single statement in the abstract of his article with which I would wish to
disagree or which appears to me to be incompatible with the statements I have
made above about territorial attachment and group identity amongst the
Mursi—or with possible 'corollaries' that might be drawn from them. Second,
my own interest in territorial attachment and identity was not aroused by the
'post-modern' debate about the impact of globalization and 'deterritorializa-
tion' but by the much earlier anthropological debate about territorial
expansion and 'ethnogenesis' amongst cattle herding peoples in East Africa.
The Mursi case is only relevant to the general issues raised by Kibreab,
therefore, to the extent that it allows us to gain some distance from our
'normally unexamined assumptions about territory and identity' (Turton 1996:
106). Whether my analysis of this case contains insights which are relevant to
the issues raised by Kibreab in his article is, ultimately, for the reader to decide.

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Rejoinder to the Replies by Daniel Warner, Finn Stepputat and David Turton
GAIM KIBREAB

The central thrust of my argument is that as long as the basis of apportioning
the rights of entry to, and use of, territorialized spaces and enjoyment of rights
associated with this remain conditional on territorially anchored identities,
places of origin will continue being the repository of rights and membership.
Consequently, voluntary repatriation will still represent one of the most
important solutions to the refugee problem but not necessarily to the problem
of refugees. It is this reality that reinforces the links between people, identities
and particular places. As far as those who flee from the developing countries
are concerned, globalization has only exacerbated their condition. The
globalization process is marked with a number of fundamental ironies and
contradictions. Firstly, globalization has created expanded freedom of move-
ment and opportunities for the peoples of the North but incarceration for the
peoples of the South. The reason why globalization has created expanded
choices and opportunities in the North is not only due to 'increased wealth and
technological advancement' as Warner suggests, but mainly because of their
membership in a spatially bounded social world—namely, the European
Union, OECD, etc. This suggests that globalization on the one hand causes
integration, and on the other fragmentation (Chimni 1995). Secondly, in spite of globalization, as places and localities become blurred (Gupta and Ferguson 1992), the desire of people to inhabit culturally and ethnically distinct places has never been greater than it is now.

Warner gives the impression that I consider voluntary repatriation as being a durable solution to those in exile under all circumstances. Though it is true that cessation of the factors that prompt people to be uprooted involuntarily is an absolute precondition for the solution of the refugee problem, the problem of refugees is amenable to being solved both in the context of exile and repatriation. Once the causes of flight are eliminated, how refugees respond to the opportunity of return is determined by a variety of other factors. (For an elaborate discussion of these issues see Kibreab 1996.)

Warner raises the distinction between the ontological and sociological positions with regard to the 'notion of roots in relation to identity'. My main pre-occupation is what he refers to as the 'sociological' rather than the 'ontological' one. He does not show how the ontological as opposed to the sociological position is relevant to the issues at hand. I do not think Warner has succeeded in showing how the ontological approach helps us to understand by means of description, explanation and prediction on the one hand, the experiences of refugees in terms of the changes they undergo as a result of displacement, and on the other, the responses of governments, as well as the attitudes of host societies towards 'others'.

Warner quotes at length two refugee voices partly to show that displacement of identity is a common feature of modernity and partly to show that the views constructed in the North also 'have some resonance in Beirut and Santiago'. Though refugee voices vary depending on their experiences in exile, it is true that 'once refugees have found themselves a part of systems of otherness, they can never return fully to their past' (Douglas in Krulfeld 1992: 7). It is equally important to realize, however, that 'who we once were we always continue to be' and 'who we were once we will never quite be again' (a quotation in ibid). That is the reason why it is more appropriate to say that returnees integrate into 'new' rather than re-integrate into their former societies. Both groups are no longer what they were before. With regard to refugee voices, the Eritrean refugees who returned from Sudan, including those who were born there and who had never been to Eritrea before, unequivocally state that they are at home and are enjoying for the first time full citizens' rights. This attitude is difficult to understand in isolation from the kind of treatment the refugees received in the country of asylum. Repatriation is conceived as an escape route from conditions of deprivation.

Warner argues that 'progressive Third World scholars' have a tendency to defend smaller states against hegemonic encroachment on their sovereignty by big powers even when such states' records of human rights performance are dismal. There are not many 'progressive' Third World scholars who prioritize state security over human security. At least I am not one of them. In countries where states are oppressive, the security of states and human security are
inversely related. More often than not, it is states' action or inaction taken to ward off the imagined or actual threats to their security that prompt refugee and other forms of population displacement. In such a situation, the security of states may mean human insecurity.

It is important to note, however, that human security and states' security are sometimes inextricably linked. Sometimes there are compelling human rights violations that warrant external intervention but it is also important to recognize the fact that 'protection of human rights' may provide the pretext for big powers to encroach upon the sovereignty of weaker states to promote their own foreign policy and economic interests. Intervention in the name of human rights protection can also have extreme, widespread and catastrophic consequences on the wellbeing of the very people who are supposed to be protected by such an intervention. Iraq is a classic case in point. The NATO bombing campaign of March–June 1999 in Kosovo and Serbia may be another. Only when there is a threat to 'international security' do international powers justify intervention in other states' internal matters, and international security is considered threatened when 'oppression' generates massive flows of refugees which may destabilize neighbouring countries. But what happens when genocide does not result in massive flows of refugees to a neighbouring country? The examples of the Gulf and Kosovo in contrast to Rwanda are glaring. In Rwanda not only were powerful states unwilling to intervene to save hundreds of thousands of innocent victims of genocide, but they were also reluctant to separate the perpetrators of the genocide from those who fled in search of international protection (Crisp 1999). Ironically, the perpetrators lived off the handouts given by such powers and continued holding the refugees as hostage. The Third World scholars Warner has in mind are reacting against such double standards and hypocrisies. I do not agree with Warner that the principle of seeking approval of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter should be pursued under all circumstances, as he puts it, 'even excluding the concept of human rights itself'. The lives (estimated between 10,000 and 20,000) that perished in East Timor after the referendum would have been spared if it were not for this procedural requirement and the Security Council's attempt to appease the oppressive Indonesian government. The Australian government was willing to send troops before the unfolding of the tragic events but could not do so without a green light from the Security Council. I agree with Warner that NATO's behaviour in Kosovo sets a dangerous precedent, but this should be weighed against what was going on on the ground. Though the Security Council is the lesser evil we have to live with, I do not think it is a disinterested and objective arbiter of conflicts.

Warner argues that the 'ability to actualize certain forms of behaviour without interference' rather than the territory itself is significant. If Warner's use of the concept of territory was consistent with the way it is used in the bulk of the relevant literature (in terms of actually occupied terrain), he would have easily seen that many of the behaviours associated with occupation of a territorialized space, such as freedom of movement and residence, production
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of material goods and culture as well as the right to admit or exclude outsiders, are impossible to actualize in a spatial vacuum. He sees the role of a territory not being different from that of a cyberspace inasmuch as both constitute 'sites of activities'. Without assuming a philosophical stance, my understanding of the differences between the two is that a cyberspace is a line of communication and a territory is an actual terrain in which the activities that sustain human lives and social relationships are produced, reproduced and transformed. Cyberspace is boundless whilst the resources of a given territory are limited and hence the concern of occupants over the danger of depletion due to imagined or excessive demands. That is why asylum is increasingly perceived by host governments and their citizens as a scarce resource. Cyberspace is increasingly becoming an open access resource where entry is nearly unlimited, and whenever there is limitation of access, the sole requirement is financial capability for meeting the costs of subscription. Territorialized spaces are not accessible on the same or similar conditions. However, it is important to note that as governments erect more walls to make their territories inaccessible to genuine asylum seekers, only those who can afford to pay exorbitant fees to human smugglers may be able to circumvent these barriers.

Warner argues that I am confusing the notion of the need for a specific home with the 'private space separated from mythology', and further contends that return does not imply a return to privacy but rather to return in order to 'live with others'. I cannot be confusing these two notions because 'home', to the refugees I have been working with during the last fifteen years in northeast Africa and elsewhere in the continent, means the country, the region, the district or the villages from which they were forcibly displaced. I never came across any informant for whom home meant the actual private building and the space in its vicinity. My own on-going research findings in southwestern Eritrea, where the majority of the 180,000 returnees from the Sudan have settled, also show that the overwhelming majority have settled outside their areas of origin. Voluntary repatriation for the majority of the returnees has been a means of regaining the citizenship rights that they lost in connection with their displacement. Very few saw return as a means of regaining private space. Indeed Warner is right in pointing out that 'return to home can be seen as the return to live with others'. Among the populations that I have been studying, return has been a vehicle of social, economic and cultural integration of peoples with disparate occupational, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds (see Kibreab forthcoming).

Finally, Warner is inviting me to join the camp of those scholars who are trying to arrest the expansion of the private at the cost of the public space in order to avert the threat to the common public good—the institution of asylum. Though such a pursuit is undoubtedly worthwhile, it is also important to take the dramatically changing moral views of the majority of populations in host countries into account in order to minimize its negative impact on the system of asylum. There are two ways of doing that. One is by rigorous campaign against the policies and practices that undermine the principles and
norms enshrined in the international instruments relating to the status of refugees which most governments are parties to. And secondly, by contributing to the development of conditions and mechanisms which discourage those who use the system of asylum as a channel of migration, with the aim of maximizing the opportunity of genuine asylum seekers to access protection. One of the central objectives of the recent EU Heads of States meeting in Tampere was to adopt an integrated asylum and immigration policy and to eliminate ‘illegal immigration’, for which countries such as Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands expressed support (Government of Netherlands 1999). ‘Illegal immigration’ does not only refer to ‘immigrant smuggling and traffic in persons’, but it also includes all movements of persons, including asylum seekers, that take place without possession of ‘proper documents’. If we were to carry out a survey among refugees in the European countries to establish their mode of entry, including my own, I would not be surprised to learn that nearly all but the few who arrived under the quota system, family reunion and the programme for resettlement of disabled refugees, fell into the so-called category of ‘illegal entrants’. This is not surprising; from the perspective of sending countries, flight from persecution is invariably considered illegal, which means that those fleeing cannot be expected to apply for passports and exit visas from the government which is persecuting them. Acceptance by EU member states in Tampere, as proposed by the government of the Netherlands, of a uniform asylum and immigration policy which, *inter alia*, will be enforced by positioning of immigration officers representing all member states with training to ‘recognize false identity papers’ to undertake ‘pre-boarding checks’ (Government of Netherlands 1999), may effectively mean that no asylum seekers will be able to come to Europe. The *raison d’être* of Tampere is to make Europe inaccessible to asylum seekers from the South.

If not rigorously challenged by every means, the implementation of the so-called ‘integrated asylum and immigration policy’ may mark the beginning of the end of asylum. From a humanitarian perspective, it may not make sense to distinguish between those who use the asylum channel as a means of immigration to escape life-threatening economic hardship and those who flee from persecution. But in these dramatically changing unfavourable policy environments, differentiation may be unavoidable to salvage the institution of asylum. The consequence otherwise could be disastrous. As it stands at present, the moral right of asylum is not apportioned on the basis of need, but rather on the basis of the ability and resources of potential asylum seekers to surpass the barriers erected by states in the North to make their territories inaccessible.

Stepputat indirectly implies that in spite of my acceptance of the ‘natural’ links between people, places and identities, several of my own points and arguments suggest the converse. My point of departure is not based on the inseparable link between people, place and identity, as Stepputat seems to assume. It is, rather, the forcible dislocation of people, as well as the absence of opportunities to establish new homes elsewhere based on equality and dignity that sustain and reinforce the links between people, identity and particular
People, Place, Identity and Displacement All places. It is when roots are cut by force from their cultural, social and spatial milieu that they become powerful instruments of maintaining the link between peoples, identities and particular places. The link is even more powerful in situations where the forcibly uprooted roots cannot be re-established elsewhere. Stepputat argues that I have failed to pay attention to the (post-structuralist) analytical proposition that we have to explore how, when and under which circumstances people and identities are linked to certain places, and what effects such linkages—or the lack of such linkages—may have for people...'. That is precisely what I have done in the paper. As places are increasingly territorialized and as more people are forcibly uprooted from such places without being offered a substitute, or their attempts to establish new homes outside their places of habitual residence are thwarted because of their 'otherness', it is these very circumstances that link people and identities to particular places.

Another of Stepputat's criticisms is based on the fact that I have disregarded the debate which postulates that identity, instead of being deterritorialized, is re-territorialized. I am aware of this debate and the reason I did not dwell on it is because I have no contention against it. It is important to state, however, that 're-territorialization' implies that there was a time in which people's identity was de-linked from particular places. Deterritorialized identity is inconceivable in situations where all space is territorialized. He seems to have misunderstood the central points of my argument by reducing it to an oversimplified statement—namely, 'that people are not free to go wherever they want', thus, I am said to be 'whipping a dead horse...'. Such an oversimplified presentation does not do justice to the points and arguments raised in the paper. Only a superficial reading of the paper would give such an impression.

Turton's criticisms fall into three parts. Firstly, he alleges that I have misrepresented his arguments by resorting to an 'illegitimate use' of 'technique', inter alia, by drawing corollaries that according to him are 'non-sequiturs' or have no relevance to his statements. In their description of the rationale why the title of In Search of Cool Ground was fitting, the authors state 'It is an appropriate title for two reasons. Firstly, it reflects a local perspective of most displaced and impoverished groups of the northeast African region—groups whose primary concern is to find a relatively secure place in which to begin working towards a better life, often irrespective of the country in which that place is located (1996: 5) (emphasis added). I interpreted this to mean that the subjects of their discussion—namely, the people of northeast Africa—have no sense of attachment to particular territories. If the peoples' sole preoccupation is to find sources of livelihood, regardless of whether these resources are located in or outside their country, this cannot mean anything else but having no sense of attachment to particular places within the northeast African region. I contend I have not misrepresented the views of the authors.

Another 'misrepresentation' according to Turton is my statement, 'This is even true among the Mursi whose identity is said to be formed in a state of mobility'. Turton contends, 'As it stands, this is a fairly meaningless
formulation which I have never used.' This is what the Introduction to In Search of Cool Ground states: 'The title of the book is a translation of a phrase often used by the Mursi of southwestern Ethiopia, encapsulating their view of themselves as a people whose very identity has been formed by movements and migration' (1996: 5) (emphasis added). The only word I have changed is 'mobility' instead of 'movement', which mean the same thing.

Turton's second contention is that since he agrees fully with what is stated in the abstract of my paper, he does not see the rationale why his work should be included in the works I have used in highlighting the emerging issues in the forced migration debate. It pleases me to hear that he agrees with the thrust of my arguments as summarized in the abstract. The reason why I included his work is simply because I thought that some of their views were at variance with the reality of the displaced populations in northeast Africa as I understand it. Most importantly such views, I thought, shied light on significant aspects of the debate concerning the links between people, identities and particular places and consequently on repatriation or on a solution to the refugee problem. There is nothing which suggests that my views are right whilst his are wrong.

Thirdly, Turton asserts that his interest in the link between people, identity and particular places 'was not aroused by the "post-modern" debate... but by the much earlier anthropological debate...'. It is always a problem, is it not, that in covering several works together, the attempt to find common threads applicable to all the works may sometimes do injustice to the individual pieces? Though there is a discernible similarity between some of the views I referred to earlier and the 'post-modern' debate on the links between people, identity and particular places, I stand corrected with regard to the origin of Turton's interest in the debate.

1. It is appropriate to point out that there is no explicit or implicit reason why I should want to 'attack' the work of a person who has for many years been a source of inspiration and insight to me.


