# Global Cultures

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Edited by

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# CHAPTER ONE

# OVERVIEW

FRANK A. SALAMONE

This important collection of papers came about as a result of a session at the Northeast Popular Culture Association in the fall of 2008 at Dartmouth, New Hampshire. Cambridge Scholars Publishing asked me to put together a collection of papers from the session and elsewhere on the topic of the worldwide spread of American culture. A number of people answered the call, and the works of those who followed through are found in this collection. People have been conscientious in meeting deadlines and providing interesting and diverse papers.

My paper on Christmas at the Freed Slaves' Home, Nigeria, examines how an American-style celebration of the holiday became a tool in the conversion of youngsters in Northern Nigeria. It became not only a means for conversion to Christianity but a "civilizing force" of Americanization as well.

Anne Bolin's fascinating study of her fieldwork among body builders follows. She was and is a participant-observer in the sport. Along the way she reveals a good deal about American society in a somewhat unknown area of endeavor. Julie Pelletier and Linsey McMurrin examine the complex dynamic created by taking travel courses into indigenous communities in the so-called postcolonial world, while An Goris examines American influence as exerted through romance writings.

Kweku Boakye and Rosemond Boohene examine the world of tourism as it applies to perceptions of Ghana. Many American tourists take back particular impressions of an area, not all of them complete or accurate, from quick trips to tourist areas. Sometimes tourist sites come to America and Europe as Charlotte Tidy's fine piece indicates. She examines the impact of the tour of China's terracotta army in the overall realm of the rhetoric of Globalization. Increasingly, exhibits are taking on the air of being global in implication. Television, on the other hand, has always had the potential for being global in nature and in saying much about identity.

Kamille Gentles-Peart demonstrates its potential in maintaining identity, using a case study of West Indian women and their TV viewing.

We have seen many examples of how the world has welcomed President Obama. Jeremy Hockett, in an innovative study, looks at this phenomenon in detail in his Ode to America. In it he presents the President as an object of multi-cult love and an antidote to the cynicism which spread over the world during the previous administration. It is a fine piece of ethnography. In a similar vein Yuha Kiuchi looks at Jero, a popular entertainer in Japan, as a bridge between Japan and the United States, incorporating elements of both cultures in his presentation.

Finally, Frederic Will draws on his many years of work and travel abroad to look at American culture in light of global culture. He describes the way in which his global experiences have influenced his understanding American culture. It is our hope and intention that the reader will see this work as a trip to deepen our understanding of the role of American culture within the overall setting of world culture.

# CHAPTER TWO

# CHRISTMAS AT THE FREED SLAVES' HOME, NIGERIA

FRANK A. SALAMONE

> Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveler, thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!
> —Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*

Crane (n.d.:21) in assessing the work of the Sudan United Mission (SUM.) notes that in Nigeria it carried on the work of a Freed Slaves' Home and a Native Agents' Training Institution. The two institutions were linked. The Freed Slaves' Home cared for and educated freed slave children. At the time of his writing, about 1915, the Home had educated over 200 youngsters. Crane gives a bit more information on the set up of the Home than did Bargery. He notes that the basic philosophy of education is "that the children should be trained to take their place in native life, and not become mere hangers-on of the European community." To aid the achievement of that goal, the SUM housed them in native huts rather than a European building. To encourage them to stay in "native life," the Home did not teach English at this time but rather used Hausa as the language of instruction - a practice that was obviously modified by the time of Bargery's report. The useful, or "practical" arts, were taught - farming, building, roof-making and weaving. Interestingly, Crane states that both sexes participated in these activities.

Crane also states that the aim of this enterprise was evangelization and that Christian instruction was fundamental to the entire enterprise. He does not discuss how the imparting of Christian knowledge would serve to aid young children who had already been uprooted from traditional life in better adapting to that life. In fact, his very next declaration belies that intention.

As the children grow up they are transferred to other stations where they act as the missionary's personal attendants and helpers, receiving in this way further training and education, with a view, so far as the boys are concerned, to their entering the Training Institute and becoming evangelists (Crane n.d.:20).

Although girls were not considered as potential evangelists, they were sent to the Institute in order to find proper Christian husbands, providing appropriate wives for Christian evangelists. These evangelists and their devoted spouses would provide "the firm foundation of the larger Church of the future."

The SUM saw that future as one in which the African Church must be directed by Africans if it was to succeed in defeating Muslim advance. At least at first, the African evangelists would be under European supervision. The Wukari Training Institute was thus logically connected with the Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves' Home. The basic plan of the Institute was simple enough. Here native Christians, of whatever tribe, may be equipped for carrying the Gospel to their own people. A year in residence is followed by twelve months on an out-station to test and further develop their capabilities. They then return to the Institute for a final course (Crane n.d.:20).In keeping with their goal of preparing Africans to work in Africa, the SUM discouraged anything they thought might Europeanize these new evangelists.

The Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves' Home, thus, was part of an overall mission plan to evangelize the non-Muslim tribes of Northern Nigeria. At each SUM. station there were graduates of the Home who aided in its evangelization work, including education and medical efforts. According to Crane the S.U.M dispensed 50,000 medical treatments and had 60,000 school attendances yearly.

## Missions as Creators of Ethnic Identities

Ethnic groups are positional groups and chameleon like sets of meaningful relationships. For many years now, anthropologists have moved away from a primordial static view of ethnicity or ethnic groups. There are few if any anthropologists who do not view ethnicity as a process and not a thing. It is important to note that these relationships are internalized relationships fraught with meaning in which socialization plays a vital role. Furthermore, along with socialization, interactions are vital in the formation and maintenance of ethnic groups. The number, type, structure and meaning of relationships help define groups and shape their identities.

John and Jean Comaroff's (1991) idea of mission creation of identity in South Africa is a significant insight that has a direct application to the efforts of the SUM, whether the SUM was conscious of it or not. As the Comaroffs show the creation of ethnic identity is a means for fending off or protecting against threats. It is part of the sets of oppositions, which comprise the overall interaction set of these groups as John Comaroff (1987) notes.

From its inception the SUM planned to make the Freed Slaves' Home a recruitment and training center for evangelists. Gibson (n. d.), for example, admitted that time was making the need for a Freed Slaves' Home less urgent. He accepted the rhetoric of Lord Lugard, the British Governor General of Nigeria, about slavery's abolition in Northern Nigeria. However, he quickly asserted that even though the day would come when there would be no more freed slaves to care for, the home could be used for educational or industrial purposes. Meanwhile, there were a large number of freed slaves who urgently needed help. Gibson (n.d.:9-10) relates the story of "our Tom" to press his point. "Our Tom" was

> . . . a lad of about seventeen years of age. It is pitiable to read the story of that poor boy. Our friends brought him home, and he is now being trained for evangelistic service. He is one of the brightest boys you ever saw.

The American Branch of the Sudan United Mission's 1922 Annual Report and Review notes that the Seminary at Wukari, at the same location as the Freed Slaves' Home, is "the only CHRISTIAN school for higher education in the Sudan. Evangelistic, educational, industrial and medical work is carried on at all the main stations of the Mission." The Annual Report includes the "Report of the Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves Home, Wukari, for the Year 1921." It presents an interesting sketch of overall and daily life as the Home was reaching that period Gibson had foreseen; namely, the end of caring for children who were freed slaves. The Home had 63 children, 24 boys and 33 girls, on January 1. It had 56 children on December 31. Only 1 new boy and no new girls entered the Home during the year. On the other had 6 boys and 2 girls left the Home, for an overall decrease of 7 children. 47 of these children received grants, 15 from the Southern Provinces and 32 from the Northern ones. The "new boy" was from Onitsha in the Southern Provinces. He entered on February 2.

It is clear that the SUM sought to form a new ethnic identity, one in opposition to the Hausa. This one would be Christian and Nigerian, or Northern Nigerian. Since no pan-Nigerian, or pan regional, identity yet existed or was even posited at this time, the SUM was ahead of its time in

holding this idea. However, their effort was in conformity with mission efforts elsewhere. (See Comaroff and Comaroff 1991 and Platz 2003.) They wished to produce a new Nigerian, not bound to an ethnic group.

Scholars are clear that ethnicity is a created identity. Some go so far as to hold it is not "real" but "nominal" in a philosophical sense (R. Cohen, Frank Salamone, et al.). It is constructed to meet real problems and out of strategic necessity. It aids in shaping the perception of reality for purposes of negotiation. The same or, at least similar, processes work to forge national identities. The fact that eventually all those who went through the Home became members of existing ethnic groups does not negate this view of identity formation. Indeed, it strengthens it, for there was nothing to be gained from having a pan-Nigerian identity. After all as R. Cohen (1978) and I (1993a, 1975a and b, 1974) among others (cite) have argued, identity is first and foremost situational whatever else it may become. The situation was not yet right for such an identity but there was room for a Christian Northern Nigerian identity among existing groups, especially those on the Jos Plateau, who did not, however, abandon their specific ethnic names. These groups made adjustments in their basically newly formed ethnic identities, using the attribute of Christianity to define these identities in opposition to the Muslim Hausa.

The SUM was somewhat ahead of the times in anticipating a pan-Nigerian identity and wrong in believing that Islam would disappear from the Nigerian political arena. Nevertheless, its originality in seeking to create a pan-Nigerian or, at least, pan-regional identity should be recognized and appreciated for its innovation. The following section examines the manner in which it used the Christian feast of Christmas to help instill a Christian identity among children in the Freed Slaves' Home and be extension among members of neighboring non-Muslim "pagans" among whom they evangelizing.

## Christmas at the Freed Slaves' Home

In common with other proselytizing religious organization, the Sudan United Mission sought to increase a sense of communal identity. Sharing feasts marking special moments in a group's history certainly is one essential method to do so. Although Easter ranks higher in official Christian feasts as an identity marker since without belief in the Resurrection of Jesus there would be no Christianity, nonetheless celebration of the birth of Jesus has come to be the more joyous occasion.

Felicia Hughes-Freeland and Mary M. Crain (1998:5) in the introduction to their work on ritual write, for instance, emphasize the creative and affirmative role of ritualization.

> Ritual is an increasingly contested and expanding arena for resistance, negotiation and the affirmation of identity. . . Bell's definition of ritualisation as 'a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities' (1992:74) applies equally well to performance if it is not understood as the replication of a given script or text (Coleman and Elsner 1998:48). The implication of this is that ritualisation is best reconstructed in terms of social practices which are situated and performed (Hughes-Freeland 1998:1).

Certainly, the SUM's Christmas celebration falls into this category. It is clear that the missionaries used the Christmas celebration to separate the children in the Freed Slaves' Home from the Muslim and traditional communities, which surrounded them, helping them forge a Nigerian Christian identity.

The SUM's magazine, *The Lightbearer*, describes the first Christmas spent at the Freed Slaves' Home as a somewhat informal happy occasion. There were some traditional elements and some nearly traditional ones. So duck served in place of the more common English Christmas goose. However, there was a plum pudding courtesy of a Mr. Hoover. There were Christmas cards, arriving fortuitously on December 24, Christmas Eve. There were two long Christmas services, one in the morning and an evening service. The children sang Christmas hymns at both.

Additionally, there were presents for all who turned up, including school children not associated with the Home. The Emir received gold present and his son also received a present. Instead of duck, the household boys feasted on a goat. The celebration, at least in part was carried out to the market where a service was held, apparently some singing and preaching. The joy of the day was shared with all who wished to celebrate in much the performative, ritualized fashion Hughes-Freeland and Crain (1998) suggest.

The first Christmas at Rumasha became for the missionaries a sign of God's acceptance of their work in bringing a "Christian Home" to the freed slave children. Mr. Martin, the missionary in confirmation, conducted the service. His description of the service gives clear confirmation of the SUM's intentions for the children.

> Through the grace given me of God, I was enabled to hold up their crucified Redeemer to the children, to urge them to make to Him a

> Christmas present of themselves for all the love He had shown them. Long I pleaded tenderly, and pointed to Calvary's tree.

When he received no response from the children, he began to ask whether it was possible that they did not love Jesus. He had loved "the poor, despised, slave children". Eventually, some girls got up and they were joined by Mr. Martin's "boy Sammy". Other boys and girls got up and soon many were crying.

Mr. Martin then went to eat his lunch but a number of girls came to his home. However, they were too timid to address him. Soon the girls returned with all the boys and Miss McNaught and Mrs. Wilson, their teachers. They said they had gone to Mrs. Wilson to have her explain to them what he had said about Jesus. Mrs. Wilson explained the sermon, stating that they had to choose either Jesus or Barabbas. The children wept and accused themselves of being traitors to Jesus, refusing to eat until they went to confess Jesus.

Mr. Martin assured them of God's love and added more words of encouragement. However, the children still did not eat their dinner. He writes,

> Then they left, but, not to the Christmas dinner. They had something better than the meat that perisheth. They ran over to the Home singing, praying, shouting, rejoicing. Not till about 4:30 p. m. Could they be quieted down to eat their dinner, and a happier lot of children we never saw.

After dinner, the children made flags of their red head scarves and ran to and fro to the river and back. The scarves, said Mr. Martin, represented the blood of Jesus. He says he enrolled 170 children into Christianity that day, once again using Christmas as a ritualization to mark territory, Christian children from Muslims and "pagans'. All children and adults were welcome at these ceremonies. Indeed, the SUM wished to show the power of the faith and the joy shared by believers with one another.

## Conclusion

The SUM entered Nigeria, part of the vast area known as the Sudan, to stop the spread of Islam, which European colonialism had fostered. As I indicated (1971:337), "many problems disappear if one regards 'Hausa' as a cultural term and uses other terms for various ethnic groups who share . . . in that culture. . . . [The use of] 'Hausa' [as] a linguistic term, presents one immediately with the problem of being misunderstood." The British contributed to the expansion of the term Hausa as well as its conflation

with denoting adherence to Islam. A number of scholars have long agreed with Jerome Barkow's conclusion, "whether or not a person is described as 'Hausa' often depends on social context since, as an ethnic category, the term covers a multiplicity of individuals and groups" (1973:186).

In 1975 I built on Barkow's ideas, noting that the Gungawa of Yauri assumed the Hausa identity through becoming Muslims. This process increased the power of the Hausa within Yauri through increasing their numbers and reducing a strong source of resistance to their rule. Similarly, John Paden (1967, 1970b, 1973), demonstrates the extension of Hausa identity beyond traditional Hausaland to non-Hausa groups. Paden's use of census material is instructive. The data demonstrate the spread of Hausa identity via travel, migration, and, of course, assimilation and acculturation. For Paden, as for others, including Abner Cohen (1969) in his model examination of the "Hausa" in Ibadan's Sabon Gari (New Town), Hausa ethnic identity is one of choice, of affiliation. People opt to be Hausa and so long as their behavior is in conformity with that identity, they are allowed to pass as Hausa. The mutual benefits to both those already Hausa and to those who are newly Hausa allow this form of ethnic identity change (Salamone 1975).

As Miles (1994: 42) states, "To colonize is to alter identity. Among its other transformative consequences, colonialism entails the superimposition of the colonizer's sovereignty and, to varying degrees, its very self upon the colonized. As a result, the colonized society can no longer define itself independently of the hegemon." Certainly, British hegemony altered ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria. Assuredly, the SUM was part of that colonial society, no matter how benign its intentions. (See Salamone 1978.) Miles continues

> Discussions of the impact of colonialism on indigenous peoples too often assume consensus regarding the primordial identity of the colonized. Yet not only is ethnic identity ordinarily evolving and situational, colonialism itself shapes group identity. For Nigeria, this is a point usually made with reference to the Igbo, but, also Frank Salamone (1992) has shown, it is relevant to the Yoruba and Hausa as well.

This work seeks to add a bit more to the discussion, focusing on ritualization and the role of the SUM in attempting to define a type of national identity. Certainly, through the use of Christmas, opposing its symbolism to Islamic celebrations, the SUM was looking to shape ethnic and national identity. It had long opposed the notion that Islam was the natural religion of the Sudanic region of Africa and that Christianity was somehow alien to Africa. It worked in the Freed Slaves' Home with a

group of children who did not know what their home area was, much less what their people called themselves within any frame of ethnic reference. The Christmas ritual, one of many, offers a glimpse into the process the SUM used to try to shape a new ethnic identity.

It did not wholly succeed. It did, however, reshape the definition of the ethnic identities of the people among they worked, as Miles indicates colonial powers were wont to do. Being Christian became a normal component of many Northern Nigerian ethnic identities. The areas in which the SUM worked bear testimony to that fact in the North just as areas in the Southern part of Nigeria demonstrate the influence of missionaries. This aspect of mission work has been too long overlooked by most, but not all, anthropologists. The Comaroffs, as noted above, have offered a way toward understanding this dimension of their work within the colonial context.

The SUM used the occasion of Christmas, and other Christian feasts, to encourage people to learn about Christianity. On Christmas, for example, it was the practice to bring some boys and girls from the home to sing hymns. Inevitably, a crowd would form and listen. The missionaries took this as a sign of grace, drawing people to their message. However, as I discovered on one occasion, it is easy to draw a crowd to see Europeans singing. I was present in Nigeria at Yelwa in the northwest of the country on the Fourth of July. Soon a large crowd gathered to help us celebrate our American holiday. It was a matter of courtesy and courtesy to do so.

The SUM, however, interpreted their gathering as a heavenly sign to spread the Gospel. They carried this tradition further, singing and preaching on Muslim holy days, such as the Prophet's Birthday. Although this was against British colonial law, they appear to have been able to get away with it. Apparently, local Muslims in Rumasha did not harbor any will toward them for the practice, gathering quietly to listen to the hymns and even observe the rituals and listen to the sermon, respectfully. SUM writings are filled with such descriptions.

It is clear that they wished to set up their rituals observances in contrast with those of the Muslim population in competition for the "heathens" of the area. Interestingly, despite the harsh depictions of Islam in their writings, they appear to have not only welcome Muslims to their services but have enjoyed good relationships with them in their everyday interactions. Their behavior toward the Muslims of the area, in sum, was in marked contrast with their fiery polemics in their writings in their magazine *The Lamplighter*. There is an obvious objective here of changing people's identities. Certainly religious change is a significant means toward that overall end. On many instances, SUM members spoke of

creating indigenous Christians, defined as those who accepted Christ and who spoke Hausa. In other words, they spoke about people with a new identity, those whose self had changed and would be distinguished both from Euro-Christians and Nigerian Muslims.

Green (2008, forthcoming) provides some reasons why ethnogenesis does not always succeed. He argues that there has been a lack of processual analysis in much of the work on ethnogenesis and the colonial state, particularly regarding failure to create new ethnic identities. In his study he explains the failure of the British to change the identity of the "Lost Counties" of Uganda "which British officials transferred from the Bunyoro kingdom to the Buganda kingdom at the onset of colonial rule" Green demonstrates that the British failed to assimilate the Bunyoro residents of two of these counties but succeeded with the other three. He concludes

> I claim that the reason why the colonial state was unable to promote assimilation of the Banyoro of Buyaga and Bugangaizi into Buganda was due to the pre-colonial status of Buyaga and Bugangaizi as part of the core Bunyoro "homeland" and the subsequent strong ethnic attachment to the two counties; the colonial state was more successful in the other lost counties because of their lack of homeland status.

The failure of the SUM to create a new Nigerian Christian ethnic group is more complex in some ways and simpler in others. Certainly, they created Christian communities, which exist into the present. Certainly, their ritualization processes have continued. I have witnessed these phenomena myself. However, the one-hundred plus children whom they taught were far too few to form a separate ethnic group. The groups whom they converted had ties to their own identities and customs and by and large Christianity was not incompatible with them. The children either married into other ethnic groups or were assimilated into them with relative ease. Many worked for the missionaries, some even going to England, like the famous Tom in the missionary writings. Indeed, the teaching of Hausa in the Home facilitated the children's assimilation since Hausa was the lingua franca of the area.

However, the failure to create a new Christian ethnic group did not mean that the SUM did not have influence on shaping ethnic relations in Northern Nigeria. They did help create a Christian force in opposition to the spread of Islam. The use of Christian rituals and popular token of celebration such as carols, trees, decorations, games, and food associated with the holidays, along with more serious ceremonies, added a Christian dimension to already existing ethnic identities. Therefore, their work is a

reminder that ethnic identities are never stable, at least not for long. They are an ever-evolving kaleidoscope of shifting relationships, alliances, identities, meanings, and ritualizations, which real people use to adapt to real situations in real time.

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# CHAPTER THREE

# EMBODIED ETHNOGRAPHY: SEEING, FEELING AND KNOWLEDGE AMONG BODYBUILDERS

ANNE BOLIN

This paper offers an example of ethnographic inquiry in the study of a sporting subculture, that of competitive bodybuilding. The focus is on a critical and self-aware anthropology that explores the shifting relations between objectivity and subjectivity in long-term ethnographic research among competitive bodybuilders. In pushing the boundaries of reflexive ethnography, consideration is given to the potential of an embodied knowledge acquired through somatic participation. This approach emphasizes the senses of ethnographer and collaborator in the creation and recreation of a bodybuilding and gym subculture. The physical and kinesthetic experience within bodybuilding subculture is a processual one that embeds a dynamic and complex habitus of meaning and knowledge. From this process, emerges an identity and aesthetic of bodybuilding through the senses. The implications of embodied knowledge for understanding bodybuilding as cultural phenomenon and the insights this has for anthropology are discussed.

## Introduction

Experiential and reflexive ethnographic methods demonstrate the power of conjoining qualitative methods and feminist interpretive approaches to create a conceptual synergism through: teasing out systems of meaning, locating the points of cultural fracture/fissioning and containment as well as addressing culture as dynamic, processual, and negotiable.

Anthropological fieldwork is also unprecedented among research methods in that the ethnographer is the research instrument. "The assumption underlying this approach is that the only way to record another

culture is to live it, learn it, and understand it" (Cohen and Eames 1982:30).

## History Sporting Anthropology

Sport and exercise ethnography is still relatively youthful, offering frontier territory for anthropologists and others with training in fieldwork methods and a culturally relativistic stance. Sport ethnography has gained visibility through the work of a number of anthropologists. While Kendall Blanchard and Alyce Cheska (1985) may be credited with public recognition of the field by officially titling it in their book by that name i.e., The *Anthropology of Sport,* the anthropological study of sport has a long history under the appellation of games. In fact, the anthropological study of sport emerged coterminous with the development of the discipline itself in the work of E. B. Tylor, often distinguished as the parent of this topical specialty in his 1879 paper “On the History of games” (Blanchard 1995:9-23; Sands 1999:19-29).

Although sports and exercise were included in the traditional womb-to-tomb ethnographies since all aspects of cultural life were described, it was not until recently that sports and exercise ethnography carved out its own territory as a specialty field in anthropology. It should be noted that the anthropology of sport includes a variety of other research methods germane to anthropology including ethnohistory and the ethnological methods of cross-cultural correlational studies and controlled comparisons. However, ethnography remains the signature method for the majority of cultural anthropologists no matter what the endeavor. The anthropology of sport comprised itself in the 1970's and has continued to grow as ethnography has moved from the descriptive to the theoretical and problem centered approaches. Blanchard records 1974 as the actual emergence of the anthropology of sport with the formation of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play. However, much work remains to be done even in the purely descriptive arena of sports and exercise ethnography, both cross-culturally and intraculturally in North American sports and exercise (Blanchard 1995:83). Adding gender to the equation and incorporating feminist perspectives makes for an even more intellectually lucrative field for the ethnography of sport as it continues the dual task of descriptive and conceptual development.

Alan M. Klein may be credited with bringing the ethnographic study of sport into prominence, and inserting it into an already established interdisciplinary field of sport study dominated by psychology, sociology and kinesthesics. As a long time advocate and proponent of the value of

the ethnography of sport; his efforts in this regard are numerous and include a long and active involvement in the North American Association for the Study of Sport Sociology-- most recently as president of NASSS; substantial ethnographic research on sport (e.g.1991, 1993, 1997); and the mentoring and encouragement of anthropologists and others working within the framework of ethnographic studies of sport and exercise.

## Experiential and Embodied Ethnography

In continuing and elaborating on this tradition, this research emphasizes a critical and self-aware anthropology that explores the shifting relations between objectivity and subjectivity in long-term ethnographic research among competitive bodybuilders. In pushing the boundaries of reflexive ethnography consideration is given to the potential of an embodied knowledge acquired through somatic participation. This approach emphasizes the senses of ethnographer and collaborator in the creation and recreation of a bodybuilding and gym subculture. The physical and kinesthetic experience within bodybuilding subculture is a processual one that embeds a dynamic and complex habitus of meaning and knowledge. From this process, emerges an identity and aesthetic of bodybuilding. The implications of embodied knowledge for understanding bodybuilding as cultural phenomenon and the insights this has for an experiential anthropology are discussed.

As befitting a discipline whose soul is “cultural relativism,” this research in “sport” has a broad lens, beyond the scope of formal sports and expanded to include a diverse array of physical activities such as play, exercise, and movement in addition to the traditional games orientation. Many of the researchers involved in the ethnography of physical activity are full participants in their sport/exercise research. Indeed, a number "are whom they study." This ushers in a provocative new dimension for the study of culture and physicality. Such an approach is in the emerging genre of the "new ethnography" known as reflexive ethnography. Whereas anthropologists in the past discussed "informants" and research populations, in the up and coming reflexive and dialogical anthropology informants have become "consultants" and collaborators in efforts to divest anthropology of the inequalities inherent in researcher and subject relations.

An experiential ethnography asks that the anthropologist actively participate in the lives of her/his collaborators, albeit briefly (see Turner and Bruner 1986). For ethnographers of physical activity, this requires immersion in the lives of athletes at multiple levels. Sands states: "Instead of looking at participation as being a line of research that one crosses or

enters into a compromising or contaminating position, it is suggested becoming one of the "team" acts to open 'doors' of experience that is needed to know the life of the athlete" (1999:37). This kind of involvement implies a long-term time investment and labor intensive commitment because human participation in groups includes cycles and levels of engagement. Subcultures involve learners and novices just as they may involve elites. The ethnographer often enters at ground zero and in the process of becoming an ethnographer and anthropologist, experiences her/his own socialization in the lives of the athletes. It is the process of learning the exercise subculture and participating in the various levels of performance that the ethnographer can begin to forge an analysis, which facilitates her/him "seeing" "the experience itself and the interpretative framework within which the experience has meaning" (Goulet 1994:32-33).

Regardless of the form of the physical activity, a process of identity construction within a community is very likely invoked. This has clear resonance for ethnographers of sport, whose own research process involves them in a rite of passage as their involvement and knowledge of their athletic community accumulates over time resulting in competence intuitively and consciously (a la Goodenough 1970). For a postmodern and truly reflexive ethnography in which the ethnographer is co-collaborator, an experiential approach informed by the sensual can be invaluable. And by this, I refer to what ethnographer de Garis (1999:65-74) argues, an experience, which does not just privilege the visual, the observed and the verbal, but the kinesthetic and the somatic bodily experience of the sport as well. Knowledge, values and beliefs are embedded in the bodily experience of the athlete. As the ethnographer becomes increasingly subject and object, as we may become whom we study (no matter how momentary, perhaps liminally) we may come to share the position, neither above nor below, but as part of (de Garis 1999:67). As a result of such co-participation that involves temporal and kinetic experience in an activity (regardless of our actual skill, the ethnographer will have acquired a knowledge based in the somatic and sensuous. As de Garis notes in his work on professional wrestling "the point is that language and sight are limited in ways that tactile sensations aren't." (1999:71, also Fabian 1990 and Howes 1991 in de Garis 1999, Salzman 1999).

## Becoming and Being: Experiences from the Field

*When Bolin read Alan Klein's Little Big Men, she knew he had been there just as she had been there. By being there we refer to the process of an*

*experiential and somatic ethnography, that is one in which the sensual and kinesthetic ethnography has opened the doors to "perception." Klein's description of Olympic gym and the elite competitive bodybuilding subculture "felt" right to her. It felt right not only as fellow ethnographer of bodybuilding subculture, but also as subject, competitive bodybuilder. Klein has trained with the men and women that me and my bodybuilding colleagues at the local level can only dream and read about. His research spanned seven years, with field stints lasting from one month to a year at the major elite competitive gyms in the West Coast Mecca of bodybuilding. In his words "It takes time to be able to get beneath the surface---sometimes months or years---and my continued presence over so long a period enabled me to discern some of these inconsistencies" Klein 1994:284). He references the ethnographer's rite of passage into a sport subculture: "At times informants would even refer to their refusal to let me inside in the early going because I might not report it right or because I just didn't know enough about a problem"(1994:284). De facto this process is one shared by athletes as well, not just ethnographers. In my own case, as a novice competitor I was not privy to information about the subculture that I acquired as I became a denizen, nor was I treated in the same way.*

*Cultural indicators of the process involved in the ethnographer's own transformation from novice to experienced status as well as the relevance of somatic and experiential ethnography abound. For example, my training partners serve as an unobtrusive measure of the process of "earning my stripes" as a bodybuilder. The identity of the bodybuilder is a distinctive social identity that is delineated from weight lifter, power lifter, fitness enthusiast among others. Two distinguishing features and icons of the bodybuilding identity are competition, desire to, or a past history that includes competition. Over the years my training partners have become more and more muscular and are themselves active competitors as I have gained a reputation as an "over the edge" training partner—Ms Freak as my partner refers to me, Anndroid by another. I am routinely included in discussion on steroids, including joking –"Anne training has gotten better from the two sustanon's a week" and finally, true testimonial to my status in the bodybuilding world—the men competitors feel comfortable teasing me about gaining weight; "Let me ask you just one thing Doc, did you have any fries with that shake?" Although we women competitors do not regard this as funny or cute when applied to us.*

## Reflections on the Somatic and Sensuous: Bodybuilding

*If ethnography is at best only "partial truths," then it could be argued that some studies of sport subcultures contain 'more real" partial truths than others*. An embodied ethnography would use as an "epistemological framework" (de Garis 1999:73)," active reflection on our own somatic and sensuous experiences as participant-observers to ground our analysis. To illustrate the significance of this approach for gaining an understanding of the nuances of participation in sport, I will describe several examples from my work among bodybuilders based on 15 years of ethnographic research. I did, in fact, become whom I studied.

Ways of knowing bodybuilding entail a variety of somatic, sensual and embodied experiences in addition to visual and verbal discourse. As an active competitor, I am positioned to acquire this understanding of bodybuilding as subculture and social identity through bodily practice. The distinction between appearance and physical experience is exemplified in the competitive posing that is the apex for judging bodybuilding. It is the privileging of posing as a visual discourse that may underlie sports researchers and others who deny bodybuilding as a "real" sport. To the uninitiated spectator, bodybuilding competition "appears" to be missing an essential element of sports competition, physical exertion (Blanchard 1995:9). But an analysis from an embodied position argues otherwise. Posing is indeed strenuous and hard work, but the competitor's face and physique should never give this away. We are told by mentors to smile and above all look like we're enjoying ourselves. A bodybuilder must be able to flex and hold the muscular pose without shaking and showing signs of tiredness (achieved by practicing the holding of a single pose, flexed hard for at least a minute to a minute and a half).

But to really understand posing as a kinetic activity requires that the posing experience be contextualized into the total competition cycle of the bodybuilder. For example, during the week prior to my competition, I have depleted, that is I have "cut" my carbohydrates over three days from 60 grams down to 20 grams and then over the next three days increased them gradually back up to 60 grams—all pretty low servings for an average American who routinely takes in 60 grams of carbohydrates with two slices of bread and a small apple in a single sitting. I lift weights an hour and half with my partner, and follow this with my second running or biking session of the day in the precontest 16 week phase dieting phase. After the lifting (before or after my aerobic exercise), I will practice posing as I have been doing routinely for at least six weeks.