

# A REVEALING CRISIS AND METHODS IN THE FIELD

*Bente E. Aster*  
*Hovedfag UiO*

In 2001 I conducted anthropological fieldwork in the Ivory Coast for 11 months. I worked among musicians and singers in the capital, Abidjan, and I attended various rehearsals and concerts in the country as well as on an international level. Touring with different bands gave me a valuable opportunity to obtain information through interaction. I followed three bands, each within a specific musical genre—reggae, dancehall and a local pop music genre known as *zouglo*—in various neighbourhoods known as ghettos in Abidjan. Initially, I had set out to do fieldwork in Abidjan because of the military coup on the 24th of December 1999. The international press had written about reggae texts, and related them to the political change taking place in the country. I wanted to investigate the extent to which artists were able to set the political agenda in a West African country like the Ivory Coast. My fieldwork, though, suggests that the artists are generally apolitical and constantly claiming that they do not want to be associated with a particular political party. Rather, they want to take on a role as teachers or tellers of the truth to the nation. They are heavily engaged leveling social issues, and want a change in behaviours and attitudes. The local expression for this is *avancer*.

In this article I concentrate on the concept of anthropological fieldwork, which I understand as being about getting involved in local social life, often without having knowledge about its social codes. While one might think one is doing something together with others, the meaning of the interaction will very likely differ for anthropologist and her informants. Jean Briggs has written on these issues, and especially on how conflicts in the field can be sources for both frustration and enlightenment. Further, she focuses very interestingly on herself as an anthropologist in the field (Briggs 1970). My experience in the beginning of, and in many ways throughout, my fieldwork was that I was a stranger and an underdog. I was very much on the defensive, trying to handle the various situations as they arose. Clearly, this greatly influenced my methods in the field, which I had to change, adapt and improvise during my stay.

I particularly want to discuss my social role as a young, European, white, middle-class, and female anthropology student. There were benefits and disadvantages linked to these characteristics when I tried to learn the necessary social codes. I conducted fieldwork in a male-dominated show-business setting in post-colonial Ivory Coast, and I had to actively use the aspects of my identity mentioned above to provoke the social codex in order to obtain information. I had to present and perform a certain role, and stick to it, a process very much in line with what Erving Goffman calls information control (Goffman 1969). Clearly, there have been many female anthropologists who have conducted fieldwork

in male settings before and consequently have had the feeling of being "matter out of place" in a double sense as both an anthropologist and a woman. In this article, though, I want to focus on how I solved the particular challenges I met as a woman, in addition to being a white European. In everyday life I had to confront the challenges of different themes like gender, power, respect, money and visa demands. I believe that my identity in the field was so important and such a dominant aspect of my fieldwork that writing about it will help the reader understand what sort of methodological challenges I faced and what methodological choices I made, and consequently what sort of field data I was able to produce with the help of my informants.

Before arriving I had somewhat naively thought that since the big city of Abidjan is extremely modern and proud, and since the country as a whole has had a close, "successful" relation to France after colonialism, I as a young white woman would not receive that much attention. But I soon found that I had been wrong; despite modernity and a heavy French civil and military presence, I was still very much on the African continent with African social and behavioural rules. I was a stranger with physical features that were different, and a woman. By no means could I "go native". I discovered certain patterns when it came to interacting with my informants, and I will here try to reveal some of the logic and practices inherent to this context. The Abidjanese environment is characterized by people trying to localize and getting hold of various scarce resources and this was therefore a predominant operating logic. The unpredictable conditions people lived in created specific attitudes and skills in handling individualism, pragmatics and aggression. This in turn created certain practices within personal relationships, in which there was a pervading aspect of utility and a low degree of trust.

After three months in the field, I still had not met a band that I could work with. I had tried to find and get to know several reggae and *zouglo* bands after my arrival, but for various reasons this proved difficult. So I was relieved when a friend of mine, Pierrot, introduced me to the reggae band Rastafari from an Atlantic coast village. Pierrot was himself a reggae artist who had an album on the market, and he wanted to sing with this band during the MASA festival (le Marché des Arts et Spectacles Africains) in the beginning of March. Pierrot had previously said he would help me find a band. This can be construed in two ways: he wanted to be kind to me, but he also wanted me to become dependent on him by means of introducing me to those of his acquaintances I could make use of in Ivorian show business. He was very inventive and had ideas about many solutions when it came to my mission in the Ivory

Coast, and he kept reminding me of the advantages of his acquaintance. He made himself very useful to me by sharing local codes with me; that is, he helped me navigate in the Abidjanese labyrinth of social relations. I chose to put all my trust in Pierrot and his cunning plans, and this was of course his reward in the relationship—a young white woman spending time with him and paying for him at times. I was from then on his expedient focus, as he needed me too. Our relationship had a symbiotic character. It was only months later that I understood to what extent we had an economic give-and-take relationship and not what I would have called a friendship. It was then that I learned that my scope had to be wider than just one person, that being dependent on only one man is problematic, and not very smart as an anthropological method.

Friendship as a social relation has different meaning in different places. In my upbringing, I had been taught that the ideal friendship is a dear and sincere relationship, where one must be honest and loyal to each other. In the ghetto environment in the Ivory Coast, friendships function in a different way. People can only rarely permit themselves to engage in moral or emotional bonds, as these entail mutual loyalty. If you are loyal to someone, you cannot do hard business with him/her as easily. My informants had to maneuver between the several social relations they had access to. They experienced a scarcity of resources on a daily basis as they did not earn a predictable monthly salary. That is why they needed to hold all network relations open for business at all times. They had to eat (*bouffer*) when possible, as the expression goes. Their idea of trust is very different from the Western middle-class definition, where one builds trust with others by staying the same person through different settings. In the Ivory Coast, one builds trust by showing one's ability to change by having a modifiable character, analyzing any situation strategically to always find access to resources. As a result, people demonstrating this ability are thought of as survivors, someone who will not be *bouffé* but rather someone who bites back and is trustworthy. This fact creates expedient behavior in social relations in the Ivorian field, and the air is rife with the constant question of who eats whom, and who strikes first; this is the social reality of urban ghetto-dwellers in Abidjan.

I started to spend time with the Rastafari, and after a short time I moved into their house in their village on the coast. I thought that this was it; I had found a reggae band, and my fieldwork would be a success. What I did not sense, was that this was the beginning of a relationship which ultimately caused me a lot of problems and fears, but from which I drew many lessons and valuable information later on. Rastafari started to rehearse for the MASA and I followed them whenever I could. After a while I recognized that the band was actually ostracized and boycotted by most professionals, and I was later told that as I was seen together with Rastafari I was classified as a girl who smoked

*ganja* (marihuana) all day and who was not respectable. These other professionals looked upon the Rastafari members as irresponsible kids who did not know what they wanted to do in life, and who tried to trick everybody who stood in their way. This fact shows that as a recently arrived anthropologist, I was bound to meet different kinds of people and have problems foreseeing the consequences choices made at an early stage would have. I was trapped by eager informants as well as by the lack of other cooperative bands. It was difficult to break out of their network and enter other networks via my contacts.

After the first three or four rehearsals, I noticed that Pierrot started to complain about the band members' begging for money for this and that. He was really angry, and said that he could not afford to hand out all his money in this way. He had his own rent, transport and food to think about, I was informed. He also started to show some discontent with the way the rehearsals were conducted; he often had to wait a long while before Terry would let him sing. Things came to a head between Terry and Pierrot one evening when Pierrot had been asked to come to rehearsal. He was told that there was a rehearsal, and that he was to sing. However, he was never given the opportunity. He had waited such a long time and was frustrated. In the end, when the band started packing their gear and he realized that rehearsal was over, he vented his frustration and anger.

Pierrot started making a scene as they left the rehearsal room: "I will not accept being treated with this little respect, man! If I knew I was only to watch the others play, I would never have shown up in the first place", he cried out. Furthermore, he claimed that they had called him only to get transportation money out of him. This discussion carried on into the streets in two separate groups. Terry took the lead with two of his musicians while Pierrot walked with the rest of us at a distance. As we were walking along, we caught up with the singer and his two loyal musicians. Then, as if by magic, the situation changed altogether. Pierrot went over to Terry, greeted him heartily, and they became friends again. They smiled and talked for a while until Pierrot and I went home. In the taxi, the situation changed again and Pierrot started his criticizing speech with new force. He shouted out loudly about lack of respect.

The social frames for interaction changed back and forth during this incident; things changed both emotionally and strategically. The actions and reactions described here are situational. Pierrot allowed himself to express his intense feelings of respect and lack of such while with me and the other band members. When he found himself in front of Terry again, he had to be able to show that the fight was about a specific matter, and show that he was able to set the matter aside when the situation demanded it. Pierrot had to prove that fighting for respect was not a dominant feature of his personal nature in every social setting.

Emotional tone is a cultural pattern, not a question of human character. I think this quarrel happened because it was the only way someone can show his or her discontent in the ghetto. Pierrot felt powerless, and the fight over respect can be seen as a last resort to rearrange the power balance. Pierrot did not have any money or social rank to use in order to obtain what he wanted: to sing. So he had to employ a discourse of respect in a last attempt to stop Terry's execution of power over him. The fight about respect channeled his anger and let Terry know he existed; it did not end the relationship, but that had not been the purpose. On the contrary, the fight helped solve a relational problem so they could go on with the rehearsals later on. Sure enough, some days later they all rehearsed again, and things went smoothly between them.

Respect was an extremely important theme during my fieldwork. As I was not familiar with what I will call "the tantrum codex", I found it hard to display such an eruption of emotions. In this kind of relational landscape, either you respect a person and treat him/her well, or you do not, and act harshly towards them. This goes both for women and men. I saw that it was happening to me, but especially in the beginning of my stay I was unable to speak up for myself. Linked to this disability is of course my dependence on these informants; I needed them in order to get information. If I were to make scenes, the consequence might have been that they just left me alone. But maybe I should have started these outbursts, too. The evident risk was that I did not manage the local codes that dictated which quarrels to engage in and which to leave. I never quite understood why people all of a sudden would say, "Oh, I leave him with his own conscience. God will deal with it later". Often, I realized this happened in situations where the ill-doer was younger than the offended person, and should have shown respect to the latter. People would say to the oldest person: "It is only a child, it's nothing. It's not worth it". As I did not control the tantrum codex, I left things much as they were, although I sometimes knew this was the wrong thing to do in the local codex.

## Gender

I understood that the clash between Pierrot and Terry had something to do with my presence. I had told Terry that I did not want to have a sexual relationship with him, and he was upset because of this. His own respect and pride had been offended. As I spent a lot of time with Pierrot, this constituted a danger to his rule of the band and the larger group. I did not know whether to tell Pierrot about it or not. I did not think it was necessarily his business, and I thought that I was an adult who could manage things on my own, like I do in Norway. I was wrong. When I finally decided to tell Pierrot about this, he said: "So that's why Terry behaves like this. Why didn't you tell me before? I am the one who brought you there, and I am responsible

for your well-being. Terry knows the two of us are only friends, and he wants to take his chance on you. Now he knows that he hasn't got access to you, but he is still jealous of me".

According to Pierrot, Terry took out his jealousy on him and other men that I talked to. Considering the fact that Ivorian show business is composed nearly exclusively of men, Terry had quite a hard job keeping other men away from me. This could explain why he gave Pierrot such a hard time. Of course, being a woman in the field caused tensions and possibilities that a male anthropologist would not have been able to cause. My presence created wishes and intentions among the band members which I could not control, but which I had to handle when the situation demanded it. Problems arose when I wanted to slow down the pace of a relationship without ending a friendly working relationship. Many male informants disappeared altogether after I had told them in a straightforward way that there was no chance of us having a sexual relationship. At that moment, I was no longer a movable good they had potential access to. The trick was to stay friends with my informants without having to explicitly answer "no" to requests for sex or money.

However, the gender dilemma facilitated a certain interest and closeness on the part of the informants. This, in addition to their willingness to spend time with me, was a great advantage. I felt that I could easily contact people and ask them all sorts of questions, and that they seldom turned their back on me straight away. Often, I was invited home for dinners and visits, where people received me very well, and where I felt welcome. This is an important aspect of the gender topic, in which a young, white woman represents a prize that not everybody has access to. However, both my informants and I wanted to make the most out of things when we had the chance, even though our goals at times were wide apart. But, I could often come along to rehearsals and clubs and stay as long as I wanted. I could join PR tours and discussions regarding concerts and the like. And most of the time, I could talk to the people I wanted.

I am very much aware of the fact that I, as a white female student, was allowed in settings where black women were absent. In my daily interaction with my informants I rarely met women, and I made only a few female friends. All staff members of all the bands that I met were men. The only girls I met several times were some of the members' girlfriends, mostly in their homes, and I also got to know the choirgirls. While the latter appeared in professional settings they kept very much to themselves, keeping a low profile during organizational or musical discussions and often staying in their hotel rooms during tours. One of the choirgirls that I met, Oumou, was known to talk and complain a lot, and therefore to be a nuisance among the men.

I think she was perceived in this way because she was different from the local picture of the ideal woman. The latter might be powerful and intelligent, but not

talkative and slandering. A woman should not make her presence known in a loud way, but rather be serene and respectable. In many men's view, she should be comprehensive, and even if the man was known to be a notorious woman-chaser, she should remain serene and not lower herself (*s'abaisser*) to the level of men. According to several men I talked to, a man being unfaithful did not mean that his woman could do the same thing. By nature, she was purer than the man; she gave birth, and thus could get reprimanded in a heavier way. Oumou, according to the men and the other choirgirl, was mean-spirited and assertive and spent her time speaking ill of others. This behavior was not really reprimanded, but was talked about among the others. She had an important position within the band, she had a beautiful voice and was a dear friend to the bandleader; as such, she was accepted and loved, perhaps even feared. However, even though Oumou was special, it was not my impression that she was constantly in opposition. She kept much to herself, or within the girls' group.

As a contrast, I could to a large extent escape this sort of local female ideal and categorization of low morals, as I was a network marginal. As an anthropology student, it was my mission to make a place for myself in the midst of the decision-making process, discussions, and the crises that followed rehearsals and concerts. I was a woman, but as a white one, I was not categorized in the same way. I could define a private category for myself, and this is what helped my entry into the male music arena. As a female student I therefore found myself in male situations accompanied by male behaviour and crises. I was one of the guys. My access was rather quick and easy as seen from this angle.

But an overall rule was that the person (the man, that is) who brought me to a place was responsible for my well-being there, and had to bring me home safely. Of course this was a double-edged sword, as was the case when Pierrot made himself indispensable to me. I could not leave the place for some other area without telling and asking my "guide". However, nearly every new acquaintance and setting changed rather quickly from music, rehearsals and professional talk to the realm of my mentioned social role in the field. Throughout my fieldwork, the gender aspect was therefore also my most valuable and difficult card to handle, but one that I could in no way escape. It took me a long time before I understood and accepted that I had to use it for the best.

## Housing challenges

As the weeks with Rastafari passed it became apparent that gender was not the only problem. Spending days and nights in somebody's house makes other aspects of daily life emerge to the surface: how and when one eats and sleeps, in short how one organizes daily routines. Rastafari were musicians, and had little stable

income, and I found it hard to meet their expectations that I pay for food, drinks, transport and illness. In their logic, the one who has the most money in a given situation is supposed to pay for a rather large number of persons. It might have been the case that as Pierrot was my friend, the members of Rastafari looked upon him as rich, too. They thought that they had an absolute right to ask for money, as sharing with others is valued as a good thing to do. Not receiving from someone richer than oneself is spoken about as stinginess and unfriendliness. In the Rastafari logic, one must give what one has. The trouble in Pierrot's and my opinion was that this was clearly a one-way giving and sharing system.

Terry constantly asked me for money, and I later understood that things did not cost as much as he claimed. This started to get on my nerves, and Pierrot was also really annoyed about how things had developed. Once he even said: "Even though I have a job, they must not think that I am rich!" One day I noticed that some of my things were no longer in my room. I was told that someone had broken in and stolen them. I noticed that someone had slept in my bed, and torn apart my sheets. Terry accused the percussionist of the theft, although he himself was the only one with the keys. He explained that sometimes he let the room unlocked. This disappointed me even more, and I started to see things more clearly. Actually, the percussionist had also received a "no" from me regarding a sexual relationship, and I suspect that Terry revenged this advance by the accusation of theft.

Again, and this is what made it so difficult, nothing was said overtly at the time, but later there were indications that my suspicion was correct. It took me some time to admit to myself that I had been fooled and exploited all the time. I decided to move out and gather my remaining things: my mattress, ventilator and a few other belongings. Terry said no, I could take out my things only over his dead body; I would have to wait till Pierrot was there. I then left the house with the question unsolved.

What I should have done was simply to follow the inherent logic and invite Pierrot to come to the house to solve the problem. However, I thought that I would be able to come up with some solution at some point on my own. I was tired of asking permission for this or that, as if I were a child again. I also started to suspect Pierrot of using me when it came to money. He often claimed that he could obtain a better price for things when we were out, suggesting that I give him money to pay for things rather than showing my rich white face all the time. While he was right in part, Pierrot also took his share of the amount, and I think I ended up paying even more. Again, it must be noted that he deliberately and cleverly made himself indispensable to me, which is in line with ghetto logic. He could do so by not giving me the sufficient information as to how to behave in certain settings, and by not teaching me how to barter in the right way. This was Pierrot's fa-

avorable position that I was about to discover. In fact, he did the same thing to me that he criticized Terry of doing to him. This is a social pattern, and as such not a surprising fact. The social pattern builds on information control, which leads to power for the holder of information.

## The conflict escalates and reaches what seems a hallucinating peak

After a couple of days, I went to the police regarding the matter. They gave me a paper they called a “convocation”, and I was to give it to Terry so that he could present and explain himself at the police station. This was to take place together already the next morning. When I confronted him with the convocation he calmly said, “Well, Bente, do you remember signing a contract with us? Remember, we signed a contract so that your journalist friends could take some photos of us. You owe us 2.5 million cfa”. This is the equivalent of 25 000 FF, or the same amount I live on during a term of study as in Norway. He showed one of my friends the “contract”; I did not see it myself. Apparently, they had falsified my signature, and had had a third person to sign as a witness. For their part, they had gone to the police, too, and had organized a convocation for me. They claimed that I had brought drugs to them. They had been preparing themselves for this sort of verbal and judicial confrontation. The escalation of the conflict was swift, as if it followed its own path. It was as if it was all about being ahead of the next person when it came to preparing oneself for the worst. I who thought myself ahead of the situation by going to the police, found myself trapped by the blackmail of an even more dramatic implication. From what I saw throughout my fieldwork this is quite common. One is supposed to be prepared for the worst, both verbally and physically. It is not smart to be surprised by the adversary. I learned this in a very crude way during this crisis. This was the model for interaction and the social logic that pervaded Abidjanese show business.

As Pierrot was home in his apartment he did not know of this escalation yet, and became alarmed when I told him: “How could you possibly do this without consulting me?” he shouted. He was scared of what would come out of this. He was scared of his own career being ruined if the news was caught up by the press. His name would become dirty if associated with this affair. He said he would certainly not make a testimony in my favour at any police station. In addition, he thought that the musicians’ organization would probably take the band’s side in the matter, and that I would possibly have to pay the 2.5 million cfa. It is difficult for me to say whether or not this was true. It might have been true in a corrupt setting, but Pierrot might have wanted to scare me, too; he might have noticed that he no longer controlled me as he used to do and that

this was his chance to make himself indispensable again. These are my speculations, and it shows how uncertain I was and still am when it comes to confidence in human relations in Ivorian show business. What I can say for certain is that I was very, very scared during this event, and I felt trapped in a plan that I did not know anything about. I had been in the field for three months, and I felt insecure when it came to everything: my personal security, my fieldwork and my life in the Ivory Coast. I wanted to go to Cameroon, where I had happy memories. But I clearly had to change my attitude when it came to methods; I could no longer go on living with musicians as if we were a big, happy family. Without any doubt, we were not.

Pierrot and I had to make a plan in order to get out of this dilemma. Pierrot told me to just forget about the police business—this had to be dealt with in the African way, he said, and I accepted whatever he advised me to do. Not only was I dependent on Pierrot when it came to meeting musicians and bands, but he also had to rescue me from the band members’ well-planned crises, which were the consequences of these encounters. Pierrot decided that we should get it all over with during the same evening, by going to the nightclub where the band would be performing. So we did, and on our way, we went over the scheme: I was to say hello to the band and sit down and have a drink, while Pierrot would go outside to have a talk with Terry. On a signal, I would go out to join them. This all happened quite quickly. On our way out of the nightclub, Pierrot told me word by word what I was to say. We joined Terry who had gathered a few helpers, witnesses really, and I started on my speech. I told them in an awkward and apologetic way that, “Really, I don’t know what has come over me these past few days, but I have probably listened to advice from the wrong people. So really, please excuse me”. In fact, I was apologizing for something that they had done to me, and this was a strange and extremely humiliating feeling. I felt a total lack of power; there was no chance that I could control my life. My self, my social person, was completely eradicated. This is perhaps what the local black women are aware of, and therefore avoid: their brothers’ way of behaving towards people, and their constant search for an economic or relational benefit. I, as an anthropologist in the field, could not escape these dramatic situations.

Paul Rabinow has written interestingly on the experience of being trapped and used by informants, and how the anthropologist’s presence alters the field (Rabinow 1977). He also sheds light on the fact that it is through crises that social life and its codex unfold before you, providing an opportunity to learn from and subsequently analyze the event. In short, one must not stop with the defeat, but rather continue to excavate an interesting interpretation of the field. A not negligible fact from the Ivorian setting is that events that seem unbearable to the anthropologist are part of a daily routine among informants. They do not neces-

sarily think of the antagonistic aspect of a crisis as a problem as they have to face this every day. So to me, this event was a crisis, but to my informants, it was not. Our perspectives differed.

My informative defeat in the Abidjanese field changed into what seemed like much the same scenario as when Pierrot and Terry had had their clash on the street—everything was “forgotten”. We might call this a relational logic in the field, which forms a pattern. The tantrum is not seen as an end to a relationship. Terry said that it was nothing, and we started to talk about how difficult it is being in a foreign country when you obviously do not know the rules, and do not know who to listen to. I then paid for a bottle of red wine, and we drank it all together, to make up. We sat there and chatted nicely and calmly together for about 30 minutes. Later, when we went in to the club again, they did another set and I sat down to breathe out. But in the next second, Terry dragged me onto the dance floor. I pretended to have the time of my life out there. I sat down again for a little while but the percussionist, “the thief”, asked me to dance again, and so I did. I put on a happy face and was nice to everyone in order to secure some future freedom. This was survival. I became a hypocrite and cynic myself, and a very good one, too. I had learned the “trick”.

After this incident, I stopped spending time with and working with them. They no longer interested me, and I no longer interested them, I suppose. From my point of view, there was absolutely no chance of us functioning together again. I could not make of this incident something that could be forgotten or repaired, by changing the frames of the setting. It was over. From their point of view, I believe they understood that I had ended my part of the deal, that is, giving away money. They had by then changed their expedient focus to something more income producing.

## The escalation seen within the dimension of cultural difference and social equality

I think the overall theme when it comes to the incidents above, is the wish among some of the informants to demonstrate that we were social equals on the one hand, but that we expressed cultural differences on the other. The members of the band, and especially Terry, wanted to show me in an efficient way that we were social equals, and that no hierarchy existed in our relationship. We could talk and discuss matters like two equal persons meeting up somewhere in the world, with regard to color, background or social rank. I was one of the guys. However, we had significant cultural differences that he was eager to highlight as well. We were in his country, and he knew everything like the inside of his pocket. He wanted to show me that he excelled in a setting that I did not know anything about and that he could help me getting settled as an “insider”. I certainly could not just appear from nowhere and think

that everything was fine. I was to learn it the hard way, by respecting the local social arenas, which is perfectly understandable. Terry’s, as well as Pierrot’s, power and control lay in that they were in a situation of information control, and could therefore make themselves indispensable to me. In this sense, they were the directors of the play that was about my survival in the field, and about my learning the local codes. My other informants watched these relationships develop, but did not tell me how I could avoid the problems, as I was to learn them for myself (*voir clair dedans* is the expression for this). They would certainly not speak ill of someone; I could perceive this as if they wanted to keep me to themselves. So they preferred that I create the crisis and learn from it without their intervention.

After the Rastafari experience, I could start the analytical process. By breaking the social rules, I suddenly became aware of their existence. I understood that I had to change my working methods from only “hanging out” with or living with people, to a mixture of traditional anthropological participatory observation and of formal and expedient interviews. I had to show them I was respectable. I had to overtly make my field notes so that everyone could see I was professionally busy with something, and thus distinguish myself from “only” being a woman. People were then able to categorize me, which was important for our interactions.

This change in my approach is strictly combined with my role in the Ivorian society, or the total lack of such. I had no official job; I did not have the format of some technician or specialist having a well-paid development job in the region, demanding respect from everyone. I wanted to escape this kind of stereotyped version of a European. However, the Rastafari experience made me reflect upon this and convinced me that maybe I was *bouffée* (eaten) precisely because I did not behave like a “real” European. I represented only myself, although I found myself alternately executing different roles like the moron, the trophy and the intelligentsia. But despite my efforts I was soon seen as a rich European, which is a true and undeniable fact, of course. I had paid my return ticket while having a student rank. After a while, I imitated what the musicians did; they lived quietly on their own somewhere, and met up in town. In order to survive, I understood that I had to emphasize new aspects of my personality by copying local social and practical tricks.

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