

Den 25. maj 2011 afholdt Michael Whyte sin afskedsforelæsning efter 39 år som ansat på Institut for Antropologi, Københavns Universitet.

Michael Whyte kom til Institut for Antropologi i januar 1972, hvor han blev lektor i 1976 efter i 1974 at have fået sin ph.d.-grad fra University of Washington, Seattle, USA.

Forelæsningen blev fulgt af adskillige underholdende taler (samt en enkelt smuk sang) fra kolleger og tidligere studerende. Talere var: John Liep, Ann-Belinda Steen Preis, Hanne Mogensen og Quentin Gausset, David Kyaddondo, Peter Henriques, Inger Sjørsløv, Lotte Meinert, Morten Nielsen og Bjarke Oxlund og sangerinden Ann-Belinda Steen Preis.

Dagen sluttede med reception med dejlig mad og original musik fra Uganda.

Tidsskriftet Antropologi er glade for at kunne bringe Michael Whytes forelæsning og således traditionen tro markere endnu en begivenhed i det hjemlige antropologiske fællesskab. Ud over hele tre professortilrædelsesforelæsninger i vort forrige nummer *Fremtid* (nr. 63, 2011) kan vi nævne, at vi har bragt Kirsten Hastrup's festforelæsning i *Kulturmøde* (nr. 56, 2007) i forbindelse med hendes 60-års-dag, trykt sammen med Cecilie Rubows prolog, John Lieps fratrædelsesforelæsning i *Penge* (nr. 49, 2004/05) og Karen Fog Olwigs professortilrædelsesforelæsning i *Slægtskab* (nr. 50, 2004/05).

Vi tillader os i denne sammenhæng undtagelsesvist at bryde vor egen regel om kun at publicere på dansk.

Redaktionen

AFSKEDSFØRELÆSNING

MICHAEL WHYTE

SO LONG, AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH

‘Was our father a bad man?’

It is August 2009. Susan and I have just arrived back in Uganda after an absence of some months. Isak – one of my brothers from rural Bunyole, now living in Kampala – has come to visit with us before we head north to Gulu the next day. We spend the late afternoon talking about family and the problems that Isak – and his sisters – are coping with in Kampala.

An older sister, employed in the police for many years, has been ill for some time and on unofficial sick leave. She has just been admitted to hospital in Bunyole and we talk about her condition with concern. Her quarters in the police lines – one room filled with beds – have for decades been lodging for her sisters and brothers while they attended school and, even now, as they look for stable work.

Isak is currently staying there, sharing the room with another younger sister and her twin daughters. They had rented a small shop where this younger sister had a hairdressing business: The Lion King Salon – lion being their clan totem. Isak had a corner for his computer in the Lion King. Here he copied music CDs and DVDs, did word processing and – his hope for the future – made music videos for hopeful musicians, using a computer programme that allowed him to combine recorded music with video clips. But money was the problem and they had recently been evicted. The shop could not support them – ‘we kept records of the income but not expenditure, that was our mistake.’ Isak explains that they had to spend too much on medical care for his older sister. So now he is baby-sitting the twins in the room in the police lines while his hairdresser sister continues to work in another ‘salon.’

It is not much of a life for a young man, but Isak insists that he has no intention of returning to live in to Bunyole. Almost all of his generation in our family – boys and girls – are looking for ‘what to do’ in town, even if town is

only the local trading centre. Like his other siblings in town, Isak is a born-again Christian, a 'savedie,' as his older rural brother says. These fellowships exist in the countryside of course, but they lack the exciting, multi-ethnic modernity of the Kampala congregations.

As we talk, evening falls and we walk along a busy road to a place where we can have dinner together. Amid traffic and dust comes the unexpected question: Was our father a bad man?

A bit of history and a bit of genealogy are needed now. During our first fieldwork in Bunyole, in 1969-71, I was informally adopted by Muzee, our local (*mutongole*) chief, thus rounding out the number of his children to 18. Over the years the relationship with Muzee and his extensive family developed. In the 1990s, Susan and I, together with a brother who worked in Kampala, built a house on land my 'father' provided. We have supported the education of what seems in retrospect like countless brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews in the family, including Isak. He is the next youngest son of Muzee's third wife. (I am counted as the oldest son of wife number 2, the beloved wife – according to her.) Isak's mother died in 1990 and he and his younger brother grew up in a somewhat disorganised household, 'headed' by successive older sisters and supervised by their stepmother (my mother) and later by their oldest brother and his wife.

Back to Isak's question. Isak related that, while helping another brother in his campaign for a seat on the District Council, some people told him that they would never vote for a son of the old chief, our father. The chief was a bad man – the phrase could also be rendered as 'an evil man.' Isak mentioned allegations of sorcery – and coupled them with his memories of the old man sacrificing at our ancestor shrine (now long vanished) and, in his last years, trying to revive the position of clan spirit medium. I explained that, when I first knew our father, he was certainly a traditionalist, but no sorcerer. In those days, I reminded him, even though everyone 'had a religion,' most senior men also kept their ancestor shrines – and everybody would, at times, become involved with the world of ancestors and spirits, practices that were referred to by saved Christians as 'the cult of evils.' I tried to describe a world of practice that I remembered well. It was a world before Idi Amin, a time people now call Uganda's Golden Age – and it had vanished a decade before Isak was born.

Dates matters here, or at least time does. Our father was more than 60 years older than Isak. He died in 1995, five years after Isak's mother. (Isak himself was, in primary school at the time.) I was someone who had appeared in Isak's world in 1989, before Isak had begun school – an exotic European with a strange connection to his family history.

Indeed, when I first arrived in Bunyole in 1969, I was no older than Isak in 2009. Then, at that time, I was young, newly married and childless, just barely an

adult in Nyole terms. Certainly wealthy by local standards, but not unimaginably so. I was a student, bent on learning ‘the things what were done in Bunyole’ from the people who were doing them – a position that marked me positively, a polite and respectful young man who listened.

That version of me was, I imagine, almost as remote for Isak as his memories of his father. As he continued to talk, to react to my answers, it became clear that Isak’s question was not simply historical; it was existential in a very specific way. It was about Isak now; it was about his stalled life.

‘People said my father was rich,’ Isak continued. ‘He was well known. If I go ask for a job in Butaleja [the District headquarters], people know me. But if he was rich, how can I be poor like this? I am nothing. Was he rich? At his funeral people talked until I hated them – that he had many cows and that my stepmother took them.’

As we walk, Isak tells us that he is ashamed that his father was well known ‘and yet I am nothing.’ ‘If I knew the story of my father’s life then I would know the way to go,’ he adds. We ask why he does not enquire from other family members, for example, his older brother, who is now the leader of the village council. But it seems that the relationship is strained and that this brother simply rebuffs him: ‘go away savedie,’ he is told.

‘I don’t know what’s wrong with our family,’ Isak speculates. ‘Are we being punished for something that happened long ago? Maybe our sister Grace. She was married and left her husband and married again in Busoga. Her husband was accused of killing someone for riches (by evil magic) and they ran away. Somewhere in Busoga. She’s in exile.’

‘When I was growing up there was no role model – no one to show what I should do with my life.’ No one made anything of his life – going outside, getting an education. My older brother would come back from Kampala and get in fights. They would sit around and drink. The only one to admire was Brian [his FBS] ‘and he was younger than me.’ Isak sees his youngest brother who is in his second year at university as the one bright spot: ‘he has learned from our mistakes; he’s really focused on his studies.’

Even though there is land available in our family, farming has never appealed to Isak. A return to village life seems to mean submission to older brothers and to a world too limited, too narrow. There is nothing for him there – where he is known as the son of a father whose history is unknowable to Isak. A father who, in the end, did not provide for his sons. The older brothers and I know that there were no cows, that they had disappeared years before in a lawsuit over bridewealth and land, but that is beside the point. Our history is not the history that Isak wants and needs – at least not yet.

The conversation with Isak was in many ways like so many others I have held after intervals of absence: a matter of catching up on the news, of being updated. But his question about our father added another dimension. It brought home the point that updating implies dating back – having shared something in the past – having had people and a social world in common. And in that common past, I dated back farther than he did. It is this theme of updating and dating back, as they play out in fieldwork, that I wish to consider this afternoon.

The sociability of fieldwork

Many of us have experienced the social and emotional effects of returning to the field. My own situation of returning over 40 years is extreme, but returning and updating are – or can be – a part of any fieldwork, whether the intervals between updates are counted in days or years. By attending to them we are alerted to some more general links between fieldwork experience and different appreciations of time as they present themselves in what I call here episodic fieldwork. I use ‘episodic’ because I want to emphasise the significance of absence and return for fieldwork relationships and the ethnographies that rest on these relationships. More generally, I want to remind us that social life is itself episodic. Communicative interaction – with or without the ethnographer’s sporadic participation – plays out in space and time and is thus necessarily a discontinuous practice. We engage each other through social episodes and we create a sense of time, change and coherence by integrating and reintegrating our episodic interactions.¹

To be brought up to date, one must have been, at one point in the past, up to date. There is always a presumption of social familiarity, of local competence, perhaps a warm feeling of being welcomed back into a social world, with a familiar social position. This sense of re-belonging may be fleeting but its significance is beyond doubt. Just think of the occasions when it falters or fails – that moment of small panic, when you are at a loss. Who is this woman and what on earth is she talking about? Can I access the Michael she knew, the Michael who remembered, before my silly smile gives the game away? And what is the game, anyway?

The small panic is not about a memory lapse but rather the social lapse that threatens. Why? Because being updated is more than receiving information. It is the condition of being part of a social group or network where stories, histories, carry meaning, as do those of Isak’s family. However, no one can be socially active/on-line all the time. Social participation is inevitably a matter of comings and goings, a matter of updates.

Drawing inspiration from Simmel I am suggesting that what is at stake here is sociability – defined as association for its own sake. Simmel argues that this

form of interaction, while not instrumental or goal directed ‘in its pure form,’ is nonetheless a condition or framework for social existence (Simmel & Hughes 1949:254). Sociability is play and necessity; it is ‘the play-form of association ... related to the content-determined concreteness of association as art is related to reality’ (op.cit.255). As examples of sociability, Simmel offers conversation as an end in itself: coquetry, tact and ‘good form.’ Here the art of interaction is paramount and time is banished, together with tactics. However sociability is not simply what happens when nothing else is happening. Rather it is a social mode that in some sense enables individual and collective actions. For Simmel, both sociability and play can risk becoming ‘entangled with real life’ (op.cit.258), a possibility that disturbs his idealised schema. But for me it is precisely these margins, where timeless sociability merges with calculation, and thus with time, that are of prime interest. Here, the forms and conventions of ‘pure’ sociability intersect with social calculation, with history and memory. Sociability, it seems to me, is both play and purpose, timeless and episodic. From my perspective, sociability is usefully seen as a condition that is achieved, again and again. Like play it is dependent on knowing forms and rules, on historical experience. But because sociability is social, it also rests on an appreciation of social positions and events. The achieving of sociability, socially and temporally specific, is a process in time, and in society. It is about maintaining a certain continuity, a practice of updating an existing social field and the positions of its players. Correspondingly, sociability in this sense is irrelevant when it deals with those who are ‘here today and gone tomorrow’ (Simmel 1950). One does not update a Stranger.

Returning – to the field, but also to any earlier set of social relationships – sets sociability in motion in the process of reconnecting. And it is a process that may well fail, even when memory does not. Old friends may now simply be irritating – have they changed or have I? Acquaintances may suddenly become friends – or at least more distinct persons because I am now older, because they have married, become established and recognised, or because life events have transformed their social situation. ‘He is no longer married; his wife and the child have died and he stays with his parents. Is it this new disease of ours?’ Any update will be a painful review, a life heading in unexpected directions, with social consequences.

Finally, returning to the field is also about being brought up to date in the world and about the world, about resuming – or finding – ‘coevalness’ when political, economic and ecological circumstances have changed (Fabian & Bunzl 2002). Through the years we have known Isak’s family, the Ugandan world has shifted radically. The country Winston Churchill once called the Pearl of Africa was transformed by the ‘regimes’ (Idi Amin, Obote, the Okellos) and then transformed again by Museveni and the National Resistance Movement

and the donor community. The colonial economy, structured by export crops and subsistence cultivation, was still viable in 1969; in 2009 the free internal market, where anything is for sale and people complain that ‘we have no cash crops,’ dominates. Pentecostal churches, mobile phones, FM radio stations and video parlours are part of a popular culture that did not exist when we first knew Isak’s father. AIDS has taken a terrible toll, also among Isak’s family, and resources have poured in for prevention and treatment programmes that are keeping some of his relatives alive. Donors and their programs are omnipresent, primary education is universal – and jobs are still scarce, as Isak knows so well.

From our first weeks in Bunyole back in 1969, we filled our notebooks and our files with the happenings of the families to whom we were closest. We came to know people not just as individuals, but as contingent parts of families and neighbourhoods. As we learned more Lunyole it became possible to follow on-going social life as a series of connected events and to construe relational data into extended cases. Such cases, we knew, were important – Manchester anthropology was still modern in 1970 – and we recorded on-going narratives of activities such as land disputes, funeral rituals, domestic quarrels, therapeutic journeys. We also followed along in continuing micro-sagas of friends and neighbours, and many of these narratives ended up as cases in their own right. Such ‘case stories’ required a degree of contextual knowledge but, once it was clear that we were interested, there were always interlocutors willing to help us with their interpretations. Collecting cases involved us in new kinds of collaboration with our field assistants and our friends and neighbours – and began to help us to move beyond our initial focus on facts and lists, names and categories. Case material was on-going, socially mediated and socially demanding. Hearing the latest about M’s father-in-law – a new episode in a continuing story – was not simply data; it was information imparted to me because I was accepted as a brother-in-law, an honorary relative. It confirmed that I was – literally – in a position to know, part of a social network, if only as a game. Knowing what M had said and B had done and what S believed allowed us to become more nearly a part of Nyole social life on Nyole terms. As we ‘moved’ we heard people talking about other people, and their on-going conflicts, projects and plans. When we returned, we were able to ask about past events and to receive updates. Being able to participate – and being interested in participating – made us more human, more social.²

Updating: the dynamics of a fieldwork

We returned at different rhythms over the years. During our first 26-month stay in Bunyole, there were many small comings and goings – and a lot of updating. We

left the field for conferences and periods of writing spent in Kampala, as well as holidays and an unplanned month in Nairobi due to illness. Returning after this absence with gifts of clothing bought from Nairobi's Keriokor Market made for a narrative that was locally more interesting/dramatic than a simple trip to Mbale or Tororo. Telling about where we had been induced narratives from our friends – about places they had reached and, of course, about what had happened in our absence. Being updated was both information – entered in fieldnotes and added to cases – and also, as I see now, a sign of our success at attaining a social place in our communities.

Our last months of fieldwork in 1971, after the Amin coup, were increasingly fraught whenever we left our Bunyole backwater for a trip to Mbale or Kampala. We drove past roadblocks and fear – young soldiers from the North, sweating even in the shade, trying to come to terms with their new power and its possibilities and pitfalls. Each return became another story, a contribution to the developing narrative about the danger of journeys and the parlous state of affairs 'outside.'

After that first long fieldwork, returns and updating came at longer intervals. There were years when we lost touch: the time of Amin from 1971 to 1979. And then the excitement and relief of coming back for a short visit in 1979 to find that our friends were all right despite the deprivations and uncertainty. Another period of insecurity followed, which gradually lessened, at least in our part of Uganda, after Museveni's coup in 1986. From 1988 we began to return regularly, facilitated from 1994 by the Danida-supported ENRECA project that linked our department to a research centre at Makerere University. Today, 40 years later, when we come and go, there is still always someone who needs a ride, or money, or advice about a problem – someone who relates the events of home in the expectation that we will understand. And there are still people in Kampala – or even in Denmark – who need to be greeted and, if possible, told the news of home. '*Amang'uliro-hi?*' (what news?) is a key part of the standard greeting but, unlike the English 'how's it going?' Banyole still expect an elaborated response – an update.

Episodic fieldwork and the creation of futures and pasts

Updating implies a sociability that is not continuous; one in which absence and return are normal. But what happens when the absences lengthen, lapping over major historical change? In such cases, returns may best be seen as episodes that reconnect the *now* of the fieldworker and the *now* of the field. Coevalness is reimposed with each visit. But, as we shall see, this is not simply a matter of learning the latest gossip. 'Communicative interaction' involves both reinterpretation of past understandings and understanding of the past.

According to my on-line dictionary the word episode comes from Greek – *episodes*: ‘coming in besides.’ There are two primary meanings. The first states that an episode is ‘an event or a group of events occurring as part of a larger sequence; an incident or period considered in isolation: *the latest episode in the feud.*’ The second usage is perhaps more familiar – the episode as an instalment in an on-going story. An episode is thus both part of a sequence and the part itself. Episodic fieldwork involves both senses of the term, reflecting different challenges and opportunities for reflection and understanding.

Episodes of updating with Isak have increased in recent years. As a reluctant schoolboy, a stubborn and – to us – silent youth, there was little conversation. Other people, his worried sisters, an irritated older brother, volunteered what updating reached us: he’s hanging out with bad lots in the trading centre, going to discos. But over the years work has brought us more often to Kampala and to the urban world of our younger family members. Isak has emerged from what had been, for us, the family shadow; he has become a presence and a point of view in his own right. Episodes in his continuing story are now – for us – instalments in a broadening family sociality. And Isak’s narrative, captured in frames is more and more clearly a part of the on-going story of urban Uganda.

One afternoon (before the Lion King hair salon closed) we stopped by to visit, and Isak introduced his girlfriend who had come to help his sister plait hair. To our surprise, it turned out they had a child together – staying with her mother. He had met her through the police connection: her policeman father and Isak’s sister had been posted in the same district town. Later her father was transferred to Mbarara, the home area of the president, and through a link there she obtained a presidential scholarship for a private university. Political patronage, increasingly the order of the day, had blessed her, and cast a few crumbs his way. Her classmates sometimes gave Isak a little work typing their term papers on his computer.

Another time, some months after the visit when Isak asked about his father, we found him in particularly urgent need of money. His computer was broken, but another income possibility was almost within grasp – if only he knew how to drive. He had gotten a part acting in a film about AIDS, produced by an externally funded NGO. He played the rich man, the Sugar Daddy who spreads AIDS to needy young women, and he was meant to come driving a car. Isak had told the producers that he could drive, but now they were getting to the part of the film where he was supposed to do it! And this might be his chance. The film was going to tour around and be discussed. He could become known, be on TV, maybe even make films himself. For example, a film about his family! His sister, in whose police line room we were sitting, sighed dismissively. ‘He’s always full of different impractical ideas – this and that.’ But we gave him some cash for a

driving lesson. So far he has not yet become a TV star, but he too was touched, ever so lightly, by the foreign donors fighting AIDS.

Long term fieldworking: change, sociability and position

The times changed, from a pre-Amin Uganda only just post-colonial to today's cosmopolitan, globalised and conflicted state of affairs. Episodic fieldworking – the updating of fieldworks by returning social beings – brought out the ways in which Banyole – some Banyole, different Banyole – link local and domestic events to wider – and emerging – social fields. Recognising such changes as on-going local reflections provides a framework for accessing new historical interpretations of the world and the directions that it is taking. (The plurals are important here.) Returning periodically was however not simply a matter of capturing events in new sequences. The very social relationships that define episodic fieldwork and continuing participation are, by virtue of their dependence on intersubjectivity and sociability, also malleable and contingent.

This is no doubt a complex way of stating the obvious: people and ethnographers change. My positions, my actual and possible relationships with Others, have been transformed over the years – as have Theirs. In some cases, we have simply grown up, and differences in age and experience that were great in 1970 or 1990 have become less so. The little boy who lived across the road from us in 1970 is now a parent and an academic, a fellow scientist with whom we discuss Uganda's ecological crises. His father, a headmaster in 1970, was our local mentor as well as our friend; today we are both grandparents in friendly competition over progeny. In other cases, our lives have taken different courses and gaps have come into being that are difficult to bridge. In 1970 we had friends among the many small farmers in Bunyole, making what was considered a good living from subsistence production and a cash crop. Gifts of crops, animals and food were commonplace, material expressions of sociability. Now their children and grandchildren are absolutely and relatively impoverished. They no longer have the capacity to be generous in the way they would have wished.³

I too have changed – again absolutely and relatively. I made my first friends in Bunyole as a young man, newly married and, by local standards, almost a youth. I was a PhD student 'sent by Makerere University to learn the things which are done in Bunyole'; everyone was more competent. Over the years I have developed and discovered different competences. I got a full-time university job, an elite job also in Uganda. I became known to district and national civil servants and have Ugandan colleagues and friends who are part of – or at least close to – the country's economic and political elite. I also have my family 'deep in the country'

in Bunyole, where we have built a house and where we have supported children from primary school to university, provided cash for family-related business projects and family emergencies. Genealogically I am now counted with the most senior men in our lineage, called in as a 'father' to 'solve our problems.' We have become increasingly drawn into the kind of network of demands, deference and intimacy that Uganda elites must also navigate.

Conclusion: time, play and purpose

Updating is not a simple linear cumulative process: more stories, more events, more money, greater insight. It is more than continually capturing the latest instalment in an on-going story. By returning again and again, we are not simply being *brought* up-to-date. We participate in a temporal process that is also transformative: we are *ourselves* updated. The two processes are linked. By returning again and again, we learn more – and we become capable of understanding more. Becoming more involved, more situated, we take on positions that are about sociability (playing at being a brother or an uncle, an elite relative), and also about obligations: children to be educated and medicine to be supplied. And networks based on research relationships in Uganda and beyond are shared with the 'objects' of research, sometimes with surprisingly complex outcomes.

Mere returning can emphasise progressive difference. Johannes Fabian argues that anthropological fieldwork 'demands that ethnographers recognise the people they study as their coevals'. However, when ethnographers 'represent their knowledge in teaching and writing' the result may well take the form of 'a discourse that consistently places those who are talked about in a time other than of the one who talks' (Fabian 2007). Updating, when it is recognised as part and parcel of research, pushes us to retain a sense of coevalness in our representations; we continue to be a part of each other's now, even as that now changes. We get jobs and raise a family, learn to use computers and mobile phones and to surf the net. Our Ugandan friends are also growing up, growing older, coping more or less successfully with the exigencies of life in the countryside or, increasingly, in town. They, too, use mobile phones and sometimes the internet. Updating continues to connect us even as we change – and to remind all of us that 'the sharing of time' has not diminished inequality. Europeans and Ugandans are still systematically, structurally separated, not by time but certainly by degree of access to resources of all sorts.

Finally, I must emphasise that I see all participatory fieldwork as episodic. Long-term fieldwork makes the process more visible but, in principle, what is necessary is simply the conscious awareness of returning and, perhaps, a strategic

use of updating. Perhaps also a more careful consideration of dating back, and of the shifting social configurations of the past, against which one is updating. Returning and updating are processes in social life as well as ethnographic research. They can be mobilised to explore change as well as continuity. Indeed, it is likely that being aware of updating as a process for achieving sociability is particularly useful when planning any fieldwork.

Another conclusion

My title is borrowed from the fourth volume of Douglas Adams's wonderful 'trilogy in 5 parts', *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Adams 1995). Adams manages to destroy the earth at least twice in the course of the five volumes in his trilogy, which I think allows me an extra conclusion or two.

The best way to get to know the *Hitchhiker's Guide* is to go back to the original BBC radio plays, which began in 1978. In our family, they were on air just after dinner in the 1980's and served as washing up entertainment for Zack and Tim, our sons. Later, we bought tapes of the whole series in order to further encourage washing up over several more years. The radio plays became novels – also good – and a film – not so good.

The *Hitchhiker's Guide* is about – well – almost everything. It is particularly good at looking at the experience of one character from radically different positions. Poor Arthur Dent, the Earthman who is more or less the main character, is brought to an almost continuous state of paradigm collapse by these confrontations. Almost, but never completely.

The value of being shown aspects of what one knows that one should also have known, but didn't (an Adams sentiment) is immense, not least for an ethnographer. Susan has always been able to open my eyes to relationships and meanings that have enlightened my understanding – and my enjoyment of fieldwork. Others from the Department of Anthropology have also helped to challenge my ethnographic certainties about Bunyole: Thorkild Jensen carried out kandidat research there in 1992 – and explored a new world of boda-boda bicycle taxis and a view of Bunyole from the perspective of (mostly) young and unmarried men. Bjarke Oxlund, our 'son' in a neighbouring district, welcomed me into his Samia family and shared insights into being a son in another place. A decade later David Kyaddondo carried out excellent and productive PhD research in the rice swamps of Eastern Bunyole. His eye for the problems and agency of the very young and the very old helped me to see and understand the social perspectives of these actors and, through them, to better understand the varieties of Nyole family life. Catrine Christiansen also a PhD student working with churches and development in neighbouring Samia

(where she was also known as Bjarke's sister and, at times, as our daughter – even *bazungu* families are complicated) visited us in Bunyole a few years ago. Our local archdeacon came to call, was presented to Catrine – and four hours later they were still deep in a learned discussion of Church of Uganda policy and politics. The archdeacon keeps asking when is she returning.

Thanks, too, to those who, over the years, have shared their fields and their projects with me, broadening my world and my anthropology. Nic and Ida opened other worlds for us in Africa and Malaysia; Niels and Eva introduced us to Denmark and to things Andean. John and Annette Liep arrived home from Rossel Island to find us in our first year – they have been our true age-mates ever since. Our sons Tim and Zack grew up with updatings from Bunyole (and Marachi) and have repaid in kind, opening new worlds in Nepal and among asylum-seekers in Denmark. Eric Reynolds introduced us to other Kenyas in Kapenguria and Kisumu – and even shared a few fish.

In particular, thanks to our special Eastern Ugandan colleagues, to Hanne Mogensen who showed us that our 'enemies' in Budama were not so very different and to Lotte Meinert, who made her Teso world a part of ours. There are so many others – generous with their time and their insight – who have shared fields and ideas with me. This is the wonder of colleagues and students, and you are too many for me to mention by name. But you are in my thoughts, my work and my heart.

So many of you here have contributed to my Ugandan education – not least through the Center for Afrikastudier with Holger Bernt Hansen and as colleagues in our TORCH and Gulu ENRECA projects, and so many more have helped me to become the best anthropologist that I could manage to be. As they say in books, all the mistakes are of my own making.

So finally, in the words of the dolphins who left earth by their own means before it was destroyed by a Vogon construction fleet, following out-dated orders from a galactic bureaucracy to clear the way for a hyper-space by-pass: 'so long and thanks for all the fish!' And if there is a moral, let it be that Vogons executing plans – and planets – with no concern for consequences might appear at any moment. Maybe they are already here. Be prepared. Resist!

Noter

1. Of course neither integration nor reintegration is wholly reliable; the episodic nature of social relations combines with updating to insure a certain degree of social and historical confusion.
2. 'From the native's point of view' Geertz argues that 'accounts of other peoples' subjectivities'

cannot be based on empathy, and that anthropologists must not delude themselves into mistaking their participation for social membership. They are not Natives and their accounts of life in the field belong to *their* biographies (Geertz 1979:44-5). I agree; I am not 'really' Isak's older brother. But our relationship is framed – played at – in terms that help me to see the changing significance of differences in age and wealth from the point of view of the senior part. Updating and dating back provide my context for exploring – and interpreting – social lives from different and shifting positions.

3. Our Isak, and his newly urban siblings, might seem to resemble John Berger's transformed and urbanized peasants in his trilogy *Into Their Labours*, which includes *Pig Earth*, *Once in Europe*, and *Lilac and Flag* (Berger 1991). But for Isak, home and its bonds are still all too active, shaping and informing the pull of town in a dialectic that is Ugandan, not French.

Litteratur

Adams, Douglas

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