

## CONCLUSION

### *The Market Has No Memory*

**A**t the beginning of 2007, I returned to Tadrar to gauge what changes had taken place since 2004, when this book was begun. I knew Mohammed Lukstaf was dead (his wife, Aisha, had cried with me over it in 2004), but now Aisha was dead, too. Fatima Id Baj was again left with only boys in her household; her baby girl, Sumaiya, had died. Venerable Mohammed Ali was dead, and two of his sons returned from the city to claim their inheritance. One of them married a village girl and the three of them set up a new joint household. One of my favorite older ladies (also named Fatima, another Id Baj) had died, as well as other older people I knew less well; numerous children had moved away to the city looking for work, moved to other villages to marry, or moved in to Tadrar from other villages to take up life in a new *takat*. By January of 2007, at least twenty members of village households were living and working in the city (out of a total village population of less than two hundred people). Thirteen households had solar power—nearly half of all households in Tadrar—and twelve had televisions along with either satellite dishes or video disk players. Nearly all households had piped water by 2007. The village seemed to me in the throes of rapid change. Some of this seemed epochal (a shift in the basic arrangements of production) and some (the movement of bodies into this life and out of it) depressingly typical.

Abdurrahman's household had changed more than most. He had already secured funding from the government to open his tourist hostel in 2004, and the new construction was mostly of cement, with a real functioning bathroom and even a shower, albeit with no hot water. Abdurrahman had solar power with a few electric lights, a television, a satellite dish, and a video disk player. But the most important changes to Abdurrahman's household in 2007 did not involve buildings and televisions.

On December 31, 2006, we were celebrating *tafaska*, the feast of the sacrifice, where the head of each *takat* slaughters a ram to commemorate Abraham's willingness to sacrifice a son for God. In Tadrar wealthier households keep the sacrificial ram inside the house for months or even a whole year, feeding it well and treating it more like a member of the family than a farm animal. This is what Abdurrahman had been doing.

When the day arrived, having finished the outdoor communal prayers, we stopped to make a donation at the mosque. Abdurrahman and I then filed back to his home to meet the women and children. I was surprised to see my friend bring out two animals for slaughter, not one. Abdurrahman's oldest son, Mohammed, readied the animals for the ritual, but I now discovered that the next two oldest sons were not absent simply because they were working in the city. They had moved permanently—and independently—to Marrakech just after my previous visit in 2004. The two boys had severed their ties to their father and formed their own household.

It seems that my intuition in 2004 was correct: Abdurrahman's second son, Lahcen, and his wife, Zahra, planned and implemented secession. The couple managed this by convincing Lahcen's next youngest brother, Hussein (Abdurrahman's third son), to marry one of Zahra's sisters, Saida, and the two couples joined together to liberate themselves from their village households and strike out on their own. By spring of 2007, Zahra had given birth to a son, and the new urban household was solidified. Lahcen and Zahra, and Hussein and Saida, had achieved the dream of all young villagers: an independent household, with their own children. They managed this long before their parents passed on and left them productive fields and the rights to water. They achieved the archetypal rural dream not through patient endurance of long-term village dynamics, but in the tumult of the city through the wage labor economy.

Abdurrahman related all this with a heavy heart. I suspect part of the sadness originated in his seriously diminished income—the wages of two sons were now permanently subtracted from the household budget—but there was more to it than material interest. Abdurrahman somberly told me how he had carefully raised the rams for sacrifice, then gone down to *souk* to telephone his sons with the surprise, to tell them they could pick up one of the animals to take back to the city. The sons, he said, decided it would be too much trouble. "We'll buy a sheep here in Marrakech," they told him over the phone, "it's easier." Telling the story, Abdurrahman said "easier" almost as a whisper, his eyes damp and trained on the distance.

A sheep purchased in the market has not been raised in the house, has not been vested with the familial aura that renders its slaughter so poignant a comment on one's obligations to God. But the sons were severing their household ties and they wanted to do it emphatically, with the blood of their own ram sealing their own covenant with God. The boys were making it clear that they were now heads of a household, and they would provide their own sheep, their own way. This does not mean they abandoned their family, only their household. The boys evince no less emotional attachment to their parents or siblings than they ever did, and Abdurrahman and his wife do visit their sons in the city. But economically two of Abdurrahman's sons now manage an independent *takat*; their wives have a hearth of their own.

Abdurrahman had long benefited from the wage labor economy, probably more than any other patriarch in the village. He had been sending sons out for wages since the oldest, Mohammed, had been capable of work, and when he brought Mohammed back he continued to send out the younger boys. The remunerated wages from the capitalist economy had facilitated Abdurrahman's rise in village politics; it had freed his time, eased his ability to provide hospitality, and helped him rise to be "a little big." By 2007 he had also tasted the bitterness of opportunity, the cruel atomization that nourishes the global economy.

Clearly life in Tadrar is based on the household—an institution that is much more than a cluster of rational actors. The bad news about this is that eminent scholars agree that economic understandings of the household are limited at best. Amartya Sen, winner of a Nobel Prize in economics, writes that "inequality inside the household is one of resource-use and of the transformation of the used resources into capability to function, and neither class of information is well captured by *any devised notion* of 'income distribution' within the family" (1992, 122–23, emphasis added). While the focus on "resource use" may be more apposite for non-agricultural, non-subsistence-oriented households, the basic idea that within households people have motivations that cannot be reduced to self-interest confounds Liberal economic theory at its core. Deidre McCloskey (also an economist, and a neo-Liberal one) puts the issue in broader perspective, writing, "Suppose a big part of the economy—say the household—is, as the economists put it, 'distorted' (e.g., suppose people in households do things for love: you can see that the economists have a somewhat peculiar idea of 'distortion'). Then it follows rigorously (that is to say, mathematically) that free trade in *other* sectors

(e.g., manufacturing) will *not* be the best thing. In fact it can make the average person worse off than restricted, protected, tariffed trade would” (2002, 17, emphasis in the original).

In Tadrar households are not “a big part” of the economy, *they are the primary unit of production*. Households are not just where people eat and the thing people spend their wages on; households are the way rural people organize productive labor in the first place. Thus, without taking up the “free trade” part of McCloskey’s argument, we can still say that because the economy of Tadrar is based in and on households, economic theories devised to understand globalization writ large are of little use in understanding village-level dynamics. And since villages are where globalization is happening (i.e., villagers are on the productive frontier of capitalist expansion), it would seem we have few theoretical tools in conventional economics to understand why or how the capitalist system expands into places like the High Atlas. The awkward truth is that since economics takes itself as the discipline best positioned to explain to the rest of us how the capitalist economy works, and since expansion is key to how capitalism works, and since capitalism expands precisely in places like Tadrar that are organized through households, and since economists admittedly have little idea how household economies work, we are handicapped in understanding what is arguably the single most significant dynamic in our contemporary social world.

The issue is not, I should add, whether villagers exhibit “rational” economic behavior or perform “utility maximization.” All people “maximize” in the sense that they choose between options. Time flows one way and we each must decide which path to walk down, or someone must choose for us. Anthropological attempts to deny this aspect of Liberal economics have failed miserably because it is an argument against tautology. Much of what has been called the substantivist/formalist debate has foundered exactly here.

Substantivists believe that different economic systems are substantively different from one another, with different goals and values and modes of organizing. Not everyone in all societies is looking to profit at the expense of others, they argue, people have different values. Formalists counter that everyone everywhere is choosing *something*, is looking to maximize something even if it is honor, the size of their yams, or their chances of pleasing God. Since people choose, say Formalists, their choices can be formally modeled using conventional economic tools, such as utility maximization curves. The two sides speak past one another, as others have pointed out (Donham 1985).

The central problem is that if people act to get what they want, and we define what they want as what they have self-evidently acted to get, it is hard to say much about “maximizing” other than it is thoroughly inevitable and any behavior—from onanism to suicide—at any time for any person is necessarily “rational.” Surely there are cultural differences in what are deemed desirable actions, different kinds of rationality (and we have examined these in Tadrar), but just as surely “in the same environment in which a capitalist firm rationally decreases production, a peasant household rationally increases its output. The difference in response stems not from any supposed contrast in emphasis on material versus nonmaterial *values*, but from the fundamentally different ways in which capitalist and peasant household economies are institutionalized” (Donham 1999, 25–26, emphasis added). The issue is the mode of production, not the associated values. There are indeed different values in different societies, but the salient factor is the way labor is institutionally organized.

In Tadrar, household institutionalization means that a boy serves his father until death. A boy is born in the house he will likely inherit, the house that his father, too, was born in. Girls also serve their households, beginning to work when they are barely old enough to walk. Their mothers, in every case, came from a different house, however, and eventually every girl will, like a young walnut tree, be uprooted from her natal household and sent to grow in another place. In such an institutional framework, what is “rational” for a person to do is what is rational for the household as a unit, and the decision over what is rational for the unit as a whole sits ultimately with each patriarch. Now, fathers are constrained by cultural norms and public opinion (I never found a father who could keep his daughters from marrying, even if he wanted to retain their labor), as well as by the evasions of household members. I watched little boys run screaming when their grandfathers tried to give them work assignments, found teenagers swimming in the river when they were supposed to be irrigating fields, saw a woman teach my own toddler to throw rocks at a minor political official. The patriarchal order is not any more tightly laced than any other; it functions through idealized norms and practical deviations from them. The norm, however, is for households in Tadrar to be organized hierarchically along lines of age and sex.

The microsociological household is not unrelated to the larger dynamics of capitalist expansion more usually discussed, and the key to linking them is to specify how the temporalities of their inequalities relate. All economic

regimes, all societies, must organize inequality—at the very least by age and sex. There is no society that attempts to enforce equality between mother and child, for instance, and neither the village economy nor capitalist organization is an exception to the general rule that societies produce and reproduce themselves via their distinctive productive inequalities. “Equality” in any society is complicated by the diversity of human capacities (between individuals and over time) and the multiplicity of variables by which it can be judged (Sen 1992, 1). There is no such thing as equality among all people in a society, across all domains of potential equality, across time. All societies face tough questions about how to allocate social labor over time, and how to distribute the rewards of our inescapably interdependent production and reproduction of society.

Thus, key structures of inequality are integral to capitalist economic organization. As Desai puts it, “No doubt there are many inequalities within capitalism. Alternatives can be devised which, in theory, avoid its disadvantages. But the advantages of capitalism—its wealth-producing ability, its dynamism and innovativeness—are dialectically connected to its disadvantages” (Desai 2002, 295). I would say that the advantages of capitalism are related to *some* of the disadvantages. Racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination and inequality are not necessarily advantageous to capitalist organization, even if they have persistently accompanied it, and such perduring inequalities may in fact be antithetical to capitalism’s most efficient operation. However, *some* inequalities—in capital, talent, and compensation—are functionally necessary to the productive power of the capitalist system as we know it. There are intense scholarly debates over whether globalization is good (usually economists and political scientists) or bad (often sociologists or anthropologists), but I believe it is difficult to argue against the assertion that any social good that might come from capitalism necessarily drags along some bad. Eliminating the productive inequalities of capitalism would eliminate capitalism itself.

Exhausting dynamism, the dislocations of economic growth, and some ineradicable forms of inequality are not necessarily the only disadvantages integral to capitalism, however. Since the nineteenth century a major concern of social theorists has been the fear that the instrumental, self-serving, short-term nature of relations in a capitalist society are too shallow to satisfy our natural human sociality. The move from face to face “community” to anonymous “society” outlined by Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887 was believed

to produce “anomie” (in Durkheim’s phrasing), a deleterious disconnect-ness that Karl Marx termed “alienation.” In Marx’s thinking, this takes several forms, but ultimately results in alienation from our “species being,” or what we would now call our human nature. This scholarly concern has penetrated popular consciousness, or perhaps popular understanding has penetrated social theory: most students I speak to believe that village life must be more peaceful, harmonious, and in some sense more satisfying than the contemporary urban world. This is not to say my students want to live in villages, only that they believe village communities are “simpler,” that villages lack an understanding of their material poverty, and that they enjoy a sense of belonging to one another that is absent in the modern world.

Globalization is in this sense thought to destroy communities, flattening them into a worldwide “mass society.” In fact, “globalization” is often understood as a synonym for “homogenization,” both in the popular mind and in scholarship on both the Left (where such homogenization is bad) and the Right (where it is good). While some sorts of homogeneity under globalization seems inarguable, anthropologists have made a case against a *general* assumption of increasing homogeneity, seeking to leaven the obviously convergent aspects of some global dynamics with attention to countervailing tendencies, especially manifestations of new forms of community via processes of “heterogenization” (Appadurai 1996). From this perspective, some forms of difference and distinctiveness (languages, cultures, social orders) are evidently being absorbed, commoditized, and consolidated, but others are sprouting afresh. Sometimes the “fresh” is not seen as new, but as surface manifestations of deeper, cultural continuities. Marshall Sahlins, for instance, seems to say that no real change is occurring at all, that any evidently “new” communities are in fact constituted of longstanding, culturally distinct forms even if they are built in new circumstances and of new materials. Sahlins would deny my simplification, but he does seem to propose a kind of cultural determination, stating that culture is “atemporal” (1999, 409), that it is the enduring structures of culture that makes both history and historical understandings possible (1983).

Therefore, while globalization surely involves “creative destruction” (Schumpeter 1976), whether “culture” is one of things being destroyed remains an unsettled issue. We cannot say conclusively if the “new” forms of communities spawned in our era are really “new” or merely apparently “new,” in the same way that we cannot confidently say whether a house

rebuilt of new materials is a “new” house or simply the old one reconstituted. The issue for most scholars is whether the plan of the house, the “structure,” has changed, but this is the issue of debate rather than the answer to the question. These are old philosophical concerns, dating at least several thousand years back to curious Greeks asking whether stepping into the same river at two different moments is really stepping into the same river. The potentially or putatively “new” forms of community spawned within the global system are sometimes celebrated or even romanticized, and other times disparaged as the ersatz leavings of the capitalist order (Joseph 2002).

The central coordinates that bind any community—traditional and emergent forms—are shared understandings of space and time. This, too, is an old idea (it goes back at least to Durkheim), but there remains an argument here about homogenization within globalization. Most scholars agree that space and time are increasingly de-localized, reordered, and standardized, but disagree about how this process operates and whether it occurs at the same scale or with the same regularity. Sometimes, in other words, this new capitalist spatial and temporal order is a unified global phenomenon (Giddens 2000), or sometimes a sub-global, “national” form of time and space is emphasized (Anderson 1991). Others find different ethnic experiences of time embedded in larger, dominant but not entirely hegemonic structures of a major “chronopolis” like New York City (Laguerre 2003). Still other scholars emphasize how some aspects of global modernity facilitate transnational communities of shared temporality and alternative forms of coherent, if de-localized, spatiality (Appadurai 1996; Silverstein 2004). Despite these different emphases there seems some agreement that we are experiencing a global “speeding up” of time and “compression” of space via new transportation and communications technologies, technologies that are ultimately produced through, and reproductive of, a global capitalist order (Harvey 1989). The situation in Tadrar offers some evidence for this conclusion, but also presents more interesting dynamics, not just acceleration and compression, but a re-weaving and integration of different modalities of space and time.

Obviously, scholars and pundits evaluate the desirability of all this very differently. Liberals and self-described pragmatists—*New York Times* columnists like Thomas Friedman and David Brooks, for instance, or politicians like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair—acknowledge that globalization offers challenges, but suggest in a vaguely utilitarian sense that it offers the

greatest good for the greatest number. Such Liberals are opposed on the Right by jingoists like Pat Buchanan, proponents of protecting what “we” have from the “unfair” competition of (generally melanin-rich but capital-poor) people elsewhere. Unions often end up aligned with this side against “free” trade with the global south, sometimes in a transparent attempt to protect their own (national, safety regulated, unionized) jobs, and sometimes with a broader appeal to institute fair standards and working conditions across national borders before free trade can happen.

Liberals and pragmatists are opposed from the Left, too, but less because of what globalization does to “us” in the affluent parts of the world than what it does to “them,” the people of the developing countries. Here the emphasis is often on “resistance,” the way poor people oppose the ingestion of their local social orders in the maw of global capitalism (Fletcher 2007; Scott 1985). David Graeber, for instance, writes that global capitalism is “the single greatest and most monolithic system of measurement ever created, a totalizing system that would subordinate everything—every object, every piece of land, every human capacity or relationship—on the planet to a single standard of value” (2001, xi). The danger here is the erasure of difference, and thus the eradication of other potential futures we might discover in our global diversity. Graeber says “would” rather than “will,” or “can,” but the “would” here means “would” if not resisted at various levels and by various means of “counter-power” (2004). Terry Eagleton (2001, 84) summarizes the Left’s position on globalization with his typical verve:

It is a sign of just how bad things are that even the modest proposal that everyone on the planet gets fresh water and enough to eat is fighting talk. One can imagine launching revolutions in the name of some exorbitant ideal, but to disrupt people’s lives in such a spectacular way simply so that everyone may be guaranteed a supply of fresh vegetables seems oddly bathetic. Only extremists could argue against it, just as only extremists could endorse a global capitalist system which in 1992 is said to have paid Michael Jordan more for advertising Nike shoes than it paid to the entire south-east Asian industry which produced them. Revolutionaries are those realist, moderate types who recognize that to put such things to rights would require a thoroughgoing transformation. Anyone who imagines otherwise is an idle utopianist, though they are more commonly known as liberals and pragmatists.

Whether globalization is good, bad, indifferent, inevitable, or but one among many alternative futures is closely tied to understandings of why it happens, how capital comes to reorganize (rationalize, some would say) the spatial, temporal, and interpersonal moorings of human beings. While it is clear enough why the business class would want to expand trade and increase their capital, it has never been very obvious why villagers would want to become workers. The Liberal answer has been that it is simply a rational choice, people choose wage labor as a reasonable means to self-betterment, but we can also ask whether capitalism expands because it:

1. fools people into thinking it is a rational means to self-betterment
2. destroys other social orders, leaving people no choice but to accept it
3. is implemented by national and international elites beyond the control of regular people
4. is more efficient and productive and thus outcompetes other social orders regardless of whether people welcome or oppose it

I believe the evidence from Tadrar supports all four dynamics, and that the multicausal nature of capitalist expansion may be the key to its success *and* the reason scholars can so vehemently disagree about it. In Tadrar, some sons do chafe under their father's authority and abandon the village for the freedom of the atomized economy. Such sons do not figure prominently in my account because I worked in the village, in the world left behind. Clearly, from the occasional meetings I had when they happened to visit, the intimacy of village life is both a blessing and a curse. For a few sons alienation is preferable to the grinding domination of the local patriarchal order, anonymity and isolation are better than a world cloyingly suffused with memory, where every rock has a name, and everyone knows it. For some the city is attractive precisely *because* the market has no memory.

For others, however, the city is an empty promise. I spoke with more than a few men who had been to the city and returned, shaking their heads, muttering about the heartlessness of the people, the noise, the filth, the interminable grasping and jostling of a social world where everyone is on the make and anonymity ensures nobody can be trusted. Even migrants who had become successful businessmen, men who had achieved the dream of creating a successful urban household, came up to the village on vacation and sat silently on boulders beside me, watching the sun set and soaking in the tender ambiance of a village settling down to its evening meal.

While I have done little work with migrants themselves, David McMurray has written eloquently of the emotional costs of foreign migration in a northern Moroccan town. Following the story of Haddou, McMurray shows how a lifetime of migrating for labor in Europe has bought this migrant many of the material benefits he had been hoping for back in Nador, on the southern Mediterranean coast, but through his absence Haddou has gradually become estranged from his children. Haddou's dream of a big house where his sons would live with him has arrived, but arrived empty—with the house built but the sons interested in their own individual dreams. Haddou migrated but retained a set of communal, patriarchal family values; his children, raised in a bustling world of migrants and commodities, international media and global inflections of what is hip and desirable, grew up to value new sorts of relationships, to dream new dreams. Haddou migrated to fulfill his traditional values, but his success ultimately destroyed the transmission of those values to his children. His story is a tragedy, but after my own work in rural Morocco it was hard for me to blame the migrants. Traditional Morocco is no paradise, however recently minted urbanites remember it. Who but propertied fathers would want to stay in the village?

This suggests that beyond calculating the benefits and costs of migration, it is crucial to note the distinction between people doing the labor and people benefiting from it. In Haddou's case, he has spent a lifetime in Europe doing menial labor for the benefit of a family in Morocco that does not much appreciate him (or at least does not appreciate him as he thinks he should be appreciated). In Tadrar the men who make the decision to tap the wage labor economy in the city are *not* those who have to actually do the labor. Patriarchs stay behind. Because Tadrar is based on a household economy, and because those households are strongly patriarchal and rooted in the mountains, "elites" within the household are foisting wage labor on at least some of their offspring for the benefit other offspring, other household members, and the elites themselves. The issue is that "elite" in a rural patriarchal household means "father." Globalization happens *to* most young people from Tadrar who directly encounter it; the young people themselves are not usually choosing it in any simple way. When they do choose it, the motivation is not to own commodities but to establish a household. Village values bring villagers to urban contexts, not any transformation of rural values themselves.

Ultimately, the men who maintain their households and tap the productive world beyond the valley are the biggest beneficiaries. We are not necessarily talking here of the sort of “rural notables” discussed so eloquently by Dale Eickelman (1985), but rather rural nobodies—men who have power over nothing but their household labor. Such men can still make use of the wage labor economy if they have successfully manipulated their local social position, their family and lineage labor organization, to free up sons and daughters who access wages. Such men become hard to contain within the egalitarian village council. It has long been the case that the Moroccan mountains have experienced alternating periods of rapacious and domineering warlords with diffuse (though exclusively masculine) democracy. Perhaps one reason villagers are so concerned with equality between men is that they have historical experience with the results of some men becoming too powerful. In the present situation the main way to become powerful is to *live off the grid*—to maintain a political and social presence in the village, but support it through urban resources. Neighbors without urban resources cannot compete. They are politically outmaneuvered and will find it ever harder to maintain any sort of political equality, or to negotiate the terms of fairness by which villagers maintain a community. Some will eventually give up and head off to the city.

However beneficial for powerful patriarchs, we have also seen that for them the wage labor economy is playing with fire. We saw how Abdurrahman’s sons and his daughters-in-law gained experience in the city through their service to their natal households, and how they used this new competence to establish their own independent joint household, something close to their ideal. In this way capitalism drains the life out of villages by facilitating the evacuation of the young. The wage labor economy provides a means to achieve the village dream of household independence even as it removes the labor that sustains the village in the first place. Men like Abdurrahman choose to send their children to work in the city rather than loaning them to relatives at vulnerable points in the domestic cycle. The young are thus absent—whether they are supporting their natal household or beginning a new one—and are not available for the long-term transactions of labor between households that are vital to village survival. If households capitalize independently on their excess labor at moments of strength rather than invest this labor in their less fortunate neighbors, the village—as a village—cannot survive. Villages do not operate in the short-term time frames of the

larger economy. If the members of a village lose control over the long-term labor of their young, the village as it has been ordered is doomed.

I will not suggest that the example of Tadrar will settle such vastly complicated questions as how globalization happens, but I do think we can add some evidence to the arguments, evidence from people who are arguably in the midst of being globalized and have some interesting things to say about it. My conclusion from what I know of Tadrar is that different people join the wage labor world for different reasons, and it is precisely the ability of money to be many different things to different people, to be used at the same time to solidify patriarchal control in the village *and* to escape it in the city, that gives the capitalist economy its power. Once you establish a dependence on money, it is hard to stop. The young are particularly susceptible, as the wage labor economy offers the traditional reward of independence *now*, not eventually, after they have worked a lifetime for elders who take a distressingly long time to die.

I suggested at the outset of this book that I think we (literate, comparatively wealthy people) can learn something from a social order like that of Tadrar, and from its transformation. This is not so obvious, perhaps. Anthropologists are famously Romantic, and I am probably no exception. I agree with David Graeber, to cite one fellow traveler, that as a discipline we have been far too fearful of being labeled Romantics, and have thus failed to press upon our audience the lessons we might learn from other worlds. Anthropology is not butterfly collecting, and the achievements of people organizing themselves to survive in tough environments may inspire us to find new, more equitable ways to share the world's resources. I have tried to show that Tadrar is not a simple place, that material survival and the sense of belonging it produces is difficult to maintain and reproduce.

Village life, as villagers emphasized consistently, is very, very hard. While I found the people hauntingly beautiful (inside and out) and while the rhythm of village life beat a kind of peace in my soul, I was never able to stoically watch dead babies be buried in shallow ditches or my neighbors die of snakebite or curable diseases. I was not able to be so culturally relative or awestruck by rural idyll that suffering, especially physical suffering, ever became simply a part of life. Often I could not stand to remain in the village for more than a few days at a time, and I moved back and forth between Taroudant and other cities and the mountains. In the mountains the flies interrupted the beauty, disease consumed my peace, and my inability

to help all the people I wanted to help sapped my professional determination to participate, observe, and write things down. Increasingly, I would argue, the people of Tadrar are not so tolerant of rural disadvantage either. The production of new wants (including the desire to be healthy, get dental care, have one's children educated) proceeds as part of the expansion of the global economic order. If I have been at pains to show that migration is fully explicable in terms of the older values villagers maintain, it is also true that new values are emerging.

What can we learn from the people of Tadrar? First, capitalism, too, has costs. It is not the best of all possible worlds, but merely one possible world. Many of the advantages of the global economy (productivity and personal freedom to contract wage labor with whomever you like, at least for some people) are related to its disadvantages (constant change, uncertainty about future employment). Villagers in Tadrar *take care of each other*. The village order may be stifling, but it is organized to provide for its members from birth to death. Children and young people suffer particularly cruelly, especially young women, but unlike the wage labor economy, any young man who survives long enough will eventually be "a boss," will eventually be served by the generations that come after. Even girls will eventually be grandmothers, and will have younger girls to help and care for them. Nobody will ever be alone. This is an economy serving its constituents in a human time frame, not one that beats to an inhumanly standardized rhythm.

Households are organized into lineages precisely because no person or household is an island, neither bodies nor households can contribute to the community in the same way from infancy through adulthood to old age and infirmity. Smaller, weaker households are assisted by larger, stronger ones; interdependence is the core of what makes a village, and what defines us as a species. To accommodate fluctuating dependency, household members employ their genealogical imagination. The bones, or lineages, are arranged, and while this is politically fraught and often untidy, the negotiations are undertaken with fairness in mind—not fairness now, necessarily, but fairness over time. Such calculations are made possible by the genealogical imagination itself, the belief that at some level, if you go back far enough into the deep time of the village body, the bones are all connected. Everybody is, if not a brother or sister, a cousin. It is a small "republic of cousins" (Tillion 1966), and just as nobody would fail to help a baby sister up the hillside or their grandfather get up from a fall, the strong are morally obligated to help the weak. This strikes me as profound because we are all,

as a species, “cousins.” We simply ignore this fact most of the time, and focus on our differences rather than our deep and necessary interdependence.

The global economy does not serve human beings. It allows human beings to serve themselves, sometimes, but this is not the same thing. Capitalism may be more efficient, may produce spectacular quantities of stuff to buy, but it does not produce people to take care of you. We forget, in other words, that all societies are forged in households, not just the world of village farmers. All societies must make babies, and neither the capitalist order nor the theoretical tools we have built to understand that order seem capable of their respective tasks—of making a society that cares for its members, and of coming to understand how economies can be made to serve people. When we grow old—and we will all most certainly grow old—we are likely to be cared for by low-wage workers from elsewhere, by migrants. Village economies like Tadrar build those migrants, provide the people who will work for little money doing difficult jobs, caring for other bodies that are sagging and failing, bodies that are no longer profitable or productive. If they cannot spend and cannot work, old people in the so-called first world are little more than the waste products of a fantastically productive but heartless machine.

Paying someone you do not know to serve you is not the same as being cared for by relatives, people devoted to you who are certain that some day, in their turn, they will be cared for, too. In Tadrar, caring for others is part of caring for land, part of normal existence, part of *life*; “home” and “work” are not separate places and are not conceptually separable. As in other economies, individuals in Tadrar can “opt out” if they like, can move away or decide not to care for the declining generation, but in a village those who choose not to care lose resources maintained by the elderly. By contrast, where I live, it is those who choose to care who suffer. In the United States the people who devote themselves to the infirm and the immature, who nurture elderly parents and young children, these are the people who lose wages, who have to explain the gaps in their resumes to “re-enter” the workforce, who find themselves dependent on wage earners. Their rewards are a flatter career trajectory, smaller social security checks at the end of their own lives, and no certainty anyone in the generation below them is likely to return the favor. Thus it seems to me there is much to learn in Tadrar about love, especially about transacting love and care across time, between families, through generations. Tadrar has something to teach us about living in an alternative temporal order, a social order built of its own

inequalities, surely, but one constructed through time frames well aligned with the trajectory of our mortal lives, and less oriented toward our inexhaustible, ephemeral desires.

To end, I want to return to my original impressions, the terrible hardship evident in the village, but also its great warmth, humanity, and elegance. Much of this book has concerned politics, economics, the chilly Apollonian fixations of men and money, property and labor. This is one kind of social operation, one kind of meaning. I will end here with something less exact, less amenable to scholarly arguments and more appropriate for literature. I am no novelist, but I think that sometimes the words that came to me while I lived in Tadrar—almost ten years ago, now—captured some things about village life that I cannot quite resurrect here at my desk. Sometimes the words that flowed from my time in Tadrar have an intimacy and immediacy I can still feel but no longer articulate.

#### SELECTED FIELDNOTES

October 31, 1998

I continue to be struck by the contradictory nature of the Agoundis, or the contradictory feelings it arouses in me. The weather is changing, fall is easing slowly into winter, and it is quite beautiful. Some days mist hangs in the valley below, and the low orange sun does not so much shine as illuminate the cliffs from within. The tightest bends in the river get no direct light at all and the air there is cold, dead still and moist, like a cave. But up on the slopes the sun is still summer-hot, and you will break a sweat even walking. Evening comes early, the sun ducking south now behind the peaks of Ounein rather than the more westward valleys. There is more night than day and the stars seem to have multiplied. I am using up lots of candles reading *Tasbelhit* interviews, social theory, and Faulkner's *The Hamlet*. The rains are late this year and getting later, though people don't yet seem too concerned. The almonds are dropping their leaves, the walnuts turning yellow. Some [trees] are already naked and ready for winter. The carob has been harvested from the lower elevations, packed into bags and hauled off to *souk*. The prickly pear is long since done giving us fruit. Figs are over with. The blackberries that remain on the bushes are desiccated, hard little blackberry candies for those

of us who search them out. A few pomegranates still hang on the trees, most of them sprung open to show their sexy, ruby-red innards to the world. Once a week or so, after an early dinner, I build a fire in the *hammam*, heat water, and go steam myself. It's perfectly silent in the small tiled room, just me and the single candle. I shift back and forth from the hot spot just next to the cistern to the cooler end of the room until I have sweated everything in me that I think there is to sweat. I dry off, wrap up, and crawl back between my blankets and my carpet, trolling the shortwave dial for English, reading, or watching the stars through the pane-less window.

There is much here that is beautiful, and some that is terrible. I watched yesterday as Abdurrahman stuffed and sewed me two new pillows. His thick, blunt fingers deftly stitching, rhythmically, evenly, not missing a beat. I sat fascinated for twenty minutes at the sheer confidence his hands evinced stuffing and sewing, stuffing and sewing. Such a powerful form on such a delicate task. It was something like watching Mike Tyson expertly cut origami, or a middle linebacker play Bach on the harpsichord. Then I went to dinner at the Lukstafs', and again was consumed by the sight of hands, this time the variety of hands dipping into the *tajine*. Grandpa Mohammad's thin, gnarled fingers taking small bites. He doesn't eat much anymore. Grandson Hussein's chubby, full-fisted grip of each bite, packing his mouth palmload by palmload, sitting on his grandpa's lap, stretching to reach the *tajine*. Grandma [Aisha's] hennaed palms, old knowing fingers, Fatima [Idzdo's] cracked nails, the baby at her breast sucking the nutrients out of her even while she eats. Little Mohammad's dirty nails and scabbed hands, Khadija's incredibly powerful, beautifully tapered fingers . . . a young lady's hands forged hickory tough by the constant, backbreaking labor that is life for young women here. Little Fatima and little Hassan both have tiny, grubby hands and paper-thin nails, not much bigger than little Hussein's, though quite a bit more coordinated. They tend to bypass the *tanoort* [flat bread used for dipping] and dive straight in for slices of potato, then retreat from the crowd at the low table, away from the penumbra of bodies, where they can kick each other and squeal with delight. The rest of us sit knee to knee, cross-legged, packed together around the *tajine*. Grandpa reaches for the big bowl-shaped bread, tears it into pieces, and distributes them around the table. Each of us

mutters, “in the name of God,” before the first bite hits our mouths. We squint in the glare of the propane lantern to see what we are dipping our bread in.

There is the smell of meat tonight. And the wax from my extinguished lantern. The littlest ones smell strongly of urine; there are no diapers here, and clothes and carpets are washed less frequently now that the river is icy cold. Mohammed has cleaned up from a day of carrying heavy wool bags of manure on his back, but carries the scent of the stable with him. Khadija’s hair is matted to her forehead with the dried sweat from the long hike to the forest, and the longer hike back with a load of wood at least half her own weight. She straps the sticks and branches to her back with a rope slung over her shoulders, held by both hands except where the path is too steep to descend safely. There she holds the rope in her mouth, hangs on to the rock with her hands and feet. She has big, solid, yellow teeth, lucky for her. Not small rotted nubs like her brother.

November 13, 1998

Went to my first *abowash* [dance]. If this was it, if this was all you got after four years of graduate school and four months in the mountains without plumbing, it would be worth it. A wonderful scene. Really moving. I couldn’t understand a word of the singing and I kept getting teary eyed all the same.

Once again I almost missed it. I had passed out by about a quarter after nine and was snoring through the preliminaries when Omar Lukstaf came down and banged on my door until I got up. We staggered up the path to the upper part of the village by the light of my single candle lantern. No moon. Countless stars. Dark in the village and the houses all quiet.

Above Haj Lahcen’s house we began to run into other people and all of us snaked our way up the path with candles and the occasional flashlight. We passed the mosque and moved into the covered part of the trail, where the houses merge into a single huge hive of a building, which seems to swallow you up. It is completely dark in here but for the madly swinging shadows of the candles, and we all move carefully, single file up the rock worn smooth by centuries of feet, all the time *salaam aleikum*-ing people moving the other way, dodg-

ing kids bombing down the path, moving slowly up in a lengthening train. Granny [Aisha] . . . had made me her project by this time and was huffing and puffing behind me, giving me instructions on what to do between huffs. She looked something like an oversized softball wrapped in lumpy un-spun wool, wrapped again in the bright scarves and rags of a Guatemalan village wedding or a London techno rave . . . about three feet tall, three feet wide, ancient hands and a cherub's face . . . toothless, grinning, laughing, cajoling.

Where the path forks into a Y there is a space open to the sky. A small flat area forms, maybe fifteen feet by twenty, before the two tunnels continue on, leading up and out of the square, one toward the almond fields, one toward the *sherij* [water cistern]. Here the men of Azzaden have gathered to sing and dance for the bride they will take with them, and the people of Tadrar had packed around to see. All of the people I know—Jamoo and Khadija, Belaid and Fatima, Yemna, Ben Edar, and all the Lukstaf boys, Haj Lahcen and Abdurrahman—everyone is piled onto the rocks above the dancers, packed in doorways, squeezed together, lounging on one another. The dull mud of the walls rising above us, shuttered wooden windows, the small mud and stick eaves of the buildings, the bright dress clothes of the women, and especially the girls, the somber earth tone *jellabas* [cloaks] of the men, all are lit by a pair of propane lanterns wedged into ledges above us. Brahim Arbuz tends the fire, and the Azzaden men hand him their drums to heat. The smoke curls up past the propane glare and it all seems quite unearthly.

I take the first bare spot of ground I see as my seat, directly behind the dancers. One patriarch of the Azzaden folks occupies the stable doorway above me, Haj Lahcen is next to him, Abdurrahman packs in underneath me. I am wedged between warm bodies on a cold starry night. It smells strongly of fresh hay and the wax of the extinguished lanterns.

The men begin their calls. Their *rais* [leader, president] will sing out a verse, and the men repeat it, or repeat the appropriate call back to it, and join in with the drums. The verse is repeated again and again as the drums get faster, and someone even brings a big plastic water drum that they beat with a stick for a baseline. On some unrecognizable signal they all rap their drums in unison and finish. The villagers yell out, *bsabt kum*, to your health, with a kind of tone like

the Spanish yell out “olé.” Then the *rais* calls out a new verse and they begin again. While they sing the men huddle shoulder to shoulder, bobbing, shuffling back and forth, moving forward, packing tighter into a single, multi-footed wool-clad body, dropping their heads further and further, then popping up with the final chorus. Some hand their drums to Brahim for warming and the *rais* calls out again. *Bsabt kum*, people call out. *Bsabt kum!*

They consume this small space, pressing back the walls of what seems a very small amphitheater melting, collapsing in on itself, slowly. Then at some invisible signal a line of women pour down the aisle between the dancers’ backs and my feet, press their way past the Azzaden men, and form a line against the wall facing me, facing the men. Too beautiful for words, their bright and distinct faces . . . the Ben Rais girls, young Aisha in particular with her serious pre-adolescent haughtiness, Yemna Lukstaf wry and confident, Fatima Id Baj concentrating, looking self-conscious as the center and sort of leader, Rqia looking like a sultry raccoon in her heavily kohled eyes . . . they line up, their tough, hennaed hands clapping in unison, their eyes flashing then modestly turning down at the ground. They are wearing tartan skirts and satin dresses, bangled country scarves and sheer city headshawls, Chinese print dresses, tie-dyed wraps, polyester exploding with color . . . they look like Scottish Chinese African Muslim princesses, beautiful faces not like anything or anywhere else . . . they continue to press into the line, lime scarves and more tartan skirts over Chinese prints, white satin and sequins and deep royal red overcoats, powder blue and sun yellow silky dresses over rough wool sweaters, phosphorescent orange scarves and dangling bits of silver and tin and copper, coins welded into jangling bracelets, bead collars and bright plastic shoes stirring the dust with small, stuttering unified steps. . . . Clapclap. Clap. Clapclap. Clap. Like ponies prancing, proud and shy and skittish.

From the corridors outside the light, other women ululate and call out an opening verse. The women respond, clapping in rhythm, their voices surging and falling. The men huddle on the ground now, hunched around their drums, twisting their ears to the sky to better catch the rhythm of the women. They find the beat with their drums and drive it faster and faster. Aisha o Rais and her older sister leave the line, dancing in front of it, facing one another. Their hands are at

their sides, their shoulders rise and fall, their feet make small, precise steps that carry them to the end of the line. Here, where there are a few feet of space to turn around, they make eye contact with some invisible person off beyond the light, dip their heads, swirl, shimmy their shoulders, swirl the other way, and dance their way back down the line. Sometimes the men will suggest a beat with their drums, sometimes Fatima or Yemna or a woman I don't know . . . will call out, sometimes the women off stage yell out. Then it is taken up, people join in, and they build another slow rise to crescendo.

This goes on for two hours or so, when the women begin to try to leave the line. All the while one granny (a Ben Ouchen? a Baj?) has been dragging girls to the line, the shy ones like Khadija too overcome with the public-ness of their position to do any more than stare at the ground and clap along. The men say, *hashuma*, "shame," to any woman who tries to leave. But it is late now and babies are starting to be lugged off to bed.

The women perform one more song, then scatter to the periphery, and it is the turn of the men from outside [the village]. They are good, practiced. They begin to move in a circle to their beat, voices soaring and dropping. A step toward the center, a step out, a step around the circle . . . they are picking up speed, crammed together, one or two soloing on their drums while they keep the step of the group, around and around until a final bumbum, bam bum. *Bsabt kum*, we yell! *Aoud*, again. But it is late. They go two or three times, then Abdurrahman says, "More tomorrow," and everyone breaks into the opening verses of the Qur'an.

This is deep, sonorous, every man, woman, and child know it . . . palms to the sky, beseeching the one and only God, they chant a long chain of looping, loping syllables, while the *rais* hollers out a contrapuntal string of praise for the prophet, praise for Allah, praise to the bride and the people of Tadrar in a sort of [fiery preacher] invective . . . and finally: *Allahu akbar*: God is great. It is over. Lanterns are lit, random groups of women are repeating the verse, people seep back into the quaking shadows of the corridors, and spill down the hill. I wind down with them, saying goodbye again and again until the lower path—there are only the few of us who live down here left. Final goodbyes and goodnights and promises that, if God wills, we will be back to *ahowash* tomorrow. My door is dark and quiet. High on the

hillside a thin string of lanterns files north, toward the Arbuz compound, toward Hussein Ben Ouchen's house beneath the old fort, and further, to Ait Moussa and Agerda. The traveling girls sing in small groups, their voices holding the night back from the narrow trail, until there are only the stars, only the dim echoes of high pretty voices. Then the village is quiet. There are only stars, cold and far away in the November sky, and the monstrous dark of the canyon below.