

Consider the Lilies of the Field

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“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. . . .”

—*Matthew 6:28–29, 34*

The Present

The original impulse for this book came from a sense that the ways of life of London prostitutes, Hungarian Gypsies, and Aegean Greek peasants—among whom we, the editors, carried out research—could be interestingly compared. These people live more or less in poverty at the margins of society, where they are often treated with contempt. Instead of adopting mainstream notions of work, productivity, and long-term economic planning, they appear to take a “natural” abundance for granted and to forage for their subsistence. Sex workers gather what they need from obliging markets, as Aegean Greek peasants and Rom Gypsies “harvest” money from state banks and the non-Gypsy world, respectively. In these cases foraging depends upon an idea of plenty; it is taken for granted that whatever you need is available more or less whenever you want it—there is no need to store, or to do without so as to hoard for the future.

This “anti-economic” stance is part and parcel of a specific set of attitudes towards time, person, and community, as indicated in this Introduction. This abundant world is celebrated in rituals that create a community of equal and autonomous individuals. Greek men drink and gamble themselves free from the mundane and oppressive world around them rather as the Gypsies drink and sing themselves into a brotherhood of equals. While London prostitutes do not create a corresponding community, they too achieve a satisfying individuality in their personal lives. In such ways, all three groups invert their socially marginal positions and claim a significant personal autonomy. Since these achievements are explicitly and systematically contrasted to the longer term orientation of their neighbors, it seems ethnographically accurate to say that they live in opposition

to the mainstream. Certainly, at times, they are perceived as a threat to other, “respectable” ways of life.

This book deals with a much broader range of social groups and individuals than the European comparison that we had in mind originally. But the other people presented in this volume share the effort to live in the present, with little thought for the future and little interest in the past. Some chapters describe what are commonly known as “cultures,” others deal with stages of the life cycle, and still others present individuals who are exceptional in their own settings. Some of these people work as wage laborers, some forage in the forest or on the sea, and still others trade or till the land. In the midst of this almost bewildering diversity, a common commitment to the present moment becomes all the more striking. These are people who live resolutely in the short term, and, in privileged moments, they transform this short term into a transcendent escape from time itself. In what follows, this quasi-ritual status outside durational time is called “the present.” This term is intended to refer very generally both to the short term—to processes of foraging for example—and to a ritual transcendental moment outside durational time altogether (Bloch 1977). But, where relevant, the “short term” (durational time) is distinguished from “the present” (ritual time).

The achievement of a permanent, timeless present involves an exceptional inversion of mainstream practice, in which the present is seen as the location of suffering and deprivation that may—with luck, prayer, and effort—be overcome in the future. This view of the present can be found in nostalgic attempts to return to a previous golden age as well as in utopian theories or millenarian visions. The quote from Matthew’s Gospel that opens this Introduction concludes, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; *sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*” For the early Christians, and for most of us, the ills of the world belong to the present. By contrast, the people found in this book imagine the present as other people imagine the future or the past: It is a source of joy and satisfaction. Through their fundamental commitment to living each day as it comes, these people invert their marginal status and put themselves at the center of their own moral universe. They also achieve a remarkable voluntarism in their sense of identity: the less you are concerned with past and future, the more true it is to say, “you are what you do.”

This particular form of transcendence is achieved through activities that celebrate the evanescent nature of accomplishments. Freedom and autonomy, then, are defined precisely by their momentary characteristics—which refuse to be caught in any framework outside their fleeting performance. Freedom and autonomy stand in opposition to transcendental values associated with a variety of institutions that organize long-term social reproduction and, simultaneously, produce hierarchical relationships. Institutions associated with the long term come to be tainted by their associations with the state, with more powerful neighbors, and with processes of social control.

In response, people who live in the present try to disengage themselves from such institutions. Some of the people represented below have found that their sense of time or, indeed, timelessness constitutes a powerful tool of resistance and opposition to surrounding neighbors and institutions. In the mainstream, institutions such as the household—with its hierarchies and mechanisms of social control—appear to enable social reproduction through time and to connote a solid permanence. The people described in this book are prepared to try to do without such arrangements rather than enmesh themselves in a politically coercive world where they can find a place only as dependents.

Yet, the achievements discussed below are colored through and through by a sense of loss. In refusing to build a long term through conventional households, for example, some of these people find that they cannot reproduce themselves at all, nor easily pass on their values and achievements to a new generation. Hungarian Rom see themselves as “orphans” who live in homes without “parents.” London prostitutes find themselves conceiving children only to lose them, and Japanese day laborers discover they will grow old without the prospect of becoming incorporated into the shrines of their natal families as ancestors, and so they will wander through the rest of time as rootless ghosts.

Plan of the Volume

In the course of this Introduction, the ethnographic material found in the book as a whole will be framed by various theoretical debates. We discuss the “culture of poverty” and the “encapsulation” of hunting-and-gathering populations. We then address briefly the ideological aspects of living in the present; and, through the single example of the household, we offer an example of the difficulties experienced by people who attempt to live in the here and now. Finally, we consider briefly the multiple political uses to which these cultural attitudes have been put, both by the people immediately concerned and also by more powerful others.

The book itself is divided into four parts, each prefaced by an introductory comment that locates the chapters with reference to our developing argument. Part One establishes the geographical and social diversity among cases in this volume, and the next two parts describe various strategies for living in the present. The final part raises questions about the academic and official discussion of marginality. This organization of the volume does not reflect any determinist argument about “living in the present.” Rather, it represents one of the many ways a comparison could be made across our sample so as to highlight a common ethos. Part One moves from Michael Stewart’s account of Rom (Gypsy) horse dealers in socialist Hungary to Frances Pine’s chapter on Polish peasants and concludes with an essay by Laura Rival on Amazonian forest foragers. At first sight, no three groups could be farther apart in terms of social organization. Rom even self-consciously contrast themselves to peasants, including mountain people like the Górale. And the social/ecological setting of both these groups could not be more

different from that of the Huaorani. And yet, we believe, it is possible to observe fundamental similarities that derive from a common orientation to the present moment. For instance, Stewart argues that the Rom representation of their subsistence activities is very similar to the Huaorani notion of gathering from a generous forest. "Gypsy activity," *romani butji*, is described as scavenging, gathering, trading, begging, fortune telling. Such activities are united by an attempt to reap without sowing. Rom revel in the idea that it is possible to live without labor and production and to exist instead through the market and especially through trade in horses. As with the Huaorani and many of the examples presented subsequently, personal autonomy is achieved through gathering or tapping into abundant wealth, through sharing on demand, and through the immediate use of goods and resources.

The Górale constitute a limiting case. It would be perverse to suggest that these peasants in the Carpathian Mountains represent themselves as foragers. Like other peasants of the region, they reproduce themselves mostly in and through the medium of households—in the sense of a named building with associated land and a group of co-inheritors attached by descent, marriage, adoption, and joint labor on the family farm. In what sense, then, can the Górale be compared with the Gypsies and the Huaorani? The answer lies in their relationship with the outside world. Their houses symbolize "the inside" of the Górale community, which is pitted against all the various forces of "the outside" world that the Górale have confronted over the past few hundred years. And these apparently autonomous and self-sufficient households are sustained through activities in that outside world—through markets and migration—where the Górale do not behave like "proper peasants" at all. Inside their homes the Górale seem very different from the Huaorani or the Rom, but outside they become "tricksters" who behave in ways remarkably like the "Gypsies." And in these brief moments, the Górale see their own households in a less positive light, for they look more like other institutions of social control and hierarchy in that outside world.

The contrast between the Rom and the Górale introduces the volume because it indicates the extremes of a continuum that runs through the volume: whereas the Rom try and live exclusively in the present, these Polish peasants qualify for inclusion in the book only because they mark the limits of this orientation to the present. Resembling the example of other peasants in so many ways, the Górale example makes it clear that a commitment to the here and now can belong to mainstream values and behavior as well as to the margins; the difference is one of degree. This book is not, therefore, simply about other and more exotic folk, but about an *aspect* of many peoples' lives.²

The chapters in Part Two present strategies for living in the present on the part of two individuals: Rita Astuti describes a Vezo woman in Madagascar who sells fish in the market, and Yasushi Uchiyamada evokes an untouchable woman in South India who engages in quasi-marital, cross-caste relationships. The analysis of such strategies is developed in the context of social groups and "minorities" in

the third part to the volume. These are single-sex groups. Tom Gill's study of day laborers segregated at the margins of big Japanese cities, Sophie Day's study of female prostitutes in London, and Evthymios Papataxiarchis's study of chronically indebted Aegean Greek peasants provide us with examples of an explicit *politics* of the present and of the self.

The fourth and final part juxtaposes Mark Harris's ethnographically based chapter on the *caboclos* of Brazil with Stephen Nugent's theoretical discussion, based on the same ethnographic case, of the misuses to which terms such as "marginal" can be put by anthropologists. Most of the people described in this book might be said to suffer marginality and what an earlier generation would have called "a culture of poverty." Nugent asks how best to present this kind of case material. An interview with an Egyptian doctor concludes the book with a life story in which an orientation to the present makes sense only in terms of the doctor's own perspective on place and history. Fanny Colonna's choice of an interview format was made specifically to avoid the reductionism inherent in explanation, and in this sense it provides a response to the anxieties Nugent articulates.

Accounting for the Present: The Issue of Marginality

It has not been always easy to persuade an audience that what is ethnographically recorded in this book actually exists. Yet, we are hardly the first to try to put this phenomenon on the ethnographic map and, more particularly, to point out connections between social disadvantage and a cultural commitment to the present.³ In particular, this book will remind many of an earlier literature that implied that the very poor at the edges of capitalist expansion had a culture of their own: the culture of poverty as described by Oscar Lewis and others in the 1960s.

The Culture of Poverty

For Lewis, a culture of poverty emerged at points of proto-proletarianization, when already wretched peasants made the first moves into modernity. The main features of this "culture" were: gregarious behavior, informal credit among neighbors, alcoholism, the use of violence to settle quarrels, consensual unions, male desertion, a tendency to live in matrifocal families, and an abiding interest in short-term achievements over and above the long term.

Lewis's work was almost immediately attacked, and it is easy to see why. One problem, as Ulf Hannerz pointed out, was the addition of structural relationships to a list of cultural traits so that unemployment, for instance, became part of a learned culture (1969:180). This confusion rendered the model implausible, and offensive. Additionally, a methodological focus on the family divorced processes of socialization from the broader social and political context. Another problem was that the "marginal" was constructed as an object and reified so that it was not possible to appreciate the central role that these poor and disadvantaged people

played in the reproduction of local and global capital (see Chapter 10). Lewis appeared to imply that the poor of Puerto Rico were “marginal” because their “deviant” culture made them so, thus reproducing the very ideology that sustained their oppression.

However, for all its limitations, Lewis’s work did contain important insights into a widespread cultural syndrome. In a descriptive, non-theorized way, Lewis observed an important contrast between the people he was discussing and classic proletarians. In his foreword to the second edition of *La Vida*, in which he tried to elaborate the notion of a culture of poverty, he stated baldly that “when the poor become class conscious, or active members of trade union organizations, or when they adopt an internationalist outlook on the world, they are no longer part of the culture of poverty, although they may still be desperately poor” (1968:xliv). This particular insight has been lost in later writing because authors have mistakenly conflated Lewis’ observations with studies of more traditional working-class communities.⁴ They were helped in this confusion because Lewis himself considered ideas and ideologies to be mechanistic reflections of economic positions, such as poverty. His critics merely had to show that some poor people did not try to live in the present in order to undermine the correlation as a whole.⁵ In reality, a range of identities may be found “at the margins,” just as Hannerz found in a ghetto of Washington D.C. a number of overlapping and, in part, opposed lifestyles—“mainstream,” “swinger,” “street-corner” (1969:38–56).

Leo Howe’s material on the long-term unemployed in Northern Ireland illustrates this point beautifully (1990, 1998). Howe describes communities where work is the foundation of most other statuses that married men hold. These were lost with long-term unemployment. In the face of an official discourse that aims to distinguish the “scrounger” and “cheat” from “real job-seekers,” most unemployed men represent themselves as would-be and willing workers. Their dependence on welfare payments was presented as a means to sustain them in their search for productive activity. Howe worked in both Protestant and a Catholic communities, and he shows how unemployment among the latter is more readily seen as a structural feature of the system than as a failure of individuals. More Catholics than Protestants adopt an ambitious stance vis-à-vis potential payments from the social security office. Rather like the Polish and Greek peasants, the Catholics are less afraid to appear as “scroungers” before representatives of a state to which they have little attachment. In the Protestant community, better incorporated materially and ideologically within the British state, the rhetoric of the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor is more effective at preventing any activity that could be represented as “scrounging.” Howe’s data demonstrate clearly that historical relationships with the state (and thereby also with work providers) decisively differentiate activities among communities of the long-term unemployed that are similar in formal, structural terms.⁶

Another insight of Lewis’s was to show that the very behaviors that enabled survival in a hostile world could have unintended effects, which themselves

helped reproduce the relationships through which these people were disadvantaged. Paul Willis later provided an ethnography, better grounded in theoretical terms, showing “how working class kids get working class jobs” as a result of the very defensive strategies that they developed to cope with a school system from which they were excluded (Willis 1977).

Despite the very real problems in Lewis’s approach, we have tried to recover these insights into the ethnographic phenomenon of “living in the present.” However, a more recent debate on the distinctive traits of hunters and gatherers, and on the historical origins of this cultural adaptation, provides a broader theoretical framework.

Foraging: For Food, Wages, and Other Goods

Two links between the hunter-gatherer ethnography and the chapters in this book suggest themselves. First, there are similarities in cultural forms, including a common stress on mobility, gathering, sharing, and notions of affluence (see next section). Second, questions about the historical origin of these representations and practices are strangely similar. In both the hunter-gatherer debates and our own, a central question concerns whether living in the present is a phenomenon *sui generis*, a sort of cosmological choice, or whether it is a response to encapsulation. Encapsulation refers to a process of incorporation or domination within pre-modern, colonial, and, now, nation states, where hunter-gatherers live in enclaves because they do not participate in the ways of life practiced by more powerful neighbors—they do not till the land, breed animals, pay taxes, honor the dead, build houses, and so on (Woodburn 1988).

The ethnography included in this book throws light on processes of encapsulation in very different situations. It shows that living in the present is an active, not passive, response to conditions of marginalization and social exclusion, and that at times it constitutes an effective cultural and political critique. In this broader context, a comparison can be made between the strategies of avoidance that are classically associated with African foragers and the processes of confrontation and negotiation that are described by contributors to this book.

The French anthropologist, Claude Meillassoux extended Woodburn’s description of the temporal orientation of African hunters and gatherers (Woodburn 1968). He described their economy as “tied to the present, without any duration or continuity” and hence as characterized by an “almost complete lack of concern for the past as for the future” (Meillassoux 1973:194, italics in the original). Meillassoux argued that this “offers opportunities for individual freedom which is revealed by the sexual attitudes, the weakness of marital ties, individual mobility, the fragility and instability of social institutions both within the band and the nuclear family” (1973:195). These general observations hold good not only for many foraging societies but also for many of the cases presented below and, indeed, for Lewis’s poor.

As Bloch has pointed out, the problem with Meillassoux's technological determinism was that it ignored the variety among hunter-gatherers and failed to address the case of Australian Aborigines who combine foraging with an elaborate interest in a mythical past (1989:16–17). Woodburn's work among the Hadza of Tanzania contributed to a shift of emphasis (1979, 1982). He introduced the concept of "immediate return," which corresponds closely to what we are calling in this volume an "orientation to the present." He described Australian Aboriginal sociality in terms of a contrasting "delayed return."⁷ Woodburn showed how immediate return was based on notions of an abundant natural world in which individuals could move freely and had independent access to resources as well as to the means of coercion. In this militantly egalitarian world, all forms of dependency and binding ties were avoided. Returns on labor were immediate, and there was little or no investment in either goods or particular social relations. In ensuing debates, the problem arose as to whether immediate return was constructed *sui generis* and produced through the foraging way of life or was a reaction to encapsulation by surrounding and more powerful social groups. In Woodburn's view, encapsulation may have encouraged immediate return by way of political opposition to outsiders, but it was equally intelligible as a choice of lifestyle that others would make if only they knew its benefits. In other words, "the present orientation" could be generated by opposition to authority and dependence *within* a society as much as in opposition to outsiders (1988:62–64).

Gibson's important study of the Philippine Buid (1986) brought these issues into focus, since the mountain Buid practice swidden farming and yet live in many ways like immediate return hunters and gatherers. Gibson attributed the egalitarian qualities of Buid social life, which involved a radical avoidance of all forms of dependency, to political relations with their predatory Christian neighbors.⁸ These latter constantly tried to place the Buid in their debt, or to forge other long-term relationships in order to bind them into the political and economic hierarchies of the lowlands. Gibson's argument is rendered all the more powerful through the ethnographic demonstration of the revolutionary consequences of one Buid man's attempts to lead his followers into "conventional" politics (1986:101–21). Property relations began to emerge in kin groups, and sharing practices between Buid changed. As household ties came to mediate the relations between individual and group, a political leader representing the whole community emerged for the first time. The sense of Buid identity itself was radically challenged (1986:115).

The chapters on the Huaorani and the Vezo of Madagascar both illustrate that debates about origins may be misplaced in the absence of historical evidence. But Rival and Astuti also both argue that this should not preclude consideration of the current political uses and implications of living in the present. Rival argues that Huaorani culture is best understood as a social form *sui generis*, which arose in conditions as obscure as those that generated other cultures and societies within the Amazonian area. Huaorani lead their lives without past or future in an

ever unfolding present because of a cosmological preference. At the same time, Rival shows how their way of life today constitutes an effective form of resistance to their neighbors and a strategy for dealing with encapsulation. Elsewhere, Rival has described how Huaorani children were kidnapped by Zaparo Indian rubber tappers, who turned them into bonded labor during the nineteenth century rubber boom (1992). In this book, she describes a sense of "absolute victimization" among the Huaorani, who live in constant flight from predatory outsiders, always under threat. The Huaorani consider that they are the only true humans in their environment, and they imagine all others as cannibals. These cannibals might snatch the vitality of the Huaorani to reproduce themselves.

Much the same historical uncertainty surrounds Vezo social forms. The Vezo, poor fisher people on the west coast of Madagascar, say that they were never subject to the Sakalava kings of the early modern era because they were always able to run away. If the king came to the coast, the Vezo would take to sea. By taking to their canoes, refusing to pay tribute and to be questioned about their past, the Vezo avoided incorporation within the kingdom. Astuti suggests that "by fleeing, the Vezo seem to have opted for an alternative mode of defining identity, a mode in which people are what they do in the present, rather than being determined by their own or someone else's past" (below, Chapter 4).

The encapsulation thesis also provides insight into relationships with the state in very different contexts. Gill shows how an identity fostered by the state is developed into a positive value in its own right. The Japanese state has historically marked out the category of day laborer as a particular type of person. In most industrial systems, day laboring is widespread, but it is just a type of work, even if it has a low status and is often associated with particular regional or ethnic groups. Partly as a result of state control, it seems that the categorical ascription is permanent in Japan: once a day laborer, always a day laborer. The return to their hometowns and to mainstream employment is more or less impossible. In big cities, day laborers provide a flexible workforce to the construction industry and are congregated into lodging houses (*doya*) that form large urban quarters around the *yoseba*, or labor markets, which are totally separate from the rest of the city. The conscious rejection of the bondage and long-term commitments of the white-collar worker, as well as the exclusive commitment to the present, can surely be seen as a response on the part of *yoseba* dwellers to this encapsulation.

Day discusses an analogous process among commercial sex workers who operate in a repressive environment, where they have to work in isolation through personal networks. London prostitutes find that their personal names are a means of state record keeping and legal control. Making a virtue of necessity, they adopt a variety of identities and, in general, possess at least two legal identities, using one as a private citizen and another for work. Some women develop different identities for different clients. This maneuver also enables them to sever ties temporarily with family and previous friends or colleagues. In these and other ways, prostitutes remove themselves from ascribed statuses, such as those associ-

ated with kinship, during the periods when they work, stressing that for the time being they are who they make themselves and no more.

Papataxiarchis discusses peasants of northern Lesbos and relates their experiences of political and economic dependency to late integration into the Greek state. These peasants often imagine themselves as a corporate unity of households aligned with the state. But experience of marginalization has also provoked them to construct an alternative social identity: *chorio*, “village,” is an imagined, egalitarian community of shared moods that in some way inheres in the place itself and exists outside time. The peasants of North Lesbos—particularly the more marginal ones, such as bachelors—have politicized this alternative identity in the form of protest against the state.

Although processes of exclusion and marginalization differ in these examples, ranging from continuous and extensive surveillance on the part of the British and Japanese states to occasional and minimal contact among Malagasy and Ecuadorian neighbors, the enclave reaction is similar. Before turning to the activities that anchor these people in the present moment, it is worth reiterating that this orientation to the present does not derive exclusively from social marginality or disadvantage. Note, for example, the Egyptian doctor who combines an active detachment from the world with an intellectual commitment and secular passion for his relatively high status and rewarding work. As noted earlier with reference to the Górale, most people live some of their lives in the here and now, but the chapters in this volume focus on a thoroughgoing marginality, where the difficulties of reproducing through time and the more or less self-conscious, explicit opposition to dominant groups and institutions are particularly clear.

Ideological Aspects of Living in the Present

The ethnographic study of hunter-gatherers has shown that a repertoire of practices exist through which durational time is transcended. These include gathering, sharing, and immediate consumption. In addition, obligations to other individuals—such as kin, as opposed to the wider social group—are denied. Irrespective of ecological and other differences, such practices construct a timeless present in conjunction with a sense of abundance. We consider that this involves an ideological commitment in the sense that these images of abundance and timelessness are a “representation of imaginary relations to the real conditions of existence” (Althusser 1971: 152).

The sense of ideology we employ is similar to the one Maurice Bloch developed in discussions of the representation of the life cycle and, particularly, of birth and death (1989, 1992a). Bloch is interested in images of the world created during rituals and the processes by which they are made to appear convincing. These deny or ignore durational time and the embedded processes of growth and decay, picturing instead a world outside that of daily experience—a world in which order is permanent and inscribed in the nature of things. In brief, Bloch

argues that the formalization of communication found in ritual, but absent in everyday encounters, helps establish the truth of this view. One of the effects of formalization is to make each ritual communication seem identical to previous ones and thus to collapse the everyday experience of durational time into a special experience of transcendental, unchanging continuity, a kind of “non-durational time.” Bloch links the amount of ritual found in a society with the degree of institutionalized hierarchy. It is through ritual that traditional authority, in Weber’s sense, is constituted. This authority then appears to guarantee the long-term reproduction of the social order.⁹

It should be stressed at once that few of the people described in this book carry out much ritual, in the traditional sense of the term. However, ritual and secular activities may not be strongly demarcated. In these cases, the processes of foraging, sharing, and immediate consumption appear to be rooted in ideological representations that share qualities with Bloch’s sense of ritual/ideology: They are symbolically marked; they constitute transformations of surrounding practices; and they deny the importance of durational time. It is therefore in a modified sense that we use the term ritual to describe such actions, which are performed often in a self-conscious style of explicit opposition to the rest of the world.¹⁰

A second point of contrast should also be clarified. Although we make extensive use of Bloch’s insights, we are using his ideas on very different ethnographic material. Like the cases in the Pacific discussed by Brenneis and Myers, where formalized and ritualized speech acts appear to create a social space for egalitarian relationships (1984), in the chapters that follow, our authors show that a ritualized present can be thoroughly and self-consciously emptied of any associations with the past and with authority. And though we use the term “transcendence” to characterize this state, our use of the term refers to a very different relation to the world than that described by Bloch.

To talk of production as “gathering” implies the short term, since production thought of in this way negates notions of material transformation and of planning—ideas that are so characteristic of production processes that take time and that depend for their efficacy on the passage of time.¹¹ Gathering and gleaning provide a favorable context for the elision and transformation of the short term into a timeless present. Representations of foraging and associated concepts of natural abundance are antithetical to the very idea of economy, which relies on notions of scarcity, saving, delayed consumption, and planning. To speak of “economy” is to speak of a model of behavior according to which present actions should provide for the future. Gathering provides the opposite model, according to which there is no need for present action to provide for the future: The future is guaranteed instead by a generous, affluent, physical environment.

The denial of labor and effort in all these cases is exaggerated and buttressed by ideological means. The Vezo talk of fishing as a form of “gathering” and contrast it with agriculture.¹² They also forage in the market much as the Huaorani forage in the forest, or day laborers forage on the streets of Japanese cities. They

treat the market as another resource like the sea, to be used each day without attending to seasonal fluctuations. But their rhetoric of market wealth is belied by their continuing poverty and dependence on the Masikuru agriculturalists for their staple food of rice. Likewise, the Hungarian Rom claim to be “boys of the market” but, in fact, subsidize their horse trading with money earned in factories.

Even the Huaorani could be said to put effort into appearing effortless. It is true that they make the Garden-of-Eden claim that the monkeys they hunt hand themselves over voluntarily. And they regard the gardening activities of their neighbors with ridicule, mocking the manioc drink that these people work so hard to produce. The Huaorani value *huentey* above all and in explicit opposition to the values of their neighbors. During these productive moments, you lie in complete tranquility in a hammock, doing nothing at all. This is described as “an almost awe-inspiring state of grace by which a person feels so good that s/he does not feel any drive to spend energy or become restlessly active” (Rival 1992:161). Missionaries translated *huentey* as laziness; but this is a “creative laziness,” for the Huaorani assert that the production of their own, prized, sweet manioc drink depends upon this *huentey*. Nonetheless, to the outsider it seems clear that this Huaorani drink is but a poor man’s version of the beer their horticulturist neighbors make.

This process of reimagining the world is particularly apparent in the creation of images of abundance. Abundance “out there” is not simply a precondition for gathering; it is equally a symbolic product of such activities. Among Aegean Greeks, the Rom, and Japanese laborers—and even, though perhaps to a lesser extent, in London and Amazonia—a generous environment seems to be produced through ritualized activities that create a frame through which its prior and independent existence can be taken for granted.

Like gathering, sharing, too, can take activities out of time and relocate them in a timeless present. It is opposed in this way to reciprocity, which, as Bourdieu has demonstrated in his critique of Levi-Strauss’s theory of exchange, is a temporal process governed by interested calculations (Bourdieu 1977).¹³ Different forms of sharing can be distinguished. Woodburn, like Gibson, considered demand sharing to be particularly characteristic of a defensive reaction to encapsulation (see Woodburn 1998; Gibson 1986). Among the people described in this book, another type of sharing is elaborated even more extensively. In fact, it blurs the distinction between “exchange” and “use,” for it involves the immediate consumption of goods in activities such as drinking, gambling, or singing. People share what they have in an expansive hospitality and sociality that bypasses *reciprocal* exchange. As Papataxiarchis has shown, in an analysis of the ritual etiquette that governs coffee shop hospitality, members of a drinking circle stop applying the code of reciprocity at a certain stage and come to treat drinking together as an expression of the heart, clearly demarcated from interested calculation (1991, 1992). Shared drinks make it possible to come together in true communion. This context is set apart by the etiquette and turned into a “ritual” where duration is transformed into a present without beginning or end.

In this book, Papataxiarchis describes an equally dramatic form of consumption that involves money. Men gamble away their wages and the European Union loans that pour into the local community through the Agricultural Bank; thereby they display their disdain of the obligations and self-interest associated with money and with working for bosses or answering to state officials. What is crucial in gambling is not skill but style. This is not a contest with another player but with money, whose standard meaning as a symbol of economic dependence is inverted and defeated.

The transcendental present insulates the ritualized space of the drinking or gambling table from the surrounding world of “dark” dependencies and “heavy” obligations that emerge in production and reproduction. Greek men, and particularly those who identify closely with the coffee shop, are momentarily able to recapture a “true” and “authentic” self that is governed from within by natural emotions and reach *kefi*—a state of lightness and good mood (Papataxiarchis 1994). Likewise, Huaorani men and women turn into playful children during their intensely gregarious feasts. As when Gypsy men sing together, the here and now becomes the only point in space and time that guarantees a sense of completion, of satisfaction, and, in this sense, of autonomy.

The ritualized, ideological nature of abundance based in sharing comes over particularly strongly in the case of the Japanese day laborers discussed by Gill. These men “come about as close as one can in an industrialized society to practicing ‘immediate return’” for they consider their wages to be “present money” and quote a proverbial saying from the Edo period: *Yoigoshi no kane wa motanai*—“Money is not something you keep overnight.” Many men do not work again until they have spent all their earnings gambling and drinking, without any thought to the future. In a comically futile gesture, the Japanese state encourages a saving mentality in the *yoseba* by opening banks in which laborers can deposit their daily wages. But these banks are hardly used, and Gill observed that deposits made in the afternoon were frequently withdrawn by the end of business on the same day.

In singing, drinking, and gambling, men “become” themselves. This exploration of the nature of “becoming” is taken in a different direction in the last chapter of the volume, where Fanny Colonna records a conversation with a middle-class medical practitioner in Upper Egypt, Dr. Nisseem. In one sense, this is a chapter about the history of Egypt since the 1950s. But, from another perspective, the conversation reveals the ways in which Dr. Nisseem strips away time and place. His form of individuality is explored over a whole adult life rather than in ritual moments such as those found in the Greek coffee shop. And, even though the story is a historical narrative, Dr. Nisseem plays down both past and future in favor of his commitment to the present moment and to the setting in which his individuality unfolds.

In his account of untouchables in Kerala, Uchiyamada shows how a similar process of becoming takes on specific meanings at the margins. He argues that

cross-caste *bandham* relationships—which are conjugal as well as sexual unions, but neither fully marital nor commercial—create a particular sense of self. Uchiyamada's heroine is a split person who remains divided throughout her life, unlike upper caste women who gradually resolve the divisions between their sexuality (as single women) and fertility (as married women). Indian women are not supposed to enjoy erotic love outside the family or to cross caste boundaries. Thus the actions of untouchable women threaten the religious, dharmic order of the universe that keeps them subjugated, as Uchiyamada shows in the intensely moving concluding section to his chapter, where the reader is led to understand how one woman's anti-clockwise walk around a temple at midday "engulfed and erased the dharmic order."

Many of the people described below find themselves irredeemably divided between life in the present and the possibility of reproducing through time—building houses or tombs, tending family land, marrying and bringing up children. To participate in social reproduction is to compromise that present-oriented self, to become caught up in the long term and restricted by dominant, hierarchical relationships.

The Household, a World Divided

Few people manage to live wholly within the present and, for the majority, some aspect of the long term is reincorporated through the back door. Many of the people described in this book consequently experience a double identity, or even a divided world. Households provide settings in which this sense of division, often a juggling act between the short and the long term, is commonly located.¹⁴ The household is readily reified as a badge of identity, emphatically distinguished from the surrounding world. Yet, its very permanence can be a source of mistrust. The household may look like an outpost of the state or of more powerful neighbors because of its hierarchies, explicitly recognized by many as a site—often the primary site—of commitments, responsibilities, and obligations in the long term: in brief, a trap.¹⁵ For people who are so fundamentally committed to living in the present, it is difficult to reproduce in households, even when these are radically separated from the wider society. Indeed, taken to the extreme, an orientation to the present would preclude all social reproduction. A less extreme variant involves the construction of alternative models of the household. The effort to recuperate houses for people who live in the present is variously achieved by associating the long term with the other gender, with married as opposed to single people, with the dead rather than the living, and so forth.

The opposition between a male, public world and a female, domestic world is particularly familiar. It is true that women are associated with the household more often than men are and, in comparison with a ritualized present, they are often caught up more extensively in long-term processes of social reproduction. It is all the more striking then to come across the examples of Neny, Górale

traders, and London prostitutes, all of whom contest the values with which they are (symbolically) associated.¹⁶ The material in the book shows that women as well as men distrust the "household"—insofar as it stands for onerous duties and responsibilities—and can step outside it. Individual dealers in Poland or Madagascar as well as in London appear to become "themselves" when they leave home. These women lose themselves in the "magic of the market" and, even if they work alongside many others in bustling noisy marketplaces, they may act as though they were on their own. In Neny's case in Madagascar, her pleasure in dealing is so great that she can barely drag herself away from the chance to broker a deal in order to fulfill social obligations to other Vezo and their guests. For her, the emphasis is as much on her own skill and risk-taking as upon the collective nature of the market. Among the Górale, the equivalent moment, when women forget their ties and responsibilities to other people, appears to be so transitory that its poignancy is tangible. Pine shows how women hawk their wares in the marketplace with a distinctive, "trickster" manner, reminiscent of the way that Rom playfully dominate *gazos* on the horse markets of Hungary. While working on the land in cooperative teams, for instance, personal autonomy and equality are willingly limited, but a different, more individualist perspective emerges when dealing with outsiders.¹⁷ From the perspective of the trickster, the house-based order is similar to the wider society, to which it is normally opposed, if only because both the household and state subsume the individual equally within a larger and long-term project of social reproduction and inequality.¹⁸

Single-sex celebrations of men have been discussed above in terms of a vision of the self where men harmonize their moods and their voices. In such contexts, these men consider themselves to have achieved an enhanced individuality; their identities are neither blurred nor merged. This state of being is similar to that achieved by some of the women as they cross various thresholds and shed their mundane obligations and commitments in favor of a heightened individuality. Therefore, this vision of the self cannot be tied exclusively to the realm of ostentatious consumption, and the settings in which autonomy is achieved appear to differ according to a number of characteristics, including gender. In this way, by moving beyond the standard opposition between a public male and a private female realm continuities between concepts of the self and living for the moment become more evident. This is not to suggest that the male and female selves are equivalent, nor, conversely, that they are invariably associated with alternative and oppositional models of the household.¹⁹ Rather, the household provides an important example of the apparently inevitable contradictions inherent in an orientation to the present.

The material in this book also shows that multiple visions of the household can coexist. The communist state in Hungary saw in Rom houses a potent setting through which to encourage assimilation and a settled, sedentary life. "Successful" Gypsy households, led by respectable parents wisely accumulating resources to hand on to their children, were encouraged to abandon their fellow Rom and

join mainstream, non-Gypsy society. State policy—organized around Hungarian officials' ideas of civilized, petty bourgeois domesticity—played upon a tension inherent in Rom life between the demands of reproduction in the household and an ideology of brotherhood that sustained Rom communities. The brotherhood was celebrated in a sphere of large-scale unisex celebrations in which women appeared to be relegated to the socially divisive and self-interested household. A similar opposition is described for Aegean Greeks. Yet, here an additional tension between men who identify with the value of *kefi* and householders is recorded (Papataxiarchis 1994). In both cases, women are represented at times as though they are compromised by their dealings with the outside world, by their commitment to saving for the long term and to planning, and by their opposition to some forms of conspicuous generosity and consumption.

However, as suggested above, this apparent association of a wholesale orientation to the present with “brotherly” men—who live for the moment (male/public), in opposition to “wifely” women in households wholly involved in reproduction (female/private)—is misleading both in ethnographic and theoretical terms, if taken as the whole picture. Stewart shows how this model coexists with another in which the Rom are “orphans.” Rom counteract *gazo* (that is, non-Gypsy) notions of the household by presenting themselves as though they were all children who perforce must depend upon the wider Rom community, the household writ large, for their nurture. Within this anti-authoritarian family, Rom grow up free to move from one house to another, to eat where they please, and to ignore demands made upon them by kin and non-Gypsies alike. This constitutes a particularly effective political method for dissolving standard connections between the long term and relationships of authority that were outlined above with reference to Bloch's approach to ritual. Rom, in other words, recuperate a notion of transcendent permanence without its associated hierarchies. The Hungarian state was therefore unable to delegate authority to household heads, who could govern the Rom on the state's behalf.

The difficulties in these efforts to redefine the household are particularly apparent in Day's chapter, where two perspectives emerge. The one is associated with acute divisions between work and home, or public and private, that can become highly problematic. For many of these women, the home is seen as a haven from the world of work, at least for some future time when they will have their own children and join mainstream society once more. However, most find it hard to build that future as they find themselves “addicted” to spending their money on trivia in the process of rejecting a “straight” lifestyle associated with the drudgery of ordinary jobs. Although freely spending earnings might seem similar to the practices of Gypsy or Greek men, to these women, it also appears lonely and restrictive. They feel coerced into a solitary and isolated existence where they experience little choice in what to do with their money.

This sense of coercion applied to other aspects of life as well. Reassuring themselves of their own fertility, which their work calls into question, many women

repeatedly became pregnant. However, these pregnancies were often terminated because women were not ready to step into the mainstream future associated with childrearing. Partly in reaction to the problems of this divided self in a divided world, a minority of the women tried to live in a unitary here and now. Doing away with a putative, respectable, bourgeois future of children, home, and husband, they remained oriented to a present in which they constantly remade themselves through dealings with money and other forms of enterprise in all facets of their lives, including motherhood. In a sense, these women gradually achieved an individuality that was also a basis for social relations with other, like individuals, as they reintegrated different aspects of their lives and turned consumption into a constant source of pleasure and profit. The household was realized as an aspect of the here and now, rather than as a potential future. This permanent present seems to provide one radical solution to the problem of division.

Given the association between social reproduction and procreation, it is not surprising to find that single-sex gatherings recur again and again in this volume, since the business of social reproduction and procreation as a whole has been captured by the dominant ideologies to which these people are opposed.²⁰ Few people represented in this volume go so far as to abandon reproduction altogether, but some members of the single-sex groups described in Part Three do without households and without children. Japanese day laborers living in hostels, Greek bachelors, and many prostitutes do not have children. Others, like Dr. Nissem, make use of other peoples' houses and enjoy “family” vicariously.

Although not necessarily images from inside the household, other examples in the book also describe split images of the world—images associated with marriage, parenting, or death—. Rival shows that a tension between dependency and autonomy emerges at the time of marriage. Although individual autonomy is celebrated in most matters from an early age among the Huaorani, couples are often forced into marriage. It is only in the context of cultivating a particular type of manioc for the marriage feast that Huaorani complain of having to do hard work. Once married, and for as long as they have dependent children, the couple lives out various forms of stylized mutual dependence that are not found in any other relationship in this society. In all these ways, marriage is a locus of binding ties and dependence that Huaorani life is otherwise organized to deny. On the other side of the world, Astuti shows that the Vezo dead impinge upon the living by demanding long-term plans and economies. Substantial sums are saved and then invested in tombs or are consumed by the living during death rites. Vezo “short-termism” is what differentiates the living from the dead, and yet the Vezo have to engage with a long term. The lightness and pleasure associated with market trade is incompatible with looking after the interests of the willful dead and of ancestors, who would like to dominate the living just as aggressive kings and royalty wished to do in the past. Vezo attempt to achieve a balance: They submit as little as possible to the long term by devoting themselves as much as they can to the freedoms of the present.



Cartoon representation of “Kamayan,” an archetypal day laborer, with nothing in his bag but freedom. The artist, Arimura Sen, works at the Labour Welfare Center in Kamagasaki, Osaka. (Originally published in Hotel New Kamagasaki by Arimura Sen. Tokyo: Akita Shoten, 1992.)

The Politics of the Present

It is possible to look at how people use a present orientation without assuming that it came into existence for and can be explained historically with reference to its current uses. The ritual construction of a present is not just an escape from the real world but also changes the world. However, in the existing literature, the implications of this sort of action have not been adequately delineated because political anthropology has focused on instrumental action oriented to the long term.²¹

Though the literature on hunter-gatherers and the culture of poverty address these issues, from our perspective each of these traditions has its own problems. Hunter and gatherer ethnographies are commonly too romantic in their celebration of the tenacity of this distinctive way of life and rarely sufficiently attuned to the hardship and exploitation that follow from encapsulation. Conversely, the culture of poverty model is too pessimistic since it implies a passive adaptation by people who “can’t help themselves.”

Concepts of resistance have recently given an impetus to the anthropological studies of politics.²² In particular, they have encouraged the study of politics from “below” and in the context of everyday life, an analytical strategy that is shared by

the contributors to this volume. Further, as they were inspired by a Gramscian interest in the contestation of hegemony, these concepts of resistance have put the processes of legitimation and consent into question.²³ Yet, many studies of resistance have suffered from essentialism and romanticism, particularly when it comes to describing the intentions of the poor (see Abu-Lughod 1990, Stoler 1986). The most serious limitation, however, has been aptly described in terms of an “ethnographic refusal,” that is, the refusal of thick description: “Resistance studies are thin because they are ethnographically thin: thin on the internal politics of dominated groups, thin on the cultural richness of those groups, thin on the subjectivity—the intentions, desires, fears, projects—of the actors engaged in those dramas” (Ortner 1995: 190). A focus on resistance to domination has involved a curious assumption of internal homogeneity and even the backwardness of “culture” (with regard, for example, to religious beliefs), as well as a somewhat instrumental view of politics.²⁴

The studies included in this volume display a willingness to engage with the ethnography and to confront unfamiliar forms of political practice, including its aesthetic dimensions. Terms like “pleasure” and “happiness” characterize these activities, which may have few points of contact with more mainstream, instrumental, planned action. Despite a lack of fit with conventional expectations—and in contrast to a view of resistance as “passive,” “implicit,” and “destructive”—the politics of the present is often constructive, politically effective, and in some cases obviously rewarding. The cases in this book illustrate, in varying degrees, combinations of all these three positive qualities.

In some we find a defensive stance of nonengagement, which aims to define an autonomous space through reducing contact with the dominant order to a minimum. It is interesting that the examples illustrating this form of politics most clearly belong to the two extremes of the world system: the Amazonian frontier and Japanese late capitalism. The Huaorani imagine themselves as the prey of their neighbors and therefore have to keep as far away as possible, and some of the *yoseba* dwellers reject attempts by the state and the unions to extend allowances that would implicate them in the state welfare system because this would compromise their masculine autonomy. This stance can be a politically effective position even though it is not aimed at transforming the overall context. At one time, it may have looked as though the Huaorani could be forced off their land, but Rival argues that they have managed to convert the oil companies into another feature of the ever-providing forest, since these companies now provide an endless supply of desired goods for the Huaorani.

A second form of resistant action seems to produce more conventional symbolic capital. The political success of Greek peasants in renegotiating their debts depended on the degree to which the government was attuned to the logic of their demands. In the course of the 1980s, when the socialist party (PASOK) came to power, the government became more responsive to peasant claims. In its populist practice, the PASOK government participated in a long-standing tradi-

tion of clientism, but it also pursued a cultural logic of anti-statist protest that existed at village level. It adopted a discourse that personified the state as a very rich and powerful patron who was expected, for example, to show a spendthrift attitude, of the kind that is admired in the coffee shop. In this context the state was required to model its relations with economic partners in the European Union on the coffee shop, somewhat to their bemusement, and then to generously redistribute its resources to its own disenfranchised citizens.

In a third type of political use, an openly aesthetic politics constructs a “whole” person in the present moment, whose active individuality rests on a balanced combination of emotion and self-interest. Day describes this lack of division as a radical individualism, and Papataxiarchis describes it as *kefi* fundamentalism. This too can provide an effective and pleasurable form of political action. Dr. Nisseem, too, represents a remarkable achievement. A sad historical comparison brings to mind all those who have gone to “share the lives of the rural poor” in Europe, including the Russian populists and so many others engaged in rural development. These revolutionaries and reformers often failed to achieve the political and social goals for which they set out. Nisseem, in contrast, by abandoning any future-oriented project of reforming and transforming the lives of others, has perhaps genuinely found a way of integrating the life-world of an intellectual with those he helps. As becomes clear in the interview—not by way of any boast or even an explicit claim, but simply by evocation of the conditions of existence today in Egypt—this project has also been politically successful in allowing the doctor to live as an “outsider,” a Copt, in a place from which many would like to exclude him. Nisseem’s transcendence of other forms of politics into a present of his own making is, in this sense, awe-inspiring.

Finally, Harris shows how these stances can be combined among the *caboclos*. Avoidance is possible in traditional spheres of domination by outsiders—such as god-parenthood. Through a performative sense of self, *caboclos* also evade the normal consequences of permanent migration to the city and treat it simply as a form of “walkabout.” Yet in other spheres, such as the marketing of fish through brokers or the exchange of votes for gifts, a strategy of connection is preferred. *Caboclo* politics stress both separation and integration. Evasion, truculence, aesthetic and instrumental politics all coexist over time.

These marginal groups recognize that permanence is *ascribed* neither in nature nor in society but constitutes an image *inscribed* by more powerful people into the building blocks and institutions of their societies. They use the present as a source of empowerment and the means with which dependence can be translated into autonomy. Thus the denial of time in favor of the very opposite of the permanent, of that most fleeting moment in the marketplace or at the gambling table, remains to some extent self-conscious. By way of conclusion, a more troubling aspect to the politics of the present needs to be addressed.

In this Introduction, we have argued that the politics of foraging and of sharing (in a sense that excludes the reciprocal obligations associated with gift exchange)

turn duration, or the short term, into a transcendent value through a sleight of hand. The pleasure of the markets in Hungary, Madagascar, London, and Poland, and of moving through the town in Brazil, the elevated spirit of Greek and Gypsy conviviality, and the happiness of the Huaorani siesta are all existential properties of the present. This achievement depends on displacing the present from its organic link to past and future within durational time. Through disconnecting the short from the long term, an “atemporal” present is constructed.

When the people described in this book deny durational time and transform it into a transcendental present in the many ritualistic and performative contexts described, they attempt to put themselves (with mixed success) beyond social intervention. Just as a concept of permanence locates authority beyond human will, so, too, the present is hard to contest (Bloch 1989). It is, quite simply, outside time and all those relationships of duration on which the authority relations inherent to states are built into the daily lives of their citizens. But this liberation is not complete since living in the present makes people, as emblems abstracted from all historical context and relations, peculiarly vulnerable to appropriation by others.

Living in the present often denies these people what Woodburn has called “the badges of success” by which mainstream society judges people. Like hunter-gatherers who “are all too easily identified with the incompetent and impoverished within their own societies,” many of the people in this volume can seem feckless or irresponsible in the eyes of their neighbors (1997:352). But there is another way in which living in the present offers hostages to fortune. The alternative form of social life that is the present can be used by other people, including powerful elites, to build ideologies of society or nation. At best, these uses escape the attention or even the interest of marginal subjects, but having your image, your art, or your knowledge taken and used by others over whom you have little or no control is also a form of domination. During Stewart’s stay in Hungary, erotic, soft-focused, “Gypsy romances”—a form of operetta with opera singers dressed up as Gypsies in the main parts—were occasionally transmitted on state television. These were loathed by the Rom. One, written by a man whom the Rom thought of as an assimilated Hungarian Gypsy, caused particular offense with its portrayal of Gypsies as free of all bourgeois cares and caught up in a libertarian sexual morality. (In fact, in sexual matters the Rom are studiously puritanical.) A sense of domination was tangible to the ethnographer. The next day at work in factories, or shopping in the town, the Rom moved alongside non-Gypsies who now saw them through the images of television fantasy, and there was little or nothing the Rom could do to correct this false impression.

The ease with which cultural representations and social relationships were, and still are, reduced to objects—cultures, subcultures, marginals—in anthropology, *as in the wider world*, accounts for many of the problems in work like Oscar Lewis’s. In his recent account of East Harlem street culture, some thirty years after *La Vida*, Bourgeois is aware that survival-of-the-fittest, blame-the-victim theories of individ-

ual action in the United States make representations of poverty dangerous (1995). He is particularly worried about falling prey to a pornography of violence or a racist voyeurism in which Puerto Ricans come to represent a chaotic threat to the social order. Note, though, that this representation is also one of vitality. And, as the *caboclo* case indicates, it seems that an inner nature, an authenticity, and especially a vital quality may all be readily appropriated to stand for an organic sense of nation.²⁵ Hungarian Gypsies provide forms of what is almost a national music; the Górale can represent one version of true Polish ancestry; prostitution provides an image for a powerful and popular fantasy of sex without dependency; the *yoseba* laborers provide heroes for an extremely popular television series in Japan; and Amazonian people provide alternative images of South American states (past and future). Likewise, hunter-gatherers of Africa have long been seen as the true autochthons, with mystical links to the fertility of the land and animals (Woodburn 1997). All these people appear literally to provide emblems, for they remain quite dispensable as human beings: Amerindians can be killed off with deliberately introduced disease or forced off their land, but their ecological “secrets” provide a new global image for Latin American countries. Former hunter-gatherers in Rwanda can be slaughtered with impunity by Hutu and Tutsi alike, and few notice. Gypsies can be removed to ghettos or camps, leaving their music to be used by the nation state. At these times the constructed, liberating present offers no escape from the present others have the means to impose.

Notes

1. The term “forage” avoids overprivileging “hunting” in the more traditional term “hunters and gatherers” and creates a distance from more conventional notions of economic activity (however, see Ingold 1991:269–272). Although we prefer the term “foraging,” the more conventional nomenclature is used where appropriate in reference to the classic literature.

2. The boundaries drawn around this volume are intended to be porous. Individuals and groups often orient themselves to the present for significant periods of time before returning to a mainstream. For example, young people in Europe become hippies and tourists and, in other ways, adopt what in eastern Europe might be glossed as a “Gypsy lifestyle” before they marry and set up house (see, e.g., Fél and Hofer 1969).

3. In this sense our experience is reminiscent of Woodburn’s, when, in the early 1960s, he returned from his research among the Hadza in Tanzania to be confronted by disbelief from his colleagues at Cambridge as he presented his findings on the absence of “social structure.”

4. We distinguish ourselves from authors like Charles Valentine and, later, Janice Perlman who argued that the urban poor of Latin America were only different from their bourgeois countrymen in the level of their wealth. Such writers accused Lewis of taking situational responses to poverty as expressions of deep-seated cultural values. In contrast to Lewis, Perlman concludes her study by saying that residents of the *favelas* (“slums”) in urban Brazil, “have the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the perseverance of pioneers and the values of patriots. What they do not have is an opportunity to fulfill these aspirations”

(1976:213). This may have been true of some slum dwellers in urban Brazil, but the implication that there is no distinctive culture among any of the world’s poor, just the mechanistic effects of poverty that wealth will remove, seems unwarranted.

5. This was a point that was made by David Lan early in the discussions that led to this book. His research in Zimbabwe demonstrated that Shona living in the northern Dande valley were marginal within their nation but did not live in the present, did not forage for their food, did not share their belongings, nor use up their resources all at once. During the war of independence from the postcolonial settler regime of Ian Smith, the Dande Shona found themselves near the symbolic center of a ritual ancestral domain (re-)constructed by the guerrillas and their aides, the spirit-mediums. Marginality inside the Rhodesian state predicated (briefly) centrality within the emergent Zimbabwean state. If today the Dande Shona find themselves once more marginal in their own land, they reproduce the imagery of the encompassing state in their rituals at least, placing themselves within the protective aura of the mainstream (Lan 1985).

6. Similarly diverse relations to “the center” are found in other parts of the world. Discussing household rituals of the Akha of Thailand during one of our workshops, Deborah Tooker demonstrated that even when these appear to invert those of the center, such ritual sustains the claim that the Akha are *a center just like the encompassing polity* from which they feel in some sense unjustly excluded (see Tooker 1996).

7. Australian aboriginal forms of sociality—predicated on and organized around the reproduction of a transcendental “dreaming,” which established social hierarchies among men and between men and women, and which Woodburn characterized as “delayed return”—seemed to occur where hunter-gatherers had not been encapsulated.

8. For instance, in organizing agricultural labor Buid sat in a circle facing outwards, and when a person spoke s/he addressed no one in particular so that not even speech generated reciprocity. The emphasis was on the individual’s relationships with the community as a whole, and no accounts were kept of labor exchanges between individuals (Gibson 1986:41).

9. See Bloch’s collection of essays (1989).

10. This qualification applies also to other ideas and practices discussed in the Introduction, such as the households outlined below.

11. This is not to say that knowledge about the long term is lacking in these situations.

12. Astuti says that in fishing, a Vezo looks for food, going out each day and thereby collecting a little something every day (1995). Vezo notice how farmers have to wait to reap, and their land is fertile because of past work.

13. Woodburn, like Gibson, considers demand sharing to be particularly characteristic of a defensive reaction to encapsulation. See Woodburn (1998), Gibson (1986).

14. The terms house and household are used loosely and interchangeably. With their names, kin connections, land, and properties as architectural spaces, houses are much more than either buildings or families. See Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995).

15. Harris demonstrated how easy it was for anthropologists to take the household for granted as a “natural unit” and to reproduce the very ideologies that underpin household arrangements in unwittingly normative descriptions (Harris 1981). Accordingly, many anthropologists have become more attuned to the continuities between households and other institutions—in particular, the state—so that it is possible to recognize the household as both a haven and a prison.

16. Thanks to Maria Phylactou for spelling this point out more clearly.

17. This is quite unlike some other peasants of the region who adopt a bored, phlegmatic air when engaged in market trades.

18. On the de-naturalization of the household and the anthropological study of cultural models of domestic life see also, among others, Yanagisako (1979, 1987) and Netting, Wilk, and Arnould (1984). See also Okely for an early discussion of the conflicting models of English Gypsy women's behavior (1975).

19. Whereas Gypsy men's devotion to their performances (and their subsequent oblivion to household obligations) is celebrated, Neny's neighbors among the Vezo note that she cannot "keep" a husband. Neny, the Górale, and the London women are not typically associated with large scale, single-sex celebrations and their transcendence of the world in a timeless present seems to be heavily qualified.

20. As Loizos and Papataxiarchis have noted, same-sex relatedness provides a context that favors the construction of alternatives to dominant models (1991:23-5).

21. In one sense, this whole volume could be read as a commentary on Marx's hugely influential description of the so-called "lumpen-proletariat" as "heterogeneous clusters of individuals who stand on the margins of the class system because they are not fully integrated into the division of labour, people who live on the crumbs of society, people without a definite trade, vagabonds, people without a hearth or home" (Marx and Engels 1958:55). While this may formally describe the position of these people within the social division of labor, we do not agree that the so-called "lumpen proletariat" cannot conceive of or embody the seed of an alternative social order.

22. See, for example, Scott (1985, 1990); Comaroff (1985); Ong (1987); Guha (1983).

23. The contemporary interest in resistance has been historically an aspect of a wider paradigmatic transition from structure to agency. Previous work on accommodation and reproduction tended to assume that actors are passive (for example, see Turner's (1974) treatment of marginals as actors mystified in the protective shield of the sacred).

24. A contrast may be found in Herzfeld whose description of the "contest between ambiguity and order" that emerges as "everyday usage continually subverts the official code" suggests that ambiguity is inherent to "discourse" and destabilizes it. This fact creates the possibility of what one might call an internal critique (1987:133).

25. As Bourgois notes: the "street culture of resistance is not a coherent, conscious universe of political opposition but, rather, a spontaneous set of rebellious practices that in the long term have emerged as an oppositional style. Ironically, mainstream society through fashion, music, film and television eventually recuperates and commercializes many of these oppositional street styles, recycling them as pop culture" (1995:8).