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'EVERY NAME HAS ITS PATH': IMAGINING AND ACHIEVING FULBE ENTANGLEMENT IN A MOOSE COMMUNITY

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'Purity is the enemy of change, of ambiguity and compromise.' (Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 1966)

In much if not all historiography and ethnography of the north-central region of Burkina Faso, interactions between Fulbe 'herdsmen' and Moose 'farmers' are represented as if occurring among strangers. Moreover, whether engaged in symbiotic or competitive encounters, each group is usually represented in terms of an assumed, innate distinctiveness (Breusers, forthcoming). Understandings in terms of intrinsic and antagonistic otherness gained further currency as conflicts between Fulbe minority and Moose majority were reported to increase with mounting pressure on natural resources accompanied by a uniformization – that is, agro-pastoralization – of livelihoods across groups. Whatever relationships of mutual dependence and advantage previously existed, it was thought, would be broken now that Moose and Fulbe no longer complement each other ecologically or economically (Breusers 1999: 343–4).

There is, however, a remainder to this equation of vanishing symbiosis and increasing tension along ethnic lines, namely the cattle Moose possess and for the larger part entrust to Fulbe. This article seeks to clarify the nature of entrustment relationships by looking into Fulbe involvement in Moose name giving and other practices intended to secure infants' coming to and staying among the living. I argue that ideas about the other world and its intervention in constituting personhood allow the imagining of an extension of Moose societal relations towards Fulbe, an extension that can subsequently be effectuated through the establishment of spiritual kinship in which cattle entrustment is embedded.

After briefly situating the research setting, I first present Moose understandings of conception, pregnancy and infancy, according to which an infant emerges progressively from the other world into the world of the living. To make an infant stay, it must be made to feel at home. Therefore its 'origin' in the other world as well as the circumstances that made its coming to this world possible to begin with must be uncovered and reckoned with. This identification is accomplished in name-giving practices. The infant is to recognize the name given as hers or his, that is, as corresponding to its prior existence in the other world. Having a memory of that other world and the capacity to accept or reject the way they are received in this world, infants thus actively participate in shaping their social environment. As a consequence, every birth of a Moose child constitutes an

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occasion for reconsidering and actually opening up and expanding the taken-for-granted social world.

Next, drawing on my fieldwork data, I demonstrate how Fulbe involvement in solving Moose fecundity problems and in Moose infants' name-giving allows the imagining, and often the realizing, of these infants' insertion in a social environment comprising Fulbe, notably through the establishment of spiritual parenthood. I furthermore argue that personhood is not only acquired gradually – in the sense that an infant emerges progressively from the other world to settle in the world of the living – but also must be continuously maintained and sometimes, later on in life, is abruptly altered, entailing a transformation of relations with both forces of the other world and people in this world.

In a final section, I argue that, since among Moose personhood associated with 'Fulbeness' is contingent upon creating linkages with Fulbe, conversely ideas about a person's 'Fulbeness' can be strategically deployed to legitimize actions and positions in relation to Fulbe, notably concerning cattle entrustment. I suggest that the divergent extent to which sustained Moose–Fulbe social relations result from Fulbe involvement in Moose procreation is to be understood in terms of controversy regarding processes of change and conflict (agro-pastoralization, and increasingly uneven distribution of cattle wealth).

This analysis seeks to understand contact, conflict and contradiction between Moose and Fulbe, not from the premise that each is 'rooted' in its own proper space and an autonomous continuation of an imagined primeval society, but rather by privileging interconnectedness and assuming a difference-producing set of relations. It takes to heart the insight that to grasp intercultural interaction one must not only look into how boundaries (between this and the other world, between Moose and Fulbe) are defined, established and reinforced, but also at how they are transcended and denied – in other words, how categories are mixed up, destabilizing the fixity of what is 'ourselves' and 'others', of what is 'inside' and 'outside' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 16–19). As argued by Bashkow (2004: 449–50), such an approach does not result in a dismissal of the notion of the cultural boundary, but rather calls for its reconceptualization as open and permeable, plural and interested, allowing for a 'zone of the foreign' where cultural distinctions between 'own' and 'other' typically reside. Beliefs, concepts and practices discussed below concern precisely this zone of the foreign, and can be situated in a discourse of otherness that is part of Moose culture, that is, part of the culture in which it is produced.[1] The downside of this approach is that the perspective presented here remains unilaterally Moose. Much as it would be interesting to analyse in equal detail Fulbe views, motives and agency in this matter, to do so would require another article.

[1]It follows that I treat Fulbe ethnographically as part of Moose culture, despite their being categorized as 'foreign' from the Moose point of view (see Bashkow 2004: 449). In other words, Fulbe as they figure in this article, are firstly a Moose construct, to be understood in terms of the 'folk boundary' Moose draw between their own and Fulbe culture, and not to be confounded with the analytical boundary I posit myself (inclusive of the 'zone of the foreign', that is). I therefore use the labels 'Moose' and 'Fulbe' as 'categories of practice', related to actors' 'experience of a category . . . [or] group . . . coupled with a public representation of that experience' – that is, not as reflecting a clear-cut identity corresponding to bounded groupness (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 12).

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MOOSE 'FARMERS' AND FULBE 'HERDSMEN'

Burkina Faso's north-central region, where my fieldwork took place, has long been a contact zone between Moose 'farmers' and Fulbe 'herdsmen'. On the one hand, the Moose kingdom of Boussouma extended northward up to the Fulbe-controlled Djelgodji chieftaincies. On the other hand, Fulbe started arriving in Boussouma as early as from the seventeenth century onwards. Their chiefs allied with the Moose royalty, with whose cattle they were entrusted and who guaranteed Fulbe's herds' access to cattle tracks, pastures and water points. The Fulbe established settlements in the interstices of the kingdom, some of which evolved into wards of Moose villages, others into villages in their own right. Traditionally, Moose commoners' livelihood was based on millet farming. Contrary to their chiefs, they rarely possessed cattle themselves. Fulbe were predominantly cattle herdsmen, though they or their *riimaybe* (cultivator-serfs) could engage in some farming as well (Breusers 2002).

The data for this article were gathered in Nionranga, a Moose village of about 800 inhabitants, and Kolade, a neighbouring Fulbe settlement of a few hundred inhabitants.[2] Similar to other Moose villages, Nionranga is composed of localized segments (*sakse*; sing. *saka*) of otherwise geographically dispersed kin groups. Each *saka* is made up of several compounds in which a man lives together with his wife or wives, his married sons and their wives, his unmarried children and grandchildren, and often one or more other persons (for instance, a sister's son or a wife's brother's child). In Kolade, Fulbe live in more or less permanent houses (*gure*; sing. *wuro*). Especially during the dry season, they practise transhumance: herdsmen take the cattle to graze and camp elsewhere, while elders, women and children stay in Kolade. Some of these dry-season camps are situated on land attached to Nionranga.

Moose and Fulbe meet regularly. They frequent the same markets, which are scheduled so that each day there is at least one market to visit not too far away; especially on Fridays and Sundays, these markets constitute major social happenings. Fulbe women call upon Moose compounds to sell milk, and, importantly, Fulbe herdsmen seek to pasture their herds on land controlled by Moose. During the dry season, they have their cattle graze the stubble of Moose fields, sometimes camping with their herds on (and manuring) these fields for several weeks. Social life is furthermore marked by disputes and conflicts between Moose and Fulbe, which erupt more or less regularly, when, during the rainy season, crops are damaged by cattle, or, during the dry season, cattle are found drinking at water points temporarily closed to livestock by Moose village authorities. Animosity is reported to have risen in tandem with population growth, the diffusion of plough agriculture, and the concomitant extension of cultivated areas and shrinkage of grazing land.

Simultaneously, an agro-pastoralization of livelihoods occurred. Since the 1950s, cattle ownership among Moose expanded substantially. Previously restricted mainly to members of chiefly kin groups, it came within reach of

[2]From September 2001 to August 2002, I carried out anthropological exploratory field research while living in Nionranga and regularly visiting Kolade. The names of persons quoted or mentioned in the citations are pseudonyms.

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broader groups thanks to incomes and remittances from migration to Côte d'Ivoire. In particular, men who succeeded in purchasing a cocoa or coffee plantation earned enough to invest in cattle back home. Fulbe, facing contraction of grazing land and access to water and salt lands for their herds, increasingly turned into agro-pastoralists as well. Agro-pastoralization was further accelerated by the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, when terms of trade for cattle with respect to millet deteriorated, forcing Fulbe to sell relatively more cattle to meet subsistence needs in grains and allowing farmers with cash at their disposal to enlarge livestock assets (Breusers 1999: 367).

Despite this agro-pastoralization, however, Moose persist in identifying themselves as essentially crop farmers and Fulbe as cattle herdsmen, and – as if to enact these identities – entrust most of their cattle to Fulbe. This calls forth the question of the nature of the relationships in which entrustment is embedded, especially given the above-mentioned Moose–Fulbe animosity and the extreme rarity of Moose–Fulbe intermarriage, which otherwise might have allowed for the existence of reliable kin relations. It is to this question that I now turn, after first briefly presenting Moose notions of conception, pregnancy and infancy as they can be constructed from existing literature – that is, based upon the Moose worldview that has long dominated the anthropological subconscious. By bringing to bear on this 'model' new insights drawn from my fieldwork, I also demonstrate that people's understandings of procreation are not uniform but flexible and sometimes fragmentary, allowing people to accommodate dynamic social and economic processes in which they are involved.

SOCIAL BIRTH: GRANTING AND ACCEPTING PERSONHOOD

Bonnet (1988a: 21–36) maintains that, according to Moose theories of conception, every woman disposes in the other world of children-capital in the form of twinned *kinkirse* (anthropomorphic spirits; sing. *kinkirga*). Women desiring to become pregnant must first lure these potential newcomers to the human world. They attract *kinkirse* by wearing frayed clothes these spirits can catch on to or by making small offerings (notably sweet foodstuffs spirits are known to be fond of) at places where they reputedly reside (such as hilltops, caves, holes, lakes and pools). Conception is initiated when, with sexual intercourse, one of a twin-pair of spirits enters the woman's womb, taking the shape of a foetus and leaving its twin in the other world. Successful pregnancy requires addition of an ancestral substance, *siiga* or vital force, which occurs in the third (for a boy) or fourth (for a girl) month. The ancestor who transmits his or her *siiga* – and thus 'returns', communicating certain of his or her qualities – is said to be the child's *segre*.[3]

[3]*Segre* is derived from *singre*, which signifies 'root' (Badini 1994: 47). From other ethnographies, Moose notions of conception appear less consistent. Accounts diverge regarding which of a person's constituents survives after death (*siiga, kinkirga,* or both), whether a child incarnates or is only accompanied by a *kinkirga*, whether *segre* refers to the ancestor 'returning' in a child or to the child 'reincarnating' an ancestor, whether *siiga* and *keema* ('ancestor') can be confounded, et cetera. Incompatibilities furthermore exist regarding the relative influence of *kinkirga* and *siiga* in moulding infants, as well as regarding whether such influence extends beyond infancy (Badini 1994: 40–7; Houis 1963: 26; Lallemand 1978: 307–9; Skinner 1958: 1104;

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Newborns, let alone foetuses, are not immediately acknowledged as unequivocally belonging to the human world, but rather seen as still partly attached to and participating in the world of the dead and the yet unborn. They are not yet accorded the status of persons (*neba*, sing. *neda*). The process of their entering into this world can be aborted at any time, for instance, when their *siiga* is withdrawn or weakened by their offended *segre* or captured by a witch, or when their *kinkirga*, dissatisfied by its reception in this world or out of capriciousness (for which *kinkirse* are reputed), decides to return to its fellow creatures of the other world (Bonnet 1988a: 86–93; Lallemand 1978: 310).

Newborns are then considered extremely vulnerable creatures, and practices regarding social birth must be understood in the light of their intimate entanglement with the other world and the wish to accomplish their disentanglement – however imperfect – while ensuring the benevolence of any remaining links. Caretakers acknowledge that newborns have a choice and must be persuaded to stay by making it worthwhile for them to quit the other world (see also Gottlieb 2004: 183). Infants are to be received in a welcoming environment, in which they are constantly and affectionately attended to, so as to avoid the least discomfort or disgruntlement. This goes well beyond caring for infants' bodily needs. Equal attention must be paid to social or spiritual relational concerns, since – contrary to Euro-American biological models according to which a foetus grows from a zygote of a few cells, which before those cells were joined had no existence whatsoever – a Moose newborn is not seen as emerging from a womb, but rather from another world (*ibid.*: 79). Making it feel at home therefore requires acknowledging this prior existence, as well as the complex relations it entertained and still entertains with that other world's invisible creatures.

In other words, because of these lingering attachments to the other world, personhood, in the sense of a social status granted to those meeting or performing socially sanctioned criteria for membership, is not, as in Euro-American societies, acquired as the unproblematic and automatic outcome of a solely biological process (Conklin and Morgan 1996: 662, 687–8). Whereas, in the latter, personhood is acquired with birth or even well before, with the precise moment being a point of contention between pro-choice and pro-life protagonists (Loizos and Heady 1999: 8), in Moose society, as in many other West African societies (Bonnet and Pourchez 2007; Cassiman 2000; Gottlieb 2004; Razy 2007), social birth is a process, started during pregnancy and continuing following birth.

A major problem in welcoming a newborn is that those receiving it initially do not know with whom they are dealing; the newborn is a stranger (*saana*) to them. Like any other stranger, it might return whence it came, yet is also always a potential future partner of sociality, who might decide to stay among those who receive it well (Badini 1994: 44–6). But, again as for any stranger, to receive a newborn well, one must get to know it to some extent, that is, uncover who it was in the other world. To make it feel at home, its prior social existence as both spirit

Some 1971: 18). Clearly, a single, shared model of conception, pregnancy and infancy does not exist, which is by no means a Moose peculiarity (Loizos and Heady 1999: 13–14).

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and ancestor has to be unveiled, and subsequently the complex relations it enjoyed in the other world are, as it were, to be domesticated.

A few days following a child's birth, its father's sister enumerates its genealogy, halting at the name the child acknowledges by its reactions (by moaning, or stopping crying). The child is given the kin group's name (*sondre*) – to be distinguished from the individual name (*yuure*; pl. *yuya*) – of its thus identified *segre*, and as a result introduced into the kin group at its proper place (Bonnet 1988a: 88–94). Conversely, acknowledging an ancestor as the newborn's *segre* attests to the kin group's recognition of this ancestor. The *segre* gives something of himself (*siiga*), receiving commemoration in exchange, not only because the infant is named after him, but also because he will regularly be offered food and drink, both routinely and at specific ceremonies. The transmittance of *siiga* keeps the ancestor 'alive' as a member of the community that comprises the dead, the living and the yet unborn.

Recognizing the *kinkirga* constituent of a child usually does not require such accurate identification, but tends to be accomplished by routine childcare practices. These aim, on the one hand, to please and appease the *kinkirga* by offering it sweet and oily foodstuffs and indulging its every desire (manifested through the child's crying or other expressions of discomfort). On the other hand, they consist of precautions protecting the child from its former *kinkirse* companions, who are suspected of wanting to lure it back to the other world (protective amulets, massages, purges – and ensuring that toddlers are never alone outside after nightfall) (Bonnet 2007: 115; Lallemand 1978: 313). According to Bonnet (1988a: 36), a child's vulnerability to *kinkirse* diminishes with age; as its *siiga* – marking its socialization – progressively gains the upper hand, communication with its *kinkirse* companions is severed. When weaned, and having acquired capacity of speech, the child is assumed sufficiently detached from the other world for precautionary measures to be lifted.[4]

Note, then, that, contrary to *siiga's* (and hence ancestors') profoundly socializing force, *kinkirse* represent a mostly desocializing power (Bonnet 1988b: 296).[5] However, as I demonstrate below, when *kinkirse* succeed in their desocializing effort, it may paradoxically result in an 'alternative socialization', not through severing the link with but rather through accommodating the *kinkirse* involved.

In this understanding of conception, pregnancy and infancy, foetus, newborn and infant are accorded agency. They are not passive objects, assigned a place in this world only through adults' socializing practices, but – able to evaluate their environment in social terms – actively participate in the process. Besides biological and emotional needs and desires, they express sociological ones as well, that is, as to the community they *want* to be inserted into (see Gottlieb 2004: 240). Hence, individuals become persons by a more complex process than a simple incorporation into a social group, which admits them by giving them a

[4]Consequently, there is a strong disparity between adults' indulgence towards young infants and the much harsher treatment children undergo from the age of about three.

[5]As argued by Bonnet (1988a: 67), the *kinkirse* world symbolizes each woman's potential to procreate independently of any alliance, whereas the world of the ancestors symbolizes social control necessary for engendering not only biological but also social reproduction.

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place or position in a community or kin group; they must also themselves accept the social group and the way they are inserted into it.

In other words, the newcomer is integrated into a community through a *negotiation* process, providing simultaneously an occasion to reassert or renegotiate that community in terms of boundaries and criteria for membership. In this process, agencies from both this and the other world partake: mother, elder kinsmen and the infant in the shape of its *kinkirga* and *segre* – the infant's utterings interpreted either directly by caretakers or through mediation of a diviner. Agency and room for negotiation manifest themselves especially when (would-be) parents face problems of sterility, miscarriage, or infant illness or mortality. It is also then that Fulbe can become involved.

FULBE MEDIATION AND FULBE ASCENDANTS

Otherness reinforced?

Uncertainty regarding and negotiation of who newborns actually are (and are going to be) can persist all through the emergence of children from the other into this world, that is, until they acquire capacity of speech and, as we will see, sometimes well beyond. To resolve this uncertainty, Moose parents frequently call upon a diviner – for instance, when pregnancy is long in coming or accompanied by unusual pain, when their infant's illness is not easily cured or some not obviously explicable discomfort persists. The diviner identifies the responsible forces, and, usually, depending on the diagnosis, proposes a simple herbal remedy or prescribes a sacrifice or offering to conciliate or propitiate an ancestor or spirit.[6]

Uncertainty heightens when a couple are unable to conceive, experience repeated miscarriages or lose several infants in a row. Repeated loss of infants is interpreted in terms of the same creature attempting to come into the world of the living: the same 'child' is repeatedly born, lives for some days, weeks or years, but then dies, refusing to stay because of having been incorrectly identified in terms of its previous other-worldly social existence, or because dissatisfied with its reception in the human world – the latter displeasure being closely related to the former. All that must be done to retain the child is to identify it correctly and receive it in an environment it can recognize as hospitable and familiar.

Alternatively, such repeated misfortune is imputed to a *segre* or *kinkirga* intentionally seeking to harm or deceive the parents. The solution usually resorted to is to deceive the malicious spiritual force in turn. Indifference or even contempt towards the child is feigned in the hope that spirits will find it not worth their while to attack: the mother-to-be remains silent about her pregnancy so as not to attract 'bad' spirits and after giving birth does not express excessive joy, the child is given a name (*yuure*) simulating the parents' contempt, such as *Kayuure*

[6]For instance, the diviner may interpret an infant's illness in terms of the infant 'demanding its name'. In such a case, the child's *segre* was incorrectly indentified, in response to which the thus insulted ancestor weakened its *siiga*. The parents are advised to give the child its proper name and make a sacrifice to conciliate the ancestor concerned (Bonnet 1988a: 94).

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('without name'), *Zaalem* ('nothing') or *Sagdo* ('rubbish') (Badini 1994: 50). Such disregard for the child, and hence deception of spiritual forces, can also be enacted by giving it a Fulbe name (*Pendo, Sambo, Mariam*) or by symbolically offering it for sale, preferably to a stranger (a Fulbe or a blacksmith, for example). In the latter case, the child is put into fictive captivity, which is again expressed in the name it is given, such as *Gaoore* ('for sale'), *Yamba* ('slave') or *Silmiiyamba* ('Fulbe's slave') (Houis 1963: 73–4, 80; Bonnet 1988a: 96).[7]

Parents unable to conceive or having repeatedly lost a child may also be advised by a diviner to turn to other intermediaries, frequently belonging to population groups perceived as strangers. Indeed, in all population groups one finds individuals who, without necessarily being diviners, are renowned for their capacities to mediate with the spiritual world and who can be called upon to facilitate the propitiation of forces hampering a couple's fecundity. Fulbe intermediaries are especially sought after, since Moose perceive Fulbe as closely interacting with the 'wild' bush (*weoogo*), that is, with those places where *kinkirse* are reputed to reside, and consequently as being in a privileged position to establish favourable relationships with (potential guardian spirits of) children-to-be. Hence, Moose need not necessarily approach Fulbe possessing special abilities to communicate with the other world (a *tii lobere* or 'throw of power', as Moose say, or *baraka* according to Fulbe), but can also turn to ordinary Fulbe to intercede and lure a child to this world. The individual name of the child eventually born will refer to the Fulbe's intercession: *Silmiiga* ('Fulbe'), *Silmiiraoogo* ('Fulbe man'), *Silmiipoko* ('Fulbe woman'), *Birga* ('dung', referring to the place where 'fecundity was asked' – a Fulbe's cattle enclosure, reputed to be inhabited by spirits) (Houis 1963: 45).

In Moose ethnography, the occurrence and meanings of both Fulbe names and Fulbe intercessors (as those to whom a child is symbolically sold, or more sympathetically as those mediating and propitiating spiritual forces) are interpreted in terms of Fulbe's intrinsic otherness. Thus, Bonnet (1988a: 96), by ascertaining that Moose justifiably do not expect spirits to attack a child 'bought' by a Fulbe because social logic applies only to 'their society', implicitly places Fulbe outside that society. Likewise, Houis (1963: 80) argued that Moose parents giving their child a foreign (Fulbe) name symbolically exclude it from their kin group and society. Although boundary crossings are engaged in, what results is a reconfirmation of the innate disconnectedness of Moose and Fulbe societies. My own fieldwork data, however, suggest an alternative interpretation of Fulbe names and Fulbe mediation, pointing rather to ambivalence and interconnectedness.

Or boundaries transcended?

As mentioned above, a diviner sometimes advises a Moose couple unable to conceive or otherwise experiencing a fecundity problem to 'go and ask for

[7]As the first two of these names indicate, most important is probably not whom the child is sold to, but rather the act of selling, that is, the implied 'thing-ifying' of the child. The mother carries her child around the market or village, offering it for sale as if it were any other commodity. Though not actually ceding the child, she may receive small amounts of money, groundnuts or cotton from bystanders (Houis 1963: 78).

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offspring (*rogem*) at the cattle enclosure [of a Fulbe]'.[8] This 'asking for' consists of small, private ceremonies at which modest offerings or sacrifices are made to propitiate spirits, while Fulbe further contribute by imploring Allah's blessing. Importantly, and disregarded in Moose ethnography, Fulbe involvement is not restricted to this moment of providing propitiatory services. Not only is the woman for whom fecundity is implored often advised to use Fulbe utensils, acquire a sheep with specific characteristics, or otherwise symbolically represent Fulbe in her daily life. She is recommended to inform the Fulbe she consulted the moment she becomes pregnant, to go and await delivery in the Fulbe's hut if childbirth proves to be difficult, and, when the child is born, to involve Fulbe in the name-giving ceremony. The mediating Fulbe becomes the guardian of both the Moose couple's fecundity and the child to be born eventually.

Moose parents find it important not only to recognize who is returning to this world (identification of the newborn's *segre*, expressed by its *sondre* or kin group name), but also to express, by giving individual names (*yuya*), certain specificities of the circumstances of pregnancy and birth.[9] Of particular importance is acknowledging the circumstances, forces and persons that made possible the child's coming to begin with. Such acknowledgement can only help to persuade the child – always tempted to return to the other world – to stay in this one. Thus, Fulbe who interceded to make pregnancy and birth possible are involved in the name-giving ceremony, which is also a public acknowledgement of the child's 'origin'. They give the child a Fulbe or Muslim name, or a name referring to the place where spiritual forces were implored (cattle enclosure), and ask Allah to bless the child.[10] Often, if the child 'asked for' is a first-born or first-surviving child after several infants in a row were lost, the same Fulbe participate in the name giving of the couple's subsequent children as well. Thus, instead of expressing a symbolic substitution to deceive malevolent spiritual forces, Moose children's Fulbe names appear here as recognition of Fulbe involvement in bringing new life into a Moose kin group and community, and helping to maintain it thereafter.

Spirits, instead of having to be lured by Fulbe, can also take the initiative in inducing a pregnancy requiring Fulbe involvement. Indeed, *kinkirse* are imagined living in a social world modelled after the human world, characterized by the presence of distinct groups such as blacksmiths, Moose and Fulbe. If a Fulbe *kinkirga* enters – accidentally or out of capriciousness – a Moose woman's womb, it is imperative to recognize the Fulbe 'origin' of the child eventually born, or, as it is usually expressed, that 'the bush where [the child] comes from is Fulbe' ('*kanga*

[8]A couple can be thus referred after a diviner read in the lines of the woman's hand a circle (signifying a gourd's support ring) or a cross (signifying the beater Fulbe women use in milk processing), indicating that a solution to her problem can be found with Fulbe.

[9]For instance, weather circumstances, day of the week, or coincidence with the death of a particular person, with a hunger period, with being at a particular place, with being engaged in a particular activity, et cetera. Individual names may also refer to initiatives taken to induce pregnancy (deception of malevolent spiritual forces, calling upon spirits or persons for assistance) (see Houis 1963).

[10]Fulbe are all Muslim. Among Moose, in contrast, one finds, besides adherents to indigenous religion, Christians (both Catholic and Protestant) as well as Muslims.

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yiitgen Silmiiga'),[11] and to treat it accordingly. Otherwise it risks not feeling at home and deciding to return to the other world. A newborn with certain marks (long and sleek hair, extraordinary light skin colour) may immediately be recognized as 'Fulbe'. More often, however, a diviner ascertains that the *kinkirga* trying to come to this world is Fulbe only after a child has repeatedly 'returned', that is, after a woman has lost several infants in a row. The newborn is then to be named by a Fulbe and to be received in a Fulbe environment reminiscent of its social existence in the other world:

> The Fulbe child is like a lost child following a path you do not follow. If you go one way you encounter Fulbe, if you go the other way you encounter Moose. Now this child that came from a Fulbe bush but that turns up among Moose, becomes a Moose but one must seek the child's origin and follow [the path of] the Fulbe in order for that child to live well. ... We act that way in order to block the roads [to the other world], so that it can go nowhere else [than with us].[12]

Such understandings and practices have implications for shaping and extending the social world in which infants come to be inserted.

SPIRITUAL PARENTHOOD

Informants' explanations, especially of the phenomenon of Moose children with a Fulbe 'origin', were sometimes vague or inconsistent, for instance, regarding whether only the child's *kinkirga* or also its *siiga* should be considered Fulbe. Some maintained that the *segre* (and hence *siiga*) of a child from Moose parents necessarily is Moose, regardless of whether its *kinkirga* is Moose or Fulbe. Others thought that if a child's *kinkirga* is Fulbe, its *siiga* must be Fulbe too, implying that through the child a Fulbe ancestor 'returns'. Still others neatly evaded a definitive answer, maintaining that the *segre* of a child with Fulbe 'origin' in turn must have had a Fulbe 'origin'.[13]

A single shared model clearly does not exist, nor is it my aim to construct one. Rather, I want to focus upon the potential social impact of Fulbe involvement in Moose procreation and the phenomenon of Moose infants' 'Fulbeness' in terms of the expansion of a social group or of sociality – or at least the possibility of imagining such an expansion. Indeed, if infants have agency – if they are not simply incorporated into an existing social group but, because of past existence in the other world and memory thereof which their hosts must acknowledge, participate in shaping the social world in which they are received (see Gottlieb 2004: 60) – a question to address is what kind of social

[11] Alternatively, it is said that 'in the other world s/he was a little Fulbe' (*'ta wenam yiiri wan a yaa Silmii-bila.'*). If Fulbe interceded with spirits to facilitate a Moose woman's pregnancy, the child eventually born is considered to have a Moose *kinkirga*.

[12] Interview with Somyasya Sawadogo, August 2002, Nionranga.

[13] 'Fulbeness' is considered a *buud yelle* ('kin group's problem'). Once penetrated into a kin group, it is likely to reoccur in subsequent generations, similar to, for instance, the birth of albinos (Bonnet 1988a: 26). 'Fulbeness' is thus within a kin group continuously recycled from the other into this world, somewhat similarly to the way ancestors are, which may explain the confusion regarding whether a Moose's *siiga* can be Fulbe or not.

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world Moose children with a Fulbe 'origin', or 'asked for' with Fulbe, help to establish.

In both cases discussed above, Fulbe are invited to name the newborn in acknowledgement either of their involvement in making the child's coming into this world possible or of the child's particular 'origin' (Fulbe *kinkirga*). Thus is achieved a doubling of the parent–child relation and the establishment of what can be called a spiritual parenthood, ensuring the child's renewed birth (Copet-Rougier 1995: iv). Such parenthood is referred to with the terms *bando* and *mando* (relation between child and 'adopted' father or *bayokdega*, and 'adopted' mother or *mayokdega*), the general meaning of which is 'to have another father or mother elsewhere'. The Fulbe name giver is entitled to consider the Moose child his or hers as well, and in many cases regularly visits the child's Moose parents, bringing gifts; likewise, when growing up, the 'adopted' child (*bi gundega*) is entitled to address the Fulbe name giver as 'father' or 'mother' – to consider them as its *bayokdega* and *mayokdega* – and often pays them respect with regular visits and gifts.

Furthermore, if the child born following Fulbe mediation is a girl, involvement of her Fulbe spiritual parents in her engagement and marriage is often considered appropriate, as an act of recognition of the good received. Usually this is limited to the symbolic gesture of 'giving' the girl to her husband (accompanying her into her husband's compound). If a Moose girl has a Fulbe 'origin', such Fulbe involvement is even deemed mandatory. All stages of her marriage must then follow 'Fulbe customs' to ensure its prosperity, that is, its fecundity. With a view to future marriage ceremonies, the girl's mother often seeks to maintain friendship with a Fulbe woman who, later, is to introduce her daughter into her husband's compound. A marriage according to 'Fulbe customs' means not only that the girl is 'given' by a Fulbe (often the girl's spiritual father or a friend of the husband's family) and is accompanied by a Fulbe woman into her husband's compound, but also that Fulbe utensils (gourds, covers, mats) are used during ceremonies and that a Fulbe hut is built in the husband's compound (so that 'the compound becomes like a Fulbe compound'). The newly arrived wife spends the first few weeks in that hut before joining her husband for sexual intercourse, again to increase the chances of a fecund marriage. The Fulbe are involved in the name giving of all children born from such a marriage, and sometimes the mother is taught how to administer enemas by her Fulbe spiritual mother. These children's relation to 'Fulbeness' is similar to that of children 'asked for at the cattle enclosure'.

Badini (1994: 72) stresses the symbolic significance of this 'entering the house' (*kinyiiri*), a ceremony that consecrates not only marriage itself but also the 'integration of the adult in the social group', the Fulbe's participation thus signifying integration in a group comprising Fulbe. However, such matters as the use of Fulbe and Fulbe utensils in ceremonies and the giving of Fulbe names should not be misinterpreted as Moose 'turning into' Fulbe or 'incorporation' of Fulbe into a Moose community. Marriages involving Fulbe and their 'customs' still are Moose marriages (no dowry payments are made, for example), and the women concerned will live a Moose woman's life. These practices rather signify Moose–Fulbe entanglements, resulting not in incorporation of Fulbe but in extension of sociality.

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While at the age of about three a child is considered sufficiently attached to this world not to be easily lured back to the other world, the above suggests that women later on in their lives still must reckon with their 'origin' in the spirit world – notably at their marriage, to secure its fecundity. Such reckoning extends beyond marriage ceremonies as such, women of 'Fulbe origin' being advised to surround themselves with Fulbe stuff at least as long as they are of childbearing age. As one elderly woman of Fulbe 'origin' maintained: 'Would I have the means, my house, all things I use, would have been Fulbe. But, thank God, I'm past the age of having children now'.[14]

Also, a woman's Fulbe 'origin' may reveal itself only in the course of her engagement and wedding, for instance, through illnesses or nightmares from which she may suffer. A diviner is to be consulted to uncover 'the path to follow',[15] which is to redo the engagement ceremony 'the Fulbe way': the future husband's kinsmen are to 're-close the hole' (*tombok-yèdbo*), that is, cancel the initial *tomboko*[16] by symbolically closing the hole in which gifts for the in-laws had been presented, and re-enact the ceremony using a white tissue and a calabash cover when collecting the husband's kin's gifts. Likewise, if a marriage remains barren, a wife's previously unrecognized Fulbe 'origin' may be identified as cause. She then is obliged to find herself Fulbe 'parents', who are to give her a Fulbe name and with whom she is to stay, wearing Fulbe clothes and doing Fulbe women's work (milk the cows, cook) – 'so that she becomes these Fulbe's daughter'. Afterwards, this *bagren paga* ('wife [returned] from the cattle enclosure') is accompanied back to her husband by her Fulbe 'mother' who brings along a calabash, a mat and other Fulbe utensils.

Men of Fulbe 'origin' also reckon with their 'Fulbeness' later on in their lives, to ensure the fecundity not so much of their marriage but rather of whatever they undertake – that is, to avert misfortune (in farming, trade, migration, et cetera), ill health and the like. Reckoning with one's Fulbe 'origin' is even said to be a lifelong affair. As one man explained:

> To perfect my life, I constructed a 'mosque' (*misri*)[17] and when I have a child I call upon Fulbe to give it a name, again to accommodate my Fulbe 'origin'. As long as I live, my children will not do anything that might compromise my 'origin'. [...] As long as I live, I want them to respect what I am.[18]

[14]Interview with Mariam Sawadogo, July 2002, Nionranga.

[15]The signification of 'the path to follow' is double here: the path in terms of practical action to remove illness or discomfort, and the path the woman is to follow throughout her life.

[16]Ceremony at which a husband's sister's son presents the husband's kin's gifts to future in-laws.

[17]Such 'mosques' (prayer cycles outside compounds where Fulbe and Muslims passing by or paying a visit can pray) seem to aim at capturing Muslims' *baraka*. Note that, even when a man's 'origin' is not Fulbe, he can be advised to draw Fulbe into his life to secure health, good fortune, and other gifts for himself and his family, and even to convert to Islam. Interestingly, Skinner (1958: 1118) observed that '[many] Mossi converted to Islam in order to fulfil the prescriptions of pagan shamans, who linked conversion with the acquisition of children'.

[18]Interview with Yooro Sawadogo, July 2002, Nionranga. Note that in this case Fulbe are involved in name giving not firstly to retain newborns in this world, but rather to accommodate their father's 'origin'. Other things men of Fulbe 'origin' can do to 'perfect their lives' are, for instance, to wear Fulbe cloths, to buy white sheep and even to convert to Islam.

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Hence, even if children progressively root in this world, entanglement with the other world is never completely dissolved and continues affecting life and personhood well beyond infancy. Moreover, when a person's Fulbe 'origin' is disclosed only later on in life (for a woman notably at marriage or afterwards when her marriage remains barren), personhood is abruptly altered, entailing a transformation of relations both with forces in the other world and with people in this one.[19]

The existence of persons of Fulbe 'origin', and to a somewhat lesser extent of persons 'asked for with Fulbe', is dual – even doubly dual (this world/other world, Moose/Fulbe) – rather than either/or well beyond infancy. That an individual's destiny should remain linked to its 'origin' – that is, to the workings of the forces (*kinkirse, segre*) that made his or her coming into this world possible to begin with – follows from Moose cosmology. Indeed, if, at conception, a *kinkirga* enters a woman's womb, its twin *kinkirga* remains in the other world, so that each person always is the seat of a *kinkirga* and simultaneously has a twin *kinkirga* in the other world. The latter is like a guardian spirit, accompanying and influencing a person throughout life; by taking its desires into account, by propitiating it, good fortune and success can be activated and misfortune averted.[20] Therefore, a person's 'destiny' is, far from being fatal, quite malleable. Especially for persons of Fulbe 'origin', such propitiation is an almost continuous concern, taking the shape of the creation of a Fulbe environment and the establishment of spiritual parenthood.

In other words, identifying who a newborn was in the other world, and the mediators that facilitated its coming into this world, enables Moose parents, and later on the individual child, to gain a sense of control of events. The future is made predictable, to some extent even controllable, and events to confront in life are not entirely random (see Stafford 2007: 59). These efforts to make the future predictable and controllable are closely related to the construction and maintenance of personhood, achieved in interaction with the other world and 'contingent upon creating ties with others in a social field' (Conklin and Morgan 1996: 660, 666–7). In the Moose case, these others comprise ancestors, *kinkirse* and living humans. As observed by Conklin and Morgan (*ibid.*: 671): 'The human body [in the Moose case understood as originating from a *kinkirga* and an ancestor's *siiga*] instantiates the social interactions that engender and maintain it.' Thus situated in relation to other beings, personhood becomes synonymous with enacting and recreating social, often kin-related roles, which in the case of Fulbe-related personhood comprise spiritual parenthood (see *ibid*: 667).

[19]This dynamic concept of personhood contrasts sharply with Euro-American ideas according to which personhood is ascribed by non-social factors, and therefore 'cannot be readily rescinded, attenuated or truncated by social action. Western persons, once established, are not easily undone' (Conklin and Morgan 1996: 665–6).

[20]Likewise, a person's *siiga* is considered his or her double, constituting not only a life force, but also the other world's presence in life (Bonnet 1988a: 34–5). A child is bestowed by its *segre* with certain qualities, which do not materialize automatically but are shaped by education. Identifying a child's *segre* thus implies knowing the qualities to be developed (Badini 1994: 83).

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ACCOMMODATING 'FULBENESS', CONTESTING MOOSE 'IDENTITY'?

Pregnancy and infancy – 'when personhood is imminent but not assured' – are times 'when people ponder change and continuity, integration and disintegration, and the intercession of spiritual or superhuman powers' (Conklin and Morgan 1996: 657), times also when the newcomer is anticipated as 'a future partner in sociality' and, in turn, sociality is imagined as a precondition of the new creature's becoming a full member of a community (James 2000: 184–7). At stake in this interactive process is not only the detection of a being that can respond in a way signalling the presence of a potential 'partner in human reciprocity' (*ibid.*), but also the discovery of the boundaries of the social space within which this reciprocity can be imagined.

Hence, an infant asserting itself as having a Fulbe 'origin' or deigning to make the step to this world only after a Fulbe mediator enticed it to do so, communicates its wish to be inserted in a network or community comprising Fulbe, and is thus encouraged to 'foster social commitments where otherwise none would exist' (Conklin and Morgan 1996: 673). Every birth of a Moose child, then, constitutes an occasion for reconsidering, and actually opening up and expanding, the taken-for-granted social universe.[21] Moose parents reckon with the circumstances of a newborn's coming into this world and attempt to establish who it was in the other world. Thus, the infant's 'origin', or as the Moose say its 'root' (*njegre*), is uncovered. Sometimes, then, not a root, but a rhizome is unveiled, directing infant and parents to the Fulbe 'other': to block the infant's path back to the other world, a path must reach out enabling relatedness with Fulbe and making possible an existence which is *both* Moose and Fulbe (starkly contrasting with dominant notions of being either Moose or Fulbe). Acknowledging the child's 'Fulbeness', its belonging to Fulbe, safeguards its belonging to the Moose family in which it is born:

> [Such a child's] *segre*, as it is he who came, as it is he who made it come with the Moose, makes that it is a little Moose. The Fulbe things we do, we do them because it is a little Fulbe (*Silmii-bila*). If you don't observe these Fulbe customs, it will return, but if you do observe them, it will not die and stay in good health.[22]

The idea that Moose personhood is contingent upon creating ties with others in a social field is conveyed by the saying that 'every name has its path', meaning that acknowledgement of circumstances and forces that facilitated one's coming into this world is to be continued throughout one's life in at least certain of one's actions and relations. It thus follows that beliefs and practices regarding Moose's 'Fulbeness' provide Moose with an incentive to engage in sustained relationships with Fulbe in order to perfect the environment in which 'Fulbeness' is accommodated.

[21] As explained above, such reconsideration can also occur later on in an individual's life, with the resurfacing of uncertainty regarding one's 'origin' in the other world and how one continues to be related to that other world.

[22] Interview with Somyasya Sawadogo, August 2002, Nionranga.

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The number of 'Fulbeness' cases I encountered was quite high. I came across them in all wards and villages where my fieldwork brought me. In the ward where I conducted my most intensive fieldwork, five out of twelve compounds had at least one member of 'Fulbe origin' or 'asked for with Fulbe'. Yet the extent to which Moose encountering 'Fulbeness' in themselves, their child or their spouse actually activated the potential of relationships thus created varied. Some emphasized that the gift received from Fulbe who mediated in bringing new life in a Moose family can only be compensated by another life in return, that is, a wife to marry. If the child born is a girl, her Moose father may then promise her to her Fulbe 'father', who then is entitled to find her a husband. Such insertion of Fulbe in Moose marriage exchange networks is more likely to occur if both men are already tied by friendship (*zoodo*). Since marriage between Moose and Fulbe is rare, the Fulbe generally 'passes' the girl to a(nother) Moose friend (*zoa*) of his. The result is a kind of tripartite alliance, involving regular visits, gift giving, and mutual services, with the girl's husband considering both her Moose parents and her Fulbe spiritual parents as in-laws. As observed by a Moose, whose brother was given by his Fulbe friend a girl born thanks to this friend's intercession:

> My brother and his wife must be grateful to [the Fulbe] throughout their life, go and visit him at feasts, bring him gifts. He rendered them an unforgettable service. . . . Lately, when he returned from Côte d'Ivoire, my brother went to see [his Fulbe friend] to offer clothes and some money. Likewise, the Fulbe and his wife cannot forget my brother and his wife [as long as] they receive from them.[23]

Alternatively, a Fulbe spiritual father of a Moose girl is eligible for courting by a Moose young man seeking a *bayokdega* (and a girl to marry).[24] In the *bando* relationship thus established, the Fulbe *bayokdega* disposes of a girl to give later on to his 'adoptive' son in recognition of the good done to him over the years. Hence, a Fulbe, who gave his Moose friend the hand of a Moose girl whose birth he had facilitated, observed: 'In the past and until the present day, what can really tie Moose and Fulbe, is when Moose have problems having children and their diviner tells them to go and see a Fulbe to solve it'.[25] Still others suggested that relations, established following Fulbe's mediation in solving Moose's fecundity problems, contributed to amicable settlement of disputes:

> At first, the children my mother gave birth to each time died. It was only after she 'asked for fecundity' at the Fulbe's enclosure, that her children survived. The first two, both girls, were named Koumba and Dicko, the third, a boy, Yooro. I was the fourth and named Sambo. All my mother's children were named by Fulbe. . . . Today, [even]

[23]Interview with Tegre Sawadogo, May 2002, Nionranga.

[24]Young Moose men – and to a lesser extent women – seek to establish *bando* or *mando* with respected Moose elders, so as to benefit at some point in their life from the gift of a daughter to marry. *Bando* and *mando*, and efforts undertaken to establish them, are much appreciated and evaluated in extremely positive moral terms; for instance: '*Bayokdega* means "searching what is good" [*somd baobo*]'; '*Bando* contributes to the development and the growth of the family. . . . [It] is conducive to unity and esteem between two kin groups.'

[25]Interview with Amadou Barry, June 2002, Kolade.

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> when there is some misunderstanding [crops damaged by cattle] … I cannot but forgive … [because of] what they did for us in the beginning.[26]

But the outcome is not always an extension of sociality. Both Moose and Fulbe informants insisted that while certain Moose show appreciation for Fulbe's assistance, others don't and 'continue dealing with Fulbe in the same hostile way as before'.[27] Although the latter group also arrange for the newborns concerned to be named by a Fulbe, these children are afterwards not necessarily addressed or known by that name. Indeed, Moose children are usually given several individual names, which are not all publicly declared (see also Houis 1963: 12). Some parents prefer not to acknowledge openly that they called upon Fulbe to solve a fecundity problem. They avoid enunciating the child's Fulbe name, and if the child is a girl, are unlikely to give her hand to the Fulbe benefactor. They are not forthcoming about the issue and merely insist that accommodating their child's 'Fulbeness' requires creating a Fulbe environment by means of Fulbe stuff bought in the marketplace, but not the regular enacting of spiritual parenthood. Although acknowledging the need for Fulbe involvement in key phases of life (pregnancy, birth, marriage), they keep it as low-key as possible and organize it with the help of neighbours or kinsmen who do entertain friendly and sustained relations with Fulbe.

> Last year, the earth priest's son, Noaga, came to see my son, telling him he wanted to see me because he needed my help with the construction of a hut at his marriage.[28] … I told my son to tell Noaga to come and see me in person. He didn't come, and when I went to build the hut, I found only Noaga and his son to assist. But since he had told my son that a diviner advised him to build the hut and that he wanted us to help him because of our co-habitation, I helped him. … Until this day, Noaga never came to inform me that his wife gave birth. I noticed one morning, when I visited Somyasya [Ouseni's Moose friend], that others congratulated Noaga. After he left, Somyasya told me that his wife had given birth. It would have been good had he informed us, so that we could have given the child a name. It is easy to come and ask us a service, but much harder to come back and inform us.[29]

While Fulbe involvement in Moose procreative issues can be explained in terms of Moose cosmology (*kinkirse* going astray) and/or cultural perceptions of Fulbe (as living in the 'wild' bush and therefore well-situated to mediate with other-worldly forces), the divergent ways in which this intrusive 'Fulbeness' is given a sequel obviously cannot. They require looking beyond fecundity concerns into issues of livelihood and socio-economic change, and into the nature of the Moose–Fulbe cultural boundary. Moose public discourse constructs this boundary as an impermeable barrier, stressing Moose's 'identity' as millet farmers in contrast with Fulbe's being essentially cattle herdsmen and epitomized by the metaphor of a Fulbe's house destroying a Moose's house when cattle enter

[26]Interview with Sambo Sawadogo, August 2002, Nionranga.
[27]Interview with Fulbe diviner, January 2002, Kaya.
[28]Noaga's wife was of Fulbe 'origin', and therefore to be accompanied by a Fulbe into her husband's compound.
[29]Interview with Ouseni Barry, July 2002, Kolade.

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a millet field. Although such discourse allows for coexistence, alternatively peaceful and mutually beneficial (for instance, during the dry season, when Fulbe's cattle graze crop residues and manure Moose's fields) and hostile and conflicting (for instance, during the rainy season, when cattle continuously threaten standing crops), each – Moose and Fulbe – is imagined as incarcerated in an occupation assigned by one's proper culture. For a Moose to keep himself or entrust cattle to Fulbe goes counter to 'what one finds at birth' (*rogem mika*). In other words, having cattle – and by extension relations with Fulbe mediated by cattle entrustment – is publicly declared and staged as conflicting with 'being Moose' (Breusers 1999: 363–6).

It is common knowledge, however, that Moose can own cattle and increasingly do so – and then entrust the larger part to Fulbe herdsmen. The discourse publicly adhered to thus covers up a twofold process occurring in Moose communities: on the one hand, a shift from an interest solely or mainly in crop cultivation to a combined stake in crop cultivation and livestock, and, on the other hand, ongoing differential accumulation of cattle reflecting unequal success in migration enterprises. Consequently, certainties proclaimed in public discourse mask uncertainties – fuelled by cattle entrustment practices – as to who is right and wrong in conflicts seemingly opposing Moose and Fulbe, and as to what constitutes a Moose's proper occupation (*ibid.*: 377).

One way to interpret the divergent ways in which Moose deal with 'Fulbeness' in procreation, then, is in terms of a debate about the nature and 'location' of the Moose community's boundary and implicitly about what is a proper occupation for a member of such a community. People *can* invoke ideas about 'how persons are constituted to legitimize their actions and position themselves in relation to others' (see Conklin and Morgan 1996: 658), but don't necessarily *do* so. Indeed, while Moose generally agree that a child 'asked for with Fulbe' or of Fulbe 'origin' must be given a Fulbe name and received in an environment comprising Fulbe objects, there is no consensus as to whether tying up the infant's 'path' with Fulbe necessitates a regular performance of spiritual parenthood. It is mainly Moose owners of (substantial) cattle wealth who emphasize the necessity of extending sociality with Fulbe beyond Fulbe's punctual involvement in name giving and marriage ceremonies. In contrast, those possessing no or few cattle, like Noaga in the case above, refrain from performing sustained, friendly relations with Fulbe benefactors.[30]

Public discourse puts up a barrier between Moose and Fulbe, notably in terms of mutually exclusive livelihoods, which hampers Moose–Fulbe interaction – a problem especially for Moose who possess cattle and (want to) entrust them to Fulbe. Neither their cattle nor their relationship with Fulbe should exist, but nevertheless are there, subverting the public discourse of opposed identities and separateness. Beliefs and practices concerning Fulbe involvement in procreation and shaping Moose personhood, however, suggest permeability of the cultural

[30]Of the above-mentioned five compounds that have at least one member of 'Fulbe origin' or 'asked for with Fulbe', three had cattle entrusted with neighbouring Fulbe with whom they also entertained sustained social relations. Note furthermore that Fulbe involved in accommodating Moose's 'Fulbeness' were various, although in each ward Moose dealt preferentially with one or two Fulbe families. These Fulbe had cattle owned by Moose entrusted in their herds.

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boundary between Moose and Fulbe, and invoking them legitimizes sociality with Fulbe. They shed doubt on where the boundary is to be maintained, and thus provide a way out of the splits wealthy Moose find themselves in between 'being Moose' and 'owning and entrusting cattle'. The spiritual parenthood these procreation beliefs and practices entail builds relations of trust in which cattle entrustment practices can be embedded.

Hence, the notion of a Fulbe-related personhood among Moose constitutes a potential argument in a social controversy on agro-pastoralization of livelihoods accompanied by differential cattle accumulation, which certain (wealthy) Moose seize to legitimize their actions (visits, reciprocal gift giving, et cetera) and to position themselves in relation to Fulbe (in terms of spiritual parenthood and friendship) (see Conklin and Morgan 1996: 658). This corroborates Jackson and Karp's contention that 'people actively [use notions of personhood] in constructing and reconstructing a world which adjusts values and goals inherited from the past to the problems and exigencies which comprise their social existence in the here and now' (quoted in *ibid.*: 658–9). Notions of procreation, and especially the idea of capricious *kinkirse* as a constituent of personhood, contain the potential to accommodate real-world processes, that is, they can be 'socially manipulated' (Loizos and Heady 1999: 14), serving different purposes depending on actors' positions and interests.

The cultural boundary between Moose and Fulbe is thus shown to be discontinuous and incomplete, and – from Moose perspectives – plural and interested. Instead of imprisoning, it creates 'the motivation for relationships with what lies beyond' (Bashkow 2004: 450), and provides wealthier Moose with an opportunity to situate the experience of cattle ownership and entrustment. Such an interpretation also fits my informants' claim that the frequency of births of Moose children with a Fulbe 'origin' is on the rise.[31] The alleged tendency of Fulbe *kinkirse* to stray into Moose women's wombs more often than they used to is paralleled by an agro-pastoralization of livelihoods and a growing need for relationships in which to embed cattle entrustment.

CONCLUSION

Beliefs and practices regarding Moose's 'Fulbeness' reside in what Bashkow (2004: 450) calls the 'zone of the foreign'. Moose's experience of Fulbe's involvement in conception, pregnancy and infancy is organized and given meaning by preconceived, culture-internal notions of Fulbe as different, the paradoxical result being the integration of 'Fulbeness' within Moose cultural perspectives (see *ibid.*). Indeed, because Moose perceive Fulbe, in contrast to themselves, as living in close interaction with the bush and its creatures, Fulbe are called upon to intercede in solving fecundity problems, and because Moose

[31]This claim is difficult to verify. One might analyse genealogies for Fulbe names' prevalence from one generation to another. However, it will be hard to distinguish children of Fulbe 'origin' from children 'asked for'. Moreover, the possibility that in the past Fulbe names signified in the first place a symbolic devaluing of the child, corresponding to a greater social distance between Moose and Fulbe, cannot be excluded.

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perceive Fulbe as following a path intrinsically different from their own, children born from a Fulbe *kinkirga* are received in a distinct Fulbe environment. As argued by Bashkow (2004: 451), 'the very opposition which defines a boundary serves as a conceptual conduit by which the other gets smuggled into the world of the self'.

The flexibility and capacity for accommodation intrinsic to this 'zone of the foreign' coalesces with the uncertainty inherent in procreation and with understandings of personhood as a dynamic social category (acquired progressively and to be actively maintained), thus providing fertile ground for cultural contingency, creativity and contestation. Procreation beliefs and practices permit imagining a social world including Fulbe. They imply that the impermeable barrier between Moose and Fulbe posited by public discourse cannot be strictly upheld in one domain (procreation), and thus permit a challenge to its necessary maintenance in another (livelihood). Especially among Moose cattle owners there is a need for relatedness with Fulbe in which cattle entrustment can be embedded. To them, encountering 'Fulbeness' in pregnancy, infancy, and/or at marriage offers an opportunity to circumvent the prescriptions of public discourse, and to establish and actually perform spiritual parenthood relations with Fulbe. Such spiritual parenthood, which may entail exchanges of daughters and the creation of tripartite alliances, allows for an extension of sociality (mutual visits, gift-giving) that legitimizes and embeds cattle entrustment.[32]

Thus we find confirmation of Bashkow's contention that cultural boundaries, understood as plural and interested, are not only used in exclusivist ways, but 'can be drawn and used for positive purposes ... [enabling] people to criticize what is unsatisfactory in a prevailing cultural order, by pointing to the plausibility of better alternatives' (2004: 454). The alleged increased frequency of intrusion of 'Fulbeness' in Moose's procreation, paralleled by agro-pastoralization and a growing need for relationships in which to embed cattle entrustment, suggests that these notions of 'Fulbeness' constitute a sublimated critique of a cultural order founded on Moose–Fulbe separateness. In this critique, Moose–Fulbe difference is recast so that it facilitates rather than hampers cultural and social interaction.

However, the ideas and practices here discussed imply an extension of sociality *without* incorporation, as results, for instance, when kinship is created through marriage or when 'strangers' are assimilated into a group through adoption. Indeed, to overcome the separateness of Moose and Fulbe societies conveyed by most of the region's ethnography and historiography, one must avoid substituting it with ideas of incorporation or embeddedness that imagine a place for a specific Fulbe entity within a larger, more encompassing Moose whole, or vice versa. Understanding Moose–Fulbe relations requires an 'anthropology of entanglement' (Callon 1998: 40), allowing us to apprehend Moose and Fulbe cultures as entangled and constituted in relation to one another, as 'a product of a shared historical process that differentiates the world as it connects it' (Gupta and

[32]Conversely, such extension of sociality interests Fulbe too. They know very well that spiritual parenthood makes them privileged candidates for entrustment of cattle owned by their spiritual kinsmen. Not only are these entrusted cattle crucial to their livelihood security, but the relationship in which the entrustment is embedded also provides them with a feeling of belonging to Moose communities, which is vital in a region where they are a minority.

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Ferguson 1992: 16).[33] Paraphrasing Maurer (2005: 40–1), what is needed is an approach that starts with considering Moose and Fulbe as part of a single social field, instead of two – as densely interconnected and constituted as separate entities only by their very interconnection.

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[33]This may be a social field, as in the Moose–Fulbe case, in which people '"know that they share" but the metalanguage providing their actions with a description of what they are doing may not jibe at all with that of the people with whom they share' (Maurer 2005: 60–1). Hence, that Fulbe – not believing in ancestors 'returning', nor in a role for spirits – reject Moose's procreation beliefs does not stop them from assisting Moose in solving fecundity problems, if only to receive Allah's benediction for helping another human being. Conversely, Moose call upon Fulbe's assistance even though being aware of Fulbe's divergent beliefs. According to Moose, Fulbe children of Moose 'origin' do exist, but go unnoticed since Fulbe simply do not bother to find out about their children's 'origin'. Nevertheless, the existence of another world inhabited by spirits (*gotedji* in Fulfulde, *kinkirse* in Moore), a hidden reality making itself felt in everyday life, which human beings can act upon through magical manipulation, is a denominator common to Moose and Fulbe world-views and may be all that is needed for mutual implication.

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ABSTRACT

Given the observed agro-pastoralization of livelihoods of both Moose 'farmers' and Fulbe 'herdsmen', interactions between both groups living in Burkina Faso's north-central region are usually interpreted in terms of vanishing symbiosis and

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increasing tension along ethnic lines. There is, however, a remainder to this equation, namely the cattle Moose entrust to Fulbe. This article looks into Fulbe involvement in solving Moose fecundity problems to elucidate the nature of the relationships in which cattle entrustment is embedded. It is argued that Moose ideas about the other world and its intervention in procreation and constituting personhood allow imagining an extension of Moose societal relations beyond conventional community boundaries, that is, including Fulbe. This extension can be subsequently – but not necessarily – effectuated through the establishment and performance of spiritual kinship in which cattle owned by Moose can be embedded. The divergent extent to which sustained Moose–Fulbe relations result is explained in terms of social controversy regarding agro-pastoralization of livelihoods accompanied by differential cattle accumulation.

Au vu de l'agropastoralisation observée des moyens de subsistance des cultivateurs mossi et des éleveurs foulbé, on interprète généralement les interactions entre ces deux groupes de la région du Centre Nord du Burkina Faso en termes de symbiose évanescente et de tension croissante sur des lignes ethniques. Il y a cependant un autre élément dans cette équation, à savoir le bétail que les Mossi confient aux Foulbé. Cet article s'intéresse à la part que jouent les Foulbé dans la résolution des problèmes de fécondité que rencontrent les Mossi, pour élucider la nature des rapports dans lequel s'inscrit l'acte de confier du bétail. Il soutient que les idées qu'entretiennent les Mossi sur l'autre monde et son intervention dans la procréation et la constitution de la personne permettent d'imaginer un prolongement des relations sociétales mossi au-delà des frontières communautaires conventionnelles, qui inclurait les Foulbé. Ce prolongement peut ensuite, mais pas nécessairement, se réaliser à travers l'établissement et l'exercice d'une parenté spirituelle dans laquelle peut s'inscrire le bétail appartenant aux Mossi. La mesure divergente dans laquelle il s'en traduit des relations Mossi–Foulbé soutenues s'explique en termes de controverse sociale concernant l'agropastoralisation des moyens de subsistance, à laquelle s'ajoute l'accumulation différentielle de bétail.

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