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Guardians of the Embers: A Cultural Geography of Land Use and
Land Tenure among the BaAka Pygmies of Central Africa.

by

Evan Tyler Davies

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
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ABSTRACT

Guardians of the Embers: A Cultural Geography of Land Use and Land Tenure among the BaAka Pygmies of Central Africa.

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Evan Tyler Davies

A general geographical and cultural survey of BaAka Pygmy exploitation of the tropical rain forest environment in the Dzanga- Ndoki national park of Central African Republic, and adjacent areas of Cameroon and the Congo is presented. The fabric of BaAka society as it pertains to practices and perceptions of land use, land tenure and relationship to the environment is specifically investigated. The data obtained during the fieldwork stage of this investigation are presented herein as an original narrative ethnography with inclusions of tabular and graphic data. A collection of some contemporary experimental genres used in contemporary ethnographic writings are discussed prior to presentation of the ethnography.
Professional Acknowledgements

Invaluable counsel and background information was provided by Barry Hewlett, Robert Bailey provided much needed criticism of the original proposal, David Wilkie was always available with helpful advice before I embarked on this field study and especially afterward, when he turned me and my tropical parasites towards the National Institutes of Health.

In the field, Anna Kretsinger provided me with original data related to BaAka use of the various flora and fauna in the Central African ecosystem, and on many occasions shared with me her intimate understanding of BaAka society. Louis Sarnot additionally provided interesting and unique insight into the BaAka world.

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. Jones of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford University for ushering some much needed funds in my direction to undertake this study. The Explorers Club granted me the honor of carrying the Club flag on this expedition. Its presence emboldened me through many a dim hour in the forest.

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To the BaAka, especially Mamboya and Ndimagwanjo, for their patience and hospitality. I know they are still getting by, but I wonder who steals goats for them now.

And to Marta, for all of your letters, your thoughts and your prayers. There wasn't a day that went by that I didn't look for the moon in the sky y pensar en ti con todo mi corazon and know you were watching it too. God bless you Marta, you were indeed the light that watched over me in an ugly and darkening place.
Dedication

Recalling a notable Spring afternoon in the year 1986 in Ithaca, New York, when, in my youthful, beginner's mind, anything and everything seemed possible. I have strived to retain this mindset in all of my subsequent studies. Moments after reading Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* in the instants before the first torrential rainstorm of that Spring, in what could have quite possibly been a fit of madness, I decided to pursue a Doctorate in Anthropology, and a life dedicated to exploration. The former is, at last, accomplished.

For better or for worse, I dedicate this study:

To the drive for knowledge in the human spirit.

To the traits of courage, fidelity and compassion.

To the spirits of great geographers who came before me. You showed me the way.

*Ni wyr dyn nid él o'i dy.*
Abstract

Professional Acknowledgements

Personal Acknowledgements

Dedication

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

I Introduction & Background..........................................................1
  a) General Introduction..........................................................1
  b) Problem Statement & Background........................................4
  c) Aim & Scope of Project.......................................................7
  d) Methodology & Schedule of Research....................................10
  e) Significance........................................................................13

II Geographical Setting.................................................................15
  a) Natural history/ Regional geography......................................15
     1) Regional Geology.............................................................15
     2) Regional Geomorphology..................................................15
     3) Soils..............................................................................15
     4) Vegetation......................................................................16
     5) Fauna............................................................................16
  b) Human history.....................................................................18
     1) Peoples of the Area........................................................18
     2) Colonial Period...............................................................18
     3) Founding of the Sangha-Ndoki National Park.......................19
III Subject Background ................................................................. 22
   a) Historical Antecedents: BaAka as "living fossils" .......................... 22
   b) Contemporary Literature Review .............................................. 26
   c) Project Scope, Protocol and Methodology ................................. 32
      1) Mapping to what end? Goal of the Project ............................ 32
      2) GPS & Brunton mapping .................................................... 32
      3) Transect walking and informal interviews ............................. 33
   d) "Experience" is not a bad word: the narrative
      as ethnographic vehicle ...................................................... 35

IV BaAka Interaction with the Tropical Rain Forest .......................... 58
   a) BaAka Society Structure and Community Space ......................... 58
      1) Welcome to the Jungle ..................................................... 58
      2) The Tragedy of Bayanga ............................................... 63
      3) Jungle Skies ............................................................... 70
      4) Stranger in the Forest ................................................... 75
      5) Homes and Hearths ....................................................... 80
      6) BaAka Family Units ..................................................... 87
      7) Band Organization & Dynamics ....................................... 88
      8) Turnbull's "Flux" in BaAka Bands .................................... 89
   b) Ownership, Seasonal Activities and Behavior ............................ 91
      1) Masters of the Maze .................................................... 91
      2) BaAka Seasonal Activities ............................................ 97
      3) Treefall! ................................................................. 105
      4) Sacred Communication ................................................ 108
      5) Mokamo's Spear ........................................................ 111
      6) Days of Hunger ......................................................... 114
      7) The Honeyfeast ....................................................... 117
      8) Malaria Dreams ....................................................... 121
c) Forest Territories & Tenure.....................................................126
   1) A Meeting in the Forest................................................126
   2) Ejengi: The Living Forest.............................................129
   3) Moon over Madrid......................................................132
   4) A Darkening Place.....................................................135
   5) Guardians of the Embers..............................................143

V Summaries and Conclusions..................................................146
   a) Summary of Findings..................................................149
   b) Suggestions for Further Research................................159
      1) Future Work in the Area.........................................159
      2) Future Work on the Subject.....................................161

VI Project References..........................................................162

VII Appendix............................................................................174
   List of Plants
List of Figures

Figure 1, map of the Dzanga-Sangha Park..................................................20

Figure 2, graph of dry season activity.......................................................102

Figure 3, graph of rainy season activity...................................................103

Figure 4, hydrographic map of park.........................................................104
List of Tables

Table 1, dry season activity percentages.................................................100

Table 2, rainy season activity percentages..............................................101
I) INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

a) General Introduction

Just take those old records off the shelf,
I'll sit and listen to them by myself
Today's music ain't got the same soul
I like that old time Rock and Roll...

-Bob Seger

"Why go at all?" was a question I struggled with for some time before deciding to go to Central Africa. Hardly one of the "new", post-modernist scholars myself, I believed that any neophyte anthropologist worth his or her mettle should do fieldwork.

Since its inception as a science early in this century, fieldwork has been the cornerstone of anthropology. Only by undertaking original fieldwork could the traditional anthropologist collect original data relating to the subject at hand. As long as there are those who are attempting to practice anthropology as it was originally intended in its formative years, as a science, we must respect the methods of Western science, and scientific observation of a subject in the cultural context of that subject is of prime importance.

Only by going to an "other" place, can anyone ever expect to understand our own society, let alone another one. The world we live in is a relatively large and still incredibly diverse place, and only by going to another place, and living among an-"other" people can one ever hope to appreciate this and understand how many ways a place and a people can be different. In section III d) I discuss the reflexive and reflective virtues of the fieldwork experience in greater detail.
Also, perhaps somethings should remain sacred. After all, if something has been around for a long time, there's usually a damn good reason for it. In our modern attempts a de- and re-constructing ideas, I believe we've tended to throw the baby out with the bathwater. To quote a well-known British anthropologist,

The profession is full of devoted fieldworkers, skins leathery from exposure to torrid climes, teeth permanently gritted from years of dealing with natives, who have little or nothing of interest to say in an academic discipline. The whole subject of fieldwork, we effete "new anthropologists" with our doctorates based on library research had decided, had been made rather too much of. Of course, older teaching staff who had seen service in the days of empire and "just sort of picked up anthropology in the line of business" had a vested interest in maintaining the cult of the god to whom they were high priests. They had damn well suffered the trials and privations of swamp and jungle and no young whippersnapper should take a short cut.

-Barley, 1984:7-8

The study that follows is a general investigation of BaAka patterns of land use, land tenure and poignant aspects of their foraging culture. There is still so much general ground to be covered in the field of forest forager studies, and land use and tenure studies have never been conducted with BaAka (or any other Pygmy group for that matter). For this reason I believe a more general study focussed on land use issues will contribute more to the field of African forest forager studies in particular and anthropology in general than the mere testing of a specific hypothesis. Additionally, as a first time worker in this area, I felt I lacked the first-hand experience necessary to formulate pertinent, testable hypotheses.
Doing fieldwork also allows the neophyte anthropologist to undertake original anthropological research; from the data collecting phase through interpretation and write up, in many instances for the first time in his or her career. Only by undertaking the original field research discussed herein could I as an anthropologist hope to uncover these aspects of BaAka society; only by undertaking this fieldwork could I, as a human being, see something truly different from my own experience, and thus broaden my understanding of my own humanity.
b) Problem Statement & Background

The study of systems of land use and tenure among forest forager groups is badly needed in all of the Central African rain forest (Vansina, 1990, Bailey, Hewlett, Vansina, personal communication), and studies among the semi-nomadic Pygmy hunter-gatherers and non-Pygmy Bantu agriculturalists, especially of the western regions in the rain forest are of great significance to African anthropology ("Pygmy" is seen by many contemporary scholars as a generally pejorative term, and for the most part these people will be referred to as forest foragers). Additionally, in recent years many conservation groups and funding organizations such as the World Bank are seeking ways to assist governments in Central Africa, and elsewhere in tropical regions, in preserving their endangered rain forest environments while ensuring the continued survival of the indigenous populations in those forests (for more debate on what constitutes an indigenous population see Bailey, 1989a).

Growing populations in the rain forest regions have placed increasing demands on the land's faunal and floral resources, and their ability to sustain the forest foragers on their traditional hunting and gathering subsistence strategy. Now more than ever before in the recorded history of this area, issues of land tenure and territory are in the forefront of debate among those concerned with peoples in the rain forest regions. Many conservation and development agencies are working with governments in central Africa to aid in the establishment of parkland in their rain forest regions, but in order to ensure that the indigenous forest populations, both forager and agriculturalist, have sufficient resources to survive by their traditional means, the governments and the conservation
agencies need ethnographic data on the forest populations pertaining to their systems of land tenure, their patterns of land use and behavioral ecology. Any strategy for creating protected reserves or parkland must take these factors into account. Conservation of the Central African rain forests and the continued viability of the foraging subsistence strategy go hand in hand; if the forager populations are not allocated sufficient territory to allow them a hunting and gathering subsistence base, they will almost certainly be forced to abandon their traditional lifeways for a cash-based subsistence means and a way of life, along with much tropical forest, will be forever lost.

Herein, I describe a field study that assembles a database on, and illuminates the little-understood systems of land-tenure and land use among the BaAka forest foragers of the western Central African rain forests in the Dzanga-Sangha national reserve. This study effectively investigates the nature and delineations of hunting and collecting territories of the BaAka forager bands in the reserve, and examines the perceptions of rights to the land and its accompanying resources. A standing hypothesis is that the forager band sees the land as their own, which is the case in the eastern areas of the rain forest (Bailey, personal communication). Included in this overall investigation will be studies of how the forager peoples use the various territories in the forest and the relative importance of the available resources.

The area in northern Congo/southern Central African Republic between the Sangha and Ubangi rivers has been identified as the most ethnographically neglected region of the Central African rain forest (Vansina, 1990), and this was an additional factor in my choice of the Dzanga-Sangha area as a field site.
Most of the better-known studies of African forest foragers were done in eastern areas of the Central African rain forest, so this study makes a contribution to anthropological studies in this field by rounding out the database of forest forager populations. This study also generated data useful to conservation and development groups desiring to re-define their management plans for the parks in the Tri-National area, and if employed by those organizations responsible for managing this area, it can help to give the people who inhabit these regions a voice, which could eventually allow them to become stewards of the land.
C. Aim and Scope of Project

The main objective of this research was to illuminate human interaction with the environment in the study area in terms of land use, tenure and territory systems and the use of the lands' accompanying resources in the Dzanga-Sangha reserve. I sought to characterize the forest in the Dense reserve and the surrounding Sangha-Ndoki park area by usage zones to discover the recent history of land use (and map these areas), to assess the impact of both the agriculturalists and the hunting and gathering populations on the tropical forest, to discern the little understood systems of land tenure within BaAka/ non-BaAka society, and to illuminate the nature of "territory" as perceived by both BaAka and agriculturalist. In the Dzanga-Sangha reserve, the situation is complicated by the fact that "traditional" forager/ agriculturalist relationships have been confused by recent immigration into the area, and even the distinctions between forager and agriculturalist have become blurred; as many BaAka are now sedentary agriculturalists themselves.

As foragers, the BaAka have very different needs from the land than their agriculturalist neighbors. They need more of it per individual to survive comfortably on a foraging subsistence strategy, and they obviously use the land differently than the agriculturalists. These factors have become increasingly significant in recent years as the governments of many central African nations have designated many of the homelands of the forest foragers and their associated villager groups as national parkland. Each village lays claim to a certain area of forest, but certain bands of BaAka also lay claim to parts of the forest, and often times these claims are conflicting. Questions such as who owns which parts of the
forest and the accompanying resources, and how does the government decide how to allocate land already delineated into conflicting and overlapping territories become very significant both to the ecological and anthropological communities and to the policy makers.

In my fieldwork, I began by collecting answers to the following general research questions through interviews with BaAka and non-BaAka inhabitants of the reserve area, Dzanga-Sangha project employees, and WWF personnel on the site, and field surveys of forest territories with local BaAka and non-BaAka inhabitants.

1. What are the uses of the land and what are the general features that are used as landmarks to distinguish the various band territories?

2. What are the BaAka foragers' perceptions of rights to land (and its accompanying resources), and what are the farmer's conceptions of land tenure and are these two perceptions in conflict?

3. How has the nationalizing of some areas into parkland affected the traditional lifeways and behavior of the BaAka and their associated agriculturalist group(s)?
   a) Is sufficient land being alloted to the BaAka to allow them to continue their practice of foraging?
   b) Once nationalized, who is responsible for enforcing territorial boundaries?
   c) How are traditional BaAka settlement patterns being affected by constraints on land?
4. How much time do the BaAka spend in each area (i.e. horticultural plot, honey collecting area, net hunting area, etc.,) and how does time spent in an area relate to the subsistence value of that area's resources?

5. What are the main causes of land disputes between neighboring bands and how are violators of the territorial boundaries dealt with?

6. How, if at all, do the forest foragers attempt to ensure that their offspring will have the same rights to the hunting and foraging territories that they do?

7. What are the effects of modernization and development on these forested regions?
   a) To what extent are logging and mining activities affecting the environment in the study area?
   b) To what degree is immigration affecting the demography of the study area?
   c) How extensive and destructive is the meat trade and ivory poaching in the area?

Specifically, in a comprehensive social context, through participant-observation studies and informal interviews I examined contemporary systems of land tenure, perceived rights to the land according to BaAka and non-BaAka groups, use of the land and the directional flow of the resources (for example, where does harvested produce go, how much is
sold, to whom, how much is consumed by the growers, how much traded to foragers for services rendered or exchanged for bush meat according to "traditional" exchange patterns, in what ways are animal products utilized by the various inhabitants, etc.).

D. Methodology and Schedule of Research

To answer the questions posed in the previous section, I lived among BaAka hunter-gatherer groups in the study region for a period spanning both the rainy and the dry seasons. For this purpose a period of six months was deemed to be sufficient. Bailey (1991) found among the Efe in the Ituri forest that all forest forager "seasons" including honey collecting, hunting, and seasons spent working for the agriculturalists could be observed in this timeframe.

In January of 1995 starting from the village of Bayanga in the Central African Republic (C.A.R.), I began fieldwork in the forests of the Dzanga-Sangha reserve. In order to conduct research in the C.A.R., I needed to secure permission from the Ministere de Science et Technologie and the Ministere des Eaux, Forêts, Chasse, Pêche et Tourisme in Bangui. Permits were applied for and issued in Bangui, I then traveled to Bayanga and began my work in the Dzanga-Sangha reserve.

I communicated with the BaAka and other Central Africans through French and Sango, the lingua franca spoken in the area.

By working closely with a BaAka informant familiar with the reserve, by accompanying game guards on patrol through the park, and by participating in (or at least accompanying) BaAka net and crossbow hunts I performed surveys of the reserve area to the end of establishing a
map of the various territories (and the accompanying resources) that exist with the limited ranges of the Dzanga-Sangha dense reserve. Data collection was also expanded to include mapping of hunting territories in the Ndoki park within the dense reserve.

During these mapping excursions, I gathered data on tenure systems and land use through interviews with guides, game guards, local BaAka and non-BaAka inhabitants of the reserve whom I accompanied, until I had data for all territories within the limits of the reserve. The validity of the interviews was then cross-checked against testimony from other members of the band or local non-foraging villagers (e.g., tenure systems described by a BaAka elder during a net hunt as to who was allowed to hunt in a given hunting territory in the future, was checked against the beliefs of local agriculturalists as to the future of the given tract of land in question).

Through these interviews and surveys, an ethnographic data base on contemporary uses of the land and many of its accompanying resources was established.

In addition to the anthropological value of this study, the results of this project can provide data meaningful to cultural conservation efforts in this area if any such efforts are mounted.

Needless to say, all aspects of this project were dependent on the cooperation of local people and project employees in providing information about their tenure systems and the uses of the lands various resources. I recorded all observations and interviews in field notebooks and documented many encounters with still photographs for later study.

Geographical survey of the hunting and gathering territories of the various forager bands was be greatly facilitated through the use of a hand-held satellite global positioning system (GPS) device. While the GPS
must be operated in clearings, because the satellite signal cannot penetrate the dense forest canopy, these satellite-oriented positioning devices allow for substantially more accurate surface cartography than traditional field surveying methods (and without the need to transport bulky equipment into the forest) which is critical if working to determine foraging territory size and perimeters.

As I followed the band on its migrations from one hunting territory to the next, to the various villages, etc. I recorded our position and our movement in terms of Latitude and Longitude displayed on the GPS. At the end of each day of taking GPS readings I plotted the GPS data on a map to establish the exact boundaries of each hunting territory, campsite, etc., within the rain forest. When we were in an area of the forest that did not allow use of the GPS device, I used a Brunton pocket transit and pedometer to conduct the mapping activity.

Working closely with village communities and BaAka bands, I recorded boundaries between agriculturalist lineage territories, nationalized lands, villages, agricultural plots and traditional hunting and foraging areas. In all areas, I made a record of current land use patterns, and observed how much time is spent by farmer and forager, respectively, in each territory. This simple observational field technique has already been successfully employed in other parts of tropical Africa for land tenure studies (Heath, 1993).

Much of the data gathered during this fieldwork period was processed, in the field, and locations of hunting camps were later plotted on a hydrographic map of the Dzanga-Sangha area.
E. Significance

In a recent edited volume, Turnbull stated "Many myths about what is rapidly becoming the past are still being perpetuated, not only by popular writers but also by professional anthropologists whose theories are supported by, if indeed they do not rest on, those myths. The African administrators are hardly to blame when they too accept those myths; they merely fall heir to the misunderstandings of others" (Turnbull in Cavalli-Sforza, 1986:103).

In many cases, there is even active discrimination against foraging groups and their traditional lifeways by African administrators who pressure them to move into the villages so that their numbers can be counted and their population taxed (Turnbull, 1972; Vansina, personal communication).

The recent establishment of much of the BaAka's traditional home land in the Haute Sangha as parkland perhaps adds a sense of urgency to the issue of their cultural survival, for both the non-Pygmy inhabitants of this area and the BaAka foragers are not certain to what degree this may impact on their lives; to what degree the national government may try to control their lifestyle, their choice of farmland, the number, species or range of animals that can be hunted in their forests, or perhaps even the layout of the village structure. On the positive side, the study area is very vast and remote, and any sweeping changes that may be imposed by the national government are unlikely to take place overnight.

In a recent issue of the American Anthropological Association's Anthropology Newsletter, David Cleveland wrote, "all anthropology today is really development anthropology, and the ethics of
anthropology must be the ethics of sustainable development" (1994; 9). A critical and timely study, an investigation of the nature presented in this section has a good deal of significance beyond the realm of academic anthropology. Issues concerning the world's rain forests and how best to manage them have lately been considered and debated by national governments, global conservation associations, the World Bank, and academic circles from anthropology and ecology to zoology. Because of the already documented cultural similarity among forager groups in the Central African rain forest, the results of this land use and conservation focussed-study will clearly have implications for all forest forager populations in Central Africa and even some for all rain forest dwelling hunter-gatherer peoples around the world.

Certainly, a study of the nature described herein can contribute to the ability of conservation groups and African government organizations to make informed suggestions and decisions concerning the management and conservation of the Central African rain forest, and by extension those who depend on it for their survival.
II GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

a) Natural History/ Regional Geography

1,2,3) Geology, Geomorphology and Soils

The Sangha-Ndoki National Park is actually two distinct park areas, Dzanga and Ndoki, contained within the territory of the Sangha-Dzanga dense reserve. Located in the Congo or Zaire basin at \(3^0\) North latitude and \(16^0\ 30'\) East longitude, it is situated on the Zaire craton, a mass of Proterozoic and Paleozoic sedimentary and igneous rocks, which overlie heavily metamorphosed basement bedrock (Petters, 1991).

This area is dominated by the Congo river system, and is essentially simple in its geomorphology. It was a vast sedimentary basin during the Precambrian, and is again today an aggradational or depositional land surface owing to the low elevation relative to sea level, and Congo river system, which transports and deposits much sedimentary material. The network of tributaries and smaller rivers which make up the Congo system in concert with the overall high temperatures of this region and the abundant biological activity easily weather the many undeformed Proterozoic sedimentary and volcanic lithics into sand, which is to be found everywhere in this region.

The soils in this area are leached, desilicated and highly weathered oxisols, typically found in the humid, free-draining environments of the tropics. These soils are clay-rich, and due to the chemical weathering of iron, often appear red in color, so characteristic of the African soils. Due to seasonal inundation during the rainy season, these soils contain sufficient moisture to support trees in pioneer vegetation after clearing or treefall (i.e. a Udic to Aquic soil moisture regime)(van Wambke, 1992).
4) Vegetation

The forests in the Central African Republic are classified as a tropical semi-evergreen rain forest, and are characterized by both evergreen and deciduous trees, the largest emergent trees attaining heights up to forty five meters. It is seasonally dry, though that season is only roughly five months in length. In keeping with Schimper's original classification of the *Tropische Regenwald*, the tropical rain forest in this region is "evergreen, hygrophilous in character, at least thirty meters high, rich in thick stemmed lianes, and in woody as well as herbaceous epiphytes."

Epiphytes are plants living perched on, but not necessarily deriving sustenance from, other plants. (Schimper, in Mabberly, 1992: 4).

Much like the Ituri forest to the East, the rain forests of the C.A.R. possess an equatorial climate, with light rains beginning in mid-April, a heavy rainy season lasting from about August to December, and a dry season that lasts until March. (Bahuchet, 1992). Annual rain fall is between 1700 and 2100 millimeters (Mabberley, 1992).

5) Fauna

The rain forests of Central Africa, like the rain forests in other parts of this world provide a home to millions of animal species, fewer than half a million even have Latin names (Mabberley, 1992). According to one researcher, "no-one doubts, and few people care, that thousands of small terrestrial invertebrates and plants await description, especially in the tropics" (Diamond, 1985 in Mabberley, 1992).
Many species of forest antelope are present in the Central African forests, and these animal make up the bulk of the animal protein consumed by the human population. These antelope species include the blue duiker (*Cephalophus monticola*), the red duiker (*Cephalophus callipygus*), the large but elusive Bongo (*Tragelaphus euryceros*), and several other antelope species.

Other sources of animal protein lesser used by the BaAka include the pangolin (*Manis tetradactyla*), porcupine (*Atherurus africanus*), squirrel (*Heliosciurus gambianus*) and giant rat (*Cricetomys emini*).

The rain forests of Central Africa are also home to some of the more spectacular species of our planet, including forest elephant (*Loxodanta africana cyclotis*), gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*), and chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), which are occasionally hunted by BaAka for their meat, and by villagers for ivory in the case of elephants, or in the case of chimpanzees and gorillas, to sell the young as pets.

These and other animals provide the human population in these forest areas with its protein. BaAka meat supply is solely derived from wild forest species, while agrarian villagers often raise livestock, though engage in hunting of wild animal varieties as well.
b) Human History

1) Peoples of the Area

The autochthonous peoples of the study area are the BaAka forest foragers and the Sangha peoples, a Bantu-speaking people who traditionally subsisted (and still do for the most part today) mainly by river fishing and swidden agriculture of tropical cassava or manioc (*Manihot escuelenta*).

Due to a variety of historical factors, not the least of which was the depopulating Arab slave trade of the previous centuries, Central Africans are a demographically sparse yet ethnically diverse people (O'Toole, 1986: 76).

2) Colonial Period

During the colonial period, from the late nineteenth century to the middle of this century, the Central African Republic, Congo and part of Cameroon were part of the French Congo, or French Equatorial Africa. Under the French colonial administration, the BaAka were essentially ignored, except for their value as laborers during collection of wild rubber, which was in high demand in the first decade of this century in Europe. The French colonial authorities relied on the traditional relationships that exist between BaAka and villager to extract labor from these foragers. Villagers in the employ of the colonial administration would often resort to violence, torture and hostage holding in order to force increased collection of wild rubber (Nelson, 1994).

In 1958, under Barthélemy Boganda, the district of the Ubangi-Shari in
French Equatorial Africa became independent from France in a popular referendum, and became the Central African Republic. The country's next president Jean-Bidel Bokasa, who for a short time ruled as emperor of the Central African Empire, decreed that all citizens of the country must live by the side of a major road for census and taxation purposes. He additionally decreed that the BaAka were also "citizens" (implying that heretofore they had been considered less than human, which is not too far from the truth) and needed to live in small roadside villages at least some parts of the year so that they could be counted and taxed as well. With coercion from their agrarian "patrons" the BaAka complied, as they do to this day.

3) Founding of the Sangha-Ndoki National Park

The study area centering around the village of Bayanga was for centuries a small sleepy fishing village on the banks of the Sangha river. The village of Bayanga itself, in the heart of the Dzanga-Sangha dense reserve (see map, Figure 1) is a major center for immigration from all parts of central Africa (the C.A.R., Congo, Cameroon, and Zaire) because of the potential for employment in some menial capacity for the GTZ, short for Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit, a German technical advisory organization which is currently working to develop the Dzanga-Sangha park for tourism, the WWF or Slovenia Bois logging operations. In recent years past, Bayanga was a stopping point for individuals engaged in illegal diamond prospecting in regions to the north.

As stated before, the BaAka and the Sangha fishers are the only two
peoples indigenous to this area, though the Sangha fisher people today have become quite marginalized by the many immigrant groups coming to the area. These newcomers participate more readily in the cash-based economy of the area, leaving the Sangha peoples to continue making their living as they have for hundreds of years.

The BaAka, due to their physical nature and their foraging culture, are, as are all Pygmy groups, traditionally marginalized in a village context. From the earliest Western reports to the latest ethnographic studies in the area, evidence indicates that the various Pygmy groups have been and continue to be treated as inferiors by their non-foraging agrarian neighbors for at least hundreds of years, and they themselves have subsisted as foragers for at least thousands of years (Laden, 1992).

In a very real sense however, the BaAka forest foragers retain a social freedom that the Sangha peoples have lost. The BaAka are at home in their forest environment, they are only seen as inferiors in a village setting, while the Sangha peoples, due to an enormous influx of immigrants into the Dzanga-Sangha area, have been marginalized in their own homeland.
III SUBJECT BACKGROUND

A) Historical Antecedents: BaAka as Living Fossils

Interestingly enough, the first known historical mention of Pygmies dates from about 2250 B.C., and comes to us from the Egyptian pharaoh Nefrikare, Pepi II in the sixth dynasty of the Old Kingdom. Addressed to one of his army's generals it reads

   I have noted thy letter which thou hast sent in order that the king
   might know thou hast descended in safety from Yam with the army with thee.
   Thou hast said in this thy letter that thou hast brought a dancing dwarf
   of the god from the land of the spirits....

   Come northward to the court immediately; thou shall bring this dwarf
   with thee, which thou bringest living and healthy from the land of the spirits,
   for the dances of the god, to gladden the heart of the King of Upper and Lower
   Egypt, Nefrikare, who lives forever.

   (Breasted's Ancient Records of Egypt in Duffy, 1984: 18).

Duffy goes on to illustrate the connection between the Ancient Egyptian empire and the foragers in the forests to the south with an interesting example. He states that

   Bes, the deity of music, dancing and children first appeared c. 2000 B.C.
   on ointment jars, mirrors, and other articles apparently inspired by
   Pygmies brought for entertainment from the source lands of the Nile.
   Ivory statuettes found in a tomb of the Twelfth Dynasty portray naked
   Pygmies dancing, an activity for which they may have been most valued.
   Dated c. 1950 B.C., these statuettes possess both an extraordinary realism
   and a close anthropometric resemblance to "modern" Pygmies.

   (1984: 19)
Of additional interest is the name given to a figure resembling a Pygmy on a monument of the Old Kingdom. The hieroglyphics were deciphered as "Akka", a name some Ituri dwelling Mbuti call themselves today, as well as the name used by the BaAka of the Central African Republic and the Baka foragers of Cameroon.

These facts would indicate that the various forager groups have managed to retain a high degree of cultural integrity over a period of about 4,000 years, not the least of which is their love of dancing. It would also point to the existence of a common cultural and/or linguistic origin shared by all forest forager groups.

As Grinker states in a recent volume, all African forest forager groups have for a long time been malevolently portrayed in popular works, travelogues and early Western exploratory accounts as "living fossils, or models of a lost prelapsarian past" (1993). Indeed, as illustrated below, there is a long history of misunderstanding and misrepresentation of African forest foragers. For example, in 1699 Edward Tyson M.D., Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in England authored a manuscript entitled Anatomy of a Pygmy Compared with that of a Monkey, and Ape and a Man and stated therein that "Pygmies are either apes or monkeys, and not men..." (Tyson, 1699 in Duffy, 1984: 22).

The French-American explorer Paul du Chaillu was best known for attempts to transport a live gorilla to the London Zoo in order to better understand the nature of this reclusive animal. In his published work A Journey to Ashango Land du Chaillu describes an encounter with a band of Pygmies in Gabon, the Obongos. He describes them as "dwarfed wild negroes" (du Chaillu, 1867: 315), and was told by his Ashango hosts that
they would gladly catch an Obongo for him if he wanted to buy "it."

du Chaillu's description of Obongo settlement patterns fits nicely with what we know of forest forager settlement behavior today, and adds much posthumous credibility to his account.

The Obongos, as I have said before, never remain long in one place. They are eminently a migratory people, moving from place to place whenever game becomes scarce...Obongos (or foraging people like them) are said to exist very far to the east, as far, in fact, as the Ashangos have any knowledge....They plant nothing, and depend partly for their vegetable food on roots, berries and nuts, which they find in the forest; indeed, the men spend most of their days and many of their nights in the woods... When they can no longer find wild animals in the locality where they have made their temporary settlements, they.... then decamp.

du Chaillu 1867: 323
(parentheses mine)

du Chaillu also states in his 1867 work that the Obongos speak a language that is essentially Ashango, but also retain "... a mixture of what was their own original language and the languages of the various tribes among whom they have resided for many years past" (1867: 323).

It is unclear how or from what source other than his own reasoning du Chaillu draws this inference, but from what we know of forager groups today, this may in fact be the case. There is no "pan-Pygmy" language, although as we have seen from the example of the Egyptians documenting the existence of people named "Akka", there may have at one time been a language common to the forest foragers which changed over time as the various groups dispersed into different regions and came
into contact with other human populations. Comprehensive linguistic studies among the various forest forager groups would surely be a ripe field of investigation for future researchers.

In his well-known work, *In Darkest Africa*, Henry Morton Stanley describes several encounters with Mbuti forest foragers in the Ituri forest of what was then the Belgian Congo.

In a very telling passage, Stanley describes his men making a "splendid capture of Pygmies." He singled out one female, who identified herself as an "Akka" (recall the ancient Egyptian reference), and stated that this woman was "fitly characteristic of the link long sought between the average modern humanity and its Darwinian progenitors, and certainly deserving of being classed as an extremely low, degraded, almost a bestial type of human being" (Stanley, 1891 in Duffy, 1984: 23). Upon later meeting a Mbuti male, Stanley remarked that the individual "represents the oldest type of primeval man, descended from the outcasts of the earliest ages" (Stanley, 1891 in Duffy, 1984: 24).

Observations such as these published in such a widely received, popular accounts as *In Darkest Africa*, only reinforced misunderstandings and racist notions of these people, that are still prevalent among many segments of the global population today, not the least of which are Central Africans themselves, who justify many of their policies, official and unofficial, towards the forest foragers in terms of these misgivings.
B) Contemporary Literature Review

As stated previously, this study represents original research in the field of land use and tenure among the BaAka, of which there are no previous studies in this area among these people. It is therefore difficult to contextualize this work in terms of a pre-existing corpus, though the studies that touch upon land issues and those that are otherwise relevant to this investigation are discussed in this section.

To begin, African anthropologist Paul Bohannan noted (1961) some basic problems with any study of land tenure in a non-European society and brought to light some pitfalls which the uninformed researcher may stumble into while undertaking any study involving land use and tenure in Africa.

The difficulty lies essentially in the fact that the word "land" immediately calls up the word "tenure," and hence prejudices the next step in any consideration of the position of land in non-European societies. "Tenure" refers to a limited type of relationship between people and land, or, as lawyers would have it, between persons in terms of land; it further assumes a given type of institutional association between the means of production and the allocation of property.

Moreover, the word "land" itself has two meanings of immediate relevance, besides its many others. In the first place, land is a factor of production— a resource; no commodities can be produced without in some way using the resources allocated with land. In the second place, space is a dimension of human society, and most of the space occupied by societies is in fact the land that is concomitantly exploited as a factor of production.

(1961: 133)

Given the points Bohannan makes, any study which attempts to
elucidate issues of land tenure must necessarily investigate use of the land by the subject people and, to the greatest degree possible, attempt to understand their ordering and organizing of their physical space.

As concerns the geographical location of this study, the rain forests of Central Africa represent one of the last natural wilderness frontiers in the world, and provide a home to the (Ba)Aka, Baka, Efe, Mbuti and other groups of forest foragers.

Studies of African forest foragers form almost a sub-field within anthropology, though there is a relatively small but diverse body of anthropological literature on these peoples. However, according to Vansina (1990), "...this corpus suffers from a fatal flaw: it studies only part societies" (1990: 29), often ignoring detailed examination of the settled farming communities which constitute essentially the other half of the hunter-gatherers' economic structure.

After Turnbull's myth-shattering, seminal 1962 monograph, *The Forest People*, researchers interested in this area of study began to realize that to completely understand the Mbuti in particular, or any of the forest forager groups for that matter, one had to examine their relationship with the sedentary agriculturalists who dwelled in villages around the forests where the Mbuti lived. In the Ituri forest of Zaïre, the lives of the Efe foragers are so involved with the Lese agriculturalists that Grinker has described the two groups as "different ethnic groups within a single society (1990: 112)."

Bailey (1989a) argues along similar lines, and raises the important question of who, forager or farmer, will be given preference to the land and its resources in a park setting. Hewlett (1993, 1991 & personal communication) and others (Bahuchet 1985, Bahuchet & Guillaume, 1979,
Ichikawa, 1978) have indicated that there are many similarities in the forager/agriculturalist relations (as described by Grinker between the Efe and the Lese) between the BaAka and settled agriculturalist groups in the C.A.R. and northern Congo. Essentially, these are a mutualistic relationship between forager and agriculturalist, a subservient role adopted by the foragers when in a village setting, including an informal "protector" relationship that the villagers have with the foragers, and a reliance by the villagers on the foragers for magico-religious purposes. For example, if a forager ever gets in trouble with the local police, or another villager with who he does not have a working relationship, his villager "patron" or "protector" will work on his behalf to resolve the problem. Also, members of foraging groups often participate in wedding, and funeral ceremonies for villagers.

In the Ituri, there is no part of the land that is considered empty or unclaimed by either a forest forager band or an agricultural community (Laden, 1992; Bailey, personal communication), and the villager and forager groups have divided the forest into an elaborate system of territories which are known to all the foragers who hunt and collect there. Also in this general area, one forager band's territory might be marked by a stream on one side, a cave on another, a group of old trees on another front. If one band violates another's territory, during a hunt or while collecting honey or edible roots and nuts, the band that has been trespassed against will often demand a portion of the resources that have been taken from "their" territory in the forest, and occasionally, the village associated with the forager band will get involved in the dispute (Laden, 1992: 84). I found this to be essentially the same case in the Dzanga-Sangha area during my own research there. Conflicts provide an
opportunity for people to better themselves and their overall
predicament, and it is not at all uncommon for a villager to accuse "his
neighbor's Pygmies" of trespassing against him while they were working
in his manioc fields or laboring for said agrarian villager.

This aspect of this study is in many ways the most critical, for as
population concentrations continue to rise and forest continues to
diminish in size, such conflicts and land disputes will drastically increase,
as they have in smaller nations to the East (e.g. Rwanda, Burundi).
Additionally, in the forests west of the Ubangi river in Cameroon where
the rain forests (and by extension their accompanying resources) are
smaller than those in the eastern areas, competition for the available
resources must be even keener.

Add to this picture the problems created by the various fly-by-night
logging and strip-mining operations that enter a forested area (the
Slovenia-Bois logging company in the case of the Dzanga-Sangha area);
to be sure, the act of clearcutting either for timber or mineral access
destroys much forest, but these operations act to harm the forest
environment in other ways as well.

The most damaging aspect of these operations is that they create labor
opportunities in the immediate area, and encourage immigration. The
migrant laborers generally clear more land in order to farm for
subsistence, and when the work is finished, many of these suddenly-
jobless immigrants turn to poaching for ivory and bush meat trading to
support themselves. The increased burden on the available resources is
particularly felt by forest foraging groups like the BaAka who as a
general rule need more land per individual to survive by hunting and
foraging than do agrarian peoples. Hewlett (1982, Cavalli-Sforza (1982,
1986), Bahuchet (1982) began to examine this subject in their survey of spatial mobility among African forest foragers in general, not specifically the BaAka of the C.A.R.

In an attempt to encourage the administrators in the various parks (Dzanga, Ndoki, and the proposed nature reserve in Cameroon) to adequately plan for the needs of their foraging populations, these researchers were interested to learn if they could determine how much land a group of BaAka actually needed to subsist by traditional means.

They found that "exploration ranges" (that is, the distances covered by an individual through his or her life) vary according to gender, age, ethnic affiliation, locality and demography. They concluded that as numbers in a forager community increase, each band member's exploration range also increases. This reflects the need to travel further in search of food as more demand is placed on the local resources.

Bahuchet (1992) re-evaluates some of Hewlett's earlier data on foraging and exploration ranges, and is a good basic survey of some of the forest foraging groups and the resources they exploit, but is quite general in scope. He examines spacial distribution of resources in the forest, forager relationship with villagers, and seasonality.

For several years in the late 1980's, Bailey, Laden, Wilkie and others were attempted to determine whether the ancestors of Mbuti and Efe foragers could have ever subsisted in the Ituri forest independent of agriculture. Opposite sides were taken and much sound academic debate ensued. These investigations were productive in that they encompassed a wide array of disciplines and encouraged much research to be done in the Ituri. Additionally these founders of the Ituri research station continue to take great pains to keep the area in isolation from the large
villages and small cities in eastern Zaire. By keeping the area relatively isolated, they discourage loggers and other "developers" from coming to the area and corrupting the balance of forager lifeways as has happened in many other parts of Central Africa. They can be commended for this.

In recent years the prominent researchers in this field (Bahuchet, Bailey, Cavalli-Sforza, Hewlett, Ichikawa, etc.) have conducted general studies to better discern the nature and extent of the relationships that exist between various forest forager groups and their villager counterparts and a host of specific studies geared to illuminating aspects of forest forager society and biology.

Hewlett (1991) has examined the nature of paternal investment in child care and rearing in BaAka society. Ichikawa (1978) examined the factors possibly responsible for the tendency of the Mbuti of the Ituri to change affiliation with a villager group. Bahuchet (1992) examined the social groups of BaAka in the Central African Republic, specifically, the links that exist between members of the same camp. Basically, he surmised that either by birth, someone living in the same community as their parents, or marriage, where daughters usually stay in the communities of their parents, even after they marry, people end up inhabiting the same community. He also presented enough evidence to suggest that if what he described as bride service, the male residing with his wife in the camp of her parents, is the rule, there are almost as many exceptions to that as there are examples of it. For example, he found that many newly married couples may form their own band, or may live in the community of the husband's parents, or with the bride's brothers, or the husband's siblings.

None to date have yet undertaken a detailed examination of land use, and tenure issues that exist within between bands of BaAka foragers.
C) Project Scope, Protocol & Methodology

1) Mapping to what End?

As stated in the introduction, the first key to understanding how land is used and space is organized is of course to define the land area or space in question, and to list as completely as possible the resources utilized by the inhabitants of the land in question. The most effective way to convey these categories of information is in map form. Maps of habitation grounds, and key resource areas such as hunting and foraging grounds and areas of horticulture needed to be made for use as a reference, and as a scientific control for later comparison with "maps" made by the BaAka of these same territories.

In terms of illuminating how these people construe their everyday world, map drawing on the part of the BaAka played a critical role in this study. Once general problems with abstraction are overcome, I found that many BaAka, especially children, are able to draw relatively detailed maps or "place representations" and are intimately familiar with their local environment. Through observation of the map drawing process and study of the BaAka maps in relation to existing maps of the area or those that I produced in the field, I was able to determine which areas and/or resources were assigned value. In general, I found this particular technique among others I considered for this study allowed me to come the closest to visualizing the world as the BaAka do, which was of prime importance in investigating land use and tenure.

2) GPS & Brunton Transit Mapping
The WWF in Bangui has an old but still quite detailed LANDSAT map of the Dzanga-Sangha park showing in good detail all the river systems and tributaries and major settlements. While the original settlements in the area have grown tremendously in size, and newer, smaller ones have cropped up, this satellite map provided an excellent reference and aid for Latitude and Longitude bearings in the region.

Working from this pre-existing map, I drafted scaled down segments for more localized detailed work, and plotted my positions at critical areas with a Magellan global positioning device lent to me by the WWF staff in Bangui, then latter plotted those positions on my scaled down segments to produce a detailed map of a given hunting or foraging territory in the forest. More often then not, it was impossible to get a bearing with the GPS because the forest canopy was too dense to permit the satellite signal to reach my receiver. In these instances, I plotted my bearing with a Brunton pocket transit from a river tributary or major swamp. I could almost always take a reading with the GPS in a clearing at some stage in a days walk to establish a reference point.

3) Transect Walking & Informal Interviews

The general research protocol observed during a transect walk or while accompanying a band of BaAka on a hunt were in keeping with techniques of Rapid Rural Appraisal, specifically outlined by Shoonmaker-Freudenberger in a 1994 paper entitled "Gathering Information in the Field" for those wishing to do rural appraisal. Additionally, walking transects are a familiar research strategy to specialists in the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting, Fishing and Environment, and they felt they understood what I would be doing.
While I began my research doing transects, I soon found the quality of the data to be better and possibly less biased by simply accompanying the BaAka on their daily hunts. The circumstances were less artificial, and I could actually observe what the BaAka were doing instead of asking them what they did. Also, asking questions relating to ownership while we were engaged in an activity involved less abstraction on the part of the BaAka.

During "lulls" in the day's activities, or in forest camps at the end of the day, I would draw place representations in the sand on the ground and ask the BaAka about where we had been that day, what we had either caught or collected, and to whom these resources belonged. It took several weeks for the BaAka that I worked with exclusively on mapping projects to conceptualize the abstraction from physical place in the forest to representations drawn in the sand. Of all the BaAka I worked with, I found the children especially well disposed to abstraction. Blaut (1991) claims that spacial reasoning of this kind is a cultural universal, phylogenetically determined, such that all children are natural mappers. As the grow, Blaut believes, children enter a world that is culturally construed where place knowledge and environmental understanding is partly a function of socialization.

As for my part, I found their ability to recall their local environment in vivid terms remarkable. They knew areas by what had happened there, a hunt or a place where someone saw a snake, which made it a "dangerous place", and so forth. My attempt at having the children draw maps or place representation themselves was less than successful, though with more time invested, perhaps an exercise of this sort might prove more fruitful.
D) "Experience" is not a bad word: the narrative as ethnographic vehicle

...and when you make your secret journey,
you will be a Holy Man.

-The Police

Beyond collection of the types of data discussed above, and the drawing of conclusions based on comparative and interpretive analysis of BaAka place representations, there remains so much left unsaid about BaAka interaction with their environment, so much more information to be conveyed to the reader, be they laymen or scholars, to contextualize the data presented. Anthropologists and geographers have long debated the various ways to present their findings, and the appropriateness of these methods. For the social/ cultural anthropologist and cultural/ human geographer, the quandary of how relay the nature or the "spirit" of a place and yet remain scientific is expressed in the lament by the prominent geographer Harm De Blij in a recent introductory text.

Thus, the cultural landscape consists of buildings and roads and fields and more. But it also possesses an intangible quality; an atmosphere or flavor, a sense of place that is often easy to perceive and yet difficult to define. The smells, sights and sounds of a traditional African market are unmistakable, but try recording those qualities on maps or in some other objective way for comparative study!

-De Blij, 1988:7

In this section, I will investigate the history of geographical and
anthropological writings, some of the current debates surrounding accepted and experimental forms of discourse, and offer arguments to support the careful use of personal narratives in ethnographic accounts.

The traditional (cultural) geographical and (cultural) anthropological fieldworker, much like the universal (though often gender specific) hero as defined most notably by Joseph Campbell, leaves his home for a different land (goes abroad), lives and adventures among an exotic "other" people (conducts fieldwork), then returns home with spoils acquired during his "travailles" (in the case of the latter day "hero" these spoils consist of knowledge of the people he has resided with during the time spent away from his homeland, and on occasion, specimens of indigenous material culture destined for a foreign museum). This pattern in many ways resembles a picaresque fiction; loosely characterized by a lowly man who journeys, willingly or otherwise, to foreign lands, has adventures, and returns home with stories to tell about them. "Through his experiences, the "picaroon" satirizes the society in which he lives" (Cuddon, 1991: 495). While in traditional literature the adventuring hero is masculine, real-world female ethnographers follow this pattern as well.

Finally, but perhaps of greatest importance, the hero imparts a piece of wisdom, a lesson learned or a "moral" if you will, some meaning gleaned from his experience which he may apply to his own life and also teach to others. In the case of the anthropologist, the information gathered during the fieldwork endeavor, while crucial to the study at hand and the career of the fieldworker in general, serves as the hero's tale.

Indeed this last facet of the hero's saga is perhaps modern day anthropology's self-proclaimed *raison d'etre*. The promise of cultural critique, insight into our selves and our society through study of the
culturally different "other". Yet consider for a moment some of the ethnography produced in this century. some of the dry, technical and scientistic presentation of social data- what's missing? Where is the "moral to the story" in these ethnographic accounts? Where is the meaning? As Berger states

Without a story, without an unfolding, there is no meaning. Facts, information, do not in themselves constitute meaning. Facts can be fed into a computer and become factors in a calculation. No meaning comes out of computers, for when we give meaning meaning to an event, that meaning is a response...

(1982: 89)

Anthropological and geographical studies have the potential to reach and affect many, many more people than they do at present. Through carefully chosen examples below, I offer suggestions of how the written accounts of studies in these disciplines might do this, what literary vehicles they might employ to become accessible and appealing to a wider audience.

Social/ cultural anthropologists and cultural/ human geographers today contend with an exceptionally wide variety of subject matter—much of their work being done well outside the traditional scope of their discipline. The boundary between observer and observed have become substantially blurred in the last half century, and in today's world where "difference is encountered in the adjoining neighborhood, (and) the familiar turns up at the ends of the earth", it has become less defined exactly what audience fieldworker's need to gear their writings toward (Clifford, 1988: 14).

"Fieldwork", writes Boon, "must be hauntingly personal and richly
particular..." (1982: 5). In recent years, many ethnographic fieldwork experiences have been converted to personal accounts, and presented as memoirs, stories and autobiographies. These accounts are accessible to a wider audience than those written in classical ethnographic format, and therefore have the potential to be significant to many more people that their traditional counterparts.

Additionally, because these "experimental" ethnographies are not written in the traditional and standard manner, dichotomies in power between observer and observed are to an extent at least textually minimalized, which, in turn, may in fact facilitate re-interpretation of the texts by the "other" being written about. More importantly, such texts do not necessarily claim a Western empiricism for their authority.

Two anthropological terms I use repeatedly in this section are "experience" and "meaning." These particular terms have specific significance within the field of anthropology and I need to define them for the scope of this study. "Experience" is a broadly defined term and especially needs to be "unpacked" here. In a general empirical sense, "experience" is regarded as a datum to be explained in an ethnography, and not a self-evidential given ("and that's the way it was folks") that cannot be debated and analyzed (Michael Fischer, personal communication). "Experience" is generally referred to pejoratively by anthropologists; as socially formulated or simply narcissistic. This, to some degree, has been and continues to be an exclusionary tactic-experience is not enough. One needs anthropological training- one needs to have years of academic indoctrination in order to be able to convert a field "experience" into anything considered significant by the anthropological community (see debate of Donner, 1982 by Pratt in
Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

By a "fieldwork experience", I refer to those sights, smells and sounds encountered by the fieldworker during day-to-day life in the subject society as well as significant social interactions that lead to intimate discoveries of the subject society and the ethnographer's own cultural preconceptions. The day-to-day living experiences lead to familiarity with the people lived with, which in turn contributes to an understanding of the people and their society.

Significant occurrences that dramatically shape the social environment in a fieldwork situation, as well as particularly joyful or horrific and "searing" events that leave themselves forever ingrained in the fieldworker's memory are also a major part of the overall fieldwork experience because they color perceptions of other events.

"Meaning" is generally used in discussions of representation, cognition sense and interpretation, but also may be discussed in terms of significance. When I ask of some modernist ethnographies, "where's the meaning?" I am asking about their significance to people in the contemporary world. What do they mean to contemporary society?

Many of us make decisions in our everyday lives which affect many other people than ourselves. In contemporary global society the decisions many people make are also very far-reaching. If we wish to educate the majority of our society to the realities of "other" societies, other cultures and people, we need works of ethnography accessible and appealing to a wider range of people than have heretofore been targeted and reached. I believe that an ethnography written in the same genre as (for example) The Tiv of Central Nigeria does not mean much to the majority of our educated society. If we wish anthropology through its
vehicle of ethnography to serve as cultural critique for the people of our society- and not simply a collection of data for our files and libraries- the ethnographies, the stories, must be accessible to larger numbers of people than they have previously. They must reinterpret for their intended audience the lifeways, beliefs and values of other societies, they must allow other societies to be understood by the people who are in positions to make decisions which influence these societies. They must, above all, refute incorrect and (therefore) potentially harmful assumptions about these subject societies.

If we are to examine the ethnography from the standpoint of cultural history, we find that it is but one of a myriad of historical manifestations employed over the centuries to assign meaning to experience among a cultural "other." The ethnography can be seen as a particular evolution of travel writing, just one of several ways humans have tried over the centuries to digest, abstract, explain, anchor and otherwise assign meaning to their experiences between themselves and among other peoples. We may additionally examine what sorts of observations have been significant in different historical periods and under different circumstances. The topics addressed in this section are current and critical issues in anthropology, and of great personal interest.

To begin a brief discussion of the various sub-genres or types of travel-writing, it is necessary to understand that travel writing is by no means a single or a simple genre.

In considering the history of travel literature, we note...
how ancient the form is, how popular it has been since
the invention of printing, and how varied are its practitioners,
its fashions, its contents, its types. But because so few writers
have studied the history, it is vague in outline, incomplete
for every century, and most difficult to theorize about.

(Adams, 1983: 161)

Adams summarizes some of the difficulties encountered when
attempting to categorize this immense body of literature. After just a
cursory examination of some of the analyses and discussions of travel
literature today, we learn that European travel literature is found to have
its origins in works such as Caesar's De Bello Gallico, continuing through
the journals of the first circumnavigators of the Earth, through the
"impressionistic sketches of nineteenth-century aesthetes" up to
contemporary travel writers and also including the recent works of
contemporary field ethnographers (Porter, 1991; Adams, 1983; Mortimer,
1990).

This is indeed a massive body of poorly defined and still mainly
untamed literature, needing much scholarly attention in its own right
(Porter, 1991 & Adams, 1983). Nevertheless, a general examination of the
corpus of travel literature reveals several structural formats commonly
used in this genre, each having the origins of its development in a
specific historical context, and each at least generally associated with a
particular breed of traveler, the missionary, the diplomat's wife, the ship's
officer or seaman, the wandering merchant, and so on.

Such examples of travel over the centuries are grouped into roughly
four categories by Adams (1983); the simple letter, the diary or journal,
the narrative, and lastly, "other" formats. This last category includes
accounts written as dialogue between two or more people,
autobiographical accounts, guides for others wishing to traverse the same
ground, memoirs, and accounts written in verse or as poems; their literary origins in eighteenth century imaginary travel literature.

Beyond information on the geography, cultural customs and peoples of "other" places in the letters and written accounts of conquerors, some of the earliest examples of information of other people and places are found in the works of Greek and Roman historians and authors such as Homer and Virgil, themselves both avid travelers of their times. The earliest travel accounts are often compilations of information designed for those wishing to follow in the footsteps of those travelers who had actually compiled that data. Various "crusader manuals" detailed guides to the Nile, the Mediterranean, Jerusalem and the Dead Sea were popular even into the Renaissance (Adams, 1983).

The advent of Columbus' discovery of the Americas and the beginning of an age of global exploration via the ship saw a major change in the form and subject matter of travel literature. Accounts were now presented as journals or diaries of the voyage taken to a new place. The format of the diary, while by no means confined to maritime exploration, developed to a distinct sub-genre of travel literature, and came to be known as voyage literature. From the Conquistadors through the British naval expeditions and colonization to nineteenth-century scientific exploration, this genre of literature flourished and developed.

With voyages of discovery, the voyage itself constituted a scientific institution and praxis. The voyage is not a means of gaining access to the terrain of possible knowledge; but it supports, generates and assembles knowledge as the locus for systematic deductions for celestial and marine observations, for taking samples of flora, fauna and humanity...
The voyage literature of the Age of Discovery continued in the same general form during the times of colonial expansion which followed. The origins of "travel literature", especially in Africa, lay in the early reports of explorers, such as Sir Richard Burton, Mungo Park and others seeking the source of the Nile, the location of Timbuktoo, the fabled kingdom of Prestor John, and other actual and legendary sites of exploitable wealth. These early travelers would often make notes of the geography of the land they were traveling through, and of the people they were living on it. Very general observations of indigenous customs, language and physical appearance of autochthonous people were the most common.

In the last century, the focus of travel writing shifted to studies of the peoples of other societies. In a world of empire and colonialist regimes, there was a perceived need to control subject populations. Control was facilitated through an understanding of the subject peoples and their societies. Again, we see that the focus of writings about the "other", these colonial reports, were tailored to the needs of the society producing them at the time.

Until the turn of the last century, the writings of travelers, colonialists and missionaries were used by students and "experts" of ethnology to draw their conclusions about other peoples. In the early part of this century, Malinowski announced in his classic, genre-establishing ethnography *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922: 4) that the credibility of the traveler's account, mere travel literature and the style of writing typified by nineteenth-century reports by colonial administrators had been "killed by science", "killed", as it were by the more distanced, more
analytical ethnographies of social scientists.

Travel writing and all earlier genres of voyage literature were popularly abandoned by anthropology in favor of the scientific ethnography. Though the accounts of early explorers and voyagers were still made reference to in the scientific ethnographies, the personal accounts of life among "the other", told in terms of human actions, desires and senses, were deemed no longer adequate by the majority of the anthropological community. It was felt that the experiences of "the traveler, the casual observer and the everyday practical man" were not rigorous, analytical or distanced enough for scientific ethnography (Hall & Abbas, 1986: 198).

In a 1986 study Mary Pratt discusses the relative worth of forcing an account of an "other" people (i.e. an ethnography) to be "scientific" and objective, and investigates the desire of Modernist ethnographers to produce a personalized, almost novel-like text in addition to that demanded by their profession. She isolates the competing forms of discourse as experiential and observational.

The distinction is between a discourse that constitutes its authority by anchoring everything that is said in the senses, desires and interests of particular human subjects, especially the speaker; and a discourse that constitutes its authority by detaching everything that is said from the senses, desires and interests of specific human subjects, especially the speaker.

(Pratt, 1986: 205)

Pratt continues her assessment of the post-Modern condition in
anthropology by discussing one of its historical paradoxes. She cites the contradiction between the active participation and engagement required of the anthropologist during fieldwork and the cool, distanced objectification of the subject in the resultant ethnography. She claims this deep-set contradiction to be responsible for the reliance by some anthropologists on the publication of paired works or the "two-book phenomenon" to arrive at the complete account of a fieldwork experience (p. 217).

Around the middle of this century it became fashionable among anthropologists to adopt a practice used by travel writers of the last century. Two accounts, usually published separately, of the fieldwork would be produced. One of these, the ethnography, would always contain the data collected during the fieldwork, presented objectively and with the authority of Western empiricism. The second work would be the ethnographer's account of his or her experiences in the field, a more personal text describing the conditions in which the data featured in the ethnography was collected. An early example of this is Mary Kingsley's 1899 West African Studies (her "just the facts" work) and Travels in West Africa, the account which contextualizes the information she presents in the former, more scholarly monograph. Such classic paired works of ethnography include Mayberry-Lewis' Akwe-Shavante Society, and The Savage and The Innocent, Dumont's Under the Rainbow and The Headsman and I, and Bohannan's The Tiv of Central Nigeria and Return to Laughter.

If our goal as anthropologists is to prove or make significant the lifeways and realities of "other" cultures and societies to our own society, perhaps in the hopes of expanding our awareness or our position in the
global community, possibly even to the idealistic end of ceasing the current destruction of our collective natural and various cultural ecologies, clearly the former, more personal mode of discourse is desirable as well as more directly significant to all people involved in the fieldwork situation.

These descriptive works, especially Return to Laughter, explain in different language than the ethnography the nature of the subject society in each case- an explanation which was somehow not possible- or not accomplished in the ethnography. Each of these anthropologists felt the need to write another work in addition to their ethnography. Return to Laughter for example, explains the nature of witchcraft in West African society to its readers in a way Bohannan couldn't have in her ethnographic account.

Pratt (1986) states that most anthropologists feel their ethnographic writings omit some of the most valuable knowledge they have gained as a result of their fieldwork experience; a personal and humanistic knowledge of the "other" and a deep-rooted knowledge of their own society, which we anthropologists have all along been striving for. Perhaps due to trends of positivist empiricism in vogue at the time, it was the objective observational discourse which "consolidated itself as the orthodox" mode of discourse in this century: the experiential discourse is used as an example of an ethnographic "heresy" to complete the metaphor.

Historically, this is all quite understandable. Malinowski and others sharing his views were writing in the wake of Darwinism and more specifically a scientism which came to be identified with all modern industrial societies. In a general light, science and technology had
become the answer to all of societies' problems, science and applied technology became in many way almost a new religion. If the emergent discipline of anthropology was to be recognized by those facets of society having real power, those considered critical to societies development, or as having real worth in society, or of being anything other than a historical continuation of travel writing, it had to be scientific. It had to be identified with scientific method to be taken seriously.

Discussion of experiences, personal interpretation, first person narration and any emotional, colorful writings were all considered fallible and biased, weak, ethnocentric and solipsistic; in short, irrelevant to the "science of man." How to reconcile this view with the need for cultural critique however, has not met with much success. Reflexive critique and insight into the processes of studying and interacting with another society are critical aspects of human geography and cultural anthropology: they will increasingly serve the most important function as we enter the next millennium. If anthropology is to have any real future, any valuable role in human society, these aspects must play in the forefront of post-Modern anthropological discourse.

Stanley Diamond (1974) states that

Unless the anthropologist confronts his own alienation, which is a special instance of a general condition, and seeks to understand its roots, and subsequently matures as a relentless critic of his own civilization, the very civilization which objectifies man, he cannot understand or even recognize himself in the other or the other in himself.

(Diamond, in Pratt, 1986)
Ethnographers continued to rely on writing paired works, one to satisfy their anthropological audience, and the other, if not only to satisfy themselves, to produce the critique that can only come from a work describing the process by which the ethnographers engage themselves in another society and what happens both to them and to the subject society once they do.

This is not to imply that post-Modernist ethnography is essentially travel writing, for this is obviously not the case. To clarify this point, I follow with three examples of contemporary travel writing and compare them with two examples of experiential ethnographies. While both discourses utilize many of the same literary devices, they are, as we shall see, fundamentally different. Upon comparing Mathiessen's *African Silences*, Lowerre's *Under the Neem Tree*, and Heminway's *No Man's Land* with Stoller's *In Sorcery's Shadow* and Alverson's *Under African Sun*, one fundamental difference is that travel writing, with the exception of Lowerre's work, are a collection of stories fragmented both by space and discontinuities in time.

Mathiessen's work, while it accurately portrays certain aspects of African society, does not in any sustained manner explore that society. His work is a collection of stories from the late sixties until today, focusing on Central African wildlife, those who govern it, who understand it, and those who live day to day in close proximity to it. Mathiessen's writings are a collection of writings about his travels, connected by his involvement with organizations concerned with the preservation of African Wildlife. Mathiessen is the narrator, and every anecdote related in the text was something he personally experienced at one point or another during his residence in Africa.
Television producer John Hemminway's *No man's Land* is constructed in much the same fashion— a series of stories and anecdotes— descriptions of and dialogue with some of the last expatriates living in sub-Saharan Africa. One gains some understanding of what it means to live in Africa, at least from one white man's point of view, but this is all. Yet, the writing is rich and the anecdotes are all very telling about the white expatriate experience in Africa. So again, while some sense of certain aspects of life for certain people in Africa is provided by the text, there is no sustained exploration of that society, no attempt to communicate the reality of Africa from an African's point of view, no attempt to elucidate aspects of African society and culture. But then this work is travel literature, makes no claims to be ethnography.

Susan Lowerre's work, again makes no claims to be ethnography, is neither travel literature in the same sense as the two works described above. *Under the Neem Tree* would perhaps be better entitled "In the Peace Corps." It is best described as "living abroad" literature. In her work, Lowerre describes aspects of her existence during a two-year stay in a small Pulaar village in northern Senegal under the aegis of the Peace Corps. Though the focus of her text is everywhere herself, her illnesses, her dealings with Peace Corps administrators and doctors, and in one instance her life back in upstate New York, she does through all of this manage to stay with one group of people for a reasonably prolonged period of time, and becomes reasonably familiar with their lifeways, their language, their society and its values. Her writing describes her personal discovery of Pulaar society. Again, Lowerre's work is essentially a story; she did not explore any facet of Pulaar society as Bohannan did, for example by examining the concept of witchcraft in rural Nigerian
society.

In a 1991 New York Times Book Review, critic Carol Spindel described Lowerre's writing as belonging to "a body of literature that seems to be rapidly growing- first person accounts of Americans living in other cultures." Spindel continues her definition of Lowerre's genre by stating that "...these memoirs (by Americans living in other societies) are not travel literature because their authors are not traditional travelers. Brought up by mothers who probably read Margaret Mead's magazine columns, they are armchair anthropologists and amateur ethnographers. They tend to leave New Jersey or Virginia to settle in a village in Africa, Asia or South America for at least a year." Perhaps Lowerre's writing style was influenced by Mead and Bohannan as she wrote in Return to Laughter, but Under the Neem Tree is no more than a personal memoir (anthropologically speaking), or a diary if you will of time spent in Africa.

Very similar to Lowerre's work is Marianne Alverson's Under African Sun. She writes about life as she lived it and saw it lived in a small village in the Botswana bush. She lived in this village for the better part of two years with her husband, also a professional anthropologist, and her two young sons. Her text is non-technical, informative and gives a general reader a very good feeling for lifeways, cultural history and society of the people of rural Botswana. This work is classed by the University of Chicago Press as "Travel/ Anthropology/ Women's Studies." I would debate the label of "Travel" simply because there is no traveling going on anywhere in the book. It seems in many instances that "living abroad" literature often falls under the broad classification of travel literature. Under African Sun is more anthropologically oriented than Under the Neem Tree certainly, as it focuses less on the authors life in
the rural village, and more on the people's lives in a rural village setting. The "Womens' Studies" classification is due to the book's concentration on Botswanan village women (which is important because it has traditionally been overlooked), who were more accessible to the author because she was female than they would have been to a male anthropologist.

Though this work gives an excellent general sketch of the environment, day-to-day life and society of rural Botswanan people, it does not delve into a particular aspect of that culture, or even offer any sustained focus on women in rural Botswanan society to make up for this shortcoming. By itself, Under African Sun is enjoyable and informative to read, and had it been advertised to the general reading public, it might have been a popular text. Though I feel this work itself should not be classified as an ethnography, its format of description and dialogue is not simply that of a memoir or a recounting of time spent in another place, and could be suitable for ethnological study because of the information it contains.

Paul Stoller begins the preface to his work with Cheryl Olkes In Sorcery's Shadow by defining it as a memoir, "fashioned from the textures and voices of ethnographic situations" and definitely "not a standard ethnography" (1987: xii). In Stoller's own words, he violates one of the principal conventions of ethnographic realism (which are increasingly being challenged), "according to which the author should be unintrusive in an ethnographic text" (xi).

However in my view, Stoller and Olkes' work succeeds where Lowerre's work failed, or better accomplishes what Alverson's text might have done, and should be seen as an ethnography, albeit an experiential one. In addition to constructing a vivid, colorful and accurate image of
Niger and its cultural landscape, Stoller deeply explores a facet of traditional Songhay culture—witchcraft and sorcery. Stoller also sets out to answer some questions of fundamental importance to anthropology. He tells us in his prologue that the theme of confrontation is inherent in his text—"the clash of two worlds reckoning." Stoller asks about our limits in our quest to understand other peoples.

"Is it ethical for ethnographers to become apprentice sorcerers in their attempt to learn about sorcery? And what are our motives as ethnographers? Are we seekers of knowledge? Self-actualization? Power?"

Upon reading through Stoller and Olkes' work, one becomes aware that their fieldwork methods were not governed by his desire to write *In Sorcery's Shadow* as they did. Nor were their methods greatly different from any other ethnographic fieldworkers in terms of data gathering. Through Stoller's familiarity with the Songhay, their language and society, Stoller was invited to study one of their most guarded and cherished secrets—an aspect of their society that survived decades of French colonialism. To this point, the pattern of what was studied and how data relating to the subject was gathered is in keeping with the best anthropological traditions. The break occurs with Stoller and Olkes' choice of an experiential choice of literary genres.

Stoller and Olkes chose to write their account almost as a novel—full of rich descriptions of the land and the people to the point of being flowery in places—"The skin of his hand was like sun-baked leather, but when he touched my hand it was with the gentleness of a child" (1987: 35)—but everywhere accurate. Many examples of dialogue between Stoller and a *Sorko* or *Marabout* (a traditional West African wise man or magician)
with whom he was discussing Songhay magic rituals and incantations. Again these dialogues read almost like that from a novel, but Stoller tells us that they are all real conversations, that most of his discussions with the Songhay sorcerers were audio taped and later transcribed and translated into English.

*In Sorcery’s Shadow* is not a novel, and is not simply the personal memoirs of one person's experiences in a foreign country. It is a powerful work of great significance to professional anthropology in terms of the questions that it poses and the issues that it raises as regards fieldwork methodology and the manner of writing up results. Unfortunately, the text was limited in publication and was not advertised to the broader reading public, who undoubtedly would have found it easily digestible, informative and of great interest. Stoller and Olkes offer this work to the anthropological community for their contemplation of methodological issues, and while not explicitly stated by the authors, for the community's contemplation of the experiential ethnographic genre as an effective ethnographic vehicle, and possibly an alternative to traditional discourse.

Stoller and Olkes explain that Stoller is a character in the text of *In Sorcery’s Shadow* and further assert that "Every ethnographer is a character in the story of his or her fieldwork" (1987: xi). Presented in this fashion, we (a more general "we") will be able to identify and associate the author's field experience with our own lives. We will also realize that the report is based on one person's interactions and experiences with no claims for an abstract, omniscient understanding of reality (Traweek, personal communication).

As Clifford (1986) explicitly argues, all ethnographies are essentially
fictions (through not necessarily falsehoods!), whether written in technical language, in an authoritative third person narrative, or presented as an experiential unfolding of events in the first person, the account has been interpreted by an individual and subject to that individual’s biases, shaped and re-(de?)formed by them, and is therefore, in a certain sense, a "fiction." Much information gathered during the fieldwork process has been omitted, and the remaining data have been arranged to present the readers with a digestible, perhaps pre-digested, view of one person’s experiences with an "other" society. Both the traditional and the experiential ethnography are fictions (though again, not necessarily falsehoods!), the later being no more fictional than the former.

From a dialectical point of view, it is certainly necessary for us to examine how our own personalities in the field influence the data that we collect; it is certainly necessary for us to acknowledge that who we are determines what we will be able (or willing) to see. Reflexive accounts of the fieldwork process lend insight into this process. Ruby states in the introduction to his edited volume *A Crack in the Mirror* (1982), "The concept of culture as a means of understanding our human-ness is a powerful concept. Too bad we haven't conveyed it to more people in a form that they can apply to their own lives" (p. 25). To this end, therefore, it is Boon’s "richly particular and hauntingly personal" experiences which must be brought to the forefront in an accessible and engaging mode of discourse. We must have meaning in the form of experiential reports as well as positive data.

Thus, beyond returning with a trove of cultural data, the returning fieldworkers, like Coleridge's ancient mariner, like Campbell's universal heroes, can and must impart meaning; insight gained from their field
experiences to other members of their societies who do not, or would otherwise never be in a position to experience another reality and learn about themselves and their own society in the reflection process as the ethnographic fieldworkers (hopefully) do.

Through readable, engaging and personal accounts of life in another society, like Stoller and Olkes' work and to a lesser degree Alverson's text, ethnography can continue to provide for the public cultural and historical data from rapidly decaying traditional societies. Particularly for the more privileged individuals living in the richer countries of our world, many of them part of the global economic and industrial "machine" responsible for the disintegration of the traditional societies of our world, these accounts can and must convey a personal understanding of a different reality and our (both our own and the "other's") mutual humanity in a form accessible to them. If we as anthropologists can succeed in this venture, we will surely have taken a step toward fulfilling our discipline's original self-proclaimed promise of cultural critique by "suggesting reform in the way we live our lives" (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 3).

Throughout the ethnographic work that follows, I will make many references to "villagers", especially relative to "Pygmies." The word "villager" should be understood by the reader to refer to one out of several ethnic, cultural and linguistic group of either Bantu or Sudanic people who maintain either traditional agricultural or fisher-based economies. "Pygmies" in the context of this work should be understood to encompass BaAka-speaking individuals who maintain semi-permanent residences along the roadside and maintain a subsistence hunting and foraging economy.
And now, without further ado, on to the story.
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of paradise

-S.T. Coleridge
Kubla Khan
IV BAAKA INTERACTION WITH THE TROPICAL RAIN FOREST

a) BaAka Society and Community Space

1) Welcome to the Jungle

You think you've heard this before?
Well stick around I'm gonna tell you more....
-Grand Funk Railroad

I had arrived.

The smell of Africa; the unmistakable sweet but somehow rotten, burning smell lingering sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes overbearingly in the sultry, stagnant air once again worked its way up my nostrils.

After a few moments on the ground I didn't even notice it anymore, but those first few breaths, are always unmistakable. They let you know, without a doubt, exactly where you are.

Of all the Third World airports I've arrived in, the shack in Bangui, capital of the C.A.R., or Central African Republic, really didn't seem that bad. Chaotic, sure, but maybe because it is a rather small building, there isn't a lot of room for too much chaos, though I suspected after seeing both French and African automatic rifle-toting troops on the tarmac that the R.C.A., as people call it there, short for Republic Centrafricaine, might be a kind of a hard place to get out of. Thankfully, at that time, I had no idea how right I was to be about that.

At the time, I really just wanted to get to the World Wildlife Fund's office on Avenue Boganda and find out what levels of bureaucracy I
would need to pass through before being allowed to venture south to the town of Bayanga, in the heart of the Dzanga-Sangha dense reserve and the Dzanga-Ndoki national park, where I was to study the BaAka forest foragers for my doctoral dissertation.

One can never be in too much of a hurry to get things done in Africa, especially at the administrative level. If some minister or bureaucrat gets the notion that you in great need of his services to obtain a given permit or authorization for one thing or another, those services become that much more expensive. It is also quite possible to encounter the type of individual who realizes that the only power he has or will ever hold over anyone on this earth lies in his ability to deny you something that you want, and so he will do his utmost to frustrate your efforts, or will simply ignore you altogether.

I was very lucky this time. I found myself in the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting, Fishing, Tourism and the Environment sitting across from Monsieur Gbafolo, the research minister, a rather avuncular, bespectacled and plump Central African who sat proudly behind a huge desk, upon which, in addition to a small collection of office materials, lay a telephone.

In certain less developed countries in Africa, the C.A.R. definitely among them, one can judge a man's importance by the presence or absence of a telephone on his desk. Telephones, photocopiers and the like are prized commodities in some African countries, and the fact that this individual had one on his desk means I was talking to somebody important. If the telephone in question actually works, which it did, as it rang twice while I was in with him, the occupant of the desk is really important, and certainly not one to be toyed with.

The minister read the first page of my twelve-some odd paged proposal
which I had painstakingly translated into French before my arrival, and hummed and nodded approvingly. He placed the document down on his desk, looked at me and asked why I was referring to the BaAka as "forest foragers" and not "Pygmies", a term shunned by American anthropologists as pejorative, almost a racist, label. I began to explain that I had been told by some of my mentors that "Pygmy" was an inherently pejorative term and should be avoided, but before I could finish my explanation, Monsieur Gbafolo interrupted with a good-natured guffaw and lamented the all to "politically correct" nature of my "typically American" proposal.


There was no arguing with that logic. As it turned out, I was to find that the BaAka freely refer to themselves as "Pygmies", and find nothing whatsoever offensive about the term. Rather, they despise the term _Citoyen_, or "citizen", given to them during president turned emperor Jean-Bidel Bokasa's rule in the late seventies. Bokasa had decided that all citizens of the C.A.R., and this was to include the Pygmies, as if they had been something less than human beings before this, must live in permanent villages by the side of a road, in order to facilitate census taking, and more to the point, to facilitate tax collection. Since then, many non-Pygmy villagers refer to their BaAka neighbors sarcastically as "citizens."

Some politically correct people shun you for your general observations about these foraging peoples when you describe them as happy, simple,
living in the moment, even having no understanding of "later." They are often described as environmentally conscious and very attuned to their environment, often described as being "one" with their natural context. These same people will tell you that these descriptions do nothing to illuminate the society of a foraging people, that these descriptions are stereotypical and even harmful.

Yet, when an individual from a Western society arrives to observe individuals in a foraging society, it is these very aspects that are most apparent to that Western observer, perhaps because they are in glaring contrast to the Western mentality. These are the most obvious traits of a foraging people apparent to a Western observer. Almost every day, I would notice how well these stereotypes described the BaAka's behavior. It should be noted that there is more to the BaAka and their society than these stereotypes, much, much more. But with a deeper understanding comes a personal understanding, and this is where, according to traditional ethnography, one's objectivity breaks down, and one's reporting of a society can no longer be considered anthropological and scientific, but must be relegated to an experiential account, a mere storytelling, if you will.

After about a week in Bangui arranging official permission for my research, I was at last ready to head down to Bayanga, the major town in the Dzanga-Sangha reserve, and field head quarters for the WWF project.

So far, the WWF staff who I was presumably doing research for had been ill-equipped to receive me in Bangui, and Jean Marc, a Frenchman working for the WWF in Bayanga, just told me that the house that the Washington office promised me I could use in Bayanga, was now being used by the WWF for an undisclosed purpose, and that I could not stay
there. Every day I had any contact with them, the WWF staff seemed less and less like the friendly conservation and research minded organization I had contacted in Washington. As I climbed into the land rover for the fourteen hour drive down to the forest, I wondered to myself what other surprises would be in store for me along the way.
2) The Tragedy of Bayanga

"Mistah Kurtz.... he dead"
-J.Conrad
The Heart of Darkness

Well before the Libyan loggers arrived in the late sixties', before the current French-owned logging concession began its own operations, and before the WWF came to establish the Dzanga-Sangha reserve, Bayanga was once upon a time a small, sleepy fishing village on the banks of the Sangha river, populated by about seventy to one hundred Dzanga speaking fisher people.

Today, this once traditional Central African village is swollen with immigrants from all over Central and West Africa, people who have come to cash in on employment with the WWF, the logging concession, and the numerous Peace Corps volunteers who themselves work in menial capacities for the WWF. Many others arrive to find there is no employment readily available and turn to poaching elephant for ivory, gorilla for highly-prized meat, infant chimps to be sold to whites as pets, and just about any other animal in the park to sell for meat. Illegal hunting for meat is perhaps the largest problem in the area; because of the overpopulation, the demand for bushmeat among the Africans is high.

The European expatriates working for the WWF and GTZ, live isolated from the Africans and have there own food imported specially for their own consumption. The cases of Evian bottled water (the Cameroonian bottle water just as safe and pure as the French stuff at a fraction of the cost) and Coca-Cola imported twice a month from France for the WWF
employees gives one a very good idea where funds donated by well-meaning individuals to the WWF go.

The World Wildlife Fund operated a small field station on a hill on the outskirts of Bayanga. The WWF staff, Allard Blom, the park's technical advisor, and Jean-Marc Garrau, the agricultural consultant, and several Central Africans, feel that the GTZ staff, all of them German, have no long term commitment to developing the region, and further corrupt and shock the local economy by throwing relatively huge sums of money around. The GTZ workers believe that the WWF staff are too ineffectual in their policy design and enactment to contribute to any significant change toward betterment in the area.

Upon seeing for my self exactly what was happening on the expatriate front, I believed they were both correct in their evaluations of the other.

One complete debacle which occurred while I was working in the area was the construction of the "barrier electrique," or electric fence around the manioc fields of Bayanga. The Germans had themselves quite a good laugh at this one. If not for the hundreds of thousands of contributed American dollars that were wasted, it might actually be funny. The story behind this particular tragedy goes as follows.

The WWF is in the business of saving wildlife. The African villagers are in the business of farming to produce enough manioc to feed themselves, and occasionally a small amount of surplus which is traded along the river for other food goods (fish, bushmeat, etc.). One of the most awesome yet commonplace occurrences around Bayanga is the nightly parade of elephants which amble around happily through the village eating the farmer's manioc. Needless to say, the villagers see the elephants as dangerous to both their staple crop and, as evidenced by the
occasional elephant attack on a human, their person.

In recent years, with the importation of firearms from the numerous logging and mining activities in the region, the villagers were gradually able to acquire the odd rifle, and began to shoot at marauding elephants as they came into the manioc fields. As long as elephants were coming into the fields, the farmers would find some way to kill or repel them. Many farmers reasoned, and correctly so, that if enough elephants died, the rest of the herd would learn to avoid these particular fields.

The WWF's Africa and Madagascar program with their stated purpose of "linking conservation with human needs" devised a solution to this quandary. The "barrier electrique."

While actual figures were never fully disclosed, GTZ officials reasoned that construction of this electric fence around the fields that circle the village of Bayanga must have exceeded half the WWF project's annual budget of roughly US$545, 300.00 for the two years it was being constructed.

Costs associated with the construction of an electric fence in a rain forest include fuel, parts and maintenance for the generators needed to provide electric current for the fence, support for the European technical advisor who has the expertise to construct a working fence (including vehicle, an enormous cost in itself, and canned and packaged food imported from Europe), in addition to the cost of shipping most or in some cases all of these parts, unavailable anywhere in Africa to Central Africa.

When the fence was near completion, it was connected to a power source a few times, to test its operation, and it succeeded in shocking some villager women tending their crops, but the WWF staff was
uncertain about how it would function against an elephant. Two nights later, while the fence had been operating, some elephants who were in the area had simply walked into the fence and broken through it, probably before they even noticed the mild current.

Over the next few days, Mr. Blom and Mr. Garrau had the current voltage stepped up (resulting in even higher operating costs), which seemed to keep the elephants at bay, but the point was raised that the fence, which now encircled the village of Bayanga and its crop fields would be useless in another six months because the soil in the manioc fields would then be depleted and new fields would have to be prepared. This point was made by a Central African community leader living in Bayanga, during an informational meeting between the WWF and local leaders concerning the fence and its operation.

After this gentleman made his point, the meeting ended abruptly in a fit of arguments and blame-laying among the WWF staff. There was, in fact, nothing surprising about this. A manioc field only supports crops for about two years before the soil becomes depleted and a new field is created by slashing and burning (swidden agriculture) a fresh patch of rain forest concentrically outward from Bayanga. The old crop fields tend to be taken up by new settlements for the regions growing population.

What then will be the fate of Bayanga? Perhaps the worst case scenario would be for the GTZ and the WWF staffs to maintain the existence of the park but physically leave the area. This would cause essentially overnight collapse of the region's economic system, and result in grievous damage to the region's ecology through loss of major species due to ivory and meat poaching. So, for the time being, Bayanga continues as best it seems able, any kind of social fabric having
disintegrated long ago.

Walking in the village of Bayanga through the sandy alleys among the mahogany plank shanties and the goats, chickens and children pestering you for cadaux, one is assailed by the smells of burning trash, the penetrating rancor of shallow latrines, of stewing bushmeat, the oppressive odor of human sweat.

One is assailed by shouts of Moonju! from sullen, belligerent adolescents loitering in large groups, just waiting. Waiting for the hours to pass, for the sun to set, for the end of the world, or the end of their own pathetic, purposeless lives.

In all parts of Africa, there is always a name given to white people. In Central Africa, Moonju is believed to have been a corruption of "bonjour," the greeting that the French colonists commonly used when they first arrived in the area.

One is assailed in Africa; by insects, by flies, most simply annoying, though many which inject you with filarial parasites which can cause illness ranging from river blindness to elephantiasis, some like the dreaded tse-tse fly which carry terrible diseases like trypanosomiasis, the usually fatal sleeping sickness.

One is always assailed by the African environment, but this place was different somehow, this place was far worse. Children always beg and pester you, but never before in an African village had the adults been as bad as their children. In other African villages that I have lived and worked in adults are pillars of their community. They constitute the law and order in their villages and have a very defined sense of identity, of history and of pride.

In Bayanga, a patchwork village of immigrants, an artificial
community, there is no sense among the people of belonging, identity or sense of pride in the community. Described by a member of the Wildlife Conservation International/ New York Zoological Society as a "disfunctional community" even the original inhabitants, the Sangha-Sangha fishers are caught up in the social decay of the Bayanga region.

In one sense, they can not be blamed. When the loggers and the diamond miners and the WWF and GTZ conservation projects came and brought their short-lived economic booms to the area, the Sangha-Sangha fishers kept to their subsistence agriculture and trap fishing. The sudden influx of foreign capital spurned an almost overnight inflationary boom in the local economy, attracted even more immigrants to the area and left the Sangha-Sangha peoples unable to participate in the new rapidly expanding economy of their region. They thus became very much marginalized in their own homeland. Now somewhat dispossessed, they too lead a profit-oriented existence.

Fortunately for me, I did not need to spend a great deal of time here. Once I registered myself with the police and the local gendarmes, and convinced them that my research permit was actually authentic, I rented a small room from a Muslim family and began to prepare for my work. A few days later, I was informed that I was obliged to assist the WWF project for two to three weeks by helping to train some African employees and some park guards in basic compass reading techniques. I didn't mind having to do this, I felt it would introduce me to some of the people who worked in the park, and give me some idea about what exactly the WWF did here. Having already spent a week in Bayanga, I was more than ready to go into the bush for a spell. I contemplated this on a walk at the end of my last day there.

Alone at night by the Sangha river, when most people retreat to their
bungalows, one can forget the turmoil of the day. On many nights by the river, trumpeting elephants can be heard on the opposite bank.

The trees hide the brilliant deep rouge of the setting African sun— but the clouds capture and reflect it onto the gently flowing Sangha river.

Palm trees stand in stark silhouette against the glimmering black water, the violet clouds reflecting the setting African sun, the sky a pale, knowing blue.

The breezes, while occasionally cool in Central Africa, are somehow never fresh; there's something rotten there.
3) Jungle Skies

Early the next morning, I was informed that the land rover for the survey team had arrived from Bangui, and the team was ready to proceed into the Ndoki sector of the park to complete a series of fifteen kilometer transects.

This would be really good for me, I reasoned. It would provide a chance to get acclimatized to walking through and living in a particularly dense tropical forest, which I would have to do when I moved into a BaAka village.

It would also provide me with an opportunity to meet a few of the BaAka from the village of Mossopalo, one of the Pygmy communities I was considering moving into for my study, who would be coming along with the survey team to act as pisters or trackers. They would move ahead of the team and clear the way as well as carry the bulk of our meagre supplies for the month we were in the forest.

Later that day, the WWF employees Kenneth and Adienne, armed with their rubber boots and Silva compasses, the park guards Pasquale and Gaston armed with WW-I vintage Springfield rifles and bayonettes, and me, with my Brunton transit, all piled into a badly abused Toyota land cruiser and drove down a mud road cleared through the forest to Salkopa, a small outpost in the Ndoki sector of the park.

After a few hours of bumpy, hot driving, we arrived in Salkopa, a small clearing south of Bayanga along the Sangha river. Here we were based while we completed daily forays into the forest, training with compass and hip chain, a forestry device used to measure distances in a dense forest.
Towards the end of the first day there, after the camp had been set up and we were beginning to prepare manioc and gravy for dinner, I looked up and noticed three quite short people staring at the five of us from several yards away. Adienne started up, speaking quickly in Sangha-Sangha to them, and after a few moments, one of them replied to Adienne.

"Ahh" he turned to us, "these are our pisters."

Everyone else in our group nodded in disinterested acknowledgement, and returned to what ever they had been doing before this interruption. These were our trackers. The people who would help us move and navigate through the dense bush in the weeks ahead of us. These people were BaAka Pygmies, and the three of them had evidently walked from wherever they lived to here.

That evening I picked Adienne's brain about these people. Where had they come from, what language did they speak to him, and so on and so forth for about an hour and a half. Fortunately for me, Adienne was always quite patient with me, and appreciated my interest. He told me that these BaAka had come from Mossopalo, the Pygmy roadside village about five kilometers from Bayanga. This was the village where I was planning to begin my work, and I thought it fortuitous that I would have a chance to meet and work with BaAka from that area before going to the village itself. This, I reasoned, might give me an in with the village.

Adienne continued to explain to me that the language that the BaAka spoke was very similar to Sangha-Sangha, though Pygmies didn't pronounce there words as carefully as they should, and that the Sangha
peoples, of which Adienne was a member, could all speak to and understand the BaAka.

This fact came as little surprise to me, after spending over a year prior to coming to the C.A.R. reading books and papers on the forest foragers. I had learned that the Pygmies in an area always speak a version of the villager language with whom they are associated. The BaAka in this area have for centuries been associated with the Sangha fishers, and it made sense that they would speak a form of Sangha-Sangha. After today, I saw for myself how true this was.

Over the next three weeks, we spent about 19 days creeping through the rain forest. This experience was one of the most educational ones I have ever had. Walking in a rain forest is not the easiest thing to do, not by a long shot. There always seemed to be vines as strong as steel cable covered with thorns shaped like fish hooks ready to snare you and tangle you up. Struggling when caught in the grips of these tropical vines is not only useless, but can prove very dangerous as well. Struggling and trying to force through a dense thicket of vines results in torn clothing and flesh and damaged equipment, which cannot be readily replaced in the forest.

Over those three weeks, I got to know Adienne, Kenneth, Pasquale and Gaston and the BaAka Pygmies. Koto, the shortest and friendliest of the bunch, Mamondélé and Mokoi quite well indeed. They were all quite patient with me while I learned how to walk all over again, Pasquale taught me how to move quietly to avoid startling animals, Adienne would tell me pieces here and there about the history of the park region, and how things got to be the way there are. Kenneth, the wildlife expert in the group, was simply worried that I would die on the
expedition, and that he'd somehow get blamed.

"The forest is no place for a Moonju" he would always admonish. In spite of his worries, we all made it through.

Towards the end of our work in that area, we all felt good. The BaAka were happy to have as many cigarettes as they wanted (that's how the WWF paid them) Pasquale and Gaston were happy to have learned a bit about compass mapping, and I was happy to know two park guards, some decent people in Bayanga, Kenneth and Adienne, who told me I was always welcome at their house for gozo (manioc paste) and palm wine, and the BaAka who could help to introduce me to their band in Mossopalo.

A few days later back in Salkopa, after we had attended to routine camp chores and packed up the bulk of our equipment, we crossed the Sangha river to a large sandy point bar along the far shore. Kenneth, Pasquale, Adienne, Koto and I all lay in the river against the sand bar with the water moving over our bodies. I looked up at the clear blue sky and the crescent moon shining above us and just thought- for a half an hour, maybe more. I just thought- no insects, no screaming, whining children, just the survey team, Koto the BaAka and me, the white alien.

The silence of the late afternoon was broken only by the sound of softly spoken French and Sango, and the river; running over the sand, and over our bodies. Laying with my back against the earth and looking up through the Nitrogen and Oxygen bubble that only gravity and the fortune of the ages holds to the surface of our world, I looked at the moon and thought that only twenty six years ago, men from Earth went
to that place and walked there. I contemplated this with my back against the land where man was born.
4) Stranger in the Forest

How does it feel to stand alone in a dense tropical rain forest?

Surrounded by shades of brown and green, blanketed by the warm, unmoving air, you become aware that you are actually inside a living place, inside a living thing. Inside the guts of an enormous living thing, and being slowly digested.

The sounds and smells of the rain forest are the most particular. A steady buzzing hum, sometimes a throbbing, pulsing noise and all over a damp, cool presence surrounding and enveloping you. Suddenly, a sweet, refreshing delicious smell appears. In the instant you turn your head to find the source, the fragrance is gone, replaced by a foul decaying odor, the sound of something wet and rotten breaking open. Directly in front of me, a hoard of termites exit their mound and begin to swarm.

Somewhere in the canopy high above, a bird began a series of deep throated caw-caw-caw's in rapid succession. When I heard this, I knew I was in the jungle.

Alone in the forest, with only the dim sunlight filtering down through the canopy to remind you of the outside world, one is surrounded by still, heavy silence- silence save for the tiny flies buzzing around my ears. The voices of the BaAka in the distance seem oddly distorted as they echo off the myriad leaves, vines and tree trunks- voices wild in their countenance, melodical in their resonance- voices disappearing deeper into forest.

The first time I entered the BaAka roadside village of Mossopalo, I
made quite a sensation.

"Yabwe Ya Mammi Watta!" the children yelled to each other.

The children's cries resounded as I entered the village.

"Mammi Watta is coming!"

Some of the older children wanted me to come close to them, most of the younger ones, predictably, ran away terrified.

"Mammi Watta" is a thing the BaAka tell their children about to frighten them. It is probably closely akin to "the boogyman" in the West.

"Mammi Watta" is a white person that comes out of the water, where they believe all white people come from, to snatch unwary children and carry them back to a watery doom.

I later imagined the children saying to each other in the moments I approached before they began to cry,

"Hey, remember that story you told me last night about that Mammi Watta thing?"

"Yea..."

"Well, there it is...."

After a few hours, the children in the immediate area where I was sitting and talking with adults calmed down. I soon found that Koto,
Mamondélé and Mokoi had told the BaAka of Mossopalo about me, and that I would be spending a good bit of time here with them.

I communicated with the BaAka through a mixture of French and Sango. Most of them could understand French very well, asked the adults around me if they would mind my visiting them daily and following them into the forest on their net hunts.

"No," the small group replied, "but only if you help..." one older man continued as the others laughed. He was half kidding, but only half. This was the first real insight into BaAka foraging society. Everyone pulls his weight. On communal activities, everyone is expected to participate, except those too young or too old. The elderly do what they can to take care of themselves, but are for the most part looked after by their children.

So for the next month I would walk to Mossopalo every morning, spent a day chasing duiker through the forest with the BaAka, and returned to my rented home on the outskirts of Bayanga. On some days, we would return from the hunt around dusk, and I would sleep under the trees, fully clothed, using my daypack as a pillow. On these days, they weren't sure what to do. They knew it was dangerous to walk on the road at night, because the elephants often walked along the road, and it was not a good idea to encounter elephants that way. Many of them offered the use of their huts, but these were small, and I didn't want to displace anyone, so I slept nearby, between a small cluster of huts by a hearth.

Many of the BaAka told me they had never heard of a mondélé who slept out-of-doors. I replied that many mondélé or white people where I come from liked to camp. They seemed puzzled, but accepted the
answer.

One morning after spending the night I awoke to the steady rhythm of Mosessi and Antonetti pounding manioc. The pounding, almost like a heartbeat, began for me as part of a dream. I was back home in New York running around the track at my old high school. The pounding I was hearing was my own heartbeat in the dream-

Pom-Pum
Pom-Pum

until in my dream I had some sort of semi-conscious realization that could actually hear this pounding noise and I wasn't really running on a track.

My awareness of my true surroundings gradually replaced the imagined context of my dream-state. I felt the early morning chill on my face, and the thick crust on my eyelids from something the BaAka had been burning in their campfires the previous night.

In that moment, I decided for my own comfort that if I was going to be spending more time sleeping in Mossopalo that I might as well be living here. I decided to return to Bayanga today and begin to make preparations to move here. I was fairly confident that the BaAka wouldn't mind, and it would be infinitely more convenient than walking fourteen kilometers back and forth from Bayanga to Mossopalo every day.

I arose, passed by Koto's hut on my out of Mossopalo and found him at the door on his way to the nearby stream for his morning bath. He smiled, and asked me if I had slept well.
"Not too bad Koto," I began, "but I would have slept better in a hut!"

Giggling, which he did often, Koto replied, "Yes, you should build a hut here. It's better for sleeping."

"Maybe I will Koto," I continued, "it would be more peaceful than living with all those bilo in Bayanga." *Bilo* is the BaAka term for non-BaAka agrarian villagers.

"Yes!" he agreed enthusiastically, "much better without *bilo*!"

This was added encouragement. I told him that I'd be back tomorrow.

"*D'accord...*" he replied, and continued giggling on his way down the path to the river.
5) Homes and Hearths

It was about ten o'clock on a Tuesday in April when I walked into Mossopalo to find only a handful of people in the village. Matofi, Makisu and most of the rest of the band were out in the forest. I walked over to Messan's hut and found him inside, laying back on his pole bed smoking banghi. He waved lazily when he saw me, I waved back and sat down outside his hut in the shade and sorted through my daypack as he finished his smoke.

After a few minutes, Messan came out, plopped a smoked duiker hide roughly the size of a door mat on the ground and sat down on it beside me, munching a piece of hearth-baked manioc.

"Messan, mbi pense ni njoni mingi pour visiter place ti wo, village ti wo", I began in Sango, "I think its really nice to visit your place, your village," but walking seven kilometers everyday is too much."

I was really just learning Sango, and I probably used more French words than really exist in Sango, but people always seemed to understand. I continued explaining to Messan that I would much rather live in Mossopalo than walk here every morning. He nodded in agreement as he finished swallowing his gozo, and said "Yes, it would be good for you to live here."

I pointed to a bare area between two abandoned huts and asked if anyone would mind if I built a hut there. Messan looked at the area and said that no one would care. When I asked him who owned that land where I wanted to build a hut, he looked at me with a confused
expression on his face and didn't answer. I asked the question again but rephrased it somewhat to get the general idea across.

"Who is the chief of this land, who controls and uses this land," I asked. He answered that there was no chief, but that the BaAka use this land and control it.

Then Messan paused and said, "Evan, there is no chief here. Some biolo try to talk like they are our chief, and we let them talk this way, but we always do what we want anyway." I nodded as he giggled.

This was the Pygmies' real secret. The villagers thought they controlled the BaAka, but really didn't. Pygmies always do as they please.

I asked Messan again if he was sure that no one would mind, even though I was starting to understand that the BaAka are perhaps the closest thing to a completely egalitarian society, and that if I lived with them, they would unconsciously expect that I would live according to their social norms, and BaAka can live anywhere they choose to build a hut.

Messen again told me that no one would mind if I lived there, and he felt it might be good for the band if I was there. He felt that a mondélé would give them some status in the villagers' eyes.

For the rest of the day, I began to gather information from Messan about my soon-to-be-neighborhood. Who lived where, etc. I started with the names of some of the people I knew, Matofi, Makisu and Koto; Messan pointing out where each of their huts were, and I in turn making notes and sketches in my field book. He then pointed out all the huts and some of the sturdier pole and mud houses near to where I told him I was going to live and told me who lived in each of these. After an afternoon of note taking, I thanked Messan and told him I'd be back tomorrow to
start building my hut.

"Njoni!" he replied with a smile, "Good stuff!" We waved as I walked out of Mossopalo and onto the dusty road back to Bayanga.

The next day began first with a trip to the market. I bought a plastic mat for sleeping, some salt and sugar to be distributed as gifts to my new neighbors, and several tins of Moroccan sardines for me. At best bushmeat tasted rank and gamey, at worst it was dangerous to eat bushmeat that wasn't thoroughly cooked, which was usually the case when BaAka were preparing it. A few hours later I had gathered up my belongings and was on the road to Mossopalo.

When I arrived there, there were many more people in the village than had been there the day before. Apparently, many of the hunters had managed to catch quite a few duiker the previous day, and so were able to take a few days off to rest and live off what they had caught. No one seemed surprised to see me walk into the village with all of my possessions, Messan must have told them I was coming.

I walked between the huts, greeting people as I encountered them, until I reached the spot where I had told Messan I was going to live. I unshouldered my pack, put it at my feet and surveyed my immediate surroundings.

There was a mud and pole house just a few yards away, the two abandoned huts, now almost as bare as skeletons, on either side of me, and two large huts about ten yards away to the north. An old woman and her grandson sat on the ground in front of one of these huts.

Messen appeared out of his hut and came up to greet me. He told me
that I could use the framework from the two abandoned huts to build mine if I wanted, because those huts had belonged to his cousin, and this cousin had since built others. I thanked him and he smiled and turned to go back to his hut.

Great I thought, I can use the saplings. I wondered how to begin building a hut when I turned around to find a small contingent of BaAka children staring at me. These children had all seen me many times before when I came to the village for the day hunts. They had all had ample time to examine me during our walks together through the forest while on hunts, but I was strange enough, different enough to still be a novelty to them, and so they came and stared. They came to stare at the mondélé, to stare at Mammè Water. I stared back at them for a moment, smiled, then watched them retreat to a safe distance. They still weren't completely sure that I wouldn't eat them or abscond with them to the land of the white people. Mildly amused, I turned around and proceeded to prepare for building my hut.

While I was clearing ground for my hut, many of the children became bored and wandered off, though I noticed that I had attracted a smaller audience of women sitting in front of one of the larger huts about ten yards away from where mine would be.

There were three of them sitting on the ground pounding dried chunks of manioc into flour in large mortars. They were carrying on with their work for the most part, but the prospect of watching a mondélé try build a Pygmy hut was too attractive for them not to steal a glance from time to time.

I had layed the bemba saplings used to make the framework of the hut out on the ground and was contemplating how to begin making this
framework. I started by driving the end of one of the poles into the
ground and bending it so that I could drive the other end into the
ground. I was able to do this a few times, and each time I was working
to get one of the ends in the ground, out of the corner of my eye I saw
the women stop what they were doing and watch me with intense
interest. They knew that I had absolutely no idea of what I was doing,
and I only hoped that soon one of them would get up and make this hut
for me.

As things turned out, Lomu, the oldest woman of the bunch was soon
on her feet and hobbling over to me, followed by the two other BaAka
women. They looked at me, the two younger ones with expressions of
amusement, and old Lomu with an expression almost of pleading, as if to
say, "please get out of the way mondélé, and let me make this hut the
right way?"

That was all the encouragement I needed. After about ten minutes,
Lomu had made me a hut any BaAka would be proud of.

I made her a plate of rice and sardines with my camping stove that
evening to thank her, and she enthusiastically accepted. Before the
evening went too far along, Koto appeared at my hut with his wife
Antonetti and his son Maybeyai. Antonetti inspected my new home all
smiles and Koto just giggled for a few minutes until his wife, clearly
having better things to do, was on her way.

Koto lingered a while longer and finally said "Patrón, will you bring
your camera to the Ejengi dance tonight?"

"Koto," I began, "tout d'abord, my name is Evan, not Patrón, and
secondly, what is an Ejengi dance?"
Koto giggled for a few more minutes. I had gotten used to this behavior from him during the survey.

"Ejengi is the forest spirit Patrón," Koto continued, "and we would be happy if you brought your camera to the dance to make light." Many of the BaAka enjoyed the flash on my camera, especially when it went off at night.

I agreed to come and to bring my camera, and Koto remained at my hut for about a half an hour, then led me to the dance. When we arrived in the small clearing just a few hundred feet into the forest from the center of Mossopalo, people were already singing and beating drums. Young boys were spinning and dancing and singing, and older girls and women were lined around the edge of the clearing clapping their hands and singing in rhythm.

Before long, a whirling mass of raphia fibers appeared out of the trees and came swirling into the clearing, causing an uproar among the dancing boys, and the chanting women. For a few moments it took me by complete surprise. What was this thing?

"Ejengi!" The cries echoed.

It turned out to be a man under a body length covering of raphia palm fibers, a man playing the part of the forest spirit for this dance. To the BaAka boys however, this wasn't simply cousin Matofi in a costume, this was Ejengi. This was the spirit they had to learn to communicate with to become successful hunters. They all shouted at the object to come to them. It did come to some, and not others. When some approached it, it fled, when others came, it ran at them, usually causing them to flee. After
some time, the whirling mass disappeared into the forest as mysteriously as it had come. The dance was over, and people, all quite excited and jovial began to go home.

When I arrived home, marveling at what a wonderful place Mossopalo was, I found Lomu, and two young girls making a small hearth outside my hut. Fire is the key to survival in the forest. It is used to cook and to keep warm during cold rains. This was the real welcome. No BaAka home is complete with out a hearth.
6) BaAka Family Units

The BaAka family unit is in almost every case the nuclear family, and the members of this nuclear family are usually the sole occupants of a given hut. Extended family living together commonly occupy separate but adjacent huts. Exceptions to this may be caused by inter-personal conflict between family members or in-laws. Such unresolved conflicts usually result in the offended individuals leaving and taking up residence elsewhere.

When children reach the age of about six or seven, they often build their own huts with their mother's help. Sisters will live together, and Brothers will live together until they are ready to take a mate, then they build a hut with their new spouse. In the case of males, age eighteen on up is an appropriate time to take a wife. Females often become eligible to be brides from the age of fourteen on up.
7) Band Organization and Dynamics

The "band" in BaAka society is at best a very loose definition, and is here defined as the largest group of individuals associated with one dwelling area. A dwelling area may be a five family forest camp, or a twenty five family semi-permanent roadside village.

Even though they are foragers, the semi-permanent road-side villages should not be seen as an artificial social construction in BaAka society. Rather it has been argued (see especially Bailey, 1989a) that African forest forager bands have traditionally been associated with a tribe of agrarian villagers, and that for at least some months during the year, the foragers will reside in a village close to the agrarian non-Pygmy villagers they are associated with and work for them in exchange for agricultural surplus.

When engaged in long-term hunts, those hunts requiring the BaAka to set up a small camp in the forest for a period of weeks to months, the size of the band that co-inhabits a camp is much smaller than the band co-habitating in the semi-permanent village. The reasons for this should be clear. Hunting and collecting, unlike agriculture is not a land-intensive subsistence strategy, and the amount of land needed per individual to survive by hunting and collecting is much greater than for agriculture.
8) Turnbull's "Flux" observed in BaAka Bands

Although Turnbull demonstrated his concept of "flux" among bands of the Mbuti foragers of the Ituri forest, the same process was observed among BaAka bands during this study. In *Wayward Servants* (1965), Turnbull describes this process of seasonal variation in band size.

The composition of the band is fluid, to say the least, and does not follow any unilineal or cognatic descent system. Throughout the forest, the bands are in a constant state of fragmentation as well as in a constant process of fission and fusion. Members of any band are quite likely at any moment to leave and join another band, temporarily or permanently, for any one of a number of reasons. In-law visiting is common and permanent attachments to the band are sometimes accomplished this way. But at the same time, with each successive, monthly change of site, the hunting camp also shows another stage in the over-all process of fission and fusion along recognizable lines of structural cleavage. At certain times of the year..., the band splits up into a number of smaller sub-bands, all still hunting within the same over-all territory, but as independent units.

(Turnbull, 1965; 27)

Among the BaAka of Central Africa, this same numerical fluctuation of band size occurs, again, for a variety of reasons. During my informal interviews with the BaAka I learned that if resources are particularly scarce, the hunters tend to minimize the size of the hunting camp, camps may move more frequently in search of food materials than if food resources were relatively abundant.

From my own observations, I noted that inter-personal relationships play a significant role in band fluctuations. Rifts in bands occur as rifts
develop between members of a given band. If friends become alienated from each other due to a perceived slighting, or an insult or betrayal of some sort, divisions within bands are likely to be seen. On the other hand, in-laws who come to stay with relatives for short periods occasionally manage to integrate well with other band members, and become a part of their relative's band. The BaAka band is, therefore, like the Mbuti band, a fluid, dynamic organization, determined by interpersonal circumstances particular to the members of that band.
b) Ownership & Seasonal Activities

1) Masters of the Maze

I felt gentle hands touching my shoulder-length hair. Molay and Molambo were sitting behind me, taking turns touching me and talking softly about their new *mondélé*. They reasoned that I belonged to them because I was in their camp living and eating with them. These two children in particular were like a Victorian parent's dream. They seemed always quiet, and never in all the time I spent with them did they ever throw tantrums.

They were very curious about me, and I let them sit along side of me for hours, watching me write, watching me shave, watching me eat, watching me as I watched their parents hunt and gather. The first thing I noticed about them was how healthy they looked in comparison to the children in the Mossopalo.

Molay and Molambo and the other children in the forest camp were free from the chiggers, scabies and tape worms so prevalent among young children in the roadside village. A distinct advantage that people who live a nomadic life have over sedentary peoples is freedom from many of the bacterial and parasitic diseases that result from accumulated human waste. The BaAka mentality is essentially nomadic, and so those BaAka living in Mossopalo practice hygiene as if they were in a forest camp, only they do not change locales every three to five weeks as BaAka do when they are in forest camp, so they begin to sully their own living space.

The adults soon learned that on certain days they could leave some of their older children with me and I'd watch over them while they spent
the better part of the day hunting or collecting. After three about weeks Mokamo, the eldest BaAka of Mossopalo and elder in this forest camp told me that we needed to move camp because we had "eaten most of the deer in this forest." I myself had run dry on my own provisions, tinned sardines and powdered milk, and needed to go to Bayanga to purchase some more from the Mauritanian merchants there, who had the best if one of the only stores for many miles.

From our camp it would take a day to walk to Mossopalo, so Mokamo told Ndimagwanjo where they would be moving to make the next camp, because Mokamo wanted to move camp tomorrow at first light, and didn't want to wait until I got back. Ndimagwanjo, Mokoi and I left early the next morning as Mokamo and the other hunters began to gather up their things to move.

Eight hours later, we were back in Mossopalo, and I found Mamboya sitting in the only wooden chair in Mossopalo right in front of my hut, guarding it. I greeted him and thanked him for watching my few belongings in the hut. He asked how the forest was, and I told him that I thought it was much more peaceful than the village. He agreed, but voiced no desire to enter the forest himself. I told him I'd just be spending a day in Mossopalo, then returning to the forest, and asked him if he'd mind watching my hut again. His own house, a more substantial pole and mud dwelling was only about five feet away, and he had no objections.

"Je suis toujours ici..." Mamboya replied.

He was one of the best employees I've ever had while working in
Africa. He was dependable and seemed to like being the sentinel or
guardian for the mondélé. When I'd go to Bayanga, I'd always get
Mamboya a big sack of rice and some salt. When I passed the nights in
Mossopalo, I'd get a goat or two for him.

At about eleven o'clock each night several small herds of goats
belonging to the non-BaAka villagers who lived a bit up the road from
the BaAka village would make their nightly parade through Mossopalo.
The BaAka, for their part, detest the goats, as they make a terrible racket,
and worse still, make an evening meal out of the BaAka's huts. I'd wait
until the goats came through the area between my hut and Mamboya's
house, or until they paused to munch on old Lomu's hut about ten yards
away from mine, walk up to them slowly shining my flashlight in their
eyes, and grab them, quickly strangle them, and bring them back to
Mamboya's hut. The first time I did this, I had to wake poor Mamboya
up out of a sound sleep, but ever after, he would lie awake when the
goats came through, and wait till he heard me come up to his house,
appear through the doorway in the dim tropical moonlight, and whisper
happily in Sango,

"Mecri mingi Patrón! Kekereke!" or "Thanks boss! See ya tomorrow!"

Tonight followed much the same course. Mamboya was glad to see
that I'd be spending the night because he knew that I'd bag a goat for
him. At about eleven thirty, I came to his door with the prize. He took it
quickly looked around the hut-littered forest clearing that was the village
of Mossopalo in the dim moonlight, and whispered "merci!" My night's
work done, I crawled inside my hut, exhausted.

The next day at about ten o'clock, I walked to Bayanga, bought more
provisions for myself, some manioc for the hunting camp, and some rice
for Mamboya, as additional payment for watching my things while I was
away, and also something for him to eat his new goat meat with. After a
few hours in Bayanga, I came back to Mossopalo and spent the
remainder of the day lazing in my hut, tending to the sores on my feet
and legs, and taking a soapy bath in the nearby stream.

At dawn the following day, Ndimagwanjo and I headed back into the
forest, and by day's end we had reached the place where our old hunting
camp had been. Nothing was left save the abandoned huts. All signs of
life, the familiar hearth smells, the peoples' voices, all trace of humanity
was gone. Ndimagwanjo informed me that we'd stay here for the night
as he started to kindle a fire from some wood and embers he'd brought
with him from Mossopalo. We'd stay here for the night in the abandoned
camp and travel to the new camp tomorrow. It was hard to believe that
just a few days ago Mokamo, Molay and Molambo had all been here,
cooking, eating, talking and living, and now there was only this BaAka
ghost town left. Ndimagwanjo and I ate a small supper and went to sleep
in separate huts soon after, but I awoke many times that night to make
sure Ndimagwanjo was still in the hut next to me. Despite the time I had
already spent in the forest, it was still an intimidating prospect being
alone in it, and I did not relish the thought of having to find my way out
if that became necessary. Fortunately, it never did.

By dawn the next day, Ndimagwanjo was gathering up his belongings
and calling gently to me that it was time to go. After I filled my
waterskins from the stream nearby we were off. For the better part of
nine hours we walked through the forest, the vines and creepers tugging
relentlessly at our bodies. Walking through the rain forest was always a
difficult task for me, though at times, it seemed to be a real effort for Ndimagwanjo as well.

At the end of the day, it seemed as if we had literally stumbled upon the new camp, Molay looking up at us with a smile on her face as her mother turned to regard Ndimagwanjo and me before quickly turning back to the task of making a hut for her daughters. The ground clearing where the new huts were was no bigger than a small dormitory room, maybe six square yards, and I marveled at how Ndimagwanjo had found it. During our walk through the forest, he told me he was following trails, but even where they were clear to him, which was by no means everywhere, they were only marked by a broken sapling, a fallen trunk, or a stream. After distributing the manioc I had brought, and unpacking my sleeping mat and tinned provisions into the new hut that Mokamo had already built for me, I asked Ndimagwanjo over dinner how he knew where to go.

"Mokamo me dit ça." He replied quite matter of factly, Mokamo told me.

There was no arguing with that logic. I sat back, completely amazed, seriously impressed and wholly confident in the BaAka's ability to navigate in the dense forest.

Mokamo had told him where the new camp would be before we had left the old camp for Bayanga to buy more supplies. Ndimagwanjo knew the general area, and once back at the old camp site, he managed to find a place six square yards in area in hundreds of square miles of rain forest.

I asked Ndimagwanjo how he knew where to find this place, what had Mokamo told him about where the new camp would be. Ndimagwanjo thought about these questions and finally said that Mokamo had told him
about a place where a hunting party that had included both Ndimagwanjo and Mokamo had caught a bongo, a large and rare species of forest antelope a few years ago. Therefore, it turned out, Ndimagwanjo had been to this place before, and was able to find his way back through the forests he had once been through.

Ndimagwanjo later explained to me after further questioning that he only remembered how to get here from the old forest camp, that he couldn't find the camp without going through it. The most elucidation I could get from him was that he had to be in a certain part of the forest before he could navigate successfully to an even more distant part. This explanation stood to reason with what I was learning about how BaAka talk about, and therefore conceptualize to some degree, their forest environment.

"Places" in the rain forest are named according to what happened there, either in one's lifetime or in recent history For example, Rabongo, the name of the nearby stream where the new camp was located was named after Mokamo's grandfather, who once killed an elephant there. Mokamo had told Ndimagwanjo that the new camp would be at Rabongo, and Ndimagwanjo who had been accompanying his elders on hunts through these forests for twenty something years, remembered how to get there from the first forest camp. Directions to a place do not seem to be given, the place is either know or it is not. In our journey through the forest, Ndimagwanjo seemed to pick up on visual cues as he encountered them. For example, he would make a turn at a fallen tree, or at a stream, he'd follow it until seeing a familiar bank, which he'd then climb. The maps I tried to have Ndimagwanjo draw never got very far. He needed to see a place before knowing where to proceed to from that place.
2) BaAka Seasonal Activities

The following data are presented in table and graph form. The graphs represent the range of activities undertaken by fifty members of the BaAka roadside village of Mossopalo from late January to late June. Mid-April marks the beginning of the rainy season in the Dzanga-Sangha area and noticeable behavior shifts occur.

The data presented in tables 1 and 2 are bootstrapped means and confidence intervals for the fraction of person days spent on hunts, working for villagers, etc., in the dry season and the rainy season. Observations were made on 74 days in the dry season, from February 1 to April 15, 1995, and on 76 days in the rainy season, from April 16 to June 30, 1995. Each number in the table is a ratio, obtained by taking the number of person days spent on a given activity during the season, divided by the total number of person days in that season. Fifty individuals (25 males and their spouses) were monitored by direct and informant observation during this field season. The dry season therefore consists of 50 * 74 person days (50 BaAka * 74 days) and the rainy season consists of 50 * 76 person days.

Bootstrapping is a statistical method of estimating the distribution of sample statistics by re-sampling the original data. The re-sampling is done with replacement; after an observation is drawn, it is replaced in the data "pot", so that each observation may be drawn more than once, or not at all during the re-sampling process. Each re-sampling involves drawing the same number of observations as in the original sample. The sample statistic of interest is then calculated for each of these new samples.

Once a large number of values for the sample statistic have been
obtained through the re-sampling process, the mean and variance of the collection of values can be calculated and used as the mean and variance of the sample statistic. Other features of the sample statistic's distribution can be calculated as desired. All of the bootstrapped statistics are based on 6,000 re-samplings. Assistance with the computer manipulation of the data and the statistics was generously provided by Anthony Postert and Elaine Fortowski, both doctoral students in the Economics department at Rice University.

Following these tables, two graphs, figures 2 and 3 are presented offering visualization of activity frequency in both the dry and the rainy seasons respectively. After these graphs, a map, figure 4, detailing the location and movements of the various hunting camps is shown. Five bands of BaAka from Mossopalo (A-E) are represented. The circle A1 represents the first location of Mokamo's hunting camp (the camp inhabited by the observer). A2 represents the location, Rabongo, where Mokamo's camp moved after three weeks at the old location, and A3 the last location before the group went back to Mossopalo. B represents another Mossopalo band, that moved camp four times in the three month period from mid-April to mid-July, C a band that moved three times, D and E, bands that moved only twice in that time frame. Locations of these camps were established with latitude and longitude data from GPS and later plotted onto the hydrographic map of the Dzanga-Sangha area (fig. 4).

Mapping of the locations of the rainy season hunting camps took approximately three months, from April to mid-June, and would not have been possible without unwavering assistance from Ndimagwanjo, local fishermen who provided many a pirogue ride and the individual
inhabitants of these camps who, allowed us to sleep in their camps after making it clear that they could not feed us. Fortunately, between Ndimagwanjo's ability to locate payo nuts, and the quantity of tinned sardines I would occasionally purchase in Bayanga, we never passed a day without eating.
Table 1.
DRY SEASON (Displayed as % of BaAka engaged in activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day Hunt</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Hunt</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWF Work</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Labor</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idle</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.
RAINY SEASON (Displayed as % of BaAka engaged in activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day Hunt</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Hunt</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWF Work</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Labor</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idle</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dry Season Daily Activity Levels

Note: Area on graph represents proportion of subjects undertaking indicated activity on given day.
Rainy Season Daily Activity Levels

Note: Area on graph represents proportion of subjects undertaking indicated activity on given day.
3) Treefall!

Occasionally in the distance, one can hear a tree falling. When this happens, the first thing one is aware of is something really big is moving through the bush, like a herd of elephants. Finally, you hear from time to time, or feel, more accurately, the thud of the trunk impacting on the forest floor, or else something that has just taken a big footstep.

It was the first tree fall I’d ever heard, and while it was quite some distance away, everyone in the hunting party stopped and glanced at each other when they felt it. It was at this time that the BaAka told me about mokèlé-mamèlé, the legendary rhinoceros-like beast rumored to live deep in the forest. It is commonly believed among peoples in Central Africa, Congo and the Ituri region of Zaire that there is a reclusive beast that lives in the dense inner forests that out-sizes an elephant yet looks something like a rhinoceros and believed by some to be a species of dinosaur.

Everyone had been late returning to camp this day. As daylight began to fade through the veil of leaves that constantly surrounded us, Mokamo even walked a short distance away from the camp and began calling in the direction where the men left in the morning. After a few minutes, Mokamo turned, walked back to the camp and continued separating strands of Mokosà vines that he would soon wind into string for hunting nets.

I asked him where the hunters were, and he told me that they had answered his calls, and were headed back to camp. I hadn’t heard a thing resembling a human voice that had sounded in response to his calls, but with a shrug to myself, I accepted that I didn’t hear what the elder
Pygmy did.

I had already learned that the BaAka possessed a very keen sense of direction in the forest, and saw their environment in terms of a collection of very different plant foods and fungi, whereas upon first arriving, all I could see in the forest was a green blur. On an average day in the forest, a BaAka might look in one direction, and without pointing, call out to another member of the band to collect whatever particular fruit or insect nest he has spotted.

Mokamo did not seem uneasy after this, he said he had heard the hunters, and they were on their way home. Sure enough, about ten minutes later, just as the light was beginning to fade through the canopy of trees, Koto, and the other men came trudging back through camp, carrying two red duikers, an impressive catch for one day, with them.

As night fell, the atmosphere became quite jovial. Between the payo the women had collected during the day, and the two duikers the men had caught, there was more than enough to eat. The hearth fires provided dim for the camp light as they slowly cooked the meat placed on top of them. Peoples faces and arms were illuminated softly as they worked around the fires, keeping warm while anxiously awaiting the meat to be done. In about an hour, they were feasting mightily, talking and laughing as they recounted the story of catching the two antelopes. After a while, bellies began to get full, eyelids became heavy, and the cooking fires returned to their dimly smouldering, normal selves (hearth usually are not made to burn large fires, unless one plans to cook because it uses up too much wood), as the members of the camp prepared to sleep. Even I had put away my field book and stretched out on my sapling trunk bed.
As the camp became quieter, an almost imperceptible noise became quickly all-too perceptible, first to the BaAka, then even to me. The creaking sound of breaking heartwood somewhere very close was upon us, and in complete darkness. A tree, a very large tree at that, was falling, and the sound of branches smashing through the canopy, of branches breaking against each other served to alert us all to the impending danger. People reacted with a start; scrambling out of their huts, grabbing up their children and running.

I leapt up from my pole bed and followed Koto’s wife Antonetti, only because she was the one human form I managed to catch a glimpse of in the darkness, as she ran blind into the bush. In seconds we heard and felt the trunk of an old mahogany tree hitting the ground. After it hit, people stopped running, but the shouting began. Everywhere, and not just by the BaAka. Everything started making noise. Birds were cawing and chirping, tree frogs making their deep-throated sounds, chimpanzees screamed and howled in the distance. It was as if every living thing in the forest had to vent its surprise at the disturbance. Gradually the BaAka settled down and went to sleep, as did many other of the forest creatures. The next day, people got excited again, when we saw just how close to our camp the tree had been. Literally ten feet from Mokamo’s hut, lay the fallen behemoth.

Among the many dangers poised to BaAka camps by the forest, treefalls are some of the most common. When I later asked Antonetti where she had been running to, she replied simply

"Away! Away from mokele-mombele!"
4) Sacred Communication

If communication is an art, we would expect to find in it both beauty and conflict, conflicts that when resolved through the beauty of communicating lead to even greater understanding. In words, in glances, gestures, a laugh, communication by any means, and in any form is sacred. Without it there could be no hope for cooperation, for mutually beneficial co-existence, no hope to live and build together as humans have been doing for millennia, no hope for living as humans.

In the world today, we find many instances where communication has broken down and we are left with suspicion, and internecine strife between different ethnic populations. I wanted to experience communication with the "other" in the rawest possible sense, to prove to what I was already sure of, that with patience and the desire to understand, peoples alien to each other can communicate, and work together in a mutually beneficial way.

Antonetti remained by my side for most of the day, picking ticks out of her son's nose, breast-feeding him when he'd cry, and watching me write in my fieldbook.

"Mbi inga apé..." she'd say looking mesmerized by the motion of the pen over the paper. Antonetti spoke no French, but would speak in Sango in hopes that I could understand her. Sometimes I could.

"Mbi inga apé..." she would repeat again, softer. "I don't know."

She would sit quietly for hours watching me write my field notes, watching the pen move over the paper, making letters that became words, words became sentences.
Many of the BaAka liked to watch me write, staring intently at the words, as if they could comprehend them by trying hard enough, but they would usually become disinterested fairly quickly and leave me be, going about their business. Antonetti however would stay at my side with her child for hours upon hours watching me write. I had observed BaAka "graffiti" very early on, many BaAka would spend some of their idle time painting letters, and numbers and a host of other indefinable symbols along the dirt road with vegetable pigments. They would always proudly point out what they had written to me, and in some cases ask me what they had written. A few looked mildly disappointed when I explained that their assortment of letters and numbers didn't mean anything, a few remained convinced that what they had written had to mean something.

I used to guide their hands with a pen on paper, or with a stick in the dirt to form letters, usually the letters of their name. The BaAka were also very patient with me when it came to speaking parts of their language. One day while accompanying Antonetti, Mosessi and their children on a payo collecting trip, Mosessi sat me down on the forest floor.

"Ngu..." she said and pointed to my waterskin. *Ngu* is the Sango word for water. Figuring she wanted some water I began to hand her the waterskin. She stared at me for a moment before shaking her head and repeating "Ngu...

Perplexed, I repeated the word, then she said "Ahhh.... Ngu ni Sango... ni BaAka c'est 'mai.'"
These were usually the kind of sentences the BaAka spoke to me in. A mix of Sango BaAka and French. When I responded, it was usually more French than anything else. Mosessi was now doing her part to broaden my vocabulary.

"Ma-a-a-i-i." she mouthed slowly. "Mai" was the BaAka word for water.

"Mai doki..." she said with her hand placed on my waterskin. I repeated the phrase without knowing what it meant. She then turned her head to the small stream and said "mai muké!"

"Muké?" I repeated beginning to understand, "you mean mingi?"

"Ahhh oui!" Mosessi replied, her eyes beaming with approval. "Mingi" is the Sango word for "much, many, or alot." "Muké", was obviously the BaAka word for "Mingi."

This tutelage continued for some time, with Mosessi pointing to objects and naming them, and me writing them down in my field book. During the weeks and months that followed I would, when possible, try to use some of the words Mosessi taught me. Often however, when I did this, some BaAka would reason that if this mondélé could speak some words, he must be able to speak BaAka, and they would start talking to me in their native language. The conversation would quickly revert to a haphazard mix of French and Sango.
5) Mokamo's Spear

In the hunting camp, propped up against Mokamo and Mokebe's hut when they were in, was Mokamo's giant spear. When you got close enough to the camp so you could see it through the forest leaves, you could tell that Mokamo was in his hut or close by if you saw the spear lying against his hut.

Every time Mokamo went into the forest to make hunting camp, he took his prized spear. The spear was about ten feet long, and made Mokamo look even smaller when you saw him carrying it from a distance. It was rumored that he had killed many a gorilla with it and even an elephant once, like his grandfather. Gorilla meat is certainly eaten if it is available, but among the BaAka the primary reason for hunting gorilla is to prove your personal courage and skill as a hunter to your peers, and make you more attractive to a potential wife.

While the spear "belonged" to Mokamo in the loosest sense, that is to say if you asked one of the BaAka who the "konza" of the spear was, they'd tell you it was Mokamo, though the elder hunter hardly ever used himself anymore.

During the dry season, when Mokamo spent most of his time in Mossopalo, traveling into the forests only on day hunts, almost any other BaAka in Mossopalo could use Mokamo's spear, if he wasn't already using it himself. Everyone knew he had a nice spear, so if they thought that they might need one, they would go to him and ask for the spear, and on any given day while in forest camp, Mamondélé, Koto or Mokedi would, if they thought they were likely to encounter any gorilla or elephant pick the spear up and keep it with them on their days
foraging activities. If the hunter borrowing the spear made a kill with it, he would customarily give some of the meat to Mokamo and his family as a way of thanking him for the use of the spear, or acknowledging that Mokamo was in fact the true konza of the spear.

"Konza" is the closest word the BaAka wave for ownership. It can mean leader, as in the "leader of a dance," or, as Mokamo was, the "leader of a camp." I investigated this term by asking Mosessi who the konza of her hut was. She replied that she was, because she had built it.

"Who was the konza of her son?" I asked.

"When he is with me, I am. When he is with Antonetti, she is." Mosessi replied.

I found it interesting and worthwhile to examine ownership this way, primarily because before I could effectively investigate ownership of the land and its resources, I needed to examine how the BaAka conceived of ownership in general.

I believe that "Konza" can be better defined therefore as "who is responsible for..." rather than "owner" the way we perceive it in the West, and responsibility is not always limited to the maker of a hut or a spear or even a child, though every child knows exactly who its parents are. While Mokamo was definitely the konza of the spear, anyone using it had to take responsibility for it, just as while Mosessi was the mother and true konza of her son, if Antonetti was acting as a nanny while Mosessi was otherwise occupied, she was responsible for him.

Ownership in BaAka society is much more communal than in the West. Everyone takes responsibility for communal resources but also,
and perhaps more importantly, they take responsibility for each other. This kind of reciprocity is fundamental in BaAka society, indeed perhaps in any foraging society. When you help your neighbor, you in a sense have money in the bank, for when you need help or need food and haven't managed to collect or hunt any, the people you have shared with in the past now have an tacit obligation to help you. What is good for the band turns out to be good for the individual BaAka at one stage of the game or another. Individuals inevitably fall on hard times, and when they do, the neighbors they have shared with in the past will likely share with them.
6) Days of Hunger

Around the middle of May every year, as the rains begin to come with increasing frequency and duration, the game in the forest begins to disperse, as water can be found more abundantly everywhere, and not just around rivers and swamps as is the case in the dry season. As this occurs, blue duiker, red duiker and bongo, the preferred game of the BaAka, disperse in the forest and are not as easily caught by the hunters as they are during the dry season. Even the less palatable game, porcupines and pangolins are harder to find, and hunters may spend days on hunts and still come up empty handed.

In the Central African Republic near Bayanga, some BaAka spend much of the rainy season in the employ of a villager, helping to clear land for manioc planting, tending the fields, or working as laborers building houses and making thatch roofs. BaAka working for villagers in this capacity are generally paid in kind, given a fair amount of manioc for themselves and their family, rather than paid with cash, which is not always available even to many villagers. At least in this relationship, the BaAka are taking foodstuffs back to their families and therefore providing for them, the same way as if they were returning from the hunt with bushmeat.

As a general rule, when BaAka are given money, they buy luxury items, cheap wrist watches, cigarettes, lighters, bottled beer, etc.; items they really have no practical use for, save for their "status" value. As the BaAka have for so long been treated at best as second class citizens, at worst, like property of their villager "patrons", they have been over-exposed to the villager value system, which, of course, apes everything
western. Therefore, the BaAka can create a feeling of equality with the villagers by possessing articles of clothing, watches, cigarettes, lighters and the like. Mere possession of banda or "stuff" does not grant BaAka any status at all among the villagers, for they will always be Pygmies, and no amount of trinket ownership will change that. What's worse, is that both GTZ and the WWF are encouraging and in fact training the BaAka to work for money.

There are, I was overjoyed to find, many groups of BaAka who want no part of the Westernization trend that seems to be running amok in the Dzanga-Sangha reserve these days, and when the rains come, they form into small bands of four or five families and move two-three days walk into the forest making hunting camps there for periods of many months.

The days are spent mostly foraging, the males searching for porcupine burrows and beehives, collecting pieces of termite-infested logs along the way and eating the termites as the go, the women, on the whole search for payo nuts and comestible mushrooms.

One evening after following some hunters around all day I sat exhausted with my back against the pole structure of Koto's hut. The thin wooden poles easily supported my narrow frame, shrinking a little more with each passing day. I looked up from the ground as Koto began to divide a small antelope carcass into four sections. They had caught one small blue duiker all day, and they claimed that for this, it had been a good day indeed. A blue duiker might have been caught in less than an hour during the dry season. But for a day during the rains they told me, this was almost a miracle.

The men entered their huts, removed the barely smouldering embers from the bottom of the hearth ash and began to kindle cooking fires. A
few minutes later, the pungent smell of cooking bushmeat drifted through the camp. I learned that the BaAka, like all hunting peoples do not bleed their game upon killing or preparing it. The blood is rich in vitamin C, of which they utilize few other significant source in this environment.

As the camp waits for the stews to cook, the women then tell the men about the trees where they located bee or fly hives, so that tomorrow they can seek out the hives and either scale the tree if it happens to be surrounded by vines and smoke the bees out of the hive, or spend seven to eight hours chopping the tree down if they cannot climb it to get at the honey. More often than not, at the onset of the rainy season the men return to camp empty handed, so when a bee hive is found, much time is invested to procure that resource. Honey may even be considered a staple food during this time, for it is consumed even more than the payo nuts.

I inevitably ended up sharing more of my own food during this time than I would have liked, and while this only consisted of slightly moldy bread and tinned sardines, I ended up feeling hungry most of the time, just like every body else in the camp. One evening after I managed to drift off to sleep I had some mefloquine- enhanced dreams that I was back home, walking through my neighbors' houses looking in their kitchens and refrigerators for food, but in every house there was nothing. A while later, I had a dream that I was in a restaurant somewhere, eating the best lasagne I'd ever had. That dream was so vivid I woke up chewing, and as I did, I felt that delicious dream meal evaporate from my mouth. Dreams like this often led to midnight sobs.
7) The Honeyfeast

"Et, qu'est que-ce ça?" I asked Ndimagwanjo as he continued to collect the thin, reddish fluid from the gash left by his adze in the fallen tree trunk.

"Ça c'est la miel" he replied, never taking his eyes off of the flow of honey.

"Et comment dit-on ça en BaAka?" I asked fascinated.

"Ça c'est Kouma" Ndimagwanjo stated matter of factly.

A few hours later, we came upon a large tree covered with many vines scaling its length. The BaAka became excited, and two individuals began to climb the tree. When I asked him what the excitement was all about, Ndimagwanjo told me that we had found more honey.

In a short time several large pieces of honeycomb were brought down and distributed on the ground. Honey, unlike meat or payo seeds, when found is usually consumed immediately, rather than brought back to a camp. When there are sick or elderly people in the camp, a small portion of the coveted raw sugar is wrapped carefully in a leaf, and saved for them.

In the middle of the honeyfeast, Ndimagwanjo turned to me and presented a small portion of honeycomb to me.

"Ça c'est la miel..." Ndimagwanjo explained to me with a serious
expression on his face.

"Et comment dit-on ça en BaAka?" I asked, half way expecting the reply I got from him.

"Ça c'est Saku" Ndimagwanjo answered, not sensing anything wrong with his answer even though just thirty minutes ago he had told me that the BaAka name for honey was Kouma. Rather than pursue the issue with him right then, I accepted his answer, and wrote the name down in my fieldbook right next to Kouma.

By the end of the day, I had five different names for honey written in my fieldbook. I sat down on an inverted gozo mortar outside my hut and began to try to make sense of all this.

During the course of the day, I noticed that each time Ndimagwanjo gave me a different name for honey, the substance he was describing was slightly different. Either the texture of the honey itself, or the amount of honeycomb present in the honey, whether the honey was taken form a living tree or from a log on the ground, whether it was honey from stinging or a fly-like stingless bee; all these factors will determine, for the BaAka, what the substance is.

In sum, there are at least eleven different names for honey used by the BaAka. There may be more, while I encountered seven of these different types first hand, and asked Ndimagwanjo about the rest, as noted earlier, any type of abstraction in a Western sense is unfamiliar to the BaAka, and like listing even members of their own immediate nuclear family, there may be more varieties than came to Ndimagwanjo's mind while he was reciting the many names for honey.

To be as thorough as possible, every time the BaAka I was camping
with found honey while out in the forest gathering *paya* and looking for tracks and spoor of animals, I would make sure to ask Mokamo or Mosessi what its BaAka name was. I never encountered any type of honey that wasn’t already in my notes, and while there may be other types, I am reasonably confident that at least the major honey types have been listed herein. They are as follows.

*Kouma*: a thin, reddish honey from fly-like stingless bees collected from a nest in a tree trunk

*Saku*: as above, but with chunks of honeycomb

*Ouba*: stinging bee honey from a fallen log

*Bwangi*: honeycomb from an older hive; not yielding much honey

*Mambouya*: honeycomb from a hive with the majority of non-adults in the late larval stage—little honey, many well developed stinging bee larva

*Mangi*: stinging bee honeycomb full of honey, very few larva

*Bodi*: honey from a hive full of stinging adult bees that had to be smoked out before the honey could be collected

*Ndiba*: honey produced by a stingless, ground dwelling bee, often recovered from a rotting log

*Ebodo*: stinging bee honeycomb removed from hive by hand around noon (no smoke needed at this time, most of the adults are away from the hive)

*Mbeni*: as above, but with a honeycomb full of liquid honey

*Ekolé*: as Kouma, but collected from a nest in the ground

When I first began researching the BaAka and other Pygmy groups in
Central Africa, I believed that honey found during a hunt was consumed on the spot as a treat for those who found it. It is certainly a treat to be found relative to other sources of nutrition in the forest, but especially during the rainy season when game is scarce, it proves to be often times the sole source of nourishment, the only thing consumed for periods of days at a time. During the beginning months of the rainy season, honey is in fact a staple of the BaAka diet, and often, the sole source of nourishment.

Just as the Eskimos have seven different words for snow (see Carpenter, 1973), the BaAka have several names for one of their most important staples during the long, hungry days of the rainy season.

As an aside, it is worth making a brief note about the BaAka (and perhaps pan-Pygmy) metabolism. Cavalli-Sforza (1986) notes very high chronic levels of blood sugar among BaAka, who were all healthy and non-diabetic. Several Western researchers co-habitating with BaAka and other Pygmy peoples when ingesting amounts of honey equal to that which the Pygmies were ingesting were unable to metabolize the glucose as quickly as the Pygmies can and became unconscious for several minutes afterward (Hewlett and Sarnot, personal communication).

During my stay with the BaAka, I never attempted to drink as much honey as I saw my adaptive band members ingesting. I did sample each type of honey we found, but upon eating even a moderately sized piece of honeycomb, I found myself feeling lightheaded and dizzy.
8) Malaria Dreams

When taking one of the quinine-derived drugs such as chloroquine phosphate as a prophylaxis against malaria, or mefloquine phosphate in regions where there are chloroquine-resistant malaria strains, one almost always experiences at least some of the side-effects the pharmaceutical companies that manufacture these drugs warn of. These side-effects can include dizziness, nausea, vomiting on occasion, gastric pains, headache, hair loss, blurred vision among others, but at the top of the list, is always "vivid dreams."

In my experience, the gastric problems disappear in about a week or so, the hair loss is noticeable when large, curative doses of the drugs are taken, and the dreams begin after about a month on the drug. Any major change in life; diet, location, behavior, social or cultural context, can produce seemingly odd or easily remembered dreams, as can any period of stress, which anyone doing work in the African rain forest will certainly be under.

However, the stress one is under combined with the secondary effects of the anti-malarial drugs can easily result, as it did in my case, in extremely vivid, though surreal "in-color" dream sequences. Sometimes these dreams can be an interesting diversion to the monotony of fieldwork. Other times they can be unsettling, disturbing and often downright disorienting, when one is already disoriented enough.

During the several months I spent in Central Africa, I had a series of very "interesting" dreams.

The fever had gotten worse during the day. At 4:00pm it was 103°F, now it was pushing 104.5°F. Fearing malaria, I took three Fansidar tablets
and went to sleep. I stayed in my hut for about thirty minutes, when I
had to go down to the stream and drench myself in cold water because I
felt as if I were burning up. I stayed in the stream that whole night.

At one point, I remember feeling like I had just awoken from a bad
dream. A dream that had now, thank God, ended. I was really home, I
felt, home in Port Washington, on a clear summer day, down at the
docks where my father and I used to keep our old sailboat. There wasn't
any sound in this dream, but that didn't strike me as unusual. It seemed
all very real.

I felt awake and completely alert as I looked up at the cotton ball
clouds drifting in the rich blue June sky; a fresh, cool breeze blowing as I
walked down the pier. At the end of the dock, was the most beautiful
sailing vessel I had ever seen in my life. An elegant, sturdy twin-masted
schooner; pennants and Union billowing fully in the wind. The
gangplank leading from the dock to the ship's deck was out, ready to
receive passengers.

As I stood at the end of the dock admiring the ship, a man in a Navy
admiral's dress blue uniform came on deck from below and waved to
me. As I drew closer, I recognized his face. It was Mark, a friend of mine
and my father's, and the owner of a marine hardware store in town. In
reality, Mark had drowned the previous November in an accident in
Port Washington, and in my dream I was aware that he had died, but it
nonetheless struck me as quite normal that he was here now, and that he
was the captain of this beautiful ship.

I do not know if even the most skillful writer could describe
completely what I felt in this dream at that moment. The weather was
ideal, the sun was warm, I was seemingly poised on the verge of
boarding the most wonderful ship I had ever beheld, and I was home. That was the most important factor in my happiness in that dream. I wasn't in an African jungle, alone, hungry and sick, I was in the place I had grown up in, the place I knew to be my home. In my dream, everyone I knew and cared about was in that town. I had everything that I had ever wanted in my life right there.

Mark looked radiantly happy and peaceful as he smiled and extended his hand to me from the deck of that magnificent vessel. I stood at the base of the gangplank and looked up. I was about to ask permission to come aboard, when everything about the dream suddenly seemed more intense, somehow more real.

I could feel the wind on my face, the fresh, cool beautiful wind, I could smell the sea, I could see the grain and the splinters in the wooden gangplank, the detail in everything, and I was beginning to hear seagulls crying in the air around the bay. Moment by moment, the dream was becoming more lifelike.

I was soon able to smell, feel, touch and almost taste this place. I knew that if I asked permission to come aboard, Mark would have said "granted" and I would have been completely there, wherever "there" was, because this could not have been my real home, because I was in Central Africa not Port Washington, and Mark was dead. Wherever this place was though, it was beautiful, and I felt wonderful to be there.

Just as I was about to ask Mark if I could board, someone seemed to say very definitely "Not yet."

I couldn't hear the words in the dream, nor was there anyone else in the dream, but I knew they were being spoken, and very firmly.
"It's not time yet."
"It's not time..."

I felt cold.

It was raining.

Feeling ripped from that beautiful place, I had just enough clarity of thought to realize what had happened. I had been passed out in the stream near Mossopalo against a log. Was it just another Mefloquine-induced "vivid dream?" I reached up and pulled myself out of the water and into the rainstorm and gazed at my naked skin, my hips and groin covered with an ugly heat rash. I felt exhausted and nauseated, walked back to my hut and lay down until morning, drifting in and out of a feverish sleep.

I wondered later if I had been about to die. If this "dream" had been an example of what some people refer to as an out of body or near death experiences. Any practically-minded individual would certainly credit the whole episode to the effects of the fever and the Mefloquine. For myself, I will reserve judgement on what really might have been going on, except to note that this was the most realistic, most beautiful dream that I can remember ever having. It may have been nothing more than this, nothing but a dream, albeit an extremely vivid one.

If, on the other hand, I was on the verge of passing away, and this was not a dream so much as it was a transformation of consciousness interpreted in terms of symbols familiar to me; home, the bay, Mark, the sailboat, etc., there was nothing uncomfortable or frightening about any of it. In many ways it would have been easier and more comfortable for
me to "stay" in that dream or "go" onto the sailboat than to "come back"
to the stream near Mossopalo. If this was a genuine supernatural
experience, I can say to others without hesitation that there is nothing to
fear about the moment of death, that it seemed to me to be the beginning
of a journey to a peaceful and beautiful place.
C) Forest Territories and Tenure

1) A Meeting in the Forest

A week or so after this episode I began to feel better. I was pretty sure that it hadn't been malaria, but I wasn't sure what it had been. The fever went on for a few days, then went down gradually over a week. Finally, after I felt that I had rested enough, I was ready to go back into the forest. Ndimagwanjo had been coming by every day to bring me fresh water from the stream, and today I told him I was ready to rejoin Mokamo and the rest.

"C'est bon!" he replied enthusiastically, "We'll go today!" In a few hours, we collected what we needed, and headed off. Three days later, we found the camp where everyone was. By now the forest was becoming quite familiar to me. I felt better here than in Mossopalo, and certainly better than Bayanga. It was quiet, much cooler underneath the canopy than in the steady sunlight that beat down in the clearings of the village during the day.

The forest was the BaAka's true element, I remember writing one day in my fieldbook. Here they really come alive. One day while following Koto, Ndimagwanjo, Mamondélé and Mokamo through the forest, we spotted some other BaAka, walking through the forest doing exactly what we were. Looking for food. I had never seen these BaAka before, they were not residents of Mossopalo, and judging from the expression on Mokamo's face, he didn't recognize them either.

The two parties stood facing each other for a few moments then Mokamo called out to the eldest hunter in the other party. That man responded in BaAka and the two greeted each other with a touch of the
hands. They began talking as the members of the other BaAka band began looking at me quizically. Koto began to giggle and told me in French that they were asking Mokamo where he had gotten this *mondélé* from. Where had he found it, they wanted to know. Mokamo told them something like, "This *mondélé* follows us. He goes with us through the forest."

Gradually, we all sat down as it became apparent that we were going to be talking for a while. Mokamo and the elder BaAka for the other band exchanged *banghi* cigarettes and continued their conversation, as the other members continued to stare at me.

After a while, Mokamo and the other elder stood up, shook hands and parted. Koto, Ndimagwanjo, Mamondélé and I followed Mokamo, the hunters of the other BaAka band following their *konza*. When I asked Mokamo who they were, he told me that they were from another village far north of Mossopalo, but that they were BaAka. He said that their *konza* and he talked about where the other members of their respective bands were hunting, how the hunting was going, and general gossip about villagers. After the meeting both groups parted to avoid entering the general area where each other's groups were trying to hunt and gather. When I asked Mokamo which group "owned" this part of the forest, he didn't understand my question. I repeated myself and asked who the *konza* of this forest was. He looked at me blankly and finally said

"Ejengi."

Later, back at the camp, through Ndimagwanjo I was able to figure out that there were no "property lines" as such in the forest. That commonly
when two bands meet, they figure out where each other's members are and try to avoid these areas, not so much out of courtesy, but for the simple and practical reason that if there are other hunters there, there will not be as much game or collectables in that area.
2) Ejengi: The Living Forest

Of the many evening time dances that I witnessed in Mossopalo, none was so memorable as the last evening. It was the largest crowd that I had ever seen at one of these night time dances, with a large group of BaAka boys waiting to see Ejengi.

This was the real purpose behind these dances, Mokamo once explained to me during a lazy afternoon, the would be hunters, the would be husbands must learn to "see" Ejengi and know his thoughts. Only some people can "see Ejengi" he had said. Those who can know what Ejengi is thinking, they know what makes the forest happy, and they tell the rest of their community what the spirit of the forest wants done. The elders often sit in a group during these dances and one by one during the dance stand up, dance with Ejengi and "sing his thoughts", they sing about what the community must do in order to keep Ejengi happy. These are the ones who are said to be able to "see" Ejengi.

Every one in a BaAka community knows how important it is to keep the forest happy with them. They depend on the forest for their very survival, and keeping the forest spirit happy with them is of prime concern. During one of the earlier Ejengi dances I attended in Mossopalo, I remember asking Ndimagwanjo exactly who or what Ejengi was. He had replied that Ejengi was the konza of the forest. The "owner" or one responsible for the forest. Back then I was still struggling with the meaning of the BaAka word konza, tonight in Mossopalo however, I was sure that I finally understood.

As an anthropologist, the function of the Ejengi dances seemed clear to me. They serve to strengthen group solidarity, which is all-important in
BaAka society; if the band is cohesive, each individual BaAka is more prosperous. When the elders who can "see" Ejengi dance with him and sing "his thoughts," they are essentially passing decrees on what the band should do. As there is no chief or headman in BaAka society, the elders, who have had the most experience, make decisions as a group and claim that these decisions are coming from the most revered source, the forest spirit himself. As no one would ever dare defy the source that brings the necessities of life to the BaAka, unless he or she wished to be exiled from the community, everyone concedes to the wishes of the elders.

This functionalist explanation for the Ejengi dances points to the core value or guiding morality of the BaAka: group coherence above all things. Personal disagreements are always swiftly resolved. If they cannot be, groups of people separate, but they do so in groups. The good of the group is always placed before the good of the individual, and in this way the BaAka maximize their ties of reciprocity, which are often critical for their survival living as foragers in the rain forest.

Koto and I sat on the fringes of the clearing watching the men and boys dance together with Ejengi in the pale moonlight, on my last night in Mossopalo before going back home. We saw Messan and his dead sister's widower Makisu dancing together and singing with smiles on their faces. The two had recently made up after a protracted period of hostility after Makisu's wife had died from what was probably cirrhosis of the liver about a year ago. Makisu and his wife had had a single child, Sau Sau, who had been born severely retarded, a result of fetal alcohol syndrome. Messan and everyone else in Mossopalo knew that his sister had always drunk too much, but Messan blamed Makisu for letting her continue to the point of death, and Makisu had blamed Messan for the
condition of his sister.

After a recent hunt, Messan brought Makisu a large portion of red duiker meat, knowing that after the death of his wife he had fallen on hard times, and offered his renewed friendship. With barely a moment's hesitation, Makisu accepted the gift and his brother in law's friendship.

"It is good that Messan and his brother-in-law have made up", I said to Koto as we watched the two dancing together with many, many others, "now Sau Sau will have a bigger family."

"Evani", Koto began, his usual comic smile absent, "I think you can see Ejengi now..."
3) Moon Over Madrid

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul....

-S.T. Coleridge

They took me from Charles deGaulle airport in a wheelchair to an ambulance waiting outside. The French sky was cold, overcast and rainy. I usually love weather like this, but with a fever of 103°F and having just spent six months in the rain forest it was too cold, too different, too much of a shock.

I rode silently in the back of the ambulance to the Centre Hospitalier de Gennesse only a few miles from the airport, where I was to spend the next four days. The doctors there never did reach a diagnosis, but the fever gradually went down over the next week. I was quite happy to be out of that place and into a small hotel in the city where I was able to get some real rest. The hospital stay was too confusing for me, different nurses coming into the room at all hours taking blood samples, blood pressure, body temperature, fussing with the bed, fussing with the damned IV in my arm. The Central Hotel was where I began the healing process, the recovery from my ordeal. Just to take a hot shower, and sleep in a bed with clean sheets, undisturbed for hours, was heaven-sent bliss. After a few days I took the train from Paris to Chamartin station in
Madrid, where I finally met up with my friend Marta after all the months of letter writing during my time in the bush.

For the most part, my time in Madrid was wonderfully therapeutic. Central Africa had left me drained, physically and emotionally, and I needed the rest.

It was now just after 10 o'clock, and the city's night face was beginning to show itself. Looking down Calle Orense, I watched the people moving back and forth in front of tall, off-white colored buildings bordering either side, the entire scene silhouetted by a deep light blue sky turning vibrant purple on the opposite horizon, a delicate breeze blew the Spanish summer air through my clothes and over my body, now, both delightfully clean.

Madrid, once only a city of my imagination, was now quite real. As real to me as the BaAka and their world. Thoughts of Mossopalo, Mamboya and the forest flitted in and out of my thoughts sporadically, uncontrollably. Part of me, maybe most of me, was still there.

As as I sat at the café table smoking and writing about a world thousands of miles away, the green traffic lights turned to red and back again, the white street lights faded into the distance down Calle Orense like an artist's exercise in perspective.

The neon lights along the bottom of the buildings, the various and sundry store fronts and facades all fade into the distance as the cars and their headlights flow rhythmically along the Calle while the sky overhead turns darker still- now a profound midnight blue.

I crushed out my cigarette, and laid a few hundred pesetas on the café table. I stood, stretched briefly, and walked away down one of the myriad streets among the cars, lights and people that are the city of
Madrid, and into the clear, warm, goodnight.
4) A Darkening Place

You will come to a place
where the streets are not marked,
some windows are lighted,
but mostly they're darked...

-Dr. Suess

Three months after returning to America, I still felt odd, and on occasion experienced waves of nausea. Much of the evening stomach pain I had experienced while in Europe had gone, but frequent bowel movements and diurnal heart burn still persisted.

Upon arriving back at my university in Houston, I noticed a mild swelling on my left ankle, which while at the time I reasoned was a sprain from a jog I took the previous day, was to herald a month long nightmare. I made a long-overdue trip to the doctor, and thereupon my problems promptly began.

Clichés are clichés for one very good reason—there is generally a lot of truth to them. The clichéd phrase of "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing..." is all too true, especially when members of the medical profession who know "a little bit" about parasitic diseases tell one of their patients what they think instead of steering them towards someone who knows.

After after a blood test and after producing several stool samples, I was diagnosed with Strongyloidiasis, a mild enough tropical and sub-tropical disease which often appears even in the rural United States. This, I was told, would account for my exceedingly high white blood cell count, my
gastric disorders, occasional fevers and nausea, and, probably, the
doctors guessed, the strange swelling on my ankle, which at this point
had subsided in its original location and appeared elsewhere on my
lower leg. The drug Thiabendazole was prescribed for the
Strongyloidiasis, and after taking the two day course, I felt much better.
After a few days however, I felt feverish again, and my entire left calf
began to swell. Upset, extremely alarmed and mentally almost
completely exhausted, of course returned to the specialist, a professor of
medicine at the University of Texas, who tried telling me that this was
probably just an after-effect of taking the drug to kill the *Strongyloides*
organism, and asking me what was upsetting me so much. I, in turn,
tried telling myself that this man was a doctor, a specialist of infectious
diseases, and that he must know best. I tried not to worry about it.

Over the next week, my leg became a hot, swollen, painful parody of
its former self. At one point, I tried to walk to the University library from
my house, normally a seven minute walk, and had to turn back minutes
after leaving because it was too painful to walk. I spent most of that
week lying on my bed, trying to believe that the doctor knew best and
that as he said this swelling would "...all just go away."

When I finally couldn't stand it anymore, out of desperation I asked a
friend to take me to the emergency room of a local hospital. While they
were concerned and friendly enough at the hospital, the doctors on duty
were predictably unprepared to diagnose a tropical illness. They ran
some tests to check for obstructed veins or blood clots, of which they
found none, and recommended that I speak to the same infectious disease
specialist that had accused me of worrying too much about my swollen
limb. I naturally returned to him the next day and he berated me for
going to an emergency room instead of a specialist, meaning himself, in
the first place. I only wanted to be cured of whatever horrific affliction I had, if that was even possible.

I didn't have any energy left to argue with him or even defend my action of going to the emergency room, which I considered then and now quite reasonable. He prescribed another course of Thiabendazole and sent me on my way. I took the stuff over the weekend and watched in a state of resigned panic as my lower left leg swelled to even larger proportions, my ankle completely misshapen, and my foot looking vaguely like a football, almost as if someone had inflated it with air from a tire pump. The entire leg from the knee down was hot, extremely painful and marked with hive-like serpentine rashes where the adult parasitic worms were moving through the sub-cutaneous tissues of my leg.

I have never been closer to madness than I was at this point. My head felt as if it was full of water, and I could feel it moving around, churning. An ocean in my skull. I was disoriented, and confused, and panicking. I only wanted to go home to die. I couldn't stand the confusion anymore. I was so tired, so sick and tired of being afraid. I just wanted my peace. Peace to be alone, to die, in peace and comfort. So terrified.

Early Monday morning, I went to the student health service, where I had begun my whole ordeal, and collapsed in sobs. I had no idea what more to do, my leg had developed a secondary streptococcus infection at this point, and was covered with blisters in addition to looking as horrible as it did. The doctor there was kind, and made arrangements for me to enter a hospital as she called the infectious disease specialist I had been seeing. I asked her if I was going to loose the leg. She told me no, but that it would probably remain permanently swollen due to damaged
lymph nodes. I almost didn't care at that point as long as they could take
the pain away. I would still be able to walk I thought.

About an hour later, I was in the office of the infectious disease
specialist, allowing him to re-examine my leg for the third or fourth time.
It looked positively horrible now.

"Well I don't think this is strongyloidiasis..." he said pensively.

No shit. I thought.

All bitterness aside, to the man's professional credit, his next guess
turned out to be right.

"It might be Loa loa..."

Loa-Loa? Right.

Sure, that's the ticket.

Low-ah low-ah. I turned the syllables over and over in my mind. It
sounded like some kind of Hawaiian cocktail.

"Yes, it is starting to look like Loa loa now..." he spoke mostly to
himself as he began looking through a small handbook of
pharmaceuticals.

Gee, thanks doc, I thought to myself bewilderedly, now all our
problems are solved. What the hell is Loa loa, and maybe, if its not too
much trouble, can we get rid of it?
After a few minutes pouring over some manuals, the good doctor told me that he was ordering some diethylcarbamazine citrate tablets from the Center for Disease Control and that if I noticed something moving in front of my field of vision, specifically, if I felt a worm moving in my eye, to go at once to the emergency room. The eye is apparently a favorite vacation spot for the *Loa loa* filaria, and if they are present there, they can be surgically removed.

The doctor then wrote me a prescription for some antibiotics to get rid of the secondary strep infection in my leg, and told me that within a few days his office would get in touch with me and make arrangements to administer the diethylcarbamazine citrate in a hospital. Most people can tolerate this drug with little if any side effects, but on occasion it can produce headache and even coma. Also, the doctor told me, if the filaria have begun to produce offspring, severe allergic reactions can occur due to dying microfilaria. If any of this was to happen, the doctor explained, a hospital is the best place to be. I couldn't agree with him enough.

After three days in the hospital having my nurses stop in every three hours or so to make sure I hadn't died, the infectious disease specialist decided that the diethylcarbamazine wasn't going to affect me in any adverse way, he sent me home in a wheelchair. The swelling in my lower leg had subsided, but now my left knee was swollen so much I was almost unable to bend it.

After about a week, the swelling had disappeared for the most part, I had some occasional episodes after that, but the worst seemed to be over. After another week I jogged three miles at a slow pace, did some push-ups and sit-ups. For the first time in several months, I exercised. I felt so alive after that run, so human and whole- that was the best word to
describe the feeling I had- whole. I felt whole again, like I was ready to
rejoin the world of the living. Ready to be human again.

It was hard enough coming back to Houston after a prolonged
absence- seeing people and places that were once familiar, walking in a
world I felt I once belonged in, though now, I felt as if I were only
existing in that world, a world that had gone on and gotten along just
fine without me.

After all this, I can honestly say I do not feel as though I have ever
suffered. I can state with complete conviction that I have been
uncomfortable in my life, but I have had it comparatively easy.

When I was aware of it, I found myself actively cursing the day I ever
set foot in Central Africa- that steaming, fetid place- I felt as if no good
could ever possibly come from what I had done there. After observing
first hand how WWF contract employees operated in the field, and what
their priorities were, I was completely certain my sponsors in the
Washington office of the WWF wouldn't be the least bit interested in the
conclusions from my study.

My body was healing, but my mind was still an open sore. In Central
Africa I had dreamed of home. I suppose part of coming full circle to
recovery involves being home and dreaming of Central Africa.

Of the dreams I can remember, I have had only a few in color in my
entire life, the mefloquine induced ones in Africa notwithstanding. It had
been months since I'd been back, months since I'd stopped taking
mefloquine. Yet the particular dream I had this night in Houston was in
color.

This dream was about me, my illness, both mental and physical, and
healing. It was the first dream I had about healing. Prior to this date, the
dreams I had were all nightmares for the most part, vaguely defined,
black voids of terror consumed my nights, my days were consumed by incessant worry. This was a break from all that.

I dreamed that I had just awoken from a nightmare back in the rain forest in Africa. I woke up in the Mokamo's forest camp, but no one was there, only the abandoned bee-hive huts remained, and the one I had awoken in. It was almost like the morning I awoke in the abandoned camp with Ndimagwanjo, after sleeping there one night on our way to the new camp except that now I was completely alone, and it was near twilight, not morning.

All the cooking pots, the hunting nets, Mokamo's spear, anything any of the BaAka would have come back for was gone. Nothing save for the skeletons of the twig and leaf huts, and the trampled ground where the Mokamo, Koto, the rest of the hunters and their children had been.

I crawled out of the hut, and stood up. There was no sound of anyone nearby, and all the embers on the hearths were cold. Where had everyone gone?

I hurried down to the stream a few meters away to see if Koto or Mokamo or any of the children were there, but again, there was no one. To make matters worse, I kept hearing something, something big, moving through the forest. It was in the distance, but it was getting closer every moment.

In my dream, I knew that it was *mokele-mombele*, the mythical beast the BaAka told me about, but this *mokele-mombele* of my dreams was worse. This evil creature knew that I was there, it was coming to get me, and I knew without a doubt, that it would do something horrible if it caught me. I felt a terrible urgency in the dream. It was dark, I was alone in a forest that I didn't know, and *mokele-mombele* was after me and getting
closer all the time. I had to get away, but if I tried to flee I'd be running blind into the forest like the night the tree fell in the camp.

After a terrible moment of total panic, I saw something through the leaves. It was a faint reddish light, the glow of a smouldering log. I looked harder at it and saw Molambo and Molay dimly illuminated by the light, hiding in the bush looking at me. When they noticed that I saw them, they waved to me and started to run through the forest, scattering embers from their smouldering log behind them, turning back every once so often to wave to me frantically.

"Come on!" their expressions seemed to say. I was paralyzed with fear, and they were running too fast. Running away. But the embers, I could see them. I broke free from my fear and started running on the path, following the trail of embers and just barely keeping sight of Molay and Molambo through the darkness. Mokele-mombo was behind me, but I was getting away from it. I knew Molay and Molambo were running to a safe place, and that I'd be OK if I could make it there too; if I could just follow the trail of embers out of this darkening place. I continued to follow the embers and got ever closer to the two children as I got further and further from the beast that was pursuing me. Shortly we came to a clearing in the forest, and just beyond that clearing I could see my father's house in New York. The children had lead me home.

In the last instants before I awoke with a start, they stopped in the clearing, turned to me and said in English "you'll be OK now, you're safe," and then they disappeared into the forest of my dream.
5) Guardians of the Embers

Alone and lost in a darkening place where hope cannot be found,
find a dying ember, fallen on the ground.
Gather up this lonely spark and protect its feeble light,
for with this ember we can kindle
warming fires for the night.

Alone and lost in a darkening place where we cannot find our way,
the glow from these dim embers, will guide us 'til the day.
So guard and keep these lonely sparks and feed their feeble light,
for embers dim, once nurtured,
continue burning through the night.

- For Emily, from a dream in Thames Ditton
June, 1995

Now, when I think back to Mossopalo and my time spent with the BaAka, I wonder how they are doing, how their lives are changing, if the children are growing up as children of Mossopalo, or as children of the forest. I remember my time in Mokamo's hunting camp, and I wonder if Molambo and Molay are still helping their mother build huts and hearths, and learning where to find payo trees from her. I wonder if Mokamo's grandson listens to him recounting his stories of battles with gorilla and spear hunts of elephants and dreams of being a great hunter like his grandfather someday, or does he dream about what he believes the white man has? The machines and cars and wrist watches and radios and Western clothing are already used as symbols of wealth and success
by the villagers, and many of the BaAka, hoping in vain to be seen as equals by the villagers aspire to what they perceive to be a "Western" way of life, and as a result end up forsaking many of their traditional lifeways. Much of the future of the BaAka at least in this part of Africa will be determined in the next generation. Thankfully, many BaAka in this region actively shun the lifestyles of the Europeans and the villagers, and want nothing to do with changes to their lifestyle. As long as there are people like this, as long as there are bands going into the forest during the rains and making camp, there will be other generations of foragers.

When I asked Mokamo whether or not he wanted to see his grandchildren grow up to be hunters, he answered me in French, "I hope so."

"I hope they will learn to see Ejengi."

Hope is perhaps one of the most powerful words in any human language. "Hope" represents the possibility of a better, brighter tomorrow, no matter how terrible your circumstances today. Hope is a good thing, as the popular author Stephen King once wrote, maybe the best of all things, and any truly good thing never dies.

I hope, and I also believe, that many of the children could see Ejengi that last night in Mossopalo. I believe that they saw Ejengi dancing for the first time by the glow of the hearth fires, the fires that they will inherit someday. Their responsibility for keeping those fires most of them already know, they are the konza of those fires, the guardians of those fires, the konza of their own tenuous foraging lifestyle. A lifestyle that like hearth embers will soon die out if not protected and nurtured, if not
kept alive by the next generation. For the future of the BaAka foragers, these children are the guardians of the embers of their foraging lifestyle, and like the embers of a fire, the BaAka children represent for their culture most of all, hope.
V SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The ultimate voyage of discovery lies not
in seeking new landscapes, but in seeing
with new eyes.

-Marcel Proust

Little Boy's thinking of the things he's seen,
Scary as the werewolf on the matinee screen.
Little Boy's shrinking like a leprechaun.
Good-bye cruel world, Little Boy's gone.

-Jimmy Buffett

In the end, there is something poignantly and terribly sad about all of this. Between the moment field notes are written and the time they are re-read, there is an abyss. Perhaps, in some sense, the whole fieldwork experience can't be appreciated for years after it has been undertaken, and then of course so many things about the subject culture will have changed, that insights are more than likely no longer applicable to the people in question, if those people are even still living.

I have often found, as have many other fieldworkers that I've worked with over the years, something nostalgic about looking back at old field diaries. Looking back through the yellowed pages at the colorful and vivid descriptions of events that happened many years ago; what often seems like lifetimes ago. Looking back at the pages smeared with mud from the swamp where the notes were being written, the pencil writing smudged from the sweat that was running down the fieldworker's hand
as he was writing, the small insects caught between the pages, now pressed and almost a part of the notes themselves. The occasional small mementos tucked into the diary in places. So much about the moment of observation all comes back when looking at an old field diary. So much about what was happening to the fieldworker at the time. So much about the place where he or she was.

Any work of ethnography is as much about the fieldworker as it is about the subject being investigated. The best any anthropological fieldworker can do is to observe as much as possible about his surroundings, about the people he is living with, about the daily events as possible, drawing inferences as they occur to him, whether in the field, during the write up, or even many years after the ethnography is completed. Even though one does one's best to remain objective, the ethnography is ultimately the most essential personal drama: one individual's interpretations, a view of a different place, a different people, through one person's eyes.

Perhaps a great deal of the sentimentality the fieldworker feels when looking back at an old field experience, perhaps the greater part of the nostalgia, is for the person he was when he was doing the study; for the younger, less knowledgeable, perhaps even more innocent man alone in the jungle among strangers. Part of the sadness of the fieldwork experience lies in the fact that the ethnographer has lost the person that he used to be; that he has been truly changed by the field experience, and in a sense has died; with an older, and hopefully wiser person existing where the younger ethnographer once did.

All human societies by their nature gather and accumulate knowledge of their physical and social surroundings. A major part of this knowledge
gathering process involves letting go of our younger selves to make
room for our older and wiser selves. Indeed, this is perhaps the only way
we, as people, can learn; the only way we, as humans, can grow.
a) Summary of Findings

The major objective of this field study was to illuminate the systems of land use and land tenure among the BaAka, their land-use patterns and also to understand as completely as possible their cognitive perceptions of the space they inhabit and utilize.

After the close of the field season, it became clear that there are many contradicting expectations as to the future of the various territories that exist within the reserve by the various groups who utilize them. Having an understanding of what each constituents' beliefs and ultimately, expectations are, may allow management authorities to better resolve disputes or at least predict where disputes will arise, and hopefully how best to handle them when they do.

In the interest of conforming to the scientific method, and certainly for the sake of continuity, I will now individually address the original questions posed in the introduction of this dissertation, which were the same questions posed in my original research proposal to the World Wildlife Fund and the Pitt Rivers Museum of Oxford University.

These original questions posed were designed to obtain as completely as possible in a limited time a working knowledge of the critical issues facing the BaAka, their society and their land. Many of these questions could be broken down into more specific sub-questions yet further and investigated more completely; indeed, one could spend a long field season investigating any one of these questions in greater depth.

These questions again, each answered separately, are as follows.

1. What are the uses of the land and what are the general features that
are used as landmarks to distinguish the various band territories?

The land is used by the BaAka for essentially every facet of their lives. Of primary importance to BaAka subsistence during the wet season is the collection of Payo nuts (*Irvingia excelsa*) and various types of honey. During the dry season, net hunting of duiker (predominantly *Cephalophus monticola* but also *Cephalophus callipygus*) and trapping of small mammals becomes the dominant use of the forest land. The majority of the BaAka who are involved with and paid by the WWF and GTZ projects rely considerably less on hunting and foraging than their more traditionally minded counterparts. These basically numerate BaAka are increasingly beginning to purchase processed foods (bread, rice, canned meats, etc.), and now only resort to foraging and participation in net hunts when they are out of money and awaiting the next job from the WWF/GTZ project. Unfortunately, those BaAka who work predominantly for the project are no longer needing to go into the forest for long periods of time and their offspring are living mostly in the larger semi-permanent villages by the side of the road, rather than in the forest camps, where they learn the skills necessary to survive in the forest.

The second half of this question was partially investigated in Section III, where we examined the literature on exploration ranges. Mass migrations of forest foragers are very unusual, most individuals living all of their lives in a 150km radius of where they were born. All BaAka who live traditionally and use the forest year round on a regular basis have an idea of where other BaAka villages are, and what parts of the forest they are likely to encounter other forager bands. In all instances when I observed an encounter between different bands in the forest, both groups
behaved with tolerance and even friendliness with each other.

"Ownership," as we have seen, is not a concept that is applied to land, except that the BaAka hunting in a given area have rights to what they manage to catch and what they collect. They are "responsible" for the resources they obtain, in how they distribute them, and strangers would not commonly be allowed to hunt where one BaAka band is already hunting. However, while I was with Mokamo's band, we twice came upon other BaAka bands in the forest, and what occurred on each occasion was a friendly greeting, and a talk over some banghi about where each band had been and how the hunting was in the respective areas. The two groups then continued on their way, each careful not to go where into the general areas where they now knew the others to be. As land cannot be "owned" except perhaps when a band is hunting on it, there are no natural features that are used to distinguish between the property of various bands, because they do not own property.

2. What are the BaAka foragers' perceptions of rights to land (and its accompanying resources), what are the farmer's conceptions of land tenure and are these two perceptions in conflict?

The BaAka believe that that the forest is theirs to hunt in, and collect from. As far as individual rights to a particular resource, if they kill a game animal (for example) single handedly, they can distribute the meat as they wish (though they always distribute it). As far as gathered semi-perishable resources (such as payo for example), they are usually gathered by one member of a nuclear family for consumption by that family, although as noted in earlier sections, very often members of other
families, but still members of the same band help themselves freely to collected resources without ever asking permission.

The farmers run by a simple rule, if they or BaAka acting in their employ clear a section of forest for manioc planting, that land, and all the manioc on it is theirs. Conflicts often arise when during periods of famine, BaAka steal manioc from the villager who hired them in the first place. This results in the villager demanding work from the BaAka who stole from him at a later date. Conflicts of this nature are resolved as simply as this. During periods of famine in the forest, the villagers expect that the BaAka will attempt to steal from them, and are essentially resigned to this. They accept that the BaAka need to eat. More complicated disputes may arise when a BaAka steals from a villager with whom he does not have an association. Usually the victim of the theft will seek out the villager with whom the thieving BaAka are associated, and demand compensation. The usual sequence of events in this instance involves the villager commanding the BaAka he is associated with to perform labor for the villager from whom they stole.

3. How has the nationalizing of some areas into parkland affected the traditional lifeways and behavior of the BaAka and their associated agriculturalist group(s)?
   a) Is sufficient land being allotted to the BaAka to allow them to continue their practice of foraging?
   b) Once nationalized, who is responsible for enforcing territorial boundaries?
   c) How are traditional BaAka settlement patterns being affected by constraints on land?
The shortest and the most true answer is that the nationalizing of the vast tracks of forest into protected parkland has badly hurt the ability of the BaAka to continue a traditional hunting and foraging existence.

Parkland is completely off limits to everyone; no one may hunt, collect, even drink the water there, including the BaAka. Sadly, the WWF has not initiated any sort of community outreach or even basic education program regarding the park to explain to people why lands that they once used are now suddenly off-limits to them.

In the regions closest to Bayanga, some BaAka are unlikely to make their living in the traditional manner, and so turn to laboring in the villager manioc fields and selling their services as house builders and roof makers. This shift in BaAka traditional economy has resulted in a change in settlement patterns. The roadside villages that a foraging BaAka might spend five to six months out of a year in, are becoming lived in more or less year round, and the smaller forest hunting favored by nomadic BaAka are no longer being made with regularity.

4. How much time do the BaAka spend in each area (i.e. horticultural plot, honey collecting area, net hunting area, etc.,) and how does time spent in an area relate to the subsistence value of that area's resources?

As presented earlier, the time spent collecting (or hunting) a resource relates directly to the subsistence value of that resource. The more time and effort spent in collecting a resource, the more important that resource. In the rainy season, when the game is dispersed through the forest and difficult to locate, honey becomes a staple nutrient.

Manioc horticulture, while never a particularly critical subsistence
strategy among the BaAka, is not a part of their rainy season subsistence economy. The villagers get about two manioc harvests a year; at the end of the dry season around April and at the end of the rainy season around October. Even during the dry season the only activity performed by BaAka in their horticulture areas is collection of manioc root, little if any effort goes into clearing or maintaining the plots.

Finally, the hunting/foraging strategies differ greatly between the rainy and the dry seasons. During the dry season, the hunters spend seven hours to three day-long forays in the forest foraging and hunting. During the rainy season, they spend at least one and usually several months at a time in the forest in camps that move on the average every two to three weeks.

5. What are the main causes of land disputes between neighboring bands and how are violators of the territorial boundaries dealt with?

Throughout the course of this study there were no conflicts observed involving land, nor anything which might suggest that conflicts over land might ever occur. Small, usually quickly resolved conflicts over resources (division of game meat, who gets the biggest piece, who is entitled to a share of gathered payo nuts, etc.) do often occur, usually, perhaps predictably in times where the resources are few and in great demand.

If an able-bodied member of a BaAka band is constantly taking resources from others without reciprocating, that member will almost certainly be ostracized from the band, forced to move away from the others. Group integrity is valued very highly among the BaAka, and is
critical if the individual band members are to survive.

BaAka are often enough caught up in a land dispute between farmers however. Many villagers employ BaAka to work in their manioc fields, burning tracks of forest for new fields, clearing fields and maintaining them once the crops are planted. The villagers usually allow the BaAka to take enough manioc home to their own families as payment for their labor. Quite often one farmer's employed BaAka may accidentally or intentionally take from another farmer's field.

When this occurs, the two villagers enter into a dispute, which is usually resolved quickly, but often at the BaAka's expense. For example, the farmer will often compensate his neighbor with manioc from his fields to make up for that which was stolen, but then the compensating farmer will demand more work from the offending BaAka, or allow him to take less manioc in the future.

6. How, if at all, do the forest foragers attempt to ensure that their offspring will have the same rights to the hunting and foraging territories that they do?

Again, the shortest and most accurate answer to this question is that they don't. They take no direct steps at all to ensure that their children have the same rights to the land as they do.

In one sense however, they do ensure that their children will be able to exploit the natural forest environment at least as well as they can, by taking their infants and children into the forest with them when they make the hunting camps of the rainy season, assuming that they are making hunting camps during the rainy season and not working for the
WWF as tourist guides.

As long as family groups of BaAka are entering the forest to spend prolonged periods of time hunting and collecting they will take their children with them into the forest, those children will gradually become sensitized to the environment, and after successive years growing up in that environment, they will have the skills necessary to survive in that environment, as well as an intimate knowledge of the tropical forest.

7. What are the effects of modernization and development on these forested regions?
   a) To what extent are logging and mining activities affecting the environment in the study area?
   b) To what degree is immigration affecting the demography of the study area?
   c) How extensive and destructive is the meat trade and ivory poaching in the area?

To answer each of the sub-questions successively, the diamond mining in the area, when it occurs at all, is limited to small collective (often even individual) efforts at locating stones. While the hope of finding valuable diamonds has lured many people to the Bayanga area and thereby increasing the population in the already stressed environment, the mining itself has not directly harmed the environment.

The logging efforts of Slovenia Bois, the now French-owned forestry concession are a more pressing danger to the area. This company is essentially exploiting only a few of the species in the forest, notably mahogany, and not clear cutting the forest. Considerable destruction
does occur to the surrounding forest where logging is taking place because the heavy machinery needed to extract the trees damages the ground cover. Additionally, the many wide roads clear cut into the forest to make access possible for the logging machines destroy much forest and generally disturb the wildlife in the area.

Immigration to the Bayanga region is perhaps the park's biggest problem. Bayanga can barely support its population now. Additional immigration to the area by Africans eager to find paying jobs in some capacity with the WWF and GTZ projects will only cause further destruction to the immediate environment. In addition, the GTZ is taking steps to increase tourism to 20,000 tourists visiting the park each year by the turn of the century, which will further tax this precarious environment, and may far exceed the park's capacity to regenerate itself after prolonged and extensive use.

Finally, the ivory poaching and meat trade, is, like in any other park in Africa, one of the biggest threats to the endangered species that the park is designed to protect. The ivory poaching is not the problem in Central Africa that it is in eastern and southern Africa, if for no other reason that the elephants have more opportunity to hide and elude poachers in the rain forest than their savanna and veld-dwelling kin. Illegal hunting for meat is the most destructive activity occurring in the park at this time. Wire cable snares set by hunters to catch red duiker (Cephalophus callipygus) often snare more curious, more endangered animals that happen by, such as gorilla and chimpanzee, and cause death and maiming injury to these animals. Additionally, with more and more people trapping and hunting with firearms, many more forest species have the potential to become endangered.

To help combat this loss, the WWF and GTZ projects should be
investigating ways to discourage immigration to the area and building a stronger, more effective guard force for the park. At the time of this fieldwork however, there were no steps being taken along these lines.
b) Suggestions for Further Research

1) Future work in the Area

The area of the Dzanga- Sangha dense reserve and the Dzanga-Ndoki parks, which borders on the Ndoki park in Congo and a proposed reserve in Cameroon, will, if logging in these areas is kept to a minimum, remain an extremely fertile environment in which to engage in botanical and wildlife studies.

The poaching in these regions still constitutes a very real threat to many species of wildlife, especially the forest elephant and the gorilla, and until serious measures are taken to counteract the amount of poaching that occurs in the park, numbers will continue to fall. Poaching in and around Bayanga is increasing as population increases because food is in greater demand. Poaching in this region is done mostly through the use of wire snares, which often trap unwary or curious chimpanzees and gorillas.

On the whole, the prospect of future ethnographic work on the BaAka in Mossopalo, because of these villages' close proximity to the corrupting and de-stabilizing environment of Bayanga, is honestly quite bleak.

The WWF's acknowledged policy involves "preserving an semblance of hunter-gatherer existence which can be used in attracting paying tourists to the Dzanga-Sangha park" (Blom, personal communication). The numeracy and literacy programs being established for the BaAka in this region act to draw the BaAka into the region's new cash-based economy, and further estrange them from a forest forager lifestyle.

Substantial work could be done on the impact of heavy tourism on this area, precisely on which facets of the the BaAka's traditional society are
affected by commercialization of their homelands, how the BaAka adjust their society to capitalize on this commercialization, and which, if any, facets of their culture could remain unchanged by the massive changes in this region so as to allow the BaAka the freedom to return to a foraging lifestyle should the planned commercialization eventually fail. At the time of this fieldwork, the BaAka were poorly equipped to function in a cash-based society.
2) Future work on Subject

The field for forager studies involving the BaAka of Central Africa, the Mbuti or the Efe of the Ituri, or other of the less well known Pygmy groups is completely open and fertile. Unlike the !Kung and many Native Alaskan groups, the African Pygmies are still true foragers (not considered post-foraging societies as are the former groups) and are unique in their social structure and behavior.

As mentioned earlier in section III a), the undertaking of a comprehensive linguistic survey of several of these forest forager groups offers the distinct possibility of producing remarkable insights into the origins and pre-historic migrations of these foraging groups.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity that exists with the most relevance for the Western world is the study of traditional medicines employed by the BaAka or any of the forest forager groups. The rain forest contains many natural cures for a wide variety of ailments, and no one on this Earth knows that environment better than the BaAka Pygmy foragers.
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VII APPENDIX

1) BaAka Plant Names Referenced with Scientific Nomenclature

Compiled by D. Harris, A. Kretsinger & E. Davies 1995
parentheses indicate prefixes used for singular and plural
note: some plant names only exist in plural form

FOODSTUFFS

1. Gozo -- *Manihot escuelenta*
   A starchy root known commonly as Cassava, Tapioca or Bitter Manioc.
   Rich in toxic prussic acid, which must be removed by extended soaking
   in water and cooking before consumption.

2. Kule (e/be)-- *Dioscorea mangenotiana*
   A wild forest yam collected at the end of the dry season by the BaAka.

3. Koko (-/ba)-- *Gnetum sp.*
   The leaf is shredded and baked in a hearth fire to serve as a (reasonably)
   non-perishable food.

4. Payo (mo/me)-- *Irvingia excelsa*
   Waxy, dicotyledon seed either eaten raw or boiled to make a
   (reasonably) non-perishable food.

5. Kopo (e/be)-- *Ricinodendron heudelottii*
   Nuts are edible, the wood used to produce the resonating chamber for
the harp played by BaAka (a.k.a. Pygmy harp).

6. Ngembe (mo/me)-- *Afrostyrax lepidophyllus*
   A nut used in flavoring, vaguely garlic tasting.

7. Sende (mo/me)-- *Raphia cf. hookeri*
   Sap collected and consumed as palm wine (no fermentation process).

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

8. Ngongo (mo/me)-- *Megaphrynium macrostachyum*
   The broad leaf is used for making coverings for the traditional "beehive" huts, and used as a wrapping material.

9. Bemba (-/ba)-- *Gilbertiodendron dewevrei*
   Thin branches used in constructing the framework for huts, and also for making honey collecting baskets.

10. Bungu (-/ma)-- *Raphia cf. vinifera*
   Leaves used to make thatch for roofs, skirts, and used in construction of some toys.

11. Kosa (mo/me)-- *Manniophyton fulvum*
   Fibrous bark of this tree is used to make nets, porcupine traps, adze and spear handles.
12. Gao (mo/me)-- *Ancistrophyllum secundiflorum*
   Bark used to make vertical frames for collecting baskets.

13. Kpongbo (mo/me)-- *Eremospatha sp.? cabrae*
   Bark is almost elastic, used to make horizontal section of a basket.

14. Nzambi (mo/me)-- *Cissus dinklagei*
   Vine used for climbing trees to reach bee hives, also containing potable water.

15. Kambu (di/ma)-- *Cleistopholis patens*
   Bark is used to make the wide straps attached to collecting baskets to facilitate carrying.

16. Sosa (-/ba)-- *Antiaris sp.? africana*
   Bark is pounded into a cloth-texture then painted for manufacture of traditional clothing.

MEDICINES (not a complete listing)

17. Bei (mo/me)-- *Anonidium mannii*
   A large (10kg), wild fruit. The juice of this fruit is used as a vermifuge. Often given to pre-ambulatory children to purge them of ascarids and larger intestinal parasites.

18. Mbemba (e/be)-- *Pterocarpus soyauxii*
   The bark of this tree can be shredded finely and spread over the
forehead to reduce fever. The reddish sap is used as a pigment for
painting barkcloth and faces. Upon death, the eyes are customarily
painted with this pigment.

19. Sombolo-- *Penianthus longifolius*

The sap from the stems of this plant are used as an ingredient in arrow
poison and as a balm to kill sand fleas or chiggers (*Tunga penetrans*)
which are common to the region. BaAka do not physically remove the
chiggers from their feet as the villagers tend to do, as a result, many
BaAka rely on this natural pesticide to rid their children of these
infestations.

POISONS

20. Pombe (di/ma)-- *Strychnos aculeata*

Sap used as an ingredient in arrow poison, and also is employed as a
salve to kill sand fleas.

21. Lomba-- *Milletia barteri*

Sap from the stems of this vine is toxic and used as fish poison. During
the dry season, BaAka women find small swamp areas in the forest,
construct mud and bark dams around a small portion of water, and
throw small cut-up bits of the stem of this liane into the sealed off area.
After a few hours the fish and crabs that ate these morsels become
paralyzed, enabling the women to take them out of the water by hand.

22. Ndemele (-/ba)-- *Strophanthus sp.? gratus*
Sap from this vine is used as an ingredient in arrow poison.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

23. Paka (mo/me)-- *Guibourtia demeusei*

Sap from this tree dries into a hard resin that can be ignited to produce a slow burning flame used in starting hearth fires, and for a liquid fuel for fires, and for a light source when working at night.

24. Ndembe (di/ma)-- *Rothmannia whitfieldii*

A blue pigment used to decorate barkcloth and used as a face paint and used as a face paint among young girls.

25. Landa-- *Funtumia elastica*

The sap is a wild rubber predominantly exploited by Europeans during the colonial era. Also used by the BaAka to make crude rubber balls that the children play with. Sometimes used in construction of traditional spear as an adhesive agent.

26. Banghi-- *Cannabis gigantea*

A wild species of marijuana used primarily by the BaAka for smoking. *C. gigantea* is a very large plant, and on rare occasions if insufficient *M. fulvum* species are available, the BaAka will use the stems of *C. gigantea* to produce hemp cords.