Resistance, Representation and Third Space in Shimshal Village, Northern Pakistan[1]

David Butz

Department of Geography, Brock University, St. Catharines ON L2R 2G8
Tel: 905 688-5550, Fax: 905 688-6369, E-mail:dbmarley@brocku.ca

Abstract This paper examines how inhabitants of Shimshal, a small mountain community in northern Pakistan, resist their subordination in two realms of interaction with outsiders: (a) as porters for Western tourists, and (b) as animal herders whose pastures have been placed within the boundaries of a limited-use national park. I describe a shift in emphasis from mainly material forms of everyday resistance, to resistances aimed at negating the discourses that legitimise Shimshalis' continued subordination in these realms. I argue that community members' efforts to involve non-locals in their representational struggles effectively reconstitute some of the physical terrain of those struggles – specifically trekking trails and pastures – as third spaces, provisionally beyond dualistic understandings of porter/trekker, global/local, and self/other. The paper concludes by considering the hybridity implicit in this form of resistance; specifically, that to move beyond a dualistic understanding of self/other is to practice the hybridization of self.

Introduction

The concept of resistance has recently received renewed interest in the social sciences as a way to understand certain types of agency among members of subordinate groups (e.g. Haynes & Prakash 1991; Manzo 1992; Miller, Rowlands & Tilley 1989; Price 1998; Scott 1985, 1990). Geographers are contributing to this revival by theorising the spatiality of relations of domination and resistance (e.g. Pile & Keith 1997; Sharp, Routledge, Philo & Paddison 2000). An important dimension of these recent examinations has been the effort to describe how the material and discursive aspects of

domination and resistance relate; that is, to use the notion of resistance to understand subjectivity as well as agency among subordinate populations. Much of the conceptual context for this effort comes from postcolonial analyses of subaltern subjectivities (e.g. Bhabha 1983, 1984, 1985; O'Hanlon 1988; Spivak 1985, 1999).

My purpose here is to contribute empirically and theoretically to understanding the relationship between material and discursive dimensions of resistance by examining a recent shift in emphasis in how some men in Shimshal, a mountain village in northern Pakistan, respond to their domination by outsiders; a shift from mainly material forms of everyday resistance, to resistances aimed at negating the discourses that legitimise their continued subordination. I focus in particular on the ways Shimshalis are dealing with what they identify as two of the most important sites of oppression they face: first, their position as porters – load carriers – within a growing adventure tourism economy; and second, their position as livestock herders on 2700 square kilometres of territory, about two-thirds of which has been designated an IUCN Category II National Park (a designation which prohibits local uses except for purposes of conservation). I argue that the spatiality of Shimshalis' resistances is important at each of these sites; specifically, that in both cases Shimshalis are attempting provisionally to turn dualistic spaces of confrontation into what may be described as third spaces beyond dualisms (Pile 1994).

The paper is divided into two main sections. These describe portering and responses to external conservation initiatives, respectively. The first section begins by summarising the material and representational dimensions of Shimshali men's subordination in the realm of portering labour relations. I then describe how porters' time-honoured practices of everyday resistance (Scott 1990) in the material realm (e.g. feigned ignorance, theft, sabotage) have the long-term effect of strengthening the discourses that legitimise the most oppressive aspects of the labour relationship; an effect which the current generation of porters recognises, and is attempting to alter by practicing resistances which disrupt the representations underwriting porters' material subordination. My argument that Shimshali porters are attempting deliberately to manipulate the representations that foreign visitors use to describe and position them builds from a conceptualisation of potentially resistant subjects as fully constituted in and through their field of domination, but having access to knowledges that do not originate in that field of domination. I therefore outline this understanding of the subaltern subject before describing the ways porters interact with foreign tourists along the trail. I then argue that these interactions effectively reconstitute the spaces of the trail as a third space of off-kilter resistance, which porters utilise to introduce some ambiguities into the naturalised and dualistic identities of the parties in the labour relation.

Porters' efforts to disrupt the ways they are represented are tactical, informal, and unsanctioned by community elites. Some Shimshalis are also involved in more strategic, formal and collective efforts to intervene in their representation by powerful outsiders. The paper's second main section describes the formation of the Shimshal Nature Trust by a group of elite men in Shimshal as a way deliberately to intervene in developmentalist discourses that represent Shimshalis as unable to look after their natural environment properly, and in so doing to oppose the management plan of the Khunjerab National Park. I argue that the community is attempting to use the trust as a medium for presenting their own version of a discourse of environmental sustainability and entitlement to a global audience, in the hope of implicating that audience into Shimshal's struggles for limited autonomy. In so doing, they are provisionally reconstituting Shimshal territory –

previously a dualistic space of confrontation between Shimshal and proponents of the park – as a third space beyond the local/global dualism. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the hybridity that these cases suggest is inherent in the practice of resistance, and the implications of that hybridity for the relationship between resistance and subjectivity.

The Off-Kilter Resistances of Shimshali Porters

Porters and Trekkers

Shimshal is a farming and herding village of about 110 extended households, located two days' walk from the Karakoram Highway in the Karakoram mountains of northern Pakistan (figure 1). Portering is Shimshal's most important source of cash income, earning the community $20,000 to $30,000 US a year (Butz 1995). The majority of Shimshali men below middle age are eager to porter, but none would describe portering as their primary occupation. Shimshal has about a dozen career guides, but no career porters. The men who porter most are in their late teens to early forties, and from large households with surplus male labour; a disproportionate number are English-speaking college students, home for the summer and separated to some extent from their households' agricultural routines. Young men from poor households are no more likely to porter than their wealthier counterparts; virtually all households provide portering labour at least occasionally. However, only in the most impoverished circumstances does the senior man in a household – the household head – work as a porter. Similarly, senior village figures – teachers, other salary earners, village organisation leaders, religious leaders – seldom porter, although they do sometimes work as guides; despite the popularity of portering as a way to earn money, it carries a certain stigma associated with the indignity of carrying others' burdens for payment. In contrast to other parts of the Himalaya, Karakoram villagers do not normally pay each other to carry loads (i.e. there is little commercial portering) (Malville 1996; Seddon 1979). Thus, in Shimshal the activity of portering is not constructed discursively as an occupation; nor is it associated with a particular category or 'class' of household. It differs in this way from portering in India and Nepal, where it has become more strongly associated, sometimes as an occupation, with specific ethnic or class groups (Adams 1996; Dixit 1995; Malville 1996; Ortner 1999; Seddon 1979). To the extent that portering in Shimshal is a stigmatised occupation, and the majority of porters are young, junior household members, their resistances tend to be tactical rather than strategic, and are seldom formally sanctioned by village elites or household elders.

The trekkers that porters work for in Shimshal are mainly white, well-educated, middle-aged, middle-class men and women from North America, Western Europe, and Japan. Of the approximately100 foreign tourists that pass through the village each summer about 80% are members of agency-organized treks, traveling in groups of up to a dozen for periods of two to three weeks. The remainder are split about evenly between hard-core trekkers/climbers (staying from two to four weeks) and low-budget independent backpackers (staying from four to ten days). Shimshali porters speak well of most tourists and claim to like and respect them as individuals and as representatives of their "nations."

Figure 1. Shimshal Territory in Northern Pakistan.

Interactions between these two main parties to the labour relationship occur at the road-head where porters are hired and dismissed, on the trail, at camping spots, and in the village. Trekking groups usually travel with a non-Shimshali Pakistani guide, and often also with a foreign guide. In these cases interactions between trekkers and porters at the first three of these sites are monitored by guides, who often strive to prohibit porters from speaking with tourists. All initial agreements about payment are mediated by guides, often on behalf of a trekking agency, and often without the participation of trekkers; porters usually try to involve tourists in subsequent renegotiations of payment. Interaction at the fourth site – the village – is mediated by village elders who relieve their worries about the impressions porters are giving of the community by regulating porters' interactions with tourists. Pakistan's Ministry of Tourism also mediates the labour relationship to an extent, by stipulating a maximum wage, standard weights and stage lengths, rest days, equipment entitlements and rations. However, as very few tourists are aware of the details of these regulations, and as the government enforces them indifferently, agency guides ignore them to the extent they can; that is one of the main reasons guides dislike porters talking to tourists. It is important to understand that the oppressive dimensions of the labour relationship against which Shimshali porters resist are often enforced by guides, government regulations and village leaders more than by tourists, although they are enforced, ostensibly at least, on behalf of tourists.

Portering as an Oppresive Labour Relation

The men who carry luggage for trekkers and mountaineers in northern Pakistan are participants in a highly oppressive set of labour relations, the material details of which are described elsewhere (Adams 1996; Butz 1995; Dixit 1995; MacDonald 1998; MacDonald & Butz 1998; Ortner,1999; Rockel 1995; Seddon 1979). As load carriers who receive orders from many without giving orders to anyone, whose pay filters through several sets of hands before reaching them, and whose conditions of employment are virtually unregulated in practical terms, they are susceptible to numerous forms of coercion, fraud and ill-treatment internal to the way the labour relationship is structured. This oppressive situation is exacerbated by the Government of Pakistan's policy of stipulating a *maximum* porter wage, and by the fact that in villages along trekking routes many more men are available to porter than there are loads to carry.

Porters' subordinate position in the realm of material labour relations is legitimised through discourses of subservience, which portray them as an essential labouring class; at once bestial and naturally servile, and also greedy, recalcitrant and unpredictable, and therefore in need of constant surveillance and correction (MacDonald 1998; MacDonald & Butz 1998). Variations on Schomberg's colonial-era assessment of his Shimshali porters still circulate prominently in climbing and trekking circles: "As animals, or even men they were splendid. They were agile, tireless, and extremely helpful whenever they chose, but as they failed to co-operate with us unless it suited them, our journeys were long and exhausting wrangles" (1936, 13; for contemporary examples from throughout the Karakoram, see King 1998; Murphy 1977; Rashid 1995; Shaw & Shaw 1993). These discourses provide an integral ideological foundation for the material and institutional dimensions of the labour relationship.

Despite an acute awareness of the many oppressive aspects of working as a porter, many young village men in northern Pakistan are pushed into seeking portering employment by lack of alternative employment opportunities, and pulled by the prospect of quick – if unreliable – earnings. Avoiding portering labour altogether is not a realistic option for most village households, and so young men who do get hired as porters consider themselves in some ways fortunate, and are forced to struggle from within to avoid the most oppressive aspects of the job. The most concrete evidence that porters experience their labour as oppressive are the myriad acts of everyday resistance they practice routinely – and despite the associated risks – to wring less labour, and more money and control out of the portering encounter. In one of the few published analyses of porter resistance, MacDonald (1998) identifies acts of feigned ignorance, silence and refusal to understand, sickness and accident, task bargaining, theft, sabotage, work stoppage, and desertion as the most common practices of resistance to the forms of domination exercised on porters in Pakistan. My work in Shimshal reveals an almost identical set of time-honoured practices.

These acts of everyday resistance are problematic for Shimshali porters. They are often effective, in the short term, in gaining porters a slower pace, a lighter load, slightly higher wages, and a bit more control, but they also provide legitimation for those discourses that represent Shimshali porters as a naturalised inferior labouring class. Because Shimshalis have practiced these forms of everyday resistance a little more militantly – and perhaps less skillfully – than porters elsewhere in northern Pakistan, they have a strong reputation for greed and recalcitrance, with the result that trekking

companies are reluctant to take groups to Shimshal. Porters have become increasingly aware that their acts of everyday resistance are feeding the representations that legitimise the particularly oppressive nature of portering relations. A sense is emerging among porters that the small material gains gleaned from practices of everyday resistance are outweighed by the damage these acts do to Shimshalis' prospects of increasing their access to portering opportunities and being treated fairly when they are employed. This awareness originates largely in Shimshal's first generation of literate youth – many of whom work as porters – who are, for the first time, reading in English what is written about porters. Many Shimshali men have become preoccupied with issues of representation, particularly with the practical problem of resisting the oppressive nature of portering in ways that do some material good without nourishing the ideological basis of porters' subordination.

The ensuing discussion within Shimshal is very exciting, but it also presents some problems for theorising resistant subaltern subjectivities. Before I can develop an analysis of the specific forms of resistance that are emerging among Shimshal porters I need to theorise the sort of subjectivity – the potential for resistant agency – I wish to attribute to this subaltern population situated within this particular field of domination.

Theorising Resistant Subjectivities

Given the stark conditions of domination in which Pakistan's trekking porters are entwined, and the oppositional practices with which they confront these conditions, a useful place to begin is with Scott's (1985, 292 & 293) well-known insistence that to expect resistance always to be "(a) organised, systematic, and cooperative, (b) principled or selfless, (c) [having] revolutionary ideas, and (d) [embodying] ideas or intentions that negate the basis of domination itself" is to "fundamentally misconstrue the very basis of economic and political struggle conducted daily by subordinate classes... in repressive settings." Scott develops an alternative conceptualisation of everyday resistance – anonymous, disguised, opportunistic, cautious, compromised, often unorganised, micro-practices – which he argues are more productive, safer, and potentially as oppositional as the grander gestures more commonly accepted as 'legitimate' resistance. I think Scott's model of everyday resistance provides too unsubtle a basis for imagining the sort of resistant subaltern subjectivity that characterises Shimshali porters.

Mitchell (1990) demonstrates that Scott relies on an understanding of domination as purely coercive, a force acting on the bodies, the outward behaviours, of the peasants he studies, while their minds remain free, unpersuaded by hegemonic arguments. He suggests that Scott can only maintain this coerced body/unpersuaded mind dichotomy by assuming

> the notion of a subjectivity or selfhood that pre-exists and is maintained against an objective material world, and a corresponding conception of... a power that [merely] coerces and places *limits* on people's options, rather than... [a power that works] ...through *creating* truths and subjects and sites of apparent autonomy (Mitchell 1990, 562, 564).

Rosalind O'Hanlon develops a parallel critique of the Subaltern School historians, who, she suggests, weaken their "assault upon western historicism" by readmitting "the classic figure of western humanism – the self-originating, self-determining individual ... through the back door in the form of the subaltern himself [*sic*]" (O'Hanlon 1988, 191).

While I am persuaded that it is important to recognise, and legitimise, certain subaltern practices as resistance, this surely needs to be done without relying on the figure of an autonomous subject who operates against, but outside, the field of domination. Neither, I think, can we rely on a belief in practices or spaces of resistance that are not also practices or spaces of accommodation to power. Foucault expresses this concisely, in the well-known dictum that "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978, 95). This is not to say, however, that discourses of resistance or subaltern subjectivities are "only a reaction or rebound... that is, in the end, always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat" (Foucault 1978, 96). Rather, Foucault is optimistic that "there must always be points of insubordination at which it is possible not to escape power *per se*, but to escape the particular strategy of power relation that directs one's conduct" (Simons 1995, 85).

Bhabha is more specific, but also more pessimistic, about the potential for a resistant subaltern subject position. He begins from the position that colonial power is never possessed entirely by the coloniser, because of an ambivalence that lies at the root of the West's approach to subaltern 'otherness.' This ambivalence is characterised by a will to produce "the colonised as a fixed reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (Bhabha 1983, 199). Accordingly, "colonial discourse [and power] does not merely represent the other, ... so much as simultaneously project and disavow [the others'] difference ... the coloniser's mastery is always asserted, but is also always slipping, ceaselessly displaced, never complete" (Young 1990, 143). *Mimicry* is a process that emerges in the context of this ambivalence, producing in the Native a partial representation – a mimicry – of the coloniser, similar but distorted. While this mimicry is reassuring to the coloniser in some respects, it is also threatening and disorienting, because it implies a loss of control for the coloniser, and introduces "inevitable processes of counter-domination produced by a miming of the very operation of domination" (Young 1990, 148). The value of Bhabha's concept of mimicry, for my purposes, is that it articulates more precisely than does Foucault a site for disruptive practices, without locating that site outside the field of domination within which the subaltern subject has been constituted, but it does so somewhat grudgingly, without crediting colonised subjects with active forms of resistance.

Through the later concept of *hybridity* Bhabha allows a stronger sense of agency into his formulation of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. He suggests that colonial power produces hybridised subjectivities, through which "other 'denied' knowledges enter the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority" (Bhabha 1985, 156). Hybridity can thus be used by the colonised to become a "strategic reversal of the process of domination" (Bhabha 1985, 154); it transforms colonial discourse into something that disrupts what colonisers intended, by tactically inserting repressed knowledges into colonial discourses.

Parry (1987) criticises Bhabha for limiting the subaltern subject to agency predicated on mere reaction to colonial domination, thus obliterating "the role of the native as historical subject and combatant, [as the] possessor of an-other knowledge and producer of alternative traditions" (Loomba 1991, 170), that may not have anything to do with colonial domination. While Parry willingly acknowledges Bhabha's success in showing how "the scenario written by colonialism is given a performance by the native that estranges and undermines the colonialist script" (Parry 1987, 42), she nevertheless

maintains faith with the anti-colonialist hope that the subaltern has some access to the pre-colonial past, from which "a native contest initially enunciated in the invaders' language, culminates in a rejection of imperialism's signifying system" (Parry 1987, 45). Loomba (1991) suggests that this dichotomy between Bhabha's hybridised colonial subject, and Parry's native combatant cannot be supported empirically. Her own examination of colonial and anti-colonial institutions in India allows her to posit a hybridity that "draws upon indigenous traditions" and is thus "not entirely dependent upon the contradictions of colonial authority" (Loomba 1991, 172).

It is this conception of the potentially resistant subject that I employ: a subject fully constituted in and through the field of colonial domination, but a subject that has access to knowledges that do not originate in that field of domination, although they are invariably interpreted and experienced through it. A subject who is *transcultural*, as well as colonial or postcolonial. But I also want to go a step farther, to suggest that a self-conscious awareness of hybridity – of transculturation – allows some Shimshali porters to exploit the ambivalence Bhabha speaks of in unexpected ways.

Power and Resistance among Shimshali Porters

In attempting to solve the practical problem of resisting the oppressive nature of portering without playing into ideologies that justify their subordination, many Shimshali porters I know have settled on the tactic of enlisting trekkers as active co-conspirators, by attempting to sell practices of resistance as a struggle for 'authenticity' in which trekkers can participate, in opposition to guides, tour companies, and their own material interests. Authenticity – native or tourist – is a much problematised notion (Butz & MacDonald 2001; Cohen 1994; Griffiths 1994; MacCannell 1973; Urry 1990). Here I am using 'authentic' in Habermas' sense, to denote an ideal state of being, or site of enunciation, which one experiences as sincere, non-contrived, and non-coerced (Habermas 1984). For example, porters who speak some English will often pass time on the trail by telling trekkers stories of Shimshal's history; stories that hint at an authentic, autochthonous past which is contrasted to the hybridised present, and which introduce trekkers to knowledges whose origins predate the field of colonial domination. Trekkers are thus initiated into a vision of potential authenticity, forcibly denied by outsiders like themselves (Lele 1993, 68). They are also told in some detail of how threats to this authenticity have been resisted, and of the precedents for everyday resistance in indigenous history. The candour with which porters reveal this gives trekkers a taste of the authenticity they may desire. Later, when they are victimised by the same forms of everyday resistance, they may be thrilled – or ashamed – to recognise and experience subaltern authenticity more fully.

I do not think this should be understood as just a complicated and perverse tactic to make trekkers more vulnerable, or to reduce the risk of punishment, although it may reduce the likelihood that misdemeanours will be reported to officials. Rather, I think this is a strategy focused on the longer term; an attempt to exert some control over the discursive representation of everyday practices of resistance, to clearly identify these practices as resistance and not Oriental dissolution, and to provide trekkers with a sense of their own complicity in the reproduction of a set of oppressive labour relations. Shimshali porters seem willing to sacrifice some of the short-term benefits of disguised resistance, in order to gain this larger discursive ground. Shimshalis' strategy reveals a group of people who are highly conscious of the ambivalence of their subaltern subjectivities; people who

are aware that they are fully colonised by the field of domination in which they are situated, and who develop a politics of oppositional practice accordingly.

In Shimshal, a critique of imperial forms of domination is accompanied by a self-critique of what they have become within this field of domination. Remnants of pre-imperial knowledges and practices are sufficient to remind Shimshalis of their current mimicking subjectivities, but also sufficient to unbalance that mimicry; to introduce a self-conscious ambivalence into Shimshali subaltern subjectivities. Moreover, Shimshali porters are aware of the disorienting benefits of their ambivalent, hybrid subject positioning; aware that it disrupts trekkers' ability stably to fix an authentic native, or an authentic travel experience (i.e. one which gives tourists access to 'native authenticity'), and aware that the western employers of porters are often disturbed that Shimshalis seem to be neither fish nor fowl, neither identifiably same nor sufficiently different to be accepted as authentically 'other.' Shimshali porters rely heavily on this disruption and disorientation to create spaces for safely and productively practicing resistances to the oppressions of portering labour.

The outward manifestations of porters' hybrid subjectivities – that is, their ambivalent relation to the ambivalent western trekkers who employ them – can have the most disorienting effects on trekkers if encounters are individualised and personalised, if mediation by guides, trekking agencies, and community elders, is minimal. This – along with the lack of a discourse of portering as occupation – helps to explain why porter unions or formal porter organisations have had little success in northern Pakistan. But, it also marks the extent to which porters are trapped in a field of imperial discourse which naturalises orientalist tropes of an individualised and personalised relationship between a dependent native servant, and a disciplining and providing western master. Shimshalis' discursive context constrains their ability to imagine an alternative way of configuring an oppositional relationship with western visitors. Despite the innovativeness with which Shimshali porters have dealt with their growing awareness of the importance of representation, they have not been able to resist from outside the field of domination in which they are constituted.

But this most recent move by some Shimshalis indicates more than just a mimicry that disorients by its imperfection. Rather it suggests an attempt to disrupt imperial discourse by engaging productively with the shared subject-constituting experience of imperial ambivalence; an act, perhaps, of overcoming otherness by implicating the other in practices and discourses of resistance. The way Shimshalis attempt, in practice, to do this, is highly spatial. In order to explain its spatiality I have to introduce the notion of third space.

Resistance as Third Space

It was Bhabha – again – who gave us, embedded in his larger discussion of hybridity, a vague link between resistance and a concept of third space: "The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (1990, 211). Third space is "that productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness" (1990, 209). Pile (1994) builds from Bhabha to imagine third space as an epistemological terrain for interrogating those foundational dualisms which he thinks underpin the social constitution and policing of rigidly bounded cultural identities (e.g.

man/woman, rational/irrational, white/non-white). Still understanding third space in a largely, although not entirely, metaphorical sense, Pile suggests that this space is "continually fragmented, fractured, incomplete, uncertain, and the site of struggles for meaning and representation" (1994, 273). He uses the concept heuristically to illuminate the "grounds of dissimilarity" on which dualisms are constructed, and to demonstrate that there are spaces beyond dualisms (Pile 1994, 273; see also Law 1997, 109). The third space is thus "a location for knowledge" (Law 1997, 109), which identifies the "social construction of dualisms as part of the problem" by "recognising places beyond the grounds of dissimilarity... collectively named the third space" (Pile 1994, 264; see also Law 1997, 109). So, third spaces are places beyond the grounds of dissimilarity; places where dualisms are elaborated and broken down.

My objective in Shimshal is to describe actual third spaces, the characteristics of which allow fixed identities – of spaces or human subjects – based on normalising dualisms, to be challenged. And I want to assert boldly what remains largely implied in Pile and Bhabha: that the deliberate construction of third spaces is a strategy particularly amenable to the circumstances of the radically disempowered – those condemned by their location in a field of power to struggle, not to win definitively, but simply to fight another day. If the third space is a space of "ambivalence and not fixity of the construction of identity," continually "fragmented, fractured, incomplete, uncertain" (Law 1997, 110 & 109), then it is also perhaps a space commensurate with what Foucault would call agonism, and which he describes as a lifestyle of continuous and opportunistic resistance, focused on chances to exploit the ambiguities of power, to disrupt dualisms, to "pursue games of power ... played with a minimum of domination" (Simons 1995, 86). This suggests that the characteristics of actual third spaces may be most amenable to what we might term off-kilter, rather than directly oppositional, forms of resistance: those which are directed at an angle to specific exercises of power (see Butz & Ripmeester 1999). The ambiguous nature of third spaces may allow resistance to construct or utilise discursive terrain beyond dualisms. At the same time, however, I think a third space sensibility can allow the radically disempowered discursively to reconstruct actual spaces in ways that allow them to engage more productively in directly oppositional resistance.

Portering: The Third Space of Off-Kilter Resistance

The practice of the various modalities of oppression which constitute portering labour is embedded in and constituted through the long and winding space of the trail, specifically, where porters carry trekkers and their loads across streams, where they bring trekkers hot tea at the end of a long climb, where they abandon their own travellers' shelters to trekkers weary of sleeping in tents, where they assemble as supplicants hoping to be hired, where they line up to be paid, where they carry 25 kg loads (plus their own gear) all day across difficult terrain. The space of the trail is a third space – a space which has long been both local and global – as well as a liminal space between the local and the global, the inside and the outside, the indigenous and the metropolitan. Neither the trekker in search of an authentic experience, nor the villager reliant on portering income, desires to constitute this trail as either purely local or purely global space. But, imposed on this space beyond one set of dualisms, is a highly dualistic labour relation, which in various ways constructs one party as brown, beast, servant, ahistorical, natural and the other as white, beast-master, master, historical, cultural.

In practice, what Shimshali porters are doing is engaging in tactics to utilise the third space of the trail to introduce some ambiguities into the fixed, naturalised, and dualistic identities of the parties in the labour relation. Specifically, as I outlined earlier, English-speaking porters engage trekkers in conversations which emphasise the community's subordinate position within a contemporary set of global and regional interactions, which enumerate Shimshal's unfortunate experience of a history of colonial exploration in the region, and which link the tourists' own histories and activities with these ostensibly time/space-distanciated processes. Some trekkers at least, are unnerved to discover that their own histories of colonising are Shimshal's history of being colonised, and that these histories are being recreated before their eyes, and with their complicity, in the liminal space of the trail. Crueller still, they find they cannot do anything about it; they are simply unable to carry all their own baggage or make their own tea, and porters insist on carrying them across streams and providing a hundred other small services which imprint the legacy of colonial exploration on the trekking experience and on the third space of the trail. And in any case, what would be gained by denying Shimshalis the opportunity to earn money from providing these services? Porters clearly do not want that either. What is going on here, I think, is off-kilter resistance which directly opposes nothing, but which nevertheless exploits the ambiguities and opportunities of an actual third space, in order to insinuate two opposing, naturalised identities into a common discourse ... and more than that, which spoils the little pleasures that trekkers get from the social enactment of these opposite, yet complementary, naturalised identities.

Community Resistance in Third Space

Shimshal Nature Trust – Khunjerab National Park

In the early summer of 1997 I returned to Shimshal after an absence of two years. A day or two after my arrival I was met by a delegation of educated and traditional elites, who immediately asked me to help them frame a set of formal guidelines for the internal and autonomous stewardship of their 2700 km^2 territory. Over the course of the summer these guidelines expanded into the Shimshal Nature Trust (SNT). I was assigned the limited task of collating community members' various ambitions for the trust into a draft document, in English, that would describe and justify the trust to non-Shimshalis, as well as define a set of operating principles and procedures for villagers. I was also encouraged to put the document on the World Wide Web for global consumption, and arrange the production of hard copies for Shimshalis to distribute to relevant institutions and individuals throughout the Northern Areas (http://www.BrockU.CA/geography/people/dbutz/shimshal.html). My task was not an unproblematic act of translation and dissemination. As I attempted coherently to articulate a diverse and complicated set of hopes, plans and initiatives, I found myself drawn into a set of intense negotiations over the purpose of the trust, how it should work, and why it was necessary.

I soon learned that the Shimshalis I was working with understood the embryonic Shimshal Nature Trust as a risky last-ditch effort to reconstitute and formalise two decades of informal resistances to interventions by environmental/developmental agencies into the way the community uses its environment. Previously, Shimshalis had resisted these external interventions with the time-honoured strategies of disrupting information-gathering procedures, disobeying administrative regulations, ignoring agency advice,

blocking passage into the community, and by employing sundry other less dramatic and mainly material tactics of everyday resistance (Scott 1990). Discussions during the summer of 1997, and the resulting document, reflect – once again – Shimshalis' growing awareness that their struggles for continued autonomy must be waged on both material and representational fronts. And once again, it was Shimshal's young educated elite – the first generation with literacy in English – who read with incredulity that agency intervention into the environmental practices of Shimshalis and their neighbours are justified by the consistent portrayal of these villagers as incapable stewards of their ecological environment, guided – or rather *mis*guided – solely by short-term instrumental motivations (see Butz 1998).

The Shimshal Nature Trust was conceived, from the first preliminary discussions, primarily as an assertion and demonstration that the dominant representational tropes are erroneous, and the interventions ill-conceived. Thus, the purpose of the trust is mainly representational. It articulates a 'subjugated knowledge' that opposes, and is intended to destabilise, the dominant discourse of Shimshalis as incapable stewards of their environment. The material implications of initiatives proposed in the trust are secondary to their representational purpose. As the document states:

> as we are already practising sound nature stewardship, many of our indigenous customs need only be formalised, perhaps somewhat more regulated, and articulated in a way that resonates with the larger Pakistani and international ecological movement. Our largest challenge is not to develop a system of utilising the natural surroundings sustainably, but rather to express our indigenous stewardship practices in language that will garner the financial, technical and political support of the international community, and that will persuade Pakistani authorities that we are indeed capable of protecting our own natural surroundings (Shimshal Nature Trust 1999, 4).

Accordingly, the document begins with a brief history of the community which stresses the symbolic importance of the landscape to Shimshalis (i.e. the extent to which community history, identity, and landscape are inseparable). It then asserts forcefully that Shimshalis are careful, prudent and knowledgeable stewards of their environment, before outlining at length, and in deliberate mimicry of developmentalist writing, the many policies and practices the community employs to ensure their lands are treated appropriately. The document emphasises throughout that the Shimshal Nature Trust is the community's response to invasive and inappropriate interventions by outside agencies, mainly those associated with the establishment, in 1975, of Khunjerab National Park (KNP).

The Shimshal Nature Trust was initially the brainchild of Shimshal's small group of young educated elites: teachers, university students, and salary earners living outside the community. It took several years and many community meetings to convince Shimshal's traditional leaders formally to support the Trust, and thus give it the authority formally to represent the community. In addition to involving long debates over the utility of replacing direct material forms of resistance with the Trust's variety of representational resistance, the process also played out as a struggle between traditional and modern/educated forms of authority, and between a present and future generation of formal community leaders. Currently its activities are managed by a Board of Directors

comprised mainly of traditional village elders, which is advised by a Task Force consisting of most of the Trust's originators. Thus, in addition to its significance as a form of resistance, the Shimshal Nature Trust is also important for integrating the interests of two types and generations of elites in the community. Many Shimshalis, including all women and most men who are not formally-educated or elder members of influential households, have had little direct involvement in the formation of the Trust or the way it represents the community. I think it is correct to say, however, that the great majority of Shimshalis support at least the overall goals of the Shimshal Nature Trust, because of the ubiquitous importance of the community's pastures.

The community is united in its resistance to *any* interventions by the KNP, because of the threat its management plan poses to Shimshal's extensive pastoral economy. According to a survey conducted in 1995, the community herds about 4500 goats, 2500 sheep, 1000 yaks, 400 cattle, and 30 donkeys in some three dozen individual pastures, including three large and highly productive alpine areas (Shimshal Environmental Education Programme 1995). After portering, the sale of livestock, cheese, and wool is the community's largest source of cash income, earning about $20,000 US a year (Butz 1995). The pastures, and pastoral practices, are also important repositories of meaning for Shimshalis; they are central "symbolic resources" in that they are understood, for example, as places for spiritual renewal, sites for important celebrations, repositories of history, and definitive of the Shimshali character (Butz 1996). The KNP, created in 1975 to protect the habitats of rare species of Asian mountain wildlife, was designated an International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Category II park, defined as including "one or several ecosystems not materially altered by human use" which visitors may be allowed to enter "under special conditions for inspirational, educative, cultural and recreative uses" (IUCN 1985, in Nelson 1987, 294). The park's 2300 square kilometre area has been interpreted by administrators to include most of Shimshal's pastoral territory, so that were the management plan successfully enforced it would devastate Shimshal's herding economy (figure 2; see Knudsen 1999 for a detailed discussion of the management of Khunjerab National Park).

Globalisation

The attempted imposition of KNP restrictions on Shimshali territory and villagers is a text-book example of the unfortunate local effects of a careless globalisation of environmentalism and sustainability discourses. In other words, we can see here how western technocratic discourses of environmentalism and sustainability are used to solve the problems that distance creates for "establishing and maintaining power relations" over space (Allen 1997, 65). What I find more interesting is the way Shimshalis are attempting to disrupt the globalising flow of power represented by organisations like IUCN – and the nationalising agenda of the government of Pakistan – by using the very resources of globalisation to solve some of the problems that distance creates for establishing and maintaining *resistance* over space. To state it simply, Shimshalis are attempting to utilise global media technology to present their own version of a discourse of environmental sustainability and entitlement, to a global audience, in the hope of implicating sympathetic parties at a variety of scales into their own struggle for limited autonomy. I think this has interesting implications for understanding the changing ways that Shimshalis are tactically and discursively using the space of resistance; not some metaphorical site or terrain of resistance, but the actual piece of territory that IUCN and others want to be global space,

and Shimshalis have struggled to keep local space. By advertising their struggle outside the region Shimshalis are deliberately involving non-locals in the way they care for their territory. In their attempts to prevent their territory from becoming definitively global, and beyond their control, Shimshalis are relinquishing their struggle to maintain it as purely local space, and are rather discursively reconstituting their territory as a third space of resistance.

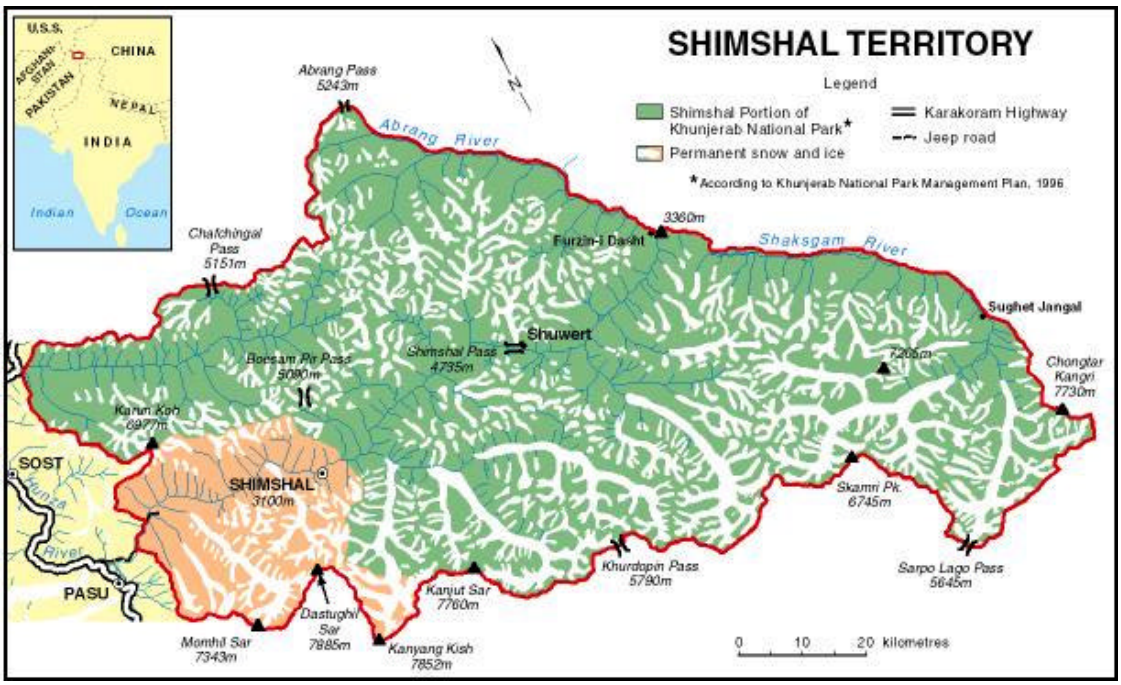

Figure 2. Area in Shimshal Territory claimed by Khunjerab National Park

The Third Space of Direct Confrontation

If the trail into Shimshal is an ambiguous space, accepted by all parties as both local and global, a space perhaps of off-kilter resistance, then the territory upstream from Shimshal, ostensibly within the boundaries of the park, has been until recently represented as something quite different. The international organisations involved in creating and managing the park treat the territory in question as definitively global space, and by imposing the international regulations of a Category II Park, they are rejecting any possibility that the territory can remain local space. The Pakistani state, in underwriting the park agenda, is also constructing much of Shimshal territory as global space. It is apparent, however, that the state's main interests are in positioning Pakistan more respectably within a larger global space, and in constructing Shimshal as national space. For Shimshalis the territory in question has been unequivocally local space, and their uncompromising opposition to the park indicates that they have been unwilling to imagine it as anything else. We have here, I think, a case of quite direct oppositional resistance – not at all off-kilter. An initial dualism is clear: non-local space/local space. But in legitimising their position, each party has constructed an additional stark dualism. For the

international environmental organisations, their identity as the rational caretakers of an environmentally-sustainable future, in opposition to their identification of Shimshalis as irrational, militant, and radically-backward hunters and grazers, justified their reconstruction of Shimshal territory as global space. For Shimshalis their identity as the historically-sanctioned stewards of a meaningful landscape, in opposition to their identification of park management as technocratic agents of the Pakistani state, justified their insistence that the territory remain local space.

For a long time it seemed inevitable that the Pakistani state – the only party with significant direct repressive power – would use the dualism between sustainability and backwardness to expedite and subsidise the nationalising of local space. With these odds Shimshalis could only lose the global space/local space struggle. What I think the Shimshal Nature Trust does is begin the process of reconstituting the territory in question as third space, space beyond the local/global dualism. At the same time, it begins the process of reconstituting Shimshalis as subjects beyond the sustainability/backwardness dualism. And it does this in several ways:

1. By appropriating the language and format of environmental sustainability to describe its own initiatives;
2. By utilising a more sophisticated and contemporary language than park personnel can muster, a language which constructs Shimshali culture and environmental stewardship as part of the sustainable future;
3. By representing Shimshalis as subjects whose identity transcends the sustainability/backward dualism, to become, in their document, the cosmopolitan indigenes;
4. By representing the territory in question as global space which must be recognised as somewhat autonomous local space in order for its global purpose to be realised;
5. By using global telecommunications to avoid the mediating influence of the Pakistani state on the message Shimshalis want to convey; and
6. By attempting to engage a global audience as co-conspirators in Shimshal's efforts to salvage a sustainable and locally-meaningful future from a cynical and rapacious state.

We see here the construction of third space as a discursive move by the radically disempowered, to disrupt a dualism that could only work to their disadvantage within an existing field of power. What this move does, however, is relinquish for now the hope of winning the war, in order to go on fighting more battles. This is not a final rejection of dualisms, but rather a strategic realignment which opportunistically rejects one dualism in favour of a dualism which Shimshalis understand as more productive for their purposes. Shimshalis are trying to confuse the dualism between local and global space, and local and global identities, in order to set them in an uneasy alignment in opposition to national space and national identity. I think we get a glimpse here at how Shimshalis are attempting to disrupt a globalising flow of power by using the resources of globalisation to solve some of the problems that distance creates for establishing and maintaining resistance over space. This offers hope for the potential to appropriate processes of globalisation in support of resistance. And it may be working. The Government of Pakistan seems to have abandoned ambitions to enforce the KNP Management Plan in Shimshal territory, although that has much to do with a global move towards an ideal of

community-based conservation management (see Knudsen 1999, for a description of this shift in northern Pakistan). Moreover, the Shimshal Nature Trust is gaining some notoriety as a local example of sound community-based conservation.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by returning to the relationship between practices of resistance and the constitution of subjectivity under domination. In this paper I have discussed a program of tactical, informal, off-kilter resistance, and one of strategic, formal and directly confrontational resistance. Both of these have evolved to incorporate a more representationally-oriented mode of operation and a changing spatiality – the expression of a third-space sensibility. In both cases Shimshalis have imagined parts of their territory as being spaces beyond the dualisms emplaced in those spaces. This is a move both of resistance and hybridity. In fact, the hybridity inherent in resistance has been an implicit theme throughout the paper. Porters' tactical efforts to engage tourists beyond the dualistic nature of the labor relationship inevitably concedes something to tourists' existing understandings – which are the dominant understandings – and to their claims to Shimhali space. Similarly, the Shimshal Nature Trust concedes much to Western technocratic understandings of – and claims to – endangered space/Shimshali space. In both cases Shimshalis have changed their understanding of themselves in the direction of their oppressors.

In the previous section I suggested that Shimshalis were not engaged in a final rejection of dualisms – which would involve a move of almost incredible (and perhaps reckless) *self*-confidence – but rather a realignment in favor of more useful dualisms. If this is correct, I think it hints at several things. First, it helps describe some of the necessary opportunism of everyday resistance; the necessity or willingness to negotiate with power (de Certeau 1984; Scott 1985, 1990). Second, because this realignment of dualisms constitutes a changing spatiality, it may suggest that third space only exists fleetingly, in its contingent practice. Third, it may encourage us to conceptualise resistance as a hybridising practice that nevertheless rejects the assimilation of self. I argue above that Shimshalis recognize this hybridising characteristic of their responses to subordination, and that they attempt actively to employ their own constitution as hybrid subjects in a field of global domination in their struggle to maintain themselves as selves for themselves. This is an effort to constitute themselves beyond a particular dualistic alignment of self/other, but not, of course, to reject all limits to self. This practice of hybridity – this accommodation in resistance – may be, paradoxically, what is necessary to reach a space beyond the ontological silence of subalterity.

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