Of Hostesses and Hooligans: Transnational Intimacies in Tashkent and Tokyo

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> To arrive at the constitution of an ethics of sexual difference, we must at least return to what is for Descartes the first passion: *wonder.* This passion has no opposite or contradiction and exists always as though for the first time. Thus man and woman, woman and man are always meeting as though for the first time because they cannot be substituted for one another. I will never be in a man's place, never will a man be in mine. Whatever identifications are possible, one will never exactly occupy the place of the other—they are irreducible one to the other.
>
> Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*

> When I hear the Japanese national anthem, tears well up in my eyes. It is a time of national unity. It is a moment when the history of a people crystalises [sic] itself in a single moment. With a tempo that speaks of sadness and suffering, I feel like I am offering up a moment of silent prayer when I hear the Japanese anthem. As the tune plays, I think of, and pray for, all of the ancestors of this country. I become a member of this family, a member of the Japanese family.
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> Philippe Troussier, *Passion*

Towards an Ethics of Transnational Intimacies

In the quote above erstwhile coach of Japan's national world cup football team Philippe Troussier claims membership in a national family that often rejected him, either because his teams lost, he didn't speak Japanese, or he was overbearing with his players. The governor of Tokyo even called him a "second-rate bully" whose treatment of Japanese players exhibited the worst traits of white people (French 2002). After describing how he was moved to tears by the Kimigayo, Troussier goes on in his memoir to claim that he has the same emotional reaction when he hears the national anthems of France, South Africa, Morocco, and Burkina Faso, all places he has lived and coached (Troussier 2001, 88). Troussier's promiscuous nationalism is both self-serving and unstable, moving adroitly from orientalizing descriptions of inscrutable Japanese others to his self-identification with the "Japanese family." However, it is through these rhetorical switches that such romances with difference work, discovering and defining differences in order to transcend them or achieve identification with them. Such ambiguous and tactical "flirtations with the foreign" (Kelsky 1996), are a central feature of twenty-first century social life, particularly in the "international" regions of global cities such as Tokyo.

As a contribution to a conference devoted to "observing Japan from within" (implicitly from the point of view of foreign academics working in Japan), this paper dwells on the increasingly fluid boundaries implied in these terms. It describes interactions among foreigners and Japanese during the 2002 Football World Cup in Tokyo, interactions in which some of the "locals" are actually foreigners. The paper also describes my interactions with Japanese aid workers, observations from within a Japanese group but taking place in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. The essay focuses on intimacy between the foreign and the Japanese, intimacy that plays upon but does not erase the boundaries of national and sexual difference.

This project is about flirtation with differences, flirtations and passions that are sometimes fraternal, sometimes culinary, but often ambiguously sexual, because of the nature of the sites I am describing, namely nightclubs in Tokyo and Tashkent. In "global cities" such as Tokyo, but even in provincial cities such as Tashkent, transnational flows of people, images and ideas pose opportunities for transnational intimacies. When these sexual differences are organized around social identities such as races or nationalities they may stabilize into fixed sexual preferences associated with nationality, gender or race. The "Asian fetish," "yellow cab," "*gaisen,*" "rice queen" or "potato queen" are all terms in the transnational nightlife. I call these transnational *hetero*-sexualities: sexualities organized around national and ethnic difference. In other cases the intimacies and associated identities are more fluid, short-term and ambiguous. We are in the tricky area of intimacy organized around differences, a seeming ethical paradox, but a common trait of sexual interactions. Even in presumably intracultural sexual interactions, imagined sexual traits are often conflated with personal, gendered, ethnic, and physical differences that augment the erotic possibilities of "overcoming" these differences through sexual intimacy. More provocatively, one could say that all sexualities are *hetero*-sexualities—all are about intimacy with the *other*. In transnational intimacies the others are more marked, and the structural inequalities behind their differences more varied.

Luce Irigaray describes sexual difference as the central philosophical issue of our time and the failure to acknowledge sexual difference as the central flaw of Western ethical thought since classical times (Irigaray 1993, 5). For Irigaray, recognizing the sexual other *as other* means to reject attempts to objectify the other or reduce the other to a pale reflection of the self. Moreover, the "historical movement from the one, singular [male] subject to a the existence of two subjects of equal worth and equal dignity" serves as model for the "recognition of all forms of others without hierarchy, privilege, or authority over them: whether it be differences in race, age, culture or religion." (Irigaray1995, 18-19). These are not separate issues, of course. Sex/gender differences are often imbricated with racial, ethnic and national differences. This paper looks at conflations of sexual differences with differences of race and nationality in social interactions in the transnational border regions of Europe and Asia. The question is not only as Ien Ang asks, "how we can live together-in-difference" (2002, 193), but also how do we come together through difference. Is it possible to achieve dialogue, let alone intimacy, across a boundary of structural inequalities and protected boundaries? The problems are related to, but are much broader than, the researcher-informant issues frequently discussed in critiques of ethnographic writing (cf. Inaga 1999, Zene 1999). Transnational intimacies, as described in this essay, are now utterly commonplace in everyday life in the contemporary world.

Signs of intimacy and power are closely related. Expressions of intimacy may be grasps at personal power, as in the pat on the back from the boss to the subordinate (Hodge and Kress 1988). The same touch may be a caress, the intimate approach to the other. Especially in nightlife interactions, as discussed in this essay, actors manipulate the ambiguity of distance and familiarity to alternately or ambiguously express intimacy and power. Crossing boundaries is potentially as much a claim to power as the more overtly political acts of drawing boundaries; whereas drawing boundaries may be in fact an invitation to genuine intimacy, as in signs of respect for the other. In Derrida's terms, flirting with difference is a kind of "brisure," a breaking and joining at the same time.

Postcolonial critics warn of the historical relations of power through which dominant masculine subjects have sexualized marginal, impoverished and feminized "others." In this view, transnational sexual relations are over-determined by structural inequalities, and there can be no ethics without a focus on politics. In a discussion of the sexual dimensions of economic globalization, L. H. M. Ling uses the term "global hypermascu- linity" to describe "a convergence of hypermasculine interests across cultural, spatial and systemic divides" (Ling 1999, 283). In Ling's view, strategies of economic development, ideologies of consumption, colonialist discourses of racial domination and sexualized representations of women (Asian women in particular) constitute a global system of gender oppression, to which women can only answer with a worldwide feminist revolution (301). This represents an extreme view, but it points out the limits of looking at transnational sexual interactions purely through the lens of interpersonal ethics.

An alternative view, while not denying the systematic gendering of economic and political institutions, emphasizes the personal tactics and ethical judgments of individuals within these structures. As Ang points out, an emphasis on *tactics* "signifies a realistic recognition of the limits to radical political intervention in the contemporary world" (Ang 2001, 3). Reframed in methodological rather than political terms, Ang's statement implies that interactions cannot be reduced to the structures in which they occur. This view might be politically complacent, but I see it as a necessary focus on the everyday tactics of transnational and intercultural interactions. The statement also implies that ethics is not the same as politics. A structural view simply traps people in categories that don't adequately express the fluidity of their everyday identities. As Sandra Buckley argues in a study of the public discourse of sexual risks in Japan, actual transnational sexual practices and identities are fluid, "oozing through the cracks" of porous and permeable national boundaries (Buckley 1997).

This essay describes transnational intimacies in two very different contexts. The first discussion is from a short visit with Japanese aid workers living and working in Tashkent. The second is a description of interactions among locals and visitors to the 2002 Football World Cup. The essay examines the politics and ethics of transnational sexual interactions I observed in these contexts. In keeping with the theme of this conference, I conclude with a reflection upon my position as a "foreigner" among the "Japanese."

Transnational Intimacies and an Ethics of Disengagement: Visiting with Japanese Expatriates in Tashkent

I visited Tashkent in February 2001 as part of a team of Japanese academics visiting the city to assess an aid program administered by the Japanese government. We were only in the city for a week, but I had time to interact with Japanese aid workers and the Uzbek hosts, as well as the Japanese academics in my group. I do not see this experience as sufficient for an ethnography of these people or their work, but the experiences are suggestive of the complex new possibilities of a transnational ethnography of studying Japan "from within."

I came to Uzbekistan as the only foreign member of a Japanese group, sometimes creating anomalous situations, as when I toured Samarkand with an enthusiastic young Uzbek Japanese-language major as my personal guide, introducing all the sites to me in Japanese more fluent than my own. The Uzbeks also found my position within the Japanese group difficult to understand. In the occasional small disputes with senior members of my group they sometimes treated me as a possible sympathetic intermediary, perhaps because of my ethnicity, or perhaps because of my native English and fluent German (the head of the group studied several years in Germany.) My eating habits also made me anomalous to both groups. At a dinner at the home of the Japanese ambassador, the Uzbeks were baffled at my ability to consume raw fish. The locally stationed Japanese were obviously thrilled at the sushi flown in from Tokyo especially for this dinner. I sympathized with these island people stranded in this vast land-locked nation. On the other hand, I began to avoid eating with my

Japanese colleagues in order to get my fill of the local specialty of roast lamb, one of my favorite foods. Many of my Japanese colleagues were unable to stomach the daily diet of lamb, and many of the locally stationed Japanese had tired of it.

I spent my spare time exploring Tashkent. Tashkent is not a global city. The economy is moribund. White-collar workers earn about 15 dollars a month. Foreign investment has stagnated, and silk-road tourism is threatened by the proximity to war-torn Afghanistan. Nonetheless, Tashkent has a small transnational population of foreign managers, including Korean managers working at Korean-owned manufacturing plants, aid workers, including the Japanese officials I was visiting, and more recently a contingent of U.S. military and intelligence officers engaged in the war in neighboring Afghanistan, some of whom I met at my hotel. These expatriate residents and visitors frequented the few expatriate-oriented nightspots in the city, which can be found in English and Japanese guidebooks and traveler's personal websites. In keeping with my long-term research on nightlife, I visited three international nightclubs in Tashkent, including one I found on the internet, and two introduced by local Japanese expatriates. I also visited discos and an internet café frequented by local Tashkent youth.

During my short visit to Tashkent I told the Japanese aid workers my interest in nightlife research, and they enthusiastically introduced me to some of the nightspots and told me about their experiences there. One night, some local male Japanese aid workers invited me to join them at their regular club together with some other Japanese expatriate contractors. The club I will call "Arabian Nights" was a hostess club in which women served a mostly foreign clientele. It was a hostess club, not a brothel. One room was fitted with *tatami* mat, apparently designed for Japanese guests. The young hostesses represented the broad ethnic mix of Tashkent residents, including blonde Russians and Tatars, ethnic Koreans, Uzbeks, and many women of mixed heritage. "Alysha," the hostess assigned to talk to me said she was three-quarters Russian and one quarter Uzbek. She was a cellist who once studied at the national conservatory, and, like most of the hostesses, spoke fluent English. Such academic qualifications were not uncommon among women in the transnational nightlife scene in Tashkent.

One go-go dancer at another club had a post-graduate degree in physics. A masseuse working in our hotel was a trained historian once employed in the national archives. The presence in the international sex trade of women with high educational credentials seems typical of post-socialist societies, with a mix of high human capital development and low economic development. Alysha said she was using her income to study English and computer science at local private institutes, hoping for a future position in a transnational company. Or, she hoped, she might manage an international marriage. One often found the same mix of sexual and economic strategies among educated and underemployed women in 1980s China. However, unlike China, it is not clear that the foreign investments, jobs and expatriate men will be arriving in Tashkent in significant numbers.

Two of the expatriate Japanese I visited with were regular patrons. One had developed a long-term relationship with one of the hostesses. He explained that paying for her time as a hostess eliminated responsibilities to the woman beyond the context of the club. Ordinary women he met outside the club would be hoping for an international marriage. Rather than feeling that foreign aid work was incongruous with visiting the hostess club, these men saw their patronage as an economic benefit to the women. They enjoyed practicing their Russian and Uzbek with the hostesses, and teaching them a few words of Japanese. Some chose to talk with young blonde Russian girls, but others preferred the Russian-speaking girls of Korean ethnic origin, girls with Asian faces who spoke Russian as their first language. The racially varied women represented an exotic cultural and racial hybridity to these men, who were able to indulge themselves in a controlled fantasy of ethnic and racial mixing that was less available in Japan, and certainly more expensive. During my visit to Arabian Nights, Alysha treated me to a novel transnational fantasy of exotic Russian culture with her beautiful looks and conversations about Russian music and literature.

In such commercial leisure contexts, men pay to consume an exotic sexualized other that is largely a product of their own imagination, whether those of the visiting aid worker or of the visiting scholar. The virtuosity of the women's performances comes from their insights into the men's fantasies of difference, with the women cultivating these differences and playing across the boundaries through controlled signs of intimacy. Irigaray writes that women are more interested in knowing men than vice versa (1995, 17). I suggest that this unbalanced empathetic sense may simply reflect inequalities in power and status. As Ann Allison argues in her ethnography of Japanese hostess clubs, the nightclub hostess makes her living by knowing the needs of the "other," who pays money in order not to know her (Allison 1994). This is, of course, an occupational requirement, not an essential feature of female psychology. In this case the men did seem interested in getting to know the women, though perhaps only in limited ways such as language and casual flirtation. There was intimacy in the Arabian Nights, but it was limited in different ways by both the men and the women.

As in many post-socialist economies, some Tashkent women are turning to hostessing and prostitution to earn money. According to one Uzbek news report over 2000 young women work as prostitutes in Tashkent, charging from three to thirty dollars (in local currency), and seeing five or six clients a night. Although there is no law against prostitution, the report claimed that many women work for pimps who take a large portion of their income (Nakhanov 2002). A young Japanese aid worker told me, however, that a more informal form of prostitution is common among young Tashkent women, who often exchange sex for treats or pocket money. All international nightspots attract prostitutes. Women who service foreigners charge around fifty to a hundred dollars, sometimes more.

These intimate exchanges are governed by rigid structural inequalities. The Japanese, Korean and American expatriates come and go; the local women remain are trapped in the local regime. The women at the Arabian Nights worked well, seducing their customers into dances and drinks, and in the end, extracting for themselves and the club owners more than $100 from each man, an amount of money equivalent to a half-year's pay for an office worker. I asked Alysha why the club was so expensive. She accusingly said that people in Tashkent don't care so much about money. Those who have it, spend it. At the same time, she said of herself, "I love money." The Japanese aid workers did not mind the costs. They were willing to pay a lot to maintain the social, sexual and racial boundaries between themselves and locals, while carefully playing across these boundaries in controlled fantasies of racial mixing. The men, mindful of their position as expatriate workers, were ethically strict. They paid with their own private funds. They were careful to follow local laws and the rules of their organizations. As far as I know, they did not pay for sexual intercourse with the hostesses. They acted respectfully and amiably to the women. And the women I spoke with claimed to like the Japanese customers very much, particularly for their generosity. Generosity is an important ethical standard in Russia and Central Asia. The men were ethically minded, but this was an ethics of disengagement, relying upon exchanges that limited their obligations to the hostesses. Such tactics of purchasing disengagement are of course common in the *mizushōbai* in Japan. They also seemed to work in the transnational environment of a Japanese-style hostess club in Tashkent.

These expatriate workers were all male. I also socialized with one of the female Japanese aid workers. She knew of the visits of her male colleagues to the hostess clubs, but they held no attraction to her. Ueno-san (a pseudonym) had lived in Tashkent many years, and spoke excellent Uzbek and Russian. When she first lived in the city, she said, she frequented discos with her Uzbek and Russian friends. She had numerous local friends, including ethnic Uzbek and Russian girls who took her clubbing.

Ueno introduced me to these discos on a trip to Tashkent's "Broadway," a pedestrian mall that is the most popular destination for Tashkent youth, featuring kabob vendors, karaoke boxes, cafes, shopping and other entertainment. Broadway is a display case of Tashkent's mix of Western, Russian and Central Asian culture, including the Mirburger fast food restaurant, the closest thing to Western fast food in the capital. The ethnically diverse youth of Tashkent stroll Broadway in their newest fashions, many smuggled in from China to avoid high import duties.[1] One youth disco was located near the Mirburger restaurant. Entering the disco, I found teenagers dancing to both local Uzbek tunes and Western hip-hop in a large barren room. A loquacious DJ urged on a frenzied group dance. The cheerful bricolage of Western, Russian and Uzbek language music and dance moves reminded me of small Chinese discos I frequented almost a decade before (see Farrer 1999, 2002). As in China, the mix of international and local tunes provided a chance for youth to sing along in their own language, and share among themselves improvised dance steps unique to their local scene. In my study of the Chinese case, I suggest that the mix of foreign and Western tunes creates a sense of cultural participation that is simultaneously transnational and nationalistic, both a way of belonging to the larger world and of marking off a local corner of it (Farrer 1999). According to Daniel Stevens, the "Mirburger generation" of post-socialist Tashkent youth employ these hybrid consumer strategies as a way of expressing both a newfound nationalism and their aspirations of joining the world (Stevens 2001, also Eaton 2001).

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[1] An Uzbek student recently informed that the stalls on Broadway have been closed down as part of an extensive attempt to control the black market in Uzbekistan.

Despite being older than most of the young people on Broadway, Ueno seemed comfortable in the world of Tashkent youth culture. After the trip to "Broadway" I asked Ueno if she had ever dated any of the young men she socialized with in the discos and in everyday life. She paused and said, no never. I asked her why. Her answer was long, but it could be reduced to a few factors: her desire to return to Japan, the attitude of Uzbek men to women, the strict Islamic culture, and the unbearable smell of lamb. For the "first world" woman, the "third world" Uzbek men were too traditional, too poor and too fond of lamb. Ueno's reasons were personal, but the complaints were quite familiar, and showed the limits of intimacy in the face of vast structural equalities. At the most general level, Ueno's remarks were a mirror image of the men's. This was also an ethics of disengagement. In her case, intimacy could only go so far as friendship.

To a researcher who has spent years studying transnational interactions in the nightlife in China, these stories were familiar. Though first-world men and women approach the sexual opportunities of the third world rather differently, they both ultimately are keeping a distance. Their ethics allow intimacy—whether sexual relations or friendship—but another focus is on disengagement. Some people are very careful not to hurt their local partners, and to benefit them practically and emotionally. But in an international system of radically unequal mobility opportunities, these personal ethics are inevitably exit strategies, ways of preserving one's own transnational mobility, while limiting the disappointments of left-behind friends and lovers. Such tactics of disengagement may be common among mobile populations of all sorts, but in such cases as this, they are particularly one-sided. Uzbek passports are doubly stigmatized in the age of terrorism. I am not disparaging the types of intimacy that are created across these borders. Even the hostess club can be justified as both fair play and good employment. But these justifications also point out how ethics may sometimes be a form of damage control in conditions of inequality.

Transnational Intimacies and an Ethics of Conflict: Football Internationalism and Erotic Fooliganism in Japan

I now turn to my long-term field site in Japan, the bar and club scenes of central Tokyo (particularly Shinjuku and Roppongi). I have been visiting these places since my first arrival in Japan in 1998, and treat this project as a companion piece to research on the international nightlife in Shanghai. The nightlife in Tokyo had a new focus in June 2002—football. I recount my experiences of these events as a *local foreigner*, a commonplace identity category in global cities such as Tokyo. But first I will recount the odd politics of football internationalism Japan's World Cup in 2002, because it forms both a background to individual stories and an articulation of the same themes of transnational intimacy on a societal scale.

Perhaps more than in any other industrial country, the rhetoric of internationalism characterizes postwar Japan, assigning Japan a hybrid insider/outsider status vis-à-vis a transnational (Western) modernity. As many observers have pointed out, the rhetoric of internationalism reifies the very category it purports to eliminate: a nativist "closed" Japan that must be internationalized. In the build-up to the 2002 World Cup, the rhetoric of Japanese internationalism has its awkward moments. Pre-event Japanese media reports focused on the dangers of rampaging foreign football hooligans, particularly the British.[2] One article warned local women to stay away from the Roppongi entertainment district, lest they be raped by visiting foreigners. Another weekly tabloid article angrily denounced a German newspaper article purportedly describing Japanese girls as "whores" and "stupid cows."[3] Two thousand police were mobilized in Roppongi alone the first weekend of the world cup, and, for that weekend at least, many local women did seem to stay away from the places foreign fans might be congregating. Picking up on the Japanese transliteration of "hooligan" as "fūrigan,"[4] foreign correspondents had a field day lampooning these Japanese fears of "fooliganism."[5] More serious critics, including some of my Japanese professorial colleagues, complained that Japan was loosing its chance to impress the world with its internationalism and openness to tourism, some saying that Japan "didn't deserve" the World Cup. Japan's *sakoku* 鎖国 (closed country) mentality once more seemed in evidence, and foreign residents and internationalist Japanese seemed to delight in pointing out Japan's failure to "internationalize."

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[2] "Fūrigan taisaku keisatsuchō 45-oku en" フーリガン対策 警察庁４５億円 (450 million yen approved by the Ministry of Police for anti-hooligan measures), *Asahi Shinbun*, Dec. 21, 2001; "Necessary Measures against Hooligans in Sapporo

As the games progressed with few violent incidents, and Japan's national team fared well, the tone of press reports changed from worries of hooligans and charges of xenophobia to an exuberant celebration of football internationalism. Japanese television focused on the loyal support foreign teams, particularly Cameroon, received from the small Japanese towns that hosted them in preparation for the games. Some newspaper reports described foreigners' impressions of the friendliness of their Japanese hosts; others described how the Japanese were pleasantly surprised at the

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Hotels," *Hokkaidō Shinbun*, March 12, 2001; "'Hooligan Spotter' Comes to Japan from Britain," *Asahi Shinbun*, May 30, 2002.

[3] "Nihon josei o baijo yobawari" 日本女性を売女呼ばわり (Japanese women are called whores), *Shūkan bunshun,* June 27, 2002.

[4] As well as being a transliteration of hooligan, the term *fūrigan* also contains an oblique reference to the Japanese word *furyō* 不良, or "no good."

[5] "Seconds in Sapporo/ Dome to Host Argentina-England Clash," by Michael Church, *Daily Yomiuri,* May 24, 2002 (The Daily Yomiuri on line). "They made interesting viewing on the Yamanote Line Tokyo to Shinagawa on Sunday Night," Jeremy Walker, Asahi Shinbun News Service, June 4, 2002. "The Coming Imperial Hooligan Regime," by Amy Chavez, *The Japan Times*, June 15, 2002.

friendliness and civility of the foreign (especially the British) fans.[6] Some Westerners noted with surprise how Japanese fans mixed their support for their home team with tokens of support for their favorite foreign teams.[7] Media fear-mongering switched from foreign hooligans, who failed to emerge, to the overly exuberant Japanese youth ("J-hooligans"), but these were largely described as non-violent and internationalist in outlook.[8] The FIFA website described these young revelers as "cuddlier than their overseas counterparts,"[9] a feminization and eroticization of the Japanese fan typical of internationalist discourse on Japan. Japanese women also eroticized the foreign male players, most notably the English star David Beckham, who was rumored to want to move to Japan. One women's magazine ran an article entitled "How to Enjoy the World Cup," with a list of all the players who were considered good-looking.[10] The eroticization of the world cup from a macho perspective could be found in the Japanese weekly magazine *Flash*, which contained a special insert on "world cups" with nude pictures of large-breasted women from all participant countries except Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, the title a play on the words bra-*cup* and world *cup*.[11]

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[6] "English Fans Impressed by Japanese Hosts," by John Maylam, *The Japan Times*, June 10, 2002. "Football Fans Are Never Ones to Agree," by Yo Yakatsuki, *Asahi Shinbun News Service*, June 9, 2002. (asahi.com). "Oh-So-Sober Japan, Suddenly Drunk on Soccer," by Howard W. French, *The New York Times*, June 14, 2002.

[7] "Many Overseas Visitors Have Commented on Differences," by Jeremy Walker, *Asahi Shinbun News Service*, June 6, 2002 (asahi.com). Some observers argued that showing allegiance to teams other than their own home country was something only Asian football novices would do. According to my observations in bars in Japan, however, foreign football fans, including Europeans, often supported teams other than their own country's team. Showing support for two teams at once, however, might have been peculiar to Japanese fans and the "foreign locals" living in Tokyo.

[8] "Toward a 'Troussier Nippon': World Cup Fever Sparks a Generational Shift," by Jonathan Watts, *The Japan Times*, June 22, 2002.

[9] "Homegrown Hooligan Headache," *Fifaworldcup.com*, June 17, 2002.

[10] *Josei jishin* 女性自身, June 14, 2002.

[11] "WORLD kappu bakunyū bijo nūdo" WORLD カップ:爆乳美女ヌード (World Cups: Giant Boob Beauties), *Flash*, July 2, 2002. The series of photographs

As the site of the contentious England-Argentine match, provincial Sapporo became the focus of media reports on foreign fooliganism. Several bars closed their doors, and their owners organized collective patrols of their Susukino entertainment district. One noodle shop owner became a minor media celebrity for her decision to close down her shop for the duration of the event.[12] After the games began, however, dire fears switched to glowing tales of internationalism. According to one report, Sapporo fans even gave the English fans a "standing ovation" when they (peacefully) left the stadium.[13] The FIFA website showed a photo of two female English fans kissing a male Argentine fan in the Sapporo Stadium. Another report focused on two young Sapporo women, Aya and Aki, who were overwhelmed with the handsome foreign men buying them drinks after a game.[14] "This was one of the most enjoyable nights I have ever had," Aki reportedly said. Such a spectacular show of erotic internationalism would not have made sense without the initial show of fear.

My observations of this circus of internationalism focused more on the fans, and their after-game parties. Nationalism and internationalism blended easily in the street celebrations. With the Japan team's unexpected series of victories in the football World Cup, hordes of new football fans crowded the streets of Tokyo's nightlife centers, mobbing any bar with a television showing a game. The sounds of football could even be heard from the doors of some hostess clubs and strip bars in Shinjuku's Kabukichō district. After the victory over Tunisia on June 13 assured the Japanese team would progress to the Cup's second round, thousands of blue-clad youth with *hinomaru* decals on their faces swarmed through

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were taken from an American pornographic magazine specializing in large-breasted women.

[12] "Sapporo: After Seeing Off My Article on Hooliganism," by Taro Karasaki, *Asahi Shinbun*, June 2, 2002.

[13] "English Fans Impressed by Japanese Hosts," by John Maylam, *The Japan Times*, June 10, 2002.

[14] "Sapporo Rocks to a Friendly Beat," by John Maylam, *The Japan Times*, June 6, 2002.

Kabukichō, slapping hands with one another in a show of national pride and collective effervescence not seen, according to some accounts, since the Second World War.[15] Some slaps that I experienced seemed harder than necessary to me, but the mostly high-school age celebrants were elated. In Tokyo, hundreds of young men and women gathered in front of Studio Alta at Shinjuku Station shouting "Nippon, Nippon," clapping and singing in seemingly practiced unison. But, the nationalism of the celebration was laced with signs of internationalism. The same crowd in front of Shinjuku station prominently displayed a Korean flag, celebrating the victory of Korea over Portugal in a game watched by Japanese fans in dozens of bars in nearby Kabukichō.[16] One of the most popular chants among fans was "Troussier Nippon!" referring to the French coach, who led the national team to its early victories. Moreover, young Western residents of Tokyo also were among the enthusiastic supporters of the Japanese team dressed in blue jerseys and "high-fiving" passing strangers.

The hybrid rhetoric of nationalism and internationalism that was so evident in the media also worked in the football-saturated nightlife. Despite the negative attention on foreign fans, for many foreign residents of Japan such as myself the World Cup was one of their few opportunities to *be a local*, to support the Japanese team as an ordinary home-team fan. Of course, many Japanese also supported foreign teams, and the socializing after the games allowed opportunities for mutual congratulations and the mixing of nationalist affiliations. Simply put, global events like the World Cup offer people not only the opportunity to be nationalist fans, but also to be internationalist fans. Foreign residents could be Japanese, and Japanese could show off their international affiliations.

After the Belgian-Japanese game, which ended in a draw, I attended a party at gigantic Velfarre Disco in Roppongi organized by the Belgian fan club. Some of my close friends were members, and attended the match, though I passed up a chance to buy tickets to the game. At the party, internationalism was clearly evident. Television crews tried to prompt some of the attendees into statements of support for their national teams, but most interviewees chose the occasion to praise their "opponents" and express an internationalist stance. Several Belgian fans decked out in "red devil" costumes sported both Belgian and Japanese flags on their faces, as did several Japanese fans. Belgians and Japanese danced, chatted and flirted with one another while a Belgian DJ played techno dance tunes. One red devil prodded his laughing Japanese dance partners with his soft inflatable pitchfork. For Belgians visiting Japan just for the game, the party was a rare chance to meet locals. As usual in the Roppongi nightlife, the foreign male visitors and local Japanese women showed the greatest social and sexual interest in one another.

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[15] "Toward a 'Troussier Nippon,'" cited above.

[16] The love affair with the Korean team faded after Japan was knocked out of the finals. While some Japanese I interviewed continued to support the Korean national team, others cited a greater interest in European players or a mild distaste for the nationalistic Korean fans as grounds for supporting Italy, Spain or Germany as Korea progressed to the semi-finals.

Local Japanese and visiting Belgian women took turns dancing sexily with a handsome black Belgian originally from the Congo named Henri. He was part of my group, a friend of a friend, and this was his first trip ever to Japan. Henri's small adventure that night is perhaps typical of the prosaic ethical embarrassments people fall into when too eagerly approaching sexual others. At the game and the party afterward, Japanese television crews covering the game and the party seemed enchanted with Henri's exotic appearance and wide smile. Women flirted with him, and Henri, who stepped off the plane the previous evening, was overwhelmed by the sexual and media attention.[17] He was ecstatic with this warm reception on the first evening of his first visit to Japan. We could barely convince him to leave the party, eventually taking two taxis back to my apartment, a frequent resting place for friends living far from the city center. When I arrived at my apartment, however, with two tired Japanese friends in tow, another Japanese woman friend, Miho-san, got out of Henri's taxi and sourly scolded me for putting her in a car between "two strange foreigners." She said Henri had been touching her "all over" the entire way back from Roppongi, and she wasn't able to get him to stop because he spoke no

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[17] See Russell (1996) for a discussion of the sexualization of black man in Japanese popular culture.

Japanese, and she spoke no English or French. From such a close friend, the "strange foreigner" jab hurt, but so did the treatment she got from Henri. Miho is one of my best friends, so I was upset with Henri, but I also felt some sympathy for the new jet-lagged Congolese-Belgian visitor who seemed so disoriented after just one day of stardom in Japan. It was an extreme case of what many foreign men experience in Japan, a deluded phase of misinterpreting the curiosity and politeness of Japanese women toward foreigners in general as a form of personal sexual charisma.

The next morning we all met for breakfast. Miho, who had slept on my floor with the two other friends, was reluctant to see Henri again, but we persuaded her to come along. Miho is not an "international Japanese woman" in the usual sense. She doesn't speak English, and she had never dated a foreign man. She voted for Ishihara Shintarō and always reminded us of the virtues of Japanese society and culture. But, almost by accident, as a friend of a friend, she had become a permanent and central member of a mixed international group of friends living in Suginami-ku in Tokyo. Having been told off about his faux pas the night before, Henri emerged sheepishly from a neighboring friend's apartment, and we all walked to a local family restaurant. There Miho was able to formulate her revenge, ordering for Henri a traditional Japanese breakfast that included *nattō*, a fermented soy product with a strong odor few culinary novices can appreciate. After watching Henri dutifully downed his entire portion with a forced grin, she seemed satisfied. His willingness to consume difficult Japanese food impressed her, along with his polite acceptance of her order. A new peace had been achieved through a rhetoric of nationalist food rather than internationalist sex.

This story is extreme in its triviality, but undoubtedly exemplary for that reason. More "substantial" intimate encounters also occurred at the same party. A few days later a young Belgian cameraman, visiting for the World Cup, told me his story of how he met a Japanese woman at the party:

> It was really surprising. I hadn't met any girls at the party, and as I was getting ready to leave at night there was a girl standing at the elevator. We got in together and I started talking to her. And then when I got a taxi I just asked her if she wanted to go with me.... When we got the hotel, she just laid on the bed, and she

> said, good night, like she was going to sleep, and I wasn't sure what she was thinking, but I reached over and kissed her and then she just pulled off her clothes. Everything was good after that. I guess that Oriental girls are like that. They are more shy and passive, and they will wait for you to make the first move.... [I asked what he thought of her.] Oh, I don't suppose I will ever see her again. I guess she was just looking for something for one night, not for true love.

His narrative repeats the familiar myth of the closed, oriental Japan that suddenly and mysteriously opens, but it is also a simple tale of a young woman and man looking for sexual fun across a boundary of nationally marked sexual difference, or eroticized national difference. Without the veil of difference, the sexual fun possibly would appear too pragmatic.

The sexual politics of difference that emerged in a spectacular way in the World Cup is an everyday event in so-called *gaijin* bars in Roppongi where foreigners and Japanese seek out one another for sexual adventures and dating relationships. As the World Cup reportage shows, the manufacturing of difference and the pleasurable transgressions of this difference are not limited to sexual interactions. In addition to sexual joking, many conversations in these bars center on travel, food, or language, other pleasurable forms of consuming difference. Sexual flirtation, however, seems particularly to thrive on the contrivances of difference. Establishing boundaries is the first rhetorical move in heterosexual play, but even this does not imply fixed positions. Sexual difference implies an unrevealed secret, and allows a constant interplay between and boundary-preservation or secrecy, and intimacy or revelation (Simmel 1971c, 1984). The wide appeal of this interplay is evident in one of the most simple social games people play in the transnational nightlife (at least in Roppongi), the game of guessing where someone is from, usually followed by some mutual recognition of the other's home place. ("Oh, I have been to San Francisco.") Some people play the game well, others lie or change their stories, but the point of the game is increased intimacy through finding and overcoming difference, breaking, establishing, and re-breaking bonds of otherness and commonality. Such tactics of approaching the other do not always work, as Henri discovered, but social recovery is possible through reformulating, replaying and re-bridging the boundaries of national difference.

The Politics and Ethics of Transnational Intimacies

> How, in short, can we live together-in-difference?
>
> Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*

> Without friction, life would be so boring.
>
> Muroi Hisashi, "Narratives of 'Internationalization': A Critical View"

To cite Ang again, "this is a world in which people quite different from one another in interest, outlook, wealth and power are tumbled into endless connections," (Ang 2001, 3). And again, as we have seen above, some of these connections are sexual. It is also a racist and sexist world, and a world of vast inequalities. What are we to make of these transnational intimacies constructed around difference and structured by inequalities? Simmel argues that pure sociability, of which flirtation is his favored example, is premised upon a fiction of social equality, an understanding that interactions should be enjoyable to all (Simmel 1971c). In contrast to flirtation, Simmel describes prostitution as a dehumanizing objectification of the other and reduction of the other to a device (Simmel 1971b). Simmel's conceptions of flirtation as mutual play and prostitution as objectification contains the same tensions found in Luce Irigaray's ambivalent poetry of the caress, and her hope that sexual touching should be "a festive celebration and not a disguised or polemical form of the master-slave relationship" (1993, 17). Both point to the precarious ethics of sexual difference, especially the dangers of trying to assimilate the other to ones own purposes. On the one hand, we find the caress, the most elementary gesture of love, "an amorous impregnation that seeks out and affirms otherness while protecting it" (Irigaray 1993, 186), or pure flirtation, a mutual play with the sexual other that gives full expression to the erotic feelings of both (Simmel 1984). On the other hand, the same gesture—spoken, tactile or symbolic—of approaching otherness may be a grasp of power, a sexual objectification or a negation of the individuality of the other (Kelly 1997). In a situations of vast social inequality, such as in the nightclub in Tashkent, the *caress* and the *grasp* seem inseparable, even in the types of amiable erotic play I witnessed; power and intimacy are ambiguously practiced in the same approach to the other. It is not that the relationships are not practiced ethically, but they are structured by inequalities.

In such cases, personal ethics are not enough. A politically informed stance requires a critique of the international structural inequalities that shape transnational relationships differently in Tashkent and Tokyo. Structural analyses can't define the ethics of people within these structures, but they do help explain why some ethical rules and tactics of power seem to work in some structural situations and not others. As Jonathan Friedman writes, different strategies of empowerment can partially be accounted for by understanding differences in global position (Friedman 1990, 324). Put simply, cross-national interactions in Tashkent and Tokyo are structured by different conditions of mobility and resources. Tokyo women have more economic resources and chances of mobility than Tashkent women to use in dealing with foreign men, allowing for mutual and consensual sexual play in the expensive Tokyo nightlife. Among the Tokyo fooligans we find a mutual consumption of difference, perhaps a mutually pleasurable exploitation, or perhaps a mutual recognition gained through continued contact and conflict, all conditioned by the relative social equality between participants.

A structural critique also can focus on the historical origins of racial discourses, as does Kelsky's, genealogy of Japanese women's longing for the West in Japan's subordinate status to the West and the subordinate status of women in Japan (Kelsky 2001). Finally, a structural critique can focus on the gendering of social institutions themselves (Connell 1995): the male-dominated Japanese aid agency my Tashkent informants belonged to, even the male-dominated football establishment in which women can only participate as fans. Taken together these do give the appearance of something like the "global hypermasculinity" Ling describes (1999), although I think it would be a mistake to lump them together without realizing the very different degrees to which women have made inroads into these institutions and challenged traditional gendered practices within them.

(Japanese overseas aid agencies, for instance, employ many talented women.) My concern, however, is that systematic structural critiques of gender relations only go so far in helping us interpret social interactions which take place within these structures. Neither structural nor historical critiques can produce or replace an ethics of sexual interactions. Especially, if interactions are reduced to an essentialized masculinity and femininity, then we get nowhere in understanding the ambivalent expression of power and solidarity by both men and women in social interactions.

In addition to the politics of structural inequalities, an ethics of transnational intimacies is also made difficult by the range of ethical standards. For many youth nightlife play is an area in which personal ethical standards simply differ, and participants play at their own risk. As one Russian woman said to me in Tokyo's Roppongi, "We have our own way of having fun. Some people like it, some people don't. Maybe you will end up hating us. Who knows?" Ethical conflicts are inevitable, but people do not have to accept one another's standards. Rather they actively try to persuade others that their own ethical frame or sexual motive is the right one. As Simmel argues, greater intimacy may depend on conflict (Simmel 1971a). The ethics of intercultural interactions, thus requires an acknowledgement of the positive and productive possibilities of conflict (Muroi 1999). Avoiding conflicts leads only to an ethics of disengagement. And, an ethics of disengagement leads to political stagnation and lack of involvement in the lives of others. In sum, the conclusion I tentatively draw from this ethnography is the potential value of an ethics of conflict (within engagement), and the potential pitfalls of an ethics of disengagement, however well-intentioned.

Sex, Food and Friendship:
Towards a Grounded Ethics of Transnational Intimacies

Given the variety of the situations described in this essay, it seems fruitless to offer up general conclusions about an ethics of transnational intimacy. Ethics must be grounded in concrete situations and narratives. In many cases the political project of remedying structural inequalities is probably more pressing. However, in the ethnographic fragments above are suggestions of several ethical idioms that are worth exploring in grounded situational ways. I also take this as a chance to explore very briefly the grounding of my own ethnography and my own sense of intercultural ethics in my concrete position as a foreigner living and researching in Japan.

The first idiom is sex, which was the main theme of this research. Sexual intimacy can be a way of encountering and appreciating difference, not only through complacent pleasures and harmonious interactions, but also through conflicts and surprises. Of course there is the possibility of cruel grasps and patriarchal mastery, but an ethical approach to sexual difference may also be a *caress*, it may be a touching intimacy that rather than destroying otherness, celebrates it. Through approaching the sexual other in an ethical fashion, “the lovers meet as a world that each reassembles and both resemble. Inhabiting it and dressing it differently. The male lover’s and female lover’s horizons being irreducible” (Irigaray 1993, 207). We should be careful of the heteronormativity of Irigaray’s formulation, but sexual relation seem to me to be the most pregnant field in which to explore the possibilities of genuine togetherness-in-difference. Based on this ethnography, the ethics of intercultural intimacies include the sorts of kindness, generosity and respect that we normally expect of lovers, but we must not eliminate the possibility of salubrious conflict. At the very least, an ethics of intercultural sexual intimacy must allow for both sides to speak, and thus allow for conflict beyond what one might normally expect in intracultural romances (if these exist). The Tashkent hostess club interactions seem to fail in this respect, but perhaps that is only because I saw only a superficial side of the interactions among these men and women.

Despite being the focus of my own research, sex is perhaps not the dominant medium of intercultural intimacy. In my personal encounters with different cultures and in the ethnographic observations above, I have found food to be perhaps the more common medium for expressing difference, and also overcoming difference, a way of showing the national colors, and also serving them up for others to partake. Eating ethnic difference is the most common expression of internationalism, represented in the proliferation of ethnic restaurants in global cities such as Tokyo. Even Tashkent had Chinese, Korean and Western fast-food restaurants, and they were popular places for showing off a modern cosmopolitan attitude. Rejecting the food of the other is the simplest expression of one's own cultural limits. Food is an idiom we can learn to speak more easily than others, but even here we will always retain our own native accents. In my travel to Tashkent, the culinary distance between the fish-eating Japanese and the lamb-eating Uzbeks seemed the simplest expression of the differences between these people. For me, eating lamb and drinking vodka with my driver in a small roadside eatery seemed the finest way of "entering" the local culture. But of course, I was still only a tourist, consuming local color. The boundaries between consumption and identification disappear in eating, and we are left to wonder, what are the ethics of eating the food of the other? The ethics of constructive conflict seem to apply even here. Cuisine can be an aggressive act, as in stirring up the menacing odors of *nattō* and rice in front of an unsuspecting Belgian guest. But literally swallowing the insult can be a sign of acceptance, surrender, or even newfound love. After he returned to Belgian, Henri sent Miho a large box of Belgian chocolates, continuing the cycle of culinary exchanges. Miho began to think of Henri quite fondly.

Friendship seems to be the ultimate act of engaging the other. Here, I must mention again my admiration for Ueno and her apparently deep friendships with Uzbek people, though it did not extend to romance. In my experiences living as a foreigner abroad and observing intercultural interactions, friendships across cultural boundaries are more difficult to start and maintain than romances. Sexual communication is perhaps easier to master than the linguistic communication upon which friendship is based. Even in the ethnographic fragments above, friendship is the key ethical category. Men go to hostess clubs as friends. As Ann Allison shows in her ethnography of a Japanese hostess club, hostesses serve as a lubricant to strengthen the bonds among male friends, but the hostesses are outside the circle of male intimacy created in these interactions (Allison 1994). In other words, the hostess club probably does not promote friendship between Japanese men and Uzbek women. In the case of the Belgian-Japanese football party, the friendship circle is also the key to understanding these interactions. Miho became a true cosmopolitan through friendship, not through some pre-existing *akogare* for the West (Kelsky 2001). For Henri, his entry into Japanese society was mediated through the mixed friendship group not simply through an encounter with Japanese people at large. In general, the local foreigners play a key role as cultural mediators in Japan, partly through friendship ties. Friendship is perhaps the least studied of the important ethical relationships in many contexts.

Finally, as a foreigner living in Japan, I experience all these idioms of interaction somewhat differently than either the Japanese-Japanese or the foreign researcher visiting Japan for a short term. My normal life is in Japan. I live here with my wife, who is Chinese, and our newborn daughter who has Chinese, English and Japanese ways of pronouncing her name. The erotic interactions that are the basis of my intimate life are situated here. My diet is a true cosmopolitan mix, including Japanese ingredients. The friendship group that I feel most at home with is centered in Suginami-ku in Tokyo. As an ethnographer, my differences with both "Japanese-Japanese" and "foreigner-foreigners" may oddly explain my focus on the foreign and cosmopolitan in Japan, because this is my life world, the one that I belong to full time. I am not here to study what is truly Japanese, then return home. I live here, and study what is important in my world. As for the ethics of transnational intimacies, perhaps friendship, food and flirtation all are a good start. Football really is not my game.

Of course, this ethics of sharing foods, friends and lovers can be discomforting. We may fear that strangers are distorting our cuisine, speaking our language badly and marrying our women. But, especially for those of us living in rich countries, the ethics of generosity are indeed important. We all live in some version of "Troussier Nippon." I have come to empathize with Troussier's promiscuous borrowing of national symbols. After all, in the postmodern world, we ironically rely upon such transnational entrepreneurs to produce our national symbols, whether it is American flags made in China, Japanese national football teams coached by a Frenchman or our "new generation" taught by foreign professors. We should not begrudge these guests a place at the national table.

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