's age-status was marked by particular attire deemed appropriate to one's age (1999:73). Some Spanish older women in the district still adhere to this principle. Migrants, by contrast do not have a consensus to adhere to on what one should wear (see example in chapter five). Clothing is smart-casual, albeit avoiding the more revealing and undignified clothing deemed to be worn by tourists, a distinguishing tactic (see next chapter) which simultaneously disguises potential betrayals of corporeal age. That said, it is not uncommon, particularly in the summer heat, to see older people wearing light summer clothing, like shorts (mainly for men) and T-shirts. In some senses there is more of an acceptance of the ageing body than in mainstream society, perhaps simply because of the sheer numbers of older people. Yet, simultaneously, this invites a need to pay attention to one's figure, with an emphasis on preserving the best of the

body. Some feel they must still look a certain way, namely beautiful and slim. In the field, I found amongst certain women a preoccupation with weight and beauty that rivals that of my own age-cohort. Indeed, in one shockingly extreme case, an older woman was suspected by peers to be suffering anorexia nervosa.


Growing older is 'reconstructed as a marketable lifestyle that connects the commodified values of youth with bodycare techniques for masking the appearance of age' (Katz 1995:70). In Spain, there is a mushrooming of new technologies catering for those seeking an ideal-type body. A wealth of anti-ageing centres offer chelation therapy, magnetic field treatment, acupuncture, cryotherapy and many obscure techniques I had never heard of. Advertised in the free papers (Fig. 5), cryotherapy, for example sets about 'freezing the way to better looking skin,' removing, 'unsightly skin blemishes' including age-spots and warts. As Hockey and James assert 'Literally they [older people] can buy their physical, and therefore also social independence' (2002: *in print*). Fig. 6 also shows how through herbal formulas, one can symbolically 'live forever.'

I witnessed a number of people (of a certain means) trying out expensive herbal formulas, not to mention various diets and weight-loss techniques. For example, in an effort to lose weight, one American woman, Josie, spent a fortune on herbal meal replacements that she balked at swallowing. Others simply place a restriction on the amounts that they drink, for mental but also physical well-being. Whilst the ageing of the body can provoke negative emotional reactions (see Hepworth 1998), in Spain, it is somewhat harder as the body is more likely to be revealed in the heat, yet the social scene is one of enjoyment. As Viv (the cruise-goer) put it,

FREEZING THE WAY TO BETTER LOOKING SKIN  
WITH  
**CRYOTHERAPY**



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

UNSIGHTLY SKIN BLEMISHES LIKE  
WARTS • MOLES • AGE SPOTS • ACNE  
KERATOSIS • SKIN CANCER • AND OTHERS

CAN ALL BE REMOVED WITHOUT SURGERY OR LASER.  
QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Cryotherapy is a simple method of freezing the skin lesions with liquid nitrogen, which is not acid or a chemical. It is just a very cold liquid.

After Cryotherapy you will be pleasantly surprised at your new appearance. Imagine looking in the mirror without that ugly mole or black spot. There is nothing magical about cryotherapy, but it can do wonders for your complexion.

It is the most effective and safe treatment.  
Needs NO ANAESTHETIC because it is practically PAINLESS

**THE ICE COLD SOLUTION!**

**Leaves No Scars**

**Excellent Cosmetic Results**

Fig. 5 'Freezing the Way to Better Looking Skin'  
Source: *the Entertainer*. Date unknown.

Fig. 6  
Brochure for  
'Forever Living'  
Herbal Products

Forever Living Products  
offers you the best Aloe Vera  
products in the world:



ALOE

*Cosmetic and Food Products*

'It's not easy when you're here to enjoy yourself. Can you imagine at all these social occasions, getting out your flask of cabbage soup, and meeting for drinks, but having no drinks!'

Of course, such contradictory pressures bear heavily on those who do not fit the norm. On one occasion, I saw one woman pointedly suggested that the weight of another lady Amanda was an issue, much to her embarrassment. The discussion between the groups of women began as a commentary on the Spanish, who they saw, 'letting themselves go after having children,' which then led to a discussion of their own sizes. Following the insulting comments, Amanda exposed the societal nature of the constructed 'problem' of her weight, pointing out loudly, 'It doesn't bother me at all. I've always found it upset other people far more than me.' Similarly, at a funeral, disparaging comments were quietly directed at one lady whose varicose veins and 'red-nose from drinking too much' were the topic of discussion. A moral censure was put upon the woman, because she was 'not looking after herself.' In a strange paradox, some ideals of positive ageing (activity, leisure, consumption, enjoyment) can themselves reveal themselves as causing negative effects of fourth age 'feared ageing.' This then requires a moderation of positive ageing ('enjoy yourself but not *too much!*') to fit the body-image that is associated with the canon.

Of course, ultimately the image creates problems when real ageing occurs; it is seen as negative, and described in exaggerated hues, with metaphorical allusion to decay. Jan, a sixty year old who was at one point suffering bad arthritis and a period of impetigo, told me, 'I just feel like I'm dying slowly.' Others keep busy to stop themselves 'stagnating' or 'vegetating,' or 'rotting away' (incidentally drawing on the body-based realism of carnival discourse (Dentith1995:66)). When bodily aspects of ageing impinge on one's life, the

socially-valued dictum that age is irrelevant is exposed. The impression of negotiating ageing well comes unstuck and the limits of 'attitude' become stark. Yet, before 'the time to go' occurs, there is a process of negotiation of the physical ailments, propping up the idea of subjective 'mind over matter' ageing, in a delayed capitulation to age (Williams 1990:76). Les, an enthusiastic man with an intense lust for life explained how he had recovered from a large number of serial heart attacks:

'Mind over matter...putting your mind behind something.

The doctor commented on how superfit I am and that I will continue, although of course its getting harder now.'

His capacities for the active lifestyle he had pursued were now limited, but, in overtones similar to Jerrome's findings, he explained this as 'a 'slowing down' rather than a 'giving up' (1989:161).

The emphasis on masking and controlling visible ageing, with a mind over matter approach is sometimes demonstrated by a presentation of the body as a machine. The body is conceived as a separate material entity, programmable and malleable through the mind. Les, for instance, who'd had several heart attacks, described how he was saved on one occasion by the doctors, 'jump starting me. It was like they kept plugging me in, jump starting me back to life!' One other couple who'd since moved back to England as a result of the mobility problems explained why they had to move on a subsequent visit back. 'Bob could hardly move, but they've pieced him up. He's got nuts and bolts all up his back.' Similarly, Williams points out how there is a tendency (particularly in working class families) for British descriptions of health to draw attention to the functional or mechanical conception of the body (1990:28). Featherstone and Hepworth explain this as a means of distancing or denying death,

'The dominant image of the body as a machine which can be serviced and repaired, and the array of products there, cultivate the hope that the period of active life can be extended and controlled into a future where ultimately even death can be mastered' (1995:42).

I suggest also that the joking metaphor allows the articulation of painful experiences, restoring subjectivity over potentially dehumanising experiences. The separation of the body-mind<sup>viii</sup> is also mobilised to support the notion that one is essentially 'young-at-heart,' whatever the physical conditions. This reflects a shift in self-conceptualisations of the body, from its taken-for-granted status towards the awareness that one *has* or possesses a body (Nettleton 1998:12).

When the reality of deterioration is unavoidable, there is generally an agreement that it 'is time to go,' with societal support. One couple in a club were deteriorating quickly, evidently on their 'last legs.' There was a discussion as to why they didn't go back to a nice residential place in England. One woman pointed out,

'Its psychological, isn't it? To move back would be like giving up wouldn't it? Like admitting, well that's it, that's your life gone. Nobody wants to get like that.'

Very old age itself, though not avoidable was deemed as something that in the final stages, 'should not be there.' Those that chose to remain there were nevertheless well cared-for, albeit with an acknowledgement that this was not really seen as the best option. Many go back to the home country, a move often preceded by a number of smaller moves, from the *campo* to the town, or from a hilly retirement resort to a flat near to the town, anticipated by a 'giving up' of the muscles which have been pushed until they can be pushed no more. When people go back, there are mixed feelings; on one



hand, the ideal of positive ageing is maintained as evidence of 'real' old age is removed (and the need to contemplate one's own futurity). Simultaneously, there is pain felt as one loses friends who are significant members of one's cohort.

## CONCLUSION

An ethnographic analysis of a 'positively ageing' society demonstrates the ways in which the ambiguities and inherent contradictions of positive ageing are negotiated on a daily basis. First, ageing takes on an oppositional dimension; split between a version of 'feared' ageing which is located elsewhere other than in Spain, and that 'positive' and 'desired' version imagined to be realisable in Spain. Living in Spain gives people an opportunity to critique a perceived expectation of ageing (as involving dependency and 'slowing down'). At times, in its place become new expectations of what ageing, in this more positive sense should entail. As all four tenets of positive ageing show, it is clear that, on one hand, the features offer great potentials for new experiences. Yet, simultaneously, they create a reinscription of a number of expectations, ironically governing ways of behaviour that celebrate autonomy, independence and the mastery of one's own body. Being 'successful' in ageing does not come without its own dilemmas.

As in chapter five, in this arena the anti-structural tenet of positive ageing (about escaping constraints, presumptions and responsibilities) becomes structural. In attempting to posit a challenge to mainstream structural ideas

of ageing as dependency elsewhere, much work is invested in the maintenance of a new status quo. For further research, it would be interesting to note how far the subversive capacities of anti-structure continue when one does return as a result of ill-health, dependency or disenchantment with life in Spain. Certainly positive ageing in Spain offers an alternative to mainstream ideas, but one that opens up further questions about the subjective and social negotiation of ageing.

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### **Notes:**

<sup>i</sup> In all but two of my interviews, reflections on the choice were positive.

<sup>ii</sup> Tulle-Winton states, 'Becoming a successful ager does not come cheap and ageing now represents an expanding field of industrial and money-making activity' (1999:290).

<sup>iii</sup> One of Fitzgerald's respondents in Sun-City described their experience as 'the long vacation we wished we'd always had' (1986:229).

<sup>iv</sup> Although I feel like I am reinstating age-related behaviours at this point, it simply reflects a reality that when people were enjoying freedoms, they represented amongst themselves that this was not quite 'adult' and were behaving more like youngsters!

<sup>v</sup> Alluding to the conception of the body as a machine, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>vi</sup> That said, the emphasis on conservatism is not as strong as within some age-segregated societies within the UK itself, where it reigns supreme. See Blaikie 1999:162-63.

<sup>vii</sup> In one advertisement for *Interpares*, an exclusive RC, the director points out, 'The younger you are, the easier it is to get in - over eighty it's almost impossible except in very special circumstances. We like couples to join us, but that's not to say that a friendly widow or single person would not be welcome.'

<sup>viii</sup> Fairhurst points out how the mind body dualism does not refer to distinct ontological entities but are reflected as such in lay people's language and usage (1998:268).

**Chapter 7 -**  
**LEISURE AND TOURISM FOR SELF-DEFINITION<sup>i</sup>**

*'Tourists, go home!' exclamation on a poster (enlarged from a postcard)  
in a long term migrant's hallway.*

*'Get yourselves out of my way. I hate tourists!' said Lily loudly, not concerned if  
anyone heard her, flapping her arms wildly as we walked through the town at  
lunchtime. (Fieldnotes September 1999)*

*'To go into the town in summer? I'd rather go to hell. In summer I hide.'*  
Elizabeth, long term migrant.

**Introduction**

Drawing on the premises of the last chapter, this chapter explores how in their need to demonstrate their ability to age well, migrants employ a distinction between themselves and tourists. I suggest that the distinction is made because actions and behaviours typical of an archetypal tourist metaphorically resonate with fears about ageing. Migrants distance themselves from typical 'tourist' behaviour which echo aspects of bad ageing (inactivity, inauthenticity, childishness, dependency, transience, and a 'herd-like' mentality) (see Fig. 1). Alternatively, migrants strive for a 'leisured' identity, in which migrants can find best the ideals of good ageing (activity, self-improvement, education and association with adulthood). In Spain, one has the time to educate oneself and relax, far away from the fetters and demands of working life. The place of Spain, as site of leisure is a place in which the more desired form of ageing can be realised. In contrast,

The UK, for Britons in this case, is represented by migrants as the location in which the more feared version of ageing is anticipated to take place. Certain undesired forms of self-identity are located elsewhere, in other people, places or times. Paradoxically, it is also the location in which ageing also can be safely dealt with.

**Fig. 1 -The Tourist/Leisure dichotomy**

<b>Tourist</b>	<b>Leisured Person</b>
Dependent (childish, irresponsible)	Independent, responsible
Organized by others (herd-like)	Organised by self (possessing individuality)
Inauthentic/superficial	Authentic
Transient/Guest/Passing through	Permanent/home

These conclusions arose during fieldwork, in which I found that migrants vehemently distanced themselves from tourists, expressing negative feelings about their yearly 'invasion.' Of course, tourists are almost universally disliked for a multitude of reasons. There is a long-held snobbism towards tourism (Graburn 1978:30), but perhaps tourists are disliked simply because they are a nuisance, disrupting everyday life. All these reasons, whilst true, nonetheless miss an important point. That is that tourists' characteristics may remind people of what they, in their self-conceptions should *not* be. Given the normative culture for ageing (as explored in the last chapter), tourists represent too many of the negative behaviours that are avoided in the pursuit of good ageing. In expressing dislike for tourists, migrants are expressing much more about the ideas and aspirations of their own lives in the later stages of the life course.

The pursuit of leisure is not unproblematic, however precisely because leisure, in its opposition to work and its association with 'freedom,' shares many characteristics with tourism. Being leisured, one can appear passive, transient, idle, easily misread as belonging to the wider categorical grouping of 'the tourists.' Yet migrants dislike being conflated with tourists. Tourists arrive for their two-week's package holiday, follow set patterns and paths, for set periods of time in an existence worlds apart from migrants' lifestyles. As shown in Fig. 1, they are seen as dependent, herd-like, and by comparison to them only able to experience Spain superficially. Living as a tourist would be akin to ageing badly.

Now, to support migrants' self-conceptions as migrants not tourists, certain modes of behaviour must be adopted. Ironically, they involve the imparting of an organised and disciplined approach to leisure. To fend off the slippage to a tourist identity, there is an adoption of a work ethic to leisure, which defines migrants as responsible and adult-like. Once again structure is recreated out of a position of anti-structure.

The chapter begins with an analysis of the ambiguity inherent in the anti-structural value of leisure and pleasure seeking. To meet the aspirations of ageing, they must manage a 'leisured' existence that fits their self-representation as ageing well rather than risking the negative consequences of pursuing a tourist identity. I examine this imparting of structure in part two.

**PART ONE**  
**The Ambiguity of Leisure for Migrants**

*'Sometimes we go down to Nerja and sit and watch all the Spanish people.  
We can pretend to be tourists for a while too.'* Edie, village dweller.

**I.i The Ambiguity of Leisure**

Migrants moving to Spain enjoy leisure following years of work. The problem with leisure is that it has at its heart a dialectic paradox (a positivity and negativity within the unitary concept). On the one hand, leisure is welcomed as a 'safety valve,' and is traditionally associated with self-realisation and self-development. Yet, the relaxation allows the possibility of idleness, which is seen as threatening, as the proverb on leisure captures, 'the devil makes work for idle hands' (Clarke and Critcher 1985). The cultural evaluation of leisure is essentially ambivalent; there is a fine line between good experiences and bad ones, with images of utopian paradises easily slipping into the more negative images of dystopia.

Whilst leisure is seen as a process for self-actualisation in modern life, equally the mass production of leisure is found in imaginings of dystopian 'anti-leisure.' In dystopian fiction such as Huxley's *Brave New World* (1994 [1932]), and Orwell's *1984* (2000 [1949]) etc., leisure becomes the site for mindless entertainment, immoderation and extremes (Wesley Burnett and Rollin 2000). Similarly, Shields points out that in constructed safe geographies of leisure and consumption (he analysed a shopping mall) protected by perfect security, there is also a possibility of 'an unheard

degree of surveillance, with almost Orwellian overtones into daily life.' (Shields 1989 quoted in Sibley 1995:xii). The same observations are borne out within leisure sites. Some urbanisations in Tocina, for instance, offer all-night lighting, security guards and vigilantes to patrol the plots for security. But they also threaten one's sense of individuality. The cost for such ventures are borne out by expensive 'community fees.'

Recently, the changes in the site of Tocina and Freila (as detailed in chapter four) have made possible the slippage of the zone from one of leisure to one of mass tourism (or dystopian leisure). The role of tourism in the economic turnaround of the region (as outlined in chapter four) means that the environment of the coastal zone is specifically marked in policy and practice as for tourist purposes above agriculture<sup>ii</sup>. It is clear that in Tocina development is aimed at building a tourist environment (much like the construction of shopping malls in the UK as social spaces of consumption and leisure for all the family (Sibley 1995:xi). The infrastructure of tourists' home environment is created to meet their demands for comfort, modern sanitation, and English-speaking bars and shops. Gradually the area is changing to meet those needs.

On the whole, Spanish holidays are associated with 'having a good time,' rather than read as educative (Ryan 1991:45). The slippage of this end of the Costa to follow on the heels of the larger tourist complexes to the West-end of the Costa threatens migrants' status as leisured individuals. Inland migrants, in particular draw distinctions with the tourist mass. One resident told me (with tongue in cheek) that the coastal spread was 'like the Isle of Man. You know its all kiss-me-quick hats and funfairs.'

The distinction of 'good leisure' and 'bad 'leisure' has a long history, marked especially through the dichotomy of the tourist and traveller. Originally, leisure and tourism were regarded as the province of the elite from the days of the Grand Tour when young men 'travelled.' Yet tourism filtered down to the masses, opening up the possibility of leisure for all. In this instance, a dichotomy between the tourist and the traveller (a more refined version of the former) was established. The traveller embarked on a journey not purely for enjoyment, but for education and self-discovery. Tourists, on the other hand, provoked negative reactions that continue to this day. Urry quotes Henry James as describing tourists as 'vulgar, vulgar, vulgar' (1990a:1) and tourism has been labelled as an insidious disease, and as detestable and disgusting (Ryan 1991:131,143). In Spain, early migrants conceived themselves as fitting much more the 'traveller' mould (See chapter four).

The contempt felt in general for tourism has traditionally been explained as demonstration of class and status positioning. Urry, in particular points out how tourist-choices, 'relate very clearly to complex processes of social emulation' and competition between classes (1990b13-14). Perhaps it would be adequate to explain migrants' antipathy for the tourist lifestyle as a means of distinction *vis à vis* the masses? Tourists choose to,

'set off in their Renault 5 or Simca 1000 to join the great traffic jams of the holiday exodus...cram their tents into overcrowded campsites, fling themselves into the prefabricated leisure activities designed for them by the engineers of cultural mass production,' (Bourdieu 1984:179)

By doing so, they reveal their lack of taste. Are not migrants articulating these very concerns? To answer in the affirmative however only partially explains what is going on.



The explanation of distinction is worth probing somewhat more. In particular, it is interesting to ask what *exactly* is it about tourists and tourism that is regarded as so abhorrent? When probing such questions, it is clear that matters of distinction work in interaction with other subjective concerns. The features of tourism and leisure in fact replicate the concerns of ageing well or ageing badly. As I have said, 'bad agers' and tourists share similar traits; both can be inactive, denied individuality, dependent, ill-informed, transient (not-belonging) and temporary. The possibilities of migrants being confused with tourists and thus depicted as having the same lifestyle take on heightened significance for older migrants negotiating (and trying to avoid) these very issues. The potential closeness of migrants to tourists in fact force a very violent distinction. Ethnographic exemplification for such processes can be found in other domains. For example, Harrison argues that the strength of antagonism between Serbs and Croats in the Balkans is precisely because they have 'aspirations to the *same* identities' (1999:23). He notes in this case, 'it is the perceived similarities of the ethnic Other that are experienced as threatening, rather than the differences' (*ibid.*) I explore this with reference to migrants in Spain.

### I.ii The Ambiguity of Migrants

It is often quite difficult to tell migrants and tourists apart, not least because there are many overlaps between the two groups in orientation. Permanent migrants coexist with short-term tourists during the summer months, in a shared inhabitancy of the leisure zone. The reasons for travel (whether to holiday *or* retire) do not appear to differ enormously. For example, I quote a selection of rationales for moving or staying by migrants:

- 'The climate is the most important thing to make me stay.' (Bob, urbanisation dweller)

- *'We came for holidays first then eventually for retirement.'* (Gerald, lives in village)
- *'We put all our stuff in storage and decide to tour around Europe in a camper-van. We never made it to see half of what we had planned!'* (Vincent and Carol, urbanisation-dwellers).
- *'We came for culture. We travelled the world and ended up exploring Europe'* (Jed and Sheena, American urbanisation dwellers).
- *'I did the Shirley Valentine thing. I left a note on my husband's pillow and disappeared.'* (Barbara, mountain-village resident).

The needs of escape, freedom, regeneration, self-realisation, communication and happiness deemed realisable through tourism (Krippendorf 1984:24-28) are equally salient for migrants in pursuing leisure.

According to most existing typologies, migrants are not tourists. Not wishing to indulge in exhaustive analyses of definitions of tourists (as covered by Smith 1978:2-3, 8-12, Urry 1990a), it is nonetheless worth noting that the tourist-migrant distinction largely rests on the idea that tourism implies people's movement 'outside their normal place of residence' (Urry 1990a: 2) and that the tourist experience is 'in some sense a contrast with everyday experiences' (*ibid.*:11). It is an impermanent, temporary change of location (Smith 1978:2), for, as Graburn expresses, 'we cannot properly vacation at home' (1978:23). Permanent migrants, living in the area do not meet these conditions. Furthermore, as Chambers elucidates,

'To travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves a movement in which neither points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable

or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation' (1994a:6).

Yet, distinctions are not that clear-cut. O'Reilly asserts, 'it is not always simple to tell where tourism stops and migration starts' (2000a:58). In any case, migrants *do* sometimes resemble tourists. For example, the work-leisure dichotomy that characterises tourists as breaking from the work-sphere (Urry 1990b:26), places migrants, who indulge in leisure and do not work, as tourists. In addition, in the 'host-guest' dichotomy (Smith 1978) migrants are neither strictly hosts nor guests, but fall somewhere in between. Migrants themselves often conceive of themselves as guests in Spain, at times adopting this theme as a moralising discourse out of respect for local ways. Some feel that their perception as guests limits their engagement and ability to really 'fit in.' Bill for instance, ruefully told of how he felt condemned to a superficial mode. He said,

'I find it difficult to make friends [with Spanish people], as much as I'd like, the tourist infrastructure is too ingrained, and with others we can't find much in common to talk beyond bar conversation.'

On the other hand, they are also subject to the same disruptions as native 'hosts' entrapped in the gaze. For instance, many migrants (particularly in the village) told me how upsetting it was to have tourists peer through the windows of their 'typically' Spanish houses (see Fig. 2). Clearly, Urry and Rojek's assertion that, 'living in a tourist honeypot is akin to being a prisoner in the panopticon,' (Urry and Rojek, 1997:7) is equally applicable to these migrant 'host-guests.'

Some migrants themselves feel a sense of being 'in-between'; neither tourists, nor working, but engaged in leisure as a way of life. This



Fig. 2- 'Nice house'  
A Tourist Peeking into a 'Typical' Spanish House.

ambiguous position is captured in one instance, when one couple, Reg and Janet, announced that they were going back to England. When I inquired as to the reason for their visit, I was met with silence, followed by Reg, instructing his wife Janet to 'tell the girl, then.' Janet seemed a little embarrassed and said, 'We're going there because we're leaving for a holiday, a cruise. I mean *a holiday*,' she said correcting herself, 'that sounds so stupid doesn't it?' She felt the need to justify their decision to take a break from a holiday site, pointing out, 'Well, we could have cancelled it, but we would have lost our deposit.' Another couple said to me, 'Its not like being on holiday here,' then qualified '...well, I suppose it is compared to England.'

Given the ambiguity of migrants, as *leisure* migrants pursuing relaxation, self-development and enjoyment means, according to the ambivalence of leisure itself, that there is always a danger of slipping into a tourist (dependent) lifestyle, either in reality or in other's (or one's own) self-conceptions. To partake in inactivity, for one, threatens one's self-conception as active (as identified in the last chapter). To fend off such a possibility, various systems of organisation are reintroduced to leisure pursuits. As a result of the similarity between them, and the potential disruptive consequences of a tourist lifestyle, migrants must redefine themselves *vis à vis* tourists.

## PART TWO

### **The Negativity of Tourist Characteristics for Ageing and the Imparting of Structure.**

The redefinition necessitated by both the ambiguity of 'leisure' as a value and migrants positions, involves the re-establishment of structure into an apparently anti-structural (non-work, leisure) lifestyle. For, in migrants' definition, a responsible, organised and disciplined approach to leisure must be adopted. Far from being a free zone of leisure, it becomes governed by a work-orientation. The tourist experience, with all its putative inactivity and inherent boredom is offset by industriousness and activity.

In this section, I identify the negative features of tourism, pointing out how they mirror potential fears of ageing. For analytical purposes, I have identified three negative features, which overlap and have resonance with some fears of old age. I take these in turn. First, I look at the lack of autonomy and controlled nature of tourists, second, the inactivity and finally the inauthentic and transient nature of tourists. It is important to note that criticism is addressed to an abstract, obscure and unidentifiable figure of 'the tourist,' rather than any personalised known visitor. I then show the redefinition of migrants *vis a vis* these negative characteristics, in order to support a story of them ageing well.

#### **II.i Controlled, with a Lack of Autonomy**

Tourists are disliked firstly because of their perceived lack of individuality. Particularly in the village, they are seen as 'herds' and 'sheep' following a

circuit-route that leads them up and down certain steps and through the main causeway of the village. Many of these organised tours are groups of elderly people, and the touristic groups represent conformity. Lash and Urry point out how holidays, particularly in the twentieth century became very regulated. The holiday-camp phenomenon (1994:267) is an extreme example, with visitors told when and what to eat. Such principles characterise older people's holiday experiences. For Chaney (1995) points out that tour operators adopt an authoritative paternalism when marketing to older clients. In reality, this translates to companies making life 'easy,' in which everything is done for the customer. Such a stance is in direct contrast to migrants' ideals, in which most people define themselves as being 'different,' 'un-typical' and certainly autonomous individuals. The ease of tourist life is worlds away from the hardiness they have developed in overcoming the obstacles of living in another country.

O'Reilly points out that for migrants, tourists represent figures of fun and objects of ridicule (2000a:110), and sometimes this bore out in my research. The derision functions *de facto* to instate the migrants as more autonomous and more responsible. For instance, tourists are attributed child-like characteristics, which facilitates the continuation of the middle-age plateau into old age and prolongation of an 'adult' status rather than 'elderly' (see chapter six). Furthermore, Rojek points out that 'leisure activity is an adult phenomenon which is defined in opposition to the play world of children' (1985:180). In many examples, then, tourists were likened to children, presented as engaged in 'play' rather than pursuing serious leisure for self-development. Similarly, they were seen as having no mind of their own, having to be organised into routinised coach trips, almost akin to school trips. They were noisy, disrespectful and acted as children in an irresponsible and feckless manner.

Even for people within the touristic urbanisations, steps are taken by migrants to distance themselves from the 'play' of the tourists. Margaret for instance, a former expatriate wife described how,

'It's lovely here apart from what we call 'the silly season,' six to eight weeks a year when it all gets rather ridiculous. We avoid the town. It's the only thing that irks though, but it does take the shine off things when you are disturbed all night long.'

On another occasion, the chairperson of a club told a story to a newly interested potential resident, which reduced tourists to naïve and rather ridiculous figures. She explained how she lived further up the coast, 'away from tourists.' She went on to tell a story of how some tourists in her town had got on the bus ahead of her. For a good few minutes, the tourists and bus-driver engaged in a long misunderstanding. The tourist couple repeatedly asked in English how much the trip would cost. The increasingly frustrated bus driver, getting more and more annoyed asked, '*A don de?* (Where to?), to which the tourists repeatedly asked in English, 'how much?' In this particular story, the tourist is held up as a helpless individual, far removed from migrants' narratives of overcoming challenges in the adaptation to life in a different environment. Tourists, like children, have little cultural competence, in this case in the ways of life in Spain.

The non-tourist lifestyle is asserted through other material means. Following a break from fieldwork and a visit from a friend, I was sporting more of a tan than usual. A long-term resident and good friend Judy said, 'Oh my goodness, you look like a tourist. You can always tell the long-term residents here...we're all as white as a sheet and avoid the sun!' O'Reilly notes the opposite, suggesting that residents flaunt their more developed



tans. Either way, skin tone is then treated as a visible marker of difference. So too, clothing. As O'Reilly notes, clothing and dress adopted is more normal 'everyday' wear in preference to the shorts and flip flops of tourists. One woman in my study described a tourist, 'hanging out everywhere with no care for who had to watch.' On one occasion I saw Eleanor in mid summer walking down the street of Freila in black T-shirt and black trousers. Nothing could be more removed from the bright colours and more revealing clothes that tourists are deemed to sport<sup>iii</sup>.

### II.ii Inactive

Another parallel of tourism with undesired ageing is the possibility of inactivity. The majority of tourists arrive in the long, hot summer months. For migrants who do not have the resources to return to Northern Europe to escape the heat, the warmth can become unbearable, inducing lethargy and periods of inactivity. These behaviours are opposed to those ideals of good ageing, and as such represent threats to self-esteem. For many tourists to the Costa, the week's break to 'recharge the batteries' is about little more than catching up on sleep, dozing off mid-afternoon and sunbathing. Certainly for residents, these aspects of tourism, if taken to extremes, can be considered dangerous to their lifestyle. Judy, for instance, felt very depressed that her summer months had been spent in lethargy. The heat got to her, and she felt useless and fed up. The inactivity and lack of direction of 'lazy tourism' is seen as, at best a stance to be adopted in moderation, and at worst, a threat to be kept at bay. Yet it was only 'others' who were imagined to have slipped into a 'bad' lifestyle, never themselves (also noted by King *et al* 2000:117). Those people, 'the undesirables' as Bob, an American guy explained, 'came in with mass tourism.' He continued,

'they sit around and get drunk all day,' and are avoided and treated with caution.

The lack of direction or motivation associated with tourism is problematic for some migrants. Much work is done to dispel the image that migrants live a permanent holiday, although unfortunately this may be how others see them. One day I was introduced to two tourists visiting their newly migrated friends at a club. When I explained the point of my research, one man replied,

'I can tell you everything you need to know, I'll write it for you...I've only been here a week but that's long enough to see what life here is about. Drink, siesta, drink, siesta, drink. That's what!'

Such images strike not just at the self-images of migrants in general but also highlight the fears related to boredom in ageing. To be involved in a repetitive and unvarying routine is to demonstrate an undesired version of ageing, worlds removed from the positive, active and interesting lifestyle migrants generally assume.

### **II.iii. Transient, not Belonging, Inauthentic.**

Distancing from the tourist experience also occurs because it jeopardises migrants' status as belonging. In other words, the coexistence of seasonal tourists and migrants is disruptive to feelings of belonging and long-term communality. For instance, Eva lived in a block of flats originally designated as a retirement community, which had subsequently been let out to tourists. She was disturbed by the implications of only having two other permanent residents in the unit, especially in winter. She explained her antipathy,

'It's a shame all this letting, its always its done through agents so you have no idea of who is here. Nobody's got any interest in looking after the place, they do as they please when they are here, the kids playing on the lift all day long.'

Whilst at times the anonymity of a tourist site is enjoyed (see chapter five) it has its downsides too. Tourists' transience and lack of long-term presence has contributed to a diminishing of migrants themselves to anonymous and dehumanised figures in relation to Spanish locals. Often, I found that I was rendered a tourist myself, especially in Tocina, where few local people knew me. This categorisation gave me a sense of anonymity, which at times slipped into feelings of invisibility and lack of importance. I felt uncomfortable at being asked regularly if 'I was on holiday' with strangers I met. For me, this question dislodged any sense of belonging and permanence in my (albeit temporary) home. Pi-Sunyer asserts, 'If tourism commoditises culture, natives categorise strangers as a resource or a nuisance rather than as people' (1978:155). Certainly, my friend Carlos, a shoemaker in the village was not particularly flattering when he told me flippantly that tourists were 'like sheep who never buy anything.'

Reflecting tourism's necessary consequence of creating a 'we-they' opposition between visitors and native hosts (Nogues-Pedregal 1996:59), migrants feel that tourism has brought a potentially threatening change of status in terms of how they are evaluated by local people. As George, an American pointed out, before tourism migrants were seen as 'distant cousins,' now they are seen as 'walking credit cards.' Informants recounted the small measures taken by local people to ostracise foreigners. These include serving Spanish people first in shops. One woman explained their intention, 'to assert that it 'was their place.' It is interesting to note how even amongst migrants, the less permanent migrants are sometimes

symbolically distanced into the more touristic end of the scale and given their assumed traits. For instance, in the International Club I was talking to a group of people standing around having drinks. The bar staff there changed according to who would volunteer. On this particular occasion, Pete, a 'snowbird' (there for only the winter months) was on duty. The others jokingly ridiculed Pete, stating 'he did not know how to shake a bottle of tomato juice properly.' One man commented, 'it's because he's a snowbird...they don't know how to do these things properly. They'd know that if they were here!'

Migrants also perceive tourists as being falsely duped into accepting inauthenticity. By contrast, they dispute a transient status through claims of local belonging. Migrants assert *real* authenticity in contrast to the tourists ill-fated attempts to seek it. This can be enacted in apparently insignificant ways, whether by referring to Juan, the bakery delivery boy as 'like a son,' having good relations with the gardener in the urbanisation, or (and rarer and harder to achieve) demonstrating a real engagement in local people's lives<sup>iv</sup>. Recent assertions suggest that the quality of tourism has degenerated, becoming an experience which is prefabricated and constructed through the 'gaze' and exemplified in 'pseudo-events.' Indeed, foreign tourists' attempts to capture 'the sights' and signs associated with 'Spain,' including the 'slice of real Spanish life,' are seen as evidence of this. For example, one long-term resident in Freila fulminated angrily to me about an American tourist she saw shaking an old lady up and down and explaining how 'perfect' she was. The older lady, dressed in black (one of the key images of Spain) did not speak English, and had no idea what this tourist was saying. The tourist was seen to violate locals too much in their pursuit of what was deemed a false sign of authenticity. The migrants in contrast and as a result of living and belonging there, feel real authenticity,

or believe themselves to consume the 'authentic' rather than the 'illusion' (Bourdieu 1984:250).

#### II.iv 'It's Not All Gin and Tonics You Know!' Establishing Alternative 'Leisured Identities'

Despite the negativity of depictions of tourists by migrants, it does not mean that migrants avoid leisure pursuits. Rather, in contrast to the less desired tourist identity and its connotations of bad ageing, leisure is heralded as leading to the attainment of ageing well (Dawson 1990:211-243). In this section, I explore how migrants positively identify with the 'good sides' of leisure and life in a tourist zone.

When the home environment is a leisure environment, daily activities unsurprisingly mirror those undertaken in the tourist experience. For most, everyday life is organised around a series of leisure pursuits, be that gardening, reading, sports etc. which are intermingled with daily responsibilities (shopping, cleaning, cooking). Sometimes migrants employ cleaners or domestic aids, so this cuts down even more the 'work'-type responsibilities. The diversion and entertainment of holiday life is used in narrative to fend off a negative image of the humdrum of everyday life (as is imagined to be the experience in the home country). For instance, Gerald, a man in his late seventies, goes swimming everyday, with another woman living on the seafront suggesting, 'the sea is my personal swimming pool!' Following retirement, leisure (not to mention its management) is a source of identity in the absence of work.

The choice of leisure in Spain itself is depicted as promoting a desired old age. The association of Spain with leisure has a long history, being a site *par*

*excellence* where certain new age-related ideals can be met. Blaikie points out how good ageing has recently come to be associated with holiday-zones. With reference to the UK he states that there has been a 'conflation of positive ageing and seaside living' (1997:629). In the Western cultural redressing of negative images of old age (as shown in the previous chapter), the association of positive images of warmth and community have traditionally been applied to the period of old age. Whether it be the use of 'sunshine' buses (Fennell, Phillipson and Evers 1988:138), the naming of units in residential homes after vistas of nature and community, such as 'rivers, gardens, trees, villages,' (Oliver 1999:177) or the 'Sun-city' phenomena in the US, 'good' old age has been associated with pleasant images that overlap with tourist ones.

The 'place-myth' (Lash and Urry 1994:260) of Spain as a 'familiar' site lends itself to potential good ageing. One tourist brochure for example states,

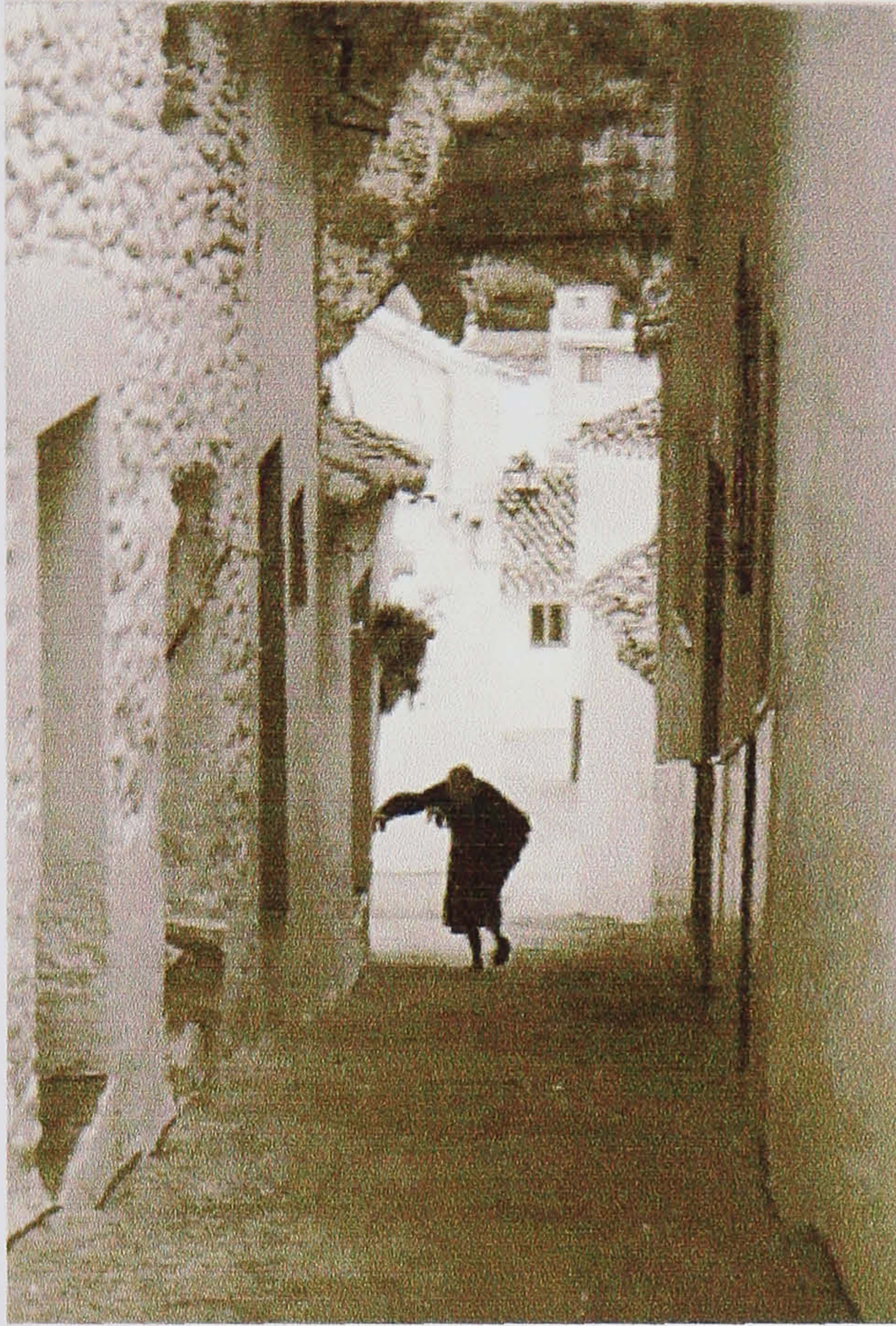
'Long time favourite of the Brits, the Costa del Sol has all the essential ingredients for a traditional Spanish holiday - sun, sea, sand, sangria and something for everyone! Whether you're an outright beach potato, a super-fit sports fanatic, or somewhere in between, you'll love the Costa del Sol' (Airtours: The Holiday Makers 2002:244).

In 'the Spain we know and love' (*ibid.*) one can do as one desires, a theme synonymous with the ideals of the positive ageing discourse. Spain is constructed as having 'always' been the site for tourism, right from the beginnings of mass charter tourism in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. In an analysis of the marketing of holiday-destinations to older people, Chaney similarly points out how agencies 'use a form of presentation that casts novelty within the reassurance of tradition' (1995:221). The construction of familiarity enables older migrants to feel at home, a feature, which,

following long-term geographical relocation to new and strange surroundings<sup>v</sup> has been found as important amongst older people (Reed and Roskell Payton 1996:543). In the perpetuation of ideals of continuity, one man pointed out, for instance how Spain was like 'England in the sun.'

Images of the Mediterranean feed into the association of the place with good old age. There is an idea that ageing is not hidden in Spain, and that older people assume central positions within communities. For example, the image of the 'old lady in black' is often used in constructions of the region (see Figs. 3 and 4). Furthermore, the notion of 'the Mediterranean diet' is suggested to lead to longevity and good old age. 'Olivio' olive oil spread advertisements, for example, show the (gerontocratic) family, producing olive oil which induces all kinds of youthful behaviours in old-age. Eighty year old men are depicted enjoying football matches, cheered on by their devoted wives, or indulging in strip-shows in front of an adoring elderly female audience. This image is reaffirmed by personal observations. At one coffee-morning, one lady commented to her companions, 'its beautiful here. The Spanish families all come down to the beach and line up in the fish restaurants. They know how to take care of the old here.' As the listeners murmured in agreement, she continued, 'Its how it used to be in England, but they don't do that anymore.' On another occasion, an almost identical scene was celebrated, and one person exclaimed that the elderly in Spain are 'not packed off in a corner,' but completely involved in family life. Indeed, the outdoor orientation in the summer enhances this alternative visibility of older people, as Fig. 5, a common sight, shows.

The leisure lifestyle is celebrated in opposition to an imagined alternative located in the contexts from which migrants came. The negative reading of the UK (O'Reilly 2000a:164) for example as one man reflected, 'everything in



Figs. 3 & 4

The 'Old Woman in  
Black':  
A Feature of Tourist  
Images.

*Source: Postcard (3) and  
Lookout Magazine. Jan  
1996:10. (4)*

PHOTO COMPETITION

# images of SPAIN

THE WINNER: Right, Lourte castle in Huesca, Aragón,  
seen through late winter almond blossom.  
This photograph by Pauline Allen of Madrid wins this  
month's prize of 20,000 pesetas.

SPECIAL MENTION: Above, a woman cooks paella  
in the on a citrus farm in Cártama (Malaga). The photograph  
was made by Heinz Bahofer of Hagendorn, Switzerland.

SEE PHOTO COMPETITION RULES ON PAGE 68.

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**Fig. 5–The Visibility of  
Older People. A View From Sevilla**

Britain is falling apart' is extended to the experience of ageing. Particular experiences are located in particular zones. For example, one woman expressed her satisfaction with Spain, asserting, 'I shall never leave Spain unless in a wooden coat. I would be bored and cold in England.' Furthermore, the ideal of mobility marked by the very movement to Spain is employed to present certain positive traits in the individual against a negative image of stasis and stagnation in old age (as Gustafson similarly notes 2001:381). Another woman, for instance pointed out how in her native Florida, all the older people would be 'bored silly and lined up in rocking chairs.' The subtext is therefore that one is entertained and comfortable in Spain. Images of boredom, coldness, greyness and pervasive disorder are not simply negative images of the home country, but rather strongly linked to the fears and worries of ageing; to be bored, cold, and alone are worries that can then be located far away geographically in England, or wherever.

The leisure experience offered by Spain then easily slips into the 'good ageing' experience. Rather than lazing on the beach, it is common for migrants to seek other more serious experiences which 'cater to their desire for learning, nostalgia, heritage, make-belief and a closer look at the Other' (Boissevain 1996:3). Craik points out, '...tourism has come full circle, revitalising the educative and enlightenment role of early tourism as a training-or finishing school- for travellers' (1997:118). Much club-life is organised around tourist trips and visits to different sites in Spain and Andalucía. Many of these have a 'cultural bent,' the tourist experience intertwined with learning and education, incorporating historical facts, archaeological insights, or architectural explanations. The consumption of this sort of tourism meets the ethos of the Third Age (Laslett 1996) positively offering possibilities for self-identification as 'learners' rather than

negatively through the inevitability of becoming pure consumers (as read in other experiences of tourism).

Ideals of communality emphasised in tourist propaganda particularly for older people (Ylänne-McEwen 2000:89) are adopted by migrants, with a relaxing of rules associated with making acquaintances. This 'communitas' found regularly in the liminal tourist experience is equally found in older persons' experiences. For instance, Dawson points out in his study of older people's clubs in Ashington, North-East England, that community is 'a potent topic of interest amongst elderly people,' with the construction of *communitas* a regular feature of club life (Dawson 2002: 23, Okely 1990). Both conditions (old age and tourism) are met in Spain. Unsurprisingly, migrants assert that it is easier to make friends in Spain, so much so that some people have to find techniques to limit acquaintances. The constant flow of tourists, whilst despised *en masse*, has its benefits in that it provides an 'audience' to migrants in small scale arenas (although this has its own repercussions as I show in chapter eleven). They offer a never-ending source of company and short-term friendship to migrants. In tourist-migrant interactions, the typical introductory question of 'what do you do?' is replaced by 'how did you get here?' which prompts the recounting of arrival narratives.

In order to maintain the boundary with a tourist lifestyle (and fend off its negative consequences), certain regulations are imparted. As in positive ageing, one must keep on the go, even in pursuing relaxing pastimes. Sandra for instance, explained, 'I like to keep busy. If I feel bored, mind you I never *do* feel bored, I just zoom off somewhere.' Another woman said, 'What would I get done if I sat around like that lot all day?' She was referring to groups who sit around drinking beer all day. It was unclear whether the 'lot' were tourists or badly-ageing migrants. She added, 'I'd

never get anything done.’ In fending off the feelings of transience and inactivity, another migrant observed, ‘You have to have a project, otherwise you get lost, then these people seek out others who are lost...then, oh well, its really sad.’ In the course of my fieldwork, it was difficult to find out what happened to the rule-breakers as, by virtue of their lifestyle they did not really attend the clubs and associations I frequented. For the few within the clubs that slipped, the wrath of community talk was brought down on them (see chapter eleven).

The reinsertion of a structured, non-transient (non-tourist) existence is clearly demonstrated through the words of Jim, a snowbird migrant. Jim kindly wrote to me when I explained how I was struggling to explain them as either ‘migrant’ or ‘tourist.’ He explained his interpretation of his status, with recourse to conditions of permanence, material belonging, responsibility, and activities (including attitudes to indulgence). His reply (titled ‘*from a split residential European*’) pointed out that,

- ‘The likes of me are not tourists,
- 1) We are property owners here
  - 2) We pay a local tax in addition to our urbanisation dues
  - 3) We pay a wealth tax
  - 4) We can vote in local elections
  - 5) We have Spanish Bank Accounts and Credit Cards
  - 6) We have Spanish NIE fiscal numbers and cards
  - 7) We stay here for up to 181 days a year

**TOURISTS DO NOT HAVE OR DO THESE THINGS!**

I am sure there are many other differences, like we don’t spend so much time on the beach, eat fish and chips, drink vast quantities of booze, and we do have responsibilities like we have to maintain our properties and gardens.

Yes, maybe we can be a bit snobbish about certain types of tourists, particularly the booze cruise types which frequent the Islands, Torremolinos and Benidorm in high season....’

In Jim's reply, certain questions are addressed which imply a moral distancing from the unimportant, banal and inactive status of the tourist. These features are oppositional to migrants' own valued concept of the work ethic; rather migrants themselves are responsible and have obligations, albeit within the relative freedom of a life of leisure.

The reclamation of the work ethic for one's identity construction is something that I identify with, having fought against the implicit idea that to some degree my fieldwork was not quite work either, or 'a kind of holiday.' Every time I left the university for another batch of fieldwork I was ribbed: 'lucky you! Another six months in the sun.' Simply by being in Spain, regardless of what I was doing, it was perceived that I would to some degree be a 'tourist' there. For some people (although never at my own institution) tourism is not a valid topic of academic study. I felt this to be less an issue than the potential threat that I may 'be a tourist' in fieldwork periods, instead of working.

Alternatively, migrants argued that they had *earned* 'the break.' Some migrants were marginalised in the general community of migrants for *not* having earned the right to be there. Hippies, young drifters and sometimes even myself were viewed suspiciously for expecting life to be a free ride. Indeed, I found that others' expectations of me were that to be there, I should be working even harder. In the face of a perceived laziness, I often found myself subject to working really long hours to avoid the accusation that I was on holiday (something that I imagine would be a lesser issue if working in a non-leisure zone). Even sitting on a bench in the town reading a Spanish magazine (to bring my Spanish up to scratch) on a break between interviews in the exhausting heat of the day was commented on. A passing migrant called out, 'so this is what they call research is it?' This implied that

my main purpose for being there was surely enjoyment and leisure, problematic when I had not earned that right. The spectre of the work ethic still governs attitudes to enjoyment, particularly employed to justify their position.

As in the previous chapter, here the ability to fend off a tourist identity is contingent. As one gets older, migrants defend themselves less from the tourist status, and at times grudgingly accept it. This is seen most readily in the geographical move by more maverick migrants to urbanisations. These urbanisations, once referred to by a couple of migrants as like 'toy-town,' and 'a rabbit hutch' (images which invoke childhood, dependency, claustrophobia and control) are re-evaluated when the time comes. When the hilly slopes of the villages become too difficult to manage and when independent life in the village or *campo* is too challenging, migrants may have to move to the more touristy zones, with all their comfortable positive benefits of well-established infrastructures. For many people, this decision is put off to the last. For instance, one migrant scathingly referred to the main residential complex in Tocina as a 'holiday camp,' yet later moved to the security of the touristic urbanisations. In the face of ill-health and mobility problems, the move gave him peace of mind. It seemed that the physical path from more independent lifestyles to ill-health and frailty was mirrored by a path from a more independent 'traveller' and 'pioneer' lifestyle to living more akin to a tourist (and also fittingly becoming more likely to be temporary as thoughts of return to the UK begin to arise). In effect, as people became more physically aware of the limits of their ageing bodies, they became more like tourists.

## CONCLUSION

To recap, migrants adopt a positive self-identification as leisured people rather than tourists. I argue that this is because leisure and tourism, ambivalent concepts, metaphorically mirror the same ideals and fears of ageing. However, the distancing from a tourist-identity is used to support one pole of leisured anti-structural identification as good agers. This necessitates the introduction of other structural features, in particular the work ethic, to fend off the tourist identification, with all its negative connotations of inactivity, transience, and banal insignificance. To end, I present a poem, written by two seasonal migrants, Elmer and Heidi Swanson (real names) for their yearly newsletter to friends all around the world. It captures the imparting of structural habits to maintain an enjoyable negotiation of leisure that fulfils their aspirations to age well.

### *RETIREMENT*

*What is it like? What do you do?  
These questions are often asked of you.  
When retirement is on the way,  
How do you plan to fill your day?  
What are the drawbacks? What are the perks?  
Do you get bored? Do you miss your work?  
All our pensioner friends say with one voice:  
'What do we do? We have a surfeit of choice!'*

*Far away from the cold, wind and rain  
We have chosen Tocina in Southern Spain.  
As we enjoy breakfast on our balcony,  
We watch the sun rise out of the sea.  
Then to the beach for a quick morning swim,  
An invigorating way for the day to begin.  
Free from stresses of the technological race,  
Our life proceeds at a leisurely pace.  
We shop, cook, eat and perform our chores,  
As our needs are much the same as before.  
While Elmer tracks the market's gyrations,*

*Heidi still writes science dissertations.  
Elmer's hobby is marquetry, Heidi's acrylic art,  
And in petanque and Players Club we both take part.  
(Thanks to Elmer and Heidi Swanson)*

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**Notes:**

- <sup>i</sup> This chapter is based upon a similar article, Oliver, C. (forthcoming) 'More than a tourist: distinction, old age and the selective consumption of tourist space' in (eds.) Meethan, K. Pile, S. and Anderson, A. *Narratives of Place and Self. Consumption and Representation in Tourism*. CAB International: Oxon.
- <sup>ii</sup> With the rare exception in Almería (Eastern Andalucía) in which the *plasticultura* industry is predominant over other land-uses.
- <sup>iii</sup> As I pointed out in the last chapter, such clothes also hide aspects of the ageing body (see chapter six).
- <sup>iv</sup> The varying degrees of engagement in local life demonstrate that even within this group, vast differences in attitude and grades on the migrant-tourist /host-guest continua exist.
- <sup>v</sup> In Reed and Roskell Payton's study, they demonstrate strategies of constructing familiarity before and after new residents come to an institutional home (1996:552-553).



## Chapter 8 -

### TIME

#### Living the present in view of the past and future

*'the timelessness of a world beyond boredom, with no past, no future and a diminishing present' (J.G. Ballard on the Costa del Sol 1996:35).*

*'It lends a timelessness to that stage of life, in spite of, perhaps to some extent because of, the fact that dying becomes so much more probable' (Laslett 1996:193).*

*'to understand a society, you must learn its sense of time'*  
(Levine and Wolff 1985:30).

#### Introduction

This chapter examines how in the light of past influences, and in the face of new expectations associated with this stage of the life course, migrants adjust to a different temporal system. Moving to Spain involves adopting a different social construction of time, presented by migrants as the move to flexible time from planned/structured time. It is also felt as a move towards a more self-determined approach to time, away from a sphere in which time is controlled by others. Like ideas of ageing, these concepts are understood in spatial terms. Coming from a past (in Northern Europe or the US) which was governed by a structured understanding of time as use-value, they engage with what they perceive as more 'Spanish' flexible and cyclical

approach to time-use, deemed appropriate to their ideals of freedom and unplanned leisure.

However, as revealed in the previous chapters, some old habits are hard to break. This is manifested in this chapter in a tension between 'free' and structured time. On one hand, it is imagined that in an anti-structural sphere one is free from time constraints. Yet on the other hand the idea that it is a resource is still played out. For even this time 'off' was 'earned' through work, and means then that it is still accorded an intrinsic 'value.' Free time, as an anti-structural motif is also laden with contradictions. It is a poisoned chalice potentially leading to boredom and apathy. The awareness of eventual death further accentuates this value of time as a precious resource. In this way, the temporal disciplining that governed 'the former life' still influences the actuality of time-negotiation. Time, even free time, must not be wasted.

This paradoxical and contradictory understanding of time echoes the anti-structure: structure tension as laid out previously in other domains of migrants' lives. Turner points out that anti-structural conditions are realised in 'non-work,' or more tellingly, 'an anti-work phase in the life of the person who also works' (Turner 1982:36). To this could be added the suffix, 'or has worked.' In this non-work sphere, migrants desire a relaxing of temporal modes. As is common in other experiences of old age, a cyclical and slowed down sensation of time is experienced (see Hazan 1980). An imagined version of 'Spain' as unhurried, and uncapitalist is contrasted with the rat-race UK (or other place of origin). Whilst the 'mañana' syndrome is somewhat of a cliché, nonetheless it is still often espoused as a reason for migrants' better quality of life. Yet, as in other chapters, the idealised anti-structural lifestyle cannot sustain permanently. In this case, the seeds of the

dissolution of anti-structure are sown in migrants' own condition as ex-workers. The existing structured understandings of time therefore begin to impinge, too deeply imbedded in one's psyche to be completely disregarded. This is all the more acute given the awareness of mortality in one's own 'life-time.'

I begin the chapter with a brief summary of the theoretical stances that inform the understanding of the later empirical detail. In part two, I show how migrants' present the move to Spain as towards a less structured or measured temporal order. This is complemented with an understanding of time as simultaneously cyclical time, but open to flexible interpretation and governed by a sense of spontaneity. I then demonstrate how this 'less structured time' manifests itself, for instance through some migrants' fetishising of certain modes of time as particularly 'Spanish.' In part three, I show how old habits intervene. Many migrants have been influenced by an historically embedded Western construction of time, and cannot completely delete this linear 'inward notation of time' (Thompson 1967:57). Rather, previous temporal structures infiltrate their more relaxed approach to time. Migrants are squeezed into an extraordinary condition, between time as 'not theirs' (devoted to their working lives, families etc.) and time as not there (inevitable mortality). In this 'me time,' the repetitive nature of life stabilises the passage, but is ultimately halted by the knowledge of the irreversibility of time passing.

Before I begin, a short note is needed to clarify the concept of 'time,' which in English conflates different understandings. In other social groups, there are many differentiations (marked in language) to account for different types of time (see Leach 1961). For the purposes of clarity, I point out three usages of 'time' as employed by migrants that have no linguistic

differentiation, but signify different time understandings. First, there is 'everyday-time,' that which is conceived of as the time spent in going about of one's daily business. Secondly, there is calendrical time, in which the weeks, months and years, and the passing of years are perceived. Thirdly, and perhaps the most important in governing the others is the lifespan itself. The way we talk about time is intrinsically related to the passing of time according to our own situated body<sup>i</sup>, for instance as revealed by terms such as 'life-time,' or death as 'time's up' or 'time is running out.' At different points, people use different understandings, and this should be borne in mind throughout.

## PART ONE

### Conceptualising time

In September 1999, for financial reasons and to put me in the hub of life whilst improving my Spanish, I undertook a part-time job for two nights a week in a local bar in the village. I soon found the organisation of the job was a little unlike I was used to. First, hours were unspecified. I knew I would start at around 8pm, but could finish between 11pm to, at latest, 4am. What was most concerning however was adjusting to the irregularity of the post itself. Many times I turned up faithfully for my job (not an insignificant task considering the fact that it was over half an hour's walk) to discover that the bar was closed. Sometimes, there was simply a scribbled apology that the bar was not opening that night. On other occasions, I was expected to turn up for work at the drop of a hat. When I told other foreigners about it, they laughed. It seemed I was being initiated into the 'Spanish time' to which their main advice was 'accept it or it will kill you!'

The anecdote reveals how to become an 'insider,' I, a newcomer, had to make considerable adjustments to adapt to an altered construction of time. Throughout my empirical work, again and again, I found the social elaboration of the concept cropping up. Regrettably, in perusing texts, I

found that much research neglects the detail of time (Rosaldo 1993:109). However, some sociological and anthropological approaches *have* paid attention to the intrinsic value of time itself, demonstrating time as a means of classifying and categorising the objective world. Rejecting the notion that 'time is just what it is,' (Gell 1992:6), Durkheim, for instance explores it as a central category through which people experience the world. Evans Pritchard, Levi Strauss and Leach similarly point out the culturally constituted elaboration of the time-universes of different societies (*ibid.*: 6-34).

In an important distinction, Leach elaborates two different senses of time. First, the repeatability of certain natural phenomena gives rise to a sense of time as a cyclical and ritualised construct. Second, the ultimate inevitability of death (Leach 1961:125) instils a sense that time is non-repetitive and irreversible. For analytical purposes I refer here to the two distinctions respectively as cyclical or linear. Similar to Leach, other relevant research has elaborated a distinction between the time units of peasant societies, as 'retarded' and cyclical, in comparison to the more standardised and chronologised principle of time as seen in Western industrial society<sup>ii</sup> (Adam 1990:9). In capitalist society, time is valued as a mechanistic and quantitatively valued resource (Christensen, James and Jenks 2001:201), 'a structural metaphor basic to Western industrial society' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:66). Metaphorical elaborations of time present it as something to be saved, wasted, sold and budgeted (Adam 1990:104, Lakoff and Johnson 1980:7). Even from early childhood, everyday practices (rewards and punishments) instil a temporal disciplining on the body, so that children come to understand time as 'a commodity which is subject to an exchange relationship based on both discipline and/or liberation' (Christensen, James and Jenks 2001:203).

Migrants, having retired from demanding jobs (often expatriate professionals, teachers, social workers etc.) anticipate that a lifetime of labour will bring its own rewards of free time. However, although clock-time passes at the same rate, the *perception* of the speed by which it passes by varies according to the metabolic rate of different organisms (Adam 1990:79). For older people (with an increased metabolic rate) this has an impact, and as Leach tells us, 'The feeling that most of us have that the first ten years of childhood 'lasted much longer' than the decade forty-fifty is no illusion.' (1961:132). This perception is heightened by the context of Western post-industrial society, in which time itself is said to be speeding-up. Technological advances have led to an accelerated culture of speed (Nowotny 1994:84) in which everything seems to need to have been done by yesterday. Augé points out, 'history is on our heels, following us like our shadows, like death' (1995:26). Such pressure compounded by the ontological awareness of the universality of the death experience creates a deep 'escape' orientation (Nowotny 1994:143). Given the personal-ontological and wider social contexts of migrants, it is little wonder that there is a strong desire to 'stop the moment,' and 'live in the moment' (*ibid.*: chapter five), by looking for escape routes to an idyllic pre-industrial past (*ibid.*:49), in order to halt the perception of time flying by.

This chapter draws upon Hazan's call that we should study the mechanism that strikes 'the fine and unpredictable balance' between Leach's two conceptualisations of time (Hazan 1995:205). I point out how, in Spain, despite the struggle, the linear understanding of time ultimately maintains precedence over conceptions of repetitive periodicity. To illustrate this point and to end this brief synopsis, I draw attention to one woman, Nancy's narrative. Nancy lived alone as, in putative images of her, 'a batty old

woman in the studio.' Most of her days were passed in fighting an increasingly difficult battle to maintain her large house in the country. Occasionally, she questioned this existence. Going over these thoughts on several afternoons, she explained that the most important thing to her was a feeling of her own productivity before her death. She explained:

'I don't care,' she said, 'I feel that, you know as you get old, that perhaps you haven't done anything...that you'll look back on your life and it was a washout. I suppose I'm trying to stop it being a washout. It's like I want to look back and say that I've achieved something. That's it, I had a choice at some point, I either went to the beach, arranged to meet for coffees, played boardgames, or I threw myself into something like this. At least now, before I die, I'll have a couple of properties to sell.'

The awareness of linear time predominates, creating an imperative for productive time long after paid 'productivity' ceases. I begin by backtracking a little to explore how moving could be read as the desired swapping of this temporal mode for another, in 'opting out' to (anti-structural) cyclical time.

## PART TWO

### **Starting Over: Rebirth and Cyclical Living**

#### II.i. Starting Anew

*'The thing is, when you come here, the past is past. It doesn't matter. Nobody gives a shit. That's it. When you step off the plane, it's a new you'*

(Stan, village migrant)

For many, moving to Spain is a 'new beginning.' The event of the physical movement is, for most, a temporal marker and narrative break. It equates to what Humphreys describes as a 'career break,' a major life event or discontinuity in the lifestory (1993:172), which manifests itself in articulations of 'life before' and 'life after.' For example, one woman in her forties, Sarah was incredibly informative and open in response to other enquiries, yet was quiet when I asked her about her life 'before.' She told me, 'I can't talk about my past life. It's just a blank. I was another person.' Some are less explicit, but refer in similar terms to the continuities and discontinuities between life now and before. Richard, an expatriate executive stated for instance how when he writes letters, he has 'to be in the right mood. As in my *previous* life.' The 'turning point' (*ibid.*:176) can mark a change in the fundamental meaning structure in which people orientate themselves to the world (*ibid.*:172).

It is little wonder that the motive or reason prompting this 'break' is often curiously sought out about other migrants. Many times when I met Jill, she told me the title of my thesis should be, 'everyone's running away from something.' She said many people had moved as a result of a 'trigger' that had pushed them away from Britain. Whilst not true for all by any means, for some there is a definitive moment precipitating their move. This ranges from divorce, bereavement, bankruptcy, or simply a realisation that time is frittering away. The point of moving becomes the epiphany from which the new life begins, a feature noted also by Biggs, Bernard, Kingston and Nettleton amongst respondents in other 'Retirement Communities' (2000:666).



Such a new beginning has resonances with aspects of Leach's cyclical time. The break from one stage and entry into another is akin to a kind of social rebirth through migration. One has a clean slate ('the past is past') and is given a new lease of life. Sharon, an ex-social worker, told me in Spain, 'I am more content, less exhausted, I am not the person I was.' The entrance into a liminal state is a condition in which 'ordinary social time has stopped.' (Leach 1961:134). Instead, there is a marked rejection of the 'planned' and structured nature of time from which they come, with a new orientation to see 'time as it comes.' For example, as part of my introductory discussions, one of the questions I often asked was, 'How long do you see yourself staying here?' In reply, a common answer was 'forever,' subsequently qualified by 'we'll have to see.' The lack of planning is celebrated, as revealed by this example:

I lived next door to Peter, a man in his forties, who was the chef in the restaurant next to my house, opened some six weeks previously. One day I bumped into him in Tocina, and he gave me a lift back up to the village. He explained how he'd come to be there having arrived originally for a holiday that had extended to several months. All of a sudden he announced that he was leaving the next day. He said, 'he'd given it a go,' but he was moving on back to work in cruise ships. The restaurant was without a chef for a while.

Later in the day in my fieldnotes I wrote,

I am struck by how fragile and testing this area is...if people do not like it, they move on, and they go, and always this option is open to them.

Many migrants were unspecific about the period of time that they were planning to be there, if they had any plans at all. Some were testing it out for a while. A few people upped and left, with little notice at all. Others, alternatively said, 'I came here *x* no. of years ago, and never planned to stay...' This complements the post-modern understanding of the life course

in which adult life, as a process, 'need *not* involve a predetermined series of stages of growth' (Featherstone and Hepworth 1991:375).

Positive ageing itself celebrates the motto of 'living in the present.' As Katz points out, in the current era 'cultural industries recast the lifespan in fantastical ways, in particular, the masking of age and the fantasy of timelessness' (1995:69). Many people repeated to me that 'there's no point worrying about the future, we'll see what happens.' Whilst it is accepted that 'one should prepare for the future' (chapter six), nonetheless there is often a reckless imperative to 'live for today.' One couple moved from the *campo* to an apartment block as they were getting older. This move had cost them financially, but they pointed out 'well, shrouds don't have pockets!' Another man, Richie said pragmatically,

'we don't worry about the future. We have to live life as it is, as I know in my family, genetically nobody lives past sixty-nine years old. Some accuse me of being pessimistic, but that's how I know things to be, and it makes me realise I am here to live, in the now!'

A vague future is considered the time for getting old. This was poignantly expressed in a conversation between Charlotte and Gerald, a couple in their eighties. We were in their small flat in an apartment block, talking about the Mediterranean diet keeping them healthy and young. Charlotte got up slowly and sighed, 'but old age cometh to us all.' Gerald exclaimed, 'I shouldn't start worrying yet!' 'Why not?' she replied, 'I'm over eighty, so when am I supposed to start?' They both died within weeks of each other the following year.

## II. ii 'The Mañana Syndrome' - Past Times, Cycles and Spontaneity

The associated myths of 'traditional' Spain (see chapter four) help confirm the idea of migrants stepping out of linear, chronologised time into a more cyclical and ritualised existence. Common amongst tourist brochures and publications is the myth that, 'life goes on as it has for centuries.' Notwithstanding processes of development, much of Spain's appeal lies in images of traditionality, especially characterised by tourist operators and some migrants as acquiescence to the '*mañana*' (literal translation: 'tomorrow') temporal dimension. This refers to a lack of urgency of tasks. For example, if workmen promise you that work will be done tomorrow, it means that it will be done at some unspecified time in the weeks or months to come. There is often little point giving time deadlines - everything is contingent. This imagined (and sometimes actual) unhurried nature of work extends even into working migrants' lives, with a notable reduction in hours spent working compared to their previous existence. Marco, an Italian estate agent in his early fifties, spoke almost of an embodiment of this condition when I first met him, as he said,

'Where in England could you get an atmosphere like this? You LIVE! You have to learn how to live it. I see people in my office buying property, and they sit there, nervously twiddling, not knowing they do it. They're still in the rat race. When I come back from London, honestly, it takes me three days to get back to normal.'

Certain features of 'Spanish time' are celebrated as appropriate to the life-stage, assumed to be more 'laidback' than Northern Europe or indeed Northern Spain, where, as Brian explained one day, everything worked *en punto* ('on the dot'). Reg, overhearing our discussion added, 'Britain is a go-

getter society,' he said, 'everything is timetabled and planned. It's all set, with no freedom. That's why I left there. I got fed up with it.' Another woman said, 'I hate the time element that you have in England...here you can bask in the freedom,' although in contradiction to her words, she did place time restrictions on her visits into town (see III.ii). Time is seen as less important, demonstrated by one of King et al's respondents who pointed out how he doesn't wear a watch any more (2000:119). This aspect of Spain is seen as highly appropriate to a life course in which one should be free of demands for any length of time. As Laslett described, the third age

'has no necessary temporal structure, for the individual anyway. Ideally he or she should be in a position to savour the experience of the third age as an individual for any possible duration of years' (1996:193).

Amongst migrants, there is a blurring or lack of distinction between work-time and leisure time. People joked that they forgot what day of the week it was. This feeling occurred to me also and arises out of a lack of qualitative difference in the ways one spends time. It echoes Spanish attitudes to 'work' and 'life,' which are less sharply demarcated than would be common in the UK and which create the impression that days blend into each other. The undifferentiated nature of the week also means that weeks themselves pass less tangibly, although there is still a general awareness of wider calendrical rhythm. The passing of seasons is marked out dramatically on the landscape, the mountains bearing the colours and vegetation of different seasons, whilst the climate pervades the lives of migrants. The three month invasion of tourists in June, July and August (see chapter seven) is felt as a terrible season that drags on because of the heat (in almost a direct contrast to Brody's observations of calendrical social cycles in a village in the West of Ireland in tourists visits during the short summer season positively affirm

local identities in contrast to the despondency and pessimism felt by villagers the rest of the year (1973:40-43).

In Spain, for older migrants, the passing of the seasons facilitates a sense that there is 'more' time, as it is somehow 'stretched' over a longer mild climatic period. Pat for example, told me in mid-October, 'in Britain at this time, everything's closed, people are wearing grey raincoats. Here, you can sit outside from April to November, and have the freedom to watch the stars in the evening.' The qualitative perception of time as 'stretched' has resonance with other descriptive terms. For instance, I was told by one hectic party-goer that 'time here is elastic' in the context of a lunch meeting that started at 12pm and still had the odd straggler at 8pm. We had arranged to meet later that week for the village fiesta, and although she told me it was to start at 10pm, she added, 'you know the Spanish, you've lived here for a while...it doesn't mean a thing!'

To live life as unplanned is deemed intrinsically Spanish, although it is unclear how far this really governed Spanish life as I did not set out to research this. Amongst migrants, I found that the spontaneity was both inspiring and exasperating when conducting fieldwork. When I wanted to meet one woman, for instance, she told me she hated committing herself to a time (explaining perhaps also the reluctance for club commitments found in chapter five). At other times, I arranged meetings and people did not turn up, so after a while I got used to pinching a little salt to every agreement that was made. There were no doubt advantages of this too. On other occasions, I happened to run into unplanned events, and spent long afternoons whiling away time in occasions I had not planned for or foreseen. Whilst this element is characteristic of most ethnographic research, here spontaneity is presented by migrants as distinctive to the context. On one

occasion for example, I ran into Elaine, a woman in her forties in the town. To my shame, I was determined to watch a crucial game of football that was shown only in an English bar, and Elaine decided on the spot to join me, despite breaking prior arrangements. She said, 'that's what I love about Spain; the spontaneity. I'm supposed to be going for a dinner with the girls, but I'm sure they'll understand.' Spontaneity is adopted as a motif of life.

To fight against the relaxed approach to time is seen as useless and leading to frustrations, whilst to adopt it shows cultural understanding and a sense of belonging. Marco told me that he does not respond well to some English clients because of their demands. He explained, 'I work, yes, but not in an English way. I go when I want, I don't work weekends.' Another woman, Sally, in my first meeting, referred to an alteration of character one must undertake. Originally a buyer for a large pharmaceutical company, she had now retired to a house in the centre of the village. She said,

'I've become more tolerant and easy-going, I think because you *have* to. You just have to accept the fact that the Spanish like to talk and use the shops as a meeting place. People push in, or pop around and then they are chatting for ten minutes. That's nice though,' she added, 'in England, they've forgotten how to talk.'

Time takes on a moral dimension; the unhurriedness facilitates a sense of lost community.

The view of relaxed 'Spanish time' is tinged with nostalgia for a bygone past in England. In Spain, it is asserted that people live more like they used to in England, with adherence to values of community, honesty and belonging. Particularly in the village of Freila, a sense of timelessness is read off the rural heritage and tight-knit community there, projecting a temporal

traditionality upon people (see chapter four and Oliver 2002). Many people I knew in the village left their doors open and celebrated this as a symbol of wider values. Sally for instance told me,

‘It’s a lovely feeling to know you can leave your door open, and the kids run in and out. Here, the kids are respectful of the elderly and aren’t afraid of looking soft. It reminds me of what we’ve lost in England...You could never lie dead in your house here, because villagers always ask if they’ve not seen you for a while.’

In a fascinating account, Jean Lave explores a process of ‘decontextualising’ time and space from the reality of a changing present in Oporto in Portugal amongst British port families (2000:180). There, the British port gentry sustain an anachronistic vision of themselves, as unchanging and very ‘British’ dynasties which have continued since the seventeenth century (*ibid.*:167). In Portugal, the local Portuguese are erased from the picture, yet in Spain the Spanish are recognized but complementary to the idea that one has moved ‘back in time’ (See chapter four). The cyclical nature of the ritual calendar year in Spain (ranging from the fiestas of the two saints of the village, through to regular nationally important periods – *semana santa*, *el día de la cruz*, etc.) enhances a feeling that nothing changes year in, year out.

The decontextualisation is, however, a very fragile vision. Romantic ideals of a timeless place immune to the effects of the outside world are seriously under threat following development occurring in the region (as explained in chapter four and Oliver 2002). The cyclical nature of the village is seen by migrants (in a lay version of the modernisation perspective) as giving way to a perceived linear and progress-oriented vision, becoming more like ‘the rest of the world’<sup>iii</sup> in capitulating to modernity. This is responded to by nostalgia for the early days, when the area was deemed ‘untouched.’

However, I now reveal that migrants themselves still cannot always escape a Western orientation to time, even in their 'free' time.

### **PART THREE**

#### **Old Ways Die Hard - Restructuring Unstructured Time**

#### **...and Back Again**

Jon, a migrant in his late 40s taking 'time out' from his career on doctor's orders told me 'I still have a problem with time. I still feel like I have to be somewhere.' His inability to kick the habit of urgency reveals how the movement from a linear to a timeless and spontaneous existence is not always total. The association of time with value is ingrained in the working world, creating a deep seated moral imperative to use time productively. This does not sit easily with a notion that one now has time to fritter away. I examine this uneasy and contradictory balance again as demonstrative of the structure to anti-structure tension.

#### **III.i Disciplined Time and Valuable Time**

In the seminal essay, 'Time, work-discipline and industrial capitalism' E.P. Thompson points out how in Britain the inward perception of workers' time was gradually altered between the Middle-Ages and mid seventeenth century (1967:56-57). Following the entrenchment of industrial capitalism, work life was restructured and brought in a different temporal understanding for workers (*ibid.*:56). The structuring of labour was now timed according to the clock, creating a notion of being able to 'own' time. Thompson explains how employees were subject to a distinction between



'their time' and their 'employers time' (1967:61). A moral valuation became attached to time, implying that it was a sin to waste away one's own time. The Protestant Ethic, furthermore instils the rule that, 'time is money' (Christensen, James and Jenks 2001:203). Foucault also demonstrates how time-management became a technique through which order and disciplining could penetrate the body. The old monastic model of the timetable in work was developed along with principles such as marching according to time (1991:141, 152). In this way, time became an articulation of power.

There also grew a *qualitative* valuation of time (see also chapter three) through the emergence of bourgeois society, which brought a division of public and private time. The conviction was that people should have more time 'for themselves' (1994:18); time alone was necessary for self-development. Yet to 'own' one's own time, one must earn it. Leisure is seen as a 'compensation' for working (Clarke and Critcher 1985:3), with as much exchange value as any other commodity. As Baudrillard points out, time has to be 'purchased' before it can be consumed; free time must be bought:

'The free time of the holidays remains the private property of the holiday maker; an object, a possession he has earned with the sweat of his brow over the year; it is something owned by him, possessed by him as he possesses his other objects.'  
(1998:154)

The 'free' time migrants have in Spain is 'theirs' now, which they have earned (see chapter seven) over the many years they have spent running against the clock and subject to the controls of the work timetable. Edgar, a retired brigadier, (now deceased) explained to me whilst having fun at the

British Legion, that this was 'pay-back time.' Time, as Baudrillard again expresses is the last great value,

'In the real or imagined abundance of the 'consumer society,' time occupies something of a privileged place. The demand for that very special kind of good equals the demand for almost all the others taken together.' (Baudrillard 1998:151)

Even 'free' time then is weighed according to the value that it afforded for less economic pursuits. Available time can be 'invested' or 'spent' on other people. As one woman expressed, 'I have the time to spend on cultivating friendships,' in ways that she assumed impossible when working. Satisfactory friendships needed time, or, as Sarah, a young woman expressed 'couldn't be made over a week.' This qualitative and enabling value of time was expressed by one man at the international club one afternoon in the context of much joking around. He said to me,

'You get here, reflect on your life and realise that you've spent all your life doing other things apart from living it. When you get out here, you have to live the reality of life.'

Particularly salient for older migrants is the 'birth/death horizon,' in which time also becomes more valuable. Schutz and Luchmann explain,

'The knowledge of finitude stands out against the experience of the world's continuance. This knowledge is the fundamental moment of all projects within the framework of a lifeplan and is itself determined by the time of the lifeworld.' (Schutz and Luchmann 1974:49 as quoted in Adam 1990:32).

Yet for some, the excess of free time is not the joy dreamed of when working relentlessly. Instead it drags along and is felt as a weighty burden. As a result, the liberation from time commitments is never wholeheartedly

adopted. For, freedom from structures, whilst on one hand is liberating, can also upset ontological security. The sense of limitless time, spanning ahead in an undifferentiated manner is alien to what one has left behind. For myself, coming from a situation in which there were enforced breaks, (the weekend, the end of a contract, the end of term, the end of the working day), it was initially disturbing to lose these markers.

Chaney points out that 'the standard assumption has been that an excess of free or unstructured time will create a variety of 'problems' culminating in the possibility of self-disintegration' (1995:212), and amongst migrants 'stagnation' was felt as a real potential danger. In my initial visit, I was warned for instance of the dangers of spending too much time on my own, for fear of becoming too introspective. Jim told me how the bar-owner in the village had warned him of the dangers of 'getting sucked-in.' He had pointed out that if you 'go with the flow,' this leads to constant late nights and getting up half way through the day. By pointing out that he had seen people 'wasting' their lives, the bar-owner reaffirmed the existing moral valuation of time as a resource that should not be frittered away. To bask in this time-freedom, like tourists do, potentially threatens one's sense of independence and decency. In particular then, time management can sometimes create tensions between visitors and hosts, as Amanda explained,

'people expect you to be the same as them. You know I had a couple of visitors and by the end they were in a mood with me, saying, 'what's the matter with you? But I just didn't want to stay up all hours all of the time. For them, its two weeks, but you know, for us, well we could end up doing that all the time.'

Free time can easily slip into boredom and apathy, far removed from the actions of one's ideal active ager. Whilst time is valued as the prized reward for years of working, within the community those who find that this 'time flies,' and avoid problems of stagnation are positively esteemed. Reflecting the observations of the last chapter, even in leisure, existing modes associated with the realm of work are woven into workers' leisure (Clarke and Critcher 1985:9,10). Leisure should still be, to some degree used 'properly,' in a constructive way (*ibid.*:5), particularly given the fact that time may be short. Indeed, a common insult is to suggest that others spend their time unproductively. Suzanne said, 'It's the way people live here, day-in day-out, sitting around with nothing to do with their time apart from sit around and talk about the fact that they do nothing.' Bob, a man in his eighties also spoke sceptically about the 'people who come and pretend they are not growing old...who try and live in the past, although time is speeding up...who have no real interests...and get very very bored' [my synthesis of what he said].

Other judgements were typically addressed at the *alternativos* (hippies/bums) who did nothing with their time. Likewise, I myself had to demonstrate that my time was used productively. I felt vindicated on one occasion when a club member exclaimed, 'we don't have a minute, we just don't have time to spare. Who's she? [pointing to me] She's is here to study us...No, she's a hard worker, she doesn't play all the time.' These sentiments very much reinstate the idea that time is a resource that can be squandered and wasted (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:8). It also reveals, as Nowotny has commented, the 'tendency today to extend labour-intensity to the idleness which has become time-free for consumption' (Nowotny 1994:121).

### III.ii 'Time Doesn't Drag. We're not Bored.' The Ritualisation of 'Good' Time Use.

To demonstrate mastery over the expanse and weightiness of time, certain disciplining temporal structures are reintroduced. Self-imposed rituals combat the slippage into wasteful time. Catherine, another woman, for instance, was almost infamous locally for her extended visits to bars, but again talked of her need to introduce some sense of a timetable into her life. She said,

'I still like to live the same as before, you get used to your routine don't you? I make Thursday the day to go into the town, otherwise you say you'll slip down there and then aimlessly wander about.'

Ironically, however, it is exactly this planning and timetabling (resulting from the ontological awareness of linear time) which reinstates a cyclical sense of time. Whilst planning appears to contradict the spontaneity of time, the ritualised nature of the time functions to instil a sense of time as elastic and unquantitative.

To give an example, Betty went every Saturday to the International Club, then without fail went with her friend for a chicken sandwich at the same café. After my 6 months absence, she said, 'oh nothing changes, we're still here, we're still going for our chicken sandwich afterwards.' Jerrome points out that rituals found in associations of the elderly function to ground aspects of self-identity which may have been threatened by change, as well as offer satisfaction through the accomplishment of small routines (1989:160). Similarly, in Spain, club schedules impart yearly, calendrical, monthly, weekly and for some, daily routine, with meetings held at the same time. My weekly round of events tended to be: International Club on

Saturday morning, American club on Saturday lunchtime, church sometimes on Sunday morning (although quite rarely). Then on Tuesday morning, I would go to Spanish lessons, followed by Labour club/International Club on Tuesday lunchtime. Wednesday lunchtime I would go to the British Legion, and on Thursday I would again go to Spanish lessons<sup>iv</sup>. Any schedule could exist for any individual along these lines. Luncheons of the British Legion were every month up the coast on Friday, whilst monthly lectures of the fine art club were on Sunday evenings. Every month, at the American Club, birthdays were also celebrated with champagne and cake, with celebrants sung to by the rest of the group (to varying responses from the celebrants themselves!) Calendrical cycles were marked by the 'summer holidays' of the clubs, running (mirroring 'term-time') between late September and May/June (until the tourists come). Furthermore, yearly rituals, such as the Remembrance Service and celebratory meal were held in the same venue in almost exactly the same format.

Hazan notes how repetition serves to slow down and freeze time. Problems of ageing and deterioration amongst elderly Jews in London are solved by isolating and effectively freezing their social condition (1980:89) through repetition and insularity. Huby reflects the same findings in an East London day-centre, showing how the institution creates 'the impression of a group of people suspended in an eternal present of bingo, reminiscence groups and day-trips' (1992:41), as does Golander with reference to nursing wards (1995:132). Ironically in this context, timetables are introduced to set aside standardised chunks of productive time, yet through the constant repetition, time gains its more cyclical meaning that fosters the more spontaneous and elastic understanding of time. Both spontaneity and cyclicity mean that time is qualitatively re-assessed. Both serve to 'slow down,' stretch and

disrupt the overall mechanistic time conception, even if ritual appears in this context via a system of reinstating quantitative time value in wasted time. Overall, the sense of time slipping away is less tangible.

The imposing of schedule, in one sense instils comfort (as this was the way things used to be done) yet also 'collapses time.' This does not mean people are necessarily 'slowing down.' On the contrary, the *rate* of the cycle often passes quickly because of the number of activities that people furiously undertake (time as value within time as valueless). Despite the cyclical and levelled out nature of time as without 'depth' (Leach 1961:126) (not moving forwards and upwards in a linear fashion), the speed of the cycles nevertheless gives the impression that time is passing quicker (thus ever increasing the urgency to 'pack more in'). I was often told that the enormous amounts of things to do created a sense that one had *less* time. Mary, a busy woman told me,

'I feel like I have less time here, that its shrinking and that we have eighteen hours a day, five days instead of seven. Its because socialising takes longer. You start lunch at twelve, and it finishes at six!'

Ironically, she now owned a filofax (almost a symbol of productive work time), which she had never possessed before she came out to Spain. This activity stopped time dragging and despite the overarching model of time as standing still, the rate of the cycles was felt as quickly passing.

The numbed perception of time passing created through routine complements the nostalgic view of unchanging Spain (part two). For some, this is also fostered by nostalgic revivals or fond looks at certain past ways of life. In Hazan's research, references to past events were looked upon distastefully (1980:89). Here, there was a certain ambivalence. I found that

the *recent* past was not mentioned often, but that certain *long-passed* occurrences in their lives were still definitive. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the British Legion, for example, references to the war are common (as found also by Huby 1992:43), and in the Remembrance Day service, memories seem to be felt much more strongly because of the numbers of people who *could* remember particular strong and defining moments (see chapter nine). For instance, Gerald in the Legion recalled a story about his time in Egypt and explained to me, 'Oh yes, we had fun then. In those days, we did have some laughs....' His friend, Kay after talking to one group across the room was accused jokingly of 'fraternising with the enemy' with further war references throughout the rest of the afternoon's meeting. Other discussions in the researcher/informant interaction sometimes went into distant past memories of childhood. Perhaps this nostalgic view on life past is facilitated by the 'out of time' element of the socially constructed time-world.

## CONCLUSION

### And Back AGAIN!

I have pointed out that with the awareness of the Western understanding of linear time (as to be productive in the face of mortality) comes the necessary reintroduction of certain structures into migrants' free time. Again, the structure invades the anti-structure. Yet, like in other arenas, the structures ironically recreate anti-structure, this time through rigid repetition, which again *reduces* the sense of linear time. The two senses coexist in an uneasy synthesis in the everyday lives of migrants. However, as we saw how the physical materiality of the body ultimately undermines its social construction (see chapter six), so too do markers of time's passage pierce the



bubble of timelessness. So, whilst it seems that in this community nothing changed, at the same time *everything* did, especially in terms of composition and the well-being of people attending. Society is a constant creation in which history is never fully entrenched, rather constantly being redefined according to the present. The president of the American club Nora, explained to me, 'It's always changing, there's always fresh faces...as one lot dies, another lot comes, it certainly stops it being boring!'

Given this cyclical routinised and very present-oriented nature of time, change and deterioration is often explained as if it 'creeps up' (see chapter six). In the chairman of the Legion's speech about the inadequacy of the UK provision for repatriation on illness and the need to prepare, he also alluded to this gradual sense of ageing. He stated, 'Yes, we're all getting on...One day we are seventy, one day seventy-five, then all of a sudden you realise, you can't lift a bag.' The cyclical anti-structural nature of time is always vulnerable to the linear, irreversible time. The reality of deterioration, whilst 'psychologically very unpleasant' (Leach 1961:125) ultimately informs migrants' conduct in their management of time.

In the next chapter, I reveal how migrants use ideas of nationality or cosmopolitanism to confirm their positive self-identification.

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### Notes:

<sup>i</sup> As Burnett and Holmes point out, the body in some ways can be 'considered as an historical entity with an 'age' and a 'past' (2001:21).

<sup>ii</sup> See for instance Gurvich as discussed in Gell 1992:62, or Bloch's conception of the global distinction between ritual and linear concepts (*ibid*: 88).

<sup>iii</sup> Although Collier points out, they have never been traditional in the first place, *always* linked to Western modernity (1997:11).

<sup>iv</sup> I write this, a year and a half away from the field without reference to my fieldnotes, demonstrating the ease in which routine becomes instilled in the consciousness.

**Chapter 9 -**  
**'Put me in a box, but not one with a screwed down lid!'**  
**NATIONAL AND COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITIES**

*'However much you fight against it, if you live abroad where there are other expatriates, you become what is known as the foreign community. Initially I struggled hard against this notion but as the years passed I grew more relaxed about my status as a foreigner and more willing to appreciate the ties that by language, humour and shared experience, bound me to my compatriots'*  
(Chris Stewart. *Driving Over Lemons* 1999:182).

**Introduction**

After a break I came to the field and went into a local café where I bumped into Helen, a long-term migrant. I explained that I was back with my partner Marc, a Belgian. She responded, 'Oh, well, there's a couple of Belgians who live near me in the *campo*, friends of Craig's [her son]. I'll give you their number and perhaps you can meet up...' The anecdote reveals how in Spain, a mixed nationality and cosmopolitan social space, nationality becomes an important defining label and immediate ticket to group-belonging. This confirms the vast numbers of texts which proclaim that the consequences of globalisation and mass migration are not necessarily the vision of a post-national homogeneous state (Hutchinson and Smith 1994:10-13). Diversity, even within a mixed arena, is as much if not *more* salient than ever before. This chapter interrogates both the attachment to imagined

pan/supranational identities such as 'Europeans' or 'cosmopolitans' and their place alongside notions of national identity.

National identity and/or notions of cosmopolitanism discursively echo other facets of identity explored throughout the thesis. For in the ideal of cosmopolitanism are the same anti-structural values of freedom, diversity, education, excitement as well as creative insecurity sought in a leisured, positively ageing existence. National identity by contrast at once offers security, but is also associated with being tied down, restricted, and unadventurous in outlook; in other words, structural. Similar observations are found in Zabusky's ethnography of national diversity in European co-operation in Space science. There, workers extol the excitement and stimulation of working with others of different backgrounds (1995:161). They contrast this to the 'boring' experience imagined in working within national industries (*ibid.*:162). For migrants in Spain, the liberating self-development sought (as explained in chapter three) is seen as realisable through a cosmopolitan existence. Yet, as revealed in other examples, structure reforms. In this case, national identity may be revealed whilst trying to downplay it. As seen in negotiations of positive ageing, tourism, and time, the anti-structural is involved in a contradictory dialogue with its counterpart. This explains the overwhelming presence of paradox and inconsistency in the following presentations of identities as national or otherwise.

The chapter is then essentially an ethnographic examination of the international circuit. For whilst cosmopolitanism and expatriate lifestyles are *theoretically* debated in respect of the usefulness of the 'travelling trope' (for instance by Hannerz 1990, Clifford 1992, Thompson and Tambyah 1999:221), there is still relatively scant *ethnographic* evidence of its real life

manifestations. Recent contributions by Traweek (1988), Zabusky (1995), Shore's analysis of EU elites (2000) and Fechter's work on expatriates in Indonesia (2002) go some way to remedy this. This chapter offers another contribution. It begins with an examination of cosmopolitanism in Spain, pointing out that the cosmopolitan nature of oneself is often revealed with reference to others who are presented as more nationally oriented. In particular, it becomes clear that there are multiple lay-meanings of cosmopolitanism. For some, cosmopolitanism literally reflects Hannerz's assertion that it is a *transcendence* of national identities. For others it is the relative enjoyment of interaction with other people of different nationalities (including or not including the Spanish). For yet others still it means the presence of other nationalities in one's daily awareness, without regular meaningful contact. All claim equally to be cosmopolitan. In part two, I explore the alternative to this cosmopolitanism, in some people's displays of national identities, focusing particularly on the English.

In part three I go on to show that even for those who strongly downplay nationality, their behaviour ultimately reveals certain national traits. Intending a transcendence of nationality, they may ironically demonstrate it. Again, like cosmopolitanism, national identity is not by any means one thing, but reveals itself in multiple ways. In portraying this, I echo the assertion of others that there is a danger of over-emphasising the revival of collective identity in diasporic sites (Sarup 1994:94). I focus instead on the range and multiplicity of identities (Ranger, Samad and Stuart 1996:4) that can emerge *within* a site of migration (Griswold 1994:107). Malkki's insightful monograph *Purity and Exile* argues that heterogeneity is in fact a key feature of national/ethnic identity. Her study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania in different sites (a town and a refugee camp) demonstrates that collective identity is interpreted in a plurality of ways, as a fluid and shifting

notion (Banks 1996:151). In fact, town refugees *negate* a collective identity in migration (Malkki 1995:155), whilst for others it is the central locus of their identity. Likewise, in this chapter, I reveal that for migrants in Spain, the revelation of national identity is displayed in a variety of ways. At some times, it is not even at all volitional, revealed in an intended *negation* of collective identity. Finally, in part four, I explore the implications of 'this sort' of cosmopolitanism, showing both the exciting possibilities, but revealing also the potentials for a categorical understanding of others, problems in integration and the degree in which comfort is sought through nationally specific habits and interactions.

Before I begin, a few points must be qualified. For the purposes of the chapter, I depend again on my plentiful data on *English* people. In doing so, I am perhaps entering into somewhat murky waters. For, regarding English national identity, particularly on the *Costas*, it is clear that the subject is not free of political or moral overtones. As pointed out in chapter three, the assertion of an English identity can and has been read as a version of colonialism<sup>i</sup> and little opinion on the subject can claim to be morally neutral. Indeed, in producing earlier versions of the chapter (Oliver 2000) I found that I reproduced some ideas that I later felt guilty about propagating, despite the fact that much evidence came as it were from the horse's mouth. I feel in retrospect that analytical discussions of 'Super-Brits' (Oliver 2000) would not be welcome amongst most migrants. Apart from it being a sobering reminder of questions of authority addressed in writing, it also forced an interrogation into *why* I felt uncomfortable. Namely, it is because it is clear that, whatever their situation, many migrants in Spain do not imagine themselves as nationally-sentient.

It is important to point out my own position. I am an anthropologist, well versed in the constructed nature of nations and nationalism (e.g. Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Anderson 1983, Hutchinson and Smith 1994). I also lived in the village where people felt more 'different' (see chapter eleven) and less inclined to belong in any national group, so I reflected similar opinions. Furthermore, in referring to 'English' national identity (rather than British as I have in an earlier version), I reflect current political climes. Within British groupings there were light-hearted internal divisions noted between Scots, Northern Irish and Welsh, that were insignificant for most. Yet I did not ever question these peoples' feelings about being 'British' or 'Scottish' etc. As a result, I cannot claim to represent their opinions properly, so refer mainly to my work with English people. Let us first turn now to look at how, for some, nationality is denied.

## PART ONE

### *Mini-Europe? Negotiations of Cosmopolitanism*

'Nationality, or being English means nothing to me,' said Barbara, a fifty-five year old retired accountant, finally settled in Southern Spain, following a lifetime working in Switzerland, Monaco, Geneva, California, London, Hong Kong, Iran and Belgium. 'I believe in Europe,' she continued, 'myself and my friends here,' (referring to her German walking companions) 'we believe that we are the *real* Europeans.' The feeling that one was part of an 'international community' (as it was sometimes referred to) was confirmed by the diversity of people and backgrounds there. People from France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg,

England, Scotland and Ireland mix with those from South Africa, Canada, North and South America and probably more countries in an anti-structural 'expatriate scene.' In this section, I unpack how difference is negotiated and perceived.

Fundamentally, the social aspects of living in a cosmopolitan place are positively valued. Connie had retired with her husband Brian from expatriacy in Trinidad. They sung the praises of international life in an interview, stating,

'We have friends of all nationalities...we've not got two of the same nationality and that's how we like it. We don't have problems with any of the locals either...we're not the sort to row, as we respect different ways. We tolerate, of course, we have to, we are in Europe now.'

Essentially, in this very 'social' society, cosmopolitan tolerance is espoused as a beneficial hallmark of the society that they themselves have created. One day I spent an afternoon at an Embroidery Club, a spontaneous and uninstitutional meeting of women of all different nationalities. In between various news-swapping, the conversation constantly reverted to a deliberation upon 'culture,' difference and tolerance. Rachel, the 'leader' if you like, announced to the table, 'I don't care who moves into my village. Lesbians, Homosexuals, French, German...they're all people.' When anything with the slightest whiff of political incorrectness was raised, participants and Rachel especially set it right. In an exemplary display of liberal tolerance, the thrust of discussions of the day was the repudiation of the tendency of 'generalising and making generalisations about others.'

It is clear that in their experiences in Spain, migrants' experience may echo expatriate experience. According to Thompson and Tambyah, expatriates

are 'situated in a collectively shared identity project (i.e. trying to be cosmopolitan)' (1999:214), in which cosmopolitanism is incorporated into their narratives as an ideal (*ibid.*:216). They go on to assert that cosmopolitanism is a collection of ideological discourses which derive from colonial power structures as well as patriarchal structures (*ibid.*:217). Importantly, they assert that cosmopolitanism is the consumption of cultural differences, a practice readily undertaken in Spain. For example, Trisha, a fifty year old ex-international banker gave up the rat race to move to Freila. For her, the village represented a means of obtaining enlightenment through contact with cultural others. She explained,

'Why did I come? I've absolutely always been fascinated with other cultures, other peoples...My first husband was a Russian, my second a Yugoslav, and well, what with my job [a banker]... I'm a linguist too, I always knew I'd come to a foreign country. It takes months and probably years to understand how and why people think the way that they do.'

She runs a bed and breakfast joint in the village as a means of bringing different people together. 'You share what you have, and you also learn from them,' she explained. Trisha is almost an embodiment of Hannerz's 'people of independent (if modest) means for whom openness to new experiences is a vocation' (1990:243).

As suggested, there is an echoing of the ideals of cosmopolitanism with other categories of self-identity. Cosmopolitans share features of the unrestricted leisured person, the positive ager, the isolate etc. *in contrast to other identities* (bad ager, tourist, the 'club-maniac' and the nationally-inclined). For instance, Cosmopolitans 'actively consume cultural differences in a reflective, intellectualising manner, whereas locals remain content in their parochial ways of life, *much like tourists*' (Thompson and



Tambyah 1999:216). The resonance of categories also extends to age and class identities. Those considered 'old' in a negative sense and lower class are also imagined more likely to be nationally oriented. Judy for example claimed,

'In the town, they are all very well off, but very boring, very English. The ordinary who aren't in good class positions try to become like that. For the same reason I couldn't live in England, there is nobody young and you just get together at parties for old people and its boring.'

The theme of the excitement of cosmopolitan life is particularly applicable for older people. Apparently, one of the most repeated questions to retired migrants is 'don't you get bored?' On the contrary, it is often claimed that through international living, one is, as one migrant put it, 'never bored!' The 'levelling' effect of cosmopolitanism is a factor that is emphasised as constitutive of a good old age. For example, in an advertisement for *Interpares* residential community, the 'South-American-born German' director extols it as a selling point,

'We try to keep an 'ecological balance,' a mixture of ten nationalities and languages, social levels and educational backgrounds'...Interpares is 'simply slightly different,' he said. 'We are a broad-minded community, very international. We have people from all walks of life. What matters is not the contents of their bank accounts but their inner decency' (1995:17)

In Spain, diversity is managed daily through similar egalitarian democratic means, as seen in the urbanisations' committees. One such committee member Albert, explained that there is, 'representation from all sides...for instance, in ours, we have one Spaniard, one Swede, one French person, four Brits and one Canadian.' Albert continued, 'Yes, this is a happy village. There's a mixture, its no problem, we publish everything in at least three languages.' As in other international spaces (Shore 2000, Zabusky 1995), English is readily understood, yet obvious problems of communication are

represented as a source of the society's joviality. For example, the difficulties may be overcome by miming and sign language, creating much hilarity and adding more fun to the already social orientation of the society. Jenny from Bradford, told me about the mixed nationality aquafit she attended, and laughed, 'its like being in junior school again.' The international nature of the community contributes to the anti-structural 'bent' in life, understood as being fun, exciting, and challenging. To be cosmopolitan is understood here as being beyond categorisation and emancipated. As Judy pointed out to me, 'I detest nationality. I flinch when they try and put me in a box.' National allegiance, on the other hand is morally judged and loaded with negative connotations of structure.

The farcicality of life in these contexts facilitates at times the sense that events are 'for the moment' (chapter eight). As I pointed out in chapter six, this has a downside in that responsibility rarely extends beyond that moment. To give an example, one day I lunched with Kelly, an ex-television executive, and a couple of friends at a bar in the inland white village where she lived. Evidently, she had been knocking back the wine at a fair pace, and she recounted the generosity of her neighbour, a Spanish bachelor, who had given her a full slaughtered goat for her freezer. He came over to the table where we sat, and Kelly agreed to accept another goat. At this point, he was gesticulating with two fingers on his hand, to which she kept laughing, 'yes, goat's legs!' It was only after a friend pointed out that perhaps the 'goat legs were not goat legs after all,' that she realised that he was actually symbolising peseta notes, and was seeking payment for what she had thought was a gift. In response, she gave him a false phone number. Ultimately she *would* pay, but the linguistic incommunication allowed her the potential, should she wish, to eschew responsibility.

The identities of the cosmopolitan and the national are borne out in spatial terms by some. Those in the village and *campo* ascribe a nationalistic sentiment to those in the town, most certainly because the English infrastructure is well established. This is not to say that this is how it is always borne out in reality. Rather, the inlanders distance themselves (at times virulently) from national allegiances through the ascription of those sentiments to others. Tocina is known amongst foreign migrants throughout the East of Málaga as *mini-Inglaterra* (mini-England), whilst other areas further down the coast are referred to as *mini-Alemania* (mini-Germany), although of course there are national variations within these. Inland migrants often avoid the coastal clubs. The exception is often *DADFAS*, the district fine art society. Monthly lectures are given by experts on famous artists in the exclusive Parador Hotel in the town. It is acceptable to attend this group because, although its origins are English, there is a cosmopolitan attendance. The acronym *DADFAS*, relating to the town and District Fine Art Society, was colloquially known by some as ‘Dutch and Danes, Finns and Swedes!’

Despite the claiming of cosmopolitanism with more elite connotations by inlanders, cosmopolitanism is still asserted as the province of almost all migrants. For instance, those who live in urbanisations compare themselves again against those in the town. One woman pointed out, ‘I live in an urbanisation. It’s very international, not like Tocina here.’ Equally however, the inevitable orientation to national identity is contested by those who live in the town. One couple laughed,

‘we love it here [in Tocina], there’s loads of Spanish. All the others move up to the hills to look for real Spain, without realising the Spaniards have sold all their shacks and moved into the town!’

This does not mean that for some migrants, aspects of national identity are not still important. In the next section then, I examine the lifestyles of those who are geared more towards national allegiance, and, in particular English national identity.

## PART TWO

### *Mini-Inglaterra? Negotiations of National Identity*

If I was to portray the groups of migrants in Spain as nationally-sentient and inward-looking, I would likely be lynched. For, despite much evidence of the expression of national identity, be it in consumption of foodstuffs, linguistic dominance or overt displays of signs and symbols of the nation, most migrants feel uncomfortable being perceived as ‘little Englanders<sup>ii</sup>.’ With this in mind, I explore some of the facets of life that reveal national attachments.

First, it is salient to ask ‘how is national identity manifested?’ I do not want to go into extensive discussions of national identities and nationalism (see Gellner 1983, Hutchinson and Smith 1994, Anderson 1983), but instead I focus upon the ways national identities are constructed and expressed *in situ*. The first obvious feature of national-attachment is the support of nationally-geared services. Although Tocina is seen as more ‘Spanish’ than its counterparts up the coast, it still has a fair concentration of English-themed pubs, and English supermarkets, estate-agents, dentists and care-services (See Fig. 1 ‘a taste of England in Spain’). Since linguistic ability is



Fig. 1—An English 'Pub' in the  
Centre of Tocina

often associated with quality and security, the English language is often used by services as a sales pitch and technique. One person explained, 'they're probably more likely to rip you off, but you think, oh well, at least if we can speak the same language we can sue them!' Almost any kind of international and English foodstuff can now be found, following a gradual introduction to the main supermarkets. According to Benjamin, an interviewee, this was 'a battle fought and won.' An amusing turn on this is the consumption of hybrid *tapas* in the clubs - in one pub, you can buy a 'tapa' of 'cottage pie' for fifty pesetas.

Language obviously plays a key feature in the establishment of national identity. The *lingua franca* of the nationally-mixed migrant population is English, as in other international institutions. As in other contexts other languages are also commonly heard (Zabusky 1995:97); clearly one can 'get by' in Tocina relatively easily without using Spanish. Roger claimed that he knew twelve words of Spanish and this will suffice. King, Warnes and Williams (2000:135) and O'Reilly (2000a) point out, it is often difficult to learn Spanish at a later age. Moreover, the regional Andaluz dialect is considerably different to the Castilian Spanish taught in classes (King *et al* 2000:135). Linguistic inability is often thought to engender social distance. As Roger an ex-wing commander, explained, 'half the over-60s [Spaniards] can't read or write. We couldn't possibly have anything to do with them,' although opportunities of social mixing themselves are limited. For example, only a few migrants attend the local *pensionistas* club. One newspaper article reports how 'Language difficulties mean that foreigners lead separate lives' (Conde and Pelaez 1999:27). In some examples, the previous expatriate lifestyle is used as a justification for not learning the language. Bob told me,

'I've been stationed in Cairo, Sudan, Malta, Libya, East Africa in the Gambia, then the Seychelles and Dubai, working overseas all in all for 35 years. I've been to so many places in the world, and in each one I asked myself if I wanted to learn the language, like do I really want to learn Chinese? You lose inclination.'

Popular mythology of inland migrants portrays the coastal clubs as typical of expatriate clubs the world over (including in former colonial sites). Forster, Hitchcock and Lyimo point out that 'there is a remarkable similarity within expatriate institutions worldwide' (2000:69). Examples of such social institutions can be found in the 'goldfish bowl' ghetto (Shore 2000:163) of EU civil servants in Brussels, or in expatriate circles in Singapore (Thompson and Tambyah 1999) and Indonesia (Fechter 2002). The large array of clubs and associations could be read as blending the expatriate social experience with the tradition of older person's clubs. The experience of expatriate living is often conflated with a colonial mentality by other migrants (as well as wider media stereotypes). Although O'Reilly argues that in Spain there is no evidence of real colonialism, the idea of colonialism is still salient for these migrants as a moral discourse to disapprove of others' behaviour. At times, for instance the clubs are referred to as demonstrating colonial-type features, with the international club known colloquially by other (non-attending) migrants as 'the International Club that is 99.9% English.' One informant negatively described it as, 'the English colony implanted in the centre of Tocina.' Members meet in a club-house that strongly resembles the typical English social club. Regular events include darts evenings, based on the English TV show *Bullseye*, and monthly trips to Gibraltar to stock up on English goods. The club is very hierarchically organised, with strong leadership provided by Martin, the

chairman, who oversees events at the club. A video library, book library and magazine swap area also ensure the consumption of English goods.

Another nationally based group, the British Legion, meets weekly at the *Golf Hole*, a 'pub' in the English heartland of Tocina. Its members are British ex-servicemen and women. Meetings are also held once every two months at a clubhouse on the outskirts of town (also used by the Masonic Lodge). Here, national identity is displayed materially by a picture of the Queen and a large Union Jack in the meeting room. This is because allegiance to the crown is considered very important. For example, some time ago, a senior politician was in the news for not knowing which way up the Union Jack went. I slipped down in my seat as I had no idea either. When asked if I knew, the people present joked, 'well, it doesn't matter, you're French aren't you?' This comment acted to divert the attention from *my* ignorance back to their continuing negative commentary on the politician. Demonstrating a deep emotional attachment to national symbols engendered by years of work devoted to defending the country, they found it most upsetting that the mistake had been made.

As O'Reilly found, being nationalistic in sentiment does not necessarily mean that one wants to live in Britain. Rather there is a nostalgia for a particular version of England that has disappeared (2000a:164), or indeed may never have existed 'back home.' At a coffee morning, one woman, Margaret told me she had been in Spain for twenty-eight years, and revealed virilently anti-England opinions in her conversation. Nevertheless, despite her antipathy towards England, she was disinterested in local politics and kept a keen eye on what was going on in England instead. She exclaimed how, despite leaving England almost thirty years before, she was disgusted with Tony Blair, and was particularly upset that her friend, who



had served in Burma, had to survive on £68 per week. She exclaimed, 'don't mention the UK to me, it stinks! It really stinks!' Yet, later, in a group discussion, somebody mentioned that one of her friends had been burgled, and that the Spanish police had been disinterested and unhelpful. And, in response, Margaret contradicted her earlier distancing from England, pointing out that, 'the police are really rude here, not like ours [English] who are wonderful and kind.' Later I asked her if she spoke Spanish, not an unreasonable question considering that she had lived there twenty-eight years. 'Don't be silly!' she replied. Whilst other migrants are incredulous of such unwillingness to make some steps towards learning the language, Margaret still considers herself fully English in lifestyle and orientation. She just does not like some of the things that are going on there.

As intimated in the above example, migrants occasionally define themselves as nationals in opposition to a constructed Spanish Other (O'Reilly 2000a:94). Certain mechanisms and distancing strategies are employed to reflect on their contrasting 'English' qualities. As Rapport shows through his examination of American Jewish migrants to Israel, self-definition depends on the construction of an other 'lazy' 'Oriental' (Rapport 1998:69). As in Rapport's example, a joke commonly levelled by English migrants at the Spanish is that they are bogged down by inefficient and tedious bureaucracy (Rapport 1998:77). This is contrasted to a Northern European efficiency, evident in, for example the hard work and activity involved in arranging club-based fundraising events and trips out. Some even think of Spain as 'Third-World'-like. Derek for example commented,

'There's elements of truths in the old stereotypes. I'm often wondering if I'm living in a Third World country. There's such a mixture of the new and the old. I mean look at the state of the public sector and the roads.'

Similarly, an ex-wing commander pronounced some extreme views when he said,

'At the time when we came, the Spaniards were still picking slugs out of the ground. At the end of the civil war, this was the poorest country in Europe. They forget the expats brought prosperity to the area.'

Again, a benignly superior attitude was reflected by the chairman of a club I attended. Referring to the way expatriates had been accepted within local society he explained,

'At first, the Spanish seemed very hostile to us. But then I think its often because they are more scared about what you think of them.'

British diasporic groups have historically comprised an imperial diaspora (Cohen 1997:1). In the Spanish context, O'Reilly points out this is an inappropriate parallel because the migrants are not actually involved in economic work relations (2000a:142), although King *et al* point out how some have come from careers in the colonial territories (2000:86-87). According to Forster, Hitchcock and Lyimo, in military arenas and former colonies people act out very exaggerated assertions of national identity (2000:65). They note for example, 'Drinking, sometimes quite heavily, was a feature of European expatriate life. Some degree of self definition was imposed by not drinking during daylight: hence, the first drinks of the day would be known as sundowners' (*ibid.*) Those who come to Spain from these environments often employ the same habits. Moreover, a few superior attitudes derive from lives in former colonies or have been historically influenced by the immediacy of the English colony of Gibraltar in Spain<sup>iii</sup> (although it should be noted that overt expressions are rare amongst the majority). Before charter flights became widely available, many migrants

used to come into Spain via flights to Gibraltar, and the first apartment block in Tocina was known as *Little Gibraltar*.

As a result of the histories of some migrants, militaristic versions of Englishness pervade. For example, in the free publications, England is occasionally referred to as Old Blighty, and stories regularly feature profiles and experiences of servicemen in the World Wars. Field argues that the experience of the Second World War significantly shapes participants' attitudes throughout their lives (2000:284). In Spain, former military titles and positions are still held in awe. The 'mascot' of the Legion club was a ninety year old ex-Brigadier, who had worked with the Gurkhas of Burma. His position of superiority, earned through many years devoted service, was also maintained by the tale that he was the man who, whilst in Kenya, told the Queen that her father had died and that she was now Queen. A moral of the tale is that although away from home, the expatriate community remain central to the history and the making of the nation. The legends foster a close 'we-feeling,' based on attachment to the monarchy and the military. For other non-English people, this type of pride can at times be felt as exclusionary. One American woman, Maisie remarked,

'One man reckoned he was in the Bengal Lancers, in the Indian Army. Oh they really throw that stuff around. They reckon they were the tops, the *crème de la crème*. They look down on you, especially if you haven't got the right accent.'

The fact that migrants are of a broadly similar age facilitates a particular version of a 'remembered' England. Migrants of similar ages can remember the wars, and particular changes in technology and lifestyle. As a result a particular 'flavour' of national identity is evoked. The celebration of Remembrance Day is an important date in the annual calendar, and is

planned for with great precision. Numbers attending the service are increased by returning snowbird migrants and SAGA group tourists bussed in from other resorts. I attended two packed Remembrance services held in St Michael's church (the Catholic church 'loaned' to the Anglican parish<sup>iv</sup>) in Tocina. They were pronounced weeks in advance in the migrants' media. The standard bearer stood outside solemnly, and the money collectors marched in perfect unison to offer the donations to the priest, whilst the sound of the bugle moved women to cry. Fortier examined Catholic rituals amongst Italian migrants in Britain and (as Bell summarises) found,

'the communal activity of mass produces an attachment of the group to the site of its performance. Through embodied movements, the custom operates to recall and reconnect with places elsewhere that, through these very movements are remembered; at the same time, a site of diasporic belonging is created' (1999:3)

In this case, national identity replaces the age-specificity of the migrants as the central basis for their common feeling. This confirms Myerhoff's assertion drawn from her study of Jewish elderly people in California,

'Perhaps most important is that a positive valuation of ethnicity can serve as a nondenigrating component of identity that is not readily destroyed by retirement or empty-nest syndrome' (1983:50).

To other migrants, the celebration of national days seems anachronistic and is cited as evidence that these migrants are 'living in the past.' But as a very modern tourist destination, Tocina is hardly a throwback to the past. Rather, the non-place-like characteristics typical of Tocina (Augé 1995:78) give rise to the space, freedom and plasticity needed for the assertion of national identity in this manner. At times, it lends an ironically comical twist to

obvious English assertions of national identity. For instance, in a perversion of the more sober English reality, the local English bookshop was called *WH Smiffs*. Further English witticism was evident in the naming of the local Indian restaurant. *Balti Towers* is a twist on the famous English 1970s comedy TV show, *Fawlty Towers*. Acting as 'in-jokes,' their lesser familiarity with non-English residents allows them to serve as another means by which the English maintain an exclusive national identity.

To continue; overt national displays are not everyone's [English?] cup of tea. They are seen to reveal an unflexible, structured and unadventurous outlook, attitudes more readily associated with tourist behaviour. For these travellers, the new territories are a 'home-plus,' (Hannerz 1992:247), a recreated version of one's own familiar mode of existence with the added advantages of the new destination. For instance, Deborah told me, 'being here, its just like being in England. I have a three-bedroomed house, just as I would in England. It's the same.' Whilst this attitude is openly criticised, in the next section, I question how far the distancing stance adopted by others extends. I show that through style, beliefs and behaviour, or habitus, it is almost impossible for people to escape *some* version of national identity. Even in cosmopolitan attitudes, versions of national identity are demonstrated.

### PART THREE

#### National cosmopolitanisms - revelations of Englishness

In contrast to an imagined 'Little England,' some migrants suggested that they came to live in the *real* Spain. For many of them, 'real Spain' means to live an existence surrounded only by Spanish. Failing this, the lesser evil is to live with a cosmopolitan crowd, against a Spanish backdrop. Certainly these migrants do not wish to live in an anglicised version of Spain. Barbara commented:

I came to live in a typical Spanish village, not in Tocina.'

For these people, others who display what is considered 'English' behaviour are often ridiculed. Henry, one 50 year old retiree noticed some upper-class tourists come into his local bar and mocked them, saying,

'There's so many people around here that I call the Daphnes and Rogers. You know the sort of people who live in mansions and flash it around. I hate those who are here but act like they're still in India. They have their G and Ts at six o'clock on the terrace.'

Werbner suggests that cosmopolitanism is a knowledge and openness to other cultures (1999:18). Whilst this is true, it can also mean in practice a closed attitude to one's own nationality. Often, I heard tales of people running a mile from invitations to get together 'just because they were English. Delia said, 'I can't abide the paradise seekers... just because you speak English they think you'll automatically be friends.' Rather than acting regardless of nationality, they are acutely conscious of it. People deplore

stark displays of Englishness, as Peter reveals, 'If I go into a English bar on the coast, I feel like a foreigner.' Or Jackie: 'My idea of hell would be an expat club.' Another older woman pointed out, 'they seem to forget that World War two was over many years ago,' evincing a difference between 'them' (nationals) and 'us' (cosmopolitans).

The distinctive status of *campo* dwelling people, the preserve of many migrants is, however coming under threat (see chapter four). Road developments ease access to the more isolated villages and make them more desirable for other migrants. Yet, the more that foreigners settle in and visit the villages, the quicker the kudos of living in this context diminishes (at least as kudos is evaluated in their terms). For some migrants then, resentment is felt for the foreign expansion into their area. Raymond, an ex-English spy left Freila village after some years to move further inland. His reasoning was straightforward: 'There were too many bloody Brits.' Yet, in response, new migrants also project a negative 'colonial' mentality on such attitudes. Sandra for instance, talked of her alliance with kind Spanish neighbours, with a distancing from the more hostile English migrants because of their 'colonial' attitude:

'They [Spanish neighbours] look after us like family. I didn't realise this until last week when I went to a wedding and sat with Granny and Aunty. Most resistance you get is from people who've been here a long time. You know, they treat it like colonialism, its like the Days of the English Raj. Its like, 'We were landed here the first, so it belongs to us.'

Yet, the branding of such particular forms of national identity as irrelevant or repugnant does not necessarily mean that national identity is insignificant. Rather there is a continuation of attitudes, and even those who

see themselves as cosmopolitan (ostensibly *negating* nationality) reveal elements of 'Englishness.' This is because the same techniques of distancing, employing class and intellectual differences over the other *English* people they encounter show how they share the same parameters of behaviour, ironically revealing themselves to share the same cultural traits.

For example, some of the cosmopolitan English migrants (in contrast to mass crowd behaviour) adopt habits, styles and knowledge of the Spanish. Spanish phrases are dropped in willy-nilly through English conversation, whilst evidence of travel and cultural fluency was well displayed in material possessions in houses. A certain 'knowledge' of Spain and local customs was also widely flaunted. For instance they might gain a mastery of traditional local cooking, explain tricks for getting the best prices and learn elements of local history. Such techniques of cultural appropriation from 'the cultural supermarket' (Mathews 2000:196) show distinction (Hannerz 1992:113) through 'knowing' the Spanish. Crucially, it seems that the people who they demonstrate their knowledge to are other English people around them (including their English visitors). In a way then, 'cosmopolitanism' is used to raise an individual's status above others within one's own particular national group, in this case to be cosmopolitan is to be stylish among the English upper classes. Historically, English national identity has relied on notions of distinctiveness, individualism (MacFarlane:1978), and in its more extreme forms, eccentricity<sup>v</sup>. These can all be demonstrated in the practice of cosmopolitanism.

This style of national identity is markedly different to the militaristic theme or rampantly patriotic manifestations imagined to be exhibited by tourists. The cosmopolitans adopt the stance of paternalists or eccentrics. These historical versions of Englishness are different, but they are versions of



Englishness nonetheless, long associated with the English character (see Langford 2000). For an explicit avoidance of one's own nationality has historically been a strategy associated with the English. One current novelist describes his intentions when he moved to a white village in Andalucía,

'Temperamentally we were like the mid-Victorian traveller Alexander Kinglake, who, while crossing the Sinai desert, a five day struggle through unpeopled wilderness, suddenly saw a lone figure coming the other way. It was another Englishman. Kinglake passed him at a safe fifty yard interval, pausing only to raise his hat' (Seymour-Davies 1996:137).

Public eschewal of one's nationality by such people reinstates them as curiously English.

There is much investment in trying to gain 'local knowledge.' Cosmopolites take a paternal interest in the Spanish, seeking to understand their customs and behaviours. At times, this means contrasts are drawn between 'us' and 'them,' in a reified assertion of difference fostered through years of contact, replicating other behaviours identified earlier. Chapter four shows how original migrants were somewhat exclusive, and developed relationships based on a clear recognition of status hierarchy. Doña Margarita (as she is referred to by Spaniards), a long-term resident refers to the workers on her farm by nicknames and surnames<sup>vi</sup>, and although her manner is kindly, she is definitely in charge. The mode of interaction between workers and herself resonates with the style of interaction between landed gentry and their employees (see Newby 1975:152-153,155). Others were less overt in their superiority, but nonetheless expressed similar positions of a paternalism. As one woman in Jayena, trying to conserve her house in a 'typical' Spanish style said,

'I'm restoring the house, taking it back to what it was. I want to preserve the original features so that I can pay Jayena back in some way. They've shown me so much love and kindness that I'd like to use my foresight into the economy to show and help them make the best of the village.'

Integration involves fitting into the Spanish system within the realms and character of migrants' 'Englishness.' For instance, the integration of migrants in the area depended on the adaption of the Spanish patronage system, which has resonance with ideas of the English benevolent gentry. The upper-class migrants in the village were extended a position of paternalism by the prefix of Don and Doña, a term of deference and respect, systems which replicated British ideas of paternalism as embodied in 'the ethic of the 'gentleman'' (Newby 1975:152). According to Barrett, certain members of the Spanish bourgeoisie in a Northern Spanish village aspired to a 'gentleman complex' (Barrett 1974:24), a desire to live a 'quasi-aristocratic' ideal of civilised leisure (*ibid*:27,29). In social relations this amounted to clear-cut segregation between patrons and clients in which,

'a powerful and socially superior individual assumes the role of protector and benefactor to persons who are his social inferiors. He becomes a father figure and treats them as if they were somewhat less than fully mature adults' (*ibid*.:30).

The relationship is characterised by a generosity on the part of the patron and a close friendship between the two but also a clear recognition of the status differences.

Originally then, migrants slotted into this system. As a result, English status was reinforced by local validation. For example, when English migrants first used marble to decorate their graves, this 'new style' was copied by

Spaniards. A Spanish friend told me how many of the villagers have now chosen marble since then, simply because an early migrant, Anne had chosen it<sup>vii</sup>. Similarly, once Anne started using particular flowers at the All Saint's festival (see chapter ten), the same flowers were seen as the ideal for the rest of the village<sup>viii</sup>. The patron-client version of integration is demonstrated on occasions such as when Don Pedro (Peter), another foreigner, was asked to attend his Spanish goddaughter's wedding in the 1980s; he was specifically asked to attend in a dinner suit. Of course, attitudes have come under revision now, but remnants are clearly there.

Cosmopolitan migrants may display an alternative positioning as an 'English eccentric' or slightly 'different.' As, Chris Stewart, a 'good life abroad writer' writes about his inland experience in Andalucía, 'There seems to be a preponderance of eccentric women among the foreigners here' (1999:186). Indeed in a celebration of rule-breaking, strange ways of acting may be secretly cherished. I suspect, for instance that Marjorie rather liked being described as 'the batty old woman' on the hill. For there is a curious fascination for eccentrics in the village, as revealed by Bob's recollection,

'I remember Charlie, an eccentric son of a wealthy family who walked around town with a deerstalker on. He set up a bar for a laugh called 'the Sailing club' in Freila's oldest donkey cave. Shortly afterwards he died of alcoholism.'

To be eccentric undoubtedly places one outside the realms of the majority. However, it also places such migrants outside of local norms. As a result, they are known by Spaniards through their 'foreigner' status, and more likely through their nationality. Unlike the militaristic conformist version, this is a particular, individualist kind of Englishness, traditionally associated with the behaviour of the aristocratic eccentric, in contrast to perceived

obvious displays of Englishness. Such migrants do not reject national identity *per se*, but instead object to the particular form and style that it has taken in group expression. Englishness *en masse* is vulgar, but Englishness has long been associated with individualism (see Strathern 1992:30), and it is this 'stand alone' nature of the individual, above and beyond the group (MacFarlane 1978:5) which is expressed by these migrants. The ability to claim that one is cultured rests upon credentials of having a certain reserve and distance, a stance resonant with a deeply rooted historical idea of 'old fashioned Englishness.' An example of such implicit Englishness is given by the oft-repeated condemnation of those who complain about Spanish systems in a local magazine. The writer exclaimed, 'Don't the whingers realise that it's just a case of bad manners in another country?' (Rhys-Jones 1999:10) Ironically, those that assert national superiority are reprimanded in ways redolent of Englishness. The reproach seems curiously high-class English by its appeal to sensibilities of manners and decorum.

#### PART FOUR

#### **Limitations and Implications of Integration**

I have pointed out that living in an international community can mean betraying some version of nationality, even if this is not the desired consequence. In this section, I interrogate reasons why national sentiment may arise out of cosmopolitan living. There are a number of inbuilt limitations of expatriate cosmopolitan life, which combined with the difficulties of integration engender feelings of national belongings. Particularly, as one gets older, the abilities to negotiate new languages,

penetrate local groups and go without familiar comforts become difficult to develop or sustain. Migrants may be disappointed as they find a resulting 'clanning together' of different groups. Debbie, a maverick woman who built her house almost single-handedly said,

'I came here with a romantic notion of living in an international community. I still like that idea, but in practice I find that it means people group together.'

Rosa echoed, 'You think you get chucked into this giant melting pot coming here...unfortunately you still get those with 'them and us' attitudes.'

Initial difficulties often arise in attempting to become 'local.' As Thompson and Tambyah point out with reference to Hong Kong,

'In trying to be cosmopolitan, these expatriates also had to confront a myriad of frustrating and seemingly intractable socio-cultural barriers to getting inside the local culture' (1999:215).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned language difficulties and class differences, there is a lack of social and economic relations, although those of a younger age find it easier to integrate, often due to having children with them. Due to the lack of common interests in daily behaviours, it is often difficult to go beyond superficial interaction. But as King, Warnes and Williams ask, is it even right to ask the question of integration with older migrants, particularly given the lack of integration channels through work and schooling? (2000:136). I found that most migrants desire 'integration' but do not specify what it is, how it can be achieved or indeed, what one is integrating into. Most consider it important to adapt to the local diet and foodstuffs (which are cheaper than imported goods anyway) and consider it an honour to be invited along to baptisms or weddings. Yet, when I asked my Spanish landlady how integrated the *extranjeros* are in the village, she

firmly stated that none of them wanted to get involved at all, a statement which went against a great deal of what had been said to me by migrants themselves. 'The fact is,' she said, 'they don't *really* want to participate in the pueblo, just say, 'hold' every time they pass.'

This distance between locals and foreigners lends itself to categorical grouping. In the village, the desire to 'know' those of the village translates into a desire to know what makes others tick. As a result, certain groups are ascribed certain personality traits. Molly, for example saw many of her dogs poisoned by Spanish women. Over time, she adjusted to this by putting it down to a facet of 'their' behaviour. Trying to 'get to the bottom' of the Spanish 'character,' she said, 'They take delight in pain. It must come from the Moorish blend...It's like there's death and blood, its exciting, there's a wild look in their eye.' For some, a consequence of living there is the ability to understand 'a Spanish mentality,' a 'German mentality,' an 'English mentality,' and so on. This is far from the ideal of hybridity so extolled in international living. The cultural fascination exemplifies a (now theoretically obsolete) vision of cultures as different, discrete 'things' from which one could borrow or 'know.' Cultural difference is read as something 'natural,' unquestionable and consumable. Less obsolete in practice than theory then.

As a result of the perpetuation of an objectified and fixed view of culture, (Wikan 1999:57) Wikan warns that 'culture becomes amenable to use in defence in all kinds of special interest' (*ibid.*) She explains how some immigrants intentionally reappropriate the 'culture-bound' model for their defence cases in judicial procedures. Solicitors excuse inappropriate behaviour (violence against women for instance) by claiming, on the defendants behalf, that it is something intrinsic to his culture. An overly-tolerant attitude, in which actions are excused by recourse to cultural

propensities for certain behaviour is the net result. In Spain, albeit with less dramatic consequences, a similar phenomenon is sometimes at play. For example, on one occasion, I sat with a group of young British women. We all discussed how, at some time or another, we had been affronted sexually in ways that had made us feel threatened or uncomfortable. Yet the blame was firmly directed at our own cultural groups for dressing in ways that stir an imagined latent masculinity in the local men. Wikan warns that such models reduce people to 'a product rather than an agent, as caught in the grip of culture' (1999:58), a model that is in fact reductionist and racist. Her examination exposes a trait not identified in anthropologists themselves, who are allegedly complicit in 'being the last bastion of cultural absolutism (Wilson 1997:3) (in Rapport 2002:156). Rapport himself, rather posits that the noble anthropological goal of seeking to understand others in their own terms cannot be employed as an excuse to avoid making moral and ethical judgements' (2002:158).

Given the difficulties of integration to any satisfactory level, people often find comfort and fuller friendships through an established social infrastructure of the clubs. Thompson and Tambyah find that in Singapore, 'these blatant dwelling places [expatriate clubs] are almost invariably justified as temporary concessions to the difficulties of plugging into the local' (1999:231). Similarly, migrants struggling for a more integrated existence 'give in' to national associations and national media, primarily out of a need for comfort. Fiona told me she had 'succumbed' to buying satellite TV. Annabel, Fiona's friend also explained her dilemma in similar terms,

'Of course, I could succumb to Fiona and the like and go to all those clubs. But that life is an English life, singing songs and hymns and things. I find it all too sentimental, like looking in a photo album.'

Furthermore, familiar products associated with one's own country are enjoyed for the comfort they afford (at times illicitly). Vera ran a small café, selling tea, coffee, cakes and snacks. The venture was looked upon disapprovingly by some migrants at first, particularly as Vera had lived in the *campo* around Freila for some time. Marge explained, 'she should know better.' One day Vera moaned that she had to go to Gibraltar, a considerable trip to what she felt was a 'grotty' destination. Her reason for going was to buy raisins sold in the Safeway store there, which were required for her cakes. I found this ironic considering that almost every other house in Freila had a sign selling the local speciality *pasas*, huge juicy raisins of far superior quality to the shrivelled, dried-up rabbit-dropping-like variety sold in Safeways. Yet, this desire for the 'known' product is common; Thompson and Tambyah similarly point out how expatriates carry with them their 'enduring somatic groundings of consumption preferences' (1999:229). To my shame I was not immune; at one point I was ill and craved tinned tomato soup rather than the delicious local gazpacho!

International living is somewhat easier than local integration because international migrants' have more in common. Nevertheless, even in these mixed nationality groupings, it is not always plain sailing. Zabusky's fascinating study again provides a worthy starting point. She examines how discussions of nationality were governed by a great deal of superficiality. The people involved acted as 'if they were providing official travel guides to national differences' (1995:163), in which stereotypes were often the basis for interaction. Furthermore, I found that some interactions within the international community were governed by a sense of 'not rocking the boat.' Saugestad Larsen's study of a Northern Irish village reveals a same sense of 'decency' in interactions between opposing factions of Catholics and



Protestants (1982:132). Likewise in Spain, the tolerance and understanding necessary for this sort of society was often stretched to extremes, meaning that only 'safe' topics were discussed. A direct questioning of another's political persuasion was considered rude, as Larsen also identifies (*ibid.*:137). Similarly, Zabusky notes that amongst international space workers that there was often a feeling of a lack of things to discuss (1995:233).

In Spain, this is made more profound as people are insulated from local occurrences. In particular, people do not, due to disinterest or linguistic restrictions, engage to a significant degree with local politics. This is despite the fact that in the last few years, voting rights for municipal elections have been granted to EU residents (Marina 1994:62). Yet, even on the wider scale of general politics and ideologies, discussion is kept to a minimum. For instance, one day I was discussing a Hemingway book with a Norwegian and Canadian couple, Bierta and Jack. Jack mentioned that he did not appreciate Hemingway's politics. Before I could even mention anything in response, he quickly followed his remark by stating,

.'.but then around here, I've learned not to get into discussions about religion or politics. I just change the subject. You're bound to have a different opinion from me, but that shouldn't stop me from being interested in you and thinking that you're a good person. I don't want your political position to influence me and colour my judgement of you.'

The capabilities and 'know-how' of cosmopolitans are often overstated. 'Muddling through,' or confusion are regular features of cosmopolitan exchange. For example, in Spain, Elly, a young Scottish woman, drifting from place to place and job to job, struck up an odd friendship with Swedish newcomers Astrid and Peder that transcended the age and nationality

differences. Prior to a visit home, the couple offered their property rent-free to Elly, so that she could get on her feet. Suddenly, things went wrong. Elly was concerned that she had been offered something for free, and as a result, she began to wonder if she had misread the offer or their motives. 'I don't understand them,' she said, 'I mean, they're offering their place to me to live in ... for nothing? Why? Were they joking?' Even on the day of their departure, Elly wasn't *entirely* sure that they had meant it in the way that she had interpreted it. Their once intimate relationship became plagued by suspicion, which resulted in its ultimate collapse. One year I had left them as best friends, yet the next year they didn't speak and each referred to the other party as 'a bit strange.'

Continuing in this vein, it is clear that, whilst confusions of linguistic, bodily and social expression lend a humorous touch to interaction (part one), such misunderstandings can also cause upset and offence. At the Embroidery Club, a Danish woman told me about a feud between her husband, a Dane, and an English friend. When talking about an innocent topic, the Dane had slapped the Englishman on the back. He meant this purely as a friendly gesture. The English man thought that it was too hard, and felt violated. Their relationship cooled and the two do not speak now. Similarly, Anna, from Luxembourg, was shocked when her German neighbour, a very close friend started avoiding her. She told me,

'I worked out why she was being so cool towards me. It was because we hadn't offered to pay to share costs for a lift. But it hadn't even entered my head, as she was going to the place we were going anyway. People here think in such different ways.'

Petty cultural misunderstandings can give rise to deep hurt and resentment.

Sometimes, these upsets go a long way to challenge the liberal idea of tolerance so extolled by cosmopolitan migrants (as outlined in part one). Debbie was involved in a long-running feud with her German neighbour over her terrace. Following various verbal slurs, Debbie's plants were poisoned. In the end, the police were called, as the neighbours were involved in a physical fight. I met her buying a security lamp for outside her house. She told me,

'I arrived in the village looking for warmth and friendliness, but others don't seem to respect that ethos at all. I've never been racist, but here I feel discriminated against because of what nationality I am. Without knowing it, I myself got sucked into anti-German feelings, and they can't stand you anyway, just because you're English. You know they'll be World War III starting in Jayena soon...you'd never have thought it would have started over a piece of fucking patio!'

The expatriate cosmopolitanism closes in on itself, a factor likely because of the limited social make-up there anyway. The international circle is accessible only to a certain ilk. Certainly, class values still predominate despite the espousal of egalitarianism. As Zabusky notes for the case of those involved in international space cooperation, 'the awareness of class, along with the persistence of class-based values, beliefs, and practices, is an everyday part of Europeans citizens' perceptions of society and social relations' (1995:33). Likewise, in the same group, the absence of racial differentiation also went unnoticed<sup>ix</sup> (1995:34), a fact of life demonstrated in Spain. Migrants were overwhelmingly white, Northern-European in origin and there was a marked absence of other ethnic groups.

On one occasion, I met two Indian men, a rare exception. They had come along to the Thanksgiving Day celebrations, where they began a sing-a-long in the coach back to Tocina. They improvised words for an English song that they knew only the first line of, which went, 'It's a long way to Torremolinos, it's a long way to go...' This was followed by various Spanish, French and Dutch 'old time' classics. This display of national difference was generally enjoyed, although someone pointed out ironically, 'This is some great *American* club!' When the two men left the bus, a discussion began about who they were. Although their presence was enjoyed, it was clear that they were considered benign gatecrashers. Someone said to the coach-load, 'they're like the two guys who appear at the party and say 'Happy Birthday Jack. It is Jack's party isn't it?' Then when they're told in fact it's Thanksgiving, they'd say, 'Oh Thanksgiving? Oh great, happy thanksgiving then!'

## CONCLUSION

### **Mini-Europe? International living**

To sum up, amongst migrants in Spain, there is a fluid and multifaceted use of national identity, ranging from the extreme assertion of national identity to an absolute denial of it. At the same time, there are claims of more anti-structural 'cosmopolitan' identities, which again range from its more intended meaning, as the transcendence of national identity, to more realistically and in practice, an image of cooperative difference. This form of cosmopolitanism is complementary to national identity rather than

oppositional to it. Most 'cosmopolitans' create alternative positions and methods of assertion that have resonances with, and unconsciously confirm (structured) particularly national ways of behaviour. Concentrating on English cosmopolitans shows that they reveal their nationality by replicating culturally-specific ways of dealing with communal relationships. Demonstrating feelings of individualism, their need for social distance and exclusivity through cosmopolitanism paradoxically displays a revelation of national identity, albeit of a different expression to more overtly proud nationalist migrants. Paradoxically then, through a claim to escape nationality, one is actually playing right into its demonstration.

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### Notes:

<sup>i</sup> See opposing opinions by O'Reilly 2000a and Jurdao 1989.

<sup>ii</sup> Indeed, this portrait is the subtext addressed throughout O'Reilly's consideration of the subject (2000a:8).

<sup>iii</sup> Stanton explores the association and metaphor of Gibraltar to the solidity and permanence of the English Empire. Here, a dream of English imperialism is played out as it is one of the last outposts of the Empire (Stanton in Goddard et al 1992:174, 187).

<sup>iv</sup> Scholars of nationalism have long recognised the symbolic value of religion in nationalist discourse (e.g. Anderson 1983). I do not have space to delve into that here, but it is worth noting that the Church of England services rest largely on national-affirming sentiments, especially through their hymns ('I vow to thee my country,' and 'Jerusalem' are two examples).

<sup>v</sup> Langford notes even in the eighteenth century, 'For the staff of British embassies abroad, the activities of English visitors, 'each vying with the other who should be the wildest and most eccentric,' as Louis Dutens, based at Turin in the 1760s put it, were a major preoccupation.' (2000:25)

<sup>vi</sup> Newby notes that the gentleman farmer asks, 'nice-day-how-are-the-children' in a 'ritualised monotone, only faintly listening for the reply, but nonetheless addressing his employee on Christian name terms' (1975:160).

<sup>vii</sup> For instance, Doña Anna (Anne) and Doña Rosa, had an ongoing feud over who had been established in the village the longest. When I saw Rosa on the day of the festival, she asserted how everyone copied her. She said, 'I noticed a lot of people have copied my idea. I introduced the idea of having a window box and filling it with flowers.'

<sup>viii</sup> Anne herself told me how now she only gets the flowers for the festival *el dia de los Santos* at the last opportunity. During previous years, her choice of flowers had been taken as the flowers to have; many villagers would wait until Anna had put her flowers up and then rushed to the shops to order the same.

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<sup>ix</sup>Zabusky points out, 'Nonetheless, the absence of blacks, East Asians, and South Asians was not meaningful for participants; that nearly everybody was white did not seem to contradict people's primary experience of diversity or to challenge their corresponding valorisation of diversity' (1995:34).

## CHAPTER 10-

### 'God's Waiting Room'

## DEATH AND CONTINUITY IN MIGRATION

### Introduction

Whilst the last chapter explored feelings of national belonging, this chapter goes some way to look at how death and the prospect of death is dealt with in the context of 'the good life.' Deaths in the community urge a consideration of migrants' own feelings of belonging (Jonker 1997:193). Francis, Kellaher and Neophytou point out, 'The place of burial is indicative, sometimes very sharply, of attachments which can be read into and read from the locus of burial' (2000:42). Beliefs about collective ethnic and cultural identity (Reimers 1999:147) become extant. Furthermore, death reveals much about the nature of the 'community' left behind. In Spain, death momentarily unites the disparate individuals within a group. It facilitates a public self-representation of the migrants as 'a community' and serves to celebrate shared beliefs and values of the group.

The migratory context shapes and informs reactions to death; the contingencies of death must be negotiated within a system that is far removed from migrants' blueprint of the standard modes of dealing with death and bereavement in the UK, other parts of Northern Europe or the US. In an alien context, one must negotiate different laws and regulations, as

well as variant norms of emotional behaviour. I suggest that in negotiating the Spanish systems (or indeed, choosing to deal with burial or cremation outside Spain) beliefs about the degree of attachment to Spain become explicit. In particular, the manner of disposal resolves ambiguities of belonging following mobility, telling the story of where one perceives to be 'home.' Since burial is the final sedentarisation of the physical body, it is important to migrant peoples where and how they are laid to rest. The material memorials, as well as verbal representations of people who once lived in Spain state, define and reinforce values for the existing migrants.

I begin the chapter with a sketch of contrasting ways of dealing with death in Northern Europe and Spain. Whilst I am aware that there is no single approach within Northern Europe, I draw upon Walter's material (1997) which suggests differences between Southern European expressive modes and those found in Northern Europe. Due to limitations of my data, I mainly focus again on English migrants' reactions, although there are some variations, as I point out throughout. In part two I reveal the differing reactions to the alternative system, ranging from discomfort to ambiguity to positive acceptance. Death is dealt with in a multitude of ways, depending on the attachments of the individuals. Finally, in part three, I reveal how an individual's death is managed by the migrants left behind.

## **PART ONE**

### **Blueprints of death: Alternative systems in Spain**

Wikan points out in comparing Egyptian and Balinese responses to death, that culture 'shapes and organises responses to loss' (1988:451). As



Huntingdon and Metcalf have also commented, 'death rituals reflect and shape social values' and are unique to each society (1979:43). This section draws attention to the different cultural modes of dealing with death, drawing on differences between Britain and Spain. This topic grew from my personal circumstances, living with the local florist who was overwhelmed every year by the manic demands for floral displays for the All Saints festivals and local funerals. By extension, I could not help but get acquainted with the differences in approach, particularly when confronted with death in the migrant community in my everyday life. In particular, I show how for some migrants, there may be some discomfort in dealing with the alternative system, due to an historical shaping of cultural reactions to death and disposal.

In Northern Europe, death has famously been considered the last great taboo (Bauman 1992, Hockey 1990:54). Ariès' well-known treatise, *Western attitudes toward death* (1976) charts the changing historical attitudes to death, noting a movement in Northern European societies towards death's sequestration. Through the Middle Ages, death was something that was openly acknowledged, public and prepared for. As a destiny common to all, its rituals were simple and uncomplicated (Ariès 1976:55). In the eighteenth century, by contrast, death was romanticised (*ibid.*:56), but by the middle of the twentieth century, death had disappeared entirely (*ibid.*:85). Currently, it has become less of a public and ritual phenomenon and more of a private individualised occurrence, 'a technical phenomenon, obtained by a cessation of care' (*ibid.*:88). The knowledge and inevitability of death in public consciousness has, according to Bauman, given way to a terror and fear of death that cannot be dealt with by any amount of technical mastery (1992:16). Recent work has, quite rightly questioned the degree to which the taboo is still maintained, but there is certainly some validity in the

suggestion that the secularisation of society has continued the trend towards making death a private event.

In Spain, due to the older ages of the migrant population, the possibility of death appears to be a real threat and this reality is borne out fairly frequently. In some ways this leads to an overt acknowledgement of death, for instance with descriptions of the area by some migrants as 'God's waiting room.' At the funeral of Will, a popular man in the Masons and the British Legion, my friend Judy was talking in the church to the woman in the pews in front about the number of deaths that had occurred recently. Despite the inevitability of death, a whole sequence of recent deaths had still come as a real shock. 'I suppose that's what happens when you have a place full of elderly people' Judy qualified pragmatically. Despite this relatively open acknowledgement of others' deaths, it is normal for people not to want to dwell on death as an issue. Although the frequency and naturalness of death is accepted, it is still presented as something that would happen to them all *in the future* and for most, in another place, be it a specialist institution or country of origin. For example in a financial advice supplement in a newspaper, Peter Floodgate wrote:

'Many [expatriates] will say that Spain is now their permanent home and they will stay here for the rest of their lives or, as one client told me, 'until hell freezes over.' However, they, like most others, then admitted that they would probably return home if one or other or both became ill or one of them had died - note the use of the word 'home' even though they had no house in the UK' (1999:xiv).

More open acknowledgement of death for migrants is still miles apart from the more public, violent and expressive way it tends to be expressed in Spain. According to Walters' taxonomy of different modalities of death ritual, Spanish death rituals could be classified as open and formal,

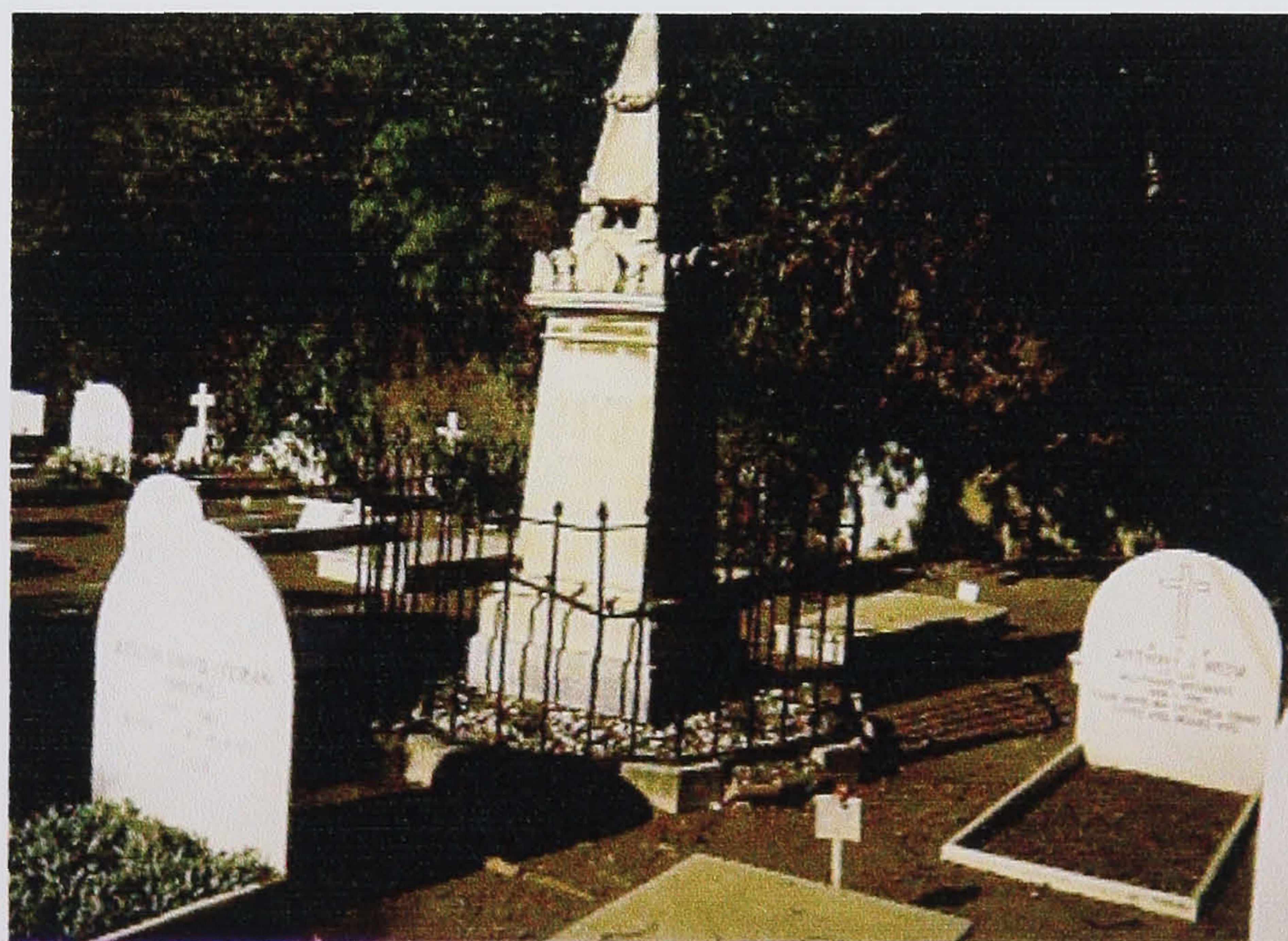
involving ritualised expression that the English would feel embarrassed by (1997). Spanish funerals are reminiscent of previous ways of dealing with death in England. For example, Gore points out how in 1920s Kent, a funeral was a much more communal affair, which involved 'laying out' the body in the parlour at the deceased home, to be subsequently visited by the entire street (2001:213). Similar practices are demonstrated currently in Spain. Following a death in the village, church bells are chimed to inform people of the occurrence; women make obvious displays of grief, such as wailing, crying and piercing screams; relatives gather in the house of the deceased for a vigil during the hours until the funeral, which is held some short while afterwards, within forty-eight hours of death. The funerals themselves are very public affairs, in which close relatives of the deceased must greet a long stream of people from the *pueblo*, all coming to pay their respects. Following a spouse's death, women used to wear black, and although this custom is dying out, some older women in Freila and Tocina still observe this rule. Certainly, this system is more of a public and highly ritualised event than migrants are accustomed to.

By contrast, in the UK now, following a death, the funeral rites are usually held within a week, allowing time to let the shock sink in and make various personalised arrangements for burial or cremation. Burial involves the laying of the coffin deep in the ground, often in large grass-covered graveyards. Where the grave is tended, it is usually covered with flowers, plants or specially designed decorations (pebbles and chippings). It is usually marked by a headstone made of durable material. Graves are traditionally treated as aesthetic properties; by ritually tending and caring for the grave people express respect for the deceased. The interaction with the terrain itself is seen as fundamental (Francis, Kellaher and Neophytou 2001:228). The actions of gardening, arranging flowers and washing the

stone facilitate the recollection of memories and maintain the on-going relationship of living and dead (*ibid.*:230). By proxy, the relative is brought into 'physical and psychological contact with the deceased' (*ibid.*:231, 2000:43). The acts may also serve as distractions from grief, easing the process of mourning (Francis, Kellaher and Neophytou 2001:234).

In Spain, similar respect is shown in tending the grave, yet the site and means of burial are vastly different. For a start, the cemeteries themselves are walled-off areas. Burial occurs in above-ground 'niches' laid out in long rows and up to 6 or 7 niches high (see Fig. 1). At the entrance, high status members of the *pueblo* are buried in grand family tombs. During a funeral, the coffin is placed inside the niche, before being sealed up by concrete and later covered by a memorial plaque. These niches are not necessarily permanent, and can be reopened and reused after five years if no-one responds to a sticker placed on the grave from the *ayuntamiento* (municipality). The bones of the exhumed bodies are then laid in the ossuary (chapel). The *cementerios* are stark areas, whitewashed (like local houses) under the orders of the *ayuntamiento*, although the niches themselves are decorated with photos, religious insignia and mass displays of colourful artificial flowers. On *el día de todos los santos* (All Saints day - November 1<sup>st</sup>), lavish floral displays are on show, lit by a massive display of candles (artificial and real). I was told that it is only recently that the *cementerio* is so well maintained. It followed the modernisation of the village when a similar process of 'smartening up' was extended to the cemetery. Prior to this, it was probably more akin to the cemetery described by Washington in the Basque area, 'one of almost total neglect' (1969:73). Indeed, in Freila, until a short while ago, the gates were locked almost all of the time, unlike the open access policy of British protestant cemeteries. It was pointed out to me that some time ago, the cemetery was muddied and overgrown. Now, it is seen

**Fig. 1- A Spanish  
Cemetery**



**Fig. 2 - The English Cemetery at Málaga**

widely as much better; quiet and pretty, paved and with the odd decorative tree.

The cemetery is in a sense, a microcosm of the *pueblo*. This is echoed by Washington's study of Basque funeral customs, in which the Basque term for the cemetery literally means 'village of the dead'<sup>ii</sup> (1969:72). At the All Saints festival, candles are lit and people attend the graves of relatives throughout the night. One night I went, accompanying a migrant friend to the cemetery where I met a Spanish friend attending his father-in-law's and sister's grave. Earlier in the week I had told him how I thought that the idea of staying in a cemetery overnight (as was the old tradition) provoked a feeling of spookiness and unease in me. On the night itself, he asked me if I was still scared and I confessed that I was surprised by the pleasant atmosphere and feeling of communality. He pointed out,

'it's the day when we celebrate the dead. The dead will be very happy tonight with the flowers, all these lights [candles and battery operated torches<sup>iii</sup>] and their family and friends all around, taking care of them.'

I asked him where his sister was (who had died a short time before). 'In the other street,' he responded, confirming the sense that, for the Spanish members of the *pueblo*, the cemetery represented a micro-community or 'mini-village' in death.

Another anecdote confirms this observation:

In the week prior to the All Saints festival, I had been to the cemetery, where I met an elderly woman. Wearing the black clothes of mourning, she was using a mop and duster to clean the inside of the glass on her husband's niche. Whilst talking to me, her eyes filled with tears as she explained the occurrences of the death of her husband three years ago. Suddenly, she pointed out that over there was her mother, then underneath was her sister-in-law and brother, all their deaths having occurred within the same half year (hence them being closely grouped

together). She was weeping freely to me, even though I did not really know her very well at all. Unused to this public and indiscriminate show of grief, I did not really know what to do, and patted her rather uselessly on the back.

However, she continued, pointing out how she lived in the pueblo and knew all the people 'around' her late relatives. She kept directing me to graves of people she knew, each time returning to talking about the death of her loved ones, ending with sighs of '*qué lastima*' (what a shame). I explained to her who I was and what I was interested in, and as a guardian of the cemetery she was keen to show me around. We went into the next aisle, where she pointed out, 'my sister lives here,' then pointed out her niece, who had an aunt opposite her, who was described as being '*muy cercita*' 'really close.' I pathetically echoed her comments by saying that they are all together in heaven now, which she agreed with. The emphasis on the physical closeness of relatives was constantly mentioned throughout her tour, although she seemed to know everyone buried there. She gave me details about the occurrences of some people's deaths, right from the civil war through to a young lad's death in a motorbike accident. We had to leave as the cemetery as it was about to be locked, but we returned briefly to her husband's grave where she scratched the tiniest white splash of whitewash off the artificial flowers.

As I show earlier, Spanophile migrants appreciate and utilise Spanish ways in representations of good ageing (chapter six and seven). Yet, when death occurs, there is a real challenge to how far one can go. How far migrants feel comfortable laying someone to rest in a replica Spanish community in death depends on the degree to which they themselves feel integrated. Other alternatives chosen are based on ways in which death would be dealt with 'at home,' wherever that may be. As Jonker points out, 'memory structures responses to loss and burial in a foreign environment' (1997:187), setting 'an inner blueprint of 'how it should be' (*ibid.*:195). In her research, she looks at the ways in which rural Mediterranean migrant communities in Germany (Turkish Muslim or Greek Orthodox Christian) interpret current losses through recourse to 'how they used to do it.' In this reverse situation, whereby Northern Europeans are migrants to the Mediterranean, there is perhaps a similar expectation to do things as they 'had been done back home' (*ibid.*:189).

One example gives an impression of the difficulties involved when understandings of appropriate reactions to death clash. A Spanish man, Jesus, who lived opposite me had, whilst I took a break from fieldwork committed suicide. Upon my return, the story was recounted by my Spanish friend. Apparently, when Jesus' mother found him, there was the customary screaming and crying. However, much to the disapproval of my friend, his American immediate neighbour failed to go around to the house until the evening. From my perspective, I interpreted her reluctance as borne of the intention to give space and privacy to the grieving relatives, and an unwillingness 'to intrude.' In the eyes of my friend, who understood the appropriate reaction to death as the concern of the *pueblo* and immediate community, the neighbour had been neglectful and disrespectful. In the following section, I explore the negotiations of this sort of variation in managing both the emotions and practicalities of death.

## PART TWO

### Dealing with Death. Different modes

*'Among sedentary peoples a frequent question is: 'Where do you come from?' For travelling gypsies this question offers no answer. It is best to ask where the person will be buried' (Okely 1983:226).*

One must be cautious in drawing parallels between highly mobile travellers and the more sedentary-inclined (but still mobile) migrants in Spain, yet still



there is a certain veracity in the above quotation. For, despite the espousal of the 'wherever I lay my hat' motif by migrants (chapter three), it is in the event of death that real choices have to be made. A major issue is particularly *where* ones' remains should be in the event of death. With reference to the Merina of Malagasy, Bloch argues that kinship relations only really become completely fixed following death and the sedentarisation of the dead (Hallam and Hockey 2001:187). Only at that point, the dead solidly fuse with the physical space of the tomb, becoming part of the ancestral stone of the localised Merina territory (*ibid.*) As I shall reveal later in the discussion, similar beliefs are demonstrated about the fixing of identities to peoples and places through burial or ash-scattering.

Furthermore, as Jonker points out, in talking of others' deaths, migrants themselves imagine their own death. 'Accordingly,' she states, 'the question of where they themselves were going to be buried loomed large' (1997:193). In Spain, for migrants, the dilemma is between whether to be cremated or buried in their place of origin or in Spain, responses that reveal much about the nature of the relationship between migrants and Spaniards. As Okely points out for Gypsies,

'Gypsies' death rites and beliefs must again be understood in terms of the relations between Gypsies and Gorgios, not merely the Gypsies' internal social system' (1983:216).

This same premise is useful in application to migrants in Spain, and should be kept in mind throughout.

In fact, a whole range of different reactions to death (or the onset of it) are displayed. For some however, the dilemma of holding a funerary ritual in Spain is not even applicable. For as I pointed out earlier, a significant percentage of migrants move back at the onset of severe health problems.

Dwyer for example refers to the fact that the possibility of public healthcare is a significant factor in the decision to move home permanently (Dwyer 2000:367). In the face of death some migrants acknowledge the comfort of their home country as the appropriate place to die. In addition, for many people, it makes financial sense to retain their domiciliary in England for there is no inheritance tax between spouses (in Spain there is no spouse exemption). Alternatively, others are buried in the UK, or the English traditional cemetery. A third option is to stay until the end and be buried or cremated in Spain, whilst fourthly, others are cremated and have their ashes scattered in other locations. A number of people find themselves having to decide these choices suddenly when dealing with unexpected deaths.

Unexpected death is particularly hard, as without immediate relatives it is often difficult to know how to react to unexpected loss. Migrants only have a relatively small shared past (as also described by Jonker 1997:188), nothing is clear, and there are no real guidelines as to know what to do. Added to this, there are a number of different laws to be dealt with (not to forget the aforementioned complex regulation regarding inheritance tax). The adjustment is not facilitated by the short time span in which the practicalities of disposal must be dealt with; interment or cremation must be completed within forty-eight hours. Often, this is not even time enough to allow the breaking of the news and the arrangement of flights for children from England, let alone to allow a proper consideration of the nature of the funeral to take place. In response to this, many migrants have adapted by keeping the actual funeral itself very simple and small, but organising a later memorial service to enable a proper 'goodbye' from the community.

Much can be read from future projections of where migrants imagine themselves to be buried or cremated, particularly revealing different

degrees of belonging that they have to Spain. To be buried there, or have one's ashes there was cited as evidence of attachment and belonging. An example of a discussion one afternoon at one of the clubs following the memorial service of a man who was buried in Spain, reveals much about the subject.

*October 13<sup>th</sup> 1999. Two weeks following the memorial-service, a discussion at the Legion centred on what one should do in the case of death. Six people, myself included, the late stragglers, were sitting around one table in the Golf Hole, the regular bar. Present was Jill, a woman I had not seen often, although she appeared well integrated in the group, Jane, a Scottish woman, her husband, Robert, Ronnie, recovering from illness, his wife, Deirdre, Sandra (the wife of the chairman) and myself. The men were less interested in the discussion it appeared than the women.*

Jill: I think she [the wife] should do what my friend Joyce did. She took her husband's ashes home in a suitcase (*cries of laughter*). Then you can at least sprinkle them in a garden of remembrance.

Jane: yeah, well, I must admit I am a bit surprised she had him buried here, you know with the boys and all that in England. I'd have thought she'd have had him flown back to England.

Sandra: well, they do it so quick don't they? But she [the wife] says now she'll always have a tie to Tocina. She can never completely leave now, she says.

Caroline: But if there's a cremation, you can take the ashes wherever with you.

Sandra: Its only since ten years though that you can do that though. Ten years ago you couldn't get cremated here. You know 'cos they're such strong Catholics. Now you get your ashes and you do what you like with them.

Jane: (*laughing*) Well, Robert [her husband] reckons he'll die first and I'll just stick a potato sack over his head and that'll be it. (*for a moment she looks pensive*). Yes, I don't really know what I'd do.

Deirdre: I'd have to go home I reckon. You know the Spanish seem so cold when it comes to people dying. I went to the *misa* (mass) of my gardener, a lovely fella he was. But it was like, just bung him in a hole.

In the above discussion it is clear that, for these people at least, England is the desirable site for burial. Where the body is laid is symbolically considered to be where that person 'is.' For example, when Jane points out, 'she can never leave now, because he's here,' she is referring to the

cementing of an emotional bond through expressing attachment to material remains (Francis, Kellaheer and Neophytou 2000:44). It demonstrates the ways that 'cemeteries act as magnets, drawing, attaching and rooting the immigrant community to the soil of the new homeland (Francis *et al* 2001:42). In other discussions too, it was common to refer to people who were dead as still somehow there (as Francis *et al* also noted 2000:44). For example, according to Stan, following Ida's death, she continues to 'keep an eye on me you see,' as her ashes were scattered in the sea near their apartment. Yet for others, whilst living in an alien environment is exciting, the thought of being buried there, away from one's family is considered slightly uncomfortable. There is a discomfoting feeling and a sense of trepidation that this is not how things should be done, and that an alien system ('*their way*') is somehow enforced upon them. Particularly salient is the different locations of the burials. Francis, Kellaheer and Neophytou suggest that the soiled or grassed cemetery garden, typical in the UK 'belie[s] the reality of decay and decomposition beneath' (2001:235). In Spain, by contrast, there is little sense of the body merging with nature in above ground niches (Francis, Kellaheer and Neophytou 2000:47). This may be more disturbing for some people to accept.

As revealed in the extract, some feel horror at the difference in burial locations in Spain. A lot of the English migrants I spoke to found these cemeteries 'spooky,' and indeed, I felt this sometimes when confronted with the bareness of the areas, and their explicit, undisguised literal containment of the dead. My own personal surprise have been informed by my experience of visiting English graveyards when growing up in rural Hertfordshire; for me, graveyards were places of nature and beauty to facilitate quiet reflection, quite unlike this alternative system. As Okely points out in the case of traveller gypsies, death is equal to assimilation, as

the dangerous *mulo* (spirit) is sedentarised within a gorgio place (a cemetery) (1983:228). This relates strongly to fears of the dead, yet for migrants in Spain, who conceive of their dead as benign, the fear of assimilation is potentially read as threatening. For migrants who feel themselves as 'guests' it may feel alienating to become sedentarised in a site that is not entirely home.

Whilst these migrants (club-goers who lived on the coast) thought of this system as being 'cold,' not all felt this way. Indeed, those that felt they 'belonged' more to Spain, and were more integrated had come to admire the alternative treatment of death. Putatively more 'open' ways of dealing with death are commented upon, particularly as they complement the personal self-evaluations of the migrants and their intentions. The 'freedom' and acceptance of death through ritual is greatly admired, as well as the 'kamikaze' attitude to life projected onto Spaniards. For instance, Elizabeth, at the All Saint's celebration pointed out to me,

'That's what I love about it. There's no formality, respect is just shown in different ways. When I think of the respect shown in funerals in England, all I think about is people, serious and grey looking, dressed in black and surrounded by so much MUD! Here, look at it, its just one of those things. Everyone comes and goes, smoking and wearing what they like. I just love their attitude.'

Later on she continued, 'its different of course now, the women used to sit up all night in hard chairs. Can you imagine; what devotion! Now they stay until one or two am. It's beautiful though; it reminds me of Christmas. And the atmosphere...it's like a fiesta!' Being one of the few migrants with a burial site reserved for her in the village, she was also a valued member of the *pueblo*. Later in the evening, for instance, she was told by a number of

the Spanish people there that she was part of the village and, as one woman put it, 'one of us.' For another migrant whose children were halfway across the world, his Spanish friends were a source of comfort to him in imaginings of his own death. He pointed out,

'I don't feel part of a community, but I do have people who would advise on my funeral and tell Edith [his wife living with children in the States who he hoped to join at some point]. At least I hope they would tell Edith if anything happened to me. It's very insecure here though...you see I could die out here and no-one knows. But I have some Spanish friends who think I'm like a grand-dad. I know that they would sort it out, stick me in the wall up there and look after the dog.'

Migrants more committed to Spain also may have names and phrases engraved on niches in Spanish. This is just one means by which this alternative cultural system is utilised by migrants. Another town-dwelling migrant, Nancy recounted how one friend had felt uncomfortable at the burial of Nancy's husband David, but she herself had felt very differently. As he was placed in the top niche, the woman had expressed how she couldn't look because it was 'too macabre.' However, Nancy, a devoted Spanophile, reassured her, 'no that's David all right. He always wanted to be at the top.' Nancy incorporated the Spanish burial system into her grieving process for her husband, using it to reflect upon his characteristics. We visited the grave together prior to the All Saint's rituals, where she told me how the funeral had been a nice affair, with the sun shining. 'It was so much nicer than a typical burial in Birmingham...' she commented. Another woman referred to how she had already booked five niches for her family at the cemetery in the village. Although she was only in her fifties, she

expressed this feature as revealing belonging and commitment to the village. She said, 'here's definitely home,' and continued, 'If I move on, I'll stick *Se Vende* (for sale) on them.' This referred to the ways the niches look like and, indeed perhaps represent the mini apartment-blocks (with *se vende* on too) which were proliferating in the area and would be her reason for moving on.

For some migrants, particularly in the villages, the 'freedom' which is located in Spain as a carnivalesque zone (chapter five) spills over into their treatment of death. I heard for instance of one funeral of a migrant who died in mysterious circumstances. It was a riotous affair, in which the coffin was taken into the bar *en route* to the cemetery. I was shown his grave afterwards, and behind the glass where usually figurines of the virgin or artificial flowers are put, there was a number of items of a more personal nature. Not only was there a rolled joint, ashtray and lighter, there was also a card with a number of very strong expletives joking about the nature of his character (headf\*\*\*\*, old c\*\*\*). All were next to a plastic model of the Virgin Mary. Adolescent freedom is articulated through material memorials. Another I heard about was a very non-religious affair, with the music of the 1960s hit 'Nights in White Satin' played. The carnivalesque element is sustained by some mistakes made on gravestones as a result of language misunderstandings. To have such demonstrations in a Catholic environment reveals much about the potential for licentiousness that exists in the Spanish diasporic situation, and confirms the eccentric values of some migrants (chapter nine), even in death.

However, even when Spanish modes of burial are adopted, the blueprint of migrants' pre-existing cultural methods still informs memorial practices. For example, in the cemetery in Freila, Barbara, who had lived in the area

for over thirty years donated a seat opposite her husband's grave. In the UK, donating public utilities as memorials for individuals is an evermore popular custom. Furthermore, although the niches' engraving was in Spanish, the niche itself was a very basic style, much less ornate than the surrounding Spanish graves. Spaniards often use vast arrangements of artificial flowers, religious insignia and phrases, and photos in elaborate displays. Following Reimer, I also noted how graves assert a different national identity, the British in Spain being typically more restrained in the choices of design, opting for the more formal and less decorated. They are usually simple slabs with minimal engraving. One woman objected to the 'big show' of the All Saints. She felt that the demonstration of devotion did not wash, as the relatives did not bother tending the grave at any other time of the year. As an objection, she puts 'ugly old pot plants up there!', much to the dismay of her Spanish housekeeper. Francis, Kellaher and Neophytou point out that in the UK, the choices of stone epithet and garden allow the realisation, reflection and projection of the mourner's own self identity (2001:227). For migrants to Spain, clearly there is an odd mixture of old ways and ideal adopted ways.

Reimers shows that some immigrants in Sweden use funerary rituals that run against the norm of Swedish funerals to reinforce ethnic or cultural identities (1999:149). Indeed in Spain, for some migrants, the funeral may be a final expression of nationalist belonging. Some can be very resonant with the Remembrance Day service, particularly if it is for an ex-serviceman. Hymns sung tend to be of the 'traditional' ilk, and references are made to England. For instance at one service, following one such nationally-based hymn, the priest pointed out, 'let us move from thoughts of our country to the heavenly country,' and he was clearly not referring to Spain. The funerary rites in an Anglican church make explicit the national element



without any choice; for example, prayers refer to 'our Queen.' Some high ranking members are buried in the exclusive (and notoriously expensive) English cemetery in Málaga (see Fig. 2), although, reflecting hierarchy even in death, only a few were granted this privilege. Similarly, even though Nancy was a Catholic and was more open to Spanish burial than some of her friends, it was still important for her that her husband was buried accompanied by the full regalia of the British Legion. She told me how it had been a formal affair with servicemen and the Union Jack draped over the coffin. Perhaps there is an element of this which is resonant with the ideas of being buried in 'a corner of a foreign field,' as so strongly remembered during the Remembrance Service (chapter nine).

Although the means of burial may be accepted, the different formalities of the service may also be difficult to deal with. For instance, Elizabeth was at times full of admiration of the ways that Spaniards dealt with death. However, when a close relative died, she recounted to me how the structures were absolutely intolerable. 'It was awful,' she recalled, 'they had me lined up at the end, shaking hands with all these people. I don't know how on earth I managed to get through it.' She was particularly concerned with the fear of breaking down in public, a norm described by Walter as particularly English (1997). Rather than the Catholic ritual being the comfort it was intended, to a foreigner it was fraught with difficulty. The English way of grief, essentially private, was the means by which Elizabeth wished to have confronted the pain of the death.

For other migrants, commitment is often shown to the *place* through ash-scattering on the landscape or in the sea. This tends to happen for those who feel less attached to the people and community of the Spanish *pueblo*, but still think of Spain as their home. For example, just before Ida's memorial

service on the beach, a discussion came about where a woman stated, 'I've already reserved my spot in the mountains...my daughter knows where I want to be.' Laying their ashes to rest in this manner reveals their own beliefs of belonging; belonging 'in' Spain (the land) but not belonging to the indigenous community. Simultaneously, the appropriation and reinvention of death rituals through the use of different venues, such as leisure sites (Hallam and Hockey 2001:169) expresses more personalised and individual sentiments. Ashes can also be scattered in Britain. Others choose to repatriate the body so that it can be buried in one's country of origin, although this is notoriously expensive. These final two means signify a return to one's 'home' of Britain, usually close to children or relatives. This was objected to in one discussion, as one man said, 'Some don't feel like staying here. Personally, I think that's stupid; if you come to Spain, you come to stay. I'll have my ashes sprinkled at the [local landmark].' Another woman butted in, 'that'll be expensive though,' to which he responded, 'well then, on the rubbish tip...I keep seeing places by the roadside, garbage sites...I'll go there please!' Like him, a small few claim not to care. Roger in the Legion joked, 'They'll put me out in the dustbin, in a garbage bag if I'm lucky. What does it matter, I won't know anything about it, will I?'" The happy-go-lucky attitude to life in the present (chapters five and eight) is jokingly extended to imaginings of death.

Certainly there is an interpretation of freedom in memorials; for example, Ida's ashes were going to be sprinkled in the sea in a boat by her husband and the vicar, who comically did not swim! It was only on the day that the idea was abandoned because of strong winds. Even on this occasion, in the wind, a large crowd gathered, and we followed an Anglican order of service and sung English hymns. There was a touching idiosyncrasy about the service, with one woman blowing a whistle as the wreaths were chopped up

in the fierce sea. At this, one friend of Ida's pointed out, 'it's like us, isn't it? Going back to nature.' Somehow this was more in line with cultural ideas of merging with nature than above-ground interment.

### PART THREE

#### Continuity and Continuance - Societal Reactions

In chapter eight I point out how strategies to create an image of permanence are at work in the negotiation of time. The frequency of death could be read as puncturing that image sustained through ritual and repetition. Yet, what I show is that although for the individual, the image of timelessness is ultimately flawed, the continuity of the community itself is still maintained through death. According to Bauman, in facing death, a certain degree of cultural creativity is in order (1992:4), and in Spain much work is put into maintaining a sense of [diasporic] societal continuity. Death anxiety is managed by the collectivisation of mortality (*ibid.*:123), in which individual biological mortality can be transcended by the construction of a notion of 'group immortality' (*ibid.*:124).

The various ritual means of dealing with death have been widely studied in anthropology, most notably by Van Gennep (1960), Hertz (1960), Turner (1969), Huntingdon and Metcalf (1979) and Bloch and Parry (1982). In this section, I rely on Hockey's exposition (2002), which points to a distinction in emphasis between their approaches. She explores how Van Gennep treats ritual as a regulated process which ensures that society suffers no harm through the potential disruption of transition (Hockey 2002:212). However,

Bloch and Parry and Turner disagree that ritual has a 'protective function' (*ibid.*:216). Instead, it is creative and works to transform and produce society, presenting death as the renewal of life (Bloch and Parry 1982:5,42). Here, society is 'an *outcome* of ritual practices' (*ibid.*:217). In this final section, I show how death functions precisely in this latter manner. The society, at times a fragmented and disparate group, nonetheless finds death an important event which 'gells' the community together. In very few places, could Bloch and Parry's assertion be any more true:

'if we can speak of a reassertion of the social order at the time of death, this social order is a *product* of rituals of the kind we consider rather than their cause....mortuary rituals themselves being an occasion for *creating* that 'society' as an apparently external force' (1982: 6, quoted in Hockey 2002:217).

Death does not destabilise society. On the contrary, it is through death practices that continuity is maintained and the society tells itself what it is.

Firstly, the means of dealing with death ironically confirms the cyclical nature of time and orientation to the present, through an extension of the sense of routine to the occurrence of death. For one, death is often explained as a stealthy gradual process. Joy said, 'I feel like I am dying slowly...Look,' pulling her skin from her bones, 'its death here, here and here, creeping up.' Furthermore, when death occurred, I was struck by the way in which it was 'tallied' and referred to as a repetitive process. Marjorie, for instance, referred to a recent death as, 'the third one this year.' In my second year of fieldwork four close friends died, as one woman put it, 'one after the other.' I had found this an upsetting surprise when I came back after a break in fieldwork. A small group (of women) discussed this at the funeral of one of them, and one woman stated, 'It's terrible, its been one shock after another,' and ranked one, a suicide, as the worst of all the shocks. After a small

discussion, the chairwoman stood up and said, 'That's it, enough! I don't want to hear any more. Really no more!' Yet, as I discussed in chapter eight, the constant arrival of new members of the community ensures that deaths are not disruptive to the overall continuity and reproduction of society. Furthermore, death is articulated as 'natural' because of the older ages of members.

As such, although deaths are met with immense sadness, there is a fairly pragmatic response from members of the community to them in the sense of 'that's how things go.' This varies according to gender; women who realise they will probably live longer refer more to the unpredictable nature of death. One woman explained, 'I will stay here as long as possible, until I kick the bucket.' For other women, a return to England is imagined to bring death. As Edie pointed out, 'if you make me go back, I'll curl up and die.' Another stated, 'if I went to England, it would have to be in a wooden coat.' Notice that in both expressions, the move would be a forced one. Men, in contrast deal explicitly with the realisation that they will die at a particular foreseen point, often theorising about the moment. Don pointed out,

'I know the time's coming for me to die. I'm very rational about it. Its all genetically programmed you see, I've got eight more years and I plan for that moment. I'll die before my wife, although she doesn't like to talk about it.'

The same sentiment was repeated by many men when the subject of death came up.

Continuity is maintained because the event of a death brings the (often fragmenting) migrant community together. As Young and Cullen point out, 'Death is *the* common experience which can make all members of the human race feel their common bonds and their common humanity' (Cullen and

Young 1996:201). Many migrants pointed out how when a death occurs, there is more help and support than one would expect elsewhere; they are given much well-meant advice on coping, especially informed by others' personal experience. Bob pointed out, 'When a spouse dies, there's more camaraderie, more so than at home.' Furthermore, good attendances at funerals (or memorial services) ensure a good expression of solidarity. One man pointed out that when his wife died four years ago, he got 'so much attention it was embarrassing!'

Following a death, one of the major decisions one must make is whether to stay or go. Some of the advice is aimed at trying to keep the spouse there. One woman recounted to me her discussion with a newly bereaved woman, saying, 'I told her she shouldn't make any snap decisions. But of course to her, the house feels empty and big and she has the decision whether to sell or stay.' She then generalised this sentiment to the wider group of women. 'Besides, you can't always be a burden to your children now, can you? I mean you can move back with them, but they might not want you there all the time.' Another corroborates this observation noted in chapter six: 'I always said I'd never trouble them...I'd hate to feel a burden, they've got their own lives to get on with, their own things to do, they don't want to feel like they have to care for you.' The encouragement is to stay in the society, where other friends will help.

In the village, when a German man died, I was very touched by the common bond and feeling of solidarity that the death evoked. The man in question had been a bit of a loner, who passed much of his time alone at a bar. Following his death, his son, a young man in his late twenties came over from Germany. He was warmly embraced in the village by the migrants, who worked together to make things easier for him. For instance, people

drove him long distances to sort out the paperwork involved in the death. A memorial drink was arranged, and for the week in which the man was there, he was cooked for, invited along to events and looked after. A common bond is displayed at funerals. To give another example, when Wanda died, her husband could not afford to pay for a wake following the scattering of ashes. The local English bar rallied round, laying on wine, cheese and biscuits, and once the husband had left, contributions were donated by the funeral-attenders to share the cost between all of us. At this stage, the clubs and members of the community serve as surrogate families<sup>iv</sup>. As Susan confirmed, 'I always say the American club is my family.'

Of course, there are also certain problems intrinsic to this particular community which perhaps make death harder to deal with on an individual basis. For one, there is a problem of letting everybody know in the disparate networks that a death has occurred. Often, one does not wish to exhaustively telephone members of the social networks and, instead rely on word of mouth (or radio broadcasts) to give details of arrangements. Following a death, the spouse may distance themselves from attending the clubs to grieve, but may find it difficult when they rejoin the groups, particularly as some people (who visit the clubs infrequently) are not aware. Accordingly, they may not modify their behaviour to the newly bereaved spouse. For instance, on one occasion, when a man had died, his Swedish friend, arriving back from a visit to Sweden had rung up to ask him and his wife out to dinner. Only at that point did she embarrassingly find out that the husband had in fact died. The widow involved told me later, 'that's what's so difficult...nobody knows.' Obviously the friends themselves are also upset as they miss the memorial service and the chance to say their

goodbyes. The looseness of the network contrasts with the special and temporary solidity displayed at the funerals.

The regularity of the occurrence of death may aid grieving, as it reintroduces on a regular basis the possibility to reflect on and articulate one's own personal experiences. For instance, at one funeral, two unacquainted women, one a migrant and the other a visitor, struck up a discussion based on the fact that their husbands had both died at a young age. They pointed out, 'you never know do you,' and 'that its such a shock.' They then used this to reflect on their current good living and the importance of dying after having led a 'full' life. One of the women said, 'Well I hope I've got a bit longer to live yet.' To this, the two other women agreed, 'oh yes, you look very healthy.' 'Its this stuff isn't it?' she said, raising her glass of wine, '...but, well, I think I've certainly got a long time left.'

During my time in Spain, there were rumours of an informal 'widows' circle' starting up to overcome the difficulties of always going out on one's own. In practice, I do not think this got off the ground, but the principle probably is still upheld, with small numbers of widows joining together for some functions. That said, amongst the community, following a death there is usually an initial strong social concern for the widow that she must not become a burden to others (particularly children), but continue staying where all the friends can look after her. Often, other widows 'adopt' other women, and they create their own social networks, in isolation from mainstream couples. Often, the actual death of a spouse is seen to revitalise the lifestyle of a partner left behind. As one observer put it,

'Look at Judy now though, always bounding from one place to another. Its lovely to see her like that though. She wasn't like



it before her husband died. And I'm pleased for her, so many widows around here, sit and get more depressed, but she didn't do that.'

The adjustment is hard however. As Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson point out, 'Spouses who love each other strongly may have a larger fraction of daily habit linked to the presence and activities of the other,' (1976:116) and the emptiness felt in a foreign country may seem more extant. As Betty pointed out, 'despite all the activity, you still get lonely. But that would be the same wherever you go. But yes, loneliness is a problem when your partner dies.'

In the minds and memories of husbands and wives, the individual is referred to, but otherwise deceased individuals disappear gradually from the scene. There is no real material marking of migrants' existence, apart from in one rare case at the Legion in which an obituary of a famous member is posted on the wall. Because of his status and longevity in Spain, he will live on there as an inspiring legend to those who knew him. Of all the clubs, the Legion is perhaps the exception in remembering the dead. At the annual meeting, someone reads out the members that have died (on the occasion I attended, ten people had died). These deaths are indexed to the personal states of members and the state of the club as a whole. The chairman for example, pointed out after reading the names, 'It's hard as we're getting older, but thanks for all coming - good to see the old faithfuls are here.' Yet, walking around the *cementerios*, I was struck by the relatively small number of foreign graves for the numbers of migrants in the area. Materially then, there is often not an enduring marker of individuals. This reflects the Western social ideal that, 'the deceased cannot and indeed

should not be seen to participate in society' (Hallam, Hockey and Howarth 1999:3).

Exceptions to this general rule are people who had distinguishing personalities, and were referred to because of the memorable things they had done. These references served to enforce the values and ideals of the expat society as slightly off-beat and daring. Yet the erasure of past members of the society is somewhat afforded by the high turnover of people; of course newcomers do not remember people who have died before their arrival. There are new people arriving constantly who know little about the previous cohort, very much confirming the idea of the society as existing 'in the here and now.' To minimise the immediate impact of any individual's death, their roles are quickly filled in. Glen told me about a funeral he had attended, whereupon he was immediately given his 'job' (at the urbanisation's community office). He explained, 'I thought I'd got rid of my job at last, then I went down to the community office for the AGM to be told, 'you are now the community secretary.' Clearly, despite the upsetting nature of death, society goes on.

## CONCLUSION

### **Migrants' Negotiations of Death in Spain**

The fragility of belonging to Spain is exposed through the painful confrontation with death. Decisions about death reveal ultimate attachment to place, and existing culturally-specific understandings of dealing with death inform migrants' behaviours. Whilst it is clear throughout the discussion that the adoption, partial adoption, or planned adoption of

certain 'Spanish' features occurs in migrants' choices (often out of necessity), certain previous structures again reintroduce themselves in this domain. Ultimately, in the case of death, the shedding of certain cultural dispositions is less easy; old habits die hard. Through attitudes to death and burial, the continuum of belonging between Spain and England can be read clearly. In particular, death is an event where the 'community' draws together and presents itself to itself. In the next chapter, I reveal more about the particular nature of this 'community.'

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**Notes:**

<sup>i</sup> As the site was described wryly by one informant!

<sup>ii</sup> Caro Barajo also points out '*Los vascos usan la palabra 'ilerri' para designar el cementerio y esta palabra vale tanto como 'pueblo muerto' o de los muertos.*' (1979:72)(the basque people use the word 'ilerri' to describe the cemetery, and this means the same as dead village or [village] of the dead')

<sup>iii</sup> Candles are very important in Spanish funerary systems as it was thought that the dead needed light, money and food '*para hacer un paso decisivo en el otro mundo*' ('to make a decisive passage in the other world') (Caro Baroja 1979:75).

<sup>iv</sup> Indeed, as I have noted in chapter six, and as Dwyer points out, this extends to the reliance on friends for healthcare (2000:367).

**Chapter 11 -**  
**COMMUNITY/INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS**  
**Small Politics**

*'Anyway, almost nobody here is who they say they are at first. They aren't even who somebody else thinks they are. In this place you get at least three versions of everything, and if you're lucky one of them is true. That's if you're lucky.'*

Margaret Atwood (1996:149) *Bodily Harm*.

*'There are some faces that tell me everything at once. Yours don't convey anything.'*

Jean-Paul Sartre (1989[1944]:15) *Huis Clos (No Exit)*.

**Introduction**

*'If you don't have a reputation, you'll get one anyway.'*

So told me Lynn Motson, the owner of a house in the centre of a small village marked by the tiled description 'casita de that Lynn Motson' (See Fig.1). She was not alone in mentioning the heightened significance of people's talk, or gossip in migrants' interaction. Throughout my time in Spain, whilst becoming more and more involved in social life in the capacities of both 'gossip' and 'gossiped-about,' I became intrigued to know why gossip was such a vital part of life there. Constantly, I was told there was a lot of 'back-biting,' 'back-stabbing' and 'niggling' in the expat community. When I probed into why, the standard answer, as elsewhere in the world, one might assume, was that it arose out of the boredom of other's. It is a phenomenon that exists because *others* had nothing better to



Fig. 1. 'Casita de that...'  
A Reference to Reputations!

do<sup>i</sup>. Yet, it seemed to me, that whilst gossip was regarded as not something to be seen to be engaged in (people were embarrassed if exposed as a 'gossiper'), most people *did* involve themselves in its 'small politics,' and enjoyed indulging in the practice.

The accusation that people talked out of an excess of free time was valid to an extent, but this did not satisfy me entirely. If gossip arose out of others' boredom, why did people take it to heart? Why did *they*, if they were not bored, themselves engage in it? In effect, why was this informal talk such an integral part of migrants' lives? Gossip is in fact far more than the trivial talk of the bored in Spain; its importance lies in its centrality as a motif expressing important statements about migrants' lives. Gossip reflects certain particular structural and cultural bases underpinning 'the community.' It represents central ambivalences and tensions of migrants' positions, as developed in the earlier parts of the thesis. In effect, gossip exists precisely because of its ambiguity in being both 'con-' and 'de'-structive of community and structure. Meyer Spacks points out,

'Gossip, like sex, embodies positive force. Its energies...lend themselves simultaneously to the destruction and sustenance of human ties' (1985:25).

Secondly, I explain its importance as deriving from the local context, indicating the small-scale nature of intercultural processes through migration.

Throughout the thesis, a common theme is the tensions inherent in achieving 'desired' (as opposed to 'rejected') ideals following migration (good ageing, leisure, unstructured time-use and so on). The anti-structural desires are essentially double-edged, bringing the need for structure to clarify ambiguities. Yet the social context greatly influences how such

tensions are worked out. Essentially, this is a very social society, in which, given the absence of roles and status markers, reputation is everything. Yet, again this brings immense contradictions. For to pander to others' opinion is to renege on one's own sense of individuality, a personal value that is defended zealously (see chapters three, six, seven and nine).

Small politics, or, in the layman's term 'gossip,' is a motif *par excellence* to deal with such tension. It expresses the desire for experiencing one's essential individuality whilst still respecting the inescapability of some kind of social belonging. Gossip exists in the 'grey zone,' representing both structural and anti-structural features. In one reading, gossip is the natural consequence of community living, an expression of 'the bigger collective voice,' above and beyond any individual. Yet similarly, gossip is a ludic, negative and uncontrollable (anti-structural) feature of life which at same time. The ambivalence of its meaning goes part way to explain both its propensity to flourish in social circumstances, and the ambivalent attitude held by people towards it, in which it is both enjoyed and despised.

However, this is only one explanation of its centrality. It also exists because of particularities of the specific location and context. Gossip exists in Spain because it always existed there, in the village, in the town, as the first migrants came and as they continue to come. It permeated into the migrants' lifestyle following contact between foreigners and locals. The fact that it expresses the central ambiguity displayed by migrants perhaps explains why it was not rejected but continues to flourish, even in sectors of the society in which little contact exists now. Thus, whilst the social bases of the migrant community may predispose its members to gossip, the setting of interculturality shaped and influenced the form and mode that it has taken.

## I. The Anthropological Debates. Gossip and Individuals vs. Community

Before I begin my ethnographic analysis, I must first explain what is meant by 'gossip.' Not least, it is seen as a mundane and banal feature of everyday life. Nevertheless, it is negatively evaluated; seen as a breach of courtesy, manners and tact (Bergmann 1992:20) and as demonstrative of 'spitefulness and petty-mindedness' (Zinovieff 1991:120). However, whilst gossip is perceived of as a morally objectionable practice (*ibid.*:97), it flourishes despite all sanctions. For, at the same time, it is seen as a source for enjoyment (Bergmann 1992:97). Like Gilmore, I analyse gossip as not one concrete thing, but 'a diverse range of linguistic behaviours all of which have something in common' (Gilmore 1992:58). The element that they have in common is that this verbal behaviour has a definite 'affect.' Gossip has a necessary motive and intent; it is an individually chosen action with a firm societal consequence (*ibid.*:60). Individual words have a pervasive impact on people's views (and thus by implication future behaviours) of both themselves and how they view their community (Brison 1992:14).

The work of Gluckman in the early 1960s properly established gossip as a social form worthy of analysis in its own right. In accordance with the functionalist school of thought, he suggested that gossip and scandal have positive virtues. First, they function to mark off individuals as 'members' of a community (Gluckman 1963:308). By talking about someone, one is acknowledging them to be within one's sphere, and thus an 'insider' within the community. Second, in addition to defining the group, it serves to maintain the group by imparting and upholding group norms (Brison 1992:11). Community is maintained through gossip, as villagers who are at odds with each other can still maintain an image of harmony and amity (Gluckman 1963:312). Thus, for Gluckman, 'Gossip is not idle: it has social



functions and it has rules which are rigidly controlled' (*ibid.*:312). It marks out group identities, ensures the maintenance of the group's norms, and perhaps most importantly is the means of mitigating tensions between different factions of the community.

Such an overtly positive and causal depiction of the function of gossip was a sitting target for critique. In the seventies, Robert Paine, departed from this understanding of gossip in terms of a 'system,' instead considering gossip as a purposeful 'action,' utilised by the individual in the 'micro-politics' of reputation (1967). For Paine and others, (i.e. Bailey (1971) and Haviland 1977), gossip is a method enlisted for political purposes, in which individuals rationally choose to defame their target. Information is used creatively for personal gain (Bailey 1971:3). Gossip is a tactical game of information management in which people can 'do down' and accuse their rivals (Paine 1967:279). It does not have the latent function identified by Gluckman, but is calculatingly and purposively used for self-interest (*ibid.*:280).

Understandings of gossip are clearly rooted in the age-old social science debate of 'community' vs. 'the individual.' Does gossip work as an abstractive 'invisible fist of public opinion' (Gilmore 1992:52) to maintain the social group (see Szwed 1966), or does gossip simply serve to preserve individual self-interest (Wilson 1974:94)? Symbolic interactionists (such as Haviland 1977) and others such as Wilson and Gilmore depart from dichotomising, exploring instead how *both* explanations can be valid. Like them, I assert that it is unnecessary to fall in line with one scheme or another. It is *precisely* the dual function of gossip that explains its pervasiveness amongst the migrants, a group characterised by a tension between structure and anti-structure. As Wilson suggests, and I agree,

'Surely it is time to think beyond impassable antitheses....can we not try to understand the relationship between the individual venting his passion and serving his self interest and the exercise of social control by a group over its members in the search for unity, both through the 'game' of gossip?' (Wilson 1974:93).

The following discussion explores the ambiguous nature of gossip in confirming community and individual identity.

## PART ONE

### Individual Identity and Community.

#### I.i. Gossip as a 'community' phenomenon

At my soon-to-be local in Freila in the first week of fieldwork I had a long discussion about my project with Pete, a man I had known from previous visits:

Pete: The people in Tocina are bad....I mean, its such a gossipy goldfish bowl down there.

Caroline: Oh, great, what am I letting myself in for?

Pete: No, its Ok, they're a funny lot. Every now and then I go down, and immediately I am filled in with the gossip about everyone. But, that's what you get if you choose to live in a goldfish bowl.

Gossip, whenever it was talked about as a generic 'thing,' was always portrayed as a mass phenomenon, a necessary consequence of people living *en masse*. It is seen as the negative face of 'community,' in which people nosily pry into others' lives in a claustrophobic physical space. Jill, a

Liverpudlian migrant (who has since left Spain) told me that whilst there are very good sides to the migrant community, there are downsides related to its 'incestuousness.' Percival observes that similar sentiments were expressed by people in sheltered housing, in which gossip was 'described as integral to social interaction in these settings' (2000:306).

Talking about 'community' however could open a whole can of anthropological worms. For there has been a long history and many pages filled debating the usefulness and precise meaning of the term. Cohen sums up the difficulties.

'even used descriptively across and within different societies to denote groups of people who live 'with' or close to each other, 'community' is so vague as to be virtually meaningless' (Cohen 2002:169).

However, as Cohen advocates, 'let's not waste time and energy on semantic neuroses about the word' (*ibid.*:170). I use the word 'community' here as a meaningful term for people in Spain as it was used (without definitional precision) in context. Roughly this accords to Rapport's proposition that 'community' is conceived of as a fund of behavioural forms, a sum of repeated and routinised actions (Rapport 1993:162). Cohen (2002) informs us that the fact that 'community' is not universally definable, should not necessarily lead to its abandonment. He recognises that, 'It doesn't follow that we should ban it from use - only that it is futile to try and theorise community other than in its particular uses' (2002:169).

Whilst it is clear that the notion of 'community' is espoused positively (see chapter nine in articulations of 'the international community' and 'the English community'), 'community' is also fearful in its perceived capacity to wield social control. One must be subject to others' standards and opinions,

to be under others' control. This controlling threat contradicts the desires for autonomy and self regulation. For example, on one occasion, I was privy to a discussion between Barbara, a woman deeply involved in the retirement community, who found warmth, friendship and comfort in club-life, and her friend, Janet, an independent ex-social worker who was less inspired. Both lived in flats in Tocina. I repeat our conversation:

Caroline: How was the bowling club trip?

Barbara: Yes, it was good....Of course it was a shame that I couldn't sit with Janet and William (Janet's partner) because they'd allocated seats [on the coach].

Caroline: (surprised) What? They told you where to sit?

Barbara: Well, it saves problems.

Janet: Well, that's really silly, I think. Couldn't they just do it on a first come first served basis?

Janet felt little inclination to what she perceived as the constrictions of community-belonging; she 'had been there, done all that.' Despite the desire for privacy, speculation about others' lives continues. For example, during fieldwork, I went to speak on the radio about my research topic. During the course of the discussion, I mentioned that I assured confidentiality to interviewees. Marge, the disc jockey, told me,

'That's a good thing you said what you did. People all know each other here you see. I find it difficult to get people to even come on the radio, they won't come on and say anything in case people recognise their voice. We call this place Rumoursville.'

Indeed, the propensity of community control and surveillance (even in a documented and institutionalised way) is indicated by the titles of the regional sections in the Coastal Gazette: 'Herradura whispers,' (by 'Adam

Hearsay') 'Almunecar echoes' (by 'Sir Veil Lance'), 'Torre twitterings,' 'Axarquía briefs,' and 'Nerja Noises' (by the moles) (see Fig. 2).

In summary, feelings towards community are extremely ambivalent. On the one hand, the warmth of strong social ties between friends and neighbours attracts new migrants and makes life enjoyable once there. Migrants pull together and help each other in a spirit of equality ((O'Reilly 2000a:127-129) and King, Williams and Warnes (2000:148-152)). However, there is little written on the Janus face of the community. Alongside the warmth and support it can offer, it also threatens intrusion on one's privacy.

### **I.ii. Individual Identity and the 'escape' from gossip and community**

Living closely amongst others also potentially threatens the central ambition in the lives of most migrants, the dream of realising one's individuality. As I explained in chapter three, the key defining characteristic of the foreign community is that of 'a community of individuals.' Some people seek to distance themselves from the mass of public opinion and the sanctions on choice it may impose. Campo and village dwellers in particular spatially distance themselves from these perceived traits, locating them as the properties of those 'on the coast' (echoing the antipathy of individualistic middle class inhabitants of suburbia towards those living in the collectivities of council estates in the UK as detailed by Oliver, Davis and Bentley (1981:104-121). Freedom is imagined to be inland (see Pete's explanation 1.i). One migrant asserted that one found on the coast the sort of people '[she] left England to get away from.' Other less flattering descriptions were given of its 'fakeness,' or as one informant described it as 'like one giant performance and theatre.'

**herradura**  
*whispers*  
by adam hearsay

**almuñécar**  
*echoes*  
by sir veil lance

**torra**  
*twitterings*

**axarquía**  
*briefs*

**nerja**  
*noises*  
by the moles

Fig. 2—Subheadings in *the Coastal Gazette*  
(‘the Light-Hearted Toast to Life on the  
Coast!’) July 2001

The perceived difference between the foreign communities of Freila and Tocina cannot be overstated. As Martin, one 'campo-dweller' said, 'Tocina may only be six km away, but it might as well be six hundred in terms of the differences in people.' The distinctiveness is maintained through the strong sense of visual separation (See Fig. 3). Both during the day and at night the mass coastal strip can be seen, in opposition to the dotted and isolated houses of the campo. The physical proximity of coastal dwellers, living 'on top of each other' is read as evidence of their conformist nature, 'following the crowd.' The more spatially separated *campo* dweller, living 'out in the sticks' describes him/herself as more real, through living individualised and a somehow more authentic existence. To steal a phrase from Rapport, 'their modal working community, the 'group' to which they in effect consistently belong, is themselves alone' (1993:75). Migrants describe how they live a day to day existence with 'normal Spanish people,' engaged in the real world of work rather than leisure. As Barbara, a younger woman building a house in the campo with her older husband said,

'On the coast, everyone gets in each other's pockets. It isn't normal. I have a normal life. I work doing the jobs *in the way I want to*' (my italics).

For campo-dwellers, gossip is read as a concomitant consequence of coastal living. Yet this is not true. In the next part, I explain how gossip, in its ambivalence, is also a necessary consequence of the expressions of individualism.

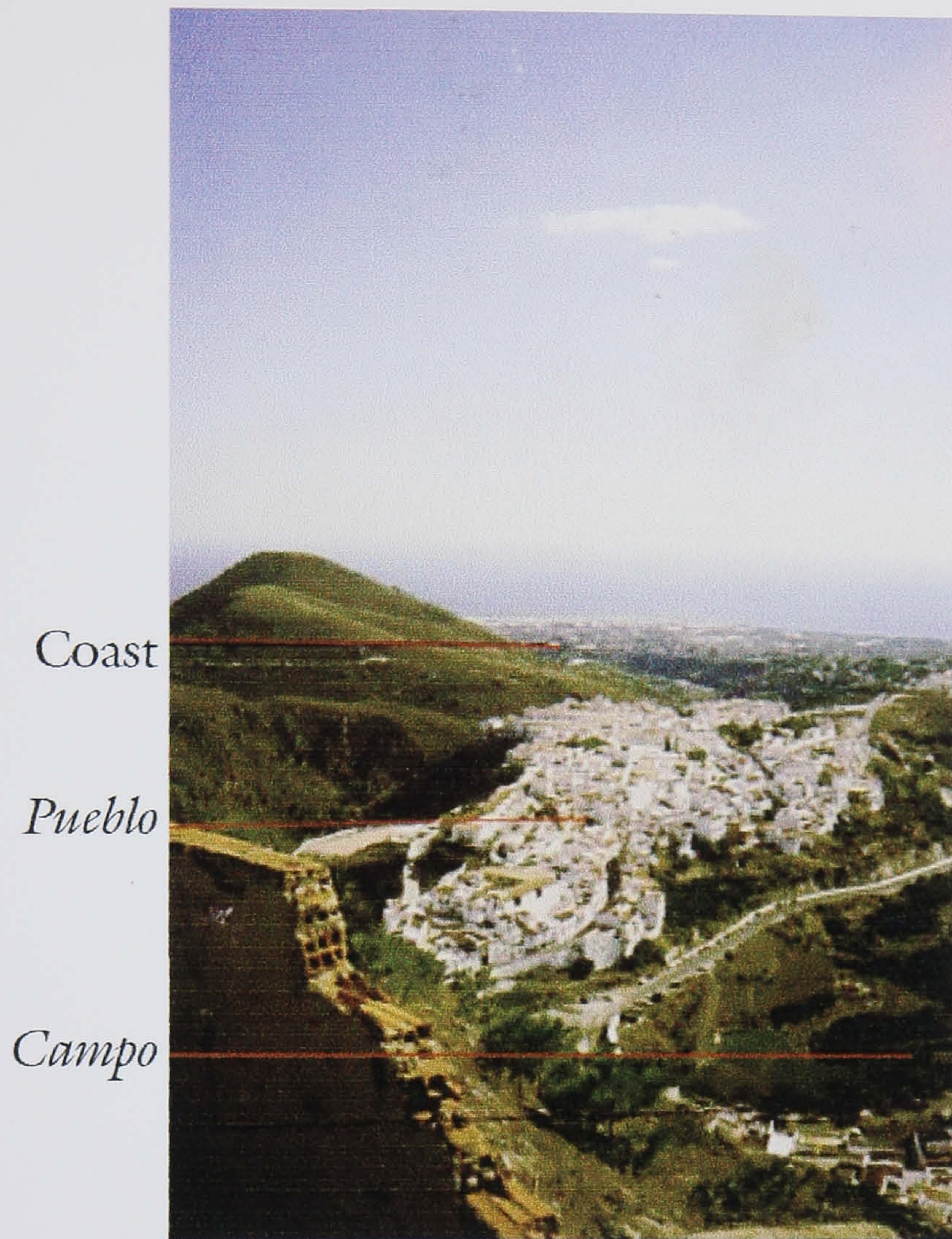


Fig. 3. The Visual Separation of Inland and Coast

Fig. 4—The Physical Layout of the Village. Proximity of Others.





### I.iii. Anti-community: Individual Identity and the *Need for Gossip*

The celebrated value of individualism in this society has intrinsic problems that invite a necessary predilection to gossip. Gossip counteracts the personal and societal consequences of expressions of individual distinctiveness. However, it sustains because of its dualistic nature, simultaneously confirming individual status and importance through the strength of the gossip utterance. I conclude the section with a detailed example, demonstrating the way that gossip works to keep overt expressions of individuality in check. Yet, the rebellious naughtiness of gossip, and the relatively private engagement in the practice mean that one does not renege on one's own sense of individual identity by indulging in gossip; in many ways, gossip can confirm one's individual distinctiveness.

One quotation succinctly reveals the fears of *both* community and individual orientation:

'I don't know who to trust. Maybe I've made a mistake coming out here? Sometimes, I feel like turning away all my visitors as I need to be alone. Sometimes I do and it doesn't worry me at all. Yet, I try not to do it too much, as I'm frightened that nobody would come at all and I'd die alone.' *Judy, village migrant.*

As the sentiment reveals, despite the distancing from the perceived claustrophobic, constricting image of community, there is a necessity, even for 'more individual' foreigners to feel part of a social group. People still need social approval and validation in one form or another (Jerome 2000:206). 'Community,' however vague and weak the concept, still exists. Even the appreciation of one's own individual distinctiveness necessitates

the existence of a wider social milieu. Talk gives proof of one's existence and confirms one's value in the eyes of others. Rapport states,

'The denser the relations, the more the evidence of one's own existence, the greater the significance of that existence, the more exact the nature of that existence is made' (1993:151).

In the absence of work or economic ties, the 'social fabric' is comprised of individual friendships. Friendships are indicative of anti-structural *comunitas* more than structure for they are undertaken voluntarily and free from obligations (Allan 1989:17). They are non-exploitative and are based on reciprocity rather than 'broader structural imperatives,' (*ibid.*:20). Bell and Coleman point out how the idiom of kinship is used to describe friendships (1999:7); in Spain, migrants' close friends are regularly described as 'like a sister/mother/brother.' According to Bok, the revelation of personal secrets is a 'near-universal urge' amongst human-beings (Bok 1981:79), and friends act as listeners. This involves an exposure, potentially leading to feelings of personal vulnerability (*ibid.*:80). Through talk about oneself, one reveals material for future gossip.

As I identified in chapter seven, there are an infinite number of friendships in the heightened social existence of the migrant/tourist context. To illustrate the point, I refer to a personal extract from my fieldnotes:

'On the way down to the British Legion, I see people I've never seen before walking along, and I say hello. That's what you do in a holiday place isn't it? Its so easy to make friends here, almost too easy. I think about the countless times that I have been involved in long conversations with strangers here that began absolutely out of the blue. And then I think about the friends I have here, and realise that I have got friends, but in this context, it's the people that you have the least differences with rather than those that you could have the most in common with, because they are not here.'

Given the cosmopolitan ethos (see chapter nine), 'the scene' is very open to others. Certainly, acquaintances, if not friendships are easily and quickly formed (O'Reilly 2000b:244). On one occasion, for example, I was sitting at a 'breakaway' faction of the American club (see chapter five), who had decided to meet on the odd occasion away from the main group. A man walked into the bar after having been told to come there by a member who had, by chance, heard him speaking in an American accent in a supermarket. The members greeted him like a long lost friend and he was accepted with warmth and friendliness.

Of course in a context where there is an almost infinite number of potential friendships, as Allan suggests, gossip, ridicule and subtle aggression become the only means of breaking bonds (1979:39). In fact, amongst the more senior migrants they can be techniques to limit one's social world. Beth, an American described how Judy, the longest foreign resident in the village ignored her when she made friendship overtures when she arrived. As in Rapport's study of rural Northern English people (1993), older offcomers guard against new offcomers and assert their seniority and longevity. In a strange perversion of belonging, in Spain there is a sense of 'local absolutism' that is not based on any primordial territorial belonging. Original migrants themselves employ a 'morality of stasis' (Rapport 1997:75) against newcomers invading their home.

In the absence of other resources for exchange, gossip itself becomes *the* tradeable resource; to know something about others in the community makes one desirable for company. Signals of sociability such as displays of courtesy, warmth and generosity are the main currency in the absence of economic exchanges. Problems abound, namely because these signals allow for a greater possibility for misunderstanding (Bailey 1971:113). Social

exchanges such as favours, borrowings and invitations create unspecified return obligations, for which there is no exact price in terms of a single quantitative medium of exchange (*ibid.*:102). This can and does lead to all sorts of verbal scandal surrounding conceived unequal reciprocities.

Through gossip one learns how to play and win the social game (*ibid.*:2), so as to keep one's own privacy, yet learn enough about others to exist comfortably in their presence. One chooses to reveal things or not, as Rapport states, 'individual differentiation depends on what one does not reveal or seek to share' (1993:175). In gossip conversations, bonds that are voluntaristically undertaken between partners are established. And shared 'gossip-tales' denote a special trust. If the gossip tale is 'between us' or 'only for you' (Bergmann 1992:69), it implies an exclusivity that does not contradict one's imaginings of oneself as 'outside of the crowd.' Simultaneously, participants know that gossip at the same time as creating intimacy, reveals the essence of other's individuality by making them seem strange and worthy of talk.

The problem of individual freedom and privacy is that others are exercising it too. This is very uncomfortable, for still one wishes to know who shares one's immediate vicinity. Given the context in which it is desirable to 'keep oneself to oneself,' the importance and currency of personal information about others becomes more esteemed; the culture of privacy encourages gossip. Bok suggests,

'Gossip increases whenever information is both scarce and desirable - whenever people want to find out more about others than they are able to' (Bok 1981:91).

Through gossip and speculation, one can force the unknowable to be made known. For instance, one man, John, known as a recluse, was amongst the first small, cosmopolitan set of migrants. He explained how there was a lot of 'in-fighting' amongst early migrants. 'Our opinions just did not meet,' he told me, 'and anyway, my wife and I just came here to retire to ourselves, grow things in the garden, that sort of thing.' This made him all the more interesting. When I told one lady that I was to visit John that afternoon, I was told, 'oh him, yes, well I'd be keen to know all about him, I know nothing about him, even though he's been here for years. He's a mystery, that one...'

Others are a threat in the sense that, 'no-one knows who you really are' (as observed also by O'Reilly 2000a:112). Little is known of each other's backgrounds. Kate observed, 'You'll never know the true person. Everyone puts it on. They'll tell you something, and you're sure that its porkie-pies.' Suspicion pervades new interactions and can even enter existing relationships. O'Reilly argues,

'There are problems of mistrust and doubt in a situation where personal histories are not shared and futures are ambiguous,' (2000b:246).

Such a situation can foster a sense of paranoia that others are trying to find out about you, as indeed they often are. Edna told me, 'people here ask a lot about your past, why you came and what brought you here. That galls me a bit.' Yet I was also told by some that I should try and find out exactly these things, and I was offered advice on how to go about it. Many times I was told, 'dig deep enough and you'll find it,' with 'it' being the deep secret that had brought people there. I was even offered tips on tactics to get research data, the most oft-cited being 'to get them drunk and then the truth will come out!' No wonder there was a sense of paranoia; I was recounted one

story in which a woman was even convinced that her husband had spies out for her from the CIA when he went away.

I was not immune from talk about what I was up to. My friend Jill found out that I had a friend over to stay. I asked her how she knew. She laughed mysteriously, and joked, 'I have my spies out and about!' In the face of such interest, there can be reluctance to give too much away, again confirming the notion that one keeps things hidden, or one is putting on a face. John remarked, 'I keep myself a closed book, I won't let too much of myself away.' Judy, in a recent correspondence remarked, 'I find it very difficult to reveal anything private.' Another friend told me about her new landlady, 'she's OK, at least I think she is...I mean I don't really know her that well, and you know, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover,' and on various occasions I was warned not to 'be sucked in' by seemingly innocent people. It makes one prone to insularity, as Mary, a young woman pointed out,

'you can't confide in people here. I wouldn't let personal things away, because you don't know how others take it. For you, it could be really serious, but another person could read it lightly. You all take things in different ways don't you?'

Added to the linguistic and cultural difficulties are the complex mixtures of backgrounds, ages, and also the widespread use of drugs and alcohol which complicate interaction. As Vivienne said,

'everyone's functioning on different levels. People come with their own structures and ways of doing things. What can I say, we're in this pot, all cooking slowly, waiting to blow!'

In a society where socialising is a key activity, it is believed that pleasure and new sensations can be 'acquired' (Finkelstein 1989:171). This encourages a social competitiveness based upon cultural capital (*ibid.*:121), as

demonstrated through manners, fashion, style and civility. These very basics which govern 'civil sociability' are seen to reflect the individual's value and worth. Actions take on significance as being a performance. Clichés, habits, images and routine mannerisms (according to notions of fashion and civility) become indistinguishable from the person<sup>ii</sup>. Indeed, Denise, the young woman told me how status lies in how far you can be entertaining and outrageous. She said, 'you have to prove how 'social' you can be, in terms of how well you can entertain, how creative and different your cuisine is. It also makes you important if you do outrageous things, like stripping off your clothes...' The problem of social life is that if one is an actor, one is also routinely concealing what one wishes, thereby introducing the mode of suspicion. Goffman points out for example, 'the ways in which people deliberately attempt to mislead others by signalling an attitude to which they don't subscribe' (Bailey 1971:113). It becomes natural in the performed 'social' society to try to 'get to the bottom of a person,' whilst still at the same time playing along with the manners game.

Indeed, gossip is seen as so 'natural' in this setting that some people actually have reputations based on their ability to extract information. John's wife, Christine said, 'I ask questions and get people to spill all.' John said, 'It's amazing to see Christine at work...she makes people feel so comfortable and then they tell her everything.' Indeed, this led to a bizarre situation for me. In my role as ethnographer, I was legitimately doing what migrants did as a normal part of being there; finding out about others. On one occasion I went to a social gathering with John and Christine. She had invited a neighbour that I would be interested in talking to and said, 'I'm interested in what you do and how you do it. I'm going to watch the questions you ask and how you get people to reveal things about themselves.' The evening was a little uncomfortable at times; I was suspicious that Christine was aiming to get

deep information from me, and she was also suspicious that I was constantly lulling her into a false sense of security in order to get information from her. Quite out of context, late in the evening in mid-conversation she exclaimed, 'You're doing research aren't you?' I was watching people watching others and in turn was being watched myself. Perhaps some of the less welcoming reactions I received when telling people about my research came because my role hit upon the central sensitivities of the community in piercing the desires to 'keep themselves to themselves' (see chapter two).

Gossip exposes the masquerades of self-presentation found in leisure society and reduces the person under discussion to his/her naked individuality (Bergman 1992:129). In response to gossip allegations, individuals must be forced to depart from the anonymity, and address explicitly who they are. They must reveal some evidence to refute a false story. Many of the gossip stories I heard cast extreme aspersions on people's characters, exposing them as homosexuals, alcoholics, violent characters, or mentally ill. These over-the-top fictions echo Rapport's observations, in which he found, 'individuals guided as if by a dramatic sense, writing themselves into 'reel life melodramas' with related machinations of character and plot' (1987:162). Yet it seemed that the more ridiculous the story, the more a refutation was being provoked. For instance, I talked to Terri who told me I was allegedly lesbian because I had spent some time with another woman, so we were 'naturally a couple.' She told me not to be concerned, explaining,

'Oh, don't worry...they had me down as a prostitute....When I lived on the coast, I had some Jehovah's witnesses as friends. They have to travel around in pairs, so these two men used to come around every week. It was even worse when we went to functions together. They'd come and pick us up in really nice



cars, you know as they do. Well, of course I was seen as a high-class prostitute. It was even funnier when you consider that neither of us groups drank, and that we were actually discussing the Bible when we were supposed to be, well....!

The extreme aspersion of the 'prostitute' allegation succeeded in soliciting other vital information to establish what she *was* doing (if not selling her body). It also stopped her getting 'too big for her boots,' a trap that Jane may have been falling into by associating with high status people.

Complications are formed by the inconsistencies and contrasting messages in the general ethos of migrants as both egalitarian and strongly individualistic. On one hand, the egalitarian ideal facilitates the erasure of one's past. The individual is 'a blank slate' who can carve out their chosen identity (see chapters five, seven and eight). Willy for example, a newcomer to the village espoused the anonymity that he found in Freila. Again and again he would repeat to me, 'no-one gives a shit who you are...You can have fifty million pesetas in your pocket or nothing at all.' This egalitarian basis means however that those who find themselves aspiring above and beyond the others are redressed through 'small politics.' The individual is sharply reminded that their alterity is only appreciated within the bounds of the group.

Gossip reduces the differences, re-balancing the society towards the desired egalitarian basis. Following Willy's assertion of the anonymity and thus equal basis of the society, he whispered ill-opinions about another man, Doug. This was because he had transgressed the ethic of egalitarianism by exaggerating his possessions and attempting to present himself as superior to others. 'With him,' he explained, 'everything is *más más más*' (more, more, more). If your wife has two breasts, his has three, you know what I mean?'

Even the very ideal of self-sufficiency is seen as a claim to a superior status (Bailey 1971:15). Here again, gossip is a threat to hinder anyone going too far down the individualism track. Of course, this may result in the situation identified by Brison in Papua New Guinea, in which *any* attempts to assert control and enforce one's opinion are potentially open to attack. In an egalitarian state, 'almost anything anybody does provokes a negative reaction' (1992:31). People can drop hints and spread rumours without facing any of the consequences, for it is very difficult to actually trace who said what. The environment of suspicion is one in which 'everyone looks for nefarious hidden plots behind apparently innocuous surfaces,' (*ibid.*:31). Yet the pervasive distrust is essential, for it renders it impossible for anyone to maintain and consolidate status. If anyone is, in a sense, 'getting too big for their boots,' or threatening the distinctiveness of the others, talk is the action and form which will bring them back down to size.

Simultaneously, the ideals of strength, autonomy and individual difference can conflict with egalitarianism (as Cohen also establishes for Whalsay, Shetland 1978:450). People want to express their opinions strongly and this can provoke resentment. Aimee pointed out how, 'people here have different educations, manners, money, ways of life. Its no wonder that cliques form.' Although on the surface, as one informant described, 'differences are diminished,' the same differences in reality provide reasons to undermine harmony. Nigel, one mildmannered man, blew up at me one day. 'I'm not one to talk about people,' he said, 'but there's only so much of Willy I can take. We're just such different personalities.' Whilst the different orientations of egalitarianism and individual distinctiveness are dealt with by people in Whalsay through allocations of varying and distinctive characteristics (*ibid.*:452), this technique cannot sustain. Cohen identifies that such allocation is based upon an underlying sense of cultural integrity or

imperative to present such a front (*ibid.*: 456), which is not so readily found amongst this more disparate mass of migrants.

#### I.iv An example of the tensions that gossip addresses

To sum up, gossip addresses the concern with and threat of individuality in others. It also maintains intimacy in a small-group of disparate individuals, whilst allowing personal expression. To conclude this part of the analysis, I finish with a lengthy extract from my fieldnotes. I code the various statements in terms of the particular issue it addresses:

Code:

- 1) Dislike of other's modes of individuality. Worry of being 'fooled' by others, suspicion of 'plots' and inherent distrust of people until they have earned it.
- 2) Fear of being seen gossiping, as gossiping is morally objectionable and associated too much with 'community.'
- 3) Need of affirmation of others. Support needed for one's own beliefs.
- 4) Other's assertions of individuality being recast as potentially abnormal and dangerous.
- 5) Strong assertion and displays of personal beliefs. Strong self-expression to express one's own individual autonomy.
- 6) Need and want to know about others in one's immediate environs
- 7) Need to maintain one's own privacy. 'Keep oneself to oneself.'
- 8) Giving to others with a fear of unequal reciprocity. Unclear return obligations yet worry on the part of the giver for being 'taken for a ride.'
- 9) Communal agreement of local, small group (individuals who 'belong'); social cohesion and intimacy.

*One morning, I visit the local café and run across Rachel, a Northern woman from the North of England. I am drinking my tea and eating some cake. Rachel's husband, Bradley is there.*

Caroline: How's things going with the café, then?(6)

Rachel: Well, its better now I've got someone else to help. She's run a bar before. The Thompson (*tour operator*) people told me she's lovely, very straight-up (1). You see you never know, do you? You don't know who to trust (1). I mean people were always on at me to get Sara working here.

Bradley: (*loudly*) Sara, now Sara. (*Rachel shoots him a warning glance*)

Rachel: Oh you're off (2).

Bradley: I'm not off (2), but hang on a minute, (*turning to me*) what do you think of Sara (3)?

Caroline: Oh, I dunno, I don't really know her very well, I suppose I find it difficult to know what to make of her (2) (*I am trying desperately to search for something neutral, but do say something* (3)).

Bradley: I'm glad you think that (3). Exactly what I say, she's barking mad(4) (*he twists his fingers into his head several times*). No, I knew that straight away. It takes me usually two days until I know what someone's like...I'm a very good judge of character. I can't stand her. Every time she comes in here I walk straight out (5).

Rachel: Yep, its true, every time, he just walks straight out.

Bradley: She's up there with the stars the clouds, who knows, but she's definitely not here (4).

Caroline: Yes, but here it's difficult because we're all so different.

Bradley: Its not that, (*he continues*), its that she's not normal (*He reconsiders...*) well, normal, I don't know, but she's just on another plane (4).

***Linda comes in, wearing a flowing white dress.***

Rachel: You look lovely, where are you off to? (6)

Linda: What do you mean? I'm here, aren't I? (7)

*Immediately, Rachel launches in to a discussion about Emma, a young girl who had turned up in the village a few months previously, who had been having violent arguments with her boyfriend...*

Rachel: She came in this morning still with her clothes on from last night, still bloodstained, but she wouldn't accept help (1).

Caroline: I think I know her, a very shy girl.

Rachel: Hmmph (8)

Bradley: I bet you know her from Sara...that'd be right. Two nutcases together (4)

*Rachel launches into the story, me periodically asking questions, the other woman looking on matronly...*

Rachel: The thing is, its starting to rebound on me, I had all of La Chorruela in here this morning, because he'd kicked her out in the street at three am in the morning. She came in here looking a right state, so I sat her down, gave her a drink and a bit of cake (8), which she didn't touch the whole time...she never does (*Linda tuts disapprovingly* (8).) Then he came in...I

was cleaning up round the tables, I wasn't listening in or anything but sometimes you just overhear things (2, 6). Well they must have thought I was eavesdropping because they sat there whispering (7). Then they went outside and they were walking up the street hand-in-hand. Then, I went outside to clean off the tables, I wasn't looking, but couldn't help but see them(2)...I think she's a fibber. I think she tells lies (5,8). Bob (*a friend*) thinks she's up to something (8, 10), but she swears not.

Linda: Hmmmm, well I wouldn't like to bet that she's not the innocent she makes out. I've heard that she's been out all night before.

Rachel: Yeah but she says that's what he (*her boyfriend*) does...when he was working on the rigs in Brazil they get up to all sorts (1). She's a young girl....I bet he doesn't tell her it all (1).

Linda: 'Aye, but nor does she. I can't tell you what because I've been sworn to secrecy (7), but this came straight from the horse's mouth. She's stayed out all night, that's all I'm saying.

Rachel: I knew it (*triumphantly*). I don't believe her. I mean I've offered her lots of times to pay her flight back and she never takes it (8), she can't be that desperate (1).

Linda: And Judy's offered her help many times, and she'd not have any of her fella there, he'd get a swift kick in the balls (5), but again she's not stuck with it (8).

Bradley: Well, I'll give her short shrift from now on. (*The others are in agreement.* (9))

Linda: It wouldn't surprise me if they weren't driven out of Ronda (another town in Andalucía).

Rachel: There's definitely a history lurking there (1). Its like the other one, Sara, I get up early when I can't sleep, and I often see her wandering around at six in the morning.

Bradley: Sara. I walk out of the shop if she comes in, I just can't bear to be around her (5). I can't listen to her crap when she gets going (1)(5). (*To Linda*) What do you think of her? (3)

Linda: It's true she's not really with us, but I think she means well. Its like Emma, she's supposed to have no money but she's always up that bar. That's Sara though, she gives drinks away....says she's got an allowance (1)(8).

Rachel: Its Sara all right, she does it from the kindness of her own heart....

Rachel and Bradley together: at the expense of someone else's pocket! (8) (9)  
(*An interlude, whilst customers are being served. Linda is trying to leave*)

Rachel: Well, you've heard about Judy's guests haven't you? They're complaining about Edna making too much noise (9)

Linda: They're guests, they shouldn't complain, I mean its Spain isn't it? (9)

Bradley: (*To Rachel*) You old gossip, you!

Rachel (*indignantly*) No I'm not (2) (*he continues laughing, whilst she carries on protesting*) I'm only telling her for her own good so that she doesn't go up there and put her foot in it...You're going up there aren't you, Linda? (*Linda nods*)...See!

Bradley: Naaaaa!

Linda: (*trying to escape. She mimics a zip on her mouth*) It doesn't matter anyway,  
my lips are sealed (9)  
*A few weeks later, Emma has disappeared, leaving Rachel with an enormous  
phone bill unpaid from calling several times abroad (8).*

In this example of gossip behaviour, many of the issues identified in the previous section are present. Group talk reveals the interplay of structure as a definitive part of anti-structure and vice versa. First, it is as the collective voice of morality in the migrant community. As Gluckman (1963) implies, it gives a loose definition and shape to this collection of individuals by reconstructing past events and giving the community some sense of social history and awareness of who is part of it. Furthermore, it forges bonds between individuals, suggesting intimacy and insularity from everyone else. At the same time as managing the dangers inherent within the individual stance of others,' it also preserves one's sense of individuality by creating situations whereby one can enhance one's own moral rectitude by focusing on other's misfortunes and failures. It also undermines the consensus implied in imaginings of 'community,' allowing for heightened emotionality. Caricatures and exaggerations are common features of reconstructions of events (for example, above with the aspersions of Sara as a 'nutter'). The rules of normal interaction are relaxed, and allow for the creative playing with taboo modes, such as the use of vulgar language (1992:117). Particularly for these individuals, who are perhaps more overly-sensitive to non-conformity, gossip is a form that simultaneously shocks, whilst being socially acceptable. It is a juicy and non-bland backlash against society that simultaneously confirms it. Paradoxically, through being such a socially precious resource it allows access, belonging and acceptance in society. This sense of belonging is contextually-specific, arising out of a recent history of foreign and Spanish interaction, an additional factor which helps explain its ubiquity.

## PART TWO

### Context and Cultural Resonance

*'Where's she been? What's SHE been doing?' I asked with raised eyebrows about a passing woman to my friend, Cati, whilst passing time sitting on the benches in the plaza. She slapped me on the back, replying laughing, 'You're like us, now, one of the women talking here!'*

The form in which hostile behaviours are expressed in Spain derives from a history of cultural contact and interaction of *extranjeros* with villagers native to the area. For, whilst accepting that gossip arises from personal concerns of the migrants, it is fundamental to also stress the importance of the context; much gossip behaviour arises because people are living in and around historic and local villages and small towns. Foreigners have been the subject of discussion by locals and have adopted some of the Spanish ways of expressing hostilities. They use the same actions themselves when confronted with people that are new to the area, particularly given the tensions that newcomers represent (see chapter four).

For migrants, gossiping with the Spanish demonstrates their local knowledge, status, and belonging. Through associating it as a 'Spanish' trait to be adopted, behaviours that were deemed unacceptable in previous contexts are legitimised. This does not mean gossip is more Spanish, nor that it exists any the less in the UK. Anyone working in a British university knows this is clearly not true! Rather migrants in Spain may adopt the

particular culturally specific modes of expressing aggression. Features of gossip and aggression found in Spanish interaction, such as literally ignoring someone, maligning them intensely, or staring through them, may become adopted as regular features of migrants' own use. This is particularly the case in villages and amongst more established migrants. Gossip behaviour is resonant, or perhaps derives from the *pueblo* orientation<sup>iii</sup>, in which it is suspected that whilst one can present a polite exterior, ill feelings are held underneath. One can see how certain features of gossip behaviour in the 'foreign community' resonate with existing Spanish uses.

As examined by ethnographers, gossip has been identified as a dominant feature of Andalusian village life. David Gilmore, for example in *Aggression and Community: Paradoxes of Andalusian culture* (1987) explores the use of gossip, nicknaming and satirical versification as 'the collective voice of morality and guardian of tradition' (1987:v) in Andalucía. According to Gilmore, there is a need amongst Andalus people to offer a pleasant and hospitable presentation (noted also by Zinovieff in her study of Greek hospitality (1991). Aggressive feelings and social control must instead be channelled through underhand means, through the use of visual surveillance, nicknaming and gossip. Brandes, for example highlights the aggressive stance taken in social relations as a predominant feature to confirm expectations of behaviour (1980:9). The function of gossip in the past was mainly as a means to uphold categories; most particularly, aggression was shown as an assertion of masculinity.

Of course, since those studies, times have changed. The pueblos under study have faced significant life-changing social transformation. At the same time, questions have been raised as to whether the aggressive features of



Andalucían life were *really* such a dominant feature, or more likely a product of the ethnographer's imagination (See chapter four). Aggression is no more 'Mediterranean' than any other feature of social life. This is clearly true, for as demonstrated, the Northern European migrants are as likely (or even more likely?) to involve themselves in gossip behaviours than the Spaniards. That said, whilst essentialism is clearly not appropriate, it should not be wrong to assert that the similar practice of gossip exists in different ways, according to different places and contexts. Gossip *is* a dominant feature of life in the village. Whilst its purposes have changed as a result of the social transformation of the area (especially the introduction of foreigners to the village), it remains lively and present. I will begin by explaining the history of a number of migrants and how they became embroiled and incorporated within pueblo gossip.

When migrants first came, they became part of an existing social structure (see chapter four). In terms of social relationships, they had to become acquainted with the *pueblo* orientation of villagers. Migrants were subject to gossip because when they first came, they upset the moral structure of the village. The fear of what others will say is a crucial feature in Andalucían life (Brandes 1980:34) and reputation is fundamental. Foreigners disrupted the norms; for example, women went into bars, drinking and smoking cigarettes without their husbands present. Alice describes how when she went to the casino in Freila on her own, all the people there were, according to Alice, talking about her and asking what is '*la mujer de Don Pedro*' doing here? According to Gilmore, the threat of aggression sustains the group, 'whipping people into shape' (1987:178). When foreigners came, this was probably the intention behind gossip about them. How effective it was is debatable. For, it confirmed the migrants enhanced eccentricity and individualism which, in moving to Spain at this point they displayed.

However, one American couple who first came twenty-six years ago was rumoured to be 'living in sin' and, in response did renew their marriage vows to publicly prove otherwise.

One of the original shocks for migrants was to adjust to the small-scale context. For example, when Judy first arrived, nearly forty years ago, she was unable to get on with a close Spanish neighbour. She expressed her discomfort to another friend in the village, pointing out how horrendous this woman was. Much to Judy's embarrassment, the woman replied that she was her sister. Fortunately, following this, she said not to worry, as she herself agreed she was a *puta* (whore)! However, there is still a process of adjustment to the closeness and relatedness of people in the pueblo now, a small-scale, closed locale which encourages gossip (Zinovieff 1991:120). It is said that the apparent anonymity of urban locales are assumed to undermine the power of gossip; it flourishes in face-to-face communities (Bailey 1971:4-5), involving friends or acquaintances (Bergmann 1992:69).

In Freila (and Tocina to a lesser extent), the physical layout of the village (see Fig. 4) in which people live very close together, hastens the spread of news. Balconies and rooftop terraces that seem fairly private can be seen from all angles, and as my landlady expressed, the walls are paper-thin and you can hear some discussions. Added to this is the fact that for most of the year, windows and (sometimes) doors are left open. Similarly, Percival points out how proximity of dwellings leads to indiscretion in sheltered housing (2000:308). Even for campo dwellers, for whom it could be asserted that there is more privacy (see Fig. 5) a similar problem exists. Rapport describes a community (or collection of diverse individuals) in a similar landscape in the North of England, and points out how in the Wanet valley, other families 'feature prominently in the landscape of the other' (1993:42).



Fig. 5—*Campo-Dwellers' Awareness of Others  
In Their Environs.*

The same is true in the foothills of the Sierra; even distant neighbours become at least acknowledged within each other's social universe.

The adaptation to this manner of life can cause a number of problems. For instance, Fleur, another migrant, who splits her time between London and Spain was being quite 'vocal' in a bar. She caught herself saying something and explained to me, 'I have to remember to be careful around here. I'm so used to being in London where you can say what you like.' In a sense this adaptation is seen as a marker of belonging. In my second phase of fieldwork, I was sitting having lunch with a woman who had been there a long time, when I said that 'you have to watch what you say in this place.' She told me, 'yes, you are learning.'

Another feature that predisposes the existence of gossip is the condensation of personality into labels and nicknames. For instance, when told about new people by Spanish friends I was often given short catch-all descriptions of the person either by appearance or personality. They varied from harmless ones, such as *Canario*, meaning canary, to more derogatory terms. The foreigners in this context were and sometimes are also subject to the labels by the Spaniards. One American woman described how her categorisation changed as she became integrated in the village. She said,

'I was known around the village at first because I said 'hello' to everyone. We were known as the crazy Americans, then the friendly crazy Americans and now, just the Americans.'

The same practice spills over into the foreigner's modes of interaction. As one woman explained (and as I pointed out in chapter five), 'you get to know people as 'characters...'

The spread of interesting news is facilitated by other features of Andalucían life, especially the different system of socialising. Gossip here is 'working-class,' occurring on the street, rather than in the privacy of the home characteristic of 'middle-class' British gossip behaviour. There is a sharp differentiation between the street, which is public and the house, which is private,

'The world of women (and children) is literally walled off, sealed, bounded' (Brogger and Gilmore 1997:18).

It is interesting to note that within the family I stayed in, it was rare that my landlady was visited by close friends in her house. Only the family and one foreign friend were regular visitors. Talk mainly occurs in the social setting of the Plaza, or in the shops or hairdressers. Daily, women gather here to talk; women come and go in a constant flow and all afternoon can be spent in gossip. Gossip on the whole is found in 'sociable inactivity'; it is often found in periods of forced inactivity, as a 'fill-in.' This is even more heightened for older people who are 'socially-allowed' to be in a state of leisure and have a reputation for gossip, whether on verandas or in bars (Bergmann:1992:74). In these 'waiting times' there is a tendency to 'beat empty time to death with gossip' (*ibid.*:75).

As I pointed out earlier, a central feature of Spanish society is the performance of hospitality by the Andalucíans to each other and to visitors. Indeed, in the village, hostile feelings are often kept veiled in order to maintain a sense of public decency. It is most important that private, dark emotions are not brought out into the public. As Gilmore aptly summarises,

'The immediate impression of a brightly harmonious and hospitable society soon reveals a darker more ominous side, an underground of tensions and secret rancour' (1987:3).

This can be borne out in interactions between migrants and local Spaniards. Emily, one original migrant explained that when she goes into the village, women tell her, '*eres muy bonita hoy*,' ('You're [looking] really pretty today'). She explained, 'Then when I turn away they whisper, '*fea*' (ugly). The division of public-private lends itself again to the conclusion that public life is always, to a degree, a performance. Brandes argues that people always operate under the assumption that appearances are deceiving and that one's behaviour is an *act*. One should always be on one's guard against people who conceal their real motives behind a pleasant exterior (1980:114). The face is deemed an external 'screen' of someone's personality, not to be trusted. Gilmore similarly points to 'the primacy of 'facades, masks and disguises' (1987:157). Indeed, in the village amongst the Spanish there is antipathy felt against those, who, as my landlady described, have two faces<sup>iv</sup>.

Furthermore, as a result of the outdoors orientation of social life, when walking through the village one becomes aware of the visual *surveillance* of everything that goes on there. Elderly women stare unashamedly for minutes as one passes by. In the public arena, it is considered impossible to hide anything; the rapid vine of village gossip exposes it eventually. Even simple, trivial actions are discussed. For example, as a foreigner I often wished to escape the claustrophobia of the village and went for long walks by the river. On one occasion, I met only one man, who I did not know. By the time I returned to the house everybody knew where I had been. Tebbutt, in her research on working class women's gossip points out how this 'self-policing system' (1995:76) derives from the ongoing commentaries on what is going on. Indeed, in Spain, the regular mode of conversation on the street consists of, 'where are you going, what are you doing, or where have you come from?' The sense of surveillance is heightened by the existence of

tourists. On a daily basis, people are traipsing up and down through the village, or driving on the roads examining the scenery and capturing sights of the 'objectified' culture. Willy, a migrant told me he was sick of waking up to see tourists peering through his windows, whilst another resident regularly had tourists entering her courtyard to look around. Compounding all this is the mutual fascination by Spaniards and foreigners towards one another. Sarah, a Canadian writer, summed up, 'I find it funny...they [Spaniards] watch us and we watch them.'

Other techniques of subtle aggression are adopted. It is not unusual for people to demonstrably ignore and snub people if they feel affronted. On one occasion, some years prior to my arrival, there was an incident involving an accusation of theft. During my fieldwork, I got to know very well both parties, the accused (Spanish) and the accusers (Canadian). Even now, years later, the accused woman walks straight past the accuser and in her presence ignores her. This is despite the fact that they have to spend much time in each other's company as a result of having mutual friends. Sometimes migrants adopt this amongst themselves. Lynn told me that her daughter is baffled when she visits and sees her mum ignoring people and walking straight past them, pointing out this is at odds with behaviour she would adopt before. Yet 'looking but not seeing' is a common feature in the foreign community. The owner of a café bar, described to me how it was really odd because an American couple 'walk straight past here and look the other way.' It can even be adopted in existing friendships. For example, Barbara (who was frightened of revealing her lesbian status) suspected that her friends found out when, during one social event they sat at the other end of the table and looked straight through her. Their friendship was ended on this occasion.

Gilmore's reading of gossip would imply that the recent social transformation and presence of foreigners would diminish the power and usage of gossip. The breakdown of the cohesive local community means the force of public opinion loses authority. He says of the youngsters,

'They could not care less what the adults, the bearers of tradition think of them' (1987:183).

Yet, contrary to his expectations, rather than disappearing, the foreigners' presence and mutual usage reinvigorates 'gossip' as a feature of Andalucían village life. Debbie for example, during her feud with her German neighbour (chapter nine, part four) became involved in a physical fracas. Rather than using local institutional structures because she did not trust them, 'I just found myself hitting her back,' she said. The next day, Debbie found all her plants dead, and my landlady told her they had been killed by ammonia. Employing the usefulness of gossip as a Spanish cultural resource she said,

I realised the best way to get back at my neighbour was to tell the local gossip, who soon told all the locals, who turned against the German. You see they'd all rather you slept with their husband than poison their plants.'

This feud continues to this day, with the German woman standing under Debbie's terrace shouting, '*Scheisser*' when she has visitors.

As such, the presence of foreigners in Spanish life, whether as residents or tourists, has perpetuated gossip in many ways. Aggressive forms evident in the Spanish approach have entered into foreigners' interaction. Whilst it is most certainly true that traditions are changing, gossip continues to define and confirm issues to do with reputation, family and the pueblo<sup>v</sup>. Furthermore, it involves foreigners as part of local myth (Tebutt 1995:179), who are already, because of a number of structural features identified in part one are likely to engage in the practice anyway. Yet this confirms its



status as a lively feature of Andalusian village life. The presence of foreigners does not undermine these notions, but adds to its significance.

### Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that the common usage of gossip can be understood through two overriding explanations. Firstly, it is expressive of the desires of hyper-individualistic migrants to escape community whilst paradoxically desiring it. Second, such gossip behaviours are influenced, shaped and conditioned by the physical and cultural conditions in which they exist. Migrants draw on resonant and similar practices evidenced in the local context, employing a contextually specific usage which derives from a history of coexistence with the Spanish. Gossip occurs through and across both loosely defined communities, its local form complementing personal predispositions of migrants, in trying to manage their individual position within a loose social grouping.

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#### Notes:

<sup>i</sup> As Percival described in his study of gossip in sheltered housing, 'It is interesting to note that these statements refer to 'they,' other tenants who are responsible for gossip, although...tenants both complained about and actively engaged in gossip (2000:306).

<sup>ii</sup> see also Herzfeld (1985:16) for an alternative demonstration of how 'performances' are integral to understanding others' personalities.

<sup>iii</sup> I do not wish to imply any causal connection as I have no way of knowing whether foreigners' gossip would exist in this form anyway. At this stage then, I merely suggest resonances and continuation of certain modes of being through mutual usage.

<sup>iv</sup> She said, '*odio las mujeres con dos caras*' /'I can't stand two-faced women.'

<sup>v</sup> See for further explanations section 2.3 in Oliver 2002.

## Chapter 12- CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

A short time ago I read about the case of the 'Shirley Valentine man', a Greek Cypriot sea captain who sailed his pleasure boat, 'the Shirley Valentine' around the coast (Smith in the Guardian 2002). He was convicted of an assault at 'a drunken dinner' on a 'septuagenarian expatriate and former sales director at Rowntree's' (*ibid.*) It followed the expatriate's protest of an alleged affair between his wife and the captain. Matters were complicated as apparently the husband 'had no recollection of the incident because he had drunk three bottles of brandy and passed out' (*ibid.*). Such stories challenge stereotypes of old age, and force a rethink of cultural conceptions of ageing. Increasingly we are witnessing new forms of 'out of the norm' ageing; people taking life by the proverbials and pursuing ambitions and dreams that people are unable to achieve in the working life. This thesis shows how we can conceive of such new social phenomenon. In particular, it demonstrates the importance of 'place' in negotiating ageing identities, as well as the salience of liminality to understand and explain older migrant identities.

### I. The Thesis: A Summary

The thesis has explored the negotiations of age-based identities of migrants. Identification occurs through leaving aside negative images associated with this stage of the life course in favour of more positive identifications. Deterioration, bad ageing, time-restricted working lives, organisation by

others, categorical identity and the possibilities of death are escaped, imaginatively left behind in the country of origin, or located as the province of others (the very old). Alternatively, in moving to Spain, typically a marginal, carnivalesque zone devoted in the eyes of migrants at least, to meeting the pleasure principle, they seek other poles of identification. Here, they hope to find self-improvement, good ageing, leisure, free time and individual self-expression. These ideals are for the most part clearly met, but they bring with them a number of inherent contradictions and inconsistencies.

For, according to the model of the ritual process, certain of modes of being that one escapes from must re-introduce themselves. The reason for this re-introduction is centrally because of the inherent ambiguity within anti-structural modes. If the desired features are anti-structural, they are *de facto* liminal and ambiguous, and can easily and simultaneously represent the negative features of life that migrants may wish to avoid. Turner suggests that anti-structure and liminality have 'ambiguous and indeterminate' attributes (Turner 1969:95) and are, 'complex semantic systems of pivotal, multivocal symbols and myths' (Turner 1974:259). Returning to the experience of migrants, it is clear that the lifestyle of independent, active leisure sought by migrants is double-edged. Leisure can easily lead to deterioration (through over-activity), or alternatively can easily slip into passivity and idleness. Movement to 'Spain' itself, whilst offering the desired leisure lifestyle and possibilities to escape constraining identities, is essentially ambiguous. For it is a site typically associated with short-stay tourists, which though enabling also creates a threat to migrants' sense of belonging and permanence. To continue, 'free time', whilst sought after, can also be a huge burden, and individual distinction rather than community belonging can be lonely and so on. To fend off the negativities of the double-

edged nature of the anti-structural conditions, structure has to be re-introduced.

## II. Revisiting Liminality

The thesis has shown then that a central means of comprehending new forms of retirement is through revisiting the concept of liminality. In concluding, I draw attention to how I have used liminality, and why it is important to do so. It is by no means a definitive answer to explain liminality but sets the agenda for further research and development. By contrast, I have shown that accelerated globalisation and deterritorialisation of people has meant that the potentials of being 'betwixt and between' life stages and lifestyles take on new significance away from their immediate understanding within time-limited ritual. In particular, globalisation has prompted a spatialisation of liminal leisure sites, creating new landscapes for leisure and ageing. The futuristic visions of 'El(derly) Dorado' Leisure Worlds (Soja 1996:270) do not seem that far from reality.

Throughout the project however, I have come to believe that often liminality is a concept that is bandied about, willy nilly, with little exploration as to its facets and functions within society. For instance, it is used to explain the condition of old age (Hazan 1980, Okely 1990, Hockey and James 1993), disability (Murphy 1988, Shakespeare 1994), as well as marriage rituals, death rituals, birth rituals within Western and non-Western societies. Whilst Van Gennep (1960) rightly establishes the universality of the schema as applicable to different forms, it seems rather bizarre that there is no attempt to establish some differences between the myriad of diverse uses and applications. At times, it seems that just because it roughly accords to the material, little attention is paid to the intricacies of its mechanisms. The

problem of liminality is that there is a simplistic application to different conditions, and as such it seems to be a concept that is *used* rather than *developed*. The thesis ethnographically illuminates the particularities of form in this context, widening our understandings of its contextual contingencies. Crick, similarly points out how liminality goes unquestioned in the study of tourism. He suggests that too much is taken for granted, without interrogating its tenets or even its validity. As an example he points out,

‘At the concrete level, it is well-known that in tourism one does not find neat reversals from ordinary time to structureless *communitas*. The world of tourism is rife with the class distinctions of our everyday world’ (Crick 1988:334).

To advance our knowledge it is worth paying attention to these sorts of diversions from the overall schema.

The thesis explicitly addresses such diversions. It shows, for example when and how the tenets of anti-structure, in the latter stages of ‘normative *communitas*’ begin to come undone. It also offers explanations as to why. Let us interrogate, following Crick’s example, the value of egalitarianism, as a structureless value, so espoused amongst migrants in Spain. Why does it come undone? How does it come undone? Taking just this one example, it is clear that it is because the levelling power of anti-structure does not sit well with other needs in retirement, to assert one’s independence, one’s individual characteristics that inevitably set one apart from society. As a central value it is unstable precisely because of the histories and individual values of the people involved. In other circumstances and with other people, the challenge to egalitarianism may not happen in exactly this way.

In questioning liminality, I also show the limits of the explanation. For the typical *rite de passage* would demand an overall resolution to structure,

either (in the functionalist explanation) to confirm the status quo, or to critique the mainstream society from a distance and perhaps even force change. To expand, functionalist explanations of carnival and liminal zones present them as steam valves (Babcock:1978:29). The 'time out' is ultimately resolved by confirming prevailing norms. Alternatively, the carnivalesque is read as having inherently critical and mobilising and *transformative* features (*ibid.*:30, 162) . Now, whilst in my thesis there is a movement towards final structural resolution, it does not happen, life is always in a state of flux between the two. What then happens to the subversive potentialities and critiquing capabilities of the carnivalesque and liminal being? Stuck at a distance away from mainstream society with no resolution into mainstream life (apart from the few who go back for the final years of their lives), is it even relevant to talk about such capabilities? It seems then that transformative conditions are materialised under *particular* and not *all* carnivalesque contexts. For here, if one was to assume that carnival is by necessity a subversive attack upon the original structured system, there are a number of problems. In fact, the features of the carnivalesque in retirement are a natural *consequence* of the capitalist rule-governed system that migrants have left. The time and mentality of English work patterns dictate that within the life span, there is a period of intense work, which, if successful culminates in the dream retirement to Spain. Here, one can enjoy the excess wealth put aside by a life of serious application. I cannot offer any answers, but will continue to mull over these questions for, I am sure, some time to come.

The thesis demonstrates the centrality of the role of agency in conceptualisations of the ritual process. When one looks at the implications of individual action in negotiating the abstract concepts of structure and anti-structure in daily life (as also done by St.John (2001) and Sallnow (1981)), it

is clear that the well-versed schema follows its own humanly-made diversions. In Spain, for migrants, the negotiation of the infringement of structure on anti-structure (and vice-versa) means that migrants face ongoing contradictions in negotiating different domains of their life. The actual possibilities of freedom in anti-structure are fleeting and contingent. Hetherington's study of new-age traveller festival zones points out succinctly,

'Festivals perform both order and disorder through the carnivalesque in equal measure. This is a point which Bakhtin misses, as do many of the more recent writers within cultural studies who have come to celebrate the transgressive as a counter-hegemonic form of cultural resistance. They often miss how disorder also performs order as part of an on-going process' (2000:57).

Moving from New Age Travellers to 'new agers', the observation is nonetheless valid and borne out in my research. Rather than being a simple replication of functionalist thought on the primacy of order through the performance of disorder, this perspective recognises the ambiguous, dual nature of carnivalesque acts.

Is this, however a new observation? For probing both Turner (1969, 1974) and Falk Moore (1978) reveals how both have established the same fact. Turner, for example states,

'In human history, I see a continuous tension between structure and *communitas*, at all levels of scale and complexity' (1974:274).

I argue that whilst it is all very well to point out that order is imparted over time, knowledge as to how this actually occurs is vague, to say the least. The thesis has shown (through example) *how* 'freedom' lived over time starts to

create its own forms of order. Amongst older people seeking to escape the restrictive shackles of life in Northern Europe in their later years, I have shown how new forms of structure arise. Self-regulation is either imported (as a distinguishing feature from one's past life) or created by necessity to give shape and organisation to social life. Doing this distances oneself from the idleness of the tourist who exhibits the passivity and dependency of a 'bad-ager', whilst maximising the value of the limited time left available. The place as a site of freedom and independence is, also, in other senses, *not* free.

### III. Independence and Freedom through old-age Migration

Before re-establishing the variety of means in which this is borne out, it is worth re-iterating that anti-structural notions of independence, freedom and escape are of utmost importance to migrants. As we have seen, for migrants (who reflect orientations of Western people in general) 'independence' is a defining characteristic. These older people have lived through many years in which they have seen self-sufficiency become a key legitimate definition of identity. It is therefore imperative for them to live that ideal for as long as possible. As such, responsibility is located within the individual to overcome the challenges of old age. Blaikie, paraphrasing Thompson, Itzin and Abendstern (1990:244) states,

'the ways in which later life is approached depend more on individual personality, spirit, and sense of purpose than material circumstances. In retirement, all share in a freedom from the imposed structure of the workforce, and the quality of later life 'seems to be associated with an ability to use that freedom positively' (1999:180).



As I have explored in chapter six, a cultural imperative to be 'successful' in retirement has developed (see *Choice* magazine in Blaikie 1999:100, 101). This is afforded by all sorts of new possibilities, ranging from modification of the body through plastic surgery (now available to ordinary folk as much as to the rich and famous (*ibid.*:106) through to migration to dream sites of retirement. Migration offers the continuation of independence and enrichment of their lives for the 'adventurous elderly' (Kahana and Kahana 1983:217). In one study, seventy out of eighty-eight respondents moved in retirement migration to preserve independence (Allen and Perkins 1995:76)

Essentially then, the movement to the site of Spain offers 'freedom'. In Spain, certain possibilities are imagined of a desired lifestyle that one has always wanted to have, but never had the time to. As has been so often proved in other studies (Betty 2001, O'Reilly 2000a, King 2000), migrants are overwhelmingly content with their choice to move. No doubt this is a result of the postmodern experience of retirement, in which there is an overwhelming plethora of choices for identification.

In emphasising the above, it would be a mistake to overlook the other contribution of the thesis. The thesis has shown that, whilst anthropology's almost hegemonic focus on place-bound identities is dubious in the sense that identity is not necessarily grounded in one's locality of origin, *ideas* associated with places are frequently appropriated as relevant to one's own positioning. In the light of mass movements, other literature on transnationalism tends to suggest that identity is constructed regardless of the immediate locality. The homeland tends to be reified as the most significant, and often the only significant identity referent. As Featherstone points out, 'It is also often assumed that we live in localities where the flows of information and images have obliterated the sense of collective memory

and tradition of the locality to the extent that there is 'no sense of place' (Meyrowitz (1985) in Featherstone 1993:178). Of course, this has been widely contradicted through reference to the assertions of nationalistic and localistic identities. Yet, I posit that other people seek to recreate attachment to place through the associations of certain places with certain ideas across the transnational arena.

I argue that despite people being movers (with the potential of breaking down place-bound identities), place of habitude retains or gains significant power. Place-identification is not in the usual form, in which diasporic groupings hold onto an idea of a mythical homeland (See Fog Olwig 1993 and Skribis 1995:163). In fact, this could not be further away from the truth. As O'Reilly already asserts (2000a), for instance, the British in Spain adopt rather an embarrassed and disparaging look at the place of the UK. As I show in chapter nine, however, identities associated with place (i.e. national identities) cannot always simply be shed at will, but are borne out in more cosmopolitan stances. The difference is that for migrants in Spain, the associations with place interact with migrants' understanding of ageing. Through the migration process, a process of spatial, social and temporal displacement of ageing is maintained. Places are employed to support or distance different modalities of ageing, according to the different options available through the new postmodern life course. Essentially, 'Spain' becomes a place in which a 'desired' version of ageing can be realised, whilst the place of origin (North America or Northern Europe) is imagined as a place in which feared versions of ageing are banished. The understanding of migrants (or tourists) as engaged in the pursuit of a 'smash and grab' 'Viva España' ideal (Featherstone 1993:182) does not in any way account for what is going on. Even if, as I think is clear, stereotypes are used by migrants, local affiliation is created through making them

appropriate to their own personal circumstances. For example, the sun, to take a small part of the 'sun, sea, sand' image does not mean the same as it does to the young tourist, but is understood as facilitating the good ageing of the body in a highly personal appropriation. It almost becomes a symbol of good life itself. In other words, 'Spain' and all its positive imaginings of warmth, romance and old-fashioned ways of living is located as a site in which it is pleasant to age well. The UK, or any other site of origin, is located as a negative place for ageing, associated with images of dullness, control by others and boredom.

Brettel and Hollifield assert that the life course position of migrants mediates their experience (2000:8). This stated, I have felt frustration at the limited number of studies aimed at these ends. Notwithstanding contributions exploring the transmissions of language and cultural values between different generations (see for instance Skribis 1995) who examines the perpetuation or loss of nationalisms amongst second generation Croats and Slovenians in Australia), there have been very few studies which take the life course as a serious factor in migrant identification. Throughout the thesis, one of my overriding concerns has been to draw attention to the absolute significance of the circumstances of individual migrants, and particularly the ways in which their personal concerns affect relations to places and others within those places. Clearly, the negotiation of *ageing* interacts with the negotiation of the challenges and potentials of migration. At the time of writing, there is only one full monograph (Gardner 2002) which through a study of Bengali elders in London looks at ageing and migration simultaneously. Yet, as the thesis shows, I found that the experience of ageing, and in particular the awareness of mortality fundamentally shape the ways in which the 'becoming' of the migrant occurs. The ability to integrate as well as questions of creolisation, hybridity

and synchronisation are absolutely shaped by the stage in the life course. Questions of 'home', nostalgia and ultimate belonging are also addressed explicitly through studying older migrants.

The fault I suggest, lies in the anthropology of age itself and the attitude of those within the academy. It seems rather unfashionable to study old migrants; issues of creolisation are often considered as the domain of the young (see Back 1996). I find that for a discipline that is supposed to be reflexive about its own prejudices, this is not satisfactory. Notable exceptions notwithstanding (such as Hockey and James (1993), Hockey (1990) and Spencer's edited collection (1990) the marginalisation of the subject of age within anthropology seems to reflect the marginality of old people generally. If these preconceptions are finally being addressed in wider society, perhaps it is time anthropologists started to do the same. This thesis offers an alternative approach, which I believe is no less potent in beginning from a position informed by an interest in the interactions of the post-modern life course with migration studies.

The possibilities for positive identification in Spain is complemented through the potential for contingent and mutable identities arising from the movement process itself. As Chambers succinctly put it, 'identity is formed on the move' (1994:25). In looking for a deep, fulfilled authentic identity towards the end of life, migration helps to provide material. Yet, Bauman challenges this very notion of autonomous choice:

'...the only content of 'identity' allowed in the universe of the shifting 'nows' is the *right to choose* an identity; the right to renounce an unfashionable or otherwise unappetising identity, to don a currently recommended one, to distinguish oneself (oneselves) not necessarily by being autonomous, but by

having -and practising and above all demonstrating - the right to be autonomous, in case one wished to be'. (1991:197)

This seems to be true when we consider that the striking factor of the retirement site of Spain is that whilst it is a place of considerable freedom, it is also one of amazing 'social sanction, public approval and condemnation' (Humphrey 1993:174). This is found as much in a County Durham mining community (*ibid.*) as in the community of migrants in Spain. I have documented that whilst freedom and independence are central aims, the uncertainty and ambiguity of the condition provokes the comforting, yet ultimately restrictive introduction of limitations. I assert that in conceiving of 'independent' and 'out of the norm' ageing, attention should also be paid to the concurrent developments of checks and sanctions to restrict the very notion of freedom itself. This is because the destabilising characteristics of postmodern society provoke fear as well as excitement, making us cling on to or recreate old modern certainties. Bauman puts it best when he suggests,

'The predicament in which the free floating nomads of the post-linear time, post-life-project universe have found themselves, is burdened with anxiety mostly because the structures of authority which could be perceived as 'natural, 'just there', unproblematic, have all but been dissembled' (1992:195)

In response to the limitless but ultimately abyss-like range of possibilities of 'freedom', I suggest that migrants create more structures themselves. I think it is best left to the existentialist philosophers to explain why freedom seems to demand limits, but the thesis has offered an analysis of the machinations through which this occurs.

In fieldwork, I found myself asking how these poles of apparent freedom then are negotiated, and like Hetherington (2000) found certain traits of self-regulation and order within apparently free arenas. In no way is this meant in a negative sense, in fact the introduction of order into the more carnivalesque behaviours often impart a sense of ontological security as much as to erode independence. In chapter five I began by documenting how the site is actually replete with carnivalesque symbolism; the free good life in the here and now is the order of the day. Yet, leaving the past behind is no easy task. As King *et al* show,

‘an individual on the threshold of retirement has experienced six decades of learning, socialisation, effort and experience. Much of a person’s make up is their biography’ (2000:5).

In their previous lives, migrants were governed by a work-orientation, the imperative for time organisation and the need to be productive and ordered. In Spain, old habits struggle against alternative drives which encourage relaxation, rest, fun and in some senses, disorder.

#### **IV...and back to Liminality**

It is clear then, that migrants live in a flux between feared (but ultimately comfortable) structured existences, and desired (but more risky) identities. I have shown that if liminality is more like a permanent condition (within an overall temporary ‘time out’ of pleased retirement), many of its liberating possibilities are modified. I examined this in relation to ‘ageing well’ or ‘ageing badly’ as well as the adoption of a leisured lifestyle rather than a tourist one. Furthermore I analysed how migrants negotiate a ‘see how it goes’ approach to time or an organised existence, a national or cosmopolitan orientation and a community or individual orientation to social life. In all accounts, despite seeking the ‘desired’, a middle-ground ultimately prevails.

Over time there is a slippage to old ways out of comfort, habit or necessity. I shall briefly recap how this occurs, and a diagrammatic version can be seen in Fig. 1.

First, I have identified how 'positive ageing' is sought through migration, to escape feared versions of ageing. These are located as the typical experience in one's country of origin. Contrastingly, in Spain a more self-defined and independent means of ageing is the overriding motif. In this case, the anti-structural feature of freedom becomes, paradoxically an expectation in itself. Thus one is not entirely 'free'. There are certain expectations of how to age well which are always challenged by the biological and physical process of ageing. Ageing well entails meeting a drive for self-improvement, whether mental, physical or both. As Ryczynski states, 'The freedom to do something has become the obligation to do something' (1991:222). In the case of migrants, the anti-structural motif itself turns into a governing collection of norms instilling a sense of how things should be done to be a successful ager and lauded in the company's eyes.

Moving away from the work domain to a more leisured existence is, again a move into anti-structure. I show how when living in a leisure environment (almost entirely devoted to the tourist industry) the identity of a 'leisured person' rather than a tourist is adopted over time. Migrants perceive tourists as both the embodiment of the structural as well as anti-structural. They are dependent, organised by others, come at set times, follow set patterns, are at times rather naïve and inauthentic and are confined to the 'front region' of constructed experience (MacCannell 1976:598). These characteristics completely contradict the desired versions of an independent identity. To be like a tourist is to demonstrate signs considered as ageing negatively, especially in light of the fact that they are impermanent and do not belong.

**Fig. 1 - Desired anti-structure and undesired structure.**

**STRUCTURE(Undesired)**

UK/Place of origin  
 Grey  
 Place for fourth age  
 Safe

**ANTI-STRUCTURE(Desired but ambiguous)**

Spain  
 Light  
 Place for third age  
 Risk

**Bad Ageing (future)**

Dependent  
 Unprepared  
 Inactive  
 Organised by others  
 Bodily  
 Decline

**Good Ageing (here and now)**

Independent  
 Prepared *Self-governing,*  
 Active *become norms*  
 Organised by self  
 Mental attitude  
 Improvement

**Work**

**Leisure**

→  
*Work ethic to enjoyment(to distance from tourist identity)*

**Structured time**

**Unstructured time**

→  
*(Working) history and future (mortality) impart need for time as value*

**National**  
 Categoricalised

**Cosmopolitan**  
 Not 'in a box'

→  
*(revelations of national identity through expression of cosmopolitanism)*

**Community**

**Individual**

*Communal Talk and Gossip expressive of individual and community*



Simultaneously and paradoxically, tourists also remind them of the perversions of being too anti-structural. At times, they are seen as carnivalesquely grotesque in their clothing, not to mention loud, raucous and unconstrained in their behaviour. Acting in over-the-top ways, they are simultaneously an embodiment of the liminal dangers of anti-structure. As a result of the dual positions of tourists, it is absolutely necessary for migrants to make a distinction from them. In doing so, they import a more structured and bureaucratic orientation to life, with the adoption of a semi-work ethic to enjoyment. This stops the slippage into the stagnant and wasteful life of a permanent tourist, with productive leisure replacing the productivity of work (Hendricks and Cutler 1990:91 in Blaikie 1999:175). Clarke and Critcher are not wrong when they wryly comment, 'If only we could break our three hundred year love/hate affair with the Protestant work ethic' (1985:1).

The move to Spain also involves coming to terms with an alternative approach to time-use. In retirement, time looms ahead in an unstructured fashion. Migrants often indulge in the sense of limitless freedom represented and imagined in life in Spain. Yet, simultaneously, this time can be a burden; unless it is planned it can be felt as weighty and leading to stagnation. Moreover, as a result of the individual's previous orientation, the senses of time as value, measured and not to be wasted is upheld. Individuals' past, usually as ex-workers, was governed by the clock. Many migrants are accustomed to 'the system' and may find it hard to 'shake off' the ontological security of such organisation. As well as this, migrants are in the later stage of their life in which they are aware that because there is less time looming ahead, it is in effect more precious. Certain forms of measurement and structured organisation must inform the apparent

freedom of time-negotiation. Again the structured informs the (ambiguous) anti-structural.

The question of national identity is again marked by ambivalence. I found that in the movement away from the country of origin, or a preceding expatriate lifestyle, most migrants assert, at least in speech, a lessened importance of national identity. Most migrants do not think of themselves as particularly nationally oriented, even if some behaviour suggests that they are. Rather they prefer to consider themselves as a more international or cosmopolitan grouping. Again however, I reveal how some version of national identity is evident in people's behaviours, either more obviously through material and symbolic attachment to certain rituals, linguistic expression, or even paradoxically within the very expressions of cosmopolitanism themselves. Furthermore, the freedom of cosmopolitanism is sometimes uncomfortable. In the latter stages of life, where one is allowed to do as one pleases, the need to express cosmopolitanism battles against succumbing to the familiarity of one's past, informed by certain culturally specific habits and comforts. More importantly, through looking at death-rituals, the degree of transcendence of cultural forms is revealed. In fact, methods of dealing with death and bereavement are culturally informed and show the limits of any real possibilities of local belonging. In fact, for those left behind after a death, there is an immediate drawing together of the disparate 'community'. A great degree of camaraderie is shown on these odd occasions, to suggest that although one individual is missed, the community goes on.

This community however, has a number of notable features. I have pointed out that a commonality between the migrants is the maintenance of individual independence; all the desired poles of identity presented above

are based around the fact that they represent 'independence'. That said, clearly, this is a strong *community* of individuals. Immediately upon moving, one becomes embraced into the communal crowd of migrants who have followed the same path, stepping apart from mainstream life, and existing above and beyond the local community. In this community, anti-structural values govern life. The past is unimportant, and everyone is equal under the Spanish sun. The egalitarianism is based on a recognition and positive valuation of the individuality and 'spirit' of each member. This is however a peculiar community; most of its inhabitants do not work, are not involved in any structures other than their own making, are of mixed nationality, and can often be transient members. Also significant is the fact that they do not know much about each other's history and either have to take at face value what people say or develop heightened skills of social investigation akin to the ethnographer (see chapter eleven). There are great potentials for social enjoyment in this, but these factors also creates a sense of uncertainty, making some wish to withdraw even more into their own worlds<sup>i</sup>.

The drive for individual distance is ultimately destructive however. The 'lust for authenticity' leads to 'lonely self-affirmation' (Bauman 1991:246), an existence that is unlikely to sustain. In fact, as I have shown, everybody needs an audience for their display of freedom. In response to the destructive nature of individuality, again we see how community/structure impinges upon the more individual worlds. Through the use of social talk/gossip, a loose web of communal belonging is created and the egalitarian ethos of society is maintained, which puts a check on anybody taking their individuality too far. Yet it is also simultaneously a function that is expressive of individual personalities and one's own personal slant. Furthermore, the very transience of the society means that there is little capacity to check or trace opinions (reducing the individual power to

address fallacies), and is uncontrollable in its consequences. The use of gossip both defines the concerns and values of the community, whilst allowing individual expression and power. It has a dual purpose in loosely shaping the community group, whilst sowing the seeds for its undoing. It is a special form, which has a particular application in this context and is consciously associated with local Spanish ways of behaving. It is both destructive and constructive of community; both structural (community-forming) and anti-structural by virtue of the unforeseen nature of consequences and ultimately upsetting potential of it in the individual power to change the course of others' thinking. It expresses the paradoxes of the community of independence-asserting migrants.

To draw to a close, I summarise the thesis. In the 'anti-work' phase (Turner 1982:36) of the capitalist working life, retirement (for some) opens up possibilities of freedom from expected norms (1974:274). Individuals seek desired forms of self-identity, and, in experiencing a liberation of spirit, feelings of equality and comradeship (1974:232) prevail. However, each different form of self-identification brings about contradictions because, by their nature as anti-structural, they are essentially indeterminate, ambiguous and dual-edged, leading to negative as well as the more desired consequences. This forces a need for countervailing processes (Falk Moore 1978:50) to solidify and put in place some expectations and limits.

Once the process of consolidating newly imparted structures is underway, the nature of the society (its transience and the relative temporariness of its inhabitants) means it is always open to dissolution. And so the flux continues. Relating this to the earlier raucous example of one retired couple, the moral is clear. Even if you are the Shirley Valentine captain enjoying yourself, the law will get you, even if the husband does not.

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**Notes:**

<sup>i</sup>It is worth establishing that individual withdrawal is not any the less anti-structural because it does not involve *communitas* with others. As Turner points out, 'indeed, liminality may imply solitude rather than society, the voluntary or involuntary withdrawal of an individual from a social-structural matrix'(1974:52) emphasising the fulfilment of individualistic needs (*ibid.*:260).

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