



ANTHROPOLOGY, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
Collection of documents for students of the Courses in Hospitality Management
and Economy of Tourism

By Prof. RomanoToppan

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An Anthropology of Hospitality

By **Alison Morrison (eds)**

Introduction

By **Alison Morrison (eds)**

From In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates

Overview

This book aims to both reflect and open up a number of debates between academics working in the field of hospitality management and academics from the wider social sciences. As Airey and Tribe show in Chapter 15, hospitality management is a relatively new academic discipline that has been largely concerned with the hospitality industry. In many ways hospitality has been used as a term to describe activities that were called hotel and catering in earlier times. The study of hospitality presents avenues of enquiry that the more prosaic title of hotel and catering tends to discourage yet which are essential for understanding host and guest relationships. When the possibilities are explored, hospitality and hospitableness can be studied in private and in wider social settings.

There have been a number of recent books dealing with food and social aspects of eating. For example, the work of Visser (1991), Mennel, et al. (1992), Wood, (1995), Beardsworth and Keil (1997) all address aspects of eating and meals. With few exceptions, these texts rarely touch on or mention hospitality and relationships between guests and host through a study of mutual obligations and the practice of hospitableness. Telfer's work (1996) and Heal's (1990) exploration of hospitality in early middle England are notable in providing analysis that can inform future study.

Current interest in defining hospitality as an academic subject outlined in this book stems from a meeting held in Nottingham in April 1997. The meeting aimed to explore subjects of common interest amongst...

From In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates

Tom Selwyn

The Business School, University of North London

This chapter offers a social anthropological view of hospitality. An opening section briefly considers the purpose and social function of hospitality and then offers some comparative historical and ethnographic material on the subject. Some preliminary comments are made about the social, ritual and cognitive structures within which acts of hospitality are carried out. A second section considers the importance to the practice of hospitality of food. This is illustrated and developed mainly from one ethnographic example, and the chapter ends by returning to more general themes of hospitality's structural organization.

Structures and Functions of Hospitality

The basic function of hospitality is to establish a relationship or to promote an already established relationship. Acts of hospitality achieve this in the course of exchanges of goods and services, both material and symbolic, between those who give hospitality (hosts) and those who receive it (guests). Since relationships necessarily evolve within moral frameworks, one of the principal functions of any act of hospitality is either (in the case of an existing relationship) to consolidate the recognition that hosts and guests already share the same moral universe or (in the case of a new relationship) to enable the construction of a moral universe to which both host and guest agree to belong.

Acts of hospitality thus either consolidate structures of relations by symbolically affirming them, or (in the case of the establishment of a new framework of relations) are structurally transformative. In the latter case givers...

Topics of Interest

Chapter 3: The Philosophy of Hospitableness

By Alison Morrison (eds)

From *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates*

Elizabeth Telfer

Department of Philosophy, University of Glasgow

Overview

Hospitableness is the name of the trait possessed by hospitable people. It is clearly something to do with hospitality, so I shall begin with that. We can define hospitality, in its basic meaning, as follows: it is the giving of food, drink and sometimes accommodation to people who are not regular members of a household. Typically givers, or hosts, provide these things in their own homes, and the point is that they are sharing their own sustenance with their guests. This notion may be stretched in various directions: for example, a firm is said to provide hospitality if it gives food and drink to visitors. But the central idea of the concept remains that of sharing one's own home and provision with others.

In doing so, a host accepts responsibility for the overall welfare of his or her guests. As the eighteenth-century gourmet and food writer Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin says: To entertain a guest is to make yourself responsible for his happiness so long as he is beneath your roof (Brillat-Savarin, 1970, p. 14). If this is a host's task, it is concerned with more than food, drink and shelter: it means that a host must try to cheer up a miserable guest, divert a bored one, care for a sick one. Traditionally the most important responsibility of all was for the guest's safety: hospitality was a kind of sanctuary, and the host was thought of as having undertaken a solemn obligation to...

Conclusions

By Alison Morrison (eds)

From *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates*

Conclusions

We have attempted to demonstrate the risks in the hospitality industry's use of a metaphor based on encounters in the home. The host's performance is only occasionally secure, and may be judged inadequate by the guest (or vice versa) due to different expectations of gender roles, of the functions of home and of generation and social class. The home is a container of polluting activities from which a guest cannot always be shielded. It is women who are seen as responsible for standards of performance. If the entry of a guest into the home carries so many perils, is it wise for the hospitality industry to appropriate this metaphor?

Putting up is almost exclusively initiated by the guest and the host is frequently providing what Telfer described earlier as Good Samaritan hospitality. In these circumstances, the provision of hospitality represents mixed experiences and tensions for the host, particularly the hostess. Putting up involves more intimate and ongoing relationship between host and guest than is the case when providing hospitality in the form of meals or parties. The resident guest has access to the back region to an extent that would not apply to dinner guests. Furthermore, the precise nature of what both hosts and guests can and cannot do in the eyes of the other become more complex and difficult to manage.

In these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that putting up represents a form of hospitality fraught with difficulties because of the different expectations of guests and hosts.

Chapter 13: Consuming Hospitality on Holiday

By Alison Morrison (eds)

From *In Search of Hospitality: Theoretical Perspectives and Debates*

Hazel Andrews

School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of North London

Overview

Wood (1994a) has argued that there have been few attempts to understand what the concept of hospitality actually

means. For the purpose of this chapter the definition supplied by Telfer will be used, with the addition of the provision of entertainment. She states [w]e can define hospitality as the giving of food, drink and sometimes accommodation to people who are not regular members of a household (1996, p. 83). This accords with the meaning offered in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Implied in Telfer's description is the idea of an outsider, a stranger. She goes on to say that through the meeting of the needs of the stranger, bonds of trust and interdependency are established. These bonds are based on ideas of reciprocity and exchange, which have been explored in relation to gift giving by Malinowski (1967) and Mauss (1954). The basic tenet of their arguments is that gift exchange structures and represents the material and moral life of the community, establishing relationships based on mutual obligation. In this respect another basic maxim to an understanding of hospitality is established that of turning a stranger into a friend.

In both the studies of hospitality and tourism, the appropriateness of the motives behind hospitality have been cast into doubt as the question of the commodification of the exchange between host and guest has been examined. In terms of hospitality Wood (1994a) cites Muhlmann (1932) and Heal (1990)...

List of Case Studies

By Alistair Williams

From Understanding the Hospitality Consumer

Chapter 4: Individual Processes in Consuming Hospitality

Case study 4.1: Female-friendly bars: a case study of Six Continents All-Bar-One brand

Chapter 5: Social and Cultural Influences on Hospitality Consumer Behaviour

Case study 5.1: Kosher: the fitness of food for ritual purposes

Case study 5.2: Ritualized experiences of food and drink: the example of the Japanese tea ceremony

Case study 5.3: EuroDisney: cultural Chernobyl

Chapter 6: The Influence of Reference Groups on Hospitality Consumers

Case study 6.1: McDonald's Happy Meals and collectables

Chapter 7: The End of the Marketing Concept

Case study 7.1: Market segmentation or product segmentation? The case of Six Continents Hotels

Chapter 8: Postmodern Consumers of Hospitality Services

Case study 8.1: Aspects of postmodernism and their significance to Royal Caribbean's latest cruise ship, Voyager of the Seas

Case study 8.2: Postmodernism and hyperreal pubs

Chapter 9: Hospitality Implications of the Revolution in Consumption: Marketing Simulacrity and Hyperreality

Case Study 9.1: Six Continents Hyperreal bars

Case Study 9.2: Aspects of simulation and their significance within the hospitality industry: New Orleans, the theme park city

Case study 9.3: Heritage theme parks: the Magna experience

Source: <http://www.globalspec.com/reference/33098/203279/Chapter-3-The-Philosophy-of-Hospitalableness>

Hospitality, culture and society

Location GCG08

Date and Time 11th April, 2007 at 11:30

Convenor(s)

Peter Lugosi (Bournemouth University) plugosi@bournemouth.ac.uk

Short abstract

This panel seeks to examine the nature and significance of hospitality in contemporary culture and society.

Long abstract

The concept of hospitality has been an underlying theme in many anthropological studies. Hospitality, in both its social and commercial manifestations, is also central to the production and consumption of tourism. Hospitality involves a wide range of social processes that are used to define communities, and the ways in which hospitality is practiced is therefore a reflection of the values of particular people and their cultures. To understand hospitality, it is necessary to question how notions of identity, obligation, inclusion and exclusion are entangled with the production and exchange of food, drink and the offer of shelter. Recent years has seen a growing debate among anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, philosophers and applied management researchers about the nature and significance of hospitality in contemporary societies. This panel seeks to build on these emerging debates.

Papers

Corsica, hospitality and the law: some paradoxes in identity and difference

Author(s): Matei Candea

Abstract

This paper examines the extensively debated existence in Corsica of a "law of hospitality" which extends notably to those who have fallen foul of the Law. This social practice, objectified in different ways by the French media, Corsican nationalist pronouncements and classical anthropological texts, becomes in itself a way of separating Corsicans from non-Corsicans. The paper revisits classic functionalist accounts of hospitality as a way of managing difference, in a situation where difference is no longer embodied primarily through the encounter of two people ('host' and 'guest'), but is already distributed across multiple spaces and different media.

Fanta Orange for the Ancestors: Ingesting the 'Mad' Stranger in Southwest Madagascar

Author(s): David Picard

Abstract

In this paper, I will focus on the underlying strategies and symbolic implications of hospitality cultures and practices in South-West Madagascar. I will focus in particular on the ongoing contact between and co-presence of Western strangers (tourists, anthropologists, conservationists, development cooperants, missionaries) and the heterogeneous populations living in Madagascar's Menabe coastal area. I will argue that from a Madagascan coastal community perspective, these foreigners are usually seen as 'mad'; they manipulate complicated truth machines (computers), drive motor engine cars, fly planes like birds, have little respect for ancestors and fady, protect seemingly worthless 'stones' (corals), have powerful doctors, know important Malagasy politicians, and

dispose of seemingly endless economic resources. In this context, linking in with the world of these 'mad' strangers, by wearing their cloths, by imitating their behaviour, by fetishizing drinks like Fanta Orange during ancestor rituals, seems to become a means to appropriate this 'madness' and make it work for personal or collective local agendas. The paper hence demonstrates that hospitality towards Western strangers - and I include here for instance the local participation in (modernist) environmental protection programmes run by Western strangers - manifests less a cultural involution, impact or acculturation to Western values than an active strategy to make strangers and their power work for diverse local agendas (among whom, in the Madagascan context, to solve the fishing crisis and the problem of the 'reversal of the sea' (coral bleaching)).

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Emerging concepts and practices of tourist hospitality among the locals of Viengxay, Lao PDR

Author(s): Thomas Bauer
Haiyan Song
Wantanee Suntikul

Abstract

The inhabitants of the remote and poor region of Viengxay in Laos have not traditionally been accustomed to receiving tourists to their villages. Only recently has a small trickle of adventurous tourists begun to appear, but tourism is expected to increase in future years due to international organisations' development projects in the area. The proposed paper will discuss the emerging practices of hospitality towards these tourists by the local people. These practices are influenced by many factors, including local traditions and etiquette, the area's long history of geographical and political isolation and war, and individual and societal perceptions and aspirations regarding tourism and tourists. Though there is a tendency to perceive and treat tourists as guests in the village, locals are beginning to realise that tourists are a special kind of guest that may require a different type of hospitality. Attitudes and behaviour towards tourists are also changing due to increasing contact with foreigners and the outside world and evolving expectations regarding the tourism industry. The paper will examine how these various factors interact and conflict in the formation of hospitality practices. The paper is based on site observations and focus group interviews conducted with local people in thirteen villages in Viengxay.

Monastic hospitality: the enduring legacy

Author(s): Kevin O'Gorman

Abstract

Research into the phenomenon of hospitality continues to broaden through an ever-increasing dialogue and alignment with a greater number of academic disciplines. This paper reports on an investigation into the hospitality offered by Benedictine monasteries and demonstrates how an enhanced understanding of hospitality can be achieved through synergy between social anthropology, philosophy and practical theology. All monastic hospitality takes its direction from St Benedict's Rule (530 AD); this foundational document became the basis of all western European religious hospitality. During the Middle Ages the western monasteries (as well as being the custodians of civilisation, knowledge and learning) had provided detailed and formalised rules for religious hospitality, the care of the sick and the poor, and responsibilities for refugees. The Protestant Reformation (c 1540) was to have a transforming affect on religious hospitality. Hospitable activities became separated from their Christian ties as the state increasingly took over more responsibility for them, although they adopted the principles of hospitality that had already been established within the monastic tradition and are still evident in civic, commercial and domestic hospitality.

The empirical information on contemporary monastic hospitality presented in this paper was gathered by living in the monastic cloister with the monks themselves, sharing their day, their life, and their work. During the research it became clear that within the environment of the monastic community hospitality provision is extremely complex, there was a hierarchy of guests within the monastery and differing levels of hospitality provision. The research highlighted the use and division of space for the monks and their guests, types of accommodation, inclusion and exclusion, hospitality rules and rituals and the dichotomy between the social and commercial manifestation of hospitality within the monastery. The paper concludes by observing that the prima-facie purpose of a monastery is not to offer hospitality, it is to house the monks in a community environment so that they can dedicate their lives and live their vocation to the service of God. The Rule is clearly of the utmost importance to the running of the monasteries, however an element of change has been necessary to ensure the continuing survival of the

monastery and its hospitality provision. Within the monastic community hospitality and the ritual reception of guests and the provision of hospitality play an important role by being both the bridge and the barrier between the monastic and secular worlds.

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Hospitality spaces, hospitable relationships: exploring the entanglement of social and commercial hospitality

Author(s): Peter Lugosi

Abstract

Recent years has seen growing interest among social scientists and management academics in the complex relationship between social and commercial forms of hospitality. Within this emerging body of work, the physical, symbolic and abstract dimensions of space have been examined from a diverse range of perspectives. This paper builds on and advances this emerging body of research by reconsidering the relationship between space and hospitality in both its social and commercial forms. It examines the ontological nature of space and hospitality, and uses the emerging conceptual themes to explain how hospitable spaces are produced and consumed. The discussion examines the complex and often contradictory relationship between commercial and social manifestations of hospitality. Moreover, I consider the ways in which hospitability manifests itself in particular moments and locations, and how expectations or perceptions of hospitality and hospitable relationships may be perpetuated over time and in the production of abstract, symbolic and material space.

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Source: <http://www.nomadit.co.uk/asa/asa07/panels.php5?PanelID=204>

Hospitality spaces, hospitable relationships: exploring the entanglement of social and commercial hospitality¹

Abstract

Recent years has seen growing interest among social scientists and management academics in the complex relationship between social and commercial forms of hospitality. Within this emerging body of work, the physical, symbolic and abstract dimensions of space have been examined from a diverse range of perspectives. This paper builds on and advances this emerging body of research by reconsidering the relationship between space and hospitality in both its social and commercial forms. It examines the ontological nature of space and hospitality, and uses the emerging conceptual themes to explain how hospitable spaces are produced and consumed. The discussion examines the complex and often contradictory relationship between commercial and social manifestations of hospitality. Moreover, I consider the ways in which hospitability manifests itself in particular moments and locations, and how expectations or perceptions of hospitality and hospitable relationships may be perpetuated over time and in the production of abstract, symbolic and material space.

The first part of the paper reconsiders the constituent parts of hospitality and its functions and outcomes. I suggest that entertainment forms a fundamental part of hospitality, and I argue that hospitality and hospitable relationships are not necessarily means to social, political or economic ends, but are ends in their own right. The second part examines notions of group and sociality, and discusses the ways in which particular types of sociality are formed and transformed through hospitality. The third part considers the nature of space. I maintain that the existence of hospitable spaces can only be understood by considering the processes through which they are produced or brought to life. In the fourth part, the conceptual themes surrounding space and sociality are used to explain how hospitable spaces are produced.

Hospitality spaces, hospitable relationships: exploring the entanglement of social and commercial hospitality.

Introduction

Recent years has seen growing interest in the social and commercial manifestations hospitality in contemporary societies (cf., Lashley and Morrison, 2000; Lashley et al., 2007; Brotherton, 1999; Lugosi, 2007a, 2007b). Within this emerging body of work, the physical, symbolic and abstract qualities of space, and the relationships between hospitality and space, have been examined from a range of perspectives. Goffman's (1990) notion of front and back stage continues to be invoked in discussions of how the identities of domestic hosts and frontline workers, and the services or experiences they provide, are defined by the spaces in which they are produced and consumed (Crang, 1994; Erickson, 2004; Mars and Nicod, 1984). Several authors have considered the semiotic qualities of space in shaping the actions and perceptions of hosts and guests, or service providers and their consumers (Di Domenico and Lynch, 2007; Lugosi, 2007a, 2007b; Warton, 2007). Others have considered the ways in which eating and drinking venues reflect the changing social and economic composition of cities and how commercial hospitality transforms contemporary cityscapes (Bell, 1994, 2007; Bell and Binnie, 2005; Latham, 2003). These studies consider hospitality spaces at different scales, from the micro level of interaction to the macro level of urban forms of sociality. These authors also recognise that commercial and social forces inevitable interact to shape these spaces. The seemingly contradictory motivations entangled in social, hospitable relations and commercial hospitality relationships are highlighted by several authors (Lashley, 2000; Selwyn, 2000;

¹ (Draft paper; please do not quote without permission): Peter Lugosi, PhD, School of Services Management, Bournemouth University, Fern Barrow, Poole Dorset BH12 5BB, Tel: 01202 965219, Email: plugosi@bournemouth.ac.uk

Telfer, 2000). It is problematic to assume, as many commercial operators do, that the social aspects of hospitality can be forcibly mobilised in service encounters; however, dismissing the possibility that hospitable exchanges and relations can form in commercial hospitality spaces is equally misguided. Service exchanges can be transformed into hospitable exchanges when appropriate relations are formed between staff and customers. Furthermore, the experience of hospitality is often not provided by the host alone; nor is it produced exclusively through the host-guest interaction. Instead, the experience of hospitality and the sense of hospitality within service spaces are produced through guest-guest relations and exchanges. This paper builds on and advances existing research by considering the relationship between space and hospitality in both its social and commercial forms. I examine the ontological nature of space and hospitality and use the emerging conceptual themes to consider how hospitable spaces are produced and consumed. The discussion examines briefly the complex and often contradictory relationship between commercial and social manifestations of hospitality. Moreover, I consider the ways in which hospitality manifests itself in particular moments and locations, and how expectations or perceptions of hospitality and hospitable relationships may be perpetuated over time and in the production of abstract, symbolic and material space. The paper begins by discussing the different dimensions of hospitality: its content and its functions and outcomes. The following section considers the notions of group and sociality, and discusses the ways in which particular types of social relations are formed and transformed through hospitality. The subsequent section examines the nature of space. Following Lefebvre (1991), I argue that hospitality spaces are not consistent entities, and that their existence must be understood by considering the processes through which they are produced or brought to life. The conceptual themes surrounding space and sociality are used to examine how hospitable spaces and relationships are produced.

Hospitality

Numerous authors attempt to define hospitality and understand it as both social and commercial activity (cf., Brotherton, 1999; Brotherton and Wood, 2000; Lashley, 2000). I do not intend to review these definitions and debates here; nevertheless, it is important to emphasise the key elements of hospitality on which authors tend to focus. Brotherton's definition of hospitality serves to illustrate the point. He defines hospitality as:

A contemporaneous human exchange, which is voluntarily entered into, and designed to enhance the mutual well being of the parties concerned through the provision of accommodation, and/or food, and/or drink. (1999: 168).

Similar to many other authors, Brotherton focuses on food, drink and shelter but plays down a further critical dimension of hospitality: entertainment. Telfer (2000) questions whether hospitality and entertainment are the same things. She states that "hospitality is associated with meeting of needs, entertaining with the giving of pleasure" (2000: 39). Nevertheless, in her discussions on the philosophy of hospitality, Telfer (2000) claims that this difference is "only a matter of nuance" (ibid.) and uses the word entertaining interchangeably with providing hospitality. However, when considering the intersection of the social and commercial manifestations of hospitality, entertainment and the experiential aspect of production and consumption is a fundamental aspect of hospitable relationships.

The prominence of open display kitchens and the informality and jocularity emphasised in service encounters in foodservice chains such as TGI Friday's has become a key part of service work and commercial hospitality provision. More important, however, is the role of the consumers in providing a spectacle and entertainment for fellow consumers. The guests themselves are part of the experience, whether it is in the form of passive gazing of the male or female body, convivial interaction or through more outlandish, spectacular identity performances (cf., Lugosi, 2003, 2006a). Engaging and entertaining interaction often goes hand in hand with the consumption of food and drink. The offer of food, drink and shelter can undoubtedly be offered without the offer of entertainment, although the wellbeing of the guest as well as the customer is often assured because it is part of the experience.

The functions and outcomes of hospitality A second dimension of hospitality concerns its functions and outcomes. Selwyn, writing from an anthropological perspective, suggests that

hospitality is used "to establish a relationship or to promote an already established relationship...; hospitality converts: strangers into familiars, enemies into friends, friends into better friends, outsiders into insiders, non-kin into kin (Selwyn, 2000: 19). For Selwyn, hospitality is a functional set of activities used to attain a series of social and political goals. However, rather than treating hospitality as the means to an end, hospitality can be considered an end itself. To engage in hospitable exchange is to acknowledge the other; moreover, it is an overt willingness, not only to share one's social space, but to create a shared, experiential space in which the participants become part of a contextually defined social entity. Food, drink, the offer of shelter and entertaining social intercourse form a crucial part of this exchange: they facilitate the relationship and give it an ontological reality, but emotional experience is at the heart of hospitableness.

Hospitality is inherently emotional because, to offer hospitality, is to abandon or suspend rational judgement in the creation of mutual wellbeing and joy; hospitability is openness towards the other and it is acceptance of the other, albeit temporarily. By conceptualising hospitality in this way, I am separating hospitality from the exchange of food, drink, shelter or entertainment for rational social or political purposes, which is how hospitality is traditionally treated by anthropologists. These are political or social relationships; they are exchange relationships, but this is not hospitality.

The conception of hospitality I advocate here is similar to Derrida's (2000) notion of pure hospitality, which he claims is unconditional engagement². This stands in contrast to the position of writers such as Sheringham and Daruwalla (2007) who argue that such pure hospitality is unachievable because issues of power and differences in status are so fundamental to the host-guest relations. Sheringham and Daruwalla (2007) suggest that hospitality may indeed be a state of abandonment, and a creation by the host and guest of a temporary, transgressive, carnivalesque space. However, they also suggest that such carnivalesque experiences serve to reinforce the social order because hospitality is temporary, and there are intrinsic limits to its existence. Moreover, for Sheringham and Daruwalla (2007) hospitality takes place between host and guest, in the host's physical and symbolic space. Hospitality, therefore, serves to release host and guest from existing differences in status, while simultaneously reinforcing differences in status. The stance I adopt here is different to this in two ways. First, while differences in status, class, gender etc, are inherently part of a society's spatial practices, i.e., the conditions which determine where and how we interact, hospitality, as conceived here, is the state of being between social actors where these differences are overcome in particular moments in space and time. The differences between constructions of space within the spatial practices of society and the experienced of lived space between individuals is addressed below in the discussion of Lefebvre's (1991) work. A second and more fundamental difference in my conception of hospitality is the abandonment of the fetishism of the host-guest relationship in the creation of hospitable space. Because commercial hospitality venues are inhabited by consumers, who engage with each other as much as they do with the "hosts", consumers create these moments of hospitality between themselves. Consequently, the issues of power and status that are so important in host-guest relations are not the same in guest-guest relations and in their transformation of commercial hospitality venues into hospitable spaces. This too is addressed in the latter part of the paper. Hospitality is emotional and sincere engagement, and it is therefore inherently ephemeral: within hospitable relationships differences in morality, class and social status are abandoned in favour of the existential hospitable moment. Such a conception of hospitality requires an alternative conceptual vocabulary – one drawn from Turner's (1969, 1982, 1992) work on liminality and *communitas*. The next section outlines Turner's work and suggests a new concept: the *communitesque*, which is used to understand moments of hospitality and the creation of hospitable spaces.

Hospitality, hospitability and the communitesque

Central to Turner's work on *communitas* is liminality. The concept of the liminal emerged from van Gennep's (1960) studies of the sacred rites of passage ceremonies of pre-literate

² *Derrida goes further and suggests that we can never actually know hospitality: once hospitality is offered within the host-guest relationship, it is transformed; there are limits or laws imposed upon it and it becomes contradiction.*

societies. Liminality is the stage in ceremonies where the participant has moved from one status, but has yet to move to the next: these are transitional phases or periods of anti-structure located between one structural state and another. Turner (1969, 1982, 1992) uses the notion of liminality to conceptualise periods of symbolic, emotional and political detachment from contemporary, western societal norms. He introduces the concept of the liminoid: anti-structural phenomena produced and consumed through profane leisure activities. According to Turner (1992: 57), liminoid phenomena "develop most characteristically outside the central economic and political processes". They are "plural, fragmentary and experimental"; "they compete with one another in a cultural market and appeal to specific tastes"; and, more important, "they are often subversive, representing radical critiques of the central structures and proposing utopian models" (ibid.).

Central to Turner's work on liminoid phenomena are the forms of social organisation they engender. Within playful, liminoid leisure activities, participants become members of *communitas* – social entities temporarily detached from social structures or institutions. Turner goes further and distinguishes between existential, normative and ideological *communitas*, each of which is briefly outlined below.

Existential or spontaneous *communitas* can be thought of as temporary states of affectual bonding created through direct interaction. During these moments participants "become totally absorbed into a single synchronised, fluid event" (Turner, 1982: 48). Interaction is governed by a sense of "honesty, openness, and lack of pretensions or pretentiousness" (ibid.). Notions of individualism and individual identity are abandoned and replaced by a sense of collective being. Consequently, within these moments of interaction, the unity felt by those participating transcends differences in role, status, race, sex or class.

Existential *communitas* have been conceptualised as psychological constructs that are felt or imagined (cf., Turner, 1992: 61-65). However, physicality and materiality are central to the experience for a number of reasons. First, the body becomes part of the process through which shared experiences are produced and mediated, and the body is also the site where these experiences are consumed. Second, the experiences of existential *communitas* are consumed in physical geographies, and are therefore inherently linked to the production of social spaces. Within hospitality venues, the material and corporeal aspects of consumption, including the physical presence of consumers, convivial interaction, mutual entertainment amusement, and the consumption of food or drinks become key components in the experience of existential *communitas*. These help to create a liminoid space where such *communitas* can exist.

Turner's notions of liminoid phenomena and existential *communitas* offer a conceptual vocabulary that helps to appreciate both the sense of collective abandonment in hospitable encounters and the short-lived, ephemerality of that engagement. However, these moments of blissful togetherness cannot be sustained indefinitely. Differences in class, culture, age or attitude inevitably re-emerge in social relations. Nevertheless, for actual and potential participants, the notion of existential *communitas* – a collectively experienced sense of liberated or liberating time-space – becomes an ideal to be recreated and relived over and over again. In order to recreate the sense of collective, existential abandonment created in these hospitable experiences, *communitas* emerge in two forms: as ideological and normative *communitas*.

For Turner (1969), the creation of ideological *communitas* is:

"once an attempt to describe the external and visible effects – the outward form, it might be said – of an inward experience of existential communitas, and to spell out the optimal social conditions under which such experiences might be expected to flourish and multiply" (1969: 132).

Ideological *communitas* are utopian models of social organisation based on existential *communitas*. However, as Malbon (1999) argues, the creation of ideological *communitas* should not be seen as attempts to create some ideal otherworld. The term utopia, meaning 'no-place', is effectively an unachievable, ideal state of being for a group of people. According to Dyer (1999), it is necessary to differentiate models of utopian worlds from feelings of utopianism associated with the hedonistic consumption of modern leisure. Attempts to create ideological *communitas* in commercial hospitality venues are attempts to define the consumption process as a temporary, playful, utopian experience. As Malbon (1999) suggests, the consumers of such utopianism may be fully aware that hospitality in the commercial

hospitality setting is fragile and that the sense of mutual care is short-lived, but continue to take pleasure from these ephemeral experiences.

Despite the playful nature of ideological *communitas*, their construction and maintenance relies on legislation and normalisation. Existential or ideological *communitas* morph into normative *communitas* in which participation is subject to conditions. Members begin to have roles, functions and obligations towards the *communitas* and the spaces in which they are constructed and maintained. Inside-outside dichotomies are imposed, which means that inclusion and exclusion is determined partly by individuals' ability to meet the conditions of membership, but also their willingness to fulfil their obligations towards the *communitas*. In the same way, staff or guests in commercial hospitality attempt to recapture or recreate a hospitable moment with other staff or guests by engaging in specific lines of conversation and particular interaction rituals, and they may exchange gifts of food, drink or money.

Turner's concept of existential *communitas* can help to understand the immediate experiences of hospitality between frontline staff and customers and between the customers themselves. It also foregrounds the role of embodied practices in producing and mediating the ideological assumptions that are fundamental to the experience. More important, perhaps, the notions of ideological and normative *communitas* help to conceptualise the basis of association and the obligations of association that enable individuals to recreate the experiences of existential *communitas*. Highlighting the existential, ideological and normative dimensions of hospitality emphasises the ephemerality and creative vitality of the immediate experience. It also helps to comprehend the processes of regulation and control that maintain hospitality and hospitability as ideological constructs, which are reproduced over time through a series of social rituals and institutional practices.

An inherent danger in invoking Turner's notion of existential *communitas* is that it overstates the ecstatic nature of hospitality. To speak of *communitas* is to frame social intercourse as a pseudo-religious experience. Yet, existential *communitas* is an evocative term which makes direct reference to the emotional dimensions of interaction and the sense of abandonment which it entails. Just as Turner adapted the notion of liminality, and created the term *liminoid* in his discussions of ludic states of being in contemporary western culture, the notion of *communitas* can be adapted to help make sense of hospitality. *Hospitability*, for want of a better term, can be thought of as the creation of *communitasque* experiences. The suffix *esque* implies that it resembles *communitas*, but is something different to *communitas*. *Communitasque* refers to the momentary sense of unity and sociality created during moments, in which individuals create a sense of shared space. As with existential *communitas*, *communitasque* are fundamentally psychological constructs; they are sensed and they are felt. *Communitasque* experiences are lived and are created through close interaction in particular spaces and times. *Communitasque* encounters are not ecstatic, liminal periods of abandonment: they are *liminoid* experiences in which the rationality of relationships is abandoned in favour of a playful, emotional openness towards one another. These experiences involve the production and consumption of food, drink, the offer of shelter, but they are fundamentally about mutual entertainment and the creation of a shared emotional space. The construction and reconstruction of *communitasque* moments relies the potential members' ability to create the existential spaces and the sensations they encompass. Therefore, to comprehend the construction of *communitasque* in particular moments, and over periods of time, it is necessary to examine fundamental nature of space. To do this, the next section draws on the work of Lefebvre (1991) and uses his spatial dialectic to examine the ontological nature of space and the processes of its formation.

Commercial hospitality spaces and spaces of hospitability Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is an unstable, dynamic entity produced through the interaction of three elements: 'spatial practices', 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces'. Spatial practices refer to the organisational practices of societies as they delineate particular sites for specific forms of human activity. This process of designation involves the purposeful organisation and deployment of human labour and capital in production relationships, which ensures that social relations and the dominant modes of production are continually reproduced. Actions are thus institutionalized and ritualized in particular locations, which then come to simultaneously define the location, the activity, and the identities of those involved.

Commercial hospitality venues are thus produced as various agencies, including drinks manufacturers, distributors, operating companies, marketing agencies and licensing

authorities, interact to delineate specific sites as work and play spaces. Within these sites, workers and customers are located within organisational regimes, and thus have duties and responsibilities towards such institutions. It is also through such spatial practices that the consumers' roles become redefined: the division between workers and customers are blurred and patrons begin to participate in the production process (cf., Lugosi, 2003, 2006a, 2007b). Spatial practices are tied to representational acts that reaffirm both the existence of hospitable experiences and the significance of the sites in which such activities take place. Lefebvre (1991) emphasizes the role of cartographers, scientists and urban planners as they envision the organization of space, although it is also essential to recognize the representations of writers, journalists, marketing agents and the narratives of consumers in reproducing conceptions of space. When consumers and guests reproduce their hospitable experiences in stories or other representations, they are reaffirming the emotional significance of those moments and the importance of the sites in which these experiences were lived. The final element in Lefebvre's dialectic, representational spaces, refers to "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (1991: 39). According to Lefebvre, spatial practices and their representations produce a delineated and codified space, but the notion of representational spaces highlights the transformative nature of lived experience. "Organized gestures, which is to say ritualized and codified gestures, are not simply performed in 'physical' space, in the space of bodies. Bodies themselves generate spaces, which are produced by and for their gestures" (Lefebvre, 1991: 216). These experiences of space are disruptive because they involve the appropriation and adaptation of existing cultural practices. However, these experiences are also constructive because they become a form of living memory that reproduces cultural norms.

Hospitality spaces, hospitable moments

Frontline staff and customers inevitably engage in service relationships within commercial hospitality spaces, but these prescribed interaction rituals represent only one type of experience within these locations, and the production of a specific sort of space. There is always the possibility to transform such functional, commercial relationships into hospitable spaces through the interaction between staff and customers and between the customers themselves.

As with Turner's *communitas*, *communitasque* moments do not have a simple empirical reality. If we assume that the moments of hospitality are a series of sensations, researchers can merely provide thick descriptions of events, which point to, rather than confirm the existence of the *communitasque*. In this spirit, the final part the paper presents an account of an incident which helps to demonstrate the creation of hospitable space. The incident is drawn from a larger ethnographic study of hospitality and space (see Lugosi, 2003, 2006b). The incident illustrates the ways in which commercial and social forces interact and transform the commercial service environment into hospitable space. The subsequent discussion examines the interaction of the various agencies in the construction of such a hospitable moment.

12.15 a.m., Budapest

Walking down Nagymező Utca it was easy to miss the place: there were no windows and the entrance was a small black door. A small neon sign above the door said 'Piaf' [after the singer Edith Piaf].

We rang the bell and an assertive blond-haired woman opened the door. She told us sternly that it cost 500 Forints to come in and this was a 'private bar'. [Prior to our visit, others had told us about the entrance ritual. Just like a scripted greeting at a Harvester restaurant, the welcome was exactly as people had described it, down to the colour of her hair and her attitude.] We paid the money and stepped into a small, dark, smoke-filled room.

There was a bar on the right side and sets of low tables and chairs closely pushed together in between the bar and the door. A similar row of tables and chairs were set against the left-hand side of the room. A narrow space between the tables on the left and the bar on the right lead through to the back of the bar. A piano was squeezed into the right-hand corner facing the bar with a number of chairs and settees around it.

The bar was laid out over two floors, including an even darker cellar where dance music was playing. Both floors were darkly painted with deep reds and black intermixed; the lighting was low and the upstairs tables were lit with candles.

We sat down at one of the tables in front of the piano. Two girls in their mid 20s were sitting to the left of us. An older man was playing the piano, while a woman in her late 40s sang French chanson songs. After about half an hour, the singer finished her set and the man continued to play the piano. The proximity of the tables to the piano meant all the patrons at the tables could talk to the pianist. One of the two girls asked for some songs. The pianist produced a songbook and she stood up and looked through it. Meanwhile, four men had sat down at the table next to the piano. Three casually dressed, all in their late 20s or early 30s. The fourth was considerably better dressed and obviously thought highly of himself.

While looking through the songbook, the girl asked about certain songs and the pianist played the first few notes from each song. After a while, the girl started to sing some of the songs she recognised, but in a quiet voice. She constantly looked up at her friend who was watching and encouraging her, showing obvious amusement and giving supportive comments. Having agreed on a song, the pianist played it and she sang it all the way through, albeit quietly and nervously. We all clapped, including the men sitting next to the piano who had also taken an interest in her performance.

They decided to try another song, and one of the men stood up and started to look through the songbook. The pianist, the girl and the man agreed on a new number and sang it. By this time, the friend of the girl had moved next to the piano alongside the other men. They sang another song, and everyone, including us, seemed to find it very amusing. More people started clapping including another two inebriated men, who, until then, had been having a loud conversation at a table just to the right of us. Alongside clapping, one of the men started making a clicking noise with his mouth.

This encouraged two more men (both in their mid to late 20s) to come from one of the back tables to come and join in. The newcomers and the three still-seated men offered suggestions. Most of these were Hungarian quasi-folk songs from the 1970s onwards. The singing got louder and the girl who instigated the performance started to sing with more confidence. All the men seated at the front were singing by now, except for the well-dressed man who seemed to be above such behaviour. Another older man (late 40s) came over from the back of the bar and joined in the impromptu concert. They were all singing loudly, and in unison, while visibly enjoying themselves and constantly exchanging smiles and comments. This went on for about 20 minutes, after which time, they seemed to get bored. The two men went back to their tables at the back and the girl sat down with her friend next to the four men. The older man hovered around for a while but eventually went back to his table at the back of the bar. The two girls continued drinking and talking to the men but they went their separate ways after a while. One of the two drunken men to the right of us kept clapping and making noises after the others stopped singing. This noise was audible throughout the bar and the assertive blonde-haired woman went up to him after a while and asked if he was O.K., which effectively meant 'stop doing that'.

The participants did not know each other before they met that night. This was certainly true for the two women and the four men as they did not acknowledge each other when the men sat down. This also seemed to be the case for the two young men and the older man from the back of the room. They did not engage in lengthy greetings when they joined the people singing and they went back to their tables as soon as the singing ended rather than staying to communicate. None of the younger men attempted to engage the older man in any conversation.

This was a point of commonality where they came into closer proximity to each other. For that 20-minute period, they all participated in the focused activity (Goffman, 1963) of singing and they reaffirmed the hospitality of their social space. It is possible to question the factors that facilitated this communitarian moment. The physical ecology undoubtedly played an important role: the layout of the bar meant people were physically close together, which meant they were more likely to interact. A second important factor was the shared knowledge, in this case of Hungarian songs, which underpinned their experience. These factors point to the necessary conditions that facilitate the formation of such communitarian encounters.

A further issue concerns the agency which created the event and the key actors involved. A number of individuals played a prominent role: the girl who initially stood up, selected the

music and decided to start the singing after the professional singer withdrew, the pianist in encouraging people to offer suggestions for songs, and the man who initially stood up and joined in. However, everyone in the vicinity played an active part. Even watching, laughing and clapping encouraged the playful sentiment. The sense of communitas was generated situationally as people came together and contributed to a specific emotional event in space and time.

Finally, it must be recognised that this sense of communitas existed for a very short period: this event took place over 15 – 20 minutes. During this time, a number of interests and motivations intersected: the people found novelty, amusement and a sense of commonality for a short period. The social unit was the strongest and most coherent during a very short period. Some of those present were more enthusiastic and came into closer proximity in that brief social moment, although others (i.e., the well-dressed, self-conscious man) were more distanced from it. The sense of commonality was potentially exhausted after a while and the people separated. The two girls began talking to the other men, but it is not clear how their relationship continued after that night. Nevertheless, it is clear that once the moment had passed, general rules of conduct and decorum were reclaimed by most of the participants. The drunken man failed to acknowledge this and kept making noise after the singing had finished. He was subsequently reprimanded.

Admittedly, the ethnographic gaze may seem to project a sense of value on to the moment. Nevertheless, some social event undeniably took place during those 20-minutes, and in that brief period, some sense of coherence and closeness was articulated. They identified with each other albeit in limited ways and for a limited time. From the expressions of mutual amusement and enthusiasm it was clearly evident that those present took part in a creative moment, in which they transformed a commercial hospitality venue into a hospitable space.

Conclusion

This paper has identified three principal strands of discussion. First, I suggested that hospitality should be conceived as an emotional state of being in which the participants are prepared to create a shared existential space in which difference is temporarily suspended. Developing Turner's work on *communitas*, I have called the social entities that emerge within these liminoid moments: *communitas*. Second, I argued that commercial hospitality spaces, and hospitable moments within these spaces, are produced through Lefebvre's spatial dialectic. Within this dialectic, three forces interact: a) the spatial practices which order space and prescribe set of interactional rituals for its inhabitants; b) representations of space, which establish expectations and shape perceptions about behaviour in particular sites; and c) the immediate nature of lived experience within particular sites, which has the potential to create or transform spaces – in this case, turning commercial hospitality venues into hospitable spaces and hospitable moments in which the *communitas* is experienced. Third, I suggested that our understanding of hospitality sites and the processes by which they are transformed into hospitable spaces should shift its emphasis from host-guest to guest-guest relationships. I argued that with commercial hospitality sites, consumers have a key role in transforming the experience and in creating new forms of sociality.

These three lines of discussion have a series of implications for our understanding of the relationship between commercial and social hospitality and the spaces in which they are produced and consumed. When considering the nature of commercial hospitality, it is necessary to reconsider the role of the "host" or provider in creating the experience for their consumers or "guests". The provider is no longer the sole creator of experience. This means that the now-popular stage metaphor, and the notion that frontline staff perform as part of the consumer experience, is limited in defining primarily the roles of management and frontline staff. The host or commercial provider is not necessarily the one who defines the qualities of space or the experiences felt by the consumers within. Management and frontline staff become facilitators or orchestrators: the physical and symbolic milieu they provide is an empty signifier, the meaning of which is filled by the consumers in their interaction. It is only when we appreciate the potential power of the guest in constructing hospitality and hospitable moments, that we can fully understand the tense and often shifting relationship between commercial and social forms of hospitality. The provision of commercial hospitality represents

a series of possibilities, but it is in the social encounter, sometimes between provider and customer, but most importantly in between consumers themselves that the possibilities of hospitable spaces are realised and brought to life.

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MONASTIC HOSPITALITY:
THE ENDURING LEGACY
Kevin D O’Gorman
Strathclyde Business School
University of Strathclyde
Glasgow G4 0LD

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality research continues to broaden through an ever-increasing dialogue and alignment with a greater number of academic disciplines. This paper demonstrates how an enhanced understanding of hospitality can be achieved through synergy between social anthropology with philosophical and practical theology. It extends O’Gorman’s (2005; 2007) investigation of textual evidence of hospitality within Classical Antiquity (generally accepted as the period between 770 BC – 529 AD) and O’Gorman’s (2006) focus on the provision of monastic hospitality as prescribed by St Benedict’s Rule (c. 530 A.D) that revealed the illuminatory capacity of critical historical investigation, and the continuity of hospitality management practices over the last 1,500 years. The research reported on in this paper develops those studies by exploring the hospitality relationship within the modern monastery. It is an empirical investigation combined with the author’s considerable previous knowledge and experience of monastic life.

BACKGROUND TO MONASTIC HOSPITALITY

St Benedict established the Rule of monastic life that was later to be adopted by most Western monasteries. This foundation was also to become the basis of all western European religious hospitality. It would influence the monastic approaches to caring for the sick (hospitals), the poor (hospices and charities) and the provision of education (the establishment of the first universities), all of which were originally part of the monastic tradition. The Rule, which stressed communal living and physical labour, was also concerned with the needs of the local people, and the distribution of alms and food to the poor. During the lifetime of St Benedict, his disciples spread the order throughout the countries of Central and Western Europe. As Vogüé (1977) and Regnault (1990) note the Benedictines were also to have wide influence both within the Roman Catholic Church and later within the secular society.

The monks distance themselves from the distractions of the outside world as much as is possible; their life is one of solitude and separation that should lead to spiritual enlightenment. By leaving the secular society, Böckmann (1988) notes that the monks sets up an alternative world in which people from the secular world might wish to share. Within St. Benedict’s Rule, Western monastic hospitality takes its direction from Chapter 53 which is entitled ‘*De Hopitibus Suscipiendis*’ – ‘The Reception of Guests’. During the mediaeval period hospitality offered by monasteries was comprehensive. It included lodging for travellers, accommodation and treatment for the sick, and charitable services for the poor. The usual period, during which hospitality was freely provided, was two complete days; and some similar restriction, against the abuse of hospitality, seems to have been prescribed by most of the orders, friars, as well as monks. Lenoir (1856) observes the guesthouse had prominence in all monastic buildings, however Holzherr (1982) states that monks have historically not always been completely faithful to Benedict’s demand that all guests be accorded full respect. Society was much more sharply stratified in medieval times, and it was virtually impossible to host nobles and peasants in the same manner: a clear example is given in Horn and Born (1979) when they demonstrate that the plan of the monastery of Abbot Adalhard (c760AD) shows completely separate guest quarters for rich and poor.

The monasteries have always been peaceful retreats for scholars and were the chief centres of Christian piety and learning. During the Middle Ages the monasteries (as well as being the custodians of civilisation, knowledge and learning) had provided detailed and formalised rules for religious hospitality. Wolter (1880) shows that they were also centres for the care of the sick and the poor, and had responsibilities for refugees. The Middle Ages was also the period of intellectual and cultural development. New educational institutions, such as cathedral and monastic schools, were founded, and universities were established with advanced degrees being offered in medicine, law, and theology. When there were few urban centres, the monasteries represented the most stable and well-endowed institutions in the countryside. The spread of Western monasticism (primarily based on the Rule of St Benedict for monastic life) together with its influence on religious life generally, and also throughout society, led to generally accepted and well-understood principles of hospitality. These principles were to become the foundations of the provision of hospitality that were later to be adopted and modified within

the nation-states and by secular organisations as they took over greater responsibilities for the full range of hospitality activities.

METHODOLOGY

For a period of six years, whilst undertaking academic studies across Europe, primarily in Spain and Rome, I had the opportunity to live frequently in a monastic environment. These experiences and the contacts allowed me privileged access in order to gather information and for familiarity with the environment as well as a level of access that would not otherwise have been available. The information on present day monastic hospitality summarised in this chapter is based on empirical studies in Europe during 2006, which included: participant observations; interviews with the Monks and of course guests; and documentary evidence. This took place in eight different monasteries for about five days at a time. The empirical data was gathered by living in the monastic cloister with the monks themselves, sharing their day, their life, and their work.

Lashley et al. (2007) present the hospitality conceptual 'lens' as a framework for research into the phenomenon of hospitality. This 'lens' contains nine robust themes with the host/guest transaction seen as the central focus of the hospitality phenomenon. The 'lens' can be "employed to examine social situations where hospitality is involved in order to understand aspects of the society in which the hospitality act occurs". The content of these themes are presented in summary form in Table 1. In the event the hospitality conceptual lens has proved to be a useful framework for the critical analysis of the data, for the presentation of the findings and also to summarise the conclusions.

Table 2: The nine themes hospitality conceptual lens applied to monastic hospitality

3 Theme	Descriptive Summary
1. Types and Sites	Differentiates between and acknowledges the multi-manifestation of forms and locations for experiencing hospitality and the host/guest transaction.
2. Laws	Socially and culturally defined obligations, standards, principles, norms and rules associated with hospitality, that define the duties and the behaviours of both host and guest.
3. Inclusion/ Exclusion	Symbolism of the host welcoming of an 'other' (guest) across thresholds to signify inclusion: the converse is the exclusion or leaving unwelcome 'others' on the outside.
4. Commerce	Commercial hospitality where the host/guest transaction explicitly contains economic dimensions alongside those of the social.
5. Politics of Space	Concept of boundaries and meanings of a social, spatial and cultural nature that denote inclusions/exclusions, and defines the level of intimacy/distance within the host/guest transaction once across the thresholds.
6. Social and Cultural Dimensions	Hospitality provides the opportunity for the host and guest to construct a temporary common moral universe; involving a process of production, consumption, and communication that defines the host/guest transaction.
7. Domestic Discourse	Reflects the domestic roots of hospitality and symbolic connotations of practices, language and gendered roles relative to the host/guest transactions.
8. Performance	Host/guest transaction interpreted as actors performing their respective roles on a stage to convey symbolism and meaning; thus highlighting authenticity.
9. Host/Guest Transaction	The extent to which a host takes responsibility for the care and management of a guest and the guests acceptance or rejection of the authority of the host.

NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP

The Rule of St Benedict is clearly evident in the running of the modern monasteries, older and more solid than even the buildings. However, as with the buildings, an element of change has been necessary to ensure the continuing survival of the monastery and its way of life. During the Middle Ages the monasteries had provided detailed and formalised rules for religious hospitality, the care of the sick and

the poor, and responsibilities for refugees. However monasteries no longer need to look after the sick as there are state hospitals, nor should they be expected to look after refugees or those with drug or alcohol problems, as other agencies exist for this purpose. All the monasteries, to a greater or lesser extent, engage in commercial behaviour that generate income for the monks. However the provision for guests to stay in the monastic cloister is motivated by their monastic vocation.

During the research it became clear that the monastic environment is extremely complex. There were different layers of the commercial home within the monastery and differing levels of hospitality provision. Areas of investigation included the use and division of space for the monks and their guests, levels of accommodation and hospitality rules and rituals. Within the monastic guesthouse the hospitality that is offered to meet the guest's physical and metaphysical needs is not a simple concept. It exists and is offered on many levels and it is up to the guest how much they wish to engage with the hospitality on offer.

Types of behaviour

The fundamental rules of behaviour are governed by the Rule and the monks have no real opportunities for incidental interaction with the guests, and as the monks proceed through their daily life there is no impression given that they are interested in interaction. However, any guest wishing to talk to a monk is welcomed and accommodated; interaction with the monks is dependant on the guest seeking it rather than it being offered by the host. Defined thresholds are necessary in a monastery, especially for one with thousands of guests, in order to protect the privacy and the peace of the monks, who quickly become exhibits for garrulous visitors.

Levels of intimacy

The monks continually managed to confound the inhibitions and expectations that an average individual may have of them, their authenticity is rarely questioned. Sometimes the guests, at first, claim that they feel pressured to conform at first by attending all the services, however they quickly realise that no one cares if they do. The monks believe they are carrying out God's work on earth and hospitality an integral part of this work so it would be true to say that a visitor to a monastery is not just the guest of the monks but a guest in God's house. Through the behaviour and personal integrity of the monks, everything that the guest experiences within the guesthouse and beyond is a symbol for how guests should be treated. The creation of a shared space for hospitality does allow the host and guest to construct a temporary common moral universe. For example, when a guest can be a 20 year old agnostic student and the host is a 70 year old monk, they would normally inhabit very different moral universes. Although welcoming, the monks gave definite suggestions of otherness, not least by wearing their monastic habits; one guest expressed disappointment that they did not find a habit on the back of their bedroom door that they could wear for the weekend! Acceptance as a guest in no way suggests equality with the monks or membership of the monastic community.

HOST / GUEST RELATIONSHIP

Making God the ultimate host, the Rule of Benedict makes it clear that the Abbot is the host responsible for meeting and welcoming the guests, however there are two other different levels of hosting within the monastery. There is the guest master who has hour-by-hour care of the guests making sure they are in and seated for communal meals at their place and in their particular place in the church. There is also other guests already staying in the guest house who take responsibility for hosting newer guests, showing them where to be at certain times and making them coffee on arrival, washing up after them and in general helping them to relax and feel welcome. Guests asked questions of each other and learned from their experiences, serving as mutual sounding boards to check what they should be doing.

From the research it is clear that the prima-facie purpose of a monastery is not to offer hospitality, it is to house the monks in a community environment so that they can dedicate their lives and live their vocation to the service of God. The separation of the monks from their guests (and by definition the separation of the monks from the world in general) is not an act of inhospitableness, rather it is mandated by the Rule and necessary for the monastery to function. Therefore, the ritual reception of guests and the provision of hospitality play an important role by being both the bridge and the barrier between the monastic and secular worlds.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to demonstrate how an enhanced understanding hospitality can be achieved through synergy between social anthropology with philosophical and practical theology by investigating the hospitality relationship within the monastic cloister both in the previous papers that examined its origins and history and the research reported on here that examines current practice. What is remarkable is that reconnecting with the past highlights significant relevance to the modern world of hospitality management. However, the purpose of this type of research is not to replicate the past, but to provide meaning, context, and greater understanding of the phenomenon of hospitality not previously realised, for example the monasteries themselves needed to change and adapt their hospitality provision whilst

staying true to their original mission; the original Rule has obtained over 1500 years. Importantly, for contemporary graduates of hospitality management, this form of research allows for the intellectual pursuit of social and cultural dimensions that transcend artificial disciplinary boundaries. Connecting with the origins of hospitality enhances the learning of the professionals of tomorrow.

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Fanta Orange for the Ancestors³ Ingesting the 'Mad' Stranger in Southwest Madagascar

In this paper, I will focus on the underlying strategies and symbolic implications of hospitality cultures and practices in South-West Madagascar. I will focus in particular on the ongoing contact between, and the co-presence of, Western strangers (tourists, anthropologists, conservationists, development agents, missionaries) and the heterogeneous populations living in Madagascar's Menabe coastal area. I will argue that from a Malagasy coastal community perspective, these foreigners are frequently seen as 'mad'; they manipulate complicated truth machines (computers), drive motor engine cars, fly planes like birds, have little respect for ancestors and *fady*, protect seemingly worthless 'stones' (corals), have powerful doctors, have access to potent Malagasy politicians, and dispose of seemingly endless economic resources. In this context, linking in with the world of Western strangers through forms of mimesis and material transculturation, by wearing their cloths, by imitating their behaviour, by fetishizing drinks like Fanta Orange during ancestor rituals, seems to become a means to appropriate this 'madness' and make it work for personal or collective local agendas. The paper aims to demonstrate that hospitality towards Western strangers – and I include here for instance the local participation in (modernist) environmental protection programmes run by Western strangers – manifests less a cultural involution, impact or acculturation to Western values than an active strategy to make strangers and their power work for diverse local agendas (among whom, in the Madagascar context, to solve the fishing crisis and the problem of the 'reversal of the sea' (coral bleaching).

Anthropological approaches to tourism

Anthropologists have usually approached tourism from three particular perspectives: the tourist journey, the host culture or the tourism production system. While the increasing body of studies adopting any of these three perspectives has led to the establishment of a theoretically grounded tourism studies field (Nash 2007), the actual 'object' of study often remains almost mythically flue (Miller & Auyong 1998). Few anthropologists have indeed managed to grasp the complexity and multipolarity of tourism and the largely despatialised and fragmented contexts in which it evolves. It seems obvious that tourism is about more than the tourist experience of the journey *per se* or a set of pervasive representations naturalising a particular world order. Also, tourism seems to be about more than an internationalised re-creative infrastructure reproducing power relations at different scales of a global capitalist system. Finally, tourism appears to be more than a mere impact on 'local' culture and society, leading to the development of local tourism cultures.

Tourism takes place in many places and on different scales at the same time. It involves different institutions and social actors and hence engenders simultaneously a multitude of social and political dynamics. In this sense, tourism needs to be seen as a multilayered and multipolar phenomenon taking place at a variety of interconnected scales. This makes it necessary to think of tourism (and other global phenomena) beyond a space-based ontology of difference and overcome our empathy with the classical dichotomies of inside and outside, of subject and object, of 'Self' and 'Other', of 'host' and 'guest' as mere intellectual constructions. At the same time, the very nature of this particular ontology of distance, frequently dominating the discourse and epistemology of tourists, but also of scientists and Western geographical imagination in general, become a pertinent object of study (Rabinow 1986, Rosaldo 1993, Jackson 1998).

From this point, I suggest approaching tourism as a set of symbolic, economic and social connections within a complex multi-scaled globality rather than as a unilateral dynamic emanating from a particular spatial centre or history (Appadurai 2003). To study tourism ethnographically, consequently, means to embrace the complexity of relationships, collaborations, and frictions between all actors at a particular scale. In this context, the classical ethnographic scale of 'locality' remains a pertinent frame of observation, as it is 'where things happen' (Lanfant 1995).

On this scale, ethnographic work needs to study how 'locality' is constituted through the contact, co-presence, mutual relationships of, but also the friction between, diverse actors rather than as a positive

³ David Picard, Leeds Metropolitan University. Draft Paper – Do Not Quote. 2007 ASA Conference. Draft Paper for Panel on Hospitality, culture and society directed by Peter Lugosi, Bournemouth University

ethnographic object *per se* (Pratt 1992, Tsing 2005). To study the realm of such 'contacts zones' (Pratt 1992), all actors need to be considered at an equal level, including the observer him or her self. The acceptance of the anthropologist to be part of this social reality, precisely as an anthropologist or, in a broader sense, as a particular type of stranger, seems fundamental for this kind of approach. From this point, the participating anthropologist observes the realities that unfold within a social context of which he or she is part.

Studying 'hospitality'

This text is based on research that was carried out in a fishing village in Madagascar where I was hosted as a visiting researcher by a Western non-governmental organisation (NGO) working within the field of marine conservation. This research was part of a wider multi-sited programme on the politics of marine conservation in the Western Indian Ocean. The particular position of 'visiting researcher' allowed me to follow the NGO's group of marine biologists and fee-paying volunteers and observe their daily interactions with different types of villagers, Malagasy and international tourists, political and economic stakeholders, and Western missionaries and expatriates. It also gave me access to other Western research and conservation organisations working in the village and allowed to observe how contact and connections were established between these different actors.

Within the local context of this village, I was considered as a particular type of stranger, a white European male usually associated with the marine conservation NGO that was hosting me. Embracing this particular social performance within this context enabled a participant observation of hospitality. I did not pretend to be a 'fly at the wall' or any other kind of 'neutral' observer, but engaged with people precisely in terms of me being a stranger. Doing fieldwork thus became a form of inter-subjective participation. This 'strategy' naturally enabled a pertinent frame for a participative observation approach to Malagasy hospitality cultures and practices.

This approach equally legitimated the use of a video camera to record the interactions, which was useful at a later stage to study, in a dialogical fashion engaging the subjects of the study, what happened when I arrived with my camera. I believe this kind of approach goes beyond a Jean Rouch style *cinéma vérité* approach, because while it creates its own milieu in which the filming takes place, this milieu is not experimental, nor alien to the local subjects which are part of it. It is a temporary milieu in which I am performing a role of interested and respectful stranger, whereas my hosts act out particular forms of hospitality performance.

At the same time, I am not a tourist even though I may look like. I am an anthropologist trying to understand the political, symbolic and economic underpinnings of local hospitality and of dealing with strangers in general.

While I would rhetorically admit, in a postmodernist, self-ironic fashion, that all anthropologists, me included, are fundamentally driven by a tourism paradigm, I am not a tourist precisely because I stay longer, observe more carefully, more methodically, and more goal oriented. I am aware of the ethical dilemmas involved in this type of approach. I have learnt pertinent techniques to approach 'hosts' and penetrate their social and cultural intimacy. I bring gifts and respect hospitality protocol. I play out the role that is attributed to me, in the spaces attributed to me. I tell subjects what I am doing (studying tourism contact zones and development) with the frequent effect that I am considered as an even 'more important' stranger. This often induces the performance of even more sophisticated hospitality practices, which gives me an even better or thicker understanding of such practices. Yet, while the subjects control what is shown to me, I control what I will do with what is shown to me. In this inter-subjective spiral, the more 'serious' I am taken as a stranger, the 'better' my data gets. After a long 'hospitality session', after recording what I considered as very 'good' data, where subjects gave away new or deeper insights into their meanings of accommodating strangers, I often felt bad because I knew these subjects didn't know – or didn't care – about the 'power' of their words or performances when translated into an anthropological text. In this sense, I often felt like considering the footage of some spectacular or rarely observed sacrifice or ritual like a precious 'fieldwork trophy', I would be able to edit and put into a compelling ethnographic story.

Malagasy ontology of danger and distance

Contact with local and international 'strangers' and the establishment of ongoing relations are not new phenomena in Madagascar's south-west coast. Fishing populations in this area have only recently given up a semi-nomadic life-style, in which the negotiation of social and political alliances and the accumulation of spiritual and political power were fundamental for the organisation of social life.

In the Malagasy worldview, people alive poise the power legitimating their social and political position in society from the power socially attributed to their ancestors (Koechling 1975, Lambek 1993, Astuti 1995, 2007). Consequently, the notable lineages that first arrived in a particular area also were seen to have the most powerful ancestors. The common belief in the efficiency of this magico-spiritual system can hence be said to be at the basis of the social and political organisation at a local level.

Newly arriving people, usually migrants from other parts of Madagascar, subsequently submitted themselves to this form of rule, usually by becoming part of the notable autochthon lineages' clientele and joking relationships (Fauroux 2002).

Until not too recently, the migration of outsiders hence contributed to further increase the power of these autochthon lineages and reaffirmed local power structures.

However, the massive increase of internal migrations since the 1980s, caused in particular by draughts in the country's South, and the establishment of large migrant communities in the West of Madagascar have frequently led to an erosion of this form of governance (Blanc-Pamard & Fauroux 2004). In many cases, the notable autochthon lineages were unable to 'absorb' the sheer number of migrants and subdue them to their rule. This erosion of power was further amplified by the emancipation of new patriarchs (*mpanarivos*) often within the autochthon lineage groups. The latter often quickly gained economic wealth and political power, frequently through cattle rustling (Fauroux *et al.* 2003), hence challenging the established form of rule.

The contact with Western strangers can be seen from within this perspective. Several interlocutors told me about the 'madness' of the Westerners, their 'power' to know and subdue the invisible world. I had long conversations about technology, about how one could build a plane that 'flies like a bird in the sky', about computers that 'predict the truth' in advance, of car engines that turn without visible power input. I was told stories by elderly Malagasy about how they feared the Western strangers when they were younger, wild rumours about Westerners eating the hearts of Malagasy children or drinking their blood to gain their power⁴.

The very notion of 'foreigner' or 'stranger' needs to be seen as *emic*, as a symbolic category enchanting the distance underlying social relations and order (Jackson 1998). The phenomenon of treating strangers and strangeness in terms of 'madness' seems to be grounded in an ontology rather common in human society (Simmel 1950). It has in particular been related to the political constitution of social subjects (Foucault 2000). A famous example has been provided by Jean Rouch in his study of Hauka possession cults⁵. I will argue that hospitality culture and practices in southwest Madagascar are based upon the constitution of the Other, the Western stranger, as 'mad', powerful and potentially contagious and dangerous. Hospitality strategy will consequently aim to 'master' the power and danger of this madness, sometimes by consigning it to certain spaces, sometimes by making it work for the political and symbolic purposes of the hosts. In the following I will show some examples of manipulating the power inherent to the ontological difference of the stranger, through mimesis, amicable manipulation in ceremonies (Fauroux 2004) and the appropriation of material culture.

Malagasy strategies to master ontological difference

During the ceremonies (*fumba*) held before the opening of the octopus fishing season, various objects were ritually sacrificed or brought into the ritual performance. Among them and rum, sponsored by the Western NGOs, were offered as gifts to the ancestors (*razana*). It is the drinks of the Westerners, I was later told by the lineage chief who had established the relation with the supernatural. Our ancestors have seen Western strangers consume these drinks and have then asked us to provide the same drinks so they could try them. They liked them, he further explained, and from then on we used to offer them these drinks. In this sense mobilising a particular material culture of the stranger was integrated to the symbolic and spiritual realm of the ceremony.

One of these ceremonies took place on an island housing the spirits of a very powerful and important family of ancestors. I was invited with other 'important' strangers and while participating in this ceremony, I observed wooden model boats put on one of the tables that served as shrines for these ancestors. I later went back to this island to enquire about these shrines. I was told that the children in the village often fabricate such boats and when tourists saw the children play with them, they often asked whether they could acquire one to take it home as a souvenir. Having seen that, the ancestors had asked to have such boat models as well, put on their tables.

Similarly to the first example, the attribution of value to a particular type of material culture passes

⁴ Similar stories have been reported from other areas in Madagascar (Freeman 2004).

⁵ In his *Les Maitres-Foux*, an ethnographic motion picture shot in and outside Accra, Ghana, Rouch films a large annual possession ceremony of the Hauka cult. During the ceremony, people are possessed by spirits of colonial administrators and act out these respective roles. In extremis, a dog is eaten, illustrating, according to Rouch, that the colonial masters are considered as the mad (going so far as to eat a dog) mastered by the Hauka priests. In an interview with John Marshall and John Adams, Rouch later explains the Hauka cult as a contemporary reworking of traditional religion within the contemporary colonial context, as a way to mobilise the power of colonial figures for various political and economic causes (Adams 1978).

through the stranger's association with these objects. They only become 'powerful' through this association and are consequently integrated to the symbolic and spiritual realm of the ancestors.

On day, one of my main informants invited me to a cattle sacrifice ceremony organised to ask the ancestors to help a young child to recover from disease. He asked me to bring the camera and come with two other strangers to manipulate the reflector and the sound equipment. During the ceremony he advised us how to shoot the sacrifice, mainly by situating us at centre stage of the ceremony.

In addition he wanted a large number of photos of him, us and selected member of his lineage being taken. Obviously we were not considered as an 'invisible' camera crew ought to record the ceremony for future memory, but as highly visible participants in this ceremony. Hence putting our expensive camera equipment and us on display, ostensibly performing gestures of friendship and closeness with us strangers (touching us, shaking hands, smiling, guiding us around, joking with us), he seemed to use us as part of the ceremonial ostentation. He later explained me that it is 'good' to be seen with the 'foreigners' (vazaha) cause people in his family and other important invitees then will think that he, himself, is becoming like a foreigner.

The appropriation and transculturation of Western material objects, their auto-ethnographic use in local formulations of the self, but also the mimesis of Western 'styles', practices or ways of doing or the 'staged' integration of strangers to friendship and joking kinship relations, could consequently be related to a strategy of making the alleged power of the stranger work for local political and economic agendas.

One could push this explanation even further and suggest that the local participation in Western 'nature' or 'culture' conservation agendas manifests less an acculturation to environmental and conservationist values or a calculation of more economical uses of fishing resources than an active strategy to make the foreigners and their power work for local agendas. One of these agendas is to solve the current fishing crisis. Indeed, the fishers in the village are very aware of the environmental crisis related to coral bleaching, which they frequently attribute to the weakening power of the autochthon lineages and their ancestors (*razana*). Most of them seem perfectly aware of the impact coral bleaching has had on fish populations. This changed situation is usually explained by a 'reversal of the sea' where the bottom of the sea has been turned upside down. The participation in the strangers' conservation projects thus can be seen as a mode of appropriating the stranger for his or her 'power', in a desperate attempt to solve the ecological crisis (for autochthon lineage chiefs) or further the erosion of local political power structures (by migrants and newly emerged patriarchs).

Conclusion

While anthropologists have often approached tourism in a compartmentalised way, usually from the particular perspective of tourists, hosts or the tourism production system, I have suggested in this text to study tourism as a complex social phenomenon that 'comes to life' through a multitude of connections at different Fanta Orange for the Ancestors scales. Adopting Anna Tsing's term of 'friction' (Tsing 2005), I have focused on the meeting, interacting, collaborating and rubbing of different actors at a local scale 'where things happen'. Through a juxtaposition of a series of cases in which the Malagasy respectively engage in relationships with the Westerners, I have tried to show that the ontological difference of the Western Other is used within a local social and political framework, and how hospitality cultures and practices work at mastering the 'madness' of the Western stranger. This text is work in progress based on ongoing fieldwork. Further data will be collected on the spatial practices of hospitality, on the Malagasy approaches to hygiene, contagion and danger, and on the politicisation of hospitality performance in the contemporary tourism contact zone.

Furthermore, the observations will need to be confronted to, and dialecticised with, academic debates on strangeness and ontological difference (Simmel 1950, Levi-Strauss, Bahbha 1983, Sahlins 1994), on contact and transculturation (Pratt 1992, Bruner 2004, Tsing 2005), and on tourism and material culture. Also the question on the ethics of this particular approach will be treated with more detail.

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Author:

Dr David Picard
Senior Research Fellow
Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change
Leeds Metropolitan University
Faculty of Arts and Society
The Old School Board
Calverelely Street
Leeds LS1 3ED
United Kingdom
d.picard@leedsmet.ac.uk

ODISSEA

LIBRO VI: Nausicaa, simbolo di ospitalità, accoglienza e integrazione del diverso

Si svegliò Odisseo e si metteva a sedere e pensava così: «Ohimè, di quali mortali son giunto alla terra, ancora una volta? Sono forse prepotenti, selvaggi e incivili, oppure ospitali e timorati degli dei? Come di fanciulle mi giunse un grido femminile all'intorno: di ninfe fanciulle che abitano le alte cime dei monti e le sorgenti dei fiumi e i prati erbosi. Certo sono vicino a gente umana che parla. Ma via, voglio andare a vedere di persona.»

Così diceva: e sbucò fuori dai cespugli il grande Odisseo. E dalla folta selva spezzò con la mano robusta un ramo di foglie, perché gli coprisse le vergogne di uomo.

Si mosse per andare come leone cresciuto sui monti, fiducioso nella sua forza, che avanza sferzato dalla pioggia e dal vento. Gli occhi gli ardono: e va in mezzo a buoi e pecore o dietro a cerva selvatiche. La fame lo spinge a entrare dentro una solida stalla per dar l'assalto al bestiame.

Così Odisseo stava per venire in mezzo a fanciulle dalle belle chiome, pur nudo com'era: la dura necessità lo spingeva.

Terribile apparve loro, era tutto imbrattato di salsedine. E fuggirono via, chi qua chi là, sulle spiagge dove più sporgevano dentro il mare.

Sola restava la figlia di Alcino: Atena le mise in cuore ardimento e tolse dalle membra la paura.

Rimase ferma di fronte a lui, si tratteneva. Ed egli fu incerto, Odisseo, se supplicare la bella fanciulla e abbracciarle le ginocchia, oppure così di lontano pregarla, con dolci parole, che gl'indicasse la città e gli desse vesti.

Questa gli parve, a pensarci, la cosa migliore, pregarla con dolci parole di lontano. Temeva che a toccarle i ginocchi si sdegnasse, la fanciulla.

Subito le rivolse la parola: e fu lusinghiera e accorta. Diceva: «In ginocchio ti supplico, o sovrana. Una dea sei tu o donna mortale? Se sei una dea, di quelle che abitano l'ampio cielo, ad Artemide io ti rassomiglio, la figlia del grande Zeus, nell'aspetto e nella statura e nelle forme. Se invece sei una dei mortali che dimorano sulla terra, o beati tre volte il padre tuo e l'augusta madre, beati tre volte i fratelli: certo a loro il cuore s'intenerisce di gioia per te sempre, al vedere un tale germoglio entrar nella danza. Ma più beato ancora nell'intimo, al di sopra di tutti gli altri, quello che ti condurrà a casa vincendo coi doni nuziali i pretendenti. Mai io vidi, lo confesso, una simile creatura mortale con i miei occhi, né uomo né donna: un religioso tremore mi prende a guardarti. In Delo, sì, un giorno, come te, vidi presso l'altare di Apollo levarsi un giovane virgulto di palma: andai anche là, un numeroso esercito mi seguiva in quel viaggio da cui dovevano venirmi guai e pene. Allo stesso modo anche a contemplare quella palma, stupivo a lungo, giacché mai venne su da terra una pianta simile: come ora dinanzi a te, o donna, resto incantato e stupito, ed ho paura di toccarti i ginocchi. Eppure una grave angustia mi tiene. Ieri dopo venti giorni sfuggii al mare: per tutto quel tempo sempre mi trasportavano le onde e le impetuose procelle, via dall'isola Ogigia. E ora mi gettò qui un dio, perché anche in questo posto io abbia a soffrire una qualche sventura: non penso che finiranno, ma molte ancora me ne porteranno gli dei, prima di quel giorno. Tu, sovrana, abbi pietà: tu sei la prima, dopo tante tribolazioni, a cui mi presento supplire. Non conosco nessuno degli altri uomini che abitano la città qui e la terra. Indicami dove si trova la città, dammi uno straccio da mettermi indosso, se qualche tela da avvolgere i panni l'hai portata venendo qui. E a te gli dei concedano quanto desideri nel segreto del tuo cuore, e ti diano uno sposo e una casa e la buona concordia: non c'è, credi, nulla di più bello e più prezioso di quando l'uomo e la donna reggono insieme la casa e vanno d'accordo. un dolore grande allora per i malevoli, ma una gioia per gli amici: e soprattutto ne hanno buon nome essi.»

E a lui rispondeva Nausicaa dalle bianche braccia: «Forestiero, non hai l'aria di uomo volgare e stolto, ed è Zeus Olimpo che distribuisce agli uomini la felicità, ai buoni e ai malvagi, come vuole lui, a ciascuno. A te diede questa sorte, e tu la devi ad ogni modo sopportare. Ma ora, poiché sei giunto alla città e terra nostra, non mancherai di vesti né di alcun'altra cosa, come è giusto riceva un supplire provato dalla sventura, che si presenta. Ti indicherò la città, ti dirò il nome delle genti nel paese. I Feaci, sappilo, abitano la città qui e la terra, ed io sono la figlia del magnanimo Alcino, e da lui dipende la forza e la potenza dei Feaci.»

Così disse, e diede ordini alle ancelle dalle belle chiome: «Fermatevi, ancelle, per favore. Dove fuggite al veder un uomo? Pensate forse che sia un nemico? Non c'è tra i mortali viventi, né mai ci sarà, un uomo che venga alla terra dei Feaci a portar la guerra: essi sono molto cari agli dei. Abitiamo in

disparte, tra le onde del mare, al confine del mondo: e nessun altro dei mortali viene a contatto con noi. Ma questi è un infelice, giunge qui ramingo. Bisogna prendersi cura di lui, ora: ché vengono tutti da Zeus, forestieri e mendichi, e un dono anche piccolo è caro. Su, ancelle, date all'ospite da mangiare e da bere, e lavatelo prima nel fiume, dove c'è un riparo dal vento.»

Così parlava. Ed esse si fermarono e s'incitavano a vicenda.

Condussero giù Odisseo al riparo, come aveva ordinato Nausicaa, la figlia del magnanimo Alcinoo. Gli posero accanto le vesti, una tunica e un mantello; gli diedero nell'ampolla d'oro il fluido olio e lo invitavano a fare il bagno nelle correnti del fiume.

E allora fra le ancelle parlava il divino Odisseo: «Ancelle, mettetevi in disparte, così: voglio lavarmi da solo la salsedine dalle spalle, e ungermi tutt'intorno di olio. Da tempo la mia pelle non conosce tale ristoro. Davanti a voi io non farò il bagno: ho vergogna di mostrarmi nudo in mezzo a fanciulle.»

Così parlava. Esse andavano via e lo dissero a Nausicaa. Nell'acqua del fiume si lavava Odisseo il corpo dalla salsedine che gli copriva il dorso e le larghe spalle. Dalla testa si detergeva sfregando la schiuma del mare.

E dopo che si fu tutto lavato e unto abbondantemente, indossò le vesti che gli aveva dato la vergine pura. E Atena, la figlia di Zeus, lo rese più alto e più robusto da vedere, e gli mandò giù dal capo le chiome ricciute: erano simili al fiore del giacinto.

Come quando stende oro su argento un uomo esperto, a cui Efesto e Pallade Atena insegnarono ogni arte, ed egli compie lavori di fine fattura: così a lui la dea diffuse grazia sulla testa e le spalle.

Andava poi a sedere in disparte sulla riva del mare, splendente di bellezza e di fascino. Lo contemplava la fanciulla con meraviglia.

E allora diceva fra le ancelle: «Ascoltatevi, ancelle, voglio dire una cosa. Non senza il volere degli dei tutti che abitano l'Olimpo, quest'uomo arriva tra i Feaci divini. Prima, a dir il vero, mi sembrava fosse volgare: ora invece assomiglia agli dei che abitano l'ampio cielo. Oh, se potesse chiamarsi mio sposo un uomo così, e abitare quivi e qui gli piacesse rimanere con noi! Su, ancelle, date all'ospite da mangiare e da bere.»

Così diceva. Esse le davano ascolto e ubbidirono. Posero accanto a Odisseo da mangiare e da bere.

Ed egli beveva e mangiava, il paziente divino Odisseo, avidamente: da lungo tempo era digiuno di cibo.

Intanto Nausicaa dalle bianche braccia ebbe un altro pensiero: ripiegava le vesti e le metteva sul bel carro. Poi aggiunse le mule di forte unghia e salì.

Di là chiamava Odisseo, gli diceva: «Levati ora, ospite, andiamo in città. Voglio accompagnarti alla casa del saggio padre mio, dove conoscerai, te lo dico, quelli che sono i più nobili fra tutti i Feaci. Tu fai così, mi hai l'aria di essere assennato. Fintanto che andiamo per i campi e i lavori degli uomini, vieni dietro le mule e il carro con le ancelle rapidamente: io ti guiderò nel cammino. Ma quando giungeremo alla città che ha d'intorno alte mura, e c'è un bel porto da una parte e dall'altra di essa, e stretta è l'entrata... Lungo la via le navi ricurve sono tratte in secco: tutti hanno uno scalo, ciascuno il suo. E qui c'è anche la piazza intorno al bel recinto sacro di Posidone: è fornita di grandi pietre trascinate sul posto e confitte nel suolo. E qui si prendono cura degli attrezzi delle nere navi, degli ormeggi e delle vele, e aguzzano i remi. Non hanno in mente, i Feaci, l'arco e la faretra, ma sempre alberi e remi e navi ben equilibrate, e su di esse varcano lieti e superbi il mare. Di costoro, vedi, io cerco di evitare le chiacchiere maligne: non voglio che, dietro, qualcuno mi biasimi. Ci sono, sì, tra il popolo degli insolenti, e assai. E uno più malizioso degli altri potrebbe dire così a incontrarci: <Chi è costui che segue Nausicaa? questo forestiero, bello e grande di statura? E dove lo trovò? Certo sarà il suo sposo. Forse è uno che si smarrì e lei lo raccolse premurosa dalla sua nave: uno degli uomini di lontano paese, poiché qui vicino non c'è nessuno. Oppure alle sue preghiere giunse un dio - oh, l'ha molto invocato - scendendo dal cielo ed essa se lo terrà per sempre. Meglio ancora se è andata lei a trovarsi un marito da un'altra parte. Certo questi qui nel paese li disprezza, i Feaci che la vogliono sposa, e sono in molti, e nobili.> Così diranno: e questo, credi, sarebbe per me una vergogna. E anch'io criticarei indignata un'altra ragazza che agisse a questo modo: se senza il consenso dei suoi, mentre sono ancor vivi il padre e la madre, si mettesse insieme ad un uomo prima di andare a pubbliche nozze. Straniero, tu sappi intendere pronto la mia parola, se vuoi ottenere al più presto da mio padre la scorta per il ritorno in patria. Tu troverai lo splendido bosco sacro di Atena vicino alla strada. un bosco di pioppi: e dentro vi scorre una fonte e intorno c'è un prato. E lì ci sono i poderi di mio padre e un orto verde e rigoglioso, tanto lontani dalla città quanto si fa sentire uno che grida. Lì tu siediti e aspetta un po' di tempo, fintanto che noi entriamo in città e arriviamo al palazzo di mio padre. Appena tu credi che noi siamo giunte a casa, allora va' in città e chiedi della reggia di mio padre, il magnanimo Alcinoo. È facile riconoscerla, ti ci condurrebbe anche un bambino piccolo. Non sono costruite così, eguali a questa, le case dei Feaci: tanto è bella la reggia dell'eroe Alcinoo. E quando sei dentro, nel cortile, subito attraversa la grande sala e va' da mia madre. Ella siede accanto al focolare alla luce del fuoco, e fila dalla rocca lane del cupo colore del mare, una meraviglia a vedersi. È appoggiata a una colonna: dietro di lei siedono le ancelle. E lì accanto a lei c'è il seggio di mio padre, dove egli siede e beve il vino come un immortale. Tu passa davanti a lui e getta le braccia intorno alle ginocchia di mia madre. Così vedrai il dì del ritorno ben presto, con tua gioia, anche se abiti molto lontano. Se lei ti vuol

bene, hai la speranza di rivedere i tuoi cari e giungere a casa e alla terra dei padri.»

Così parlava: e sferzò con la lucida frusta le mule.

E quelle rapidamente lasciarono le correnti del fiume. Ora trottavano bene, ora camminavano di buon passo.

Ella teneva con abile mano le briglie, e così la potevano seguire a piedi le ancelle e Odisseo. Menava la frusta con giudizio.

Il sole tramontò e arrivarono al bosco sacro di Atena: là si metteva a sedere il divino Odisseo. E subito rivolgeva una preghiera alla figlia del grande Zeus: «Sentimi, o figlia di Zeus egioco, Atritone. Almeno ora dammi ascolto, tu che prima mai mi ascoltasti quando naufragavo e mi rompeva la nave l'Enosigeo. Concedimi di giungere tra i Feaci e di trovarvi comprensione e pietà.»

Così diceva pregando. Lo ascoltò Pallade Atena, ma non gli compariva davanti: aveva riguardo dello zio paterno, di Posidone. Egli era fieramente sdegnato contro il divino Odisseo prima che giungesse alla sua terra.

The Odyssey: some quotations concerning hospitality

2 of the central characters in The Odyssey

- Poseidon, the god of the sea o "earth shaker" is Poseidon's epithet
- Athene, the goddess of war and wisdom

Note about gods: in Homer's world, a god does not embody only 1 idea; a god embodies a cluster of ideas.

Which qualities does Poseidon embody?

Note about ceremony at the start of Book 3:

- Ritual is prominent
- **Hospitality, as displayed toward Telemachus, is a vital part of the ancient world**

3.43-3.62

The passage illustrates manners

- When the visitors Telemachus and Athene arrive at Pylos, food and drink come first, before inquiries
- The king's oldest son escorts the visitors to the king
- The cup is given first to Athene (who assumes the form of an older man)

Books 1-4: about getting Telemachus's education underway

- he has not had education previously because of his father's absence.
- Pylos serves as a good place for Telemachus to learn statecraft. Pylians represent a properly functioning society, which contrasts to the dysfunctional Ithaka. Note Peisistratus, a well-behaving prince, who accompanies Telemachus.
- The education of Telemachus involves copying a model

Notice that the ceremony occurring in Pylos when Telemachus and Athene arrive is for Poseidon

- Athene prays to Poseidon
- The conflict between Athene and Poseidon motivates the story

Athene

- According to classical mythology, Athene is born from the head of Zeus, wearing armor
- Represents strategic, crafty side of war
- Metis, Athene's mother, means wisdom, cunning; was swallowed by Zeus, and remained inside, thus endowing Zeus with those qualities

Does Homer have an idea of general good that's distinct from what's good for Odysseus?

Athene is fond of Odysseus, favors him above all

- when with him during Trojan war, she appeared in natural form
- they shared qualities
- Odysseus did Trojan horse; built large enough so that Trojans dismantled gates

Notice that Athene prays to Poseidon

- Potential interpretations:

- o Poseidon is more senior than Athene
- o The prayer is empty
- When reading the story, we cannot foreclose which interpretation is best

In Homer's world, conflict between immortals (such as that between Athene and Poseidon) is different from conflict between mortals in that it's ongoing. Perhaps Homer shows that different qualities are established parts of the world, and that one must find balance between fighting and accommodating.

Notice that much of Greece is surrounded by water

- In the ancient world, the sea was mysterious and uncontrollable
- The sea is made of water, which is formless and changing, while we try to accomplish control, forming shelters, communities, rules, rituals
- This suggests a conflict between civilization and what threatens it
- An ancient Greek city was walled, which symbolized the walled space of civilized life

The Odyssey starts differently from The Iliad

- The Iliad: starts with wrath; the main character is introduced with his patronymic (lineage and place)

The Odyssey: the main character is introduced using his epithet "man of many ways;" from the Greek *polutropos*, which means "many qualities." Odysseus has gone many places and is resourceful; he has broader experience of the world, and survives. Notice that his companions died from recklessness.

(13 September)

Oral storytelling in ancient Greece

- Rhythm of Odyssey: dactylic hexameter (expand)
- An oral story is not set as a written one is; it changes and evolves over time
- The written version of The Odyssey likely came from professional poets in ancient Greece, which were important positions

Albert Lord and Milman Parry proved that the Odyssey came from an oral tradition by tracing formulae in the story: reused occurrences, which served as a mnemonic device for those who memorized it

1.420-1.444:

Telemachus ponders, but his thoughts are not revealed

"he pondered in his heart" is a formula used repeatedly in The Odyssey

Because characters' inner thoughts are not revealed, characters lack individual details, which is a characteristic of an oral tradition

Opening question: how do you know who you are?

One common answer is that we know who we are from others' recognition of us, from which we can observe that our own personal identities are not our own possessions.

How does this relate to The Odyssey? How are characters identified?

- Patronymic: the proper way of introduction: the character's lineage and place, e.g., Odysseus son of Laertes of Ithaka
- Epithet: a term bestowed by others

The Odyssey opens with a kind of identity crisis

- In the first few books of The Odyssey, Telemachus needs to know who he is, which he doesn't know because he doesn't know his father
- "Nobody really knows his own father." (1.216)

Books 1-4: Telemachy

- About Telemachus
- About problems that arise in Ithaka in Odysseus's absence (e.g., in Book 2, following Athene's advice, Telemachus calls an assembly for the first time—a kingly prerogative, but the assembly doesn't go well (in contrast to the first assembly in The Odyssey, which is among the gods, and goes smoothly)
- After Telemachus's assembly, Antinoos, who is a suitor of Telemachus's mother Penelope and thus a guest at Telemachus's house, invites Telemachus to join him for dinner at Telemachus's house, which further conveys the dysfunction in Ithaka
- Note the roots of "Antinoos":
 - o Anti: against
 - o Noos: mind or soul
 - o He's the antithesis of Odysseus
- In the background of the problems in Ithaka, the importance of a king is apparent

Evidence of The Odyssey's oral tradition: the passages 3.71-3.74 and 9.252-9.255 are the same
These passages illustrate the lack of consensus in The Odyssey regarding whether people's actions are determined by them or the gods:

- 2.206-2.242: Telemachus complains of Odysseus's fate, raising the question of whose fault it is—Odysseus's or the gods'?
- Note that recklessness is considered to be caused by Ate, a minor divinity
- 4.120: Helen is introduced in a matter-of-fact manner, not as someone who's oppressed by the past
 - 4.240-4.279: Helen acknowledges the ability of divinity to influence; wavers about Odysseus
 - A muse is invoked at the start of The Odyssey
 - Telemachus needs a god's prodding to start
 - In the ancient Greek world, claiming influence of divinity did not absolve one of responsibility for actions

In 2.230, Telemachus notes that Odysseus's ambiguous status is the worst fate that can befall someone. Oscar Wilde said, "The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about." There are more than a dozen Greek synonyms for honor, fame.

2.158-2.160: "they eat up the substance"

- Substance: Greek "biotōs"
- Life: Greek "bios"
- In ancient Greece, possessions were an important part of the self
- Nowadays, there's more interest in a deep self, beyond what others know
- Conception of selfhood changes over time, influenced by technology (e.g., writing) or lack thereof

2.125-2.126: a suitor says of Penelope upon learning of her stalling, "she is winning a great name for herself"

- She weaves in honor of her father-in-law, but does so to stall until Odysseus returns, so in doing so she weaves a trap for the suitors
- What is the meaning of her reputation:
 - Cunning, as Odysseus? Or

Unusual for a woman?

What is the function in Book 4 of Sparta?

Start of Book 4: wedding, which can symbolize the continuation of life

- Jarring that Menelaus and Helen have only a daughter, while Menelaus has son with a slave, which casts complication on future

4.43-4.46: Telemachus and Peististratus marvel at Menelaus's palace and possessions, much of which he acquired in Egypt; he's the richest man they know

- But Menelaus laments the tragedies that have befallen him (4.90-4.92)
- He wishes that he could have fewer possessions in exchange for the men he lost in the Trojan war, which is radical, considering the importance placed on possessions in ancient Greece

- Casts a shadow on Greek values

4.219-4.229: Helen puts potion from Egypt in wine to purge men's sorrow

- Would that be desirable?
- It would be nice to be free from pain, but pain is the price paid for being human
- The human experience is mixed, though we imagine bliss (e.g., 4.561-4.570: "place of ease"); its appeal is questionable: immortality may be lonely, perfection boring

Narrative:

- The reader wants to get to the end of a compelling story, but the end of conflict ends the reader's interest
- Narrative is driven by conflict and tension; a good story cannot come from paradise

5.1: Tithonas

- connection between immortal and mortal, common in Greek mythology
- Tithonas granted immortality, but not immortal youth

Helen

- from Zeus and Leda
- Leda lays 2 eggs: Helen and Clytemnestra

The Old Man of the Sea

- Subdued by Menelaus
- Tells Menelaus of others
- Aias smitten because of pride

Protean: changing

Proteus and Poseidon: both of the sea: nature at its most uncontrollable, mysterious

First instance of Odysseus: weeping

- Arrives on shore naked: has nothing, has to rebuild

8.550-8.561: Odysseus's identity is questioned

- Name: a boundary marker for humans

9.16: Odysseus introduces himself, must tell others of his deeds because his companions perished

At dinner, Odysseus honors poet, offers to promote poet if poet promotes Odysseus

Phaiakians: seagoers with ships from Poseidon, isolated, between immortal and mortal, avoid struggle, queen is niece of king

(25 September)

From handout:

In The Odyssey, the divine is distinct from the human, which is distinct from the natural:

- Where and how you live
 - o Divine: on Olympus, free to move, to change form at will
 - o Human: in cities (end of nomadism); identity linked to place (e.g., Odysseus introduces himself with his patronymic)
 - Polis: significant, defines human's space
 - o Natural: homeless, wandering (until domesticated)
- How related to other forms of life
 - o Divine: receive sacrificed animals from humans
 - o Human: sacrifice animals to gods
 - o Natural: objects of sacrifice
- How related to others of same kind
 - o Divine: constantly shifting alliances, jealousies, etc.
 - o Human: strict hierarchies, ritualized interactions ("guest-friendship")
 - o Natural: no meaningful interactions (not "social")
- How, what you eat
 - o Divine: nectar and ambrosia (no labor to get it)
 - o Human: cultivate crops; convert "raw" into "cooked" (labor, ritual)
 - o Natural: eat what lives or grows (raw)
- Sex life?
 - o Divine: any time, any one, anywhere (free choice)
 - o Human: strict codes of behavior regulating partners (choice, but limited)
 - o Natural: no codes; mating season (no choice; obey impulse)
- In general
 - o Divine: agents of constant change, immortal; change without threat to identity
 - o Human: subject to constant change; rituals give illusion of controlling change
 - o Natural: changeless—endlessly repetitive
- Conclusion: civilization = (illusion of) controlled change (e.g.: royal succession)

Significant detail about Menelaus's story of Proteus:

1.45-1.54: Odysseus kept at "the naval of all the waters."

The story of Odysseus is the story of someone being taken beyond human boundaries: explorations at borderlines of demarcations of humanity

The effort to make Odysseus's homecoming is effort to relocate him within human boundaries

Note how Odyssey is told: the order of events vs. the order of telling

What does order of telling emphasize?

- Starting with Ithaka: importance of Odysseus in social structure; highlights Telemachus and his education

- Books 1-4 and 5-8 feel simultaneous
- Odysseus is discussed, built up, before he's introduced
- Odysseus is introduced in a distressed setting

Odysseus is articulate and clever: does, and tells of doing

9.39-9.61: Odysseus and his men sack a city, not exciting

- Adversary is not unusual (a group of men)
- Odysseus does not act distinctively
- Loss because of recklessness
- Failure of Odysseus's authority to control men

Recognition important:

- Sacking of city of Kikonians is unfruitful because Odysseus is not known as attacker
- Odysseus risks safety to claim responsibility to cyclops

What do unsuccessful encounters that Odysseus repeats reveal about meaningful parts of successful encounters?

- Contrast

Cyclops: border between humans and nature; if Odysseus failed, he'd risk becoming nobody; a recurring theme: each successful encounter expands name and reputation

Cyclops: lack of depth perception and multiple perspectives

9.355-9.370: cyclops asks name, mocks notion of hospitality

(27 September)

Odysseus vs. Cyclops: about antithetics

Odysseus: man of many ways, poulometis

Cyclops: small-minded (symbolized by 1 eye)

human: can have multiple perspectives

Demotocus: no sight but gift of song

Cyclops not social

Thus cyclops parodies ritual when encountering Odysseus

- The host-guest relationship is vital to society; to violate relationship accords guest no recognition
- Odysseus says he's "nobody" (clever)
- Nobody: "outis" in Greek

In encounter with enemy:

A ==> B ==> A'

O. son of... risks outis O. son of...who accomplished...

If he fails, he becomes nobody

Odysseus is introduced on island that is the "naval of all the waters"

- He's "detained in her hollowed caverns"
- Kalupto: cover up for protection
- Similar to Kalypso
- In a sense, Kalypso is as much a threat as Cyclops

Encounter with lotus eaters: hospitable but dangerous because it threatens Odysseus's homecoming

Trojan War:

- After 9 years of fighting, the war was still not settled
- if nothing changed, the war would drag on indefinitely
- Odysseus changed the course of the war with the Trojan horse

9.413-9.415: "the pain of his agony"

- pain: "odino" in Greek: pain of birth
- agony: "odinesi" in Greek; similar to "odino"
- each of Odysseus's repeated successes: a rebirth, as in the Trojan horse
- Odysseus turns adversary into tool

Circe episode:

- 10.220-10.224: Circe identified with a loom; recall that Penelope weaved with a loom to stall her suitors
- 10.224-10.243: Circe turns men into beasts; she seduces them (but Odysseus resists)
- Why does Odysseus go to bed with her?
 - o He gets oath from her

o He reasserts his authority

Note the threat of sexual desire in the ancient Greeks' male-dominated society:

- The Odyssey suggests such a threat, as Circe reduces men to beasts
- There's tension between the threat and the need of sex for procreation

Penelope vs. Circe

- Penelope seems subservient to men (she weaves for her father-in-law)
- Circe is dominant

Aiolos:

- Odysseus has the opportunity to get home, but near there, he falls asleep, and his men open the bag of wind
- Perhaps Odysseus wanted that to happen
- Characters are capable of having others' desires

"Yet all experience is an arch, wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margins fade
Forever and forever as I move."

-Tennyson, "Ulysses" (1842)
dramatic monologue

Odysseus wants to add to reputation, but he must return home eventually to tell others of his accomplishments

As the monologue above suggests, there's a limit to Odysseus's actions; if he continued on, his identity would eventually include everything

11.100-11.111: "contain your own desire"

12.184-12.200: Odysseus contains his desire by being confined
(2 October)

"For all experience is an arch, wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever as I move."

-Tennyson, "Ulysses" (1842)

Paradox of the quest for fame in The Odyssey:

- If one experiences everything, one is not distinct; to be everything is to be nothing
- In order for Odysseus to gain glory, he must "cash in" his experiences

11.104-11.109: Odysseus must contain desire to get home

- Otherwise he would approach the level of Helios (deity)
- "contain your own desire"
- Odysseus contains his desire in his encounter with the sirens by having himself confined
 - o He becomes the only person to hear the sirens' song and live to tell of it

12.184-12.191: the sirens offer Odysseus omniscience (a recurring theme in The Odyssey)

2 concepts of identity:

- One person vs. another
- Humans vs. others

In Greek mythology, to be human is to strive to be more

- E.g., the struggle between Menelaus and Proteus
- The sirens offer Odysseus the chance to be omniscient

Note 12.377: the consequences if Odysseus does not contain his desire

11.110-11.136:

- What's the significance of the information?
- What light does it cast on the remainder of The Odyssey?
- Odysseus does not ultimately defeat Poseidon
- Details of Odysseus's death
 - o At sea
 - o Unglorious
- The story of how Odysseus must make peace with Poseidon
- A journey inland, in contrast to earlier journeys at sea
- Odysseus must repay Poseidon after having his victory
- Struggle between human tendency to become more and forces that can't be overcome

Notes on oral tradition of The Odyssey:

- Careful design regarding order of telling
- Book 11: midpoint, about descent of living man to realm of the dead
- Death: ultimate form of becoming nobody
 - o Recall: $a \implies b \implies a'$

E.g., men \implies beasts \implies better men

Source:

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FILEMONE E BAUCI
L'impossibilità di una giustizia terrena



La mia maschera è il tetto di Filemone:
dentro casa c'è Giove.

Don Pedro in *Tanto trambusto per nulla*, di W. Shakespeare

Premessa

Filemone e Bauci è una novella sentimentale a sfondo rurale, che tanto ha influenzato la letteratura cristiana, in cui l'amore coniugale di due anziani contadini e il valore dell'ospitalità giocano un ruolo di primo piano.

Ambientata in epoca schiavistica, nella Frigia ellenica, una regione dell'odierna Turchia, detta allora Asia Minore, è narrata da uno dei più famosi poeti del tempo di Augusto, Ovidio (Publio Ovidio Nasone, di Sulmona, 43 a.C. – 18 d.C.), nel libro VIII (vv. 620-720) delle *Metamorfosi*, opera letta e amata da pagani e cristiani, che hanno sentito nella proteiformità di quegli esametri dattilici spirare il soffio di una sorta di filosofia primigenia.

Dopo il forzato esilio nella lontana Tomi, un piccolo centro sul mar Nero, dovuto a scandali di corte, il poeta aveva abbandonato i racconti sull'amore libero e spregiudicato, e nella maturità aveva preso a narrare, con grande maestria stilistica, vari episodi mitici, desunti dagli ambienti dell'Asia Minore, che aveva visitato in precedenza, nella speranza, andata però frustrata, di tornare in patria grazie all'appoggio dei circoli e delle personalità che attorniavano Ottaviano.

Questo episodio non è solo stato raffigurato da pittori quali Adam Elsheimer, Pieter Paul Rubens e Johann Karl Loth, ma anche ripreso dal francese La Fontaine nel suo poemetto



Philémon et Baucis, dall'italiano Monti nella sua *Feroniade* e soprattutto dal tedesco Goethe nel suo *Faust*, che, come noto, intento a fondare un impero colossale ultramoderno, non ha scrupoli nel far eliminare i due anziani coniugi, ritenuti colpevoli di rappresentare una tradizione superatissima dalla storia.

Più recentemente il dramma di Rolf Hochhuth, *Wessis in Weimar* (1992), il cui sottotitolo espone la tesi di fondo: *Szenen aus einem besetzten Land* (*Scene da un paese occupato*), usa nella sesta scena ambientata nei dintorni di Lipsia e programmaticamente intitolata "Filemone e Bauci", i due coniugi del mito per accusare la politica unificazionista delle due Germanie, ampiamente promossa dal premier Kohl. I due anziani, piuttosto che essere costretti ad abbandonare la vecchia casa di famiglia (la "DDR"), si uccidono.


Religione : Ateismo = Altruismo : Egoismo

Teseo e i suoi compagni d'avventura si stesero sui triclini: da una parte il figlio d'Issione, dall'altra Lèlege, l'eroe di Trezene, dalle tempie ormai brizzolate; poi tutti gli altri...

Il figlio d'Issione si prese beffa di chi ci credeva e, miscredente e insolente com'era, disse: "Racconti frottole, Achelòo, e giudichi troppo potenti gli dèi, se pensi che possano dare e togliere il volto alla gente".

Gli altri allibirono, disapprovano simili parole, e Lèlege, più maturo di tutti per giudizio ed anni, così disse: "Immensa e senza limiti è la potenza del cielo: ciò che vogliono gli dèi, sia quel che sia, si compie". Così Ovidio.

In che cosa il figlio d'Issione non credeva? Non credeva nel potere degli dèi, non credeva negli dèi. Lo scontro è generazionale, tra una gioventù atea e baldanzosa e una senilità religiosa e prudente. E per convincere gli scettici non servono ragionamenti logici, ma esperienze concrete che tocchino il cuore, i sentimenti. Filemone e Bauci si pone appunto lo scopo di fugare ogni dubbio sulla necessità di una subordinazione del genere umano al potere degli dèi.

Versione originale	Traduzione	Commento
<p>Amnis ab his tacuit. factum mirabile cunctos mouerat; irridet credentes, utque deorum spretor erat mentisque ferox Ixione natus: "ficta refers nimiumque putas, Acheloe, potentes esse deos", dixit "si dant adimuntque figuras". obstipuere omnes, nec talia dicta probarunt; ante omnesque Lelex, animo maturus et aeuo, sic ait: "inmensa est finemque potentia caeli non habet et quicquid superi uoluere peractum est.</p>	<p>E per toglierti ogni dubbio, c'è sui colli di Frigia una quercia. Vicina ad un taglio cinta da un piccolo muro.</p> <p>Ho visto quel luogo; infatti Pitteo mi mandò nei territori di Pelope su cui un giorno aveva regnato suo padre.</p>	
<p>quoque minus dubites, tiliae contermina quercus collibus est Phrygiis, modico circumdata muro; ipse locum uidi; nam me Pelopeia Pittheus misit in arua, suo quondam regnata parenti. haud procul hinc stagnum est, tellus habitabilis olim, nunc celebres mergis fulicisque palustribus undae. Iuppiter huc specie mortali cumque parente uenit Atlantiades positus caducifer alis. mille domos adiere locum requiemque petentes, mille domos clausere serae. tamen una recepit, parua quidem, stipulis et canna tecta palustri; sed pia Baucis anus parilique aetate Philemon illa sunt annis iuncti iuuenalibus, illa consenuere casa paupertatemque fatendo effecere leuem nec iniqua mente ferendo.</p>	<p>Non lontano di lì c'è uno stagno, una volta terra abitabile, ora acque frequentate da anatre tuffatrici (smergi) e da folaghe palustri; Giove vi giunse con sembianze umane e insieme col genitore venne il nipote di Atlante, privo d'ali (ai piedi) e portatore del caduceo (la sua bacchetta magica).</p>	<p>Zeus assume sembianze umane: si anticipa qui il mito cristiano dell'incarnazione.</p> <p>Hermes (Mercurio) figlio di Zeus (Giove), messaggero degli dèi, incaricato di accompagnare le anime nel regno degli inferi. Il suo <i>caduceo</i> (uno dei simboli più antichi della storia dell'umanità: è probabile che i greci l'avessero ereditato dalle civiltà mesopotamiche), era bastone con due serpenti attorcigliati in senso inverso, intorno ad una verga ornata d'ali, il cui principale significato stava nell'idea di evoluzione e liberazione in senso spiritualistico. I serpenti raffigurano la polarità del bene e del male tenute in equilibrio dalla bacchetta del dio che ne controlla le forze. Sono le correnti cosmiche riferite sia all'universo che all'uomo nella complessità del suo organismo (macro- e microcosmo). Le ali simboleggiano il primato dell'intelligenza, che si pone al di sopra della materia per poterla dominare attraverso la conoscenza.</p> <p>Il <i>caduceo</i> con due serpenti indica anche il potere di conciliare tra loro gli opposti, creando armonia tra elementi diversi, come l'acqua, il fuoco, la terra e l'aria. Per questo ricorre frequentemente in alchimia, quale indicazione della sintesi di zolfo e mercurio, oltre che nel simbolismo della farmacopea e della guarigione fisica.</p> <p>Riferito all'universo, indica la potestà di dominare il caos e mettere ordine, creando armonia tra le tendenze ruotanti intorno all'asse del mondo.</p>
<p>nec refert dominos illic famulosne requiras; tota domus duo sunt, idem parentque iubentque. ergo ubi caelicolae paruos tetigere penates summissoque humiles intrarunt uertice postes, membra senex posito iussit releuare sedili. quo super iniecit textum rude sedula Baucis inque foco tepidum</p>	<p>Si presentarono a mille case e cercando un posto per riposarsi, mille spranghe sbarrarono le porte. Una sola infine li accolse, piccola davvero, coperta di paglia e di canne palustri, ma lì, uniti sin dalla loro giovinezza, vivevano Bauci, una pia vecchietta, e Filemone, della stessa età, che in quella capanna erano</p>	<p>Significativo il parallelo con il modo in cui nacque il Cristo: bussare inutilmente a tutte le porte ecc. A testimonianza che i racconti evangelici sul natale sono tutti di derivazione pagana.</p> <p>Nelle parole dedicate alla povertà è anticipata tutta la filosofia di vita sottesa a questo racconto. Anche se in apparenza non sembra, gli uomini appaiono superiori agli dèi, in quanto sanno sopportare stoicamente la loro condizione indigente. In quella povertà vi è democrazia, in quanto non sono presenti padroni e servi. Tuttavia qui Filemone e Bauci rappresentano piuttosto la piccola proprietà contadina, padrona del proprio appezzamento.</p>

<p>cinerem dimouit et ignes suscitat hesternos foliisque et cortice sicco: nutrit et ad flammas anima producit anili multifidasque faces ramaliaque arida tecto detulit et minuit paruoque admouit aeno. quodque suus coniunx riguo collegerat horto, truncat holus foliis; furca leuat illa bicorni sordida terga suis nigro pendentia tigno seruatoque diu resecat de tergore partem exiguam sectamque domat feruentibus undis. interea medias fallunt sermonibus horas [sentirique moram prohibent. erat alueus illic fagineus curua clauo suspensus ab ansa. is tepidis impletur aquis artiusque fouendos accipit; in medio torus est de mollibus uluis impositus lecto, sponda pedibusque salignis.] concutiuntque torum de mollis fluminis ulua impositum lecto sponda pedibusque salignis; uestibus hunc uelant, quas non nisi tempore festo sternere consuerant; sed et haec uilisque uetusque uestis erat, lecto non indignanda saligno. accubuere dei. mensam succincta tremensque ponit anus; mensae sed erat pes tertius impar; testa parem fecit; quae postquam subdita cliuum sustulit, aequatam mentae tersere uirentes. ponitur hic bicolor sincerae baca Mineruae conditaque in liquida cornu autumnalia faece intibaque et radix et lactis massa coacti ouaque non acri leuiter uersata fauilla, omnia fictilibus. post haec caelatus eodem sistitur argento crater fabricataque fago pocula, qua caua sunt, flauentibus illita ceris. parua mora est epulasque foci misere calentes, nec longae rursus referuntur uina senectae dantque locum mensis paulum seducta secundis.</p>	<p>invecchiati, alleviando la povertà con l'animo sereno di chi non si vergogna di sopportarla.</p> <p>E' inutile che in quella casa ricerchi i padroni o i servi: loro due sono tutta la casa, e i medesimi ubbidiscono e comandano.</p>	
	<p>Quando dunque gli abitanti del cielo arrivarono alla piccola casa e varcarono col capo chino la bassa porta, il vecchio, accostata una panca, li invitò a ristorare le membra.</p> <p>Su questa la premurosa Bauci stese un rozzo telo e smosse la cenere tiepida nel focolare e riattizzò il fuoco del giorno precedente, l'alimentò con foglie e cortecce secche e lo spinse a levare fiamme con quel poco fiato che aveva e tirò giù dal solaio legna spaccata e secche ramaglie, le spezzettò e le pose sotto il piccolo paiolo di rame.</p> <p>E spiccò le foglie ai legumi raccolti dal marito nell'orto bene irrigato, mentre lui con una forca a due rebbi staccava una spalla di maiale affumicata appesa a una trave annerita e di quella spalla a lungo conservata taglia una porzione sottile, che pone a cuocere nell'acqua bollente.</p> <p>Intanto ingannano il tempo conversando e fanno in modo che l'attesa non pesi.</p> <p>C'era un catino di faggio appeso a un chiodo per il manico curvo: lo riempiono d'acqua tiepida e vi immergono i piedi (dei celesti) per ristorarli.</p> <p>In mezzo c'è un materasso di morbide alghe palustri, steso su</p>	<p>L'aspetto più bello del racconto è la descrizione dettagliata delle condizioni della povertà.</p> <p>La scena del banchetto, descritta in maniera molto vivida e concreta, verrà spiritualizzata dai vangeli in quella dell'Ultima Cena, in cui gli aspetti connotativi andranno nettamente a prevalere su quelli denotativi. Due modi molto diversi di fare "mitologia", che indicano come la superiorità etica del cristianesimo sia stata pagata da una minore attenzione per i particolari naturalistici.</p>

<p>hic nux, hic mixta est rugosis carica palmis prunaque et in patulis redolentia mala canistris et de purpureis collectae uitibus uuae. candidus in medio fauus est; super omnia uultus accessere boni nec iners pauperque uoluntas. interea totiens haustum cratera repleri sponte sua per seque uidet succrescere uina; attoniti nouitate pauent manibusque supinis concupiunt Baucisque preces timidusque Philemon et ueniam dapibus nullisque paratibus orant. unicus anser erat, minimae custodia uillae, quem dis hospitibus domini mactare parabant; ille celer penna tardos aetate fatigat eluditque diu tandemque est uisus ad ipsos confugisse deos. superi uetuere necari; "di" que "sumus meritasque luet uicinia poenas impia"; dixerunt "uobis inmunibus huius hsse mali dabitur; modo uistra relinquite tecta ac nostros comitate gradus et in ardua montis ite simul". parent ambo baculisque leuati [ite simul". parent et dis praeentibus ambo membra leuant baculis, tardique senilibus,annis] nituntur longo uestigia ponere cliuo. tantum aberant summo quantum semel ire sagitta missa potest; flexere oculos et mersa palude cetera prospiciunt, tantum sua tecta manere; dumque ea mirantur. dum deflent fata suorum, [mersa uidet quaeruntque suae pia culmina uillae; sola loco stabant. dum deflent fata suorum,] illa uetus dominis euam casa parua duobus uertitur in templum; furcas subiere columnae; stramina flauescunt aurataque tecta uidentur caelataeque fores adopertaque marmore</p>	<p>un letto dalle sponde e dai piedi di salice.</p> <p>Lo ricoprono con una coperta, che erano soliti distendere solo nei giorni di festa, ma anche questa coperta era da poco e consunta, giusto adatta a un letto di salice.</p> <p>Si sdraiarono. La vecchietta, con veste tirata un po' su e tremolante, apparecchia la tavola, ma uno dei tre piedi della tavola era più corto: un coccio la rese pari; dopo che questo, infilato sotto, tolse la pendenza, e il piano viene poi ripulito con un caspo di verdi foglie di menta.</p> <p>Sopra vi pone olive verdi e nere, sacre alla schietta Minerva, corniole autunnali conservate in salsa liquida, indivia, radicchio e una forma di latte cagliato e uova girate delicatamente su brace non ardente, tutto in stoviglie di terracotta.</p> <p>Dopo ciò viene messo in tavola un cratere cesellato con il medesimo argento e i bicchieri di faggio intagliato e stuccati nella parte in cui sono cavi, con bionda cera.</p> <p>Dopo non molto, giungono dal focolare le vivande calde, si mesce un'altra volta il vino (certo non d'annata), poi, messo il tutto un poco in disparte, si fa posto alla frutta. Ed ecco noci, fichi secchi della Caria misti a datteri grinzosi, prugne, in ampi canestri mele odorose e uva spiccata da tralci vermigli. In mezzo era posto un candido favo.</p> <p>Ma soprattutto s'aggiunsero le facce buone e una disposizione d'animo pronta e cordiale.</p>	
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<p>tellus. talia tum placido Saturnius edidit ore: "dicite, iuste senex et femina coniuge iusto digna quid optetis". cum Baucide pauca locutus, iudicium superis aperit commune Philemon "esse sacerdotes delubraque uestra tueri poscimus et, quoniam concordes egimus annos, auferat hora duos eadem ne coniugis; umquam busta meae uideam, neu sim tumulandus ab illa. uota fides sequitur; templi tutela fuere, donec uita data est. Annis aeuoque soluti ante gradus sacros cum starent forte locique narrant casus, frondere Philemona Baucis, Baucida conspexit senior frondere Philemon. iamque super geminos crescente cacumine uultus mutua, dum licuit, reddebant dicta; "uale" que, "o coniunx" dixere simul, simul abdita textit ora frutex. ostendit adhuc Thyneus illic incola de gemino uicinos corpore truncos. haec mihi non uani, neque erat cur fallere uellent, narrare senes. equidem pendentia uidi serta super ramos ponensque recentia dixi: "cura deum di sint et qui coluere colantur".</p> <p>www.antiquitas.it</p>	<p>In quel mentre vedono che il boccale, a cui si è attinto tante volte, si riempie spontaneamente e il vino cresce dal fondo da sé.</p> <p>Turbati dal prodigio hanno paura e con le palme alzate mormorano preghiere sia Bauci che il timido Filemone e chiedono per la povertà del cibo e della mensa.</p>	<p>Questo aspetto prodigioso dell'acqua che si tramuta in vino</p> <p>verrà ripreso nel racconto evangelico delle nozze di Cana.</p> <p>Il vino che, riscaldato, evapora è il simbolo della sapienza, del discernimento, del fuoco.</p>
	<p>Vi era un'unica oca, custode del piccolo fondo: che i padroni si apprestavano a sacrificare in onore degli ospiti divini.</p>	<p>L'oca è l'emblema della fedeltà coniugale. Di lei si dice che dopo la morte dello "sposo" non si unisce più ad alcun altro. Questo volatile chiama inoltre i suoi compagni quando trova cibo; è l'immagine della pace e della concordia nella buona sorte; non vuole tenere la felicità tutta per sé ma è pronta a dividerla con altri.</p>
	<p>Ma quella, starnazzando, stanca i due vecchietti lenti per l'età, beffandoli di continuo, finché fu vista rifugiarsi proprio accanto agli dei, che proibiscono di ucciderla, dicendo: "Numi del cielo noi siamo e gli empi vicini avranno le punizioni che si meritano; a voi sarà dato di restare immuni da questo male; lasciate la vostra casa e seguite soltanto i nostri passi e venite in cima al monte!".</p> <p>I due obbediscono e, appoggiandosi ai bastoni, si sforzano di salire su per il lungo pendio.</p> <p>Distavano dalla vetta quanto un tiro di freccia: si volsero a guardare e vedono che tutte le altre cose sono state sommerse dalla palude, tranne la loro dimora.</p>	<p>Gli dèi vogliono punire l'ateismo qui fatto coincidere con l'egoismo. Gli uomini sono egoisti perché atei. Filemone e Bauci sono buoni perché religiosi. Gli dèi usano la legge del taglione. O comunque esiste una sorta di karma indù, secondo cui dalle azioni positive o negative deriva un premio o castigo.</p>
	<p>Mentre guardano sbalorditi, piangendo la sorte dei loro vicini, quella vecchia capanna, piccola anche per i suoi padroni, si trasforma in un tempio: ai puntelli subentrano le colonne, vedono la paglia del tetto assumere riflessi d'oro, le porte si ornano di fregi e il suolo si riveste di</p>	<p>Filemone e Bauci sono più umani degli dèi.</p>

	marmo.	
	Allora il figlio di Saturno dalla placida bocca mandò fuori queste parole: "Dite, o buon vecchio e tu, donna degna di un giusto marito che cosa desiderate?".	Impossibile non vedere qui un'analogia ai racconti orientali del genio che esaudisce tutti i desideri (come p.es. quello della lampada di Aladino).
	<p>Dopo aver scambiato poche parole con Bauci, Filemone espone agli dèi la scelta comune: "Chiediamo di essere sacerdoti e custodire il vostro tempio, e poiché in dolce armonia abbiamo trascorso i nostri anni, vorremmo andarcene nello stesso istante, ch'io mai non veda la tomba di mia moglie e mai lei debba seppellirmi".</p> <p>Il desiderio fu esaudito: finché ebbero vita, custodirono il tempio.</p>	La classe contadina si emancipa grazie alla religione, acquisisce un prestigio particolare.
	<p>Consunti dagli anni e dall'età, mentre stavano davanti alla sacra gradinata, narrando la storia del luogo, Bauci vide Filemone coprirsi di fronde, e il vecchio Filemone vide Bauci fare la stessa cosa.</p> <p>E mentre sui due volti cresceva la cima, si rivolgevano scambievoli parole, finché fu loro possibile: "Addio amore mio" dissero insieme e insieme la corteccia come un velo coprì i loro volti facendoli scomparire.</p> <p>Ancor oggi gli abitanti della Frigia mostrano l'uno accanto all'altro quei tronchi nati dai loro corpi.</p>	<p>La quercia e il tiglio di cui s'era parlato all'inizio, ora acquistano il loro significato: il tiglio, pianta molto longeva, rappresenta la fecondità e quindi l'amore (nell'araldica è spesso raffigurato con foglie stilizzate cuoriformi): ha un profumo molto dolce e intenso, veniva considerato nume tutelare delle fattorie. I germani lo consacrarono alla dea Freya o Frigg, appartenente alla schiera degli Asi, sposa di Odino, di cui condivideva la potenza e la sapienza, madre di Balder; era dea dell'amore, della casa e della felicità coniugale. Da lei prende il nome il quinto giorno della settimana (venerdì=Venere dea dell'amore) nelle lingue nordiche: Freitag.</p> <p>La quercia invece è l'effigie dell'immortalità e della durevolezza a causa della consistenza del suo legno. Spesso colpita dal fulmine, nell'antichità era dedicata a Giove ed egli manifestava la sua volontà facendone stormire le fronde nel boschetto di Dodona. Nel romanticismo la quercia fu la</p>

		<p>personificazione</p> <p>della forza imperturbabile: "Fedele ed impassibile come le querce". I druidi mangiavano ghiande di quercia prima di profetizzare, ma esse erano anche un simbolo sessuale maschile (<i>glans penis</i>).</p>
	<p>Queste cose mi furono narrate da vecchi degni di fede e che non avevano ragione di mentire. Del resto ho visto io stesso ghirlande appese ai rami e io ne ho appese, dicendo: "Divino sia chi fu caro agli dèi e abbia onore chi li onorò".</p>	<p>Filemone e Bauci vengono trasformati in due santi.</p>
	<p>La storia, per l'autorità di Lèlege, aveva commosso tutti, specialmente Teseo. E a lui, che non si saziava d'udire i prodigi degli dèi, il fiume dell'Etolia, appoggiato al gomito, così si rivolse: "Vi sono creature, valoroso eroe, che dopo un mutamento hanno mantenuto la forma assunta; ve ne sono altre che hanno la facoltà d'assumerne diverse, come te, Pròteo, creatura del mare che circonda la terra.</p> <p>A volte infatti ragazzo ti sei mostrato, altre volte leone; ora violento cinghiale, ora serpente che non si ha il coraggio di toccare; a volte le corna t'hanno reso toro; altre avresti potuto sembrare una pietra, altre ancora una pianta; talora, imitando l'aspetto liquido dell'acqua, sei stato fiume, talaltra, al contrario, fuoco".</p>	<p>Qui vi è espresso il tema della reincarnazione.</p>

Conclusione

La morale della favola qual è? La morale esplicita non coincide esattamente con l'interpretazione che di essa si può dare. In maniera evidente infatti si è voluto porre un tributo alla pietà umana espressa in chiave religiosa, al senso religioso dell'esistenza. Tuttavia l'esegesi non può che essere "critica", proprio perché il racconto attesta in maniera inequivoca che la povertà può essere soltanto sopportata, non vinta, in attesa di qualche evento prodigioso che premi la pazienza. Contro le ingiustizie solo gli dèi possono opporsi e qui lo fanno punendo con una morte per strage l'intero villaggio, da cui si salvano soltanto due contadini. Non c'è affronto politico o pedagogico degli antagonismi sociali, ma solo giustizia sommaria, spirito vendicativo. Il comportamento di Zeus è molto più intollerante di quello di Jahvè, che di fronte alle

interrogazioni ipotetiche di Abramo circa la possibile esistenza di qualche giusto in mezzo agli empi, riesce a convincersi che non sia il caso di sterminare un'intera popolazione (Gen 18,23ss).

Qui invece, dove l'individualismo domina incontrastato, chi ha sbagliato paga, senza possibilità di pentimento. Per non sbagliare infatti bisogna mostrare di possedere uno spirito religioso, che, essendo del tutto assente nella collettività del villaggio, viene racchiuso nel mero rapporto di coppia, visto in maniera idillica, in cui manca persino la presenza di un figlio, che in genere rende naturale il contrasto tra le diverse esigenze delle generazioni.

La povertà viene vista in maniera positiva perché connessa all'altruismo, che è tale in virtù della pietà religiosa. L'altruismo è di provenienza contadina, in antitesi all'egoismo urbano.

E' dunque una favola che mentre sul piano interiore sembra esaltare l'aspetto dei sentimenti umani, sul piano politico invece li mortifica, negando la possibilità di un riscatto sociale in cui il protagonista sia lo stesso essere umano e non una qualche divinità.

Il cristianesimo non opererà un miglioramento di questa filosofia di vita, anzi, dal punto di vista dello schiavo che vorrà riscattarsi, vi sarà un peggioramento, come risulta dalla vicenda di Filemone nella [lettera paolina](#) che lo riguarda. Il fuggitivo viene rispedito al padrone, anche se Paolo chiederà a quest'ultimo di trattarlo come un cristiano, nella certezza che davanti a dio tutti gli uomini sono uguali. Come il paganesimo, il cristianesimo non chiederà allo schiavo di liberarsi; chiederà soltanto al padrone di essere più umano: qui sta la differenza dalla cultura che l'ha preceduto.

Fonti

- Publio Ovidio Nasone, [Le Metamorfosi](#), Torino 2000
- Goethe, [Faust](#) (rtf-zip)
- F. Pastore, [Amore e mito](#) (pdf-zip)
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Una deliziosa novella sentimentale di ambiente familiare che ci è narrata da uno dei più famosi poeti del tempo di Augusto, Ovidio (Publio Ovidio Nasone, di Sulmona – 43 a.C. – 18 d.C.) nel libro VIII delle Metamorfosi. Le figure dei due arzilli vecchietti hanno un particolare risalto nella pia leggenda, che s'immagina narrata da un uomo saggio e posato.

Si racconta che un tempo, - quando sull'Olimpo vivevano gli dei dell'antica Grecia - Giove volle discendere sulla terra per rendersi conto di come gli uomini si comportassero. Per questo, preso l'aspetto di un uomo qualunque, egli e il figlio Mercurio, il quale per l'occasione si era tolto dai piedi le ali, si diedero a percorrere le vie della Grecia.

I due pellegrini, così travestiti, giunsero in Frigia senza farsi riconoscere da nessuno. Qui, desiderosi di trovare un rifugio dove riposarsi, si misero a picchiare di porta in porta chiedendo ospitalità. Bussarono così a innumerevoli palazzi, ma dovunque furono scacciati e trovarono le porte serrate a catenaccio. Giunsero finalmente ad un povera capanna ricoperta di canne e di erbe palustri, dove abitavano due vecchietti della medesima età, la pia Bauci e il buon Filemone. In quella capanna Filemone e Bauci avevano vissuto insieme fin dalla giovinezza; in quella erano invecchiati senza vergognarsi della loro povertà e sopportandola tranquillamente, tanto da non sentirne neppure il peso. Nell'umile dimora era inutile chiedere quale fosse il servo e quale il padrone: vi erano due sole persone, e tutte e due comandavano e ubbidivano a vicenda. Qui Giove e Mercurio trovarono pronta cordiale accoglienza.

Non appena furono entrati, chinando la testa per non batterla allo stipite della porta troppo bassa, il vecchio li invitò a riposarsi porgendo loro una panca sulla quale l'accorta Bauci aveva steso un rustico tappeto. Quindi la buona vecchierella allargò con le mani le ceneri tiepide del focolare e, per riattizzare il fuoco del giorno prima, lo alimentò con foglie e scorze secche, e ne fece sprizzare la fiamma soffiandovi

sopra con quel poco fiato che ancora le rimaneva. Prese poi legna e rami di pino ben secchi e li spezzò per metterli sotto al piccolo paiolo; poi si diede a mondare gli erbaggi raccolti dal marito nell'orto coltivato con molto amore. L'altro con un'asta forcuta tirò giù un coscio di maiale affumicato rimasto appeso per lungo tempo alla nera trave, ne tagliò una fetta sottile e la mise a cuocere nell'acqua bollente. Frattanto ingannavano il tempo discorrendo.

Infine il buon vecchio, spiccato da un chiodo un bacile, lo riempì d'acqua tiepida e l'offerse agli ospiti perché potessero lavarsi i piedi. Quindi gli dei si adagiarono su un povero lettuccio di legno di salice, ma con un materasso di soffice alga, sul quale era stata distesa la coperta dei giorni festivi; anche questa però era una coperta vecchia e misera adatta a un letto di salice.

La vecchietta, serratasi la veste alla vita, cominciò a preparare la tavola. Era una tavola a tre gambe, e dovette rincarzarla perché una gamba era più corta. Quando l'ebbe ben pareggiata, ne strofinò il piano con la menta fresca e vi servì in piatti di coccio le olive sacre alla casta Minerva, le corniole dell'autunno conservate in salamoia, invidia e rafano, formaggio fresco, uova assodate nella cenere calda. Dopo fu portato in tavola un rozzo cratere, anch'esso di coccio, e coppe di faggio spalmate, nel cavo, di bionda cera.

Così tolte via dalla mensa le vivande, viene mesciuto nella coppa il vinello asprigno di quell'anno medesimo, che poi, messo un poco in disparte, lascia posto alle frutta. Ecco la noce, ecco i fichi secchi insieme ai datteri rugosi, e prugne, e mele odorose negli ampi canestri, ed uva colta dalle viti rosseggianti di grappoli. In mezzo sta un candido favo ricolmo di miele. E tutto è condito con un piatto di buon viso.

Senonché durante il pasto, ogni volta che il cratere rimaneva vuoto, lo vedevano spontaneamente riempirsi, come se il vino sorgesse su dal fondo. Meravigliati per una cosa tanto straordinaria, Filemone e Bauci furon presi da timore, e levando le mani al cielo invocarono perdono per i rustici cibi e per la mancanza d'ogni apparato. Possedevano una sola oca, che faceva da guardia alla povera capanna, e i due vecchi si preparavano ad ucciderla in onore degli dei loro ospiti. L'oca, svelta, svolazzando qua e là, riesce a lungo a sfuggire ai due lenti inseguitori, e finalmente trova rifugio in grembo agli dei, che la proteggono e la salvano.

"Noi siamo proprio dei" dissero "e i vostri empi vicini subiranno la punizione che hanno meritato; voi invece rimarrete immuni dal flagello. Abbandonate dunque la vostra casa e seguitemi sulla cima del monte".

I vecchietti ubbidirono, e, preceduti dagli dei, appoggiandosi ai loro bastoncelli, si sforzarono quanto lo permetteva la tarda età, di salir su lentamente per l'erto pendio. Erano lontani dalla cima quanto un tiro di freccia, allorché, volgendo gli occhi al basso, scorsero tutte le cose dintorno sommerse da una palude; soltanto la loro capanna era salva. Mentre essi stupiti compiangevano la sorte dei vicini, la vecchia capanna, piccola perfino per due soli padroni, ecco si converte in un tempio: i pali a forcella di sostegno al tetto si trasformano in colonne, le stoppie diventano d'oro, il pavimento si copre di marmo, le porte appaiono magnificamente scolpite. Allora il figlio di Saturno parlò con benigna voce:

"Ditemi ora, o buoni vecchi sposi, degni l'uno dell'altro, che cosa desiderate".

Scambiate poche parole con Bauci, Filemone rispose: *"Chiediamo di essere sacerdoti e di poter custodire il vostro tempio; e siccome abbiamo trascorso insieme d'amore e d'accordo tutta la vita, desideriamo di morire nel medesimo tempo, cosicché io non debba vedere il sepolcro della mia sposa, nè essere da lei sepolto."*

I loro voti vennero accolti, e i due vecchi diventarono custodi del tempio. Giunti al termine della vita, si trovarono per caso sui gradini del tempio a narrarne la storia ai visitatori. A un tratto Bauci vide Filemone mettere fronde, mentre il vecchio Filemone, dal canto suo, vedeva le membra di Bauci irrigidirsi e metter fronde anch'esse. Intanto che la cima degli alberi cresceva, i due sposi si scambiavano parole di saluto, fino a quando fu loro possibile. *"Addio, sposo mio"* si dissero a un tempo. I quello stesso momento le loro labbra scomparvero sotto la cortecchia. Ancora oggi, in quel medesimo luogo, i cittadini di Cibra indicano i due tronchi, l'uno accanto all'altro, nati dai due corpi. Queste cose mi furono raccontate da persone degne di fede. Io stesso vidi poi le corone votive appese agli alberi; e mentre vi appendevo anch'io fresche ghirlande, dissi: *"Gli uomini pii sono cari agli dei, e coloro che li onorano vengono onorati."*

FILEMONE E BAUCI

...C'era una volta una terra abitabile, ora è uno stagno: le sue acque sono affollate da smerghi e folaghe palustri.

Qui venne Giove sotto mortale aspetto e col padre venne, deposte l'ale, il dio del caduceo, Mercurio; a mille case andarono, chiedendo posto e riposo, mille serrature chiusero le case; solo una li accolse, piccola invero, col tetto di paglia e canne acquatiche; ma in quella capanna si eran legati, fin dagli anni giovanili, la buona Bauci e il coetaneo Filemone, insieme li erano invecchiati e, senza mai nascondere la povertà, anzi serenamente sopportandola, l'avevano resa lieve. E non è da chiedere chi è padrone e chi è servo: tutta la casa son quei due, loro ordinano, loro eseguono.

Quando dunque i due celicoli giunsero ai piccoli penati. e, piegata la testa, varcarono l'umile soglia, il vecchio li invitò a posare le membra su un sedile sul quale, premurosa, Bauci stese un ruvido tessuto, e poi mosse la cenere tiepida sul focolare e il fuoco ravvivò del giorno avanti e con foglie e cortecchia secca lo alimentò e col suo debole soffio di vecchia ne trasse fiamme e lingue di vampe, prese quindi da un ripostiglio rami secchi, li fece a pezzi e li accostò al pentolino; e sfronda la verdura che il marito aveva colto nell'orto irriguo; con una forcilla lui tira giù una sordida spalla di maiale appesa a nera trave e di quella carne a lungo conservata taglia una fetta e, fattala a pezzi, la getta nell'acqua bollente.

Intanto ingannano il tempo conversando e non fanno sentire l'attesa. C'era un catino di faggio, appeso a un chiodo per la curva ansa: lo si riempie d'acqua calda e lo si offre al ristoro degli arti. In mezzo c'è un materasso di morbida erba di fiume su un letto dalla sponda e dai piedi di salice. Lo coprono con panni, che solo nei dì di festa erano soliti stendere; ma anche questa era una stoffa misera e vecchia, in tono con un letto di salice: vi si adagiano gli dèi. La vecchia, succinta e tremante, apparecchia il desco, ma una zampa del treppiede era corta: la mise in pari un cocchio; e quando questo, infilato sotto, ebbe tolto la pendenza, deterse il piano menta fresca.

Viene imbandito il frutto bicolore della schietta Minerva, e corniole autunnali immerse in liquida salsa e indivia e radici e una forma di latte rappreso e uova cotte rigirandole pian piano su cenere non rovente, il tutto in terrine; viene offerto quindi un boccale cesellato nello stesso argento e tazze di faggio, nell'incavo spalmate di bionda cera.

Passa poco e il focolare consegna le calde vivande, e torna il vino, per vero di non grande vecchiaia, che poi, scostato un po', fa posto alle seconde mense. Ecco dunque le noci, e con loro i fichi secchi misti a datteri rugosi, e prugne e mele che spandono profumo dagli ampi canestri e uva colta da purpurei tralci; al centro è un candido favo: al tutto si aggiunsero visi dolci e una sollecitudine tutt'altro che pigra e povera.

D'un tratto vedono il boccale tante volte bevuto riempirsi spontaneamente e il vino crescere da sé: attoniti per il miracolo, Bauci e il timido Filemone son presi da paura e levando le mani in alto pregano e chiedono perdono per il pranzo servito senza sfarzo. Avevano una sola oca, guardiana del minuscolo podere: decisero i padroni di sacrificarla agli ospiti divini; quella, veloce per ali stanca i due lenti per età, sfugge a lungo alla presa e alla fine par si rifugi proprio accanto agli dèi. Questi ordinarono non si uccidesse e «Dèi siamo», dissero, «-e i vostri empì vicini pagheranno meritate pene, mentre a voi sarà concesso di restare immuni da questo male. Lasciate solo la vostra casa e seguite i nostri passi, in cima al monte venite con noi!». Obbediscono i due e aiutandosi con bastoni a fatica pongono i piedi per la lunga ed erta via.

Tanto distavano dalla sommità quanto può volare una freccia scoccata: volsero gli occhi e sommersa da palude videro ogni cosa, solo restava in piedi il loro tetto.

E mentre son lì a guardare e piangono la sorte dei vicini, quella vecchia, anche ai due padroni piccola capanna si muta in tempio: ai pali si sostituirono colonne, la paglia manda fulvi riflessi e il suolo si riveste di marmo, la porta è lavorata a cesello e il tetto brilla tutto d'oro. Allora il figlio di Saturno parlò tenere parole: «Dite, o giusto vecchio e tu, donna degna di giusto coniuge, cosa desiderate». Dopo essersi consigliato un poco con Bauci, Filemone aprì agli dèi il loro pensiero comune: «Di essere sacerdoti e custodi del vostro tempio chiediamo, e poiché abbiam vissuto in accordo i nostri anni, la stessa ora ci porti via tutti e due, né mai io veda la tomba di mia moglie né sia sepolto da lei».

Il voto fu esaudito: furono messi a guardia del tempio, finché vita fu loro concessa; mentre stavano un giorno, sfiniti dagli anni e dall'età, davanti ai sacri gradini e si raccontavano la storia del luogo, Bauci vide Filemone metter fronde e il vecchio Filemone vide frondeggiar Bauci. Cresceva la cima sui loro due visi e loro, finché poterono, si scambiavano parole e nello stesso istante «Addio», dissero, «-o consorte», e nello stesso istante la scorza nascose e suggellò le loro bocche: ancora mostrano lì i bitini i tronchi accostati sorti dai loro due corpi.

“Le Vie dei Canti” di Bruce Chatwin

Introduzione

Le “*Vie dei Canti*” è un libro che non può essere definito né un romanzo, né un saggio, né un diario di viaggio, né un'autobiografia; si tratta di un'ibridazione tra questi diversi generi, in quanto mescola in sé elementi del saggio e del racconto di viaggio, intervallati da interi capitoli di aforismi e annotazioni riportati in ordine apparentemente casuale. “Le vie dei canti” è un *romanzo* perché riferisce di un viaggio in Australia del narratore; ma è al contempo un *saggio* perché in esso l'autore espone in forma concisa, appassionata, le sue teorie sul nomadismo e sulle società sedentarie. Ed è ancora un *diario di viaggio*, un'*autobiografia*, un po' ma non troppo romanzata, e inoltre un esempio dell'impossibilità di scrivere un romanzo tradizionale, o almeno di scrivere un romanzo che sia del tutto tradizionale, che non sia mescolato con appunti, aforismi, canti, racconti nel racconto, divagazioni, ricordi.

La stessa **geografia del romanzo è ibrida**; l'azione si sposta rapidamente da un luogo all'altro, da una realtà all'altra. Ad un altro livello, l'ibridazione si manifesta nella condivisione delle differenze: nessuno, in questo romanzo, è uguale all'altro, tutti sono stranieri in un luogo in cui gli stessi indigeni sono stati costretti a diventare tali, ora che la terra è cambiata e non possiede più quella geografia, segnata dalle “Vie dei Canti”, a loro nota, ora che è attraversata da strade, ferrovie, esplosioni atomiche indicate da cartelli in inglese che gli aborigeni non sono in grado di leggere. In una terra in cui tutti sono stranieri, chi è paradossalmente più estraneo agli occhi del narratore è chi dovrebbe essergli eguale, chi appartiene alla sua razza: gli avventori dei bar alle fermate degli autobus che collegano i grossi centri, i poliziotti, gli uomini della ferrovia.

Allo stesso modo non c'è un'esaltazione banale degli aborigeni: il loro è un mondo estraneo, che può essere misterioso, affascinante, stupido o crudele, visto da un occidentale, ma dotato di una coerenza propria. La forza di Chatwin e della sua scrittura consiste anche in questa **apertura al “diverso”** di chi non ripudia la propria origine culturale, la propria tradizione ma le porta con sé in un cammino in cui essi si contaminano con altre tradizioni, altre culture. La via di Chatwin, quella dell'ibridazione, del nomadismo a 360 gradi, quindi sia fisico che culturale, avverte le differenze e le trasforma in scambi, in mescolanze in cui le identità si fondono ma non si perdono, si uniscono restando diverse.

Riassumendo, “Le vie dei canti”(1987) , racconta delle indagini svolte da Chatwin sulla tradizione aborigena dei canti rituali, tramandati di generazione in generazione come conoscenza iniziatica e segreta. Il libro sviluppa la tesi secondo cui i canti aborigeni sono contemporaneamente rappresentazione di miti della creazione (narrazione degli eventi dell'epoca del “dreamtime”, da cui tutto discende) e mappe del territorio. Il titolo si riferisce alle migliaia di linee immaginarie, sentieri invisibili che gli aborigeni chiamano “Via della Legge” o “Orme degli Antenati”, ma che gli europei conoscono come “Vie dei Canti” o “Piste del Sogno”, che, secondo le conclusioni di Chatwin, attraversano l'intero continente; ogni canto tradizionale sarebbe la rappresentazione musicale delle caratteristiche geografico-topografiche di un tratto di una di queste vie. Le Vie dei Canti, non toccano solo alcuni luoghi specifici, ma investono l'intero territorio australiano, passo dopo passo, costellandolo di “sogni” che vengono cantati e che costituiscono una vera mappatura spirituale del territorio, che viene tramandata di generazione in generazione. Lo scrittore ci racconta la vita degli aborigeni, i loro usi e costumi, ci spiega la sacralità di quei sentieri e l'importanza della loro salvaguardia.

Nella prima parte del libro (secondo capitolo) Chatwin inserisce alcune notizie autobiografiche in cui evoca la sua infanzia allo scopo di spiegare al lettore questo suo interesse per i segreti dei luoghi e per la vita di viaggio, di esplorazione. E racconta dei periodi di vacanza presso due zie, un po' stravaganti e colte, a Stratford-on-Avon.

Egli cerca così tra le sue radici l'origine della propria irrequietezza e vocazione al viaggio. La visione dell'Australia impressa nella sua mente viene espressa in questi termini:

“Da bambino non potevo sentire la parola “Australia” senza che mi venissero in mente i vapori delle inalazioni all'eucalipto e un paese di rosso interminabile tutto popolato da pecore”. (p.15)

ed aggiunge che:

“Un giorno zia Ruth mi disse che un tempo il nostro cognome era “Chettewynde”, che in anglosassone significa “sentiero serpeggiante”, e comincio a germinare nella mia testa l'idea che tra la poesia, il mio nome e la strada ci fosse un nesso misterioso”. (p.21)

Tutta la prima parte del libro è la narrazione “on the road” degli incontri con i personaggi più disparati con cui il narratore dialoga durante il suo viaggio: atipici missionari, attivisti politici, aborigeni ormai privati delle loro terre, chiusi in campi appositi, spesso alcolizzati, in passato intossicati da esperimenti nucleari compiuti dagli europei sul loro territorio. Chatwin descrive una serie di affascinanti individui locali

bizzarri e sopra le righe, narrando di un’Australia percorsa dallo scontro di civiltà bianchi/nativi e in progressiva perdita dei suoi valori originali. Chatwin entra in contatto con le personalità del paese, e viene a conoscenza dei meccanismi che regolavano la vita aborigena: gli aborigeni stessi non potevano immaginare il loro territorio come un pezzo di terra vincolato da frontiere bensì come un reticolato di vie e percorsi. In Australia non esistevano frontiere, ma solo strade e tappe. Il significato della parola “paese” per loro era la stessa attribuita a “via”.

Nel frattempo, durante una sosta forzata in una delle tappe di lavoro, Chatwin approfitta del tempo a sua disposizione per riordinare i propri appunti, relativi alla sua permanenza in vari paesi dell’Africa, ma anche della sua vita in Inghilterra e del suo viaggio per trovare Konrad Lorenz.

La seconda metà del libro è infatti tratta dai Taccuini e consiste in un insieme di note, citazioni degli autori più diversi, ricordi di viaggi in paesi lontani dalle rotte turistiche (Mauritania, Mali, Afghanistan, Timbuctu).

Ricompare anche l’Australia e la trama della prima parte ha un seguito e un finale.

Emergono spunti per studi antropologici e naturalistici, Chatwin s’interessa all’evoluzione, ai fossili dei primi ominidi, pensa allo sviluppo del linguaggio. Con appunti sparsi spazia tra differenti culture: cita autori europei che gli sono famigliari, ma si occupa anche delle concezioni aborigene per cui l’uomo crea il territorio dando un nome alle cose.

E questo libro offre all’autore l’occasione di ribadire la sua visione del nomadismo: "Perché gli uomini invece di stare fermi se ne vanno da un posto all’altro?" Bruce Chatwin cerca di rispondere a questo interrogativo affermando che il nomadismo è riflesso della necessità umana di muoversi: si soffre quando si è trattenuti per troppo tempo negli stessi luoghi, quando qualcosa ostacola il nostro movimento.

Sembra che il viaggiare possa costituire un antidoto all’aggressività:

“Come regola biologica generale, le specie migratorie sono meno «aggressive» di quelle sedentarie. C’è una ragione ovvia perché sia così: la migrazione, come il pellegrinaggio, è di per se stessa il duro cammino: un itinerario «livellatore» in cui i più forti sopravvivono e gli altri cadono lungo la strada. Il viaggio perciò vanifica il bisogno di gerarchia e di sfoggi di potere. Nel regno animale i «dittatori» sono quelli che vivono in un ambiente di abbondanza. I «briganti» sono, come sempre, gli anarchici”. (p.360)

Chatwin si convinse che i nomadi fossero stati il motore della storia, anche in considerazione del fatto che i grandi monoteismi scaturivano dal mondo pastorale.

L’autore, aveva formulato una propria teoria: la vera natura dell’uomo sarebbe stata votata in origine al nomadismo e solo in un secondo tempo, dopo l’acquisizione della capacità di governare il fuoco e quindi di difendersi dai predatori naturali, sarebbero nate le prime comunità stanziali. Questa nuova condizione di stabilità territoriale, se da un lato fu garanzia di sicurezza e ricchezza, dall’altro avrebbe bloccato l’istinto migratorio dell’uomo, divenendo la fonte principale dell’irrequietezza umana. Il nomadismo esteriore è perciò riflesso dell’inquietudine interiore, del desiderio di conoscenza e d’arricchimento per il proprio spirito attraverso incontri, esplorazioni, esperienze.

“Esisteva per gli aborigeni una sorta di paternità parallela che legava l’anima a un punto particolare del paesaggio “. E da queste considerazioni, trae delle conclusioni sulla visione del mondo : gli uomini devono imparare a vivere senza gli oggetti, perché gli oggetti li “fermano “ , li bloccano, li riempiono di paura e di timore, e più uno ne possiede, più ha da temere qualcosa. Invece l’uomo è nato nel deserto e solo nel deserto può riscoprire se stesso. Essere “ nomadi “, significa essere se stessi, senza alcun genere di vincolo.

Chatwin riflette sull’*irrequietezza* come fonte del viaggiare e come sentimento insito da sempre nell’essere umano, fin dalla nascita. L’irrequietezza è un bisogno, il bisogno di muoversi, che “colpisce” i bambini e i viaggiatori.

Una songline o “*via dei canti*” è il termine con cui Chatwin indica una “*pista del sogno*”. E’ un qualcosa che non si può trasmettere a parole, in quanto è nel contempo una mappa, un poema narrativo oltre ad essere la stessa base della vita religiosa e delle tradizioni degli aborigeni. Agli occhi di Chatwin la verità sacra della via dei canti è qualcosa di inafferrabile, in quanto il suo è un meccanismo troppo complesso. La via dei canti è qualcosa di segreto. E a Chatwin incuriosiva molto che il significato di un paese consistesse delle stesse storie legate al suo paesaggio. Partì per Alice Springs allo scopo di verificare la sua teoria. Chatwin però non parlava la lingua degli aborigeni, e per questo si affidò ad antropologi e avvocati che già da tempo conoscevano il mondo aborigeno e si erano integrati in esso. Si trattava principalmente di membri del Land Rights Movement che erano in pianta stabile ad Alice Springs. Chatwin giunse in paese in un momento in cui la lotta politica per i diritti sulla terra era ormai al culmine.

La sensazione è quella che Chatwin, con la sua determinazione ed insistenza, vada ad infastidire una comunità che si trova a dover affrontare questioni legate ai diritti di proprietà sulle loro terre , sugli alloggi. La sua è l’immagine di un uomo curioso, che non bada a nessun tipo di metodologia su cui basarsi per svolgere le sue ricerche, la sua è una ricerca indiscriminata del sapere priva di ogni tatto.

Il distinguo da presupporre è sempre quello tra la civiltà occidentale e la società aborigena: Chatwin proviene da un mondo in cui le conoscenze segrete sono qualcosa di inconcepibile, mentre per gli aborigeni la segretezza è il fondamento della loro società. Chatwin si comportò come un vero e proprio saccheggiatore di informazioni, ma nonostante queste premesse, la gente tendeva a confidarsi con lui.

E tra uno dei personaggi nonché guida di Chatwin, spunta Toly Sawenko, ossia Arkady Volchok, un attivista impegnato nella difesa dei diritti e della cultura degli aborigeni australiani, all'epoca dedito a disegnare le mappe dei luoghi sacri per l'Aboriginal Land Council. La figura di Arkady, sua guida alla scoperta delle Vie dei Canti, è quella di un uomo rimasto affascinato dal mondo aborigeno, del quale apprezzava il coraggio e la tenacia, oltre all'astuzia con la quale si relazionava all'uomo bianco:

"fu in quel periodo che Arkady sentì parlare del dedalo di sentieri invisibili che coprono tutta l'Australia, e che gli europei chiamano "Piste del Sogno" o "Vie dei Canti", e gli aborigeni "Orme degli Antenati" o "Via della Legge".(p.11)

La missione di Arkady fu quella di difendere gli aborigeni da coloro che li ritenevano solamente dei selvaggi inetti e ubriaconi; e la sua massima considerazione per gli aborigeni, da lui considerati i veri saggi, si rafforzò a dispetto di un'Europa che a suo vedere, era circondata da un irreflessivo materialismo. Egli si mise a disposizione degli aborigeni per garantire loro "la libertà di restare poveri o, [...] lo spazio in cui poter essere poveri, se poveri volevano essere". (p.12)

Arkady imparò la lingua locale e faceva da interprete tra le società che avevano vinto gli appalti del Governo e le tribù aborigene. Un lavoro difficilissimo, perché, confidò a Chatwin " se diamo retta a loro, l'Australia è tutta un luogo sacro".(p.13)

Sebbene lo scopo di Chatwin fosse quello di scrivere un libro sul nomadismo, egli non si rendeva conto che lentamente stava abbandonando quella direzione per percorrerne un'altra, quella di un romanzo nel quale Sawenko sarebbe stato il personaggio principale. Il lavoro di Sawenko al momento dell'arrivo di Chatwin, consisteva nel fornire consigli su una linea ferroviaria che secondo il progetto doveva collegare Alice Springs a Darwin, in modo tale che la stessa evitasse di toccare i luoghi sacri. Chatwin strutturò il libro nella narrazione di alcune escursioni nell'entroterra con Arkady; durante questi percorsi i due personaggi conversano a lungo. I vari personaggi che si incontrano nel testo sono per lo più fedeli alla realtà, ad esclusione di Bruce Chatwin.

Le Vie dei Canti è quindi sia un libro sui nomadi che su Chatwin che tenta di reinventare se stesso dando vita al suo personaggio migliore, ossia un viaggiatore impavido e pratico e al contempo saggio ed umile inquisitore.

Chatwin esprime il motivo del viaggio in Australia, ossia quello di imparare da sé e non da libri altrui cosa fossero le vie dei Canti ed il loro funzionamento. "Si credeva che ogni antenato totemico, nel suo viaggio per tutto il paese, avesse sparso sulle proprie orme una scia di parole e di note musicali, e che queste Piste del Sogno fossero rimaste sulla terra come " vie " di comunicazione fra le tribù più lontane. Un canto faceva contemporaneamente da mappa e da antenna. A patto di conoscerlo, sapevi sempre trovare la strada".(p.25)

Chatwin ricorda che i miti aborigeni sulla creazione raccontavano di creature totemiche che nel Tempo del Sogno avevano attraversato il continente cantando il nome di ogni cosa incontrassero, e per merito di questo canto avevano fatto esistere il mondo.

Per i nativi australiani, così come per Chatwin, il canto (o la letteratura) e il movimento sono strettamente legati: sia l'uno che gli altri cantano ciò che vedono camminando e assegnano al linguaggio una funzione creatrice rispetto alla realtà. Ogni volta che gli aborigeni cantano ciò che hanno sotto gli occhi ripetono il momento della creazione e rendono possibile il fatto che il mondo continui a esistere. Si potrebbe dire che il loro canto ha il potere di rivitalizzare la realtà e questo è anche il ruolo che Chatwin sembra riservare alla letteratura.

Chatwin torna ad evidenziare il fatto che la patria di un uomo fosse un'icona sacra e non dovesse essere sfregiata, e gli stessi aborigeni avevano uno stretto legame con la terra, in quanto essa dava vita all'uomo, lo formava, lo nutriva e alla morte lo riprendeva con sé.

Chatwin fa propria, rapidamente, la visione del mondo e delle cose degli aborigeni: la terra, fosse anche una desolata distesa di spinifex, era una icona sacra che non doveva essere sfregiata.

L'intervento dell'uomo sulla terra stessa avrebbe significato il ferimento della terra e di conseguenza avrebbe ferito l'uomo che la abitava.

"Il paese deve" quindi "rimanere intatto, com'era al Tempo del Sogno, quando gli Antenati col loro canto crearono il mondo". (p.23)

E si entra nel campo religioso, sostenendo che la vita religiosa di ogni aborigeno avesse lo scopo di conservare la terra com'era e come doveva essere, ed il viaggio assumeva una funzione rituale, durante il quale egli cantava le strofe dell'antenato senza modificarle, cosicché ricreava il Creato; e Chatwin intese il meccanismo alla base del canto, ossia prima la terra doveva esistere nell'uomo come concetto mentale e successivamente la si cantava, in modo tale da percepirla come esistente. Le piste del Sogno sono invisibili ai bianchi e solo gli aborigeni possono cantarle, una terra non cantata è morta, per questo i canti non vanno dimenticati, né l'ordine dei versi va invertito, perché sarebbe come procurare un terremoto.

Le vie dei canti rappresentano una costruzione mentale difficile da descrivere e da capire in particolare per chi proviene da altre culture e mentalità. Secondo la mitologia degli aborigeni, gli antenati avevano creato il mondo cantando, erano stati dunque poeti nel senso originario di *poiesis* (*creazione*). Cantare era esistere, quindi la terra deve prima esistere come concetto mentale, poi la si deve cantare. In base a questa concezione, esistere consiste nell'essere percepito (*esse est percipi*). Per colui che viaggia e va alla ricerca di un luogo nel quale vivere una alternativa, il suo essere coincide con la globalità di quello che percepisce.

Le tracce di questi canti sono rimaste in tutta l'Australia, sono le Piste del Sogno e costituiscono le vie di comunicazione tra tribù lontane. Un canto è mappa e antenna.

"L'Australia intera poteva, almeno in teoria, essere letta come uno spartito. Non c'era roccia o ruscello, si può dire, che non fosse stato cantato o che non potesse essere cantato". (p.26). "La musica è una banca dati per trovare la strada quando si è in giro per il mondo". (p.147)

Affascinante è il concetto di commercio, che viene tempestivamente distinto da quello che un europeo può concepire.. "Le merci dovevano piuttosto esser considerate fiches di un gioco gigantesco, il cui tavolo era il continente intero e i giocatori tutti suoi abitanti. Le merci simboleggiavano intenzioni: commerciare ancora, incontrarsi di nuovo, stabilire frontiere, combinare matrimoni, cantare, danzare, condividere risorse e condividere idee".p.81

Non si tratta di un mestiere legato al mero profitto ma di un vero e proprio baratto con il fine del soddisfacimento di entrambe le parti, ed erano i canti e non gli oggetti, il principale strumento di scambio:

"Commercio significa amicizia e cooperazione; e il principale oggetto di scambio, per gli aborigeni, era il canto. Perciò il canto era portatore di pace." (p.372)

L'Australia è un paese deserto, muoversi significa sopravvivere, il *walkabout* diffonde messaggi tra popoli che altrimenti non si vedrebbero mai. Anche il baratto, le merci sono occasioni per incontrarsi, cantare, condividere idee e beni, ma il baratto principale è quello dei canti. La musica resta uguale e oltrepassa le barriere linguistiche.

È evidente che gli aborigeni soffrono nel vedere la loro terra violata da ferrovie, costruzioni, miniere, dal momento che ogni luogo ha un valore sacro e le vie degli antenati sono pressoché ovunque:

"Prima dell'arrivo dei bianchi, continuò, in Australia nessuno era senza terra, poiché tutti, uomini e donne, ereditavano in proprietà esclusiva un pezzo del canto dell'Antenato, e la striscia di terra su cui esso passava. I versi erano come titoli di proprietà che comprovassero il possesso di un territorio. Si poteva prestarli a qualcuno, e in cambio si poteva farsene prestare degli altri. L'unica cosa che non si poteva fare era venderli o sbarazzarsene".(pp.81-82)

In conclusione, dice Chatwin:

"Eppure mi pareva che le Vie dei Canti non fossero necessariamente un fenomeno australiano, ma universale, che fossero i modi con cui l'uomo delimitava il suo territorio, e così organizzava la sua vita sociale. Tutti gli altri sistemi adottati in seguito erano varianti – o perversioni – del modello originario". (p.372)

ANNEX N. 1 – CORRESPONDANCE WITH PROF. PETER LUGOSI

Da: Romano Toppan [romano.toppan@formazione.univr.it]
Inviato: venerdì 13 novembre 2009 20.38
A: 'Peter Lugosi'
Oggetto: R: ASA07 Panel - Hospitality, culture and society

Dear Peter,

I thank you very much for your kindness : the list of your publications is impressive.
I accept your proposal for your new journal Hospitality and Society. A very exciting topic, multifaceted and fanciful. I will try to do my best and send my contributions.
I hope to meet you as soon as possible.
Most sincerely,

Romano Toppan

NOTE : By the end of November, my e-mail changes : the new e-mail, already functioning, is: romano.toppan@univr.it

Da: Peter Lugosi [mailto:plugosi@bournemouth.ac.uk]
Inviato: venerdì 13 novembre 2009 19.07
A: Romano Toppan
Oggetto: RE: ASA07 Panel - Hospitality, culture and society

Dear Romano,

attached is a PDF of one of the papers you asked for - from the Journal of Foodservice. I do not have a PDF of the Space and Culture paper, yet. Once the proper final PDF appears, I'll mail it over to you. In the meantime, the link at the bottom of this email should take you to our university articles repository. MSWord and PDF copies of all my recent papers are there to download. Please do keep me updated about your work. My colleagues and I are launching a new journal in 2010: Hospitality and Society. We look forward to receiving high quality papers. Keep us in mind if you have an appropriate paper and spread the word.
Best regards,

Peter

Peter Lugosi, PhD
Senior Lecturer
School of Services Management
Bournemouth University
Talbot Campus
Fern Barrow
Poole
Dorset
BH12 5BB
Tel. 01202 961888
Fax. 01202 515707

Publications, presentations and other outputs:
<http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/view/author/9a2f699f3084e45a0632fe83aea2118f.html>

Original Message-----

From: Romano Toppan [mailto:romano.toppan@formazione.univr.it]

Sent: 03 November 2009 08:39

To: Peter Lugosi

Subject: ASA07 Panel - Hospitality, culture and society

Dear professor,

I teach at the Verona University and my interest for the relationship between anthropology and hospitality is very high. In particular, I wish to deepen the "protocols" of hospitality in the Chinese, Japanese and Indian Cultures , their perception of the "hospitality" in tourism, the most important values they consider when people travel and proof the experience of our hospitality (which are their major expectations? Are these cultures some traits about this experience? What do we adapt our hospitality protocols and rituals to meet their expectations at the best ?).

I would be very grateful for any inspiration or suggestion you could provide to me, just to improve my competence in this field: our studies in Italy on that topic are very poor and the large cosmopolitan and multicultural tradition of your country is able to indicate some useful tracks.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Most sincerely,

Prof. Romano Toppan

romano.toppan@formazione.univr.it<mailto:romano.toppan@formazione.univr.it>

Via Repubblica, 58

30027 San Donà di Piave (VE)

Tel +39 0421 41481 – Fax +39 0421 41481