

# World Anthropologies Network (WAN) Red de Antropologías del Mundo (RAM)

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## Presentation/Presentación

Challenging the academy, south-south collaborations, new practices, other anthropologies

## Articles/Artículos

Establishing a dialogue among international anthropological communities  
*WAN Collective*

Estableciendo un diálogo entre las comunidades antropológicas internacionales  
*WAN Collective, Traducción Carlos Andrés Barragán*

Conversation autour du World Anthropologies Network (WAN)/  
Réseau des Anthropologies du Monde.  
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Exhausting academia: in defence of anthropology, in search of time  
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*Stephen Bennetts*



## Contributors / Autores

*Yasmeen Arif* has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the Department of Sociology at the University of Delhi and is currently Associate Fellow at the Center for the Study of Developing Societies in Delhi. Also a member of the WAN Collective.

*Andrés Barragán* is a Colombian anthropologist in Bogotá, and a member of the WAN collective.

*Stephen Bennetts* is completing a PhD in Anthropology at the University of Western Australia on the Southern Italian folk revival.

*Eeva Berglund* is a Finnish anthropologist who taught at Goldsmiths College in London and is about to start a degree in urban planning in London. Also a member of the WAN Collective.

*Joseph Bosco* is Associate Professor of Anthropology, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

*Aleksandar Bošković* is Senior Research, Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, and a member of the WAN collective.

*Maria Isabel Casas Cortés* is from Spain and just completed her Anthropology PhD exams at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, USA; she will start her research on “activist research” in Spain in January of next year. Also a member of the WAN Collective.

*Elisabeth Cunin* She is a researcher of the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), France. Also a member of WAN.

*David Delgado Shorter* is Assistant Professor at the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

*Kimberly Christen* is Assistant Professor at the Comparative Ethnic Studies Department, Washington State University, USA.

*J.S. Eades* is professor of Asian Pacific Studies and Director of the Media Resource Center, Ritsumeikan Asian Pacific University, Beppu, Japan, and Senior Honorary Research Fellow, University of Kent, UK.

*Alejandro Grimson* is a researcher both in CONICET and in the Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social, in Argentina. Also a member of the WAN Collective

*Myriam Jimeno* is Professor of Anthropology at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá , and a member of the WAN collective.

*Susana Narotzky* She is Professor of Anthropology at the Universitat de Barcelona. Also a member of the WAN Collective

*Pablo Semán* is the director of the Centro de Investigaciones Etnográficas de la Universidad de San Martín, Argentina, and member of WAN.

*Sandy Toussaint* is member of WAN. She is Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, The University of Western Australia, Crawley Australia

*Shinji Yamashita* is professor of Cultural Anthropology, The University of Tokyo.

*Elena Yebia* is from Lebanon and just finished her second year as a PhD student in Anthropology at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, USA; she will be doing preliminary research in Chiapas this coming Summer. Also a member of the WAN Collective.

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Presentation/Presentación



## CHALLENGING THE ACADEMY, SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATIONS, NEW PRACTICES, OTHER ANTHROPOLOGIES

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The World Anthropologies Network project, WAN, is eminently about pluralizing anthropological theory and practice. The network's activities to this date have been oriented to maintaining this open-ended character of the project, while trying to give it shape. The results so far have included the emergence of small WAN sites here and there, mostly still in Latin America, a few in Europe and Asia. Some of the recent tasks the network have taken on have actually been prompted by face-to-face sessions with anthropology students—most of them undergraduate—in Colombia and Argentina. In these encounters, students have suggested practical actions, such as the development of course syllabi and bibliographies, some of which are already posted on the website. We include reports from these two meetings at the end of this issue.

This issue starts with two collective statements on WAN already published on paper. The first is a recent text printed in the *Anthropology Newsletter* in the US and its Spanish translation. The second is the French version of the first collective text by the WAN group published in *Social Anthropology* in 2003 and also included in the first issue of this electronic journal.

The second section includes four articles (two of them already published) and four work-in-progress pieces. It starts with two pieces by participants in the WAN collective. The first is a personal account and analysis by Eeva Berglund on the conditions imposed on the British academy in recent years by the ensemble of practices and regulations named by Marilyn Strathern and collaborators as “audit culture.” Highlighting the productivism, drive to self-exploitation, and turn towards corporatization and managerialism that have often accompanied this trend, Eeva lucidly discusses the implications of these troubling trends for long-standing anthropological principles, personal choices, and ethical positions. In the second piece, Sandy Toussaint contextualizes Australian anthropology within national cultural and political shifts of recent years, particularly after the so-called “Mabo decision” of 1992. Confronted with some of the same pressures outlined by Berglund, along with demands arising from new subjects and topics, Australian anthropologists have responded in multiple ways, yet these are still to build up to a substantial critique of anthropology's foundations of the sort WAN envisages, in Sandy's view.

“Anthropologies of difference,” by Yasmeen Arif (Researcher at the high-profile Center for the Study of Developing Societies in Delhi) queries the notion of “anthropological encounter” as found in dominant anthropological fieldwork; at the same time, she attempts to recover this concept by building on an uncommon case: An Indian anthropologist trained in India (who is most times expected to remain at home for field research) doing fieldwork in an anthropological location commonly reserved for anthropologists from the metropolis, in this case Beirut. This “lateral connectivity,” she contends, can become important for world anthropological approaches especially if they aim to move beyond a pure pattern of opposition (to the metropolitan varieties). Understanding anthropology as the systematic study of diverse human sociality, Yasmeen calls for anthropologies of difference (building on Deleuze) that are not so mediated by imperial cartographies, given that they enable other constellations of observer/observed, outsider/insider. While this does not solve all problems, one wonders if this form of South-South collaboration could be a route for anthropology to finally exit from what Trouillot called “the

savage slot.” We find Arif’s project of linking anthropologies in India and Latin America from an explicit South-South inter-epistemic dialogue perspective hopeful and worth pursuing.

Finally, the paper by Myriam Jimeno, one of the most established anthropologists in Colombia and Latin America, undertakes a simultaneous reflection on both the relation between Colombian anthropologists and the people they work with in the country—a relation which is always politicized and often wrought with tensions, since it almost invariably involves the struggles of different social sectors—and between Colombian anthropology and global, particularly dominant, anthropologies. If the former issue is predicated on an assumed lack of boundaries between anthropological practice and the social action of the anthropologist as citizen, the latter is often marked by challenges and reinventions of metropolitan concepts to such an extent that it amounts to a significantly different knowledge production.

The next section features four works in progress that we believe are very exciting, hence the slightly longer commentary. The first two are slightly revised versions of papers presented at the conference “Informatics Goes Global: Methods at a Crossroads,” convened by anthropologist David Hakken and colleagues at the School of Informatics, Indiana University, Bloomington, March 3-4, 2006. Taken together, these papers point at the challenges and possibilities entailed by new information and communication technologies (ICTs) when doing ethnographic work. Although these two papers involve work with indigenous peoples on the design of websites, we believe many of the questions they raise would easily apply to cases with groups in many parts of the world involving a variety of technologies (e.g., digital video, websites, net.art). As the papers demonstrate, the questions go well beyond technical competencies, literacy, and the “digital gap.” For David Delgado Shorter (“How Do You Say ‘Search Engine’ In Your Language?”: Translating Indigenous World View into Digital Ethnographies”), working with Yaome (Yaqui) indigenous people on both sides of the US-Mexico Border, one the key issues is how to build collaborative relations under conditions that involve different aesthetics, epistemologies, notions of property and commons, often divided opinions and conflicting tribal groups or authorities, poor material conditions (e.g., unsteady electricity supply), even unprecedented questions about the disciplinary practice of “human subjects review.” “What does ‘technology in Indian country’ mean”—he asks, echoing the work of Guillermo Gómez Peña—in the context of a widespread politics of exclusion?

Some of these questions are also addressed by Kimberly Christen in her work with the Warumungu Aboriginal group in Central Australia (“Changing the Default: Taking Aboriginal Systems of Accountability Seriously”). Christen foregrounds issues of intellectual and cultural property rights, an area in which anthropologists are contributing actively. Drawing on her digital collaboration with Warumungu artists and community leaders, she discusses the shortcomings of concepts of “traditional ownership” and the role of digital technologies in preservation (via the construction of websites and DVDs by the anthropologist with indigenous collaboration). Christen’s strongest conclusion is that what takes place is an overlap of cultural conceptions and practices of ownership and cultural management, with modern “copyright” or “creative commons” (or Copyleft, as in the case of this journal) as possible idioms among others. One of her more insightful concepts, in our view, is that property can perhaps be best thought about not in terms of ownership (particularly individual), but of kinds of authorship enacted by networks of ethical/political practices and social relations, of which the anthropologists would of course be a part. This “distributional” approach to property, she argues, is more appropriate to the actual situation of many indigenous communities and enables a different politics of collaboration with them by the anthropologist.

Surely many of the questions raised by these two papers have been part of anthropology for a long time, but some of them are new. Even the concept of “web-based ethnographies” suggests new practices. How does one “download” or “encode” indigenous cultural contents into a digital medium without betraying their different linguistic and epistemic logic? How does one render place, territory,



ritual—or respect the desire for secrecy about them, whenever this is the case—from this perspective? These were questions discussed at the session on “Engaging Code Openly” at which both papers were presented. For now, we want to highlight that these new practices present opportunities for collaboration and engagement that both pose challenges to the more detached practice of anthropology that has seemingly become common place in many quarters, particularly in the US, and point to possibilities for other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise.

We also see WAN as embracing the transformational thrust of those who are working on social movements (including alter/anti-globalization movements) from anthropological stances. Several PhD students at Chapel Hill and elsewhere are in fact envisioning their dissertation research in terms of linking up social movements’ decolonial projects with the non-hegemonic anthropologies advocated by WAN. This is the case with the papers by Maria Isabel Casas Cortés and Elena Yehia that follow. In the first of these papers, Maribel establishes a conversation between three ongoing projects: WAN; the Latin American Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality project; and what seems to be a growing trend of *activist research* among social movements. This trend has actually been identified recently in various places and movements; one of these places is the Social Movements Working Group (SMWG) at UNC, Chapel Hill (<http://www.unc.edu/smwg/>), an interdisciplinary effort spearheaded by faculty and PhD students in anthropology and which also includes participants from geography and sociology, in operation since Fall 2003. One of the group’s most important contributions so far has been the idea that social movements have to be taken seriously as knowledge producers in their own right. In her paper, Maribel—a founding member of SMWG—presents one of the most interesting cases in the world not only of “knowledge production” but, more explicitly, of “activist research,” the Madrid group *Precarias a la Deriva*. In doing so, she builds bridges between the three projects in question, particularly their respective contributions to decolonial thinking, including feminist research in the case of *Precarias*. Based on the very interesting methodological innovations of this group, she adumbrates the possibility of a “decolonial ethnography.”

Elena Yehia’s paper establishes a conversation between two different frameworks: Actor-network theory (ANT), particularly the most recent works of Law, Mol and Latour, on the one hand, and the Latin American Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality project (MCD). Starting with the question: “how can one do decolonizing ethnographies of social movements’ decolonizing practices?,” she suggests that both ANT and MCD contribute to decolonizing knowledge, particularly through their innovative conceptualization of modernity, and that they do so in complementary, yet mutually probing, ways. From ANT’s notion of “multiple ontologies,” for instance, she enunciates the idea of the ethnography of ontological encounters, which she develops with the help of notions of performance and dialogical ethnographies. From MCD, she envisions the exciting idea of ethnographies of encounters bringing together distinct geo-political locations (distinct locations in the modern/colonial world system), such as movements in the Arab World and in Latin America. Finally, Elena poses pointed questions about MCD, including the issue of the implications of decoding subaltern knowledges or, alternatively, refusing to decode them; and the limitations of the project due to its being located largely in the academy and conducted in academic language—that is, its inevitable locatedness within modernity.

The dossier includes introductions to three recent volumes that broach many of the issues central to the WAN project. Many of the topics discussed in these introductions point in similar directions as WAN, others present interesting tensions with our project. Aleksandar Bošković’s edited volume (in press at this point), *Other Anthropologies* explicitly addresses discussions of “indigenous” or “non-Western,” “central/peripheral,” “anthropologies of the South,” and “world anthropologies.” It includes chapters on anthropologies which have often been placed in the position of “other,” such as those from Russia, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Kenya, Turkey, Argentina (chapter by Rosana Guber from WAN), Cameroon, Japan, Yugoslavia, Norway, Mexico (chapter by Esteban Krotz, also from WAN), and Brazil, plus Postscripts by George Marcus and Ulf Hannerz.

Finally, the issue ends with reports from two recent anthropology congresses in Latin America, Colombia's National Anthropology Congress held in August 2005 (with Alcida Rita Ramos, professor of Anthropology at the University of Brasilia and associated with the WAN Project as one of three keynote speakers), and the First Latin American Anthropology Congress, held in Rosario, Argentina in July of 2005, which featured a session on WAN. Among the paper presenters in this session were WAN members Susana Narotzky and Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (organizers), Alcida Ramos from Brazil, Rosana Guber from Argentina, and Estaban Krotz from Mexico.

This issue was organized by Arturo Escobar, Eduardo Restrepo and Sandy Toussaint.





## ESTABLISHING DIALOGUE AMONG INTERNATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

WAN Collective

The World Anthropologies Network (WAN) provides a forum for understanding the multiple and situated power relationships that shape particular ways of doing anthropology worldwide. It is also a project of intervention to legitimize the voices of other forms of anthropology, one which recognizes these forms as anthropological knowledge in their own right, independent of, yet in conversation with, hegemonic centers of knowledge around the world.

Network participants seek to affect the communicative practices and modes of exchange among world anthropologists through their critical analysis. The aim in doing so is to constantly localize the epistemological, theoretical, methodological and political horizons of the discipline. At the same time we strive to generate conditions for horizontal conversations among anthropologists worldwide. Rather than a project to enrich historically hegemonic forms of anthropology, we hope to create “networked” environments that will allow for a pluralistic discipline that thrives on both its localness and its dialogue across multiple place-based perspectives across the globe.

We criticize the monotonous character of the current international landscape of anthropology and its tendency to reproduce the voices of particular elites around the world. We propose instead that every form of anthropology is local, including those emerging from metropolitan centers. Assuming the singularity and specificity of all forms of anthropology is important, we believe, for the expansion of the discipline beyond its established boundaries.

### Predicaments and Proposals

One of anthropology’s paradoxes is its claim to be a universal discipline in spite of its Western foundations. The strongest criticisms of this disciplinary tension between universalism and particularism came from those who identified a close relationship between anthropology and colonialism or imperialism. Yet anthropologists worldwide are not consistently discussing the current nature of their practices in light of new realities in our current global political-economy, nor are anthropologists considering the fate of anthropology on a truly global scale.

Rather than leading to the dismantling of standardized forms and practices of anthropology, most critiques of the discipline have resulted—unwittingly—in the very reinvigoration and worldwide expansion of these standards through elite centers of anthropological production. While these criticisms have questioned standard forms of anthropological knowledge and political practices, they have not impinged on the institutionalization of the discipline itself. Furthermore, dialogues between central and peripheral anthropological institutions continue to contribute to the peripheral ones becoming marginalized by or absorbed into the central ones.

WAN differs from these past critiques within and outside dominant forms and centers of anthropology in significant ways. We believe that globalization has opened up heterodox

opportunities to the academic world, and that through concerted political action more diverse, democratic and transnational communities of anthropologists can develop. At the same time, we do not write from a particular national viewpoint, nor do we wish to advocate for any particular one. Rather, we think that the dominance of some styles of anthropology stems from a geopolitics of knowledge that affects all anthropologists both structurally and historically, and hence encroaches on our own individual experiences within the academic world system. The networks WAN therefore envisions should affect the intersection of personal and institutional practices, working against universal hierarchies of knowledge and towards more critical and inclusive practices of knowledge production.

### **Knowledge Production**

WAN focuses on how standard forms of anthropology subordinate peripheral ones, and encourages the development of a system that will provide a forum for those forms of knowledge that elites ignore, disqualify or subordinate through their standard practices. Thus, WAN works against—or at the very least in tension with—the tendencies to standardize or universalize anthropological knowledge. WAN is an attempt to visualize and foster systems of anthropology in all their multiplicity, both inside and outside academia. Rather than “improving” a single anthropology—by “correcting” its “errors”—we want to make visible the tensions that make anthropology possible.

Anyone doing anthropology, according to WAN participants, is capable of dialogically contributing to the construction of diverse forms of global knowledge with local vocations. We envision the possibility of establishing a multivalent system of practicing anthropology, one based on the multiplicity of voices and positions existing outside hegemonic centers of anthropological production. This does not mean, however, we claim for any sort of apartheid of the local, or for the development of a movement of non-US anthropologists endowed with privileged or authoritative positions of marginality. As a networked group WAN is concerned with the political conditions of anthropological knowledge production at large. If the central feature of Western knowledge, including anthropology, is its expansive claim to universality, how are we to make it different?

### **WAN as Process, Method and Content**

Looking for an answer to this question of how to make Western knowledge different, we considered the creation of a flexible structure or network to foster dialogues and exchanges among a number of diverse anthropologists. Our long-term aim is to develop a self-organizing world network for anthropological research and action that at the same time aims at continuously questioning conventional academic and non-academic forms of knowledge.

We envision a World Anthropologies Network as a consciously de-centered, self-organizing process with emergent properties of its own. Obviously we cannot anticipate these as they will depend on the dynamics set in motion. Our goal is to produce a processual network, which should result in a loose and multidirectional articulation of a variety of forms of anthropology connected through shared interests, complementarities and even tensions. The network should set in motion historically situated conversations and actions on prevalent anthropological concerns, such as culture and nature, the global and local and the political economy of resources.

The form adopted by the network is of crucial importance—rather than a method, a set of contents or an objective, we consider the World Anthropologies Network itself to be a fusion of these three aspects. This network should be a venue for the constant interlocking of place-based nodal points—be these theoretical, political, communicational or institutional—in such a

way that their stability, while existing, is constantly exposed to other possible forms. We think of this hybrid form as a permanent act of connecting and thus articulating the network that constantly re-generates itself and nourishes the forms of knowledge and politics interlocked and produced through it.

The network will avoid replicating the static organizational styles available at present, although we recognize these structures have a part to play in anthropology. Yet, we want to provide a pliable, critical structure with the capacity for being constantly reformulated, for constantly considering centrifugal demands and incorporating them into its many nodes of articulation.

### **WAN as an Intellectual Attitude**

WAN should be seen as an intellectual attitude that gains its strength from its capacity for constant transformation as it exposes itself to local knowledge-practices without absorbing them. As a project capable of being situated in multiple locales, its primary motive is communication, recognizing the role of dialogue in forging needed political alliances between a range of diverse anthropologists and anthropological entities. Such dialogue is necessary for the dynamic production of knowledge that is both coherent, yet differently articulated, and that has a direction in spite of being open-ended.





# ESTABLECIENDO DIÁLOGOS ENTRE LAS COMUNIDADES ANTROPOLÓGICAS INTERNACIONALES<sup>1</sup>

Colectivo WAN

*Traducción:*

*Carlos Andrés Barragán*

La Red de Antropologías del Mundo (RAM) / World Anthropologies Network (WAN) ha sido diseñada como un foro para el entendimiento de las múltiples y situadas relaciones de poder que moldean las formas de hacer antropología alrededor del mundo. También es un proyecto de intervención para legitimizar las voces emanadas de otras formas de hacer y pensar antropología; una legitimización que reconozca estas formas de pensamiento antropológico en su propio derecho, independientes de, y al mismo tiempo en conversación con centros hegemónicos de conocimiento en el planeta.

Los participantes en la Red buscan afectar mediante sus análisis críticos tanto las prácticas comunicativas, como los modos de intercambio contemporáneos entre los antropólogos. Al hacer esto, el principal objetivo es situar constantemente los horizontes epistemológicos, teóricos, metodológicos y políticos de la disciplina. Al mismo tiempo también nos esforzamos por generar conversaciones horizontales entre los antropólogos provenientes de cualquier punto geográfico. Más que un proyecto para enriquecer aquellas formas de antropología históricamente hegemónicas, esperamos posibilitar espacios “conectados” que puedan permitir el ejercicio de una disciplina pluralista que enfatice tanto sus especificidades locales, como su diálogo a través de múltiples perspectivas situadas.

Como grupo criticamos el carácter monótono del panorama internacional de la antropología y su tendencia generalizada de reproducir las voces de élites particulares alrededor del mundo. En lugar de esto proponemos que cada forma de antropología es local, incluyendo aquellas que están emergiendo de los centros metropolitanos. Consideramos que es muy importante asumir la singularidad y la especificidad de todas las formas de antropología, en especial para propender por una expansión de la disciplina más allá de las fronteras actualmente establecidas.

## Dificultades y propuestas

Una de las principales paradojas de la antropología es su reclamo de ser una disciplina universal no obstante sus fundamentos occidentales. Las críticas más fuertes de la tensión disciplinar entre el universalismo y el particularismo vienen de aquellas personas que han identificado la cercana relación entre la antropología y el colonialismo o el imperialismo. No obstante, se puede decir que entre los antropólogos no hay una discusión consistente sobre la naturaleza contemporánea de sus prácticas a la luz de las nuevas realidades emanadas de nuestra política y economía global actual, y que tampoco están considerando el destino de la disciplina antropológica en la escala global adecuada.

Más que liderar el desmantelamiento de las formas y prácticas estandarizadas de la disciplina, la mayor parte de las críticas a la antropología han propondido y han resultado —sin querer—, en un reforzamiento y expansión global de estos estándares a través de los centros de élite de producción

antropológica. No obstante estas miradas críticas han cuestionado formas estándar de conocimiento antropológico y de prácticas políticas, en términos generales no han impactado la institucionalización en sí misma de la disciplina. Por otra parte, el diálogo entre instituciones antropológicas centrales y periféricas sigue contribuyendo a que las periféricas continúen marginalizadas o sean absorbidas por las centrales.

Las propuestas del colectivo RAM / WAN difieren de manera significativa con las críticas que han surgido en el pasado –dentro y fuera de las formas y los centros dominantes de la antropología–. Consideramos que la globalización ha abierto opciones heterodoxas al mundo académico y que mediante acciones políticas concertadas se pueden desarrollar comunidades de antropólogos más diversas, democráticas y transnacionales. Al mismo tiempo, es preciso aclarar que no escribimos desde un punto nacional particular, y que tampoco queremos avocar por una especie de particularismo. Más bien, pensamos que el dominio de algunos estilos de antropología tiene raíces en unas geopolíticas del conocimiento que afectan a todos los antropólogos tanto en lo estructural como en lo histórico, por lo cual nuestras propias experiencias individuales se insertan dentro del sistema académico mundial. Las redes que el colectivo RAM / WAN imagina deberán, entonces, afectar la intersección entre las prácticas personales y las institucionales, para así trabajar en contra de las jerarquías de conocimiento universales y propender hacia unas prácticas de producción de conocimiento más críticas e inclusivas.

### **Producción de conocimiento**

Uno de los interrogantes que más interesa al colectivo es cómo las formas estandarizadas de ejercicio antropológico subordinan a aquellas formas periféricas. En este sentido, el colectivo alienta el desarrollo de un espacio que posibilite un forum a aquellas formas de conocimiento que las elites disciplinarias ignoran, descalifican o subordinan a través de sus prácticas estandarizantes. De esta manera la Red trabaja en contra de –o al menos en tensión con–, aquellas tendencias que estandaricen o universalicen el conocimiento antropológico. La RAM / WAN es una tentativa para visualizar y fomentar modalidades de antropología en toda su multiplicidad, dentro y fuera de la academia. Antes que “mejorar” una antropología única al “corregir” sus “errores”, queremos hacer visible las tensiones que hacen a la antropología posible.

Cualquier persona que practica la antropología, de acuerdo con los participantes de la RAM / WAN, es capaz de contribuir dialógicamente a la construcción de diversas formas de conocimiento global con vocaciones locales. Imaginamos la posibilidad de establecer un sistema multivalente de practicar la antropología; uno basado en la multiplicidad de voces y posiciones existentes por fuera de los centros hegemónicos. Sin embargo, esta perspectiva no significa que apelemos a una suerte de apartheid de lo local o que abogemos por el desarrollo de un movimiento de antropólogos no estadounidenses dotados con posiciones privilegiadas o autoritarias derivadas de un supuesto estado de marginalidad. Como un grupo de trabajo en red, al colectivo le interesan las condiciones políticas de la producción del conocimiento antropológico. Si la característica central del conocimiento occidental, incluyendo a la antropología, es su demanda expansiva de universalidad, ¿cómo podemos entonces hacerlo diferente?

### **Proceso, método y contenido**

En la búsqueda de una posible respuesta a la pregunta de cómo hacer el conocimiento occidental diferente, consideramos la creación de una red o estructura flexible que fomente el diálogo y el intercambio horizontal entre un número significativo de diversos antropólogos. Nuestro objetivo a largo plazo es desarrollar una red mundial auto-organizada de investigación y acción antropológica que simultánea y permanentemente cuestione formas de conocimiento académico convencionales y no académicas.

Pensamos la Red de Antropologías del Mundo como conscientemente descentrada, como un proceso auto-organizado con características emergentes propias. Por supuesto no podemos anticipar

cuáles serán, en tanto que dependen directamente de las dinámicas puestas en movimiento. Nuestra meta es producir una red procesual que deberá terminar en una abierta y multidireccional articulación de formas de antropología conectadas mediante intereses compartidos, complementariedades e incluso tensiones. La Red deberá poner en juego conversaciones y acciones situadas históricamente alrededor de preocupaciones antropológicas predominantes, tales como la relación entre cultura y naturaleza, lo global y lo local, y la economía política de recursos.

La forma que ha adoptado la Red es de crucial importancia: más que un método, o un conjunto de contenidos o un objetivo, consideramos que el proyecto RAM / WAN es en sí misma una fusión de estos tres aspectos. La Red deberá ser el lugar de constante conexión de puntos nodales situados –sean estos puntos teóricos, políticos, de comunicación o institucionales–, en tal forma que su estabilidad, mientras que exista, sea constantemente expuesta a otras formas posibles de conocimiento. Consideramos esta forma híbrida como un acto permanente de conexión, articulando así la red que constantemente se regenera a sí misma y que nutre las formas de conocimiento y de política enlazadas y producidas a través de ella.

La Red evitará la replicación de estilos organizacionales estáticos disponibles en la actualidad, aunque reconocemos que estas estructuras tienen una parte que jugar en la antropología. Esperamos proveer una estructura flexible, crítica, que tenga la capacidad para ser constantemente reformulada; que sea sensible y esté atenta a la consideración e incorporación de demandas centrífugas en sus variados nodos de articulación.

### Una actitud intelectual

La Red puede ser percibida como una actitud intelectual que obtiene su fortaleza de su capacidad para la constante transformación a medida que se expone a sí misma a prácticas y conocimientos locales sin absorberlos. Como un proyecto capaz de estar situado en múltiples sitios, su principal motivación es la comunicación, reconociendo el papel del diálogo en el forjamiento de las alianzas políticas necesarias entre un rango amplio de antropólogos y entidades antropológicas. Un diálogo de este tipo es indispensable para una dinámica producción de conocimiento que sea tanto coherente, como diferencialmente articulada, y que a pesar de ser abierta tenga una dirección.

### Notas

<sup>1</sup> Publicado como WAN Collective (2005). “Establishing Dialogue among International Anthropological Communities”. *Anthropology News* 2005(November): 8-9. Washington, D.C., American Anthropological Association (AAA).

Para más información bibliográfica ver por ejemplo:

Ribeiro, Gustavo Lins & Arturo Escobar (eds.). 2006. *World Anthropologies. Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power*. London: Berg Publishers.

Restrepo, Eduardo y Arturo Escobar. 2005. Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise: Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework. *Critique of Anthropology* 25 (2): 99-129.



## CONVERSATION AUTOUR DU WORLD ANTHROPOLOGIES NETWORK (WAN)/ RESEAU DES ANTHROPOLOGIES DU MONDE\*

WAN Collective<sup>1</sup>

*Traduction:*

*Elisabeth Cunin*

Le collectif WAN a pour vocation la formation d'un réseau autonome des anthropologies du monde; son objectif principal est de se positionner en tant qu'espace dialogique permettant une discussion sur l'Anthropologie —avec une majuscule— dans son rapport à différents processus et événements globaux. Dans ce contexte, le réseau vise à contribuer à l'émergence d'un horizon pluriel, dans lequel les anthropologies du monde ne s'inscriraient plus dans des logiques hégémoniques métropolitaines et seraient ouvertes au potentiel hétéroglossique lié aux processus de globalisation. Le réseau devra certainement adopter des formes d'enquête globales —sans que ceci signifie l'imposition d'agendas ou de styles uniformes— qui mobiliseront des visions et des intérêts politiques et théoriques multiples et géographiquement situés. Pensé dans un contexte multilingue et organisé de manière virtuelle, tout en s'appuyant sur des événements concrets (et non orthodoxes), le réseau souhaite produire des formes alternatives de recherche et favoriser des pratiques de financement qui donnent la priorité à des agendas de recherche et à des signatures collectifs.<sup>2</sup> En définitive, le réseau peut être décrit comme une contribution au développement d'*autres anthropologies et d'une anthropologie d'une autre manière*.

Les questions suivantes ont inspiré notre projet : comment pouvons-nous repenser —et refaire— les anthropologies de manière ouverte et dans un contexte global, en dépit de leur ancrage dans la modernité européenne, et au-delà de leurs connexions avec le colonialisme, le capitalisme et la globalisation? Comment caractériser des «anthropologies du monde» par rapport à un panorama actuel marqué par des «traditions anthropologiques nationales» au sein desquelles certaines anthropologies ont plus de poids paradigmatique —et donc plus de pouvoir et d'autorité— que d'autres ?

A travers ces questionnements, nous considérons que les différences liées aux conditions historiques, culturelles et économiques de la production de connaissances ont des conséquences sur la formation des pratiques et des théories anthropologiques (et, évidemment, des anthropologues). Ainsi, un des premiers objectifs du réseau des anthropologies du monde est de rendre visibles les mécanismes par lesquels les anthropologies reconnues comme «centrales» —dans le monde et en son centre— subordonnent les anthropologies «périphériques» (là encore, autour et au centre du monde).<sup>3</sup> Un autre objectif d'égale importance (mais peut-être moins évident) du WAN est de travailler à rendre visibles ces *savoirs différents* que les anthropologies centrales ignorent, éliminent ou subordonnent (selon un principe normalisant lié à leur caractère de «connaissances expertes»). Enfin, le réseau s'oppose aux tendances à la normalisation des anthropologies, qu'elles soient identifiées comme centrales ou périphériques.<sup>4</sup>

En posant ces questions et objectifs, inspirés par des intellectuels non académiques, nous voulons montrer le potentiel propre à notre discipline en termes de critique, de rapprochement entre action et réflexion, entre raison et passion, en ayant l'espoir de modifier la structure actuelle des institutions anthropologiques, ou au moins, de perturber des présupposés peu questionnés.

*Ce projet est fondé sur.*

A) La reconnaissance analytique que, plus que de mener au démantèlement des anthropologies canoniques, une grande partie des critiques faites à la discipline a eu pour résultat — involontaire — le renforcement des pratiques caractéristiques des anthropologies centrales dans le monde. Alors que ces critiques ont interrogé aussi bien les pratiques épistémologiques que politiques du centre, la question de l'institutionnalisation de la discipline a été oubliée. Il en résulte que l'anthropologie produite dans les centres dominants a rarement prêté intérêt à des arguments et à des critiques émanant d'autres lieux. On peut même considérer qu'elle a perpétué un « espace rhétorique » qui n'a pas permis l'apparition d'autres idées, théories et activités.<sup>5</sup> En outre, le dialogue entre académiciens « centraux » et intellectuels « périphériques » a souvent contribué à la subalternisation de ces derniers. À ce sujet, la figure du « témoignage » est tout à fait éloquent.<sup>6</sup> Généralement intégré aux théories académiques centrales, le « témoignage » n'a pas été considéré comme une forme de connaissance *en tant que telle* et n'a pas été appréhendé au même titre que les nouvelles théories. Ainsi, en dépit de l'existence de certaines mises en cause, domine l'idée selon laquelle l'anthropologie des centres dominants est encore produite par un « nous » et porte sur un « eux » — alors que, dans le même temps, elle contribue à une globalisation qui rend inopérantes ces catégories —. Il existe une dynamique qui assimile les marges aux perspectives des « centres » et tend à exclure — et à empêcher — des pratiques périphériques, d'autres agendas de recherche et d'autres intérêts théoriques et politiques.<sup>7</sup>

B) La prise en compte du fait que cette situation a pour conséquence l'existence de formes dominantes de connaissance anthropologique et d'institutionnalisation (en particulier les règles académiques nord-américaines) qui tendent actuellement à exercer une influence standardisante sur les autres anthropologies, leurs institutions, leurs discours et finalement leurs propres pratiques disciplinaires. Un symbole de cette tendance est la participation de plus en plus grande d'anthropologues étrangers aux réunions annuelles de l'American Anthropological Association (AAA), la présentation d'articles aux comités d'évaluation de revues publiées aux Etats-Unis et, surtout, la force d'attraction croissante de l'univers discursif anthropologique américain sur les anthropologies subalternisées.<sup>8</sup> Comme dans tout contexte politique, il s'agit là d'une relation complexe : alors que les anthropologies subalternisées sont contraintes de se placer dans l'orbite des tendances discursives des approches dominantes, elles accroissent dans le même temps leur capacité à résister, tant en termes épistémologiques que pratiques, aux tendances assimilationnistes qui pourraient les rendre invisibles.

C) La reconnaissance de la nécessité d'une critique qui mette en cause la simple définition géographique de la « périphérie » et du « centre », en particulier lorsque cette définition s'apparente à un retour de l'essentialisme mettant en valeur un « nativisme » présenté comme un avantage épistémique. Bien que les contraintes organisationnelles et épistémologiques qui pèsent sur les anthropologies métropolitaines soient dues au fait qu'elles incarnent une *épistémè* occidentale, elles ne se limitent pas à des frontières géographiques définies. Le réseau ne prend pour cible aucun centre en particulier. Bien plutôt, son objectif est de rendre visible l'institutionnalisation de la production des connaissances (quel que soit le lieu où elle se produit) qui empêche des débats libres et critiques entre espaces académiques locaux.<sup>9</sup> Nous voulons rompre avec l'hégémonie silencieuse imposée par les régimes modernes de production de la connaissance, ouvrir des espaces alternatifs d'expression à *différents types de savoirs* et rendre possibles *leurs propres conditions d'émergence*.

D) Le WAN est conscient que les limites entre sphères académiques et non académiques ne résultent pas d'extériorités/intériorités ontologiques, mais sont plutôt l'effet du caractère

disciplinaire de la connaissance en tant que tel. L'académie n'est qu'un centre parmi les multiples espaces de production de connaissance, et être un académique n'est qu'une manière d'être un intellectuel. Cette remarque est centrale dans notre argumentation et constitue une des caractéristiques majeures du réseau d'anthropologies du monde.

### Se mettre en réseau (*enredarse*): le réseau comme processus, méthode et contenu

En tant qu'intellectuels académiques, mus par la volonté et le désir de s'intéresser à de multiples formes de connaissance, nous voulons entamer un processus qui affecte (ou, au moins, qui rende visible) les tendances hégémoniques d'organisation des pratiques des anthropologies académiques, tant centrales que périphériques. Le réseau d'anthropologies du monde cherche à transformer de manière processuelle (et donc constante) l'organisation sociale et la reproduction hiérarchique des anthropologies dominantes, trop souvent posées comme des évidences. Cette dynamique devra faire émerger d'autres formes de connaissance anthropologique —et d'autres institutions—, sans que celles-ci soient considérées comme des alternatives exclusives. Nous souhaitons également favoriser le processus par lequel la connaissance est le résultat de l'interaction entre des intellectuels académiques et non-académiques.

Nous proposons de faciliter la création d'une structure flexible, un réseau<sup>10</sup>, qui favorise les dialogues et les échanges (sur les aspects déjà mentionnés et sur d'autres thèmes) entre des anthropologies comprises en leur sens le plus vaste. Notre objectif à long terme est de développer un réseau autonome et global de recherche et d'action anthropologiques, ayant également pour but une mise en question continue des formes de connaissance dominantes (académiques et non académiques), ainsi que des orientations qui tendent à s'imposer comme telles.

Nous concevons le réseau d'anthropologies du monde comme volontairement décentré et comme un processus autonome, possédant des particularités propres et originales. Évidemment, nous ne pouvons pas anticiper ses caractéristiques, tant elles dépendent des dynamiques mises en œuvre. Notre objectif général est de produire un réseau, processuel et flexible, qui devrait permettre d'articuler des anthropologies hétérogènes en termes d'intérêts, de contributions et, pourquoi pas, de conflits partagés. Le WAN devra donner naissance à des conversations théoriques et à des actions politiques —historiquement situées— sur différentes dimensions de la relation entre nature et culture, sur le rapport local/global et, dans une perspective la plus vaste possible, sur l'économie politique des ressources.

Les premiers noeuds du réseau fonctionneraient comme des catalyseurs, autant pour susciter des stratégies de localisation (en fortifiant et en donnant une cohérence interne à chaque lieu), que pour croiser, de façon dynamique et productive, les divers intérêts et les dialogues collectifs qui lient les lieux entre eux. Ce processus devrait donner forme au réseau, tout en étant articulé par lui. De même, le réseau devrait avoir une fonction de déstratification des réseaux de pouvoir-connaissance établis tout en évitant de se convertir en une structure hiérarchique.

La *forme* du réseau en tant que telle est extrêmement importante. Nous voulons souligner le fait que plus qu'une méthode, un ensemble de contenus ou un objectif, nous considérons le réseau en lui-même comme une fusion de ces trois aspects. Le réseau devrait être, comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, le lieu d'expression d'une connexion constante entre points névralgiques —qu'ils soient théoriques, politiques, communicationnels ou institutionnels— de telle sorte que sa stabilité soit constamment soumise à d'autres formes possibles de connaissance et, de ce fait, ne soit jamais considérée comme unique ou dominante. Le caractère processuel de cette méthode-objectif peut métaphoriquement être exprimé par la figure suivante: se mettre en réseau (de l'espagnol *en-redarse*) ; c'est-à-dire comme un acte permanent de mise en contact grâce auquel le réseau s'articule, se régénère et nourrit les formes de connaissance et les politiques qui lui sont liées et/ou produites à travers lui.

L'objectif, en parlant de *se mettre en réseau*, est multiple. D'abord, et de façon évidente, nous souhaitons éviter de reproduire les styles d'organisation statiques à l'œuvre actuellement ; bien que ces structures aient un rôle à jouer, notre objectif est qualitativement différent.<sup>11</sup> Deuxièmement, nous voulons mettre en place une structure flexible et réflexive, ayant pour caractéristique de pouvoir être constamment reformulée et ouverte aux considérations et à l'incorporation de demandes centrifuges dans toute la variété de leurs formes d'articulation. Il s'ensuit que nous ne souhaitons pas aborder la question normative de comment doit être l'anthropologie, même si cet exercice réflexif est marqué par des enjeux théoriques, moraux et/ou politiques.

L'agenda du réseau devra inclure un vaste ensemble de questions de recherche propres aux anthropologies sociales et culturelles; toutefois, nous espérons qu'il s'intéressera aussi aux avancées de l'anthropologie biologique, historique et linguistique (en construisant des liens historiquement contextualisés au sein de ces sous-champs qui constituent encore une grande partie de la pratique anthropologique dans le contexte mondial), tout en problématisant ces divisions et en imaginant d'autres types de connexions. Les théories, les politiques et les représentations portant sur le rapport biologie/nature, sur le passé et le langage sont aussi importantes pour les anthropologies du monde que la recherche sur les politiques culturelles de la globalisation, les identités et les mouvements sociaux. Cet agenda sera transformé et redéfini au fur et à mesure que d'autres lieux hétérogènes seront articulés au réseau (leur apportant d'autres dynamiques), que d'autres contextes et environnements seront mis en jeu, et que les discussions politiques amèneront les frontières intellectuelles et de la recherche vers d'autres configurations. Des thèmes comme la formation des étudiants, l'expérience de terrain des anthropologues, l'anthropologie gouvernementale, les anthropologies militantes, les anthropologies dissidentes, l'éthique, l'activisme, etc., seront probablement examinés en temps voulu dans l'agenda politico-théorique du réseau. Finalement, nous espérons que ce processus commencera à interroger, de manière progressive, l'idée d'un réseau d'«anthropologies» et amènera à ouvrir cette structure à d'autres systèmes d'enquête sur la culture et les politiques culturelles, que ce soit dans les contextes académiques ou en dehors.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Le collectif WAN était à l'origine composé d'Eduardo Archetti (University of Oslo), Eeva Berglund (Goldsmiths' College), Marisol de la Cadena (University of California, Davis), Arturo Escobar (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Penélope Harvey (Manchester University), Susana Narotzky (Universitat de Barcelona), Eduardo Restrepo (Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, ICANH / UNC-Chapel Hill), Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (Universidade de Brasília) et Sandy Toussaint (University of Western Australia). Depuis, d'autres anthropologues de différentes parties du monde l'ont rejoint.

<sup>2</sup> Bien entendu, nous le répétons, en restant attentifs aux particularités historiques et géographiques.

<sup>3</sup> La distinction entre «centre» et «périphérie» est complexe et ne se limite pas à une simple distinction géographique. Au sein du réseau, nous nous intéressons à la dynamique par laquelle se met en place l'hégémonie et la subalternisation des anthropologies dans un contexte mondial et à la création de centres dans les périphéries et de périphéries dans les centres.

<sup>4</sup> Voir Restrepo et Escobar (2005).

<sup>5</sup> Dans sa discussion des théories de la connaissance, Lorraine Code (1995) analyse la façon dont les «espaces rhétoriques» neutralisent l'action sociale.

<sup>6</sup> Le «témoignage», en tant que genre latino-américain, a connu une certaine popularité dans les années 1970 et a constitué un effort stratégique pour dénoncer les violations des droits de l'homme perpétrées par les régimes militaires et les forces paramilitaires. Ce processus impliquait la collaboration d'un intellectuel académique (généralement européen ou nord-américain) et d'un leader local. Les travaux les plus populaires dans ce domaine sont ceux de Rigoberta Menchú et d'Elizabeth Burgos Debray.



<sup>7</sup> Il y a bien sûr eu, sur le sujet, des signes d'inquiétude venus de l'anthropologie et des autres disciplines. Le rapport Gulbenkian sur l'état des sciences sociales, dirigé par Immanuel Wallerstein (Gulbenkian Commission 1996), avait déjà montré la nécessité de renouveler les structures et les pratiques de production de connaissances propres aux sciences sociales, afin de prendre en compte les nouveaux ordres sociaux émergents. Ce rapport a été largement diffusé dans certaines parties du monde, notamment en Amérique latine ; néanmoins, il faut noter sa faible diffusion aux Etats-Unis. Lors des réunions annuelles de l'American Anthropological Association (AAA), certaines sessions portant sur l'anthropologie font parfois référence à des analyses similaires (voir Nash 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Loin de nous l'idée de passer sous silence la diversité des enseignements et des pratiques disciplinaires qui caractérise les Etats-Unis, ou de suggérer que telle utilisation implique telle construction normative. Le réseau s'intéresse aux concepts de «différence» au sein de l'anthropologie et entre les anthropologues, mais aussi dans leur articulation avec les Etats-nations «métropolitains».

<sup>9</sup> C'est une différence entre le projet du réseau et les critiques antérieures des anthropologues du Tiers-Monde. Voir par exemple les discussions sur l'«*indigenous anthropology*» (Fahim y Helmer eds. 1982), les «*antropologías del sur*» (Krotz 1997) et les «*antropologías periféricas*» (Cardoso de Oliveira 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Nous empruntons ce concept à un ensemble de théories des réseaux, notamment celle d'acteur-réseau, et de théories de la complexité et de l'auto-organisation. Bien que ce texte aurait pu être écrit sans aucune référence à ces théories, nous voulons souligner leur utilité dans la prise de distance avec les formes ontologisantes de pensée qui réifient les catégories et gèlent les multiples façons d'imaginer le monde.

<sup>11</sup> Nous n'avons pas la prétention de construire une organisation transnationale qui fonctionnerait comme un parapluie, ni un réseau d'organisations nationales. De fait, il existe déjà des espaces institutionnels comme l'International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, qui fonctionnent relativement bien au niveau de l'Europe et de l'Amérique Latine.

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## EXHAUSTING ACADEMIA: IN DEFENCE OF ANTHROPOLOGY, IN SEARCH OF TIME<sup>1</sup>

Eeva Berglund

“[T]here is almost no language in the audit culture in which to talk about productive non-productivity. On the contrary, the very concept of overload suggests a management inadequacy on the part of the academic —one has not paced oneself properly. One should make time for time. The result is a vague, persistent and crippling sense of failure. That is compounded in the conflation of management with performance.”

Marilyn Strathern (1997: 318).

Professor Strathern’s writings on measuring performance in education have often drawn on her ethnography (Strathern 2000b). My views on academic work conditions are not direct outcomes of anthropological investigation but they do draw on a key anthropological insight, namely that societies make some things very explicit to themselves, while at the same time making invisible certain other things. One of Strathern’s concerns has been to argue that it is a society-wide loss of trust that fuels our obsessive and constant scrutiny of performance (Strathern 2000b). While taking on board that message, my concern here is a more traditional one; to bring into view a routinely obscured social reality, namely the time-consuming work of nurture. Above all, I am concerned to remind that nurture is necessary in universities too.

All jobs have their good and bad points. Universities, at their best, are havens of learning, creativity and excitement. People can commit to long-term intellectual projects without experiencing the entrepreneur’s need to sell or the consumer’s addiction to fashion. Unfortunately, these conditions are at risk as government policies have increased bureaucracy within universities while at the same time pressuring academics to prove their usefulness. I have become persuaded that constant performance monitoring or audit is at the heart of academics’ complaints (e.g. Shattock 1992, Strathern 2000 ed., Goodlad 2002, Eriksen 2005, Rinne and Simola 2005). Alarming, audit might also be stifling creative academic endeavour (Siikala 2005).

To acknowledge that there is a problem, one need not indulge in a nostalgic fantasy that the universities were once Ivory Towers protecting a unified community of humble truth seekers. But to reduce universities to their utilitarian functions and measure their money-creating potential and then believe one has a representation of its value, is to believe in fiction. No audit can account for the value of a university, because universities belong to the class of things whose significance cannot be measured (Eriksen 2005).

It was my own experience of British academia that inspired me to seek more dispassionate ways of articulating the problem. Three years ago I left what had looked like a dream job in a London University (Goldsmiths College) anthropology department. But after only four years I had my fill of disillusionment, demoralisation and exhaustion. I was in an enviable position of financial security, so I chose to leave. I was soon, however, able to consider my situation within the context of a symposium on World Anthropologies organised by the Wenner Gren Foundation in 2003. I prepared an analysis of the

changing conditions of work in British anthropology.<sup>2</sup> My contribution ended up symbolising problems that all the participants, working in thirteen different countries, could recognise. At the symposium it also gave rise to the quip that the UK was at the 'cutting edge of the rot'. My view now is that 'the rot' is far deeper, more widespread and more frightening than I had realised.

### University business

There is a horrible mismatch between all the talk of innovation, dynamism and wealth in contemporary Western society and a reality of sameness, tiredness and unrelenting fear of failure. Although we celebrate our unprecedented health<sup>3</sup> and our growing wealth, we are also constantly being told that we must achieve more in less time. Academia is far from immune from these pressures. In fact as a significant part of the infrastructure of a global knowledge economy, universities are in a position of renewed economic and political importance. They are also losing their right and ability to manage themselves.

The spread and institutionalisation of audit is one aspect of the tendency to treat everything, including learning, as a business enterprise. By audit I refer to constant appraisal. It is accompanied by a culture that normalises 'transparency' and 'accountability' and uses the language of the 'market' and 'management' to discuss universities (Strathern 2000: 2). Adapting to audit means academics must be productive and be seen to be productive. This often generates shelf-loads of 'output', sometimes of a questionable calibre, which few have time or inclination to read. As Strathern put it, above, there is no time for time in the universities. The reasons for this have already been debated widely (e.g. Shils 1992, Strathern ed. 2000, Eriksen 2005, Shore n.d). Here I want to add to the discussion by highlighting the fact that this is part of a systematic denigration of nurture and care that afflicts society far beyond the universities. I begin from personal experience.

Once I had made the shift from post-doctoral researcher to university lecturer, the most draining experience became the difficulty of fitting in adequate research. There was never nearly enough time for reading, discussion, for proper fieldwork, or for writing. This complaint is made by every social scientist I know. It was not just my own struggle to manage my time which caused anxiety, but the knowledge that everyone else's energies had also already been stretched to their limits. Prioritising these scholarly pursuits meant that there was almost no time for 'life', including family, hobbies or even eating. Having ventured into all kinds of college-related and other academic undertakings, gradually I began to retreat from projects I had embarked upon. If I didn't have sufficient time or energy, I found that other involved parties were too overextended also to focus on them properly. From management the message we received was that staff could, indeed must, be even more committed, more productive. We were not, so I was told, in a position to say 'no'; there is no downtime in academia.

One of the things I miss most in my current life outside the university is the students. I taught some very bright and motivated people. Certainly many were there to give themselves time to discover their passion or to improve their earning potential. In Britain university lecturers are often disparaged as living somewhere other than reality, but the students never let me forget that I was actually part of a very real world of true importance, the world of learning and human growth. During the four years I worked at Goldsmiths I became exhausted and frustrated, but I never stopped being amazed at my students' or my own capacity and will to learn. The universities are a literally invaluable arena for nourishing those human qualities.

Beyond a certain point, these cannot be reduced to measurable improvements in results. Nor are they necessarily furthered by the British government's insistence on increasing student intake, particularly not when the resources to accommodate higher student numbers are missing. As admissions tutor I tried to be loyal to my institution yet honest to applicants when they asked about the college's ability to cater to their circumstances. Inadequate child care probably meant that the college lost many young parents who would have had great academic potential.

Copyright restrictions (based on financial pressures within the publishing industry) meant a lack of materials. The pressure to take on high-paying overseas students created its own mixed bag of problems. Although staff regularly pointed out the difficulties of accepting students with a poor command of English, from a management perspective more students paying more money was obviously a good thing. The unspoken assumption was that academic staff would put in that little bit extra to ensure that students' output was not compromised. Many did. Alas, targets based on financial rather than academic criteria are more likely to bring academic performance down rather than up.

Universities do still equip people to articulate critical, innovative and well reasoned ways of thinking (Shils 1992, Smyth and Hattam 2000), and passion and excitement still flourish in them. However, the need to service new administrative requirements, to constantly seek funding and to satisfy students (who are now treated more like customers and who behave accordingly), make unprecedented demands on university employees. Sociologist and philosopher of science Steve Fuller captured the mood when he wrote that "teaching is being reduced to the dispensation of credentials; ... research is being privatised as intellectual property: the one driven by the employment market, the other by the futures market" (1999: 587). How distressing to contrast this with a passage reproduced by Michael Shattock from an interview with Lord Bullock, then vice-chancellor at Oxford University, and which was originally published in A. Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind* (1987). For Bullock "the task of the university is not to train its graduates for a particular profession, to give them vocational training or to fill them full of specialist knowledge. It is to educate them: to draw out their powers of thought and imagination in the study of whatever subjects arouse their interest; to encourage them to penetrate below the surface of the conventional wisdom and wrestle with the questions to which there's no simple or single answer; to recognise the limitations of their knowledge" (cited in Shattock 1992: 140). The distress comes perhaps from knowing that most academics would agree with Bullock's aims, but would find it extremely hard to claim that that is what they are doing.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen has even claimed that universities have become like factories (2005). Whether one agrees with him or not, they are undoubtedly subject to management as if they were part of a nation's (or trading block's) trade and industrial machinery. Where knowledge is an asset, investors need up-to-date information about universities' capacity to produce. Arguably it is this, above all, which lies behind the constant stream of ranking lists and indicators of competitiveness, not only of universities, but of other elements of a nation's capacity to serve international capital. Some universities and some countries, including Finland, regularly feature at the top of the resulting ranking lists. What is striking about the winners is their constant fear of falling behind. As soon as one round of measurement has raised spirits and calmed nerves, the next opportunity to do less well comes along. In 2002 as soon as the UK's much resented Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), that ranks and allocates finances for the country's university departments, was over, the talk was of how to prepare for the next round, to be held in 2008! My former colleagues were demoralised but not surprised.

The usual justifications for squeezing more and more out of the universities are based on the assumption that they must rejoin the real world. When 'the real world' is invoked in this way, it is, of course, synonymous with that unwieldy yet all-powerful entity, the economy. The economists and business professionals who are its self-appointed experts have convinced the rest of us that we must be slaves to it (while the disposable income of many in the financial sector defies belief). Having cut my anthropological teeth by engaging with matters ecological, I have no doubt that economics matters. However, the view that 'the real world' is necessarily a world of cut-throat competition to which the universities and everyone else must now adapt, can and must be challenged. Besides ethical arguments, there are ample historical grounds to do so (Buck-Morss 1995, Mitchell 1998) not to mention ecological ones (Martinez-Alier 2002). In fact, given how willingly economic calculation encourages the destruction of life-supporting natural processes and then makes them vanish as externalities, the conceit that 'the economy' equals 'reality' is practically scandalous. In their engagement with these processes as they unfold in the world, academics are arguably far closer to reality than are the financial experts.

It is still true, of course, that as a profession, academia tolerates and even encourages a flight from embodied experience. Perhaps the tendency to live in their heads also accounts for why lecturers and professors are so prone to discount or try to ignore their own exhaustion. But it is not only staff who are evidently paying with their physical and psychological well-being, student life is considerably more demanding than even just ten years ago. Research from the USA, reviewed in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (19.10.2004) goes so far as to claim that today's students are suffering a mental health crisis. It is made worse by the fact that there the resources to attend to their emotional and physical wellbeing are more often being eroded than strengthened. UK students are also at risk, given the pressures within the university system, but also the tendency in the UK as a whole to work long hours (ILO 2004). Anecdotal and mass media reports from Finland suggest grounds for concern here also (e.g. Nurminen 2004).

We are accustomed to thinking that the universities acquiesced to market pressures because it happened by stealth and because there was no choice. Besides, everyone else is drained too (Siltala 2004, Ehrenreich 2005). However, we do not pursue these thoughts too far, since to argue that things, in general that is, are getting worse, is to attract the charge of doom-mongering, of being a habitual pessimist or a neo-con supporter awaiting Armageddon. It is possible, however, to articulate alternative views and without discounting one's own experience of reality.

I take inspiration from Teresa Brennan. In her books *Exhausting Modernity* (2000) and *Globalization and its Terrors* (2003) she laid out a historically grounded, thorough and imaginative analysis of the exhaustion and conflict that characterise work today. She did so by drawing on Marxist political economic theory and psychoanalytic thought, and marshalled a breadth of empirical illustrations to support her argument. Similar views have been articulated elsewhere, for example by Barbara Adam (1998) and Joan Martinez-Alier (2002). Brennan's work is remarkable for the thoroughness of its critique of the dominant economic framework, and for a key insight, namely that it entails organising time in a way that exhausts and consumes without replenishing. Her work provides a platform for going beyond complaints about audit into a realm where we can and must question the justifications for the intensification of labour, including academic, as well as intensifying surveillance of it.

Brennan's argument is that not only does business as usual inflict disproportionate and sustained damage on the usual suspects —the poor, women and nature— it endangers the health and regenerative capacity of all (2003: 148). The catalogue of misery she presents (in *Globalization and its Terrors*), is offered as evidence, not only of the bankruptcy of global capitalism but of the impasse into which modern thought has taken world society. What for convenience we call the West runs a world economy to suit its own needs, promises good things to everyone, but delivers waste and fear. Even in the midst of the plenty child care, education and health care are all being done with fewer and fewer resources. In fact it is possible now to talk of the "prohibitive cost of life" since after all, from the point of view of speedy profits, reproducing the next generation of workers is too slow (Brennan 2003: 87). Robots would be easier to manage than the pliable bodies and creative minds of human beings.

Even while society apparently celebrates 'creative classes' the standardised measures required by audit put both bodies and minds at risk (Kinman and Jones 2004, Kadison 2004). The critics of the new academic regime tend to agree that time for reflection has become a luxury. Perhaps one day it will be available only to those who can afford to buy time for it. Yet like nurture and social reproduction more generally, university work requires time and social interaction, and it requires that people be literally present to each other (Sipilä 2005).

This is so despite the point I made about academic life being lived 'in the head'. Face-to-face interaction with colleagues and students has always been potentially hugely stimulating and satisfying. Those who grew into anthropologists in the relatively confined context of the British institutions described by Spencer (2001) are quick to make the point, but American anthropology also enjoys a vibrant collective

memory of nurturing teacher-pupil relations. Now that information overload and supposedly instant universal access have become the norm, interpersonal, intense relationships are perhaps even more important. Whatever one's view of the social histories of academia, it is undeniable that teaching, conferences and, in anthropology at least, the regular seminar, remain fundamental to the continuity of scholarship. What they require as an absolutely nonnegotiable prerequisite is time, time to absorb and to reformulate (Strathern 1997), otherwise what is going on is not learning but replication.

### Globalisation and anthropology

For the moment it seems unlikely that social sciences and humanities will disappear. I do worry that the distinctiveness of approaches and the delight in in-depth learning are in serious danger because it is not obvious how one would make disciplines like anthropology 'count' in a way the auditors would recognise and value. In general the humanities and social sciences, so awkward to mutate into products that can be sold on a market, are vulnerable in the new utilitarian university. Many have responded to the new circumstances by concentrating on honing skills that can be easily marketed. They are now increasingly viewed as providers of transferable skills without which 'the economy' would grind to a halt. This emerging trend is brilliantly parodied in Margaret Atwood's 2003 novel *Oryx and Crake*. In the nightmare future she paints, career options are divided into those for 'numbers' people and those for 'word' people. Falling into the latter category, the protagonist enters a college offering Webgame Dynamics, Image Presentation, Pictorial and Plastic Arts and Problematics, nicknamed Spin and Grin...<sup>4</sup> They render valuable services to the culture industries or to administrations and corporations wanting data on behaviour. But rendering services is a very impoverished definition of what universities do.

Institutionally the human sciences are trying to mimic the natural and engineering sciences that are more highly valued by commerce. Engineers and laboratory scientists work as teams and generally require practical as well as theoretical engagement with each other. This has become a standard to which the humanities and social sciences are being asked to adapt, even though the benefits of doing so are not obvious, unless one accepts that big projects undertaken by broad international networks of participants are advantageous as a matter of course. In fact, one could argue that there would be greater benefits if more people did more research in smaller groups with smaller and cheaper machines (or none at all) (Fuller 2005:44). But alas, such practices do not raise the visibility of an institution or accumulate glory, and so they are discouraged or overlooked, allowed to exist in the tangled undergrowth of university life which audit and management cannot fully control. In sum, the humanities and social sciences do not enjoy the same attention as disciplines whose innovations can be profitably commercialised.

One interesting trend in the UK is that the human and social sciences try to present themselves as having useful expertise in the domain of culture. Such matters are not limited to the ethnic politics of multiculturalism, rather culture is now everywhere as a focus of management and oversight. Government also regularly uses it as an explanation for social problems (a culture of mismanagement can account for ailing schools, ethnic cultures are acceptable explanations for under-achievement, violence and poverty). No wonder since to invoke culture is to turn difference into a voluntary lifestyle choice and to make economics and justice vanish. Unfortunately, in adapting to these definitions, anthropology can end up appearing either like a trivial exercise in describing human diversity or as a sinister tool for manipulating society (Berglund 2006).

Culture is thus perhaps one of those words, like race, that one would prefer to avoid, but that one finds indispensable for making sense of reality. Fortunately, sustained anthropological (and doubtless other academic) enquiry can tolerate such ambiguity. Anthropological analysis is, in fact, brilliantly equipped to indicate where and how cultural difference is invoked as an excuse for withholding economic and ecological justice (e.g. Wilmsen and McAllister eds 1996). What has been less brilliant in the anthropological tradition recently has been a willingness to incorporate economic questions, ones that preoccupy so much of the world's population, into their analyses and to make those analyses available in a language that would make sense beyond academic cliques (but see Robotham 2005).

Globalisation has meant that anthropologists have been confronted by two broad empirical challenges to their work. On the one hand are the overwhelming influence and real-life impacts of standard economics which anthropology is reluctant to take on directly, on the other anthropology has been challenged by the ‘cultural turn’ which has meant the entry of many other disciplines into domains of formerly mainly anthropological enquiry. The situation gives rise to the kind of ‘boundary talk’ that judges what is and is not anthropological (Spencer 2000: 11). At the level of undergraduate teaching, cultural studies and media studies have forced anthropology to reflect on what, if anything, distinguishes it from these (Shore and Nugent 1997). Although we appear to be enjoying unprecedented relevance, the feeling in anthropology departments more often is that one is in danger of losing one’s right to exist. What are needed are the right arguments and the fruitful practices that will change this situation for the better.

### Celebrity culture and university life

In 2003, the professional journal *Anthropology Today* took up the problem of anthropology’s apparent loss of nerve and printed some views about what kind of publicity the discipline should seek. Paul Sillitoe’s (2003) editorial argued that it ought to be more self-promoting. This, finally, brings me to one of the features of the academic world that ought to be recognised as the damaging thing that it is, namely the need to invest in raising one’s profile. University managers desire excellence and public visibility. CVs and websites need constant updating and upgrading, publications with maximum impact need to be produced, and possibly, high-profile teaching innovations generated. Where money and resources are directed by audit to those who can be shown to be productive and successful, high visibility will truly count and everyone will know that famous star academics may be a pain, but within the constraints we have accepted, they are also an asset.

This does not come easily to anthropologists. From debates about writing culture in the 1980s and science wars in the 1990s, to what John Hytnyk has called “crisis-mongering without purpose” (2002:30), anthropologists are liable to expend vast energies on comparing and contrasting differing approaches to doing anthropology amongst themselves, while being reluctant to pronounce very much externally. It is true that anthropologists indulge in disciplinary self-critique much more than in self-assertion, agonising over (and sometimes letting students revel in) the discipline’s unedifying collaborations, past and present, with the forces of domination (Kuper 1988, Rosaldo 1989).

If it continues to focus on questioning its own premises anthropology is in danger of becoming a parody of postmodern anxiety. It risks eroding all possible foundations for supporting its own arguments. But insofar as ethnographic research forces an engagement with the empirical realities, the social relations that make up human life, anthropologists can never avoid negotiating relationships of accountability and co-presence. They may not always do this well or in ethically neutral ways, as the CIA’s involvement in American postgraduate research has demonstrated (BBC news 2005), but it cannot avoid confronting the problem. In other words, anthropological engagement makes any simple claims to virtue or to vice on the part of a researcher or of the whole discipline, quite untenable. In fact it can make its partiality an asset, as Strathern’s *Partial Connections* (1991) has inspired so many of us to do.

Constant disciplinary self-critique can also be very frustrating for students, particularly if they are primarily looking for ‘the’ correct answers that will gain them the credentials they think they need. But even where students have more ambitious goals than to regurgitate teaching, they require confident premises from which to proceed. They must also have the confidence to insist on difficulty and complexity when it is warranted. Tim Ingold is surely not alone in feeling “[w]e have a huge way to go in training both ourselves and our students to speak with conviction and authority on anthropological matters” (2003: 23). Rather than wishing that our students were able to pronounce efficiently and unambiguously to the kinds of queries that our fast-paced media world or our measurement-addicted policy world might pose, it might be more promising to consider teaching them how to be confident about ambiguity, how to insist on complexity as well as limitations, and how to study life as process.



But where attention spans are short and where built-in obsolescence is actually a good thing, as they are in market oriented decision-making, sustained effort and a tolerance for complexity always loses out to simplicity and high visibility. This has epistemological consequences but is also has a direct impact on the attitudes of students as well as staff. Rigorous, collective scholarship is giving way to fashionable, even hyped up ‘interventions’ by star scholars, as anyone who has experienced a stampede for plenary at the AAA given by some celebrity academic, will know. There is substantial evidence that it is also driving a broader trend for individual academics to conduct themselves as celebrities in the making.

What American academics recognise as a star system of hiring (Cohen 1993) has now been introduced, perhaps unwittingly, into the British university system. University managers and Heads of Department desperate to find a USP (unique selling point) lure prominent scholars to enhance their external profiles. The problem is now so serious that it is being debated in print (Lipsett and Demopoulos, Aronauer 2005) as well as among university staff on both sides of the Atlantic. The main point is that what looks good does not always translate into substantive improvement. According to Professor Richard Bulliet of Columbia University, interviewed in the *Columbia Spectator* (Aronauer 2005), star academics’ ‘off-campus visibility’ harms ‘on-campus values’, particularly those aspects of running a department that are not convertible into monetary values.

They do, of course, offer the promise of intellectual excitement and help to draw in the best students. But from the perspective of managers, in the UK at least, their value lies in their ability to hike an institution upwards in the ranking lists and to attract high-paying overseas students. In the British funding structure it makes sense for Heads of Department concerned for the continuity of their own department to believe that star academics are necessary. They can, after all, lift audit ratings particularly those of the Research Assessment Exercise that effectively produces a league table of departments. Stars are expected to publish as much as they can in high-impact journals while other members of staff carry disproportionate administrative loads. In the UK some staff have even been threatened with demeaning and demoralising teaching-only contracts (Lipsett and Demopoulos 2005: 1).

This also generates income inequalities within departments, as hires from elsewhere are lured in with offers of higher salaries as well as attractive working conditions. The *Columbia Spectator* makes the further point that the “market for scholarship is influenced by trends in academia. Scholars doing popular research have a better chance of receiving an outside offer. Professors with families and ties to their location have difficulty making credible threats to leave” (Aronauer 2005). This kind of jostling for positions promotes a flexibility within the profession that is also gendered. Where productivity and visibility are rewarded, those who invest most in nurturing and administrative tasks, whether at work or outside it, are valued least. Performance is recognised only with a sell-by date and it is measured in terms of publications with high impact, a visible conference presence and possibly spectacular student satisfaction. Meanwhile other staff carry the constantly growing burdens of teaching and administration while trying to squeeze in what satisfying academic enterprise they can.

The invisibility of so much work is more than an ethical issue. The flourishing of the universities as a feature of society depends crucially on the time-consuming work that goes on in the shadows, of organising, of dealing with periodic crises among students or demoralised staff, of struggling to hold onto resources and, of course, of keeping abreast of developments in the field. In the mean time, the feminised work of nurture, which sustains life both inside and outside the academy, gets completely overlooked. This allows the so-called creative class to hijack recognition for creativity for themselves while reproducing the structural constraints that frustrate the creativity of others.

This bifurcation into stars and invisible nobodies is not, of course, unique to academia, but nor is it simply an import from the world of media celebrity. Image management has become standard across corporate life and all the white collar jobs that are modelled on it, a fact that is having arguably profound socio-psychological effects. Sociologist Richard Sennett (1998) and journalist Barbara Ehrenreich

(2005) have described the pressures of working harder in the USA, but at the same time they have described a social environment where creating an impression of success is fundamental to surviving let alone flourishing in the incessantly audited and relentlessly competitive world of work. Juha Siltala (2004) has written a similar book about Finland. Not only does the speeded up time of information technology exert its pressures so that workers must juggle ceaseless demands for potentially around-the-clock availability, it makes it difficult for people to learn about each other. They carry out more and more tasks as short-term projects as parts of temporary teams and they change jobs with increasing frequency. One result is that there are fewer rewards and in certain situations, even opportunities, for making long-term plans and commitments. Again, instant time has become the tyrant militating against anything but superficial relationships and a kind of structural narcissism (Sennett 1998).

This is neither desirable nor sustainable. At the individual level, the demands of a just-in-time, hyperactive academic life are, perhaps, possible for a few star academics to cope with, but they undermine the long-term health of academic institutions and they erode the quality of and the passion for scholarship. To put it another way, embracing audit in universities also means embracing a soul-destroying cult of celebrity whose suitability to academia is highly debatable.

Being famous has, however, become an explicit aspiration in the West as has making the millions to be able to live the life of the international celebrity. Still working relatively autonomously, academics enjoy, perhaps, rewards whose value outstrips the lure of gold. Presumably they also have the resources to identify the flaws in the system, and to imagine and propose alternatives. Academics have, however, acquiesced to a system of workplace relationships that value image over trust and short-term goals over long-term commitments. They have done so partly, at least, because of their own professional values of competitiveness and the enthusiasm university teaching has always shown for assessing, self critiques brilliantly articulated by Strathern (1997). They should have known that, in the long run, constant measurement means constant change for its own sake as well as raising the targets (average, after all, is never good enough).

I have argued that what goes on inside universities is not unique. Yet the fact that universities should have found themselves struggling with such unsuitable working practices is surely noteworthy. As usual, the fault is partly to be found inside, and partly outside. The time to correct is, however, is now and the same goes for working practices everywhere.

### Ways out

The source of the malaise within my former institution can be found in the malaise of work and economic thought around the world. The problems have finally come home to roost. The question now is whether the universities can re-engage with the world in a more embodied, emplaced and time-conscious way. To do so they must begin by acknowledging their own exhaustion and treating it as part of the generalised energy crises of world society.

That there is exhaustion in Finland is obvious to one who is now an outsider, an occasional visitor observing what has changed and what has stayed the same. Besides my personal impressions that people are less satisfied with social trends, recent Finnish-language literature (e.g. Siltala 2004, Seppänen 2004) offers support for my assessment that Finland is a society under growing strain but, as the significance of image-management would lead us to expect, putting a brave face on things. Finland and Finns persist in projecting an image of happiness and success. The economy seems fine, the country still gets to ritually celebrate its firsts or nearly firsts in international ranking lists, and public services still operate more or less as people expect them to, despite years of cuts. But here, as in UK academia, the cost is crippling.

At least part of the reason has to do with the simple but unutterable fact that empirically speaking, the global market economy is working us and the planet to death. Indicators at global as well as national level (Ralston Saul 2005 and Kiander 2001 respectively) show entrenched income inequality combined with haphazard economic policy making over the last two decades. Most depressingly, there are few grounds for individuals or communities to believe that hard work and forward planning might yield satisfying rewards. What is perhaps most significant is that any correlation between effort and reward is perceived to have broken down. This is hardly surprising given the still growing differentials between executives' and others' pay. In the Finnish case, resentment about the rewards of top executives have led to decreased willingness to increase one's own productivity (Siltala 2004: 263). What surprises is that there is not more alarm over the fact that even the creative classes, like academics, are reporting exhaustion, frustration and health problems (Kinman and Jones 2004).

The larger costs are yet to be paid as the consequences of turn of the millennium labour politics mature into coming generations. What will become of them when so much time and energy formerly invested in reproduction – childcare, social relations, recuperation from exertion – has been diverted into the growth of capital? Exhorting all workers to tighten belts and to outperform the competitors, states continue to help capital to roam a borderless world and leaders exhort everyone to keep up with change (Himanen 2004, Blair 29.9.2005). As Brennan argued, women, children and the poor are the first to suffer, and they do so in the responses of their bodies. But those in the rich, or 'brain' (!) countries also have bodies and these too are being weakened (2003: 6). She states the problem very clearly: both "the new right and the third way promote centralization and globalization at the same time as they cut back on spending for human needs, from basic education to welfare and healthcare. They cut back just as everyone gets sicker, and more depressed, and now more paranoid, for fear of more attacks" (2003: 7).

The economists, politicians and managers who claim there is no alternative to speeding up production are simply wrong. Even within market capitalism there are elements that still value things that are not reducible to a price. I have seen this clearly in my experience in the voluntary sector in London since leaving academia. The problem is that this kind of work, of care, nurture, imagining alternatives, what Barbara Adam calls 'moonlighting' (1998), has to lurk in the shadows, the undergrowth. In those unenviable conditions it tries to patch up the mess left by the official economy. The waste in energy is phenomenal, and the dangers while society refuses to accept the cost of its growth fantasies may be devastating.

Academics, particularly in the humanities and the social sciences, must regain their confidence. The managers of the utilitarian university are not going to secure the conditions for slow and careful scholarship or nurturing education. Their assumptions must be challenged. To begin the task, it is necessary to recognise and act on the difference between improvement and degeneration and to refuse to pretend.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> My title and much of the inspiration for this essay comes from Teresa Brennan's provocative book, *Exhausting Modernity* (2000). Thanks to Karen Armstrong for comments, and to Steve Nugent for encouragement and suggestions for sources.

<sup>2</sup> Arturo Escobar and Gustavo Lins Ribeiro convened the symposium. Besides editing a volume for publication they have established an international network of anthropologists, the World Anthropologies Network (WAN), <http://www.ram-wan.org/html/home.htm>

<sup>3</sup> The UK media frequently offers up stories of the 'time bombs' ticking in the bodies of younger generations, from obesity and lack of exercise to skin cancers. The increase in the use of antidepressants

on both sides of the Atlantic, even among children, suggests that psychological problems are also widespread.

<sup>4</sup> Thanks to Nicola Green for reminding me of this.

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## AUSTRALIAN ANTHROPOLOGY. THE BEST AND WORST OF GLOBALIZED TIMES

Sandy Toussaint

Contemplating Australian anthropology evokes Charles Dickens's well-known phrase: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

### Best of Times

Beginning with a brief account of the former, Australian anthropology is situated within a postcolonial nation distinguished by human, geographic, economic, social, religious and ethnic intersections. The discipline's location within a humanities and sciences spectrum means that it is well placed to produce critical and meaningful interpretations of cultural and political life beyond and within its saltwater borders.

Present day Australia and anthropology also need to be contextualized by reference to the 1992 Australian High Court's determination known as the "Mabo Decision" (*Mabo*), which overturned the legal fiction of *terra nullius* and prior interpretation of Australia's colonization. Translated into the Native Title Act in 1993, *Mabo* represented the first time indigenous customary laws had been acknowledged by the state. It also established avenues of litigation and mediation whereby indigenous groups could lodge claims with a National Tribunal.

These events resulted in cultural, political and ethical shifts within national legislative structures and among certain populations concerned to reconcile a conflicted and often brutal history; they also resulted in expanding employment and educational opportunities for anthropologists. Anthropologists, for example, are required to carry out fieldwork as full-time workers or part-time consultants with native title claimant groups, as well as with those who oppose a claim, such as industry or government organizations. It is thus necessary that these anthropologists undertake collaborative research—especially with lawyers, historians and linguists—prior to presenting claim material in court or in situ and participating in a review of court cases.

Native title discourse has also fostered some intriguing intellectual inquiries: How do native title connections continue despite the impact of colonization and cultural change? What constitutes cultural evidence? It has also introduced university courses, many of which attract fee-paying students. More generally, and in part as a result of a fragmented postcolonial critique and the challenges prompted by feminism, indigenous groups, interpretive anthropology and cultural studies, anthropological researchers have turned to studies "at home," while retaining a continuing interest in studies betwixt and abroad, including in Southeast Asian and European settings.

Indicators such as these, alongside advances in an increasingly popular cross-disciplinary movement focused on interactions between humans and the environment, suggest that Australian anthropology affirms the "best of times" descriptor. Enrollments in anthropology and cross-disciplinary courses have been sustained (and in some cases, increased) and employment opportunities for graduates—especially in applied contexts—are more visible than they were ten years ago. Somewhat paradoxically, however, these productive engagements also embody a number of problems that accord with Dickens's "worst of times" insight.

Keeping in mind that complex disjunctures are capable of impacting interconnected persons, places, ideas and subject matter, one of the “worst” problems is that Australian universities (like universities elsewhere) have been undergoing economic transformations that, in many cases, result in their re-emergence as an almost corporate entity. A number of commentators describe this process as one where managerial emphases are progressively privileged over epistemological, pedagogical and ethical concerns. At a time when a conservative, antiintellectual federal government in Australia has reduced funding to higher education, this has culminated in academic staff being persuaded to spend time in already pressed conditions to prepare detailed applications for grants and consultancies to support their research. One of the outcomes of this process is that teaching, mentoring and individual tutelage have sometimes suffered, and conditions for a competitive —rather than a collegial— environment have surfaced.

That most anthropologists (in universities at least) are urged to apply for commercial awards and grants to assist research and teaching relief opens up unfortunate room for anthropological practice and knowledge production to be compromised; it also diminishes broader working conditions when some applications are successful and others are not. At another level of meaning, subject matter of apparent economic and intellectual benefit to the discipline in particular and universities in general do not always result in positive outcomes for the women, men and children with whom the research has occurred. For example, few native title land claims have been wholly successful: anthropology’s contribution to environmental scholarship can be overlooked when environmentalists and engineers prioritize the natural and built environment over human activities and aspirations, and few medical schools incorporate the cultural insights anthropology generates. Circumstances such as these engender professional and ethical conundrums for those who struggle with contrasting disciplinary methods and emphases, especially when the human situation is not identified as a primary concern.

Attention to complex issues such as these are sometimes raised by anthropologists in publications, electronic networks and conference venues, but such questions tend to remain in a cyclical form only, meaning the discussion rarely moves in new directions. Few result in a more substantive appraisal or sew the seeds for a revolution in knowledge that critiques anthropology’s foundations. In addition to the economic constraints that some anthropologists comply with and others resist, the lack of providing a forum for substantive discussion of these issues seems partly due to restrictions of time; it is also because Australian anthropology continues to struggle for a less self conscious and more independent identity and remains conflicted about its *raison d’être*.

### Becoming Globalized

There is a tendency too —and in current fiscal and political circumstances, a powerful coercion— for Australian anthropology to revert to the hegemonic guise that spawned its existence. While undoubtedly there are valuable exceptions and contradictions to this claim, the potential to become internal, culturally-attuned participant observers is often overshadowed by a perceived need to explore instead how anthropology’s disciplinary borders might be expanded. This situation in Australian anthropology, one both facilitated and limited by globalization, hampers in-depth knowledge production, critical analysis of the discipline and fertile conditions for a range of different anthropologies to bloom. On the other hand, globalization has the potential to encourage the expansion of anthropological knowledge in ways that would not have occurred before. Writing as a member of the World Anthropologies Network (Nov 2005 *AN*, p 8), for example, I have become globally interconnected through technology, translation and travel to communicate with anthropologists in many geographically distant parts of the world —Brazil, Colombia, England, France, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, Turkey and in North America— who sustain, challenge, compare and nourish my intellectual and practice aspirations in a way that does not always occur in more local or immediate circumstances. That most of my WAN colleagues speak



and write languages other than English (as well as English) means that they are regularly linguistically and culturally shifting from one relational context to another, a situation also reflected in the WAN website where a translatable and transformative dialogic is made possible. Providing access to ideas and findings through a range of languages marks a clear and critical commitment to anthropology's diversity in practice, as well as heralding how crucial to knowledge various forms of translation can be.

While these issues clearly resonate with those that occupy some other Australian anthropologists, in my case it has been in the process of opening up globalized Southern communicative networks and spaces where the possibility of a more accountable, reflexive and cross-cultural set of anthropologies has emerged. This analysis is particularly striking because the application of the very same technology in local Australian conditions sometimes works against productive engagement. For instance, email exchanges more regularly occur despite the possibility of an actual conversation. In these circumstances, a reliance on electronic communication (when other forms of communication are possible) tends to weaken collegiality and undermine the complex advantages of critical exchange, qualities seemingly central to a more processual, egalitarian and engaged anthropology.

Within a best and worst of times dialectic, considered within the processes of globalization, it appears that Australian anthropology has several intersected avenues requiring examination. Who should benefit, for example, from anthropological knowledge, in light of economic and social conditions and possibilities? Despite the impact of increasingly powerful corporate cultures, whether, how and to what extent the integration of anthropology with other disciplines is productive or compromises its integrity also requires attention. In circumstances that highlight anthropology's culturally transformative potential, issues such as these pose difficult challenges for many anthropologists today. Within the same best and worst of time scenario, of course, and in keeping with the ethos in which WAN and the World Council of Anthropological Associations (Oct 29 *AN*, p 5) developed, such potential might be realized to create the conditions for other anthropologies to emerge. These may not all foster the kind of transparent, diverse and nuanced forms of anthropology I'm encouraging here, but they will represent a form of difference, and therefore, an aspect of contemporary global life.



## ANTHROPOLOGIES OF DIFFERENCE. THE MAKING OF NEW ENCOUNTERS

Yasmeen Arif

“Now that I possess the secret, I could tell it in a hundred different ways. I don’t know how to tell you this, but the secret is beautiful, and science, our science, seems mere frivolity to me now.

After a pause, he added:

And anyway, the secret is not important as the paths that led me to it. Each person has to walk those paths himself... What the men of the prairie taught me is good anywhere and for any circumstances.”

Jorge Luis Borges (The Ethnographer)

Perhaps unwittingly, Borges’ enigmatic prose suggests a kernel of anthropological wisdom that addresses a juncture at which social anthropology and anthropological fieldwork sits today. The passage above is from a story about a young ethnographer who goes out to live with and learn the secrets of ancient American tribes. Upon his return, replying to the queries of his professor, he phrases thus his inability to represent his experience through the language that his discipline has taught him. Perhaps, this is an articulation about the encounters that anthropology makes potentially possible and about how, embedded in these encounters lie the crux of the discipline.

The idea of an anthropological encounter is going to be the focal point of the arguments I will propose in this essay.<sup>1</sup> It is an encounter complicated by a contemporary politics of location that is embedded in social anthropology and anthropological fieldwork. When social anthropology and its practitioners attempt to re-inscribe a disciplinary cartography that had its apparent genesis in a historical condition (colonialism/imperialism), there is a distinct discord between the desired contours of a new world and its initial mapping. Such re-inscriptions have been a critical concern in anthropological debates and this essay builds upon those debates, but through the parameters of specific perspective.

In the broadest sense, the issues that I place below are about a change of direction in classical anthropological travel and fieldwork. These are issues about research conducted from the erstwhile ‘other cultures’, by the classical ‘others’ in locations hitherto reserved for scholars from the West or the centers. They are anthropological journeys that invoke a criticality of ‘place’ and ‘location’ in the production of anthropological knowledge, not only in terms of the location of research agendas and their field-sites, but also their agents of production. I address these issues here from the vantage point of my doctoral fieldwork conducted during 1997- 1998, as a student from the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi in a location outside India —Beirut. The focus remains on the story of a visit that traverses a discursive path somewhat separate from the usual anthropological trajectories that fieldwork in my context could have implied. The aspiration is to decipher newness, not quite in the ‘invention of a counter myth of radical purity’, (Bhabha 1994: 19) but more as an answer to his statement, “Can the aim of freedom of knowledge be the simple inversion of the relation of oppressor and oppressed, center and periphery, negative image and positive image? Is our only way out of such dualism the espousal of an implacable oppositionality or the invention of an originary counter myth of radical purity.” (Bhabha 1994: 19).

Like the statement above, the arguments I pose here bear a close resemblance to those debated in the discursive world of post-colonial criticism.<sup>2</sup> In the following discussion, keeping in mind those debates, I will cull out the specific contours that apply to my narrative. In the first instance, I must emphasize that I do not intend this essay as another polemical argument from the peripheries against imperialism/colonialism, but rather as an attempt to move beyond the impasse created by such oppositional polemics.

### Points of departure

How does fieldwork initiated from India but conducted ‘abroad’, engage with the contemporary discourses on anthropological theory and practice? Conducting fieldwork in Beirut from Delhi could signal an intervention that mediates in a variety of classificatory schemes of anthropologists and anthropological fieldwork viz., Western/Eastern; dominant/subaltern; center/periphery; North/South, South/South and others. These dualisms, well-established by now, have been the result of a retrospective gloss that has tinted the relationship between fieldworker and field on the one hand and on the other, between the subjective positioning of the anthropological voice and its place of articulation. For most, these relationships are necessary corollaries to the intricate affinity between socio-cultural anthropology and colonialism/imperialism. However, there is enough reason to consider these binarisms/dualisms reductive at best and misleadingly Manichean at worst.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, this is not to say that, by debunking these binarisms the implications of power and hegemony that are embedded in these relationships can be simultaneously brushed aside. The import of power and inequitable relationships within the discipline has a long historicity spread over several trajectories<sup>4</sup> The question that continually seeks answers is that —given the way in which hegemony figures in contemporary anthropological practice, what kind of inventive responses can suitably approach the current situation?

Accordingly, my field experiences in Beirut, I reckon, are not best referenced to the limiting world of binarisms but better placed in the discursive and practical sphere that Arturo Escobar and Eduardo Restrepo develop around the concepts of ‘dominant anthropologies’ and ‘other anthropologies/anthropology otherwise’. By ‘dominant anthropologies’, they indicate, “the discursive formations and institutional practices that have been associated with the normalization of anthropology under academic modalities chiefly in the United States, Britain and France” (Restrepo and Escobar 2005: 83). They add that,

“Dominant anthropologies’ [...] assumes a single epistemic space within which Anthropology functions as a real, albeit changing and contested practices. ‘Other anthropologies /anthropology otherwise,’ on the contrary, suggests that the space in which anthropology is practiced is fractured — perhaps even more so today than in the past, and despite increasing normalizing tendencies world wide-making it into a plural space. [...] we see the project of ‘world anthropologies’ as an intervention geared at loosening the disciplinary constraints that subalternized modalities of anthropological practice and imagination have to face in the name of unmarked, normalized and normalizing models of anthropology.” (Restrepo and Escobar 2005: 81-82).

My discussion is best enunciated, first, from this ‘plural’ fractured space (where plural does not have to indicate a repetitive and plainly futile call for ‘nativist’ indigenous anthropology) and second, it is an articulation of certain practices from this plural positioning that can indeed contribute to the making of world anthropologies. It will be my attempt to display, through a description of specific fieldwork contexts, some ways in which ‘world anthropologies’ can be imagined and practiced. It is a perspective that does not lose sight of those genealogical facts which have created structures of contestation, yet it attempts to find a way in which to keep pace with changing anthropological boundaries and frontiers and more importantly, with a growing profile of anthropological concerns. The implication here is an unraveling of dominant relationships between inequitable partners, i.e. the researchers/the researched and amongst researchers themselves so as to be able to mold them over *lateral connectivities*.

Lateral connectivity as a way of interfacing in a world anthropology system has been a recent concern of, among others, the cyber group called WorldAnthroNet.<sup>5</sup> Their suggestion is a pragmatic application of network theory—the opening page of ‘worldanthronet’ states,

“Conceived as a process, we hope that the network will constitute a dialogic space for discussing ‘anthropology’ in its relation to a multiplicity of world-making processes and events. We hope that the network will contribute to the development of a plural landscape of world anthropologies that is both less shaped by metropolitan hegemonies and more open to the heteroglossic potential of globalization processes. We define this as *en/redar-se*. Modified from the Spanish ‘to self-entangle’, we suggest that this practice should constitute the underpinning philosophy/activity of the network: the constant planetary interlocking of locally significant notions aimed at producing shared, yet differentiated, anthropological practices.”

Network theory makes this a potential practice in anthropology. Developed from a base in biological theory, the section that appears especially potent for my argument is about social ‘meshworks’.<sup>6</sup> Meshworks imply a structural connectivity network based on the non-hierarchical positioning of heterogeneous elements, emerging separately, practiced through difference and brought together by compatibilities and complementarities.<sup>7</sup> Applied to interfaces in virtual cyber worlds to anti-globalization social movements, this is a construct that is neither tested for immaculate success nor explored in its theoretical fullness, especially in contexts that I argue about here. Even so, a glimmer of world anthropologies seems to lie at this door to meshworks. Using Escobar’s (2000) summarization and translating for my own use, the following tropes appear as good foundations—meshworks are self-organizing; grow unplanned and unpredicted; they are constituted by diverse elements; uniformity and homogeneity is not the criteria for inclusion and lastly, they survive on a degree of connectivity that enables self-sustenance.

The idea of a meshwork finds expression in a new anthropological circumstance where the periphery and the center have been jostled out of their historical ruts. The new journeys that I propose below through a discussion of some from India, illuminate these movements, i.e., they underline circumstances in which anthropological encounters come to be placed outside the binarisms of west vs. the rest, center vs. periphery, colonial vs. post-colonial. Because of their potential of anthropological heterogeneity, these are encounters that are meant to constitute the meshwork above. *But at the same time*, although I would endorse the ‘meshworks’ way of practicing anthropology to establish a new world of research connections, I am not sure if the new grids of interconnectivity will cease to carry traces if not a loud echo of an established pattern of *opposition*. Opposition alone may not reformulate anthropological positionings. In fact, I am persuaded by Kyong-Won Lee’s reading of Gayatri Spivak’s idea of ‘reverse ethnocentrism’ (Lee 1997: 105-106) to second a cautionary plea, so that the new kind of ‘meshwork’ connectivities do not become, (quoting Lee on Spivak),

“Tantamount to an aggressive but reactionary self-expressionism that, by revolving around the discursive orders of colonialism, tends to replicate, if unknowingly, the very Eurocentric terms and pre-suppositions constructed by projects of colonialism. [...] she (Spivak) sees beneath such nativist position an example of what Said calls ‘possessive exclusivism’, namely, ‘the sense of being an excluding insider’ by virtue either of experience (for instance, only women can write about women) or of method (only feminists can talk about women’s literature). This parochial specialization is for Spivak ‘an epistemological/ontological confusion’ [...] that falls into the pitfall of reverse ethnocentrism, a confusion that restricts the possibility of constructing an alternative discourse without reproducing or being assimilated into the Eurocentric mode of thought. Spivak contends that such an alternative postcolonial discourse is made possible only when the critic places himself or herself in an ambivalent position beyond the self/other dichotomy and constantly unlearns the norms and implications within and under which he or she is working.”

Reading the above for the argument here, a positioning beyond dualisms could articulate the questions: Are we always to be a prefix i.e. the post to an eternal suffix, i.e. the *colonial*? In effect, can there be another device that can meaningfully be used, through which the relationship of the metaphoric pair colonial/postcolonial assumes a new constitution, such that the epistemology of anthropological research becomes re-invigorated? Can this new formulation be in terms of difference, or rather a world of differences —where we re-enter the entanglements, the muddle of an infinite humanity-in-diversity, where we leave behind some labels that have created separations and oppositions rather than co-operations, or at least meaningful engagement? Across the threshold of anthropological frontiers, through a resolute heterogenizing of persistent fieldwork traditions there could be a new conceptualization that can aspire to dissolve those hierarchies that seemingly weaken the discipline. This attempt at a new conceptualization has to take a step back and away from the self /other dyad, to propose a formative layer of relationships that can make ‘meshworks’ a real potential.

The first step is to associate an epistemological orientation to the new formulation, an originary template with which pursue the discipline and here I place the undeniable core of anthropology, that is, the study of diverse human sociality.<sup>8</sup> This is a conscious step that sheds the anchoring of a discipline’s birth in western colonialism and does away with this root metaphor and its manifestation in subsequent anthropological research. I am persuaded to argue that in the ‘new’ (changing) world of post-colonialism’s and transnationalisms, fluid socio-cultural landscapes and slippery ‘objects’, dispersed field sites and multi-sited ethnographies, the root metaphor needs to be re-articulated, or re-born, in terms of difference, and not only as a reversal. The meaning of this particular kind of difference will find its form through the following discussion —not as a resolved analytic but rather as a proposition, perhaps even a wishful speculation.

The moment of difference could begin with a transgression, a breaking away from limits that have been set in the anthropological encounter. The transgressive moment will come about when, in the contemporary present of an alleged new world, dominant anthropologies need not be the defining myth of origin that secure a relationship of power and inequity amongst the various loci of anthropological knowledge production. The obvious hegemonic enterprise of the colonial encounter and the knowledge produced thereby; the subsequent postcolonial criticism that reclaimed the native/peripheral voice and so on are all well acknowledged discourses, critiques and revisions in the story that the history of anthropology has so far narrated. If the generic world of dominant anthropology and its revisions can be re-directed as anthropology through individual encounters, then its reproduction can be achieved not through the labels that constrain each (center/periphery, self/other etc.), but rather each encounter is sculpted through its own trajectory of mutual discovery. In another way, the anthropological encounters of today, whether they be between centers and peripheries, or intra-center and intra-periphery, initiated from and to any which direction, their modality has to be accessed through a belief in idiosyncrasies not contrarities, through dialogue not insularity, through complementarity rather than incompatibilities and most of all, through intentional equitability rather than hierarchy. It is in this mediating juncture that I suggest the heuristic device of *difference*.<sup>9</sup>

## Difference

The theoretical model that I am proposing here is inspired by a Deleuzian<sup>10</sup> set of concepts, namely, difference and repetition. To reiterate once again, this is not intended as a therapeutic, which by mere conception, will resolve the problem. Nor do I propose ‘difference’ as an absolute value that stands by itself. It is a provisional notion that draws meaning, first, through moments of contingency and second, by reference to a series of principles, a few base ones amongst which are mentioned below.

The first principle is the *original quest* —the anthropological encounter (bereft of its colonial anchorage). The paradigm with which we recognize it so far is the colonial/post colonial one, where post-coloniality posits a counter to coloniality. A similar point can be made about other dualisms, such as

metropolitan vs. periphery, north vs. south and so on. If I were to evaluate the journey out of India as a reversal, as a counter movement that goes against the grain, then this movement continues to be trapped within the same paradigmatic model of origin, even if it is in terms of opposition. If a counter position or opposition is a defining relationship between the terms of the dyad, there is a certain immovable fixity to this. In that case, if this dyad is seen as general/universal one, every counter moment, every new instance of opposition remains, in the ultimate analysis, what Deleuze would call replaceable, substitutable instances of particulars. Each bears a similar relation to the core essence of the general—so, even the countering mode remains limited to the inter-changeable, substitutable instances of the particular. Deleuze, thus, states:

“[...] generality expresses a point of view according to which one term may be exchanged or substituted for another. The exchange or substitution of particulars defines our conduct in relation to generality. That is why the empiricists are not wrong to present general ideas as particular ideas in themselves, so long as they add the belief that each of these can be replaced by any other particular idea which resembles it in relation to a given word.” (Deleuze 1995: 1).

Applying Deleuze’s idea to the innumerable ‘particular’ post-colonial counter statements made within anthropology, the basic principle of oppositionality, in the ultimate analysis, reduces them to substitutable instances where each bears a similar relationship to the given generality of inequity.<sup>11</sup> The question that now presents itself is: How can this relationship between the particular and the general be fundamentally transformed?

The answer lies in a second principle that dispenses with the idea of reversal, of opposition in the general dyadic model of relationships in anthropology. Instead, another kind of generality is retained as the unique essence or concept of anthropology—and that is the study of diverse human sociality through the anthropological encounter. If this concept is assumed to be the general model (the originary paradigm) we can think of initiating particular instances, not in substitutable terms (of opposition) but rather, in the mode of a Deleuzian *repetition*. As he states,

“To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular. This is the apparent paradox of festivals: they repeat an ‘unrepeatable’. They do not add a second and a third time to the first but carry the first time to the *n*’th power. [...] as Péguy says, it is not Federation Day which commemorates or represents the fall of the Bastille, but the fall of the Bastille which celebrates and repeats in advance all the Federation days; or Monet’s first water lily which repeats all the others.” (Deleuze 1995: 1).

Through the fieldwork episodes I describe below, I will try and draw attention to how each encounter refers to the ‘concept’ of anthropology—its internal, profound vibration, each as an instance of repetition and not of substitution. Each episode carries forward the essence of the anthropological quest—the discovery of heterogeneity, of multiplicity—in human sociality. It allows for a possibility of infinite repetitions, i.e. the *n*’th moments. Because there always remains a possibility of a new instance, there is also an implication of a recurring unknown. In this way, at least conceptually, there can be a transgression that breaks the limits set by the conduct of opposition.

The last principle that remains in this model is the idea of difference. Here again, I have drawn upon Deleuze’s idea of specific difference. First, by calling for anthropologies of difference, I am proposing that ‘maximal difference’ be established between the existing paradigm of anthropology and a contrary model, where the new contrary model is conceptualized with a changeover in the essence itself. If the

colonial paradigm was established on an essence or a concept of power and hierarchy, I am suggesting that the new model establish a maximal difference from the colonial model, with a relation of contrariety to the latter. Thus, “[...] contrariety in the genus is the perfect and maximal difference, and contrariety in the genus is the specific difference. Above and below that, difference tends to become simple otherness and almost to escape the identity of the concept.” (Deleuze 1995: 30).

We do not need to lose sight of the route by which the new model has been initiated —the line of reasoning to the new model or paradigm *is* the dominant model. At the same time, a breakaway can be established in terms of a difference from the concept itself, perhaps even a transgression, which allows for the release of a new series of repetitions which is unlike the series of substitutions that the colonial model forces us to. It is a movement from one kind of genus and its incumbent series of limited species to another kind of genus, which helps formulate another series of infinite species. In other words, we need not always be the other in a dyadic model, but become the agents themselves of carrying forward the essence of anthropology.

No doubt the abstract formulations of the above can provoke the reaction that nowhere in the above is there any place for the existing imbalances of power. In fact, by merely proposing a new formulation, nothing more than a denial or a silencing will be achieved. In effect, the ignorant dismissal of history can only be utopian. In response, it would be necessary to reiterate that the elaboration of the above contours of ‘difference’ is in fact proposed because of a cognizance of tropes of power, discursive or practical, transparent or opaque that continue to remain embedded. The separating away of a ‘genre’ of encounters ‘different’ from others in anthropology and in the mode described above is an effort to carve out a space because most other available spaces are tainted by power equations —ontologically, epistemologically and even materially. Some of these well mapped spaces have resulted either in reactive revisionisms, however subversive or in ‘other’ metanarratives of power (of nationalisms, local hegemonies); some more well traveled paths remain in the pursuit of endless hybrid or multiple positionings of the neo colonial world (whether effected by Eurocentric assimilation or by native appropriation). My proposition is that we start, at least in the sense of an anthropological encounter, by dismantling some of the codes that we operate under and lay out a disciplinary template which is neither a denial of history nor locked in a dyadic freeze, but rather create a movement aside and outside. The descriptions below may help in illustrating this kind of difference.

### **Institutional moorings**

The fieldwork episodes that form the ‘evidence’ in the arguments here cannot be mentioned without a brief reference to the local context in which they emerge. Although anthropological fieldwork by itself has been a reasonable concern in India, as evident in the titles edited by A. Beteille & T.N. Madan (1975), M.N. Srinivas, A.M. Shah, and E.A. Ramaswamy (1979) and more recently by Meenakshi Thapan (1998), the palette of issues raised have paid scant attention to the implications of empirically studying societies outside one’s local universe. Nonetheless, the unquestioned credo was that anthropology in India is definitively about fieldwork, and second, the point of celebration is that India is no longer a field site for foreign researchers alone, Indian scholars have themselves been able to garner a vast body of empirical work on India.

One of the pressing concerns that issues such as the above become part of is the question of ‘Indian’ indigenous anthropology —should there be any? The local opinions reify the debates of the past two and half decades, which from different moments and places —including the peripheries—, have critiqued the possibility of configuring indigenous or national anthropologies. In India, there is sufficient agreement on the matter that there is no coherent ‘Indian’ anthropology as such.<sup>12</sup> In fact, to my mind the quest for it in the first place, is futile. While individual orientations and specific scholars have made their independent mark on the production of anthropological knowledge from the country, an attempt to constitute a national indigenous anthropology ends up as a rather vexing dilemma, not to mention a rather undesirable unknown.



Threading together the various nuances of this dilemma is the tenuous issue of knowledge production from the peripheries, as is in India. For instance, what does it mean to have gone from Delhi to Beirut in order to conduct anthropological fieldwork and then write a dissertation that will be submitted to a sociology department in an Indian University? The question is not merely about combining empirical data with theoretical sophistication. What is the theoretical framework that one should adopt in order to interpret, analyze and frame one's empirical 'data'. If my specific research agenda is best informed by contemporary theoretical reflections that have not emerged from a category of the indigenous (but alas, from theorizations emerging from the centers), should that be a predicament about my 'responsibility' as a student of social science in India? At the same time, I would have cherished the training, or even a meaningful point of entry to intellectual traditions that had been alive in the Indian subcontinent —ones that I could engage with not just as 'history for historians', as Dipesh Chakrabarty (2001:6-7) points out, but as ongoing theoretical concerns. Leaving such hopeful intentions to another time and opportunity, I have to return to one issue that I can meaningfully address, that of fieldwork abroad from India.

It is an issue shot through with additional complications. First, the category of the 'Indian fieldworker abroad' is not a very unproblematic definition. Second, how is one's own society defined? Does 'membership' to a national territory automatically imply 'knowledge' and 'intuition' about one's own culture? Does being Indian mean a special relationship to all matters Indian? As Indian anthropologists trained within, if we are to explore issue located outside our boundaries, do we carry anything specifically Indian that forms and illuminates our examinations or our analysis? Is there a local disciplinary orientation at all that can direct our movements in a given Indian way? To my reasoning, there is a practical impossibility and an epistemological conundrum in trying to essentialize any culture to its carrier, Indian or otherwise, especially in pursuit of contemporary anthropological research. Of course, there will be histories/genealogies, positions/ontologies that will mark the orientation of research and the subsequent production of knowledge, but a homogenizing label is neither possible nor desirable.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, one could argue that in a country as large and diverse as India, someone belonging to the northern states conducting fieldwork in southern India could face an array of 'cultural' novelties perhaps akin to those faced by Indian anthropologists abroad. The question is undoubtedly not so much about cultural distinction and affinity, or about geographical proximity and distance; but more about boundaries and frontiers that are created by the anthropological imagination. These few points obviously do not cover the complicated tangle of issues that constitute the debate on indigenous anthropology.<sup>14</sup> However, these are the issues that influence formulations about 'Indian' anthropology and what fieldwork 'abroad' from India could imply. A summing up note to points such as these is best made with a statement made by M. N. Srinivas (1979:3), [...] [there are] very few field studies of other societies by Indian sociologists, and little appreciation of the problem of doing fieldwork outside India. This is unfortunate. *There can be no science of society in India without bringing to bear a comparative perspective, and this is possible only if Indian sociologists study non-Indian societies also.*" (My emphasis)

This view of what the science of society should accomplish in India clearly calls for a 'comparative' perspective and this is where the question of fieldwork on 'other cultures' becomes a necessity, if not a requirement. The gravity that comparison has in the anthropological world of peripheral locations relates to a crucial end, that of indigenous anthropology or that which Srinivas calls the 'science of society in India'. The true hallmark of competent anthropology as well as a valid claim to authoritative knowledge, allegedly, can come only when study of one's own is discovered through the route of the other. Once again, the might of 'classical' anthropology appears to have its crux in comparison. For instance, Louis Dumont is led to state his "[...] conviction that caste has something to teach us (Europeans) about ourselves [...]. For instance, the India of caste and *varna*, teaches us hierarchy, and this is no little lesson." (Quoted in Madan 1982: 8).

Given this, (without committing to any graspable meaning of the 'other' and what constitutes comparison), can there be an internal evaluation of how the science of society in India has progressed? The answer, most likely, would be about the lack. At the same time, there cannot be a glossing over of the

enormous diversity and variety that the Indian context provides which in itself allows for a good approximation of the ‘other’ or of ‘comparison’, however that may be defined. But at the same time, however rich the internal diversity, the imagined community of ‘Indians’ does dull the possibility of a ‘real’ encounter with the ‘other’. The standards of analytical reference are liable to keep returning to what has been called “gatekeeping concepts” by Arjun Appadurai (1986) and described as,

“[...] a few simple theoretical handles (that) become metonyms and surrogates for the civilization or society as a whole: hierarchy in India, honor and shame in the circum-Mediterranean, filial piety in China are all examples of what one might call gatekeeping concepts in anthropological theory, concepts that is, that seem to limit anthropological theorizing about the place in question and that define the quintessential and dominant questions of interest in the region.” (Appadurai 1986: 357).

If I were to make the same point from the periphery, I would say that gatekeeping concepts are also largely responsible for setting the frame to the kind of issues and field sites that local anthropologists choose to apply their professional skills to. I am by no means suggesting that in India issues outside of caste, hierarchy, or small community studies of tribes or villages do not exist. Nor am I saying that the original theoretical metonyms for India i.e. her anthropological gatekeepers, have not been questioned and reworked. My understanding is that the possible existence of that frame has made the practice of fieldwork in India limit itself to its boundaries. It has constructed a paradigm by which studies of locales outside India, *based on direct fieldwork*, remain an irregularity and a sadly under-examined aspect of the discipline. Without doubt, there are several practical and technical factors (funding, local expertise, resources, job markets etc.) that have hampered a meaningful pursuit of ‘other cultures’ from India.<sup>15</sup> But that does not entirely cover for the apparent lack of any interest in that direction, particularly when this lack may threaten to weaken the escalation of social anthropology in the peripheries.

Having said the above, however, I would have to come back to the driving force of my argument. In contemporary circumstances of how global cartographies have fragmented and fractured, at times to disperse and at other times, to accumulate around hegemonic parameters in ways that have moved far beyond the limitations of any dyad - the anthropological consciousness whether in India or anywhere else, needs to necessarily adapt meaningfully to changing cartographies in inventive and if, necessary transgressive ways. This is to say that it should not be so that ‘Indian’ anthropology and anthropologists negotiate the world and position themselves as erstwhile ‘peripherals’, but rather as another position amongst others. Once again, such a statement will immediately call on the fevered accusation about how it reveals complete ignorance, or denies the inalterability of power relations and inequities with utopian fantasies. By proposing a place for myself (and others like me in the ‘peripheries’) by which I can attempt to negotiate anthropological epistemologies outside of given dyads and other centered tropes, it would be ridiculous to suggest that I cease to be an ‘Indian’. Nor can I miraculously rise above the power imbalances that operate on me and those hegemonies that I myself participate and perpetuate in (by even speaking the English language, for instance, or using non-indigenous theory, or most probably be in a position of power vs. other regional Indian anthropologists). The point is how am I to be an Indian anthropologist —my answer lies in my strategy of difference which does not deny my participation nor does it deny my detachment from the ‘center’, it does not conceal my hybrid post-colonial condition as against some pure reclaimable pre-colonial form; rather it gives me a position from which to negotiate my ontological reality with epistemological innovation. The field experiences I describe below lead me to the pursuit of what I have called difference, a difference that can be framed in order to make for ‘other anthropologies/anthropology otherwise’. These experiences, to my mind, find a place in the cartography of anthropological knowledge production not only because they provide a counterpoint to the classical metropolitan paradigm of field sites, but also, in my argument, they make possible episodes of ‘anthropological encounters’ that anchor down the discipline to its necessary purport.

Dwelling within these experiences is what T.N. Madan calls the “form of consciousness which arises from the encounter of cultures in the mind of the anthropologist” (Madan 1982:5). They are

facets of discovery and inventiveness in the fieldwork experience that are entirely linked to the shifting of the classical fieldwork situation, but at the same time grasp an interior meaning of what the anthropological encounter is. They are facets that take us closer to what the anthropological encounter could be when it is bereft of the originary hierarchy, and as I expect to illustrate, when it focuses on the essentials of difference as well as the idiosyncrasies of diverse societies, research objects, their field sites and modalities of analysis. This is the essential displacement and decentralization of the anthropological consciousness, the *cogito* (Scott 1989), away from and beyond centered power, whether these centers are located amongst superior locations out west or amongst us, around the peripheries.

### Crossing boundaries

My choice of Beirut as a field site ‘places’ me squarely in an ‘in-between’ space that is neither inside nor outside in the west vs. rest pair. At the outset, when I was beginning to think of my doctoral proposal and field site, the idea of ‘encountering’ an ‘other’ culture in person, much in the style of the classical ethnographies I had read was seductive. As I began my tentative steps towards such an enterprise, I learnt that it was not enough for me to produce an inspired proposal on any which location corresponding to a research agenda. My field location had to be designated so by a series of what can be best called “visa and clearance procedures” after Ferguson and Gupta (1997a: 11). They have pointed out that research permission, interests of funding agencies, intellectual debates and sub-fields within the discipline, undoubtedly echoing the limits already inherent in the discipline, create a predetermined array of field sites. My own predicament, unlike the Anglo-American vantage point was to target, not an array, but perhaps the only field site that could materialize from my own nexus of training, possible funding, research permission etc.

Interestingly, as I began corresponding with a few anthropologists at American University of Beirut, one suggestion that came my way was that my research proposal should involve a study of kinship amongst a given community, because my proposed area of investigation, i.e. post-war recovery could be too complicated to handle and should be left to local students! I am not very sure whether it was my ‘Indian origin’ that prompted a presumed affinity to kinship studies. In any case, with the fortunate coming together of funding, affiliation and access, Beirut indeed, was to be my field. The overall theme that I wanted to explore was, how does a city and its fragmented spaces and peoples, when emerging from a prolonged crisis, develop strategies of recuperation and recovery? At the end of a year’s fieldwork, I was able to sustain the core research agenda through articulations collected over multiple sites —neighborhoods and their residents—, state agencies and technical documents of reconstruction, material sites of architecture and archaeology, pasts and futures, spaces and times. It was an anthropological encounter that measured the leap between borders both social and sociological. The point that I will emphasize here is that this journey refracted my ontological ‘Indian’ subjectivity i.e. in terms of my cultural knowledge of a fraught multi-community society through the similar texture of another fragile society. My contexts were new, post-war reconstruction and recovery were not part of my ‘Indian’ experience, yet, as I encountered the palette of experiences, events and their narratives, my experience of alterity became a double sided mirror of dissimilarity and sameness.

The act of my going over to the cultural domain of Beirut did not establish an inherent ‘otherness’ or alterity. Moving from life in one urban context to another does have its set of changes. Beirut and Delhi are different in a host of ways, and therefore, as with any traveler or anthropologist, there is a newness to a number of little and big instances, yet there is a sense of sameness in the experience of contemporaneity. Interspersed in this ‘sameness’ is what I could call episodes that cull out a distinctive encounter, a form of consciousness, in which a particular sense of the self as well as that of an alterity comes into sharp focus. The first instance is my initial positioning in Beirut, which was my place among Lebanese students and other European scholars of social science in the institute that I was affiliated with. Alongside them, I seemed to form a third category, my presence was the ‘other’, non-western

'voice' in social science research. To the local scholars, I was bit of a puzzle. They thought it quite unlikely that I had no western institutional affiliation and also that I was capable of fluent spoken and written English —the reason for which obviously was the notion that good research and good English was the forte of Western institutions whereas India was presumably not a part of that. On one occasion, I was introduced as an English speaking and therefore, a thoroughly colonized Indian —undoubtedly accurate but ironic!

My positioning outside the circle of academia was a wholly different story. The general Lebanese regarded Indians as a part of the South Asian 'bank' of cheap industrial labour and domestic help that had found their way into Lebanon through the Gulf. A sense of wary curiosity came forth from several of my informants, unless my meeting was preceded by a recommendation from a known quarter. It was important for me to "go native" in a way quite different from what the native used to imply in anthropology. I was clearly matter out of place: here I was a native woman wearing the white man's shoes, walking the same roads that some of my 'first world' male colleagues would have, were they in Beirut. Clearly, an orientation has been reversed, but I was neither the (local) insider nor the (western) outsider, but rather, an in-between.

Eventually, I also had the opportunity of sharing some of my work with a few 'locally' placed academics and one particular instance seems significant where it was said, "your position as a non-Lebanese —non western observer, is crucial to the text. Your analysis avoids the superiority, false humility, or 'orientalist' point of view of westerners; in the same time it bypasses the self-righteous and unbalanced attitude of the insiders". Even beyond the 'insider-outsider' contest, I find it re-assuring that the language that mattered here was the text I had formulated through ideas that were born at home and then nurtured and given substance in the 'other culture'. They were contoured around my queries and my ethnographic discoveries. They constituted a social imaginary that appeared to touch a common ground of human interest. While my Indian-ness was not entirely forgotten, my agency here was the ability to communicate through a problem that was local but at the same time universal, a communication that set me up as a student of social science rather than anything else —perhaps this was a special feature of in-between-ness.

In my interaction with "informants", an example that catches the tone is one where a symbolic relationship was construed between my anthropologist self and that of the 'other,' which became an elaboration of what Marc Augé (1998: xvi) would call "double relativity" or "others also define what is for them 'the other'". It was an occasion about creating sense and meaning between 'others' where a bridge could be temporarily constructed in order to establish a linking over a social difference, a link that made *tolerance possible between differences*. This was an interview with a Christian resident of Hamra (one of the neighborhoods I worked in) whose sons had been kidnapped during the war by unknown Muslim militants. He had consciously made a decision not to join the many Christians who had fled to safer areas. For him, a secular existence had always been the creed and practice of the genuine residents of Hamra, i.e. the 'authentic' Muslims and Christians, inter-confessional hostilities were surely being imposed from outside. Even a suggestion of doubt on my part seemed to indicate to him a measure of my non-authenticity and my ignorance as a foreigner, an uncertain Muslim (as I had announced myself as a non practicing Muslim) from a different culture. In what seemed like a gesture to establish a ground from which to move from, he pulled out a copy of the Koran and started to recite the first verse, looking up to see if I could follow and recognize. It was one of the few I knew and I was able to recite along with him. From that moment on, some validity of my position, perhaps as a 'genuine Muslim', although distant, but belonging to a familiar category of those with good faith, rather than those very close but with bad faith and suspect, seemed to be established.

The differences between 'me' and 'them' turned up a new side —they were about discovering the *different manifestations of sameness*. Human pain, suffering, destruction, the desire to move on from a malignant past, the hope for a future are part of what I would include in what Clifford Geertz (1983: 36-

53) has called the ‘moral imagination’ which tricks the anthropological social imaginary into a paradox. This profound double world of anthropology brings together distance and affinity in a situation where,

“The differences do go far deeper than an easy men-are-men humanism permits itself to see, and the similarities *are* far too substantial for an easy other-beasts, other-mores relativism to dissolve. [...] anthropologists [...] [are] still possessed of the primitive belief that there is such a thing as life itself; and anthropologists such as myself, who thinks that society comes to be more than behavior – pursue their vocations haunted by a riddle quite as unresolvable as it is fundamental: namely, that the significant works of the human imagination [...] speak with equal power to the consoling piety that we are all like one another and to the worrying suspicion that we are not.” (Geertz 1983: 41-42).

This then was one kind of difference in sameness that fieldwork abroad was to mean for me. This was the core of the anthropological encounter. The Indian social imaginary finds nothing strange in sectarian differences. Mass violence, devastating social damage is also disturbingly familiar. Yet, encountering these facets in Beirut was a novel sensation. It was a separate and distinct event, separate even within the novelty of daily life in the field. In a sense, for me this essential episodic fragment of newness —was one of *difference* that my personal biography was to encounter in my anthropological journey. Once again, these fragments brought me closer, with unprecedented sharpness, through the route of another, to my ‘inside’ social conditions from which I was personally removed. But the critical note was that this sameness/difference in effect opened a window to understanding that locations, when not mired in the anthropological imperial cartography, can only be about heterogeneous differences rather than about hierarchies that slotted the observer in relation to the observed.

Subsequent to my fieldwork in Beirut, I have had the opportunity to be involved in fieldwork in Delhi, India where I live and work. My research plan was about exploring experiences of recovery amongst some members of the Sikh community, those who had survived one of the worst events of communal violence in India about 20 years ago. During the course of compiling the ethnography and writing about it, I was stuck by the affinities between Beirut and Delhi, contexts so different, but sharing situations that ‘spoke’ to each other. This was in no way about the commonality of the peripheries, nor is about a direct comparison; rather it was about the possibility of ‘reliability’, perhaps an epistemological reliability. To my mind, this was the potential that lay in stepping outside the grid of anthropological limitations and culling out new arenas of conceptualizations. In another way, the ability to find a resonance between Beirut and Delhi *did not*, in fact, suggest to me the possibility of clustering the alleged ‘non-west’ under given parameters while rejecting the ‘west’, but it did indicate that this was a way in which the morass of fetishized diversity or of absolute relativism could be given meaningful shape. In fact it could imply the coming together of the diverse, and relationships amongst the diverse which could lead to new epistemological spaces.

The cases I describe below are not of the same kind as my own experiences, yet the significance of these negotiations echo a similar tenor of relationships present in my fieldwork.<sup>16</sup> These are experiences made significant by the amplification of the theme of difference where the classical (western) self - (peripheral) other relationship is turned on its head.

Roma Chatterji’s (RC) experience is related to a project initially conceived as a study of ageing and ‘social death’ in a western society, expressly motivated by the understanding that anthropologists do not study the West, particularly those nebulous areas that remain hidden in advanced capitalist societies. The fieldwork component was to be undertaken by Indian researchers placed within Dutch field-sites. RC focused on a home/ research institute for the aged. The process of formulating the project was not entirely smooth —partly accentuated by the discomfort expressed by Dutch scholars when faced with the prospect of having researchers from a developing country work on issues and field sites in their own ‘society’. Later into the project, when the project members made formal presentations, the same sense

of unease continued amongst academics, with queries and apprehensions that appeared to underline the sudden awareness of having become the objects of study rather than their authors, in a way a bewildered sense of being exposed, evaluated and eventually, threatened. Clearly, such a changeover in the delegation of anthropological authority could not be a painless process which by itself, marks a factor in this argument —one kind of resistance that any conception of world anthropologies will encounter are anthropologists themselves, especially those on either slot of the center or the periphery. I was struck by a special experience she underwent, with a partly paralyzed lady resident who had been admitted into the somatic section. For me, that illustrates the powerful content of a field relationship that eventually sustains the core of the anthropological encounter, regardless of anthropological boundaries.

This particular lady resident could not speak but would break into disturbing daily episodes of screaming —there was no way in which anyone could communicate with her meaningfully. RC, who helped in looking after her, knew about her love for chamber music and on one occasion of routine feeding and watching a television program of chamber music, RC reminded the lady about her past passion for music. Her face lit up and a friendship that went beyond everyday instrumental contact was established. In a moment of breakthrough, made more poignant and powerful by silence, a relationship of quiet gestures and gentle touches started —one that could pacify and soothe the lady unlike anything else before. It was this part of her interaction that led to the inclusion of ‘touching’ as part of the lady’s formal care regime. ‘Touching’, under normal circumstances, would have been left out because the ‘usual’ practice in the home amongst the somatic residents was that there should be no non-specific body contact, i.e. other than those involved in feeding, washing etc. This practice in itself was the result of a social need in that society to avoid infantilizing the aged and thereby reducing them to some stature. My point here is that the anthropological encounter is a profoundly human one, sometimes channeled through non-verbal communication as this one was, and there are ways in which these could become the ways of reaching the ‘other’ and then making that relationship a kernel of anthropological insight.

The power of relationships is also the point that Rajni Palriwala (RP) seeks to emphasize in her own experience. RP was part of a team that collaborated with a Dutch anthropologist at Leiden to study a state-society dynamic as contextualized in changing family models. In this project, a part of the motivation also came from a desire to question the perspective that kinship studies were almost always framed through western categories and then empirically explored in the peripheries. In this sense, it was an attempt to reverse the flow by having “kinship” examined by the peripheries rather than in them.

Through this project, RP sets a comparison between her earlier fieldwork in Rajasthan and her work in Leiden, The Netherlands. As an insider in India and Rajasthan, her immersion in the field came about as a gradual co-optation into a community space bounded both territorially and socially. In spite of a large range of ‘cultural’ differences, in the ultimate analysis, the fact of belonging to same country, the recognizability of one’s credentials made accessibility and acceptance easier and comfortable. The nature of a relationship that forms within the community space there becomes a function of these factors. Also, the anxiety of making mistakes is mellowed by the knowledge that returning, extending one’s stay or even starting over is not an impossible option. The conditions change entirely when the field is another country, another social universe, especially when it is about an ‘Indian’ in a “western” social universe. The question then is how do relationships form the anthropological quest in these situations?

Through her experience, RP holds that the politics of place or voice becomes somewhat diluted when the focus turns to relationships which are negotiated and sustained in urban situations where making contact is a highly fragmented and fleeting experience. The relationships that emerge in this context, as RP discovered, bring together a tension between what she calls the instrumental relationship part and expressive friendship part of an anthropological contact. As a stranger in a foreign world, the expected problem in all anthropological fieldwork is about finding relationships that is initiated by a difficult process of establishing credentials that are convincing enough for those who will participate at

its other end. But the real difficulty for RP wasn't about finding the relationship; it was more in terms of striking the right balance between the instrumentality that was the underbelly of the relationship *and* the expressive intimacy that her contact with 'informants' elicited. In my opinion, the openness with which some of her informants were willing to share their problems and insights spoke of their desire to privilege the topic (of 'single motherhood', for instance) of conversation rather than the alleged anthropological hierarchy that underpinned that interaction (Indian researcher-western 'subject'). The desire could have been partly explained by the probable lack of such opportunities of discussion on such topics in their busy, everyday lives, nonetheless, the fact remains that it is the blend of intimacy and instrumentality that bridged the distance between the ethnographer and the ethnograph-ed, and made the anthropological journey possible. Clearly, understanding kinship and familial relationships in different social universes will draw upon existing anthropological classifications and in RP's case, also find insights from a comparison with local 'Indian' categories. But a 'new' insight was possible when underlying hierarchies of anthropological locations (and research agendas) could fructify into an anthropological bridging (a relationship of difference) that could amplify the understanding of a given issue, in this case, kinship.

Radhika Chopra's (RaC) research amongst the publishers and writers of popular romance fiction in New York reflects Palriwalra's in terms of a comparison between field work inside and outside as well as the research object itself that mediates between the distances traveled. One feature was her bridging of differences between the familiar and the unfamiliar. 'Traveling' to a village in the Punjab, in spite of being a 'Punjabi' was of a far greater 'distance' than was her travel to New York. In the former, the contrast between her personal profile and the anthropological world that she encountered was far more acute than her affinity, in the latter, with the world of romance fiction in a Western milieu. New York provided a common language universe (English), a common life style (urban), and a familiar territory (romance fiction). It was about traveling a great distance to something familiar. In the Punjab, she had to learn the language, train herself to understand codes and norm that would govern a round the clock embodiment of 'otherness' in bodily gestures, in speech, in conduct and so on. In other words, a small distance to the greatly unfamiliar.

On one hand, it is the shared 'cultural' world that even allows RaC the comfort of an affinity with her research agenda in New York. Romance fiction was a common ground of popular culture. Yet, her perspective was separate from those entrenched in that very milieu in which the novels are placed. Blending together this affinity and separation and then creating an interesting ground of difference was, in my opinion, her choice of a path that could make the familiar strange, i.e., she chose to write a novel—a completely new skill with which to walk the paces of her anthropological queries. An immersion into the writing process meant understanding a familiar world differently—create western protagonists, conjure western situations or discover the intrigue of a city as the backdrop—by changing, for the purpose of the novel, from being one kind of 'native' of the exotic east to a native of the 'west' (in the world of romance fiction). It was again a blending of the research object with process that gave fieldwork here the crucial anthropological twist.

In all these encounters, I describe above there are inherent contrasts between them.<sup>17</sup> My episode of traveling is not to the west. At the same time, the point I am emphasizing here is precisely a blurring of such boundaries by drawing attention to the individual paths traveled, the issues explored and the knowledge gained. Ageing, familial relationships, popular culture or strategies of recovery are areas that produce ethnographies that inform a wider body of anthropological understanding, potentially produced by and about anyone anywhere. Yet, the significance in these cases is the fact that the agency of production has moved in a direction different from the classical anthropological journeys. It is this change that allows for a tacking between new places and voices that ultimately creates the discursive terrain for a new anthropology.<sup>18</sup> In the final evaluation, the emphasis is really about the individual contact points made—the complexity of relationships that is developed—the range of contact points being established and crucially, the new anthropological milestones covered through these multifarious pathways.

### Conclusion —The metaphors and metonyms of Difference

At the end of these registers that I have opened, let me return to the proposed theoretical framework. These episodes of fieldwork are meant to provide a descriptive indication of the substance of an anthropological encounter. I must add here that an “encounter” is a term loaded with anthropological historicity, most of which echo the hierarchies of relationships mentioned frequently here. In attempting to negotiate with these inequities, I have suggested the culling out of an inside, a core to this historical concept, by attaching a special significance to these fieldwork episodes in a way that Deleuze calls the secret of empiricism.

“Empiricism is by no means a reaction against concepts, nor a simple appeal to lived experiences. On the contrary, it undertakes the most insane creation of concepts ever seen or heard. Empiricism is a mysticism and a mathematicism of concepts, but precisely one which treats the concept as the object of an encounter, as a here-and-now, [...] from which emerge inexhaustibly ever new, differently distributed ‘heres’ and ‘nows’ [...] I make, remake and unmake my concepts along a moving horizon, from an always decentred center, from an always displaced periphery which repeats and differentiates them.” (Deleuze 1995: xxi–xxii)

At the outset, when I talked about establishing a new paradigm of the anthropological encounter, in place of the colonial encounter through the idea of maximal difference, I was implying this kind of a creation of a new concept, a new generality, from which, ever new singular encounters can be repeated.

To reiterate, the fieldwork instances I have described effectively map an ever-expanding anthropological cartography of locations, each of which is constituted by a field site, a researcher and an object of research—a constitution which can be based on heterogeneity and not on established hierarchies of power. Of course, each of these locations, by far, would also implicate a place in the historicity of anthropological world making. At the same time, they are *singular substantiations* accommodated into a new general model such that a growing collective language of anthropological epistemology is created, which in turn, releases the potential of many more specific contexts of analysis. Or, in another way, particular, *different* anthropologies finds expression in a universe of anthropological knowledge where the defining criteria does not speak of center or peripheries as the nodes of production, but underscores individual contact points, singular interfaces, heterogeneous points of anthropological production.

The epistemology of difference, in social anthropology, helps to grasp the social imaginary that defines the contemporary world. It is an idea of ‘everywhere’ anthropology that I am arguing for through the idea of difference. Difference allows for research agendas to break loose from the rigidities of localized metaphors. Objects of research require an open-ended compilation such that contemporary social imaginaries are reckoned with. Of course, the foundational relationship that tacks the researcher to the research object is tied to the genealogy of location in which each is placed. However, if difference privileges the issues under examination and not a first evaluation of conditions determining hierarchical place and voice, there is a possibility that boundaries and insularities do not get reified, but rather that anthropological knowledge achieve meaningful fructification. The logic of place and location should receive attention, but anthropological energies should be further focused on finding new connectivities, new maps, diverse locations and somewhat veered away from the persistent category of peripheral/marginal or dominant/central professionals and issues in anthropology. Through the ‘politics and poetics’ of subject positionings and representations, the inevitability of diversity needs to be assured, but as compatible isomorphisms rather than as homogenized clusters or isolated singularities. In the ‘changing’ world that the discipline of anthropology faces today, its new credo has to be that of achieving some sense of equity between the researchers and the researched, as well as between researchers themselves.



Through the narrative above, my intention has been to explore the idea of difference on the terrain of fieldwork, the undisputed cornerstone of anthropology. I am persuaded to argue that such a gloss of difference on the anthropological quest is possible not only in the realm of fieldwork locations/field researchers but also in the larger modalities of anthropological knowledge production. This does not deny the geo-political colonial genealogy that the anthropological endeavor has its anchors in, but a continuation of these very anchors into all potentialities of the future may not be a very constructive idiom. Fernando Coronil's (1996: 51-51) search for a 'decentralized poetics' of a 'non-imperial' world where a future builds on its pasts but is not imprisoned by its horror is perhaps an echo of the anthropological desire that my passage out of India appears to nurture.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Arturo Escobar for his sustained engagement with and encouragement of the ideas I propose in this essay. Needless to say, my work on this essay and other themes it generates is still in progress.

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to make a succinct list of post-colonial thinkers. Nonetheless, Edward Said, Dipesh Chakravarty, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Aijaz Ahmad, Ella Shohat, Anne McLintok are some of the thinkers that form my background here.

<sup>3</sup> For a critical overview of some of the 'post-colonial' positions relating to Manichean binarisms, see Kyung-Won Lee (1997).

<sup>4</sup> See, amongst other, Gustavo Lins Rebeiro (2005) for a quick purview of the various ways in which anthropology as a discipline has been implicated in global discourse of power and iniquity.

<sup>5</sup> Details on this group, members and connected documents are available at [www.ram-wan.org](http://www.ram-wan.org). (20th April 2003)

<sup>6</sup> I may have oversimplified the notion of Manuel De Landa's (1997) meshworks. For a brief exposition also see, De Landa's "Meshworks, Heirachies and Interfaces" available at: <http://www.t0.or.at/delanda/meshwork.htm>

<sup>7</sup> For an overview of network theory and its potentialities into the social, see Arturo Escobar's "Notes on Networks and Anti- Globalization Social Movements", available at: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/anthro/faculty/fac\\_pages/escobarpaper.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/anthro/faculty/fac_pages/escobarpaper.html). (15th July 2003)

<sup>8</sup> I understand that this need not be a legitimate definition that anthropology has historically granted. Anthropology is perhaps more accurately defined, historically, as a discipline born out of the discursive 'savage slot' that the west had constructed within its own historicity. See Michel Rolph Trouillot (1991). I am not ignoring this part of anthropology's genesis; rather, it remains beneath the interface that defines the center/periphery interface.

<sup>9</sup> Arnold Krupat's 'ethnocriticism' seems to bear some resemblance to the idea of difference that I propose here. Focussing on differences rather than oppositions, he states "a position not quite beyond objectivism and relativism, but somewhere between objectivism and relativism" (Krupat 1992:27). Carrying my discussion onwards to a detailed reflection on objectivism and relativism, though necessary, may detract the single theme I hope to explain here. However, I expect that some insight to these concepts and their relation to my argument will be found implicitly.

<sup>10</sup> The text referred here throughout is Giles Deleuze (1995), *Difference and Repetition*. The ideas that I use here are meant to be heuristic devices and this essay is not a sustained reflection on Deleuze's work at large.

<sup>11</sup> By reducing the widely nuanced post-colonial critique to a relationship of all encompassing opposition is perhaps a gross reduction. However, these nuances do not necessarily apply themselves to the task of proposing some conceptualisation *out of* limiting dualisms. My attempt here is to attempt such a formulation that can break away from categorical critiques to seek out a new terrain of potentialities.

<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, Satish, Deshpande, Nadini Sunder, Patricia Uberoi (2000).

<sup>13</sup> In addition, there could be a good number of Indian students (although I personally do not know of too many) who enroll in doctoral courses abroad and are involved in research that lead them to conduct fieldwork in locations outside their home country. My contention, in this case, would continue to be that research positionings, when centered through the form and frame of anthropological metropolises, get operationalized significantly by their own economies of research.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Hussein Fahim ed. (1982) and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (2000).

<sup>15</sup> In addition to S. Deshpande et al (2000), also see Satish Saberwal (1982) for a discussion on the mentioned factors.

<sup>16</sup> I mention three researchers, positioned in India and their experiences of fieldwork in the west. They are all teaching at the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi. Although there are a few others (less than 10, to the best of my knowledge, in India) who fit the same profile, I have included these three because I was able to contact them for conversations on the matter. Secondly, their professional affiliation is with the same institute I was trained in and therefore provided some common ground with which to discuss the trajectories of research. Most of the discussion on their work is based on personal communication between the scholars and myself. Wherever the projects are described or discussed, the opinions and issues raised are solely that of the researchers I have communicated with, or myself. They do not represent the views of other members or participants of the team, where applicable. Also, space does not permit me to discuss in detail the funding patterns, the institutional orientations for such research in India—they are crucial components in the discussion of such research from India.

<sup>17</sup> Several other issues relating to fieldwork abroad from India are common to all the projects and they remain to be discussed. Publishing work done in such reverse situations may encounter 'structures of dominance' in mainstream journals, as expertise is often an exercise of western privilege. The other point that I would emphasize is the way in which these foreign ethnographies are received locally—in our case, their reception within local forums.

<sup>18</sup> In this essay, I have chosen to foreground a conceptual outline that frames the experiences so far available to me in my milieu. In this sense, I have not really made any distinction between forays from India to the west or to any other part of the world. In fact, I have tried to show the common ground amongst these varying journeys 'abroad'. Elsewhere, I emphasize the greater potential fecundity of encounters as experiences of difference rather than of hierarchy, especially when these encounters are between regions of the 'south' or within and amongst the anthropological arena outside of the conventional centres. Paucity of space prevents a further elucidation here, however, it goes without saying that a reversal of journeys from the 'rest' to the 'west' takes on a separate canvass than journeys amongst the 'rest'.

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### Introduction

In this paper I propose to outline some of the debates and positions that have shaped anthropology in Colombia since it was established as a disciplinary and professional field in the mid 1940s. Although archeology, linguistics or biological anthropology might also be interesting perspectives from which to approach this subject, my intention here is to focus on socio-cultural anthropology. I will argue that the evolution of anthropology can be understood in terms of the tension between the global orientations of the discipline (concerning dominant narratives and practices, theories, field work, relations between subjects of study) and the way they are put into practice within the Colombian context. In countries such as Colombia, anthropological practice is permanently faced with the uneasy choice between adopting dominant anthropological concepts and orientations, or modifying them, adapting them, rejecting them and proposing alternatives. This need to adapt the practice stems from the specific social condition of anthropologists in these countries; that is, our dual position as both researchers and fellow citizens of our subjects of study, as a result of which we are continually torn between our duty as scientists and our role as citizens.

From this perspective, there is a danger of falling into a nationalistic interpretation of the history of anthropology in Colombia. As Claudio Lomnitz (1999) ironically comments, such is the case of Mexican anthropology, which has gradually represented itself as a family tree rooted in its own pre-colombian and pre-colonial tradition. However, I am more concerned with the practice of anthropologists in Colombia, since, as in other countries in similar situations, this practice has been continuously upset by discussions on the place of cultural differences within the hierarchy of power in our society; on the relationships of subjection and exclusion that afflict certain sectors, on the basis of their ethnicity, class or gender; or on the dilemmas posed by so-called “development”. The questions raised have frequently come from outside of the discipline itself; from social organizations or movements, or as a result of situations of violence and internal conflict. This has meant that the certainties of a practice oriented towards academic knowledge have been shaken by questions about the social repercussions of our interpretations and images on the populations being studied. Moreover, we are plagued by an interminable controversy regarding the social and political significance of intellectuals in our society. This controversy expressed itself as a rift between the generation commonly referred to as the “pioneers” and the one that suddenly emerged in the university system at the beginning of the 1970s (Arocha and Friedemann 1984; Jimeno 1984, 1999; Barragán, 2001, 2005; Caviedes 2004). But, rather like a weed that is impossible to eradicate, the controversy has sprung up again today, phrased in a new language that expresses the confrontation between new subjects and new preoccupations. In other words, from its very beginnings, Colombian anthropology has had to face a long and persistent social preoccupation, which has not been without its share of ambiguities or contradictions, and which is part of the aforementioned dual position of anthropologists. The result of such a situation is that a dialogue (at times more of an uproar without possibility of communication) is established between the anthropologist and the struggles of different social sectors, regarding projects of national construction. This is reflected by certain types of anthropological emphasis, which have varied over time and have even come into conflict at certain

points, but which have consistently been rooted in the questioning of the conditions of democracy for the construction of the nation, of the place of those we are studying—since they tend to be the most underprivileged members of society—and of our relationship with what we know as the State.

It is possible to point out some dominant trends and a number of breaks that appear to me to have been significant during the six decades of anthropology in Colombia. These can be grouped together into three broad tendencies which are not consecutive, but rather have co-existed and overlapped since the establishment of anthropology as an academic discipline. They also act as cut off points, since each one has characterized a particular period. The first of these tendencies is related to the predominance of a descriptive approach, in particular with the intention of carrying out a detailed inventory of the Amerindian societies, from the settlement and development of prehispanic societies, to aspects of physical anthropology, linguistics and the social organization of the indigenous societies existing within the limits marked out by the national territory. The second is particularly concerned with the the role of social inequality and cultural differences within the Colombian State, with how they are fomented, and with relationships of subjection within the local and national context. This tendency, as we shall see, adopted two opposing positions. One supported integration into national society and was particularly prevalent from the 1950s to the 1970s, though it is still present in ‘development’ positions, which during that period employed concepts such as assimilation and cultural integration. The other position was also established in the 1970s, in opposition to the first, since it attacked the hypotheses of national integration, on the grounds of its cultural homogeneity and racial supremacy. This particular stance was encouraged by the emergence of social movements seeking recognition of the rights of ethnic and peasant populations and by the ideological influence of Marxism, which was particularly strong during that period (Jimeno 1985, 1996). The emphasis here was on a type of anthropology that was militant and, as Mauricio Caviedes (2004) has called it, largely apocryphal, on account of its habit of debating, participating much and writing very little. At its height between the 1970s and 1980s, this approach sought to transform the symbolic markers of national identity and refute the position based on the ideology of one language, one religion and one nation. Its aim was to accompany the new ethnic movements in the creation of a ‘counter-narrative’, an alternative version of events, with which to challenge the cultural hegemony that ostracized the indigenous communities and other social sectors, regarding them as being responsible for the country’s backwardness.

The third tendency, which is in full force at the present time, coincides with the consolidation of anthropology in universities, post graduate studies and research centers such as the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History. This has brought about divisions in an academic community with very diverse interests and approaches, ranging from global processes and ecology to the most varied social subjects. At the same time, there are a large number of professionals, many more than there are academics, whose job it is to apply their knowledge in a vast array of public and private institutions. Nonetheless, there is a good deal of interchange between the application of knowledge and academic life, since the division between the two is relative and very often temporary. Many anthropologists, as well as sociologists—Orlando Fals Borda being a prime example—retain an interest in the practical and political implications of their studies, to the extent that they usually participate in debates and involve themselves in proposals on public policies. A recent example is their participation, in 1991, in the process of constitutional reform and development, with regard to the recognition of cultural and ethnic rights.

### **Anthropologists and citizenship**

Veena Das (1998) suggests that anthropological knowledge is constructed on the basis of maps of otherness made up of theories of the Other rather than theories of the self. It is for this very reason that the sociopolitical proximity between anthropologists and their subjects of study in Latin America has resulted in a very particular anthropological output (Ramos 1999-2000, 2004). The construction of anthropological knowledge, as well as the entire anthropological practice, is carried out in conditions in

which the Other is an essential and problematic part of the self. This shapes the anthropologist's relationship to his/her own work, since a good proportion of anthropologists do not regard their subjects of study as being exotic worlds that are isolated, distant and cold, but instead consider them to be co-participants, with a voice of their own, in the construction of the nation and its democracy.

Thus, the overall tone of anthropological practice in Colombia is precisely that of the indistinct boundary between the practice of anthropology as a discipline and social action taken as citizens. This is why it is not a question of establishing or initiating critical thinking in relation to what could be seen as mere self indulgence. Rather, it is important to remember that in countries such as ours, social thinking has been repeatedly shaken by intellectual polemics. These are contradictory ways of understanding the concepts of State and democracy, which are given concrete form in institutions, legislation and opportunities in life for certain sectors of society. Contact with the Other has made it possible to criticize anthropological approaches such as 'inflexible holism', as Veena Das (1998) calls it, which has been left behind by experimentation on ethnographical representations and by the re-conceptualization of certain categories commonly used in anthropology. Das demonstrates that in India, it was precisely the emergence of new communities, as political communities, which led to the discussion and creation of new anthropological categories, given the confrontation between the diverse sectors that make up this abstract concept of community. In short, by trying to understand new social actors that come into play on the same social stage as itself, and by reclaiming their particular narratives, the anthropology carried out in these countries reconsiders over-generalizing rhetoric, reformulates analytical categories and recuperates variations of gender, class, history and place. It does not settle for being the object of thought, instead it declares itself to be an instrument of thought (Das 1998: 30-34).

I have called this sort researcher the 'citizen researcher' (Jimeno, 2000) in order to highlight the close relationship that exists between exercising one's profession as a researcher and exercising one's rights as a citizen. Krotz (1997) has underlined the fact that, for what he terms 'southern anthropologies,' the Other, the Others are at the same time both fellow citizens and research subjects. The fact that we are fellow citizens of the subjects of our research pervades the practice of anthropology in countries like ours, making it more like the practice of politics, as a kind of *naciocentrism*. Every characterization has repercussions on the everyday lives of the people and on the practical significance of exercising citizenship. Hence the statement by Alcida Ramos that "in Brazil, like in other countries of Latin America, practicing anthropology is a political act" (1999-2000: 172). Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1995, 1998) also had this in mind when he put forward the concept of *style* to characterize Latin American anthropology (for a discussion on this topic see Jimeno 1999, 2000; Krotz 1996; Uribe 1997). Esteban Krotz (1997) criticizes the diffusionist anthropological model based on images of 'extension' or 'adaptation', for its failure to recognize that the production of scientific knowledge is a process of cultural creation, just like any other, and cannot be analyzed merely as symbolic systems that are separate from other aspects of a more comprehensive social reality.

Thus, the structure of the national state pervades the emergence and development of anthropology and provides the backdrop for the dialogue taking place between anthropologists and the Others. This is why I believe that, of all the social concepts proposed by Norbert Elias (1989), the idea of *naciocentrism* is a particularly useful one. I would like to expand this concept, in order to emphasize the diversity of meanings and interests that are brought into play when anthropologists ask themselves about the relationship between their work and their responses to questions about who participates, how and in what circumstances, in what nation, in what state. There is still much to be said regarding the answers to these questions, and they continue to pervade the theoretical output and indeed the entire work of intellectuals. With the idea of *naciocentrism* Norbert Elias seeks to underline the relationship between concepts and the social conditions in which they are created and employed (Elias, 1989), with specific reference to the intellectual orientation centered on the concept of 'nation'. Elias demonstrates how this *naciocentrism* is found throughout much of the output of the social sciences. To illustrate this

point, he offers the example of the concepts of civilization and culture, which *naciocentrism* first gives rise to and then transforms, as the societies and social strata in which they originate are themselves gradually transformed (Elias 1989). The concepts therefore go through a dual process of “nationalization”, being adopted by the both nation and the State. Other concepts that allude to social units, such as that of society, also take on this nationalized quality, in the sense that they are adapted to the project of national construction through ideas of equilibrium, unity, homogeneity, and with the intention of presenting them to the world as stabilized and divided into clearly defined units (Elias 1989, Neiburg 1998, Fletcher 1997).

As numerous authors have already pointed out (Fletcher 1997), Elias’s observations are fundamentally critical of *naciocentrism* as an intellectual current that is connected to the rise of the European nation state. However, his theories can be applied to our own historical situation, if we emphasize the fact that here there is no conceptual homogeneity regarding the constitution of the nation, nationality and the national State. On the contrary, some analysts have suggested that the violent confrontation that has been affecting Colombia for the past two decades, as well as the one it lived through in the middle of the last century, can be understood as a struggle between opposing demands on the State, in which the competition between opposing sides plays a role in the spread of violence (Roldán 2003). In Daniel Pécaut’s (1987) view, for the past half a century, the intensification of partisan rivalry for State control has contributed to the increasingly widespread use of violence, which has never entirely been a state monopoly. The recent confrontation in Colombia, which escalated from the mid 1980s on, has again involved a confrontation between very heterogeneous forces, in dispute over the precise nature of the formation of the state. But leaving aside the fact that the opponents in this struggle are armed, their conflicting viewpoints and perspectives are formed within an arena of debate in which Colombian intellectuals also participate.

Now let us look at the three main tendencies spanning the practice of anthropology in Colombia.

### The early debates

An early tendency in Colombian anthropology was marked by an inclination that is common in Boasian anthropology, namely that of practicing a generalizing ethnography on the existing native groups of the country and considering them as being in danger of extinction or cultural decline. However, there was already a tendency among the pioneers of this current to blend universal theories and models or to apply them in a fairly unorthodox fashion, which is a tendency that persists to this day. Anthropology was established as a professional discipline in Colombia at the beginning of the 1940s, thanks to the efforts of Gregorio Hernández de Alba and the French ethnologist Paul Rivet. The latter found refuge from the war in Europe in Colombia, and in 1941 set up the National Institute of Ethnology. The first generation of professional anthropologists was made up of a handful of young graduates, some of whom had come from other disciplines. Amongst them they combined an exclusive interest in ethnography with Rivet’s interest in the origin of American settlement and the diffusion of cultural traits, all of which meant researching into archeology, ethnohistory and physical anthropology, in search of enduring sociocultural sequences. This early generation played a fundamental role in the organization of anthropology courses at Colombian universities from the 1960s onwards. The same can be said of the Colombian Institute of Anthropology (1952), a state research center which absorbed the former ethnological one and began to dedicate itself to research in the four fields of anthropology, and to the preservation of archeological heritage (Barragán 2001, 2005). Thus, this first handful of anthropologists (there would be fewer than fifty in the following two decades) practiced their profession in the context of public research institutions. The social sciences, particularly sociology and history, were only just starting up in a limited number of university centers.

What were the preoccupations of this early generation of anthropologists? The first issue of the *Revista Colombiana de Antropología*, an institute publication, came out fifty years ago when violence devastated certain rural areas. At the time, Colombia was immersed in a violent confrontation in a



number of rural areas, which took the form of a partisan struggle. It was the height of Cold War suspicions and the fear of communism was rife. It is said that during this period, the partisan affiliations of those who worked at the Institute determined whether or not their work received support, and even whether they were to continue to be employed there. In this first issue of the Review the following articles appeared; "Contacts and Cultural Exchange in the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta" by Gerardo Reichel Dolmatoff, "La Guajira, a Region, a Culture of Colombia" by Milcíades Chaves, "The Social and Economic Aspects of Coffee Growing in Antioquia" by Ernesto Guhl, and "Food Distribution in a Transitional Society" by Alicia Dussan. There were also contributions by Segundo Bernal on mythology and folk tales from a Paez community, Federico Medem on the taxonomy of the alligator, and Nils Holmer and Jean Caudmont on the linguistics of two indigenous groups. Not a word then was said about the violent confrontation taking place in a large area of the rural Colombia. But on the other hand, the government was already experimenting with a type of applied anthropology in what were called programs of rural social security, which sought to resolve the problem of the rural violence. Others might note, as Marco Martínez (2004) has done, the conspicuous absence of any theoretical discussion, or explicit reference to a question or to a methodology employed in the work. Their writings appear to assume that reality is in front of our very eyes, ready to be revealed by the expert. In archeology, the focus was on establishing cultural areas across the Colombian territory and elaborating chronological sequences. We might say, then, that the focus of these works was on "local worlds" and the "objective" description of closed cultures. However, this emphasis was qualified by the preoccupation that is apparent in almost all of the texts, and is particularly explicit in those of Alicia Dussán and Gerardo Reichel, with "contact" and "cultural exchange" and with the effects of "aculturation", particularly where they perceived a "cultural loss". It was also qualified by the appearance of applied anthropology projects in certain communities, or on matters such as urban housing. Which is to say that the anthropologists were not unaware of the fact that these local worlds existed in relation to a history and a regional context that were imposed on them and that in general placed them at the bottom of the social hierarchy, or that they were facing pressing new social conditions and necessities. What they did was limit themselves to context of the Colombian national territory.

In this first issue of the Review it is also apparent that the anthropologists drew conclusions from their studies with the aim of modifying the deeply-rooted prejudices that provided the ideological justification for the subordination of indigenous societies. For example, Milcíades Chaves begins the piece on the Guajira, a peninsula in the north of Colombia, with the subtitle *Colombia, a tropical country*, and after examining the influence of the climate on man, he takes the opportunity to say that, behind many theories on geographical influence, there are hidden racist theories that ignore man's adaptation to his environment. He emphasizes the fact the region should be considered "as a culture of Colombia", when in ordinary language this term was only applied to esthetic and refined representations, and the indigenous peoples were commonly referred to as "savage tribes" and "barbarians". Chaves finishes by arguing that the "guajiros [are an example of] astonishing adaptation". Nowadays we might argue that the anthropological representation of the ecological Indian, to which the native peoples stake their claim, is largely an anthropological "invention" (Orrantía 2002). Nonetheless, although this praise for cultural adaptation might now seem naïve to us, there is no doubt about how strange Chaves' words must have sounded in a society where racism towards Indians and Afro-Colombians was prevalent. This was not just intellectual pie in the sky; as is often the case with ethnographic representations (Ramos 2004), they had implications for the way in which Amerindian societies were perceived in Colombia. There is no denying that the results of a change in the public image of the indigenous peoples would take several more decades to become apparent, and would require prolonged and repeated work on the value of cultural diversity. It would also be necessary for the ethnic reaffirmation movements and the ethnographic representation to come together. Nonetheless, it was the first step towards seeking an improved position for these societies.

In this first issue of the *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* (1953) it is also apparent that the anthropological emphasis on indigenous societies soon went beyond a mere interest in these societies as

exotic objects. But equally obvious are the tensions between the various approaches to the subject of these indigenous societies. The *Review* was announced as the “modern and more scientific” replacement for the *Revista del Instituto Etnológico Nacional* and the *Boletín de Arqueología*, publications belonging to the former National Ethnological Institute. Under legal guidance, the management of the Institute announced the establishment of the following sections: Archeology, Physical Anthropology, Ethnography, Social Anthropology, Linguistics and Folk Studies, emphasizing that in the near future there would be

“A very particular section devoted to the Protection of the Indian, which will study the specific problems of each community, in order to suggest to the government measures that might rescue the indigenous peoples from their precarious condition, **thereby incorporating them into the national identity**, since with 10% of pure indians, 40% of *mestizos* of caucasian descent and 30% of *mestizos* of Afro-Colombian descent, Colombia urgently needs the solutions that anthropology can offer it in this respect” (Andrade 1953: 13).

Before announcing the opening of a three-year course for training anthropologists, the director, Andrade, declared that anthropology could not escape from the problems facing the nation, or avoid offering an answer to the question of what it meant to be American. However, Andrade himself was responsible for failing to start up the aforementioned section, for fear that its research would “become politicized”. Thus, the idea that anthropologists might act as mediators between the State and the indigenous peoples turned out to be problematic in itself, since it raised the question of whether it was possible to sustain the dichotomy between objectivity and commitment to the populations being studied.

Many of these anthropologists included in their bibliographies the likes of Melville Herskovits, Ralph Linton, Abraham Kardiner, Margaret Mead, and also Malinowski. But they didn’t neglect to study in detail the chroniclers of the Indies as well as regional histories and monographs. The tendency to adopt the attitude of ingenuous discoverers was challenged by the need to do two things: on the one hand, to put new names on the map of Colombia, and on the other, to answer for the place that these populations would occupy within the nation as a whole; a nation which defined itself as still being in the process of formation. Thus, they clearly demonstrated their desire to participate in the very formation of Colombian nationality, in a similar kind of role to that of the cartographies, museums and censuses described by Benedict Anderson (1983).

There was no unanimity amongst this early generation regarding how they should resolve the problematic relationship between knowledge and political position, nor was there agreement as to how far their concrete proposals on social questions should go. In the fourth issue of the *Review* (1955), Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda relates how during an “expedition” to la Guajira she was struck by the high infant mortality rate among the indigenous community then known as ‘guajiros’. She then goes on to look at the high infant mortality in Colombia and immediately suggests that if cultural models of child rearing and nutrition were reconsidered, Colombia could reduce this high rate. Virginia was only just beginning her career, but the question of how to translate anthropological knowledge into public policies on health and the family, in accordance with the cultural particularities of each Colombian region, was one she would spend her life addressing. An important part of her work as an anthropology professor was giving classes in the Faculty of Medicine of the National University.

Other colleagues adopted more radical positions, inspired by the ideas of the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui, among others. According to this viewpoint, the problem of the indigenous peoples, the agrarian problem and the national problem were all one (Mariátegui and Sánchez [1927, 1928] 1987). Roberto Pineda Giraldo, another of the pioneers, recently recounted (Caviedes 2004, Barragán 2005) how two contrasting tendencies soon appeared among the first generation of anthropologists. One favoured “objective” knowledge of “in vitro” societies in danger of extinction, whilst the other, which was termed *indigenista*, backed the political claims of the Indians. Despite the fact that the two tendencies co-existed within the Ethnological Institute from 1940 to 1952, they separated their production; whilst the purely ethnographical texts were published in the *Revista del Instituto Etnológico Nacional*, the articles on the social situation of the indigenous peoples came out in the *Boletín de Arqueología*.

By the 1960s and 1970s, this difference had taken another form. Although some remained distrustful of official policy and continued to denounce the situation of the indigenous communities, others jumped on the bandwagon of the ‘development’ current within the Colombian state apparatus. They even laid the foundations for an official policy designed to assimilate the indigenous communities into the stream of Colombian national identity, largely influenced by Mexican *indigenismo*. During this period, the development argument permeated the Colombian state and made use of a new crop of scientists and technicians, who set out to “plan” social intervention in their capacity as participants in the public administration (Jimeno 1984). It was at this time that the two principal mechanisms employed by the development camp were consolidated: professionalization and institutionalization (Escobar 1996).

As far as professionalization was concerned, this was the time when the first three university programs (undergraduate to begin with) in anthropology were opened up, replacing the training given by the Colombian Institute of Anthropology. As was the case in other areas like sociology, the organization of the training programs largely followed North American university models and their creators were distinguished members of the first generation of anthropologists, namely Gerardo and Alicia Reichel-Dolmatof, Luis Duque Gómez and Graciliano Arcila. The aim was to train both scientists and professionals in the four branches of anthropology. By the mid 1970s the number of graduates was increasing throughout the country and they were rapidly being incorporated into the various official agencies. However, there was also a rapid expansion within the universities, particularly the public ones, of a student movement that was encouraged by the Cuban Revolution of 1959, by anti-colonial and “third world” social protest movements, and by the student movements that had emerged in the late 1960s throughout the first world. It was believed at the time that Latin America might constitute a utopia of social equality. The anthropology students of the late 1960s joined the movement with enthusiasm and, along with their questioning of the social order, began to question anthropology for being a product of colonialism and their professors for being docile followers of such modes of thinking (Caviedes 2004, Jimeno 1999). This questioning soon led to a confrontation between generations, which resulted in a number of the early anthropologists being removed from their teaching functions. They were replaced by radical youngsters who were heavily influenced by Marxism and the critical theories of dependency, and who attempted to reorientate the teaching programs along those same lines.

The second mechanism employed by the development ideology was that of institutionalization. We have already mentioned that some of the pioneers of anthropology actively supported new state “development” institutions, including those concerned with land reform and *indigenismo*. Some of them believed that the role of anthropologists should be to plan cultural changes, in order for development and technological improvements in agriculture to bring about the integration of peasant and indigenous populations into the social structure of the nation (Jimeno and Triana 1985). Here they were implicitly following the Andean region model, which consisted of civilizing the periphery. The anthropologist Gregorio Hernández de Alba was the inspiration for the new official agency, the Division of Indigenous Affairs, the aim of which, according to his own definition, was “social improvement and the effective incorporation into active life and national progress of territories and inhabitants that could be classified as marginal” (quoted in Jimeno and Triana, 1985, 82). From as early as 1940, the concept of *national integration* had been at the very core of *indigenismo*, which was spread throughout Latin America by Miguel Gamio. This *indigenismo* affected the formulation of Colombian policies towards the indigenous societies in the early 1960s (Jimeno and Triana 1985). The anthropologists of the time saw themselves as bureaucratic agents assigned to assimilate the indigenous peoples, who were considered to be marginalized individuals that needed to be put on the path to progress. Hernández de Alba believed that a more modern and efficient kind of action on behalf of the state might reduce the enormous influence the Catholic Church had maintained over the indigenous populations since the 19th century, on the explicit orders of the Colombian state itself (Jimeno and Triana 1985).

The first article of the decree proclaiming the creation of the new agency stated that its function would be “to study stable indigenous societies, as a basis for the planification of any cultural, social and

economic changes that might be advisable, with a view to encouraging the progress of these societies” (quoted in Jimeno and Triana 1985: 82). This directive included very concrete forms of action with respect to the indigenous populations, and in particular their lands. As is still the case today, the indigenous societies were scattered throughout the peripheral regions of Colombia, in groups of low population density with pronounced cultural differences. Some retained legal protection of their lands, dating back to Spanish colonial legislation, which they had secured through legal and political battles against various expropriation attempts since the declaration of the Republic in the 19th century. The policy of development considered collective territorial rights to be a transitional stage on the way to individual ownership, much as the liberal ideology had done in the 19th century. Thus, in 1962, the Land Reform Institute was given the task of breaking up the communal lands. However, it also opened up the possibility of allocating lands beyond the economic border. It was this small loophole that provided the perfect opportunity for the movement for the defense and expansion of indigenous lands, which would go on to achieve a great deal in the following decade.

In the early 1970s social unrest spread amongst peasants and indigenous communities seeking lands inhabited by the land owners. The latter not only refused to divide up their common lands, they also claimed lands that had been seized from them in the past, or demanded that their rights be recognized in border regions. To the surprise of the paternal wing of the peasant movement, the indigenous populations formulated their own claims through newly established ethnic organizations in which dozens of young anthropologists and other intellectuals actively participated (Jimeno 1996, Caviedes 2004).

### **A militant anthropology**

Caviedes (2002, Arocha and Friedemann 1984, Barragán 2001) argues that in the 1970s there was a break in the practice adopted by anthropology, the most drastic element of which was the way anthropologists became activists in peasant and indigenous social movements. In Caviedes’ opinion, this break did not occur simply because of a movement within anthropology influenced by Marxism and the proximity to the indigenous movement, (particularly the Indigenous Regional Council of the Cauca, CRIC), as some of us have suggested (Jimeno 1999). Instead, he argues, it came about as a result of attempts during that decade to rethink the power relationship both between Colombian society and the indigenous peoples, and also at the heart of Colombian society as a whole. This would mean that the rethinking of anthropology was a result of the struggles to transform this power relationship. Caviedes is probably more right than those of us who were too closely involved in the process during those years. In fact, I myself belong to the generation that questioned the orientation of the anthropology curriculum at one of the universities between 1968 and 1970, precisely on account of its lack of “commitment” to the social movements. Shortly after, I was able to participate in the debate on the orientation of land policies, in support of the new ethnic organizations. Many of those who I have mentioned as contributing to the first issue of the Review were affected by our criticisms, in some cases quite profoundly. During that period, the answer to the question “what is the purpose of knowledge?” was emphatic—to transform social injustice in our society. The practical response, which owed more to enthusiasm than to reflection and much more to naivety than preparation, consisted of accompanying and even trying to merge with the social movements of the time.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the land distribution problem was at the center of national debate. On one side, there was pressure from peasants and left-wing organizations, and on the other, from the principal rural landowners, who mobilized support from the most conservative sections of the party political system and from a third sector within the government, which proposed agricultural modernization, within a moderate framework of technological innovations and improvements in productivity. The result was an ineffectual land reform project that proved to be incapable of modifying the concentration of land ownership, in a country that was already largely urban. However, the rural organizations became strengthened, particularly the indigenous organization that brought together the three main indigenous groups from the South West in the CRIC (Jimeno, 1996). Their demands could be summed up in two

words: *land* and *culture*. Many of us who at the time had recently become professors at the public universities (National, Cauca and Antioquia), embraced the indigenous cause with enthusiasm. In it we saw the possibility of achieving the “commitment” between science and politics that we had so desired. One way of contributing to the cause was by producing short texts written in the fervent language of the activist, denouncing abuses, especially by landowners, the Catholic Church and local police forces, and attacking official policies towards the indigenous communities as “ethnocide”. We also promoted countless meetings so that indigenous leaders could put forward their point of view in the cities, we attended reunions and congresses organized by the indigenous communities themselves, or we took advantage of work-related trips throughout the country to act as liaisons between the indigenous groups that were cut off from each other. We were *collaborators*. One of the numerous examples of this militant literature was the newspaper *Yawi*, produced by a small group of anthropologists, lawyers and sociologists, which was circulated among intellectuals and indigenous organizations, from 1978 to 1983. The assassination of indigenous leaders during that period, as well as the imprisonment of others, was one of the driving forces behind the publication, which also examined local confrontations and praised the variety and wealth of indigenous beliefs and practices. As for the researchers from the Colombian Institute of Anthropology, they set up work stations, known as “anthropological stations” in indigenous communities, the purpose of which was to bring together research and work in the community, on ethno-education, health and organization.

We collaborators concentrated on circulating ethnic demands; the right to “territory” and to “self-determination”, the right to live according to their cultural practices and to denounce relations of submission and exploitation in the local environment. We were active image creators, who advocated the intrinsic value of the Amerindian cultures as a political means of rethinking both the relationship between these societies and official policies, and the place of the native American in society and in the national consciousness. In a sense, we continued the work that had already been started by the pioneers. The limits of this activity and its ambiguities would only become apparent some time after. The indigenous communities appropriated the ethnographical images and transformed them into a new ethnical topography.

However, militant activity was not limited to students and university professors. The expansion of official institutions involved a large number of professionals, anthropologists and other intellectuals who sympathized with the indigenous cause. They saw themselves, not as agents of the official order, but as subvertors of this order, working discreetly, even secretly, and at times more openly and defiantly. This work had two main purposes. One was to influence official policy to rethink the role of ethnic and cultural diversity. The other was to promote the creation of new local indigenous organizations designed to demand recognition of the rights of the indigenous communities. It also had the intention of putting different groups in contact with each other, by promoting the idea of a national indigenous movement with common demands and courses of action. We also worked on promoting a rethinking of official land policy, and established the ideological and practical bases for what would be a long struggle to obtain official recognition of indigenous lands in different parts of the country. Ideological, in that they rejected the idea of dividing up communal lands and advocated the very opposite: the advantage of maintaining the existing ones and applying the same scheme of community lands to the peripheral regions of the selva. Practical, since they led to intense promotional activity with local and regional organizations throughout the country.

The action taken by anthropologists, by contrast, was fairly diverse. We can demonstrate this by examining their case work in relation to the construction of the Urrá hydroelectric dam in an indigenous territory in the North of Colombia, the same dam studied by Caviedes (2004). Between 1960 and 1970, a local environmental development agency began a feasibility study on the construction of a dam in the region of the Embera Katío, near to the Caribbean plains. The plan had the financial backing of multinational corporations, and attracted interest from land-owners and politicians in the region. Over the next three decades, there was a succession of technical assessments by social and environmental

scientists. The Embera also made their voice heard, and, in a fairly haphazard manner, with a number of internal disagreements still unresolved, presented legal claims and organized public protests. During the course of the debate on Urrá, anthropologists were to be found working on various sides. On several occasions they acted as consultant technicians on the social impact of the dam. The first participants, the anthropologists Piedad Gómez and Roberto Pineda Camacho, maintained that the environmental destruction of the selva and the rivers would have a negative impact on the survival of the Embera, in spite of veiled pressure from contractors and powerful local interests. Others though understated indigenous demands (Caviedes 2004).

Parallel to the conflicting technical studies, Antonio Cardona, another young anthropologist, recently graduated from the public university, travelled the region in the early 1980s as a public employee of an agency on indigenous affairs (Caviedes 2004). His job consisted of seeking out an area for the creation of a protected communal territory, but very soon he was forced to take a position on the construction of the dam. He then worked to group the local communities together into new organizations that took the form of “cabildos” —organizations of Spanish colonial origin that were adopted as a model by the national indigenous movement. Supported by other anthropologists who had recently graduated from other universities and also sympathized with the indigenous struggle, Cardona used his knowledge of mobilizations that he had acquired as a student in contact with the peasant organization and the CRIC, and succeeded in putting the Embera in contact with each other and with other indigenous organizations. This marked the start of a slow but continuous process of participation by the Embera in meetings and they even ventured into the unknown—to the capital, Bogota. Supported by anthropologists who worked with them, they travelled on to the south of Colombia to attend the first national indigenous meeting in 1981, which led to the formation of the National Indigenous Organization ONIC. Numerous events, such as the assassination of indigenous leaders, harassment by the Colombian army and armed groups, both ‘paramilitary’ and guerrilla, have marked the protest movement against the dam. In spite of everything, the first phase of the construction began in 1989. Antonio Cardona opted, as he remembers it, for open “commitment” in opposition to the dam—and lost his job (Caviedes 2004).

The central concept guiding the action of the militant anthropologists was that of *commitment*, which they understood as a moral duty to confront what they believed was damaging communities. Many practiced it to the full, as in the case of the Urrá dam, and some still continue with this approach, but others chose to become more conciliatory and modify their positions. In time, the combative young anthropologists of the 1980s gave way to others who put their expert knowledge to use in a new way: now as consultants to the Constitutional Court, studying the damage caused by the dam that had already been built. In 1998, based on anthropological opinion, the Court ruled that the dam had caused sweeping changes that threatened the survival of the Embera and awarded compensation to their communities. At this stage, new challenges appeared. Firstly, there was the matter of reaching agreement on how to manage these fairly considerable sums of money. Secondly, there was the question of the Embera’s very survival in the midst of a war between guerrilla factions that had accused them of siding with the ‘enemy’ on one side, and paramilitaries who besieged them and kept close watch on their movements on the other. We know all this thanks to anthropologists such as Caviedes, who works for the public administration on the defense of human rights in a small town in the region. But that is another story, of history in the making.

### **Between Political Constitution and conflict**

From the second half of the 1980s onwards, two distinct situations began to come together. On the one hand, anthropology was reaping the rewards of its consolidation as an academic discipline, with a considerable number of professionals practicing applied anthropology in a wide range of areas. On the other hand, the concept of *commitment* as political activism in the community had been substituted by a greater interest in the actual production of knowledge and by a greater sectorization of anthropology according to the social, regional and institutional affiliation of the researcher. The subject of indigenous

societies now became the domain of a limited number of specialists, at the same time as the indigenous organizations and their spokespeople were becoming increasingly visible politically, and could speak for themselves. For some researchers, including Caviedes, this meant that the bulk of anthropology had distanced itself from social movements. But it can also be seen as an overall reorientation of the discipline, which in Colombia, covers a wide variety of topics and approaches. The influence of debates within the social sciences in the US, and to a lesser extent in France, have replaced the former contact with Latin American critical theory. Moreover, there has been a shift in the function of *commitment*, which is no longer understood as being a political and moral bond with local communities. Instead, it is now seen as fostering political debate at the national level. The best of example of this is perhaps the process that led to the constitutional reform of 1991, as well as the determination of many anthropologists to defend and build on some of their social achievements.

The constitutional reform came about in 1991 partly as a result of the peace agreements with the M-19 guerrillas. The country was still reeling from a wave of assassinations and bombings carried out by the drugs cartels, who were attempting to put pressure on the authorities to abandon the official measures taken against them. Many sectors of society saw the constitutional reform as a ray of hope in the midst of the conflict; as the possibility of a new social pact and the chance to make progress on social rights and economic guarantees. For certain intellectuals, including some anthropologists, it was the opportunity to leave behind the Political Constitution of 1886, which proclaimed one official religion and culture, and left the Amerindian and Afro-Colombian populations in a state of social exclusion and disadvantage. It was also the opportunity to support the ethnic organizations in their demands. Thanks to their active participation in the formulation of the new Constitution, the indigenous communities improved their public image and received recognition for a host of safeguards and rights that they had fought long and hard for, such as the recognition of their cultural diversity, their territorial rights, their native language and education. The same cannot be said for the Afro-Colombian populations, who lacked such experienced forms of representation and organization. Even so, thanks to the activities of a group of anthropologists, the Constitution included a norm that led to moderate advances in the recognition of the exclusion of these populations and in territorial guarantees for some of them. It was no coincidence that the Colombian Institute of Anthropology coordinated the committee that developed the constitutional principle on communal rights of black communities. The committee's work led to the Law of Black Communities (Ley 70 de 1993 de Comunidades Negras).

Here we encounter a difference between the perspective of foreign intellectuals and that of Colombian ones. Most foreign observers look on the progress achieved through negotiation with considerable skepticism, and see each accomplishment as merely confirmation of the existing order, since the changes have been minor ones. They see a tendency to endorse the state and accept its overall authority (Gros 2001). Jaime Arocha (2004) demonstrates precisely this difference in perspective. Whilst foreign anthropologists are skeptical towards the socio-political events affecting the Afro-Colombian population for example, through the law establishing their ethno-territorial and political rights, the dominant position taken by Colombian anthropologists is one of attachment and commitment to the political achievements concerning the recognition of these peoples.

Indeed, the majority of Colombian anthropologists make a more positive political assessment of every advance made against discrimination and historical forms of domination, or in the unequivocal process of the empowerment of the indigenous peoples. For some, it is a question of attaining a new social order, for us, it is about working in a field of day-to-day struggles to expand democracy, in the midst of a long and violent confrontation. Again, the difference in perspective has to do with our historical position as researchers and citizens, which is continually challenged by controversial ideas on the State, the nation and the democracy we are seeking to build.

The proliferation of subjects and approaches, and the shift in interest towards the national public arena, have occurred within the context of increasing internal conflict in Colombia. It is well

documented that the characteristic feature of this conflict is the complex criss-crossing of local situations and struggles for control of the State between State forces and insurgents from across the political spectrum. The money and interests generated by the traffic in illegal drugs permeates this conflict, further complicating the panorama of alliances, negotiations and confrontations. This adds a particular kind of tension, not only for those who have to live with the immediate effects of the violence, but also for the rest of Colombian society, who are afraid of becoming inadvertently caught up in it. Since 1985, much of the escalating confrontation has taken place in rural areas, which are paying the highest price for the violence. Thus, there is a relative degree of protection to be found in urban life. However, to some extent, the atmosphere of preoccupation and fear is inescapable.

In this sense, anthropologists who work in Colombia do so “under fire”, to use the expression from the book by Nordstrom and Robben (1995). How has practicing anthropology in the context of this conflict affected research work, the relationship between the researcher and the research subjects, and the field itself or its theory? The events of the conflict are like accumulating layers that shake our consciousness and personal sensibilities, to the point where none of us can ignore the fact that our environment is becoming increasingly unsafe. How does this translate to work of the anthropologist? Those anthropologists who work in a strictly professional capacity, in the countless social institutions in the areas of conflict, have to make a permanent effort to ensure that their institutional cover is the general frame of reference for their actions. Like many other civilians, they go about their business with the utmost caution, which, amongst other things, involves showing neutrality towards all parties and permanently negotiating what we might call civil neutrality. This attitude must be demonstrated in daily conversation and in their choice of relations. It also means not inquiring about people, places or critical actions. But the struggle to achieve the neutrality that protects them and the people they work with can easily be destabilized, forcing the anthropologist to abandon the area in order to ensure his/her survival.

From the point of view of non-applied research, there has undoubtedly been a decrease in the amount of work being carried out in high risk zones, particularly in some rural areas. But there is a great deal of interest in studying political and other forms of violence, even though there are tendencies to be more political scientists than anthropologists in this field. One effect of the conflict on anthropological practice has been to reinforce the general tendency towards opening up new topics of investigation, as we have previously seen. This has entailed redefining what exactly is meant by the “field” and “field work” of anthropology. The avoidance or prevention of violence has led anthropologists to abandon their former interest in localized communities, in favour of general or multi-localized processes. It has also brought about methodological innovations, including varied strategies for approaching research subjects, from the use of visual texts to the internet, or changes in traditional writing formats.

The relationship of anthropologists with their subjects of investigation has also undergone a process of re-evaluation. The naive position of committed activism has been left behind, although it still exists amongst some young anthropologists with pronounced loyalties towards the most disadvantaged sectors of society. This change can be seen as the emergence of a new understanding of political action, ‘apolitical politics’, as Barragán (2005) calls it, which is now oriented towards environmental impact, gender identity, emotional youth communities (musical, literary) or globalization processes. The concept of *complicity*, put forward by George Marcus (1999), and used by Sara Shneiderman (Shneiderman *et al.* 2004) to show the adaptation in the relationship between social scientists and their informants in Nepal, might prove useful to those working in conflict zones or on violence-related topics. According to this concept, neither the anthropologist nor the subject of investigation can limit their project to purely local questions; they must work together to place themselves in a wider context, agreeing on their purposes and commitment to an external ‘third party’. In Shneiderman’s work this entailed new forms of *complicity* with local colleagues, insofar as their common goal was to guarantee the safety of those involved and to understand the changing situation. Indeed, those working in Colombia emphasize both the need to guarantee the safety of all concerned, and the way in which this creates special bonds between them and their research subjects. Together they begin to participate in a whole range of vital little strategies, such as avoiding certain places, people and times, maintaining a degree of mobility within the area and paying



close attention to rumours. However, in our case, this concept is limited by the fact that the internal conflict makes it difficult for social scientists to regard the opposing parties with indifference, and in general they adopt a definite position of either sympathizing with them or not, as the case may be. Thus it is impossible for them to form a bond of *complicity* with some of their research subjects: in the case of paramilitary or guerrilla groups, for example. Nevertheless, they must walk a fine line between relying on the approval of armed groups in order to move above freely and claiming civil neutrality. Another factor affecting the anthropologist's relationship of *complicity* is that it is so difficult to avoid arousing suspicion, however cautious they may be. Female researchers are said to be safer in such situations, since the fact that they are women protects them from the automatic assumption that they are combatants. By way of contrast, we can cite the case of our colleague Hernán Henao, which provides a dramatic example with which to end this analysis. A university professor whose research subject for a number of years was the relationship between region, territoriality and culture, in 1999 Henao finished a study on territorial conflicts in a region of Western Colombia known for its predominance of paramilitary groups. In May of that year he was murdered by a commando in his own office at the University of Antioquia. As occurs with most violent deaths, conflicting versions of the reasons for the attack immediately began to circulate. According to some of the versions, what made him an enemy of these groups was the fact that an NGO had used his work abroad to support a claim of territorial usurpation. This particularly painful example demonstrates the difficulty of operating in a changing terrain dominated by the use of force.

### Conclusion

The practice of anthropology in Colombia has been pervaded by the tension between the global orientations of the discipline and the way they are put into practice in the Colombian context. This is due to the fact that the practice must be adapted to the social condition of anthropologists as being fellow citizens of their subjects of study. In this sense, the practice of anthropology has been *naciocentric*, since our cultural production is permeated by disparate and polemical ideas regarding the make-up of the State and what it means to construct a nation, democracy and citizenship.

This is why anthropological practice in Colombia has been far from just an acritical repetition of imported models. We anthropologists have been forced to account for the tangle of perspectives and social interests in which we find ourselves immersed, and to exercise the function of citizen-researcher. The three main tendencies that sum up the six decades of anthropology in Colombia point to certain dominant trends and a few breaks, which have not been consecutive, but rather have co-existed and overlapped since it became an academic discipline in the 1940s. At one extreme we find an ethnography with a generalizing 'blanket' mentality, and at the other, a militant anthropology. Between the two we can identify a range of positions and discussions, the distinguishing feature of which has been the ill-defined boundary between practicing anthropology as a discipline and acting as citizens. In one sense this limits our anthropological practice, but in another sense it also opens it up.

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## WAN & ACTIVIST RESEARCH:TOWARD BUILDING DECOLONIAL AND FEMINIST PROJECTS

Maribel Casas

“The project of creating a world anthropologies network challenges anthropologists to engage not only in worldwide communication but also with knowledge produced in non-academic contexts and in non-scientific realms of experience.”

Susana Narotzky (2006:133).

The goal of this paper is to articulate a commonality between WAN and a particular activist research project, called *Precarias a la Deriva*. Acknowledging their distinctive trajectories, I will try to illustrate possible points of articulation. While WAN is an explicit decolonial venture, *Precarias a la Deriva* is open about being a feminist project. However I believe that both initiatives share the following two traits: 1) a decolonial approach to knowledge production taking multiple sites of enunciation seriously as well as; 2) a radical feminist understanding of ways of creating a ‘common’ between singular experiences.

After a brief description of *Precarias a la Deriva* (PD) and the broader trend of *activist research* in which it is inserted, I will focus on the two traits I put forward are held in common between WAN and PD. I will follow with a brief discussion about how these de-colonial and feminist principles have been translated by other research initiatives, especially in the practice of ethnography. To conclude, I will present a research technique experimented by PD as a possible WAN methodology since it tries to enact those very de-colonial and feminist principles discussed through the paper.

### The Activist Research Project by *Precarias a la Deriva*

*Precarias a la Deriva* is a heterogenous collective of women that saw in the activity of research a possibility to empower themselves and develop networks of solidarity in order to take action in the current context of labor restructuring in Spain. They wanted to understand the re-articulation of class among women in a post-fordist economy taking into account the differences among them in terms of sexual orientation, socio-economic position, national origin and immigration status. Their goal is to understand how neo-liberal policies are affecting everyday life and to develop forms of organizing adapted to the new labor changes. Their analysis focuses on the site of production and also on the sites of reproduction inspired by work on feminist and neo-marxist political economy. They explicitly claim that their research practices are also greatly inspired by the tradition of action-research, feminist theories of objectivity, post-structuralist notions of difference, as well as the feminist experience of consciousness-raising.

The *Precarias a la Deriva* research project explores the labor and life conditions generated by the new economy among women located in different spheres of the casualized job market in Madrid. This year and a half long research experiment was hosted in a women’s squatted building in a multiethnic and working class neighborhood of downtown Madrid.<sup>1</sup> The *Eskalera Karakola* serves as a referential point of convergence for intermittent as well as more permanent flows of women with different backgrounds living in Madrid. Many encounters are produced thanks to the numerous activities held in

this open and centrally located space. One of those encounters resulted in the heterogeneous and loose network of women who would become the activist research collective of *Precarias a la Deriva*, starting their own research project: *Por los Circuitos de la Precariedad Femenina*. Despite disparities in race, class, family, national origin, educational background, job training, etc. this loose and unbounded group of women shared an affinity for feminism as well as a common everyday experience of drastic labor transformations. The common denominator consisted in going through the increasing precarization of their lives based on the generalization of ‘casual, flexible, intermittent, and contingent labor’ in Spain and in the European Union. This common experience will become the target of study for this research project. *Precarias a la Deriva* began exploring a common phenomenon, which despite the occupational differences, was affecting the labor and existential conditions of a variety of women in a similar fashion. Debates on post-fordism, new economy, neo liberal re-structuring, immaterial labor pointed out relevant changes in labor conditions. Social movements across Europe started to coin those (re)emergent labor conditions as *precariedad*. Precarious labor arose after the transition from lifelong-stable jobs, common in industrial capitalist and welfare state economies, to temporary-insecure-low-paying-affective-creative jobs emerging with the globalization of service and financial economy. Thus what in English is usually referred to as flexible, casualized or contingent labor- without any kind of necessary critical connotation- is being politicized in several European countries as ‘precarious labor’, denouncing its fragile and exploitative character and promoting it as a new identity of struggle.

Within this intellectual and political effervescence, the *Precarias a la Deriva* research project focuses on the labor conditions among women, working at different sites in the urban setting of Madrid. Through a close engagement with their own experiences they will refine the notion of precarity, to articulate a more situated version of it. Their research coalesced around the notion of ‘*precariedad femenina*’ (feminine precarity<sup>2</sup>) as a particular form of flexible labor (gendered but not sexed). *Precariedad femenina* challenges a notion that can be too-production centered, and offers an understanding able to capture the effects of changing labor conditions in the continuum of production-reproduction. One of this project’s conceptual contributions to the notion of *precariedad* consists in breaking the distinction between ‘labor’ and ‘life’ usually maintained by traditional political economy. They analyze how the post-fordist changes in labor are producing post-fordist lives, looking at the new subjectivities generated by or through living as *precarias* (feminine adjective of *precarío*).

### The re-emerging trend of activist research among social movements

*Precarias*’ work is linked to a broader contemporary wave as well as a longer genealogy of research practices developed from and by social movements. Current incipient research initiatives that are emerging from social movement processes, and that at the same time are trying to embody movements politics, are called *activist research* or *militant research*. A diverse set of practices are included under this term, for example: the production of counter-maps, watch dog groups and power structure analysis, combination of so called expert knowledge with *minor* knowledges, projects which use their own experience of social struggle to produce analysis and reflection, etc. (Malo 2000). The rise of activist research projects has been such that the very same movements are trying to identify and distinguish between different kinds of politically engaged research. According to an activist group, *the Action Research Network in Europe*<sup>3</sup>, some of the research practices that claim to be ‘for movements’ have been differentiated according to property regimes and ways of production. They conclude that some of the most interesting experiences of activist research could be identified by their collective authorship and their basis in common property laws (through alternative legal mechanisms such as copy-left, Creative Commons, free distribution).

Current initiatives follow many antecedents of research conducted from social movements. One of the members of *Precarias*, in a prologue to an edited volume entitled *Nociones Comunes* (2004) that collects contemporary initiatives of activist research, identifies four of the main inspirational traditions for this kind of growing practice: 1) participatory action research from Latin America; 2) Feminist

consciousness-raising and epistemology from the US; 3) Co-research from Italy; and 4) Institutional analysis from France. Identifying the conceptual and methodological tools being provided by these traditions, Malo points out how current initiatives are re-appropriating these tools, not simply embracing all of their characteristics but also developing different ones.<sup>4</sup>

### Activist Research & World Anthropologies Network

Among the hectic and action-oriented rhythms of movements, activist groups are recording, archiving, and analyzing their own practices of struggle as well as their own experiences of globalization, how they lived under certain global economic processes, and how they could explore ways of intervention in order to share their findings via publications and videos that circulate among movements and generate innovative vocabularies and ways of relating to the changing circumstances. In a parallel way, among the fashion and market-oriented cycles of academic production, a worldwide network of scholars is organizing in decentralized ways, addressing issues such the current north-south asymmetries in the terrain of knowledge production and distribution, and the necessity to challenge the unquestioned dominance of the metropolis in defining the discipline of anthropology (or any field), engaging the multiplicity of radical and diverse anthropologies developed in the margins been ignored in the disciplinary canon.

What do these two political-intellectual projects have in common? Could each of them respectively acknowledge the other as allies in the struggle for producing counter-hegemonic knowledges? In this section, I will try to point out some of the affinities between Precarias' research project and the World Anthropologies initiative. Despite the a-definitional character of WAN, given its stage of continuous unfolding, and its multiplicity of experiences, it is possible to identify certain traits following some of the pieces some of us consider referential within the WAN tradition. Among them, I posit that at least two WAN traits are shared by the principles and research practices of Precarias' project.<sup>5</sup> I will try to point out how both WAN and *Precarias* activist research shared two unique characteristics: 1) the goal to pursue de-colonial thinking and 2) the commitment to engage in feminist research.

#### 1. De-colonial and plural knowledges

“The world anthropologies project thus aims at pluralizing the prevailing visions of anthropology at a juncture where in which hegemonic, North Atlantic-center discourses about difference prevail”

Gustavo Lins Ribeiro and Arturo Escobar (2006: 8).

The framework of world anthropologies is deeply influenced by the awareness of hierarchical relations in knowledge production marked by the historical construction of canons of expertise, normally established by the powers and authorities that be (such as ex-colonial empires, and state or private driven academic institutions). Critical voices from the *Global South*, have been criticizing the enduring power relationships embedded in current academic production as generating colonialist knowledge (Guha 1983), epistemic violence (Spivak 1998), or inequality of ignorance (Chakrabarty 2000). As part of that sharp critical uprising, the *Modernity/Coloniality and Geopolitics of Knowledge Program* is one of the intellectual trends that is challenging the status quo of the current “geopolitics of knowledge” and imagining cognitive alternatives. The group's goal is to intervene in the discourses of the modern sciences, decolonizing expert knowledge and building spaces for engagement with alternative knowledges.

For the sake of this paper, I will focus on a double fundamental move made by the Modernity/Coloniality Group that have influenced the WAN project: on the one hand, situating the canon as a generalized local history, and thus allowing one to imagine beyond it; and on the other hand, taking the epistemic power of other local histories and knowledges seriously (Mignolo 2000, Dussel 2000, Escobar 2004). This alternative epistemological framework allows for a radical multiplicity of knowledges in a

horizontal relationship, challenging centers and empowering peripheries not only to get into the conversation but to change the terms of the conversations.<sup>6</sup> This call for pluralizing ‘knowledge’ has been taken up by the world anthropologies project in an effort to reinvent yet again the discipline in “a critical anthropology of anthropology, one that de-centers, re-historicizes, and pluralizes what has been taken as “anthropology” (Ribeiro and Escobar 2006).

One of the members of the Modernity/Coloniality research group, Katherine Walsh, once posed to me the following question: is activist research, and PD in particular, a decolonial research project?<sup>7</sup> My argument is that the double effort of de-colonizing and pluralizing knowledge is present in the work by *Precarias a la Deriva*. The explicit attempt to go beyond the canon is shown in the variety of sources used in their project, paying attention to who is speaking. The goal of pluralizing knowledge is performed by the very fact that this heterogeneous group of un-conventional researchers engage in a research project that will contest expert-based diagnosis of a burgeoning economy. They introduce themselves as knowledge producers, situated within the midst of social movements and within the margins of the economy. I will elaborate below how the treatment of sources of enunciation and the explicit self-definition as knowledge producers used by *Precarias la Deriva* are two indicators of their de-colonizing and pluralizing approach to cognitive production.

#### *Treatment of sources of enunciation*

According to Mignolo, another important representative of the M/C paradigm, one of the methodologies to analyze the level of coloniality of an intellectual product consists in to concentrate on who enounces, and from where, as well as what sources of enunciation are used, rather than focus on the enunciated, it is key.<sup>8</sup> *A la Deriva por los circuitos de la precariedad Femenina* is a very dense a book in terms of references. Though the bibliography one might expect at the end never materializes, detailed foot-notes with complete citations are spread throughout the whole work. Actually they are not footnotes or endnotes in the literal sense, since they are located in the margins, parallel to the main text. This location makes the reading more convenient and the notations become more present, simultaneously integrated into the central argument. The references are hybrid, using works coming from different sources of knowledge production. For instance, they refer to work done by other social movements groups (e.g. *Chainworkers*, *Hackitectura*), and contemporary Participatory Action Research initiatives (e.g. *Colectivo IOE*). At the same time, renowned intellectual voices –especially Foucault, Benjamin and Haraway- are brought into the central text several times without mentioning a specific work or year of publication. You do not find the usual deferential treatment of these famous authors which needs to be quoted by codified endnotes as in standard academic work. For the elaboration of specific themes, we can find a great number of academic references from different locations.<sup>9</sup>

The amount of academic references, and even the elaborated discourse exposed in this book, is not surprising in the context of free and massive access to higher education programs in Spain, which seems to also have resulted in a closer connection between social movements and institutional intellectualism (understood broadly). Last, but not least, an important source is the participants’ reflections. Different participant’s voices and web publications are used as sources of concepts rather than as a way to justify a famous author’s theory. It is important to note that in the context of a diverse constituency of participants marked by different factors –occupation, ethnic origin, education, sexual orientation, citizenship status –the question of coloniality is taken to heart, giving extra attention to the positions that have historically (and currently) been excluded from occupying sites of enunciation. For example, the analysis of an undocumented domestic worker from Ecuador about contemporary labor conditions and the politics of the border, gains the same status as the interpretation made by a famous Italian intellectual (Virno). Some members of *Precarias*, in an introduction to an edited volume called *Otras Inapropiables* that compiles different feminist texts, refer to Mignolo to support their desire to challenge



hierarchies based on racial classification in their texts: “La supresión de esa frontera de color en nuestras genealogías políticas e intelectuales ha sido una constante” (2004: 20).<sup>10</sup>

*Explicit enunciative position as knowledge producers*

By putting multiple sources of knowledge from multiple sites of enunciation in conversation, they are making an explicit argument about the politics of knowledge similar to what the Modernity/Coloniality is doing inside the academy: first, by acting as if academic knowledge is one among others; and second, reclaiming the knowledge that emerges from their particular local histories. Their local histories are linked to being *precarias*. According to their self-definition, being a *precaria* could involve positive, negative and ambivalent aspects. Among the positive ones, the first one listed is the accumulation of knowledges: “Somos precarias. Lo que significa decir alguna cosa buena (acumulación de saberes, conocimientos y capacidades a través de unas experiencias laborales y vitales en construcción permanente), muchas malas (vulnerabilidad, inseguridad, pobreza, desproteccion social) y la mayoría ambivalente (movilidad, flexibilidad)” (2004: 17).<sup>11</sup>

This explicit self-description as producers of knowledge is shared with many social movements'. These movements go beyond a politics of denial –saying NO to everything that is going wrong –to enacting a politics of creation –imagining and putting forward alternatives-. Knowledge, thus becomes one of the productive activities of these movements. These autonomous research groups engage directly with the creation, documentation and diffusion of those *saberes, savoirs*, knowledges, coming from social movements.<sup>12</sup> This explicit acknowledgement of social movements as knowledge producers is actually claimed by M/C as well, converging in a relevant argument for engaging social movements as epistemic authorities in multiple fields.

## 2. Engaging feminist research propositions

While *Precarias a la Deriva* is explicitly inspired by feminist theories of science and difference, bringing these principles into their research experimentations, one could say that feminism is not so central for the world anthropologies project. Nonetheless I would like to highlight 3 traits discussed within the WAN experience that could be understood and elaborated upon using PD's open and hybrid feminist approach. Firstly, because of world anthropologies' deep engagement in dismantling the hegemonic power of certain theories in the discipline, challenging the male authority prevalent in Anthropology is a constant concern for WAN. In addition though, there are deeper engagements with current feminist thinking that could aid in mutually developing the communication between WAN's and PD's projects. To begin with, there is an emphasis, shared by several WAN members, on grounded academic and scientific work that is simultaneously passionate and politically engaged (Narotzky in press; Visvanathan in press; Berglund in press) but in and of itself this may not help in escaping or challenging the universalizing notions of science or social justice. In this regard, taking a cue from PD might be insightful. I'm speaking in particular about how PD also emphasizes scientific work that is simultaneously passionate and politically engaged but additionally creatively experiments with the notions of situated knowledge as a way to deal with the radical diversity existing within PD. This grappling with situated knowledge helps set the ground for the second theoretical insight from feminism that I believe is even more shred between WAN and PD: the conceptual and organizational understanding of difference as articulated by radical multicultural feminism since the late 70s, lead by Third World women and women of color. I would argue that since WAN is trying to network different anthropologies, coming from different positionalities, histories, canons, etc, the work by feminism dealing with differences in the process of building a common project is somehow latent in its way of articulating multiple anthropologies. In the following section I will briefly explore these two characteristics, situated knowledge and articulating

comonalities amongst singular experiences, showing how they are elaborated in the Precarias' research project.

*Feminist empiricism: reclaiming a new notion of objectivity*

Scientific research has been normally associated with an ethics of scientific detachment. This 'traditional' understanding of research is thought to further the processes of reification of reality, the establishment of hierarchies according to levels of accuracy, and the development of authoritative representations of people's bodies, voices, worlds. Yet, there are efforts to question and invert those logics, exploring other political possibilities emerging ironically from those same scientific notions. Instead of a politics of subjugation, these notions may help bring about politics of liberation. From the sources that world anthropologies have drawn upon, I briefly address *situated knowledges*.

Donna Haraway has articulated one of the most influential arguments in regards to opening up possibilities for thinking and practicing research in politically engaged ways. In her famous piece on *Situated Knowledges* (1991), Haraway moved critical approaches to science forward by reclaiming an alternative theory of objectivity. Against totalizing, unmarked and universalizing goals of science, radical constructivism has reduced the world to a text. Instead of this "scary" and "disempowering" approach, and its apolitical confinement, Haraway defends feminist empiricism as a more hopeful critical alternative. Feminist empiricism calls for a usable doctrine of objectivity. Haraway in particular introduces the notion of situated knowledges. Through this version of objectivity, the situated and partial location of the viewer allows for a more accurate and in fact better knowledge. "Objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment, and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility. The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision" (1991: 190). This move towards located and embodied objectivities opens possibilities for rethinking research, politics and the world.<sup>13</sup>

Haraway's contribution on *situated knowledges* becomes one of the most powerful foundations for reclaiming research as a site of politics. This notion could be said to reinvigorate a feminist movement that calls for the democratization of science. Precarias a la Deriva's project could be understood as contributing to this democratization of science, with research conducted by 'not-necessarily experts' and within their framework of re-appropriation of research as a form of political action. A wide variety of women —domestic workers, free lance translators, telemarketers, university fellows, sex workers, etc.— come together in order to engage with their own everyday life realities as the basis of the research project. They will record, explain, discuss, and analyze, their experiences in order to make sense and intervene in the current conditions that they are going through. The kind of findings resulting from this research is related to the type of objectivity which Haraway calls for, grounded in situatedness, specificity and embodiment. A *situated knowledges* paradigm which privileges location as the source of knowledge is the basis for the empowerment of this kind of project that "gives primacy to experience as the main epistemological category" (Precarias: 2004: 26).

Precarias' project has been able to engage in a situated approach by providing detailed ethnographic documentation about the materiality of their everyday life. This is how they define the kind of research they are developing in relationship to their own situation or their reality: "Investigación militante es aquel proceso de reapropiación de nuestra capacidad de creación de mundos, que [...] interroga, problematiza y empuja *lo real* a través de una serie de procedimientos concretos" (Nociones Comunes 2004: 92; my italics).<sup>14</sup>

Precarias' research project constitutes a political economy of the feminized sectors of the casualized job market. The theoretical framework though had to be attuned to their conditions, combining neo-Marxist notions of affective labor, feminist debates of reproduction, poststructuralist theories of power

and decolonial epistemologies. This framework allows them to identify common material conditions (e.g. post-fordist labor, precariedad) and simultaneously acknowledge radical differences (e.g. a sex worker and a free lance journalist are both flexible, temporary, part-time, and self-employed workers- however there are huge differences in social status, salary, rights, risks, etc). In order to deal with this tension they build in what I believe could be called 'feminist methodology of articulation'.

*A Feminist methodology of articulation: Building affinities from differences*

Feminist movements have gone through different moments of struggle crystallizing around particular issues. If feminisms from the 70s and 80s were grappling with the recognition of difference within the context of a common and homogenous struggle, today the movement is focusing on "the recognition of commonality within the context of difference" (Anzaldúa 2002: 2). The context of the extreme fragmentation of self-acclaimed differences had to be addressed in the formation of new kinds of feminist communities and common practices. This process, aiming at generating interconnectedness among specificities, has been the goal for radical multicultural feminism (Mohanty 1991, Anzaldúa and Keatin 2002, Haraway 1988). In the same fashion, the project of world anthropologies has engaged in the endeavor of finding common articulations among irreducible different communities and experiences of anthropology. The feminist project proposes a relational understanding of difference going beyond essentialisms imprinted in skin colour, genders, sex, national origin, class, etc. The fact of acknowledging difference does not mean to surrender to a fatalist impossibility for common dialogue and struggle. Bypassing the sentence of incommensurability, the feminist project responded to the crisis of meta-narratives by building webs among situated realities that are able to interact among each other from their particular specificities. The political praxis becomes one of articulation responding not to the call to *unite!* but to the desire and common necessity to *network*.<sup>15</sup>

The goal of articulation of commonalities departing from specific situations is the basis of Precarias research project. What do care givers, sex workers, social workers, free lance —translators, designers, journalists, researchers—, professors, cleaners, students-Telepizza workers have in common? Despite disparities in race, class, family, national origin, educational background, job training, social status, etc., this loose and unbounded group of women started to identify things in common. Acknowledging the tension between the collective and the singular, the projects states: "Nuestras situaciones son tan diversas, tan singulares, que nos resulta muy difícil hallar denominadores comunes de los que partir, o diferencias claras con las que enriquecernos mutuamente" (Precarias 2004: 17).<sup>16</sup>

Precarias' project is about searching for commonalities and at the same time fostering singularities while maintaining the above mentioned tension ever before them. They are thinking of ways to articulate "lo común singular" (the singular in common) (2004: 42). The aim was to cross-fertilize communication among radically different specificities in order to form webs of solidarity and support.

### **Translating decolonial and feminist principles into research methods**

Thinking about how these principles could be embedded in research methodologies, we have seen how some of the decolonial and feminist propositions are being enacted in the research practices by Precarias a la Deriva. However, it is important to mention that there are other research experiences that have been experimenting with these principles as well. As a debutant in the paradigm of Modernity/Coloniality my knowledge on decolonial research projects is very limited, being barely aware of some initiatives at practicing and theorizing decolonial methodologies (Sandoval 2000, Tuhai-Smigh 1999, Hames-Garcia 2004). It would be fascinating to engage in an archeology of experiences with decolonial methods, compiling its genealogies and current examples, and identifying concrete procedures to be used in our own anthropological practice. While I do not know yet what a *decolonial ethnography* would look like, we

have multiple examples of what feminist ethnographies could be like.<sup>17</sup> In this last section, I would like—in the spirit of WAN’s disruptive relationship with the canon—to engage with a few historical examples of feminist ethnographies that although being from the US have not made it into the discipline’s canon.

*A History of Absences: The hidden wave of US feminism and its ethnographers*

Following Elizabeth Grosz, one should look at history with a purpose, reading the past for a possible future, in a productive way (2000). Since we are looking at a set of ancestors that have been erased from our disciplinary genealogy, I would like to put together this feminist call for engaging the past with the concept of a “sociology of absences” developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos in his analysis of the World Social Forum. According to Sousa Santos, this kind of inquiry explores the modes of production of non-existence in order to show available alternatives and affirming an “ecology of knowledges” (2004: 239). In a similar fashion, by looking at the absences within the canon one realizes the production of non-existent figures, in this case, women conducting experimental and innovative ethnographies.<sup>18</sup> By engaging with these invisibilized ethnographers, Anthropology is pluralized: rather than constituting itself as one, it is presented as a multiplicity of anthropologies.

Though focusing on the US, the volume of *Women Writing Culture* provides a great starting point for this endeavor of exploring the absent genealogies of feminist ethnography. Most of the authors being ‘discovered’ are part of a very interesting historical period in US feminism. Between the first and second waves, there was an explosion of feminist thought and action that is normally ignored by standard histories of US women’s movements. During this ‘gap’ of the teens, twenties, thirties and forties critical ideas of social transformation were spreading in the US, from the labor movement and explosions of political art to new forms of feminism and anti-war underground organizing. It was during the political effervescence of the teens in New York City when Franz Boas was becoming the ‘father of American Anthropology’. However, the canon was missing all the innovative work being conducted by feminist women in his intellectual circle. Elsie C. Parsons for example was one of them and was actively involved with the political momentum through the organizing being done by Greenwich Village activists:

“The teens, particularly the years of World War I, were a time of social ferment and protest in which socialist, feminist, and other radical ideas were common in NYC, especially among the middle-class and upper-class avant-garde in Greenwich Village [ ]. They embedded their critique of gender hierarchy in a critique of the social system. They wanted to break with dichotomized categories of “Man” and “Woman” (Lamphere 1995: 88)

The anthropological work by Elsie C. Parsons focused on women documenting male dominance cross-culturally. Parsons thinks of feminism as *a gift* brought for both men and women offering the “possibility of breaking through rigid social categories” (Lamphere 1995: 91). Parsons worked within the dominant theoretical and methodological terms of her time—evolutionism and functionalism—, however she introduced women and patriarchy as a subject of inquiry. In addition, she played an important institutional and financial role in founding the New School and supporting women researchers, a role normally obscured due to Boas’ overpowering fame.

Boas admitted that “all my best students are women” (Babcock 2005: 109) and among them Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead are normally the most renowned. In this volume though, both are treated as independent scholars that contributed with key elements to the discipline, anticipating current debates. Without delving too deeply into her intellectual contributions, Benedict brought into light the interpretative and non-authoritative character of Anthropology as well as the notion of multiple knowledges outlying the “epistemology of the oppressed” (Babcock 2005). Mead explored the possibilities of performance and public anthropology as well as the dialogical techniques for a multi-vocal anthropology (Lutkehaus 1995).

The circle of women anthropologists studying with and working for Boas during this hidden feminist wave had more surprises in store. Ella Deloria and Mourning Dove were two Native-American women conducting fieldwork in their own reservations and thus embodying and anticipating the figure of the native anthropologist. Some of the most insightful and wonderfully written pieces are *Waterly* and *Co-ge-we-a, the Half-Blood* respectively, in which they explore the fictional character of ethnography, questioning its underlying notion of scientific truth. Engaging fully in the politics of knowledge production and appropriation, they use academic expertise and writing norms in order to subvert its universalizing and distancing gaze. They appeal to the power of performance to evoke the partial and embedded nature of all accounts. They melded cultural knowledge with lived experience creating “new ways of knowing” from their positions in “borderlands”. However, instead of acknowledging the distinct epistemes from which these women were speaking from and putting forward, both of them were valued more as informants than as scholars (Finn 2005: 133-143). Both Deloria and Dove embodied the tension between fitting in and resisting the discipline’s requirements.

This tension was shared by the African-American Zora N. Hurston’s experimenting with different positionalities in conscious and innovative ways. Her writing skills are celebrated as a novelist and maybe as a folklorist, without recognizing that current debates on the politics of writing were very much being addressed and embodied by this cutting-edge figure that was introducing self-reflexivity, literary strategies and her racial position into the ethnography (Hernandez 2005). Finally, the wonderful ethnographic work by the Jewish-American Ruth Landes has been completely erased. However, she was doing pioneer work on gender, race, class and sexuality. Not only thematically was she advancing innovative scholarly work, but also in her writing she was consciously experimenting with self-positionality well before all the disciplinary debates on reflexivity. She inscribed herself as a Jew and woman in her ethnographies -such as in *The City of Women*. In addition, she embedded her critical ideas in the moment of fieldwork, for example practicing her non-othering principles through her inter-racial relations in Brazil and rejecting the upper-middle class’ life style (Cole 2005).

This is just a gesture to call attention to the existence of feminist anthropological work since the foundational moments of ethnography. A further archeology of anthropology is still to be done, one that would rescue the feminist work that has been conducted from the amnesia of the discipline, one that would go beyond the history of the US and would engage feminist expressions developed in other world anthropologies.<sup>19</sup>

### A Method in Motion: Precarious Drifts/ Derivas Precarias

What would ‘WAN ethnographies’ look like, feel like? The world anthropologies project is exploring concrete methodological techniques that could embody some of its decolonial and feminist principles. In this section I present the principal research method used by Precarias as a possible inspiration for the WAN ethnographic repertoire. What I would like to name as ‘drifting a la femme’ captures the different WAN traits outlined above in a methodology founded in de-colonial and pluralizing principles, inspired in feminist empiricism, and conceived as a communication and coordinating mechanism among fragmented life experiences. I hope that the following description will be persuasive of my claim.

Advocating for a feminist understanding of situated and realist science while maintaining politically engaged, their research commits to following the trajectories of their everyday realities and develop intimate descriptions of processes in order to foster articulations. This understanding of research was deployed through their main methodological contribution —*la deriva*— the drift. This procedure was inspired in Situationism and Feminism as the best way to match to their specific circumstances. In order to reflect upon the uniqueness of this methodological tool, a little bit of description of the origin and development of the project is needed.

Based on the first part of their book *Precarias a la Deriva por los circuitos de la precariedad femenina*, one is able to follow a kind of ‘research log’ that situates the phases of the project. The “first babbles” of this work (as they put it) started in the context of a general strike taking place in Spain on June 20, 2002. In the space of the Eskalera Karakola, several women started to share their unease with the general call by the big labor unions to stop all production chains for 24 hours. They wanted to be part of a generalized and explicit discontent against labor conditions, but the traditional tactic of the strike assumed an ideal-type of worker that was far away from the figure of the *precaria*. Striking in the context of a per-hour contract, domestic work or self-employed job would not have any of the expected effects. Nobody would even realize it. With this frustration as their point of departure, they started to brainstorm new ways of political intervention adapted to their circumstances.

The discussion ended up with a proposal: the *piquete-encuesta*, which could be translated as the ‘picket-survey’. During the day of the national strike, several small groups of women armed with cameras, recorders, notebooks and pens were dispersed throughout the city of Madrid. They aimed to hold conversations in the marginal centers of the economy where the strike made little sense: the invisible, non-regulated, un-documented, house-based sectors of the market. The main theme of the survey centered around the question *cual es tu huelga?* (what is your strike?). The survey by and of *precarias* stopped the productive and reproductive chain for some time and more importantly, for the long run, gave a temporary opportunity to talk among and listen to an invisible population. The exchange resulting from that day was inspiring: they opened a potential space for non-mediated encounters between unconnected women, among singular existences that at the same time, were sharing the common constraint of *precariedad* (2004: 21-22).

Based on the excitement of the results of this initial engagement, a plan for reconnecting and exploring the diversity of experiences of *precariedad* in a more systematic way started to take shape. Next, they needed research methodologies that would fit their circumstances. Looking for a procedure that would be able to capture their mobile, open-ended and contingent everyday lives, they found the inspiration in the Situationists. The situationist technique of “drifting” consists in linking different sites through random urban itineraries, developing subjective cartographies of the city. This technique seemed a pertinent option to be able to interweave settings that *precarias* inhabit but are not necessarily perceived as connected (settings such as streets, home, office, transport, supermarket, bars, union locals, etc.). *La deriva* presented itself as a perfect technique attentive to the spatial-temporal continuum that they were experiencing as *precarias*. Yet they were not completely satisfied with the situationist version, and thus developed a feminist version of drifting, a kind of ‘*deriva a la femme*’. Situationist researchers wander aimlessly in the city, allowing for random encounters, conversations, interaction, micro-events to be the guide of their urban itineraries. The result was a psycho-geography based on haphazard coincidences. This version though is seen as appropriate for a bourgeois male individual without commitments, and not satisfactory for a *precaria*. Instead of a random and exotic itinerary, the *precarias* version of drifting consists of a situated, directed and intentional trajectory through everyday life settings (2004: 26). This version is attached to principles such as the preeminence of everyday life activities. The personal, as source of knowledge and basis for the political, transforms the research endeavor from detached to embedded and situated observation.

*Precarias a la Deriva* appropriate the technique of drifting as their main research methodology. In place of the static interview, they engage with this urban expedition, which could be thought as a collective interview in motion or a mobile, itinerant, networked, cartographic kinds of ethnography, intentionally linking places inhabited in the everyday. Several *derivas* were conducted following different trajectories in multiple feminized precarious sectors such as: domestic jobs, telemarketing, translation, social nursing, sex work, art industries and communications. The *derivas* were envisioned as registers of the invisible interconnections among disperse everyday life realities. Drifting was able to capture the singularity of each trajectory, and at the same time identify shared traits among different ones. This

procedure was able to improve communication among a very fragmented population that shared the condition of *precariedad femenina*, despite the big disparity in their backgrounds and economic occupations. Communication thus was one of the main pluses of drifting. Communication was conceived not only as a tool for diffusion, but as a networking asset. This networking becomes even more important given a set of territories that make communication difficult, allowing contact and alliances to form among housekeepers, undocumented immigrants, temporary translators, sex workers, free lance researchers, fast food employees, temporary teachers, etc. The deriva permitted the discovery of a certain sense of commonality among the singularities. In that sense, communicative actions become the raw material for building political visions and actions (2004: 25). The authorship remains both collective and singular, since the research project is conducted and signed by PD but there are sections during the drift that have remained personal in the transcription to the book. The politics of authorship are conscious of how their research is being produced by a non-expert constituency but still they are explicit at claiming their place in the circumscribed realm of enunciation.

The technique of drift used by Precarias a la Deriva is not supposed to complete the challenging goal of constituting a decolonial and feminist research practice. It is an unfinished but evocative initiative that could enlarge our imagination in the search of research methodologies attuned to our principles.

### Brief concluding remarks

If the project of World Anthropologies is developing a framework that goes beyond the canon of Anglo-Saxon anthropology and French-inspired theory, engaging other anthropological traditions; if this framework is said to be open to anthropological knowledge situated beyond academic geographies, then I would like to propose that some of the current research experimentation conducted by certain social movements could become possible interlocutors of WAN, and might be able to inspire potential WAN methodologies.

Imagining ethnographic practices that could capture WAN's theoretical, epistemological and political standpoints has been one of the passionate and recurrent themes in our seminar of World Anthropologies at UNC-CH during the Spring of 2005. With this introductory presentation of Precarias research methodology I hope to contribute to that collective process of enlarging the possibilities of a promising and necessary world anthropologies framework for the discipline, building non-colonial and feminist research practices.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> “For six years, la Karakola has served as a convergence site and point of departure for feminist thought and political action both in the neighborhood and in the far-flung feminist networks in which we participate” (author's translation) In [www.sindominio.net/karakola/precarias/htm](http://www.sindominio.net/karakola/precarias/htm). The squatted center has been threatened with eviction since Fall 2004 by the municipality of Madrid. As a response to a call for solidarity, the Social Movement Working Group at UNC-CH (among many others) sent a letter to Madrid's Department of Urbanism in order to put pressure on the city government.

<sup>2</sup> The translation of this term is very tricky: ‘feminine casualization’, ‘contingent women’, ‘flexible girls’ don't capture it. In order to be consistent to the original meaning then, I would like the reader to get acquainted to the Spanish terms. For activist references on precariousness in Europe see [www.precarity.info](http://www.precarity.info) or [www.euromayday.org](http://www.euromayday.org)

<sup>3</sup> Information presented during the first workshop on Militant Research held at the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Social Forum in January 2005 in Porto Alegre, Brasil. The presenter was part of *The Action Research Network in Europe* which is conducting “a project that aims to recover and systematize information and knowledge generated by the most recent cycle of social movements in Europe and the European Social Forum processes” according to the flyer that was passed around during the workshop. This

Catalonian activist emphasized that among the multiple activities that movements were developing; activist research was very prominent, given “the growing emergence of the intersection of research and political action”.

<sup>4</sup> See Prologue to *Nociones Comunes* by Marta Malo (2004). Ed. Traficantes de Sueno. Madrid. English translation available under request.

<sup>5</sup> I originally envisioned expanding on three traits that I had identified held in common between WAN and Precarias. However, for the sake of this paper I will focus on the first two. I would like though to at least mention the third one: autonomy/neo-anarchism. On the one hand, I see WAN as an autonomous project, in the sense of engaging with neo-anarchist principles of being and struggle in and against institutional and power dynamics (Graeber 2004). On the other hand, I have analyzed els where the logic of political autonomy in Precarias. Their methodology consists of appropriating research mechanisms associated with authoritative and totalizing representation –such as ethnographic devices- to use them in a different way, to empower social movements to speak for themselves, this is what I referred to as “autonomous ethnographies”. See Maribel Casas-Cortes (2005) *From the Seminar to the Squat*. However, the recent firing of David Graeber by Yale University, has motivated me to retake this theme. How could a world anthropologies network respond to these kinds of attacks on subversive/subaltern anthropologies like anarchist anthropology? How can WAN be a sustainable project in the game of internal critic and at the same time inhabit the internal institutional geographies?

<sup>6</sup> For a longer description of this group see Arturo Escobar (2002). WAN follows Modernity/Coloniality’s slogan of “other worlds and knowledges otherwise” calling itself as ‘other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise’ (Restrepo and Escobar 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication with Katherine Walsh December 2005

<sup>8</sup> Electronic communication with Walter Mignolo January 20, 2005

<sup>9</sup> I selected a few from the footnotes in the margins, just to give a sense of the variety of sources: P.Virno, L. Boltanski, H. Beneker and E. Wichtman on mobility; A. Macklin on immigrant domestic workers; S. Bordo on body; C. Marazzi on contemporary nature of labor; M. Sax, R. Osborne, C. Pateman, N. Fraser, E. Larrauri, C. Garaizabal on prostitution and feminism; B. Marugán, C. Vega, S. del Rio, A.P. Orozco, S. Sassen, C. Gregorio, B. Agrela, C. Catarino, L. Oso, M. Aguirre, C. Clavijo, on feminism, globalization and women; S. Giner, S. Sarasa, J. Adelantado, J. Donzelot on changes in the family structure; G. Abril, V. Sampedro, G. Imbert, J. M. Barbero, S. Hall on communication.

<sup>10</sup> La Eskalera Karakola edited a volume on Black, mestiza and post-colonial feminism recently. See their Prologue in *Otras Inapropiables: Feminismos desde las Fronteras* (2004) Editorial Traficantes de Suenos, Madrid.

<sup>11</sup> “We are precarias. This means some good things (such as accumulation of knowledges, expertise and skills through our work and existential experiences under going permanent construction), a lot of bad things (such as vulnerability, insecurity, poverty, social instability), and the majority, ambivalent things (mobility, flexibility).” (2004: 17, my translation).

<sup>12</sup> The concern about distributing social movements’ knowledge is answered by strategies such as use of the Internet and alternative publishing houses. The publishing house for this project–*Traficantes de Sueno* and its collection *Útiles* (“Tools”) -is said to be dedicated to recompile social movements’ knowledges as tools of struggle. The diffusion of these knowledges is facilitated due to non copyright policies, and a license that promotes copying and non-commercial distribution with attribution. This alternative political economy publication often occurs under a regime of “Creative Commons” or ‘copyleft’. See [creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)

<sup>13</sup> I’ve started to analyze the epistemological, political and ontological transformations that this framework could involve. See Maribel Casas Cortes (2005) *From the Seminar to the Squat*.

<sup>14</sup> “Militant research is that process of reappropriation of our own capacity of world-making, which [...] questions, problematizes and pushes *the real* through a series of concrete procedures”



<sup>15</sup> In order to rethink new models of organizing in the context of an increasing awareness of the presence of immigrant and minorities populations, they reflect on what they learn from these feminisms: "Nos invitan a identificar las especificidades de las opresiones particulares, a comprender su interconexión con otras opresiones y construir modelos de articulación política que transformen las posiciones de partida en un dialogo continuo que no renuncie a las diferencias, ni jerarquice o fije a priori posiciones unitarias y excluyentes de victimas y opresores." (Escalera Karakola ed. 2004: 17)

<sup>16</sup> "Our situations are so diverse, so singular, that it is difficult to find common denominators from which to depart, as well as clear differences with which we could mutually enrich each other"

<sup>17</sup> The question of *can there be a feminist ethnography* has been posed since the late 80s generating a rich debate about its possibilities and diverse developments (Stacey 1988, Abu-Lughod 1988, Visweswaran 1988, Gordon 1988, Wheatley 1994, Behar and Gordon 1995, Visweswaran 1997).

<sup>18</sup> For a good discussion of the construction of the canon and the mechanisms of exclusion based on gender see Catherine Lutz's piece "The Gender of Theory" (1995).

<sup>19</sup> The task of pluralizing the canon undertaken by feminist scholars is shared by the project of the World Anthropologies Network. A joint effort between WAN and Feminist Anthropology would produce a fascinating portrait of the necessary plurality within this field rescuing the work done by women or feminist ethnographers not only in the US but in Mexico, Russia, Japan, the Arab world, etc.

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# DE-COLONIZING KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE: A DIALOGIC ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE LATIN AMERICAN MODERNITY/ COLONIALITY/DECOLONIALITY RESEARCH PROGRAM AND ACTOR NETWORK THEORY

Elena Yehia

## Introduction

This paper takes various analyses of modernity as a point of departure in order to explore what could be called decolonizing ethnographies of social movements' decolonizing practices. To this end, the paper seeks to establish a conversation between two novel frameworks for the critical analysis of modernity: actor-network theory (ANT), and the Latin American Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality perspective (MCD). While the first one is well known to anthropology, the latter is still largely unknown in the North American academy, despite the fact that its contributions, as I hope to show, offer a very constructive and useful set of insights for anthropology. My contentions are, first, that both ANT and MCD contribute in specific ways to de-colonial thinking and practice; second, that despite differences and tensions between the two frameworks they are largely complementary and have much to offer each other; and third, that the set of inquiries broached by these frameworks, when mutually reconfigured as ANT/MCD, offer a set of enabling, concrete, and perhaps unique contributions to thinking about modernity, ethnography, and the relation between academic knowledge and political practice. The paper is also written in the context of the growing field of the anthropology of social movements, although this will remain largely in the background and will not be discussed as such in the paper.

My own up-close encounter with both ANT and MCD took place somewhat simultaneously upon beginning my graduate studies in Anthropology at UNC-CH. I found the two frameworks to be making important contributions to the project of decolonizing knowledges and practices within the social sciences and providing hopeful terms of engagement with social movements. While I found both to be of considerable relevance for my research interests, I came across hardly any work that draws upon both frameworks and that makes use of the insights that each provides. Upon further reflection, it became evident to me the extent to which each framework has to offer the other as well as how effectively each of MCD and ANT, reveals, as I will argue, the blind spots inherent within the other framework. In short, I contend that putting them in dialogue is an effort which offers great potential. This entails exploring the complementarities and tensions, the practical and concrete implications for theory and ethnography, as well as the remaining challenges for both, considered separately and together.<sup>1</sup>

Part I of the paper provides a very cursory discussion of the anthropology of modernity; no more than this short presentation can be done within the scope of this paper that also includes a contextualization of my project within the world anthropologies project, or WAN. Part II looks first at actor-network theory, highlighting what I call ethnography of ontological encounters; if modernity exists among 'other ontologies', as some ANT authors would argue, it makes sense to carry this insight into the ethnography of this multiplicity. I then go on to present some of the main aspects of the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality research program, this time highlighting the different understandings of modernity offered by this framework and the articulations of a project of decoloniality that, in these authors' claim, goes beyond the lingering eurocentrism in all critical analyses of modernity that continue to see modernity as an intra-European phenomenon. In Part III, I set the two frameworks into dialogue,

including a discussion of the implications for ethnography and for decolonizing the academy. I finally state what I believe are remaining problems within both frameworks from the perspective of a decolonial project, and suggest ways in which these problems can be addressed by relocating both frameworks within modernity and by shifting some of the frameworks' epistemological and political implications, especially in terms of refusing to decode subaltern knowledges as a provisional phase that would allow for concretely changing the terms of the conversation between those of us engaging with the ANT/MCD frameworks and subaltern groups or movements.

### I. A brief note on the anthropology of modernity

The analysis of modernity has been a legitimate, and increasingly salient, project within anthropology since at least the late 1980s. Generally speaking, this project has had two broad sides to it; the first one is the examination of modernity itself as a set of practices, symbols, and discourses. Rabinow's statement is well known in this respect:

“We need to anthropologize the West: show how exotic its constitution of reality has been; emphasize those domains most taken for granted as universal (this includes epistemology and economics); make them seem as historically peculiar as possible; show how their claims to truth are linked to social practices and have hence become effective forces in the social world” (Rabinow 1986: 241).

This has been a fruitful research area for anthropology, particularly in terms of ethnographies of many aspects of modernity, from planning to development, from the economy to science, from notions of the individual to those of rationality, from particular technologies to the networks they enable. In recent years, it has been implicated in the rapid rise of science and technology studies. Besides the ethnographic analysis of practices, these works have often engaged with philosophical and sociological discourses of modernity, from Foucault to Habermas, from Castells or Giddens to Latour and, more recently, authors such as Hardt and Negri. It is fair to say, however, that as a whole this trend has remained within what could be called, in the language of MCD, intra-European analyses of modernity, even if aiming in some cases to making visible what lies “beyond modernity” (Dussel 2002).

More directly applicable to my interest is the second set of anthropological inquiries; these could be called, following Appadurai (1996), ethnographies of “modernity at large” (see Kahn 2001; Escobar 2003 for reviews of this trend). These have been geared towards examining how modernity is necessarily localized, interrogated and contested by different actors world wide. The overall question could be said to be: what is the status of modernity in times of globalization? What emerges from these investigations is a view of modernity as plural –what some authors call “alternative modernities.” In other words, this anthropology of modernity has focused on both modernity abroad and on people's engagement with it. This approach has been important in grounding the understanding of modernity in ethnographic cases. As Kahn (2001) put it in a review of a set of these works, taken as a whole they have pluralized and relativized the accepted understanding of modernity as a dominant and homogenous process. Most discuss alternative modernities (with hybrid, multiple, local, etc. as other qualifiers) as emerging in the dynamic encounter between dominant (usually Western) and non-dominant (e.g. local, non-Western, regional) practices, knowledges or rationalities (e.g., Gupta 1998; Arce and Long 2000). There is no unified conception in these works, however, on what exactly constitutes modernity. Kahn is right in saying that stating that modernity is plural, and then showing ethnographically the ways in which it is localized, has limitations in terms of theory. As Ribeiro well says in his commentary to Kahn, “modernity is subject to indigenization, but this does not amount to saying that it is a native category” (2001: 669). In the last instance, the limits of pluralizing modernity lie in the fact that it ends up reducing all social practice to being a manifestation of a European experience, no matter how qualified. Englund and Leach (2000) make a related argument in their critique of the ethnographic accounts of multiple modernities; they argue that these works re-introduce a (intra-European) metanarrative of modernity in

the analysis. The result tends to be a relativism and pluralization of modernity that reflects the ethnographer's own assumptions. As I will try to show, it is possible to escape the either/or approach to the question of whether modernity is singular or plural. This is the kind of trap that MCD and ANT work to avoid. While I refer to modernity in the singular in the course of this paper, I conceptualize of modernity as *more than one and less than many*. Modernity as multiple in this sense need not signify several fragmented, relativized modernities, nor does it have to reinscribe the same dominant modernist metanarrative. It could rather denote a set of embodied situated knowledges and practices that are grounded in a common logic, that of coloniality.

Appealing to the MCD framework, and building on these trends, Escobar (2003) raises the question of whether it is still possible to think about alternatives *to* modernity. I find it useful to borrow Escobar's analytic concepts of development, alternative development and alternatives to development, and his extension to modernity. In his view, today's social movements in Latin America must hold in tension three co-existing projects: alternative development, focused on the satisfaction of needs and the well-being of the population; alternative modernities, building on the counter-tendencies effected on development interventions by local groups; and alternatives to modernity, as a more radical and visionary project of redefining and reconstructing local and regional worlds from the perspective of practices of cultural, economic, and ecological difference. In the context of this paper, I use the notions of modernity, alternative modernity and alternatives to modernity as an analytic tool to clarify where do ANT and MCD fit in relation to other critical projects. Accordingly, whereas critical intellectual projects such as Cultural Studies, World-Systems analysis or post-colonial studies might be conceived as advocating alternative modernities, ANT and MCD might be situated within the domain of projects working towards alternatives to modernity —although of course the divide between the different projects is by no means neat and clear.

This paper will address how these processes manifest themselves in the context of the academy, and what implications this has in terms of how one can engage these processes. In other words, is it possible to produce decolonizing ethnographies of social movements' decolonizing practices? In this respect, my project has also been influenced by, and resonates with, the World Anthropologies Network (WAN) project.<sup>2</sup> Building on anthropological critiques of dominant anthropologies as nodes of expert knowledge production that exclude —or at least make invisible— other ways of doing anthropology world wide, WAN is envisioned as an effort towards creating conditions of possibility for pluralizing anthropology and, more generally, for *de-colonizing expertise* (see, e.g., Ribeiro and Escobar, eds. 2006; see also [www.ram-wan.org](http://www.ram-wan.org)). The end result is a transformation of the conditions of conversability among anthropologies of the world; paraphrasing one of the slogans of MCD (“worlds and knowledges otherwise”), this aim has been stated as “other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise” (Restrepo and Escobar 2005).

Anthropology is in an advantageous position in relating to these developments. On the one hand, the critique of the discipline's earlier association with colonialism, the subsequent self-reflexivity, the long history of engagement with modernity's 'Others', the ethnographic focus on practices of difference, as well as some of the recent transformations within the discipline (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Fabian 1983, Marcus and Fischer 1986) —all of these point to the significance and insights which ethnography and anthropology have to offer to these projects. On the other hand, the frameworks I am considering also offer much in terms of challenges as well as insights from which the discipline of anthropology can benefit significantly.

## II. Two critical frameworks on modernity: Initiating a conversation

### a) Actor-Network Theory: *More than one and less than many*

In *We have never been Modern* (1993), Latour argues against the prevailing nature-culture divide, a divide which he sees as foundational to Modernity. As he defines the concept, 'Modern' indicates “not a period,

but a form of the passage of time; a way of interpreting a set of situations by attempting to extract from them the distinction between facts and values, states of the world and representations, rationality and irrationality [...]” (2004: 244). He points out that while the distinction was installed within the realm of the scientific method, in practice moderns have never maintained such an unambiguous distinction. Instead, what has taken place is a proliferation of hybrids between nature and culture, so that non-modern practices have never been displaced.

The divide between the subject and the object is another central characteristic of modernity which by means of “*purification* creates two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of human beings on the one hand; and that of nonhumans on the other” (Latour 1993:10). Actor-network theory allows for the possibility of overcoming this divide by reformulating the status of both objects and subjects, which are decentered and recast as actors (Law, 2002). In effect, ANT allows us to engage with the phenomena we are researching not as being an object in the sense of being relegated to the domain of the natural (something out there to be examined) but rather in terms of actor-networks constituted by both humans and non-humans. Moreover, as researchers, we are constitutive of, rather than detached from, the actor-networks with which we engage, as modernity stipulates.

Contesting modernist tenets, ANT redefines the notion of ‘the social’. In this regard, Latour introduces a useful distinction between the ‘sociology of the social’ and the ‘sociology of associations’. The first functions in accordance with the assumption that there is a specific social context, that is, a certain domain of reality; this approach has become common sense (2005:4). The second approach questions precisely that which the first takes for granted; ‘reality’ instead of being ‘out there’ is the set of phenomena or associations that have become stabilized. In this way, Latour redefines sociology not as the ‘science of the social’, but as the *tracing of associations*; in this sense ‘social’ becomes not a quality of things but rather a “type of connection between things that are not themselves social” (2005: 5).

Latour tries to make social connections traceable by rendering the “social world as flat as possible in order to ensure that the establishment of any new link is clearly visible” (2005:16). As Latour argues, context bestows upon the social a three-dimensional shape; subsequently; he makes a case in favor of an alternative *flat* topography in which context is not considered in the process of re-tracing associations (2005:171). This is because “actors themselves make everything, including their own frames, their own theories, their own contexts, their own metaphysics, even their own ontologies” (2005:147). Thus, a flattened topography would allow following the actors themselves. This process, as Latour explains, involves trying “to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish” (2005: 12). A central process through which associations get established is translation which Latour defines as “a relation that does not transport causality but induces two mediators into coexisting” (2005: 108).

“[A]ctors are always engaged in the business of mapping the ‘social context’ in which they are placed [...] This is why it is so important not to define in advance what sort of social aggregates could provide the context for all these maps. Group delineation is not only one of the occupations of social scientist, but also the very constant task of the actors themselves. Actors do the sociology for the sociologists and sociologists learn from the actors what makes up their set of associations.” (Latour 2005: 32).

In his essay *Traduction/Trabesion: Notes on ANT*, John Law presents the ethnographic account by Madeleine Akrich of a process of technology transfer; how a briquette making machine makes it from Sweden to Nicaragua. Law examines how the process of transfer involves translation. He then proceeds to apply this to ANT. He points to the similarities as well as the differences between ANT of the 1980s in Paris and ANT of the 1990s in Melbourne, San Diego, Lancaster, etc.. Law then asserts that instead of a unified set of principles, when discussing ANT we are dealing with an array of diverse



practices. “What happened to the briquette making machine is also what happened to actor-network [theory]. It has passed from one place to another. From one network to another. And it has changed, become diverse”. Madeleine Akrich’s use and translation of ANT to examine the changes the briquette went through, “has also transformed [ANT], changed it. She has put it into a different place, a different set of networks, where it does other kinds of work” (Law 1997).

In *The Body Multiple*, Anne-Marie Mol looks at how a particular disease, atherosclerosis, is *being done* through different practices. In this regard she advocates a shift from an epistemological to a praxiographic inquiry into reality. For her “the practicalities of doing disease are part of the story, it is a story about practices. A praxiography.” She is concerned with how objects are *enacted* in practice (Mol 2002: 32). Her conclusion, and stronger claim, is that ‘different enactments of a disease entail different ontologies.’<sup>3</sup> They each do the body differently’ (Mol 2002: 176). “If atherosclerosis is a thick vessel wall here (under the microscope), it is pain when walking there (in the consulting room), and an important cause of death in the Dutch population yet a little further along (in the computers of the department of epidemiology).”

By foregrounding practices, performances and enactments, something happens: Reality multiplies. Amidst this ontological multiplicity and the consequent “permanent possibility of alternative configurations” (Mol 2002: 164), Mol is specifically concerned with exploring *modes of coexisting*.

“When investigators start to discover a variety of orders- modes of ordering, logics, frames, styles, repertoires, discourses [...] this raises theoretical and practical questions. In particular, the discovery of multiplicity suggests that we are no longer living in the modern world, located within a single episteme. Instead, we discover that we are living in different worlds. These are not worlds —that great trope of modernity— that belong on the one hand to the past and on the other to the present. Instead, we discover that we are living in two or more neighbouring worlds, worlds that overlap and coexist. Multiplicity is thus about coexistences at a single moment” (Law and Mol 2002: 8).

#### *The ethnography of ontological encounters*

ANT creates the conditions of possibility of performing ethnography as non-modern practice. Thereby, I want to underline the inherently performative character of ANT. Taking a seminar on Critical Performance Ethnography simultaneously while taking a Following Actor-Networks seminar last semester allowed me to explore more fully the interconnections between the two. Markussen defines Performativity as “a theory of how things —identities and other discursive effects— come into being”. She explains that “all research is performative in the sense that it helps enact the real. However, performativity is not only a theory, but also a deconstructive practice” (Markussen 2005: 329). Performativity thus entails both a theory and a method. It is a theory about emergence as well as an emergent methodology which entails destabilizing established certainties. In this sense, performance ethnography, I would argue, resonates with ANT’s project of recapturing the ‘surprise of seeing the social unravel’ (Latour 2005).

Subsequently, in her discussion of performativity as emergent methodology, Markussen points out to the *ontological encounters* that practicing performance ethnography entails; these are “encounters in which the terms of the real are allowed to shift” (2005: 341). This implies the recognition that research and reality co-produce each other. Moreover, practicing performativity, the author asserts, “requires an openness within the research process to the possibility that researchers and their practices themselves must alter” (2005: 329).

In *Critical Ethnography* (2005), Soyini Madison further reconfigures ethnography as a performance of possibility. This allows for research practices which open up a diversity of ontological possibilities. Madison writes: “In a performance of possibilities, the possible suggests a movement culminating in creation and change. It is the active, creative work that weaves the list of the mind with being mindful of

life, of merging the text with the world, of critically traversing the margin and the center, and of opening more and different paths of enlivening relations and spaces” (Madison 2005: 172).

This co-performative approach to methodology embodies many aspects of Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia as advocated in *The Dialogic Imagination*, in the manner in which it incorporates a multiplicity of voices, genres and languages, as well as its dialogic aspect. It is through this dialogical encounter that, I want to argue, the different actors are more fully present. For as Bakhtin writes, “I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness... Separation, dissociation, enclosure within the self is a main reason for the loss of one’s self” (1984:287).

The different texts and the manner in which they are juxtaposed, may be seen as representing particular “points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words” as Bakhtin maintains. “As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people [...] As such, these languages live a real life; they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia. Therefore they are all able to enter into the unitary plane of the novel” (Bakhtin 1981:292), or, as is the case here, the ethnography.

In addition, this dialogical ethnographic practice allows for an escape out of the trappings of ‘the ethnographic present’ that have so weighed down ethnography. Madison (2005) writes:

“The Other inscribed as a static, unchanging, and enduring imprint in the ethnographic present is dislodged by a dialogic, critical ethnography. Dialogue moves from ethnographic present to ethnographic presence [...] This conversation with the Other, brought forth through dialogue, reveals itself as a lively, changing being through time and no longer an artifact captured in the ethnographer’s monologue, immobile and forever stagnant” (2005: 10).

However, following this account of ANT one might be left with several questions: how does ANT account for differences among actors? How does ANT address questions of power and violence, history and hegemony? As I conceive of it, ANT deals with these questions performatively. By flattening the landscape, by emphasizing the need to relinquish any assumptions one might carry about the phenomena we are engaging with; by not taking any group or network as predetermined but rather looking at groups as in continuous process of formation; always re-tracing the actor-network’s outlines and constitutive elements. In this mode of engagement, I find that ANT is addressing such questions of power, domination, and difference through the flat topography approach. To put it differently, ANT’s performance entails a process through which modernist logic, categories and power/knowledge hierarchies are suspended. They are deprived of the authority bestowed upon them by modernity. Thereby, ANT addresses the question of power precisely by negating its function.

In this manner, ANT is tackling the repercussions of modernity and in so doing; this framework strives to unstitch the landscape constituted by modernity. Although a powerful tool for doing so, ANT still falls short. By not addressing how these categories came into being and not accounting for the processes with which the dominant knowledge hierarchies were established, ANT is at a disadvantage. For how can we adequately examine, trace and understand the actor-networks we are engaging with, without accounting for the processes by means of which other knowledges have been systematically subalternized for centuries. Without understanding the historical processes through which actors and knowledges are subalternized, it might be difficult to even perceive them as actors. This is precisely what MCD can contribute; the understanding of coloniality and how it operates as a constitutive element of modernity. To sum, while ANT addresses power structures by rendering them obsolete through practice, MCD is looking at how these very power structures came into being.

### b) *The modernity/coloniality/decoloniality research program*

According to the MCD program, Modernity is a project rather than a particular historic moment. This project starts in the sixteenth century. As Escobar explains,

“The conquest and colonization of America is the formative moment in the creation of Europe’s Other; the point of origin of the capitalist world system, enabled by gold and silver from America; the origin of Europe’s own concept of modernity (and of the first, Iberian, modernity, later eclipsed with the apogee of the second modernity); the initiation point of Occidentalism as the overarching imaginary and self-definition of the modern/colonial world system (which subalternized peripheral knowledge and created, in the eighteenth century, Orientalism as Other [...]) Finally, with the Conquest and colonization, Latin America and the Caribbean emerged as ‘the first periphery’ of European Modernity” (Escobar 2003: 60).

This is the moment of the crystallization of binaries such as subject/object, self/other, nature/culture into a system of hierarchical classification of people and nature. This hierarchization, effected through domination, is the other constitutive underside of modernity, namely coloniality.<sup>4</sup> As Mignolo asserts, ‘there is no modernity without coloniality’ which accounts for the coinage of the modernity/coloniality concept. Modernity presents a rhetoric of salvation, while hiding coloniality, which is the logic of oppression and exploitation; although historically, modernity has been markedly successful in hiding this darker side. However, just as coloniality is constitutive of modernity, so is decoloniality. Decoloniality refers to the processes through which the subaltern resist the rules and racialized hierarchies within which they are confined, defying the logic of coloniality which casts them as inferior or not quite human. De-colonial thinking is distinct from other critical projects; as Mignolo points out, ‘decolonial thinking is an-other critical theory’, an attitude that takes root at the colonies and ex-colonies in accordance with ‘an-other epistemology’ (Mignolo In press 2006). Escobar characterizes it as “think[ing] theory through/from the political praxis of subaltern groups” (2003: 38). In contrast to the ‘hegemonic modern epistemology... put in place from the perspective of a white male body, located in Christian Europe and the US’ (p. 10), the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality research program, as Mignolo writes, is concerned with ‘the de-colonization of knowledge and of being which means, the de-colonization of the economy and of authority’ (p. 10). It is an intellectual framework concerned with examining the *rhetoric of modernity/ logic of coloniality* (p. 3). And it is being conceived of, as Mignolo argues, from the perspective of the subaltern, or the *damnés*<sup>5</sup> as referred to by Mignolo, ‘turning and returning the gaze’ (2006: 7). In sum, MCD is a framework from the Latin American periphery of the modern colonial world system; in that sense “Latin America itself becomes a perspective that can be practiced from many spaces, if it is done from counter-hegemonic perspectives that challenge the very assumption of Latin America as fully constituted object of study, previous to, and outside of, the often imperialistic discourses that construct it” (Escobar 2003: 44).

In a way, ANT espouses both at the idea that modernity/coloniality is a set of processes/practices, a verb rather than a noun. That being the case, ANT contributes to complicating modernity/coloniality/decoloniality, challenging its theorized singularity and re-framing it within the terrain of a flat ontology. Pointing out to the centrality of performativity in addressing questions of complexity, Law and Mol write, “The argument is that knowing, the words of knowing, and the texts do not describe a preexisting world, they are rather part of a practice of handling, intervening in, the world and thereby of enacting one of its versions —up to bringing it into being” (2002: 19).

Modernity/coloniality/decoloniality might then be different things in different places at different times requiring to be approached not in the singular but as a set of situated, embodied practices that produce entities in an originally flattened topography. For as long as we maintain an understanding of de-coloniality in terms of singularity, we remain locked in the logic of coloniality and western epistemology.

“Here is the point: walking, as Michel de Certeau has noted, is a mode of covering space that gives no overview, it immerses the walker in a landscape or a townscape. As we walk, we may encounter a variety of comforting-or stunning- sights and situations, and then we can bring these together instead or leave them separate, as they would be on a map, removed from one another. We may juxtapose them in a way we sometimes do after a journey, by telling stories or showing pictures. The picture of a large landscape is printed so that it has the same size as that of a plate filled with food, and the story about driving through the landscape is no bigger or smaller than the story about eating the meal. Other differences abound [...] There are, then, modes of ...aligning elements without necessarily turning them into a comprehensive system or a complete overview. These are some of the ways of describing the world while keeping it open...to list rather than classify; to tell about cases rather than present illustrative representatives; to walk and tell stories about this rather than seek to make maps.” (Law and Mol 2002: 16-17).

This perspective might be enacted in the context of a flat topography, as argued by Latour. So it seems that having a good pair of shoes might be an important factor in engaging with a good epistemological practice.

While ANT (as theory as well as method) is an exceptionally suitable tool for mapping other worlds/ multiple ontologies, MCD framework offers critical insights which lead to an even more profound understanding and account of the ethnographic encounter. This enriched view would be based on the understanding that the concept of coloniality brings of how the processes of subalternization of other worlds/knowledges have been undertaken for the past five centuries, and the expansion of ANT's conceptualization of modernity to encompass coloniality as well as decoloniality as two constitutive elements of modernity. This results in an ANT account much more apt in attending to questions of power and more responsive to tracing actors that might have otherwise been overlooked not because they are not part of the network but because they have been subjected to processes that render them invisible.

### III. MCD and ANT through the eyes of MCD / ANT: Challenges and Opportunities

In the previous part of the paper, I outlined some basic themes through which the conversation between ANT and MCD can be made manifest. I also argued that the two frameworks have much to offer each other as well proposing significant contributions for ethnographic practices. In the next section, I will turn the gaze of decoloniality towards the two frameworks themselves and sketch some of the implications, challenges and possibilities which emerge from the above discussion for our own practices and modes of engagement with subaltern knowledges and worlds.

I start by examining the situatedness of the two frameworks within the academy; looking at the implications of this positionality on the geo-politics of the knowledges that ANT and MCD produce. I try to answer the question of how to escape repeating practices through which other knowledges are subalternized. After looking at the loci of enunciation of these knowledges and who their interlocutors are, I infer that there is a need to recognize both frameworks as modernist inscribed, i.e. operating within the framework of modernity. This move would allow for engaging more directly in the process of decolonizing the academy which has historically been one of the key sites where modernist knowledge has been envisioned and constituted. Next, I look at what does changing the terms of the conversation, a central theme advocated by MCD, entail concretely in terms of our research practices and modes of engagement with subaltern knowledges. I consider what the practice of listening to silences and refusing to decode might offer. In the final section, I will present some reasons why we need to move beyond decolonial thinking and what poetry has to contribute in this regard.

“A place on the map is also a place in history” (Adrienne Rich)

As situatedness and embodiment are central themes that emerge from the preceding conversation, I will now look at ANT and MCD specifically in these terms. I will be addressing the following questions: Who are the ANT and MCD advocates? Where they are speaking from? What actor-networks are they part of? Who are they speaking to? What are they trying to achieve?

The sites from which knowledges are produced are central to our understanding of those knowledges, hence the concept of the geopolitics of knowledge (Mignolo 2003). Accordingly, the first step towards situating ANT and MCD is to look at their loci of enunciation. Both frameworks are predominantly produced within the institutional sites of the western academy. Therefore, the university and its role in the production of the modernity/coloniality project needs to be addressed.

Mignolo (2003) examines the history of the university culminating with the emergence of the corporate university in the post World War II period, which displaced the preceding Kantian-Humboldtian university. Since the Renaissance, the history of the European university has been inscribed within the macro-narrative of Western Civilization. Mignolo describes the relationship of ‘epistemic dependency’ that accompanies economic dependency; this entails the ‘cultural, intellectual, scientific in the larger sense of the word and technological, as well as related to the natural and social sciences, and [the epistemic dependency] manifests itself at the level of the disciplines.’(2003: 110).

The site of production of theory is thus the initial factor to be considered when following the ANT and MCD theories. Referring to Rich’s conceptualization of *Location*, Clifford (1989) writes

“‘Location,’ here, is not a matter of finding a stable ‘home’ or of discovering a common experience. Rather it is a matter of being aware of the difference that makes a difference in concrete situations, of recognizing the various inscriptions, ‘places,’ or ‘histories’ that both empower and inhibit the construction of theoretical categories like ‘woman,’ ‘patriarchy,’ or “colonization,” categories essential to political action as well as to serious comparative knowledge. “Location” is thus, concretely, a series of locations and encounters, travel within diverse, but limited spaces. Location, for Adrienne Rich, is a dynamic awareness of discrepant attachments-as a woman, a white middle-class writer, a lesbian, a Jew” (1989:179).

According to the MCD program, decolonial thinking is not just an analytic concept but is rather an effort imbued with political implications, it is a project that entails an-other thinking, changing the terms and not only the content of the conversation (Mignolo In press 2006). I find it useful to differentiate between two distinct and significant connotations that changing the *terms* of the conversation entails. One the one hand, *terms* refers to the terminology and language used, particularly contesting the use of logocentric language, the second use of *terms* demands changing the very conditions, i.e. power dynamics and structures within which the conversation is taking place. So I am speaking of changing the terms and the *terms* of the conversation. In this regard, Fanon is arguing for changing the content and the terms (terminology and form) as well as for changing the conditions of the conversation altogether. Fanon calls for a ‘liberating transformation of the everyday’ (Gordon 42). A process which involves forcefully rejecting the dominating Western values, a rejection that emerges from the embodied situated experience of the colonized. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1966) writes:

“The violence with which the supremacy of white values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and of thought of the native mean that, in revenge, the native laughs in mockery when Western values are mentioned in front of him. In the colonial context the settler only ends his work of

breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man's values. In the period of decolonization, the colonized masses mock at these values, insult them, and vomit them up" (1966: 43).

In the process of situating MCD and ANT, we need to recognize the extent to which the subjectivities of those of us who ascribe to those frameworks and projects are framed by the *rhetoric of modernity/ logic of coloniality*; to identify how/where/to what extent have our own subjectivities been molded by modernist epistemologies, and subsequently engage in an effort of internal decolonization. This entails an ongoing practice of self-interrogation which undermines the naturalization of modernist epistemologies by the participants of the both ANT and MCD projects. As Fanon points out, "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (Fanon 1967:17-18).

This thorough interrogation would signify a situated move towards redefining the current coloniality of power. It might be argued that only after such a process is undertaken it might become possible to re-engage in a conversation with the modernist paradigm in accordance with different and more equitable conditions —thus changing the terms of the conversation. Otherwise, the danger might be that although discursively and analytically, the MCD program is advocating alternatives to modernity, by not radically interrogating our own subjectivities, we are leaving room for modernist categories to re-emerge through the back door and become manifest whether in the manner in which de-coloniality gets cast as just an other object of study or by means of processes through which an alternative hierarchization of subaltern knowledges becomes enacted in the process of decolonial theorizing. As Foucault puts it:

"The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are, is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (1984: 50)

A central theme which emerges from the above discussion is how to escape repeating practices through which other knowledges are subalternized. Here, it is worth pointing out to the danger of reassigning the theory/practice or knowledge/experience binary between the modern and the non-modern. If the MCD program is to assume the role of translator/ interpreter of de-colonial knowledges elsewhere, then there is risk of reproducing knowledge hierarchies. In this regard, there is need to caution against the MCD group assuming a position in which we may be perceived as granting recognition to other knowledges and thus validating their existence, while in the process reproducing new power/ knowledge structures in accordance with which we, as participants in the group, still enjoy the power and are in position of authority to name such knowledges. This argument is clearly captured in *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*, where Lewis makes a strong case against getting locked in what he calls the *dialectics of recognition* (Lewis 1995)

To ensure that our modes of engagement do not re-enact the very *epistemic violence* (Spivak 1988) that we are working to undermine, it might be necessary to acknowledge *the difference that makes a difference* (Clifford 1989); to unmask the power structures that still characterize our engagement with other knowledges/epistemologies while working actively towards transforming those structures and thereby the terms of the conversation. Otherwise, we run the risk of practicing what Bourdieu (1990) terms 'strategies of condescension', strategies by means of which:

"[...] agents occupying a higher position in one of the hierarchies of objective space symbolically deny the social distance which does not thereby cease to exist, thus ensuring they gain the profits of recognition accorded to a purely symbolic negation of distance. In short, one can use the objective distances so as to have advantages of proximity and the

advantages of distance, that is, the distance and the recognition of distance that is ensured by the symbolic negation of distance” (1990: 127-8).

Thus, there is urgent need to recognize the power and privileges present in the loci of enunciation of the MCD and ANT frameworks; the need for incessant self-reflexivity by those of us engaging with *other knowledges*; to be constantly on guard against being involved in the reproduction of new hierarchies; to avoid falling into the draw of representing, explaining or speaking on behalf of the subaltern.

### ***Relocating MCD within the space of modernity***

After examining ANT and MCD’s locus of enunciation, the next step would involve interrogating who their interlocutors are; who are these two theoretical frameworks speaking to? It is my observation that most of the texts I came across from each of ANT and MCD perspectives are geared primarily towards a western/modern academic audience. And although MCD is clearly inspired by subaltern contributions towards the project of decolonial thinking, however, most of these encounters still take place within the medium of western epistemologies. The work of Ali Shariati (1980), may be taken as an example. Shariati’s writings were among the most influential in theorizing for the Iranian Revolution. Yet Shariati’s analysis, while presenting a critique of Western hegemony from the perspective of Islam, is framed predominantly in reference to the dominant Western epistemology; largely lacking the positivity of his own location. So while changing the content, he is still using the language of modernity.

Mignolo points out that MCD program “looks at modernity from the perspective of coloniality” (In press 2006: 19). He argues that in contrast to world-systems analysis embedded within European genealogies of thought, MCD (as exemplified by Dussel and Quijano) is working towards the ‘continuation of an-other genealogy of thought’ (20), one that is emerging from the *colonial wound* of the subaltern and that sees its pillars to be intellectuals such as Jose Carlos Matiategui, Frantz Fanon and Fausto Reynaga (In press 2006). While I am not questioning the extent to which MCD program is articulated with decolonial projects initiated by subaltern groups and struggles, however instead of foregrounding associations and upholding genealogies with and within ‘subaltern epistemologies’, perhaps we need to consider the possibility of relocating this project into the realm of modernity as a strategy to work more deeply in and against it. To unveil mechanisms through which the myth of modernity attains its claims to universality. One of the central contributions that the MCD program offers is its unmasking of the process through which coloniality functions to discredit and disqualify knowledges that do not correspond to modernist logic. With this in mind, one can question the usefulness of advocating of MCD program as ‘an-other epistemology’ when this move would only be a factor that serves, according to the logic of coloniality, to disqualify the validity of our analysis. Whereas, if this *epistemic break* is recognized as taking place within the discursive sphere of the modernist project, then this move could be of greater potency and consequence for the project of decolonizing knowledge and being. Especially when, as I argue, the MCD program is (discursively) still a modernist inscribed project.

This break could be seen as reverberating in Latour’s *We have never been modern*; Latour’s use of terminology for his title is noteworthy. He situates his voice within modernity; it is modernity seeing itself as a myth. Dussel’s notion of *exteriority* (2002) points in the same direction; it ‘refers to an outside that is precisely constituted as difference by a hegemonic discourse’ (Escobar 2003:39). Yet in terms of framing, the adoption of the concept of an outside assumes that the gaze is still modern-based. Escobar’s *Worlds and Knowledges otherwise*, is also a performance of this rupture. His essay is not addressing, as I see it, those inhabiting other worlds, but instead it is signaling an epistemic break from within the Modernity/coloniality project towards enacting alternatives to modernity. These illustrations by members affiliated with each of ANT and MCD reveal a practice of dislodging; an enactment of a rupture from within modernity’s project as it made to realize its fallacy.

ANT and MCD frameworks are also in an advantageous position to contribute to the process of decolonizing the academy, the place within which both frameworks are predominantly situated, and the site of production of hegemonic modern epistemology. Both projects are located at a great juncture which allows them to unmask the mechanisms through which the rhetoric of modernity/logic of coloniality manifests itself and through which other knowledges are systematically subalternized. Santos identifies this epistemological move as *sociology of absences* through which he calls for theorizing processes through which hegemonic epistemology and rationality produce non-existences (2004:238). This effort is already considered by ANT and MCD participants; as Escobar points out, ‘the group seeks to make a decisive intervention into the very discursivity of the modern sciences in order to craft another space for the production of knowledge—an other way of thinking, un *paradigma otro*’ (2003:32).

While it has been a central concern among those of us who identify with either or both frameworks (and are members of the Social Movements Working Group, UNC-CH) to acknowledge social movements and subaltern groups with whom we engage as knowledge producers, the arguments presented in this paper give us a reason to pause and reflect upon. As Hage (2000) cautions: “In much the same way...as the tolerance/intolerance divide mystifies the more important divide between holding the power to tolerate and not holding it, the distinction between valuing negatively/ valuing positively mystifies the deeper division between holding the power to value (negatively or positively) and not holding it” (2000: 121).

Therefore, unless the very conditions of the conversation change towards a more egalitarian mode that takes this unequal power into account, our efforts to make other knowledges visible then do not challenge the very power we maintain to make them invisible. While keeping in mind that he was operating within a modernist concern with valuing (that is a man-centered order), Heidegger’s argument on the discourse of value may be of relevance in this context as well:

“It is important finally to realize that precisely through the characterization of something as ‘a value’ what is so valued is robbed of its worth. That is to say, by the assessment of something as a value what is valued is admitted only as an object of man’s estimation [...] Every valuing, even when it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let things: be. Rather, valuing lets things: be valid—solely as the objects of its doing” (1978:226).

### ***Listening to silences***

The challenge becomes to re-configure our own frameworks and modes of engagement; so that we can replace *giving voice* (as practiced by committed intellectual traditions, participatory action research...) by *listening* (as inspired by the other kind of politics advocated and enacted by the Zapatistas in The Other Campaign and more generally by the turn of various social movements in Latin America towards non-representational politics). This learning to listen to/through the silences, rather than signaling to an end or closure of dialogue, might contribute to tangibly changing the terms of the conversation; which would create better conditions of possibility for the subaltern to be heard. As Saldana-Portillo (2002) writes, “silence does not eliminate differences. Rather, it makes it possible not only for differences to emerge, but also for a universal identification in difference to take place. Silence is the site on which alterity and universality converge” (Saldana-Portillo 2002:302).

For Spivak the subaltern cannot speak because “the ontology of the Western subject necessitates and creates the other: the silent subaltern” (1988:183). After 500 years of silencing and subalternization by the project of modernity/coloniality of its *Others*, it is worthwhile to explore the value of being quiet when working with subaltern groups towards decolonizing knowledges; a silence that forces us to listen.



One question I raise above pertains to the effects of ANT and MCD's engagement in politics of location with respect to decolonizing the academy. The second question relates to the value of restricting and acknowledging our limitations/constraints as well as allowing for silences. What would the consequences of marking out the 'territory of the unreadable, or the unknowable' be? (Saldana-Portille 2002:299). Is it important for us to learn to be quiet at moments where the inclination might be to make other knowledges visible and other voices heard? By refusing to decode, are we enacting a reconfiguration within the structures of knowledge production which would create conditions of existence of more equitable terms according to which the conversations between MCD / ANT and other subalternized knowledges can take place? Are we to believe *The Ethnographer* (Borges) who discovered that, "the secret is not as important as the paths that led [him] to it. Each person has to walk those paths himself" (1999:335)? If that is to be the case, what would happen to anthropology after the logic of decoding difference, which can be said to have been fundamental to the field since its inception?

First, it is important to clarify that the argument presented above conceives of refusing to decode as a provisional phase which might offer concrete possibilities for changing the terms of the conversation between researchers working through ANT/MCD frameworks and the other worlds and knowledges we are engaging with. In the meantime, what can those of us who are anthropologists do?

One possible answer is given by Latour (2004), who writes, "We need to add to anthropology the competencies of a much older calling, that of *diplomat*" (2004:212). By diplomacy, Latour is referring to a "Skill that makes it possible to get off a war footing by pursuing the experiment of the *collective* concerning the *common world* by modifying its essential requirements: the diplomat succeeds the anthropologist in the encounter with cultures." (2004:240). This revisioned anthropologist or *ecologist diplomat*, and in accordance with the etymology of oikos-logos, *speaks the language of dwellings*; she *articulates the collective* (2004:213).

Echoing the argument made above about the value of interrogating the modernist frameworks within which we are largely inscribed, Latour points out:

"By no longer claiming to speak in the name of nature, by no longer accepting the polite indifference of multiculturalism, the diplomat who follows in the wake of the anthropologist gives herself opportunities to succeed that were not open to her predecessors [...] The virtue of the diplomat [...] is that he imposes on the very ones who sent him this fundamental doubt about their own requirements" (2004: 215-216).

### ***Beyond decolonial thinking: In search of the Simorgh***

In the concluding comments of his essay on the Latin American MCD Research Program, Escobar (2003) warns against critical discourses on identity in Latin America which 'have been complicit with a modernist logic of alterization, and have thus amounted to counter-modernist proposals in the best of cases' (56). In trying to come up with a coherent set of characteristics that delineate decolonial thinking, there is a real danger that we might fall into the trap of 'postulating a foundational alterity and transcendental subject that would constitute a radical alternative in relation to an equally homogenized modern/European/North American Other'. This would re-inscribe difference as a project restricted to theorizing an alternative modernity rather than working towards fostering alternatives to modernity. It would also reinscribe the subject/object dichotomy, by trying to delineate the outline of what de-colonial thinking entails, by suggesting that decoloniality is something identifiable, out there, rather than approaching it as a process in a constant state of emergence.

In this regard, ANT might prove to be a very useful framework which would allow for 'ways of describing the world while keeping it open' (Marston 2006). The needed inoculation that would provide

for enacting a 'logic of the historical production of difference' rather than fall back on 'the counter-modernist logic of alterization' which Castro-Gomez (2002) elaborates. As Escobar writes, "It remains to be seen whether the [MCD] project will fully bypass the modernist logic of alterization... conceived as an epistemic decolonization, this project would certainly seem to go beyond a politics of representation based on identifying an exclusive space of enunciation 'of one's own' that is blind to its own constructedness" (Escobar 2003:57).

However, despite Escobar's warnings and optimism in this regard, I believe that there is an urgent need for both ANT and MCD advocates to consciously engage in an effort to more explicitly explore our situatedness as well as bring into visibility the role we play in the constructedness of the frameworks we are engaging and the knowledges these produce. How, by our own performance and engagement with decolonial thinking, we are taking part in what decolonial knowledge is; in its process of becoming; this requires awareness that de-colonial thinking as such does not pre-exist our own encounter with it/ theorizing of it/ or practicing it. Performativity is central in achieving this condition.

### ***Of opposition. And the need to move beyond these categories***

While those defined as non-modern have to grapple with modernity/coloniality global designs, "their agendas are themselves emergent rather than a reaction to other agencies. That is to say, their life projects are sociocultural in the widest sense [...]" (Blaser 2004:28). In other words, while modernity tries to impose itself, there are other trajectories, other ways of being in the world that mark a rupture, a crack, on modernity's pretensions of universality. These other ways of being signal alternatives to modernity.

Yet by framing our arguments as decolonial thinking and using categories such as 'decolonial', 'non-modern', or 'trans-modern' aren't we also contributing to re-enacting modernity's universalist claims?

In order to escape from recreating another universalist modern imaginary by our own practices, we need to strive towards an enactment of a fracture; to break away from articulating other worlds against, and in relation to, a universalized modernist framework. This would lead to reinscribing the modernity/coloniality project in more transient (even if still dominant) terms while simultaneously foregrounding the contingent character of decolonial thinking; with an emphasis being made on moving beyond (rather than forward or ahead) what is merely 'decolonial'. We need to consolidate the conditions of possibility for the existence of ontologies that function in accordance with alternatives to modernity. ANT is a very useful tool for this purpose as it approaches modernity/coloniality as a phenomenon which needs to be traced and not something that exists somewhere out there.

In his critique of the dominant knowledge and representations of American Indians, Vine Deloria (1969), points out, "To be an Indian in modern American society is in a very real sense to be unreal and ahistorical". Deloria relays the story Alex Chasing Hawk, a council member of the Cheyenne River Sioux for thirty years, when asked at a Congressional hearing 'Just what do you Indians want?' To which Alex replied, "A leave-us-alone law!!" (1969:2). Thus, Deloria is speaking from the position of the unreal real, the embodiment of modernity's impossible. He concludes his chapter on *Indians Today: the Real and the Unreal* by asserting, "We need the public at large to drop the myths in which it has clothed us for so long. We need fewer and fewer "experts" on Indians. What we need is a cultural leave-us-alone agreement, in spirit and in fact" (1969:27)

In a similar vein, Fanon explains that any theorizing of the condition of black people in terms of Self/Other ends in failure because 'Otherness' assumes a degree of symmetry, whereas for black people, the struggle first entailed achieving the status of Otherness, of being regarded as human beings, of existing (Gordon 2005:40). Thus, Black people "are problematic beings, beings locked in what [Fanon] calls 'a zone of nonbeing' [...] [this 'zone'] could be limbo, which would place blacks

below whites but above creatures whose lots are worse; or it could simply mean the point of total absence” (2005 :4). The zone of nonbeing is undergoing a constant process of reconfiguration, just as the process of othering is an ongoing constantly reconstitutive category. This resulting condition of unreciprocity leads to a state of *epistemic closure*, which Gordon describes as “a moment of presumable complete knowledge of a phenomenon. Such presumed knowledge closes off efforts at further inquiry. The result is what we shall call perverse anonymity. Anonymity literally means to be nameless” (Gordon 2005: 26).

**Poetry: naming the nameless so it can be thought**

In order to overcome the limitations and restrictions of social science disciplines, which have historically been an instrument in the colonization of knowledge, Hayden White points out that fields such as anthropology, history, and political studies are inadequate in re-imagining the world otherwise, White (2005) cites domains like literature and poetry as some of the few remaining hopeful areas where this can still be achieved. Similarly, Audre Lorde argues for the centrality of poetry in allowing the conditions of possibility for *naming the nameless so it can be thought*. Her essay “Poetry is Not a Luxury” suggests that poetry is “illumination,” and a way to wed ideas and feeling:

“For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives.”

In 1177, Farid ed-Din el-Attar, a dissident Persian Sufi poet, later murdered by the Mongols, wrote *Manteq at-Tair* (The Conference of the Birds) a poem recounting the story of the journey of a group of birds longing to know the Simorgh, a magnificent mythical being. Just 30 birds finally make it only to realize that the Simorgh is nothing but their own reflection. It is a 4500 line poem, so I will conclude with just a few lines:

There in the Simorgh’s radiant fact they saw  
Themselves, the Simorgh of the world – with awe  
They gazed, and dared at last to comprehend  
They were the Simorgh and the journey’s end  
They see the Simorgh – at themselves they stare  
And see a second Simorgh standing there;  
They look at both and see the two are one,  
That this is that, that this, the goal is won...

I am a mirror set before your eyes,  
And all who come before my splendor see  
Themselves, their own unique reality;  
You came as thirty birds and therefore saw  
These selfsame thirty birds, not less nor more;  
If you had come as forty, forty would appear;...  
And since you came as thirty birds, you see  
These thirty birds when you discover Me,  
The Simorgh, Truth’s last flawless jewel, the light  
In which you will be lost to mortal sight,  
Dispersed to nothingness until once more  
You find in Me the selves you were before...

Come you lost Atoms to your Centre draw,  
 And be the Eternal Mirror that you saw:  
 Rays that have wander'd into Darkness wide  
 Return and back into your Sun subside...(Attar 1984)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> At the outset, I want to put forward a disclaimer. I want to recognize the limits within which my argument is inscribed. I do not claim that this paper examines MCD and ANT per se; rather for the scope of this paper, my analysis will be limited to looking at some of the main concepts and practices espoused by several advocates within each. Moreover, I want to make clear that the ANT and MCD I invoke and mobilize in the course of this paper, and my ethnographic work more generally, is a translation, my own. As Law (1997) points out, by enacting a specific theoretical framework in the course of my project, I am taking part in both translating as well as transforming the frameworks.

<sup>2</sup> This paper is part of a larger ethnographic project which engages with sites of encounter between social movements of the Arab World and Latin America in articulation with, and as an enactment of, WAN objectives as well as being envisioned as a contribution towards fostering South-South dialogue.

<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy to point out that while writing this essay, each time the word 'ontologies' was used it would be automatically underlined with a red line in the Microsoft word document I am using. The 'correct' options provided include: ontologism/ ontology's/ ontology/ anthologies/ ontologisms. Ontology in the plural does not exist as a legitimate term recognized by my software.

<sup>4</sup> Quijano introduced the concept of coloniality (as distinct from colonialism) as operating in four interrelated domains: control of economy (labor, resources, product); control of authority (institutions, violence); control of gender and sexuality (sex, resources products) and control of intersubjectivity (knowledge, communication) (Quijano 2000:573).

<sup>5</sup> In reference to Frantz Fanon's (1966) *Les Damnés de la Terre* (The Wretched of the Earth)

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## **“HOW DO YOU SAY ‘SEARCH ENGINE’ IN YOUR LANGUAGE?”: TRANSLATING INDIGENOUS WORLD VIEW INTO DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHIES”**

David Delgado Shorter

This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> year in which I have worked with the Yoeme (Yaqui) Indians of northwest Mexico. What started as the attempt of naïve graduate student to find a site for MA thesis “fieldwork” has slowly and tenuously become a collaborative relationship, one to which I now bring digital video cinematographers to record rituals for web-based ethnographies. For years, when wanting to show my Yoeme friends the result of my research, I would only be able to say I presented a paper or wrote an article. Once I was able to hand them a completed and bound doctoral dissertation. As they are non-literate community, well, you can imagine that it was like handing them a paperweight or doorstop.

All of this changed last year when I returned to show them that I had completed a website about their culture, language and history. Opening up the laptop screen and navigating through the website, I explained what I thought they needed to know about websites, the internet, and computers. Here they were, living in mud-thatched huts, with little medical care in the village, with running water only an hour or two per day and unable to eat meat due to the cost of this pure protein and I am explaining to them that people all over the world have computers in their home. Since I had designed the website with the help of Yoeme from the other side of the US-Mexico border (imagine the standard of living that comes with having two successful casinos, your own medical facility and community center, etc), I was able to show the tribe in Mexico a website that featured their own language, their own aesthetics and also interpretive essays that focused on videos of their ritual performances. But I had two questions that I needed them to answer: 1) How would they change or add to this website? And 2) Do I have a right to “publish” the website?

In this paper, I want to address these two issues. How do indigenous groups, often living in sub-poverty conditions, want to use the globalizing technologies of the internet? How do they understand their place in the word wide web? Then, how do they make a place for themselves in this virtual world? Can community outsiders, such as me, help them develop self-representations on the web; and if so, how do we understand such representations and their contents (often images, words, or folklore) within the framework of intellectual property rights? I believe the context of my work with the Yoeme does, I feel, highlight the chasm we call the digital divide as well as the multiaxial nodes of articulation within the “property” and “commons” debate. I will first give a brief overview of the website I have collaboratively built with Yoeme individuals; then, I will discuss how the site has been received and the uses Yoeme Indians have for the site. Lastly, I will discuss how this counters simple notions of property as we see those notions develop from international political organizations (UNESCO and the United Nations).

In January 2004, I received a small amount of money from NYU’s Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics. Through Rockefeller and Ford Foundation grants, the Institute sought to help scholars and artists build on-line curations of multi-media materials focused on ritual, religion, politics or indigeneity in the Americas. These websites or “web cuadernos” were specifically asked to present ways that embodied behaviors participate in the transmission of cultural knowledge. (So in it’s original intent, the funds were given to us in order to record and transmit “knowledge,” an important node of inquiry to which I’ll return a bit later). Looking at a decade of field notes and the expectation

that in the upcoming year or so I'd be talking with publishers about a manuscript and its related media, I decided to accept the cuaderno funds based on several factors: I was being offered permanent NYU server space, an established interdisciplinary audience for discussion of my research and the cuadernos were explicitly intended to be open so that I could use mine as an archive, meaning it could hold audio and video clips for Yoeme community members as well as future readers of my future book.

The work building the web cuaderno ended up consuming the next 14 months.<sup>1</sup> Within that time, I also returned to the pueblo and filmed an elaborate deer dancing ritual performed by 14 ceremonial participants. Before and after that trip, the website consumed an incredible amount of time. Just some of the stages included talking with tribal collaborators about which photos could be used, working with web designers to build a Flash site so items could not be removable, working with translators to use Yoeme as the default index language, getting my field work film editor to develop short clips that could be transmitted and played on a variety of computer systems, determining culturally appropriate graphics. The differences between literal ethnographic representations and web-based ethnographies led to fascinating conversations which I hope to next work into a full manuscript (such as linear, progressive, literate logic vs. graphic logic; web surfers including Yoeme internet users vs. academic audience; multimedia vs. still photos; and bibliographic citations vs. permissions for media usage). The result was a web cuaderno that was the first ever to utilize Yoeme as the default language, though also included Spanish and English. The website offers moving pictorial timelines using archival photos; language exercises including audio and video clips of Yoeme oratory; an extensive bibliography of written, archival and video resources; a jukebox of ambient sounds from the pueblo where I work; previously filmed versions of specific dances that are compared to ones I filmed in my own fieldwork; narratives of their history and struggles and a discussion board for community contributions.

As I was starting to choreograph the placement of text and image, I began recognizing an uncomfortable parallel: man goes to tribe, man learns native knowledges, man takes newly acquired knowledge and uses technology to distribute widely. On the ground, some of my collaborators were also being told not to help me with my website. According to certain tribal officials from the Arizona Pascua Yaqui Tribe, not even tribal members had the right to share information with outsiders. According to here say, outsiders, including myself, were expected to seek all information from the Language and Education Director in Tucson.

Intellectual Property debates have often emphasized the disparity between tribal give and corporate take. As Plenderleith and Posey describe in *Indigenous Knowledge and Ethics*, the Urueu-Wau-Wau of Brazil have from time immemorial used tiki uba as an anti-coagulant (Plenderleith and Posey 2004). Since that knowledge is in the public domain, Merck Corporation patented this plant's use for heart surgery. Merck stands to make billions, legally. Since only a select numbers of countries have the technology to develop and/or exploit, we see not solely an issue of indigenous poverty, but indigenous communities within a larger rubric of neoliberal flow to the west: information, raw materials, resources, capital. Indeed, as George Martin and Saskia Vermeylen show, "a central tenet of neo-liberalism is that ideas, particularly those in a social context, can be individualized" (Martin and Vermeylen 2005). Individual property rights in fact drive the market. Moreover, in ways resounding with Darrel Posey's analysis, I was starting to see how intellectual property requires a specific act of invention, is subject to powerful national and corporate interests, threatens territorial and resource rights of indigenous peoples (Posey 2002) and as I found in my particular project, simplifies concepts of ownership.

As I noted, tribal officials in Tucson were getting word of my building a website and began notifying some of my collaborators that they were not to share tribal information with outsiders. In fact, the officials pointed out, the appointed directors of culture and language would be working on their own website which would be the main portal for community members to interact with the tribal administration. Such a website, they continued, would be accessible only with a password issued to tribally enrolled members. While I understood the uses for the tribal administration to build a website,



what I did not understand was how they expected to control the sharing of information, not only between their members and outsiders, but among members of other pueblos. The Pascua Yaqui Nation in Arizona has no jurisdiction or formal relationship to the Yoeme/Yaqui community where I work in Mexico. And while many Arizonan Yaquis understand themselves as living in a U.S. pueblo, they also frequently discuss their heritage in terms of lineage to one of the eight historic pueblos in Mexico. Since I have collaborators on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, I was in a unique position to discern different responses to “official” claims of ownership.

Because Intellectual Property rights can be obtained by legal entities, these “rights” must be registered by inventors and/or authors.<sup>2</sup> When working with folkloric or traditional materials, tribal communities can identify an elder or other member of the community as the “recorder” but then register the IP right in the name of the community (Brascoupe and Endemann 1999). The community members most likely to have the economic motivation and legal wherewithal for such foresight will be the elected officials or wealthier members who could further factionalize their communities. My collaborators who live both in Mexico and Arizona had the expected response: “Who are they to tell me who I can work with?” When I expressed concern that the official’s threats might be backed up with legal action if I represent tribal knowledge in the website, my collaborators laughed at the idea, saying that these politicians are simply trying to maintain control of what gets to count as “traditional” not because of their concerns for their culture, rather their desire to control culture. On the other side of the border, my collaborators had one simple response: “You refer those people to us. We decide for ourselves who we want to work with.” My main collaborators took it one step further asking for my cell phone so he could directly call the tribe in Tucson and give them a piece of his mind. He shook his head side-to-side at the thought of a tribal politician telling others that they could not talk with whom they wanted about what they wanted. Clearly, Intellectual Property seems to be the way to stop outsiders from coming and stealing knowledge; but in the case of my fieldwork and website, it also seemed to be the way for some insiders to keep it for themselves, out of the control of other insiders.

In order to determine for myself how I could best proceed with the building of the website, I determined that all film work would have to be done explicitly for inclusion on the internet. In other words, I had to change my “human subjects” forms that I read to my collaborators to include website production. Second, I decided that the website would need to be in-process, dependent upon Yoeme responses to what I had completed. In May 2005, I returned to the pueblo in hopes of sharing what I had completed and soliciting their opinions of how the cuaderno might need to be changed. Potam Pueblo, and Barrio Santemea where I particularly work, is mostly made up of mud-thatched carrizo houses. Every morning, water flows through an extensive underground series of garden hoses to provide water for an hour or two. Electricity in the homes is provided by a similar series of low-grade wires running from light pole to light pole. One in five families has TV; one in ten has a VCR; one in 1000 might have a DVD player. The community has three schools; none of them are “wired” to the internet. Compare this context to the one of the tribal council in Tucson which maintains two of the more successful casinos in the state of Arizona.

As Guillermo Delgado points out in his essay, “Solidarity in Cyberspace: Indigenous Peoples Online,” technology in Indian country tends to more often than not create a divided population: “In many cases, indigenous peoples’ ability to acquire new computer technologies has largely depended on personal ties and ability to network with core NGOs, universities and researchers. This has led to a “politics of exclusion” (Delgado 2002). The Yoeme case highlights this division because the tribal officials in Arizona have indeed constructed a tribal website which links everything from language lessons to employment opportunities at one of their two casinos. The council is composed of Yoeme women and men who have access to lawyers and daily access to computers and the internet. They drive cars to work and are familiar with “outsider” conflicts across the southwestern U.S. The Yoeme with whom I work in Mexico bring home a week’s pay of the equivalent of 25.00 US dollars; not a single Yoeme member of their pueblo has their own vehicle. The people with whom I work, it is interesting to note, do not see

their culture as being “at risk” of dying out or being stolen. They frequently refer to their own ritual sermons which state that Yoeme rituals are for the health of everyone in the world, not just Yoeme individuals.

In order to show my *cuaderno*, I took each of the performers a collection of still photos from the dance I filmed in 2004. Each performer also received VHS tapes of the raw video footage from that ceremony. Each performer also received a DVD copy of the website, in the chance that they might be able to access a computer either at one of the schools or in a nearby Mexican governmental building (health or pension services for example). To my main collaborator, I gave a laptop which was only functional at providing the website. I showed him the website on the first night of my visit. He made me read the Yoeme version aloud to the family surrounding us. I then showed him and his daughters how to “surf” the site and I left them for a few days with their laptop (literally the first “personal computer” in the village). Upon my return later in the week, I arrived to their house to see a group of elders gathered around the fire. Many of these faces were new to me, but they invited me to sit down as they began to talk about how much they enjoyed the website. They then handed me copies of maps, a folder of every letter ever written to the United Nations and another folder of all correspondences between the Mexican government and the tribe. They wanted me to add all of this to the website. Then they asked me to take the website on a tour of sorts, traveling over the next three weeks to other pueblos, schools, at one point even arranging a premier night with a feast for me and all the performers from the deer dance which has media prominence on the website. During that question and answer period, I was asked to return in January to film another ceremony so that “they could get it right on film for the kids to see in the future.” I passed out copies of the website, I collected some thoughts on how to improve the *cuaderno*. And during the next week of interviews, my main collaborator ended all of his audio recordings with his name, his address, and a request for anyone who has a problem with him sharing this information to come speak with him directly.

Since I came to this website project with a desire to better understand how knowledge circulates and is shared in a Yoeme “commons,” it was only appropriate to spell it out on the website itself. “Knowledge” in Yoeme is “lutu’uria.” By definition, “lutu’uria” is defined as “truth evidenced by social action and community performance.” Dancers literally say, “lutu’uriata yi’ine” or “I will go dance my truth.” With such a social understanding of knowledge, the Yoeme context seems particularly appropriate for questioning the “individual” component of intellectual property. And in describing the local politics surrounding who did or did not want information shared with me, the Yoeme context hopefully provides a specific example of where property rights assume a unified or locally agreed upon notion of “owner” or “artist.” So when asked if I agree with the protection of indigenous peoples’ heritage, I say “yes, of course.” But we must be careful of what we propose. Because after the United Nations responds by claiming that “[...] each indigenous community must retain permanent control over all elements of its own heritage [...]” and each indigenous community “always reserves a perpetual right to determine how shared knowledge is used” (Daes 1997: 4), then I have to ask “who gets to decide?” The elected officials? The indigenous people already able to access power and money? Not only must we, as laborers in the globalizing market of technologies (whether they be writing, printing, computing, or pharmaceuticals) be conscience of how our work affects economically disadvantaged communities; but we must also remain diligent that our (UN) laws to protect such communities do not further factionalize the haves from the have-nots. Colonization continues not simply under the rubric of war, but when we engender local changes in government and sovereignty under the pretense of “protection.”

## Notes

1 <http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/cuaderno/yoeme/content.html>

2 In Mexico, IP regulations are dependent upon three separate laws: Mexican Copyright Act (1984, 1991); Industrial Property Act (1991, 1993, 1994); and NAFTA (1994). None of the three laws set forth

enforcement policies or penalties that judges must follow. Additionally, none of the acts specifically set out protection of indigenous “heritage.”

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## CHANGING THE DEFAULT: TAKING ABORIGINAL SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY SERIOUSLY<sup>1</sup>

Kimberly Christen

On November 20, 2003 the Australian Attorney General Phillip Ruddock, addressed conference goers at the “Copyright Law and Practice Symposium” in Sydney. He began by acknowledging, “the traditional owners of the land we meet on—the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.” He then went on to list the importance of copyright to aiding global trade, decreasing music piracy and to protecting creators. In particular, he argued that, “Copyright law can also play a vital role in fostering and protecting our indigenous and cultural heritage.” To that end he announced the government’s commitment to a “communal moral rights bill” aimed at protecting “the integrity and sanctity of indigenous culture” (Ruddock 2003). Although it has yet to be ratified, the proposed bill situates Australia’s Aboriginal population at the crossroads of a growing global debate concerning intellectual and cultural property rights, the usefulness of expanded copyright laws as a means to protect culture and the role of nation-states in defining indigenous property claims.

In what follows, I examine how recent indigenous digital projects challenge both expanded copyright laws as a means to “protect” indigenous culture and the very notion of “communal” rights as the primary state apparatus for doing so. To work through this complex terrain, I draw on my digital collaborations with Warumungu people in the Northern Territory of Central Australia and their conceptual overlap with recent national copyright legislation and intellectual property rights (IPR) movements. What emerges is both a workable methodology for adapting to and adopting local sets of intellectual property systems through processes of digital translation and co-production and a challenge to the contemporary intellectual property rights climate in Australia and globally.

### Copyright Claims

In 1993 three Aboriginal artists filed a copyright infringement suit against Indofurn Pty Ltd for the unauthorized reproduction of their artwork on a series of carpets (Janke 1995). Although there were copyright infringement cases filed by Aboriginal people prior to 1993, and, in fact, scholars and Aboriginal activists had been arguing for the use of intellectual property rights as one means of redressing the appropriation of indigenous knowledge throughout the 1980s, the “carpets case,” as it is called, brought indigenous copyright claims into the national spotlight (Anderson 2003). This case was about more than challenging property relations or redefining indigenous knowledge within intellectual property rights talk —although both of these were concomitant developments— this was about asserting and reclaiming a place in a nation that has worked overtime to keep Aboriginal people at the nation’s margins.

The “carpets case” emerged at the height of a legislative and political moment in Australia’s history that made it ripe for a reevaluation of intellectual property laws. In 1992, the Federal court acknowledged that native title had existed prior to the British invasion in 1778 and that in *some* cases native title *may* still exist (Reynolds 1996). With the reevaluation of territorial rights through Native Title claims, Aboriginal people also asserted a link between tangible and intangible property via cosmological connections uniting “country” (Aboriginal territories) and traditional knowledge. That is, ownership in

land is inherently linked to ownership of knowledge. Thus, newly imagined territorial rights provide a partial vocabulary for intellectual property rights.

Earlier land rights legislation limited to the Northern Territory invented the term “traditional owners” to classify Aboriginal claimant groups and sort out the multiple types of connections people have with land (Maddock 1983).<sup>2</sup> In Native Title cases, indigenous communities must first prove a “continuous connection” with their territorial homelands in order to secure title and thus attain a status similar to that of “traditional owner” (Povinelli 2002, Merlan 1998).<sup>3</sup> What is significant in both of these pieces of legislation is that complex local systems for defining relationships to land have been standardized around fairly static notions of tradition, ownership and distinct community groups. Tradition is assumed to be rituals, songs, myths, etc. *from the past*; ownership is perceived to be the organizing principle of socio-territorial relations; and communities are deemed to be naturally bounded and homogenous.

Although the Aboriginal claimants won the “carpets case” with the court finding that copyright existed in the works, the continued unauthorized circulation of paintings, carpets and tea towels bearing Aboriginal designs points to a long history of the simultaneous silencing and acknowledgement of Aboriginal people through the (mis) use of their cultural knowledge/materials. With an eye towards rectifying the on-going refusal to acknowledge Aboriginal intellectual property rights, on 19 May 2003 the Australian federal government committed itself to amending its original 1968 *Copyright Act* for the second time in as many years. In a joint statement by the Attorney General and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, indigenous communities were promised “new protection for creative works” (McDonald 2003, 1). In December 2003, the first version of *the Copyright Amendment (Indigenous Communal Moral Rights) Bill 2003* was sent to reviewers for comments. The ICMR amendment proposes to use copyright legislation to protect the “traditional culture and wisdom” of Indigenous communities (McDonald 2003, 2).

The *Indigenous Communal Moral Rights* bill proposes a communal frame to rectify the single-author focus of the original 2000 amendments and a moral rights commitment to address the specific needs of indigenous cultural knowledge (McDonald 2003). The ICMR bill lists five formal requirements for a claim to be filed: 1) there must be a “work,” 2) the work must draw on traditions and customs of the community, 3) an agreement must already have been entered into between the community and the creator of the work, 4) there must be acknowledgement of the indigenous community’s association with the work, and 5) “interested parties” in the work must have consented to the rights arising. In each case, the onus is still (as it has been without legislation) on indigenous artists and/or communities (ambiguously defined) to get agreements up front and to define their work in either familiar author-centric terms or vague traditional/communal ones (Anderson 2004).

Working from assumptions about indigeneity that make communal property rights the antithesis of individual ownership, the bill misses the nuance and complexity of indigenous property and distribution systems.<sup>4</sup> Community (or the idea of a traditional group) stands in for a network of related groups and just how to sort them out is not addressed. As the legislation awaits further analysis, the legislative emphasis seems to be on making indigenous systems fit into national legal imaginaries (which are predicated on international standards). What also needs to be addressed are the practical matters of negotiating overlapping property regimes within indigenous communities and leveraging digital technologies to privilege indigenous systems in cross-cultural exchanges.<sup>5</sup>

### “Chuck a Copyright on it”

Over the last decade, Warumungu people collaborated with a number of organizations, researchers and government agencies to open the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Cultural Centre in Tennant Creek. Most of my fieldwork coincided with this project, and I became very familiar with the types of alliances and negotiations that surrounded this articulation of Warumungu culture.<sup>6</sup> As Warumungu people met with

national museum staff to repatriate objects taken by Australian explorers, and as former missionaries came forward with thousands of photos for return to the community, the talk at the Centre turned to protection, preservation and the possibilities of enlisting digital technologies in both these projects. The confluence of these events gave Warumungu people a new language for articulating their own system of cultural rights management.

During this time I worked with rotating groups of Warumungu people and contractors aiding in the collection of content for two different websites, a set of visual displays for the community center and a DVD (Christen 2005). When I met with Narrurlu, one of my female collaborators, in the final stages of content gathering for one of the websites, she looked again at the photos and the information that we had agreed upon and then paused; “Well,” she said, “just chuck a copyright on it and it’ll be right.” Her directive to me signaled her willingness both to engage with this new digital medium, as well as her desire to protect that which she knew would be vulnerable once online. She was keenly aware of both the transgressions and misuse that could happen as well as the primacy of the legal system in controlling and monitoring such misuse.

Narrurlu, like many thirty-something adults in Tennant Creek, grew up with land rights and Aboriginal self-determination politics (Rowse 1998, Cowlshaw 1998). She routinely uses the language of “traditional owners” and land groups taken from the 1976 Aboriginal *Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* when discussing and deciding on viewing practices with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Narrurlu is no stranger to “remixing” whitefella laws —adapting where necessary the language of Australian law to fit the cultural and economic needs of the Warumungu. When she invoked the necessity of copyright she was not eschewing Warumungu notions of cultural property—particularly, its distribution and reproduction. Instead, she was addressing the overlap of audiences, the dynamism of the digital format and the dominance of legal solutions. She knew that Warumungu protocols for viewing images would not be upheld online —this was simply an unreasonable request. Instead, the language and practice of copyright has become *another* tool enlisted by Warumungu people to maintain some control over the use and distribution of their cultural materials. Copyright does not replace nor does it replicate; *it adds an additional layer to an already-existing cultural management system.*

The Warumungu system of accounting for and acknowledging the proper circulation routes for cultural knowledge and objects is a dynamic structure with two seemingly fixed points: open and closed (Christen 2005). That is, in English, Warumungu people often refer to knowledge or objects as either being open or closed. But this apparent dualism is not a rigid divide. Instead, it marks two nodes in a continuum of accountability where factors such as age, gender, ritual affiliation and country-associations all dictate variables of openness or closure. Knowledge is never static—it is never locked into one of these points. Its status is continually negotiated.

People referred to as “bosses” for ritual songs, dances, body designs, etc., must maintain their status through performances, country visits, and collaboration with knowledgeable members of other kin groups (Dussart 2000). Bosses have a privileged position to be sure, but they do not alone dictate distribution or access. An ancestral song series might be restricted based on gender, it may be for women only. It may be further limited to women of a particular kin grouping who together determine how and to whom the songs may be distributed. Similarly, a ritual dance might involve a particular ancestral track that crosses through two distinct territories. Thus, rights to perform the song are negotiated by those who are related to those territories. Or an elder may pass away and their knowledge of a particular territory may be inaccessible for some time.

The scenarios are endless. What is significant is the relation between people, places and ancestors continually combines with variable protocols to determine access, rights, and privileges. This is a dynamic system that tacks back and forth between a fixed—but not static—set of criteria for the distribution, reproduction and creation of knowledge in both its tangible and intangible forms. People interact with

insiders and outsiders, with “information” and “knowledge” not as a whole a community, nor as unrelated individuals, but as sets of related family networks, or what Aboriginal people refer to in English as “mobs.” This commonly used term does not deny the importance of kin-groups or extended families within communities, but it does suggest that there is more than one way of reckoning relatedness between Aboriginal community members (Merlan 1998, Christen 2004). Within these networks, ethical relations informed by social practices, territory-relations and histories of engagement inform modes of engaging with newness. In fact tensions surrounding the negotiation of knowledge production fuels the continuation of “tradition” in its many guises (Christen 2004).

Certainly as Narrurlu and I drove around Tennant Creek seeking permission from various groups to replicate digital video and still images online and for a community DVD we were met with a range of reactions: from “NO,” to lengthy negotiations over payment and access, to debates about back-up images in case of a death. Permission was granted, denied and haggled over as cultural knowledge was repackaged. The open-closed continuum ensures circulation while also accounting for change.

### It’s not just like...

When I defined the Warumungu “open-closed continuum” for a group of mainly technical consultants, they were quickly inspired—“it’s just like a Creative Commons ‘some rights reserved’ license,” one of them announced. As I thought about the similarities, I reminded him that Creative Commons has been around for about a year in the US and the Warumungu system significantly longer. I found myself suggesting, uncomfortably, that perhaps it was the Creative Commons system that was mirroring the Warumungu one. But my unease wasn’t about duration (it’s older so it must be better, or more authentic...); it was about substance and rhetoric. Why is it that this audience (and, in fact, this happened to me more than once) wanted to make the analogy? What about this indigenous system made it appealing as a source of comparison?

Over the last several years, the “commons” has become a predominant metaphor for politicizing and spatializing the types of social relationships between people, ideas and new digital technologies. This “commons talk” has taken liberties with anthropological literature concerning “gift economies” — where “sharing” and “redistribution” are presumptively linked to communal sociality and knowledge circulation (Barlow 1996, Bollier 2004). But it is not just, or only, that the “facts” are being interpreted “incorrectly.” It is also that the reliance on and misrepresentation of indigenous property and exchange systems offers the commons movement an *anchor*. This anchor provides the illusion of a past in which a commons-approach to the distribution of and access to property (tangible and intangible) existed in a form similar to that of the “share-alike” or free/libre and open source software movements that have recently emerged (Kelty 2004 & 2005, Coleman 2005). While certainly these modes of collaboration and distribution differ from contemporary corporate-driven models, they do not, on the other hand, mirror past or present indigenous systems. *Both* are more complex and historically specific.

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization offering—free of charge—a range of copyright licenses that undo the rigidity of the traditional copyright system where one automatically defaults to an “all rights reserved” model. Creative Commons “offers flexible copyright licenses for creative works” based on a “spectrum of possibilities” (<http://creativecommons.org/learnmore>). Using the language of rights, this system draws a linear trajectory from all rights reserved to no rights reserved. The Creative Commons license system provides an alternative middle ground where individuals may choose from a range of licenses to fit their particular wishes for distribution, reproduction and re-mix.

While I recognize the similarities, I am also apprehensive about making a too quick analogy. An analogy allows one to compare two things in order to clarify; but analogies also always mask fissures. In this case, both of these systems articulate sets of restrictions within social networks based on dynamic notions of culture and property. Yet at the same time the two systems make different assumptions about



the dynamism of those networks and the modes of sociality that uphold them. One looks to an international legal system as its foundation and a virtually networked community for its flexibility, the other relies on territorial networks for its boundary making and adaptable kin-groups for its innovative impulses.

In his work on the founding of the Creative Commons, Christopher Kelty shows that culture was quite intentionally mobilized as a way to uphold a range of copyright licenses. Cultural norms, would be, a sort of back up plan or a catch all for those awkward legal moments when the language of law was either too illusive or too tedious (2004: 550-553). The Commons then, was imagined as a creative space where individuals create, remake and distribute works all the while maintaining control. In the words of their promotional video, Creative Commons allows one to, “skip the intermediaries,” and “stand on the shoulders of your peers” to co-author creative works without “ever meeting someone face to face” (<http://creativecommons.org/learnmore>, “Get Creative” movie).

Here, the Internet, coupled with Creative Commons’ licenses, produces a space for innovation and knowledge sharing. And while the Internet is gestured to as a space for collaboration—that is, as a technological advance that aids in innovation—the downside, the unwanted collaboration, the unasked for distribution and the very real lack of access and control over how knowledge is dissected into bits and bytes is not addressed. *This* commons wipes away the contingencies necessary for other types of collaboration.

As an antidote to the corporate eagerness to make the public domain work for commercial innovation alone, Creative Commons is a very practical tool. But, as a rearticulation of the relationships that constitute the commons or the social relations through which property is being made, remixed and circulated, this Commons privileges a very limited type of sociality and it maintains the property values that are, in fact, central to the traditional copyright system: author-centered works, the public domain as the preeminent space for innovation and creation, and originality as the mark of a creative “work” (Coombe and Herman 2004, Christen 2005, Berry and Moss 2005).

Certainly Creative Commons did not set out to promote indigenous or other property systems. They set out to correct an existing legal system that—through recent legislative turns—has used copyright to privilege corporate rights. The problem of aligning the Creative Commons strategy with the Warumungu system of cultural rights management expressed in the open-closed continuum is that one allows us to work within the dominant US property regime; another calls attention to its limits. One enables and demands celebratory notions of an information commons, one calls attention to the denial of subjects within that commons. Instead of repurposing the Warumungu distributional imaginary within the idea of a commons, our focus turned to just how we might encode this alternative system into the frameworks used by those who uphold the unquestioned ideal of “information freedom.”

### Encoding Culture

In 2002 when my partner Chris Cooney and I were working with several Warumungu community members on two websites it was clear that Warumungu protocols functioned not only in the collection of the content for the sites, but also for the on-going interaction with the materials. Michael Jampin, an elder in the community and a keen cultural ambassador, immediately saw the potential of the Internet to educate. If “just about everyone” could access the site, he imagined the same global audience could learn about Warumungu culture. But the type of information sharing he is interested in is based on an understanding of Warumungu protocols for the distribution and reproduction of knowledge.

So when Chris and I received a fellowship in 2005 to produce a website based on Warumungu protocols for information “sharing,” we wanted to integrate Jampin’s interests into the design and architecture of the site to produce a different type of “learning experience.” The *Vectors* online journal

is a new project sponsored by University of Southern California's Annenberg Center and the Institute for Multimedia Literacy. Their goal is to bring together scholars and technical consultants to "focus on the ways technology shapes, transforms and reconfigures social and cultural relations" ([www.vectorsjournal.org](http://www.vectorsjournal.org)). Pushing scholars to articulate their academic arguments through the languages of new media, *Vectors* provides a prime opportunity to produce an online space where users can engage with Warumungu protocols for knowledge distribution, reproduction and creation.

In the final version of the website. Because place is the predominant way in which people organize social relations (with property relations being just one layer) it was the logical first level of content organization. Each bit of content (photos, movie clips, audio files) is identified with a specific "country" (the term Warumungu people use for specific territories). The content is also tagged with one of eight tracks. These tracks emphasize the overlap of various groups within Warumungu life: miners, tourists, other Aboriginal groups, settlers, etc. In the final virtual site these tracks provide an historical reference point for users as well as a visible depiction of the coexisting and overlapping sets of interests that inform knowledge production.

The work of tagging all the content provided an overall framework from which to understand the relations between content and allowed us to then sort the content into groups around the central themes Warumungu people identified: women's ceremonies, station life, ancestors, etc. We then generated content groups around specific protocols (eight in all, although this is not exhaustive). The protocols serve as the main sorting function—when users interact with the content they are forced to engage with a *different information system*. The protocols dictate how, when and in what guise "content" can be accessed.<sup>8</sup>

In order to present the content in a way that encourages users to maneuver through the site and at the same time reflects the dominance of place-related knowledge to Warumungu people, we worked with several Warumungu artists to generate an appropriate design. The main interface is a recreation of Rose Namikili's depiction of the main places associated with the content for the website. Rose graphically represented Warumungu places using overlapping circles in red and yellow with white dots to offset the circles (Figure 1). This was always to be a *rendering* of place, not a map of specific geographic locations. That is, this was not a map in the sense that one could use it as territorial information.

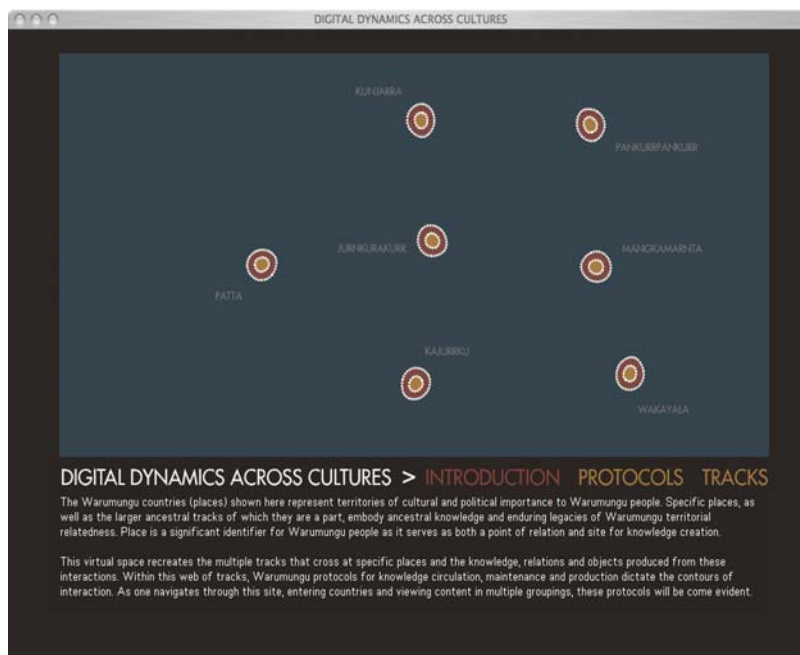


Figure 1.

Knowing the cultural restrictions surrounding the circulation of specific knowledge about place locations, I had purposely directed the U.S. designers of the website to randomize the places. When I visited Tennant Creek in February 2006 before the launch of the site to get final community approval and to work with local artists on the interface, I met over and over with the same complaint: the places on the interface we had created were “not proper.” That is, the places were not in the correct geographic relationship to each other and to what has become the standard default referent: town. Without fail, the first comment every Warumungu person who saw the prototype of the main page had was that it just wasn’t right. Namikili’s representation of the country places them in relation to town and to the Stuart Highway. Although the highway is not visible on the drawing, anyone familiar with the area can easily imagine its location and its physical relationship to the named places. My attempt to avoid making a protocol blunder resulted in the realization of another protocol at play: geographical orientation. Places should not be out of place. In the final version of the site each place in its proper place.

As users maneuver through the online space and enter certain places they can click on content groups to access more information. Yet at every site they encounter Warumungu protocols for viewing material, reproducing images, listening to ritual knowledge, etc. A video clip may stop halfway through because the material is restricted by gender. Or, a photo may be only half visible because some people in the photo have died. Audio of a song may fade in and out because elements are restricted to only those who have been ritually initiated. In every case, users must grapple with their own biases about information “freedom” and knowledge “sharing” as they seek to “learn” something about Warumungu culture. The content is secondary to the intended disruption of dominant ways of information gathering online through the invocation of the protocol screens. When content is blocked—completely or partially—a protocol animation is generated (Figure 2). Users can then listen to and watch an explanation of the Warumungu protocol. Here again we used designs by local artists combined with voice-over narrations by Warumungu community members to present the guidelines for proper interaction with and circulation of cultural knowledge (Figure 3).

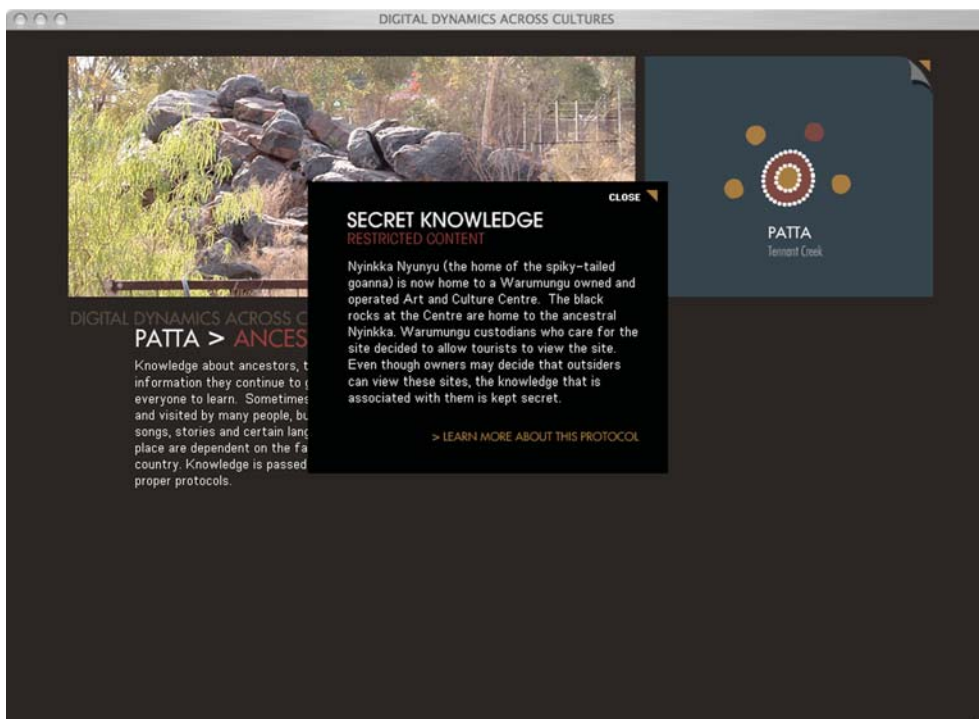


Figure 2.

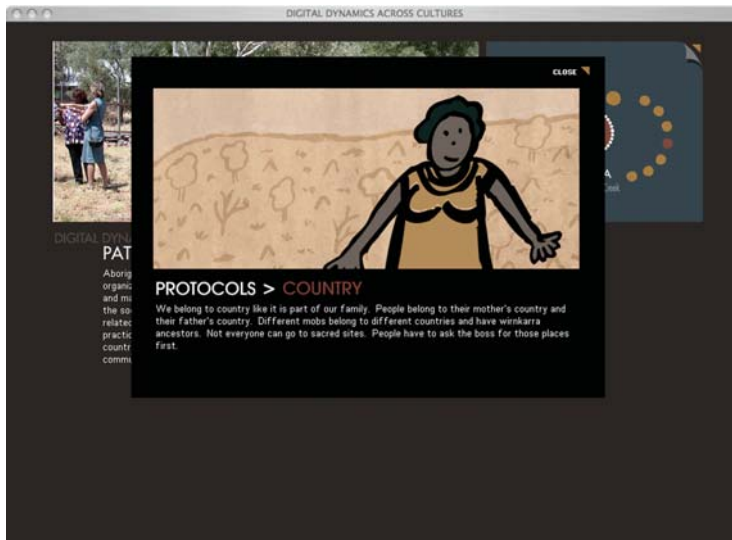


Figure 3.

This is *not* a learning site—in the sense that users will come away knowing about “the Warumungu” in any complete sense. In the design concept we wanted to stay away from what I clumsily labeled a “video-game” feel. That is, we did not want to give users the “experience” of being (via an avatar-like persona) an Aboriginal person for a day. Nor did we want people to feel as if they could learn about Warumungu culture whole cloth through this site. This was not because of some lurking Luddite sensibilities or knee-jerk Humanities reaction to “dumbing-down” the complexity of cross-cultural exchange. Instead, the site is designed to alter the way in which “learning” about other cultures is perceived and presented. By presenting content through a set of Warumungu cultural protocols that both limit and enhance (depending on who you are) the exchange and creation of knowledge, the site’s internal logic challenges conventional Western notions of the “freedom” of information and legal demands for single-authored, “innovative,” original works as the benchmark for intellectual property definitions.

### Changing the Default

The default logic of Australian copyright law—as well as the celebration of the commons as a space of creation and remix for everyone—maintains the conceit of property as separable from dynamic social networks and relations. Information as property is to be “protected” or “freed.” These *seem to be* the only options. But, as Rosemary Coombe and Andrew Herman remind us (and their first year law students), property “is a social relationship between socially recognized persons with respect to real and intangible things (and between peoples who as nations may hold cultural properties) that is authorized and legitimized in particular cultural contexts. It is also a relationship of profound social power” (2004: 561).

The power yielded by IPR laws—in this case copyright—is not just, or even, I would suggest, primarily about regulating and protecting property. More fundamentally, this legal regime mobilizes an historical mode of *protectionism* towards indigenous peoples and their property in such a way that allows control to be conceived of as support for difference. Modeling the ICMR bill on an impractical notion of community sets indigenous people up to fail. If the amendment becomes law, it would align Aboriginal cultural knowledge with impractical and unrealistic definitional standards (Anderson 2004). Here, copyright law redefines not only what counts as worthy of protection, but also who counts. When the bland world of multicultural rhetoric is mixed with legislative imperatives to “protect” and “preserve,” (culture and culture as property) the outcome has been to deny the inequities inherent within specific property relations (Povinelli 2002, Anderson and Bowery 2006).

As Australia grapples with its historical legacy of erasure, it has turned again and again to legislation to try and reconcile its national past and reimagine its Aboriginal future. The fact the ICMR legislation has stalled for the last two years speaks to its failure as a practical model for dealing with cultural manifestations of difference and competing property systems. Spaces like the Vectors *Digital Dynamics* website eek out a place where indigenous knowledge systems can challenge dominant views. But the momentum needed to destabilize the uncritical acceptance of “communal” visions of indigenous distributional systems needs to come from critiques of this either/or property imaginary: either we have an information commons or corporate enclosure; one is either a purchaser or a pirate; information is public or private.

Both national copyright legislation that refuses to acknowledge on-going marginalization and social movements that celebrate the “commons” and “gift economy” cultures on the Web (Bollier 2004, Lessig 2004) are guilty of downplaying difference and ignoring the complexity of property relations. Taking indigenous property systems seriously shifts the emphasis of exchange systems from demanding information freedom or rigid holistic communities to seeing the coexistence of distributional routes and practices. A distributional imaginary that neither assumes the neutrality of market property relations nor denies the existence of power relations within the social spaces of property exchange is necessary to challenge the default logic embedded in both of these property models.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I want to thank my co-panelists from the Indiana University “Informatics Goes Global” conference David Delgado Shorter, Shay David and Eddan Katz, for their comments, suggestions and invigorating presentations. I would also like to thank David Hakken for organizing the conference and Arturo Escobar for inviting me to submit this work to the World Anthropologies Network. This article is part of a manuscript project tentatively titled, *Mobilizing Property: Indigenous Communities and the Commons*. This larger work extends recent debates about the limits of intellectual property regimes by examining the invocations of both indigenous cultural management systems and the predominant commons talk as they are linked to the future of global markets and to the colonial pasts of settler nations. This text is a work in progress prepared for the World Anthropologies Network online journal, March 2006

<sup>2</sup> The 1976 *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* allowed Aboriginal claimants to seek ownership of unalienated Crown land. As part of the process Aboriginal communities had to document their relationships to one another and to their land. As defined by the *Act*, claimants had to designate “traditional owners” (kin groups) who had “primary spiritual responsibility” for the land. Making Aboriginal people-land-ancestor relationships fit into these newly-adopted categories caused considerable tensions within and between various communities. See Peterson and Langton (1983), Merlan (1998), Povinelli (2002), Gelder and Jacobs (1998), Christen (2004).

<sup>3</sup> There is obviously a lot of legal ground to cover between the passage of the 1976 *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* and the 1993 *Native Title Act*. Juxtaposing the two I mean not to collapse them, nor to suggest that they do the same work. Instead, what is significant is that both pieces of legislation rely on idealistic, romantic and fantastic notions of Aboriginality as the basis for lodging claims. For more in depth analyses see: Povinelli (1999, 2002), Gelder and Jacobs (1998) and Bell (1998), Strelein and Muir (2000).

<sup>4</sup> This same type of standardization took place during land rights claims in the Northern Territory under the Territory’s land rights legislation. See Merlan (1998), Povinelli (2002), Christen (2004) for more on the consequences of these practices.

<sup>5</sup> For examples of these types of collaborative enterprises see: Anderson and Koch (2004), Barwick (2005), Hinkson (2002), Tafler (2000)

<sup>6</sup> My fieldwork in Tennant Creek, NT, Australia took place at various times during 1995-2001 all of 2002 and for short periods during 2003, 2004 and 2006. This research was assisted by grants from the University

of California Pacific Rim Research Program and the Digital Cultural Institutions Project (DCIP) of the Social Science Research Council with funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> I want to thank Cori Hayden for her probing question concerning this urge to compare by my interlocutors during our “Conversations with the Commons Panel” at the 2005 American Anthropological Association meetings.

<sup>8</sup> Using the protocols generated by indigenous communities for digital content management is being addressed in Australia, see Nathan (2000), Barwick (2005), Christen (2005), Hunter (2005). For histories of new media and Aboriginal communities see: Michaels (1997) Tafler (2000), Hinkson (2002), and Ginsburg (2001, 2002), Christen (2005 & 2006).

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## INTRODUCING OTHER ANTHROPOLOGIES

Aleksandar Bošković

### About this book

There were several formative moments in the creation of this book. First of all, the idea of organizing the workshop on “Other Anthropologies” at the 2004 EASA conference in Vienna was suggested by Thomas Hylland Eriksen, as we were walking through the High Street of Grahamstown (South Africa) on a windy Sunday morning in May 2003. (Thomas also later kindly agreed to co-convene this workshop, and it is safe to say that there would be no this book if there was not for his efforts, insights, energy, and suggestions.) The two-day (10-11 September) and three-session workshop in Vienna went extremely well, both in terms of attendance and the discussions. Most of the papers from this workshop (by Kuznetsov, Elchinova, Sugishita, Guber, and Krotz) eventually made it into this book. Unfortunately, there is no chapter on India (as originally planned), and there is also nothing on China. Perhaps these chapters can be included in some future volumes on this topic.<sup>1</sup>

However, this book cannot be viewed in isolation from the earlier discussions of “indigenous” or “non-Western” (Fahim 1982; Asad 1982), “native” or “nativist” (Narayan 1993; Mingming 2002), “central/peripheral” (Hannerz and Gerholm 1982; Cardoso de Oliveira 2000), “anthropologies of the South” (Krotz 1998; Quinlan 2000), or “world anthropologies” (Restrepo and Escobar 2005; Ribeiro and Escobar in press). Apart from the collection of articles in *Ethnos* (Hannerz and Gerholm 1982) and Fahim’s book, I must also mention the edited volume dealing with the European anthropology and ethnology, by Vermeulen and Roldán (1995). The fact that all of these books have been out of print for a long time stands at odds with the growing interest in these issues. Last but not least, the leading Russian anthropological journal, *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, recently also devoted a special issue (2/2005) to “world” anthropologies, edited by Alexei Elfimov.

On a personal note, having studied, taught, and lived in very different cultural, political, and scholarly traditions (USA, Scotland/UK, Slovenia, Brazil, South Africa, Serbia) made me very much aware of both the differences and the similarities in the processes of constructing the anthropological knowledge. My stay in Brazil was especially influential in this regard, and I owe a lot to the idea of “horizontally-structured anthropology” of Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira and Mariza G. S. Peirano. (Peirano was particularly influential for me in dispelling any notion of the overall “crisis” of anthropology.) In recent years, I also wrote several papers dealing with overviews of different particular traditions from different perspectives, including Brazil, South Africa, former Yugoslavia, and Serbia (Bošković 2005a, 2005b, N.d.; Bošković and Van Wyk 2005). Therefore, the issue of “globalized” anthropological knowledge in “centers” and at “margins” (and responses to it) has been close to me (albeit on different levels) for over a decade.

### Problems

I opted for the term “other anthropologies” fully aware of the weight and different implications of the term. Part of the reasoning here is both personal and political: “the other” has its prominent place in the history of anthropology, so I wanted a play of words as well as a kind of a provocation. Obviously, the

political and historical contexts have been present in recent scholarship —both in the perspectives on the development of specific national traditions (for Argentina, see Archetti 2003), and in debating the problems of the establishing anthropology in the changed circumstances (for Russia/former USSR, see Tishkov 1992). Coming from a “critical Third World perspective” (Cardoso de Oliveira 2000: 11), I saw certain traditions marginalized or “othered,” although it is safe to say that even some practitioners of the “great” traditions occasionally perceived themselves as marginalized (primarily in relation to the hegemonic North American anthropology — cf. Pels 2003: 143, 147-8). This made me aware of the need to present in one place the state of anthropology in countries or regions that were not very well known worldwide. Overviews of anthropology rarely —if ever— mention “non-metropolitan” traditions (among the notable exceptions, see Wolf 1999: 130 ff).

But just as anthropology never had a single point of origin, it also never had a single stream of development — and this becomes, perhaps, more pronounced than ever in our “post-colonial” or “post-industrial” times. This makes some projects focusing on particular (imagined) points of view a bit problematic — for example, the distinction between “Western” and “non-Western” anthropologies has already been described as problematic (Madan 1982; Asad 1982). On the other hand, anthropology as a discipline is usually defined in terms of the “centers” or “central” traditions (Cardoso de Oliveira mentions the American, British and French traditions; one might add the German one as well).

The processes of decolonization, along with critical interrogation of the dominant narratives, have influenced much greater visibility of the non-central anthropological traditions (for a comparison with the situation of “other” —primarily African— anthropologists, see Augé 1989a: 20). Of course, some of them (like India, for example) have been quite visible and influential globally for many decades. Others, like the Russian one, have been around for a very long time, and along with the Japanese and the Brazilian ones, are quite impressive when it comes to the numbers of professional anthropologists or ethnologists. However, there are some differences in focus of research (Asad 1982: 285; Madan in Fahim, Helmer et al. 1980: 655; Fahim 1982: 265 ff), as “Western” anthropologists tended to study societies “abroad”, while “non-Western” (or “peripheral”) ones much more often opted (or had to, due to financial and/or political constraints) to study “at home.”

Of course, none of the contributors in this volume would claim that anthropology that they write about has been developing without influences both from within, and more global ones. The same goes for the more “central” traditions —the very contemplation of the mysterious and exotic “other” profoundly influenced French anthropology in the 1930s, for example (Peixoto 1998; Brumana 2002; Bošković 2003).

This does not mean that these traditions are small or in any way insignificant — the sheer size of the Russian, Brazilian or Japanese anthropological communities is more than impressive, the influence of Norwegian anthropologists at home as well — but the simple fact that in many cases, research published outside of the “centers” (for the purpose of this book, the Anglo-American, French and German traditions) tends to be completely ignored or unappreciated. I already became aware of this fifteen years ago, when I was really surprised by a quantity of American scholars doing research on Mesoamerica who simply ignored articles or books published in Spanish — even to the detriment of their own research output. (I have to say that the best ones did consult all the sources — but they were in the minority.) In the contacts with many “metropolitan” anthropologists over the years this became even more obvious —despite the important contributions included in Fahim (1982), Hannerz and Gerholm (1982), or Vermeulen and Roldán (1995).

### Aims

It would be very unreasonable to expect that a collection of fourteen papers can remedy this imbalance, but the hope of all the contributors is that these can at least make a wider audience aware of the quality and quantity of scholarship in some of the traditions that are frequently overlooked. In that sense, the

first twelve chapters in this book serve as an invitation to reconsider some of our own attitudes and prejudices about the construction and consumption of anthropological knowledge. The final two chapters (by Marcus and Hannerz) present specific overviews of these, from two different angles.

This multiplicity of perspectives is something intentionally present throughout the chapters, although all of the authors also received a specific “check-list”<sup>22</sup> of the issues to be included in their contributions. These were:

1. What were the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology in one’s country? Was or is there an anthropological tradition to speak of? (Especially when it comes to the relations with *Volkskunde*/*Völkerkunde*, etc.)
2. What were the relationships with foreign anthropologists (especially from the “Great Traditions” – Anglo-American, French and German): Did they publish on one’s part of the world (country or region), did their work link up with the work of the authors, and were there significant differences? Have foreign scholars working in one’s part of the world influenced the growth of the discipline there?
3. How does the particular history of the subject in one’s country shape the way anthropology is practiced? To give an example, in Central/Eastern Europe: How does the curious mix of *Volkskunde* and Marxism influence current thought — and should it be left behind, or can it somehow be salvaged?
4. The sociology of anthropology in one’s country: How many are involved, how are they connected with each other institutionally, and how are they connected internationally? What are the conditions for fieldwork, and where do people go to do their research (unless they work exclusively “at home”)?
5. How would one evaluate the status of the discipline in one’s country (or region) at present?

Other topics to be covered included the existence or relevance of translated works, the relationship between the “center” and the “periphery” within the specific traditions, etc. The authors were also invited to write about the institutionalization of anthropology, as (drawing on a great tradition started by Durkheim and Mauss), “one cannot separate the study of ideas from the study of institutions. Nor can one separate the study of institutions from the study of ideas” (Descombes 2001: 49).

The authors were invited to use as many of these aspects as possible, but only if they were relevant for the particular traditions that they were writing about. They were also invited to contextualize both the origins and the developments of the discipline in the countries or regions they were writing about.

### Perspectives

The chapters in this book demonstrate the pluralism of perspectives, developments, and forms, as well as different inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary influences. In some cases (Serbia), there were developed traditions as far back as in 1884,<sup>3</sup> in some other ones (Bulgaria), the development can actually be traced only after 1989. In Turkey, the formation of anthropology almost coincides with the formation of the modern Turkish state (in 1925),<sup>4</sup> while in Russia and The Netherlands, it is inextricably developed with the colonial developments and influences. The need to understand one’s own “others” (different ethnic communities) determined some directions of the development in both Mexico and Russia. Relatively recent political developments in Kenya (in the mid-1980s) contributed to a dramatic reappraisal of the discipline — but nothing like in Norway, where there are 1,000 professional anthropologists to four million inhabitants! The influence of foreign scholars has been extremely important in the Anglophone part of Cameroon, while the war and colonialism are inseparable from the development of the Japanese anthropology. The politics and historical-political considerations have shaped the developments in both Argentina and Mexico, while Brazil and Japan actually afford more prestige to the scholarly works published in their national languages (Portuguese and Japanese) —as opposed to English or French, for example.

But just as none of these traditions developed in isolation from the more global trends, they were not spared some of the recent debates, including (but not limited to) the one on the “crisis of anthropology.” In this regard, it is of special importance to point to the contributions such as the one by Peirano, who clearly shows that there is actually no “crisis” in Brazil. (Nor in many other countries, for that matter.)<sup>5</sup>

Claude Lévi-Strauss, writing almost five decades ago, specifically mentioned “three sources of the ethnological reflexivity”, as the “discovery” of the Americas, French revolution, and the beginnings of evolutionism in mid-nineteenth century France and UK. These are all very political and deeply influential historical events. In recent years, his idea of anthropology (*ethnologie*) as a humanistic discipline has become increasingly influential outside the French-speaking circles, as the boundaries (as well as genres) between social sciences, humanities and “cultural studies” increasingly become blurred. This is in tune with Lévi-Strauss’ idea of *ethnologie* as the study of “human mind” in general (cf. Descombes 2001: 47). The intersections of anthropology, politics and history also become very apparent when one looks at the development of the discipline in these so-called “peripheral” traditions. They were of course very much present even in the “central” ones (Detienne 2002; a good example also being AAA’s censure of Franz Boas in 1919 because he objected to American anthropologists serving as spies!), but outside the centers, the very fact of conducting anthropological research could be seen as potentially subversive (as in Argentina), or part of the global nation-building endeavors (like in Mexico, India or Brazil). Historical knowledge, experiences, and their interpretations traditionally formed important parts of considerations of different scholars (Archetti 2003; Augé 1989b, 2004), but one should also note the dissatisfaction of some leading anthropologists from the “non-central” traditions for what they perceive to be lack of understanding of their culture on the part of more “central” scholars (a good example is China —see Mingming 2002).

This lack of understanding can be easily remedied through the increased and improved communication, which has so far mostly been surprisingly one-sided. “Third World” scholars are supposed to know everything that is going on in the “main” traditions, but their own work (regardless of its actual quality), even when it is published in English or French, frequently goes unnoticed. How many “Western” anthropologists are actually aware of the richness and complexity of research in Japan, for example? On the other hand, I have been repeatedly told by Serbian ethnologists how amazed they are when “foreign” anthropologists doing research in the region (the Balkans) repeatedly discover “hot water” —stumbling upon the data that local scholars have produced decades ago!

But how does one justify the pervasive “crisis talk” when anthropology seems to be thriving in distant and diverse traditions, such as Brazil, Norway, Japan, Kenya, or India? Russia is perhaps a slightly more complicated case, as already noted by Tishkov (1992). Even much smaller nations and newcomers to the global scene, such as Slovenia, invest in research and produce some very good and original work. Even in countries without institutional backing, like Croatia or Serbia, the interest for studying other peoples and cultures is continuously growing. The generations of younger scholars throughout the world are coming out of the academic programs also armed with healthy doses of skepticism, but with the addition of important lessons learned from their predecessors and put in a very global contemporary context. The amount of research coming out in various forms is truly fascinating, so it is easy to agree with Peirano that there is actually no global crisis of anthropology —quite on the contrary, that it is thriving throughout the world.

The chapters in this volume should contribute to increased and improved communication between practitioners in different parts of the world, hopefully overcoming “retrospective provincialism” (referred to by Hannerz, in the concluding essay of this book). In doing so, I also see them as important contribution to the understanding of the trajectories through which anthropology will be developing in the years and decades to come.

1. However, see the excellent contributions by Madan 1982 and Mingming 2002.
2. These topics were primarily the result of the critical comments by Thomas Hylland Eriksen during the workshop in Vienna, as well as in our communication right after it.
3. Incidentally, the same year in which the first Japanese professional association was formed!
4. The modern Turkey was established in 1923.
5. See some “notable controversies” that Marcus mentions as characteristic for the recent American anthropology, this volume.

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## ASIAN ANTHROPOLOGIES: FOREIGN, NATIVE, AND INDIGENOUS

Yamashita, Bosco, and Eades

This book is about socio cultural anthropology in East and Southeast Asia, its development, its distinctive characteristics, and its relation to anthropology in the rest of the world. We examine how anthropology is affected by the location of fieldwork, writing, and teaching, by its different histories in different countries, and by the identities of the researchers, whether local or foreign. We examine the national and international intellectual climates within which anthropology is practiced, and the significance of these differences for the development of a universalistic, global, or transcultural anthropology in the twenty first century.<sup>1</sup>

The concern with the history of anthropology thus defined and its indigenization is not new, but since the early 1990s, there has been an explosion of interest in the subject within East and Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup> Part of the reason for this activity can be traced back to Western anthropology's increasing reflexivity in relation to its own history, methods, and theories, but there are also other causes. They include the rapid growth in the number of anthropologists in Asia within the expansion of higher education as a whole, and their attempts to make the discipline relevant to local issues such as problems of ethnic identity. There is also the flow of students and scholars between Asia and the traditional centers of research in North America and Europe, the increasing awareness of differences in national anthropological traditions, and a growing concern among scholars based outside America and Europe about the risk of a "world system" of anthropology in which the means of publication and evaluation lie mainly in the hands of the major universities and publishing houses in the West.<sup>3</sup>

In Western accounts, the development of socio cultural anthropology is often presented in terms of the intersecting biographies of a small number of leading scholars linked to major departments in North America and Europe. In America, the list extends from Franz Boas, via figures such as Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, to Clifford Geertz and the rest of the postwar generation. In the United Kingdom, it extends from Malinowski and his pupils, of whom the main figures in relation to Asia were Fei Xiaotong (Hsiao tung), who completed his first monograph on China in the 1930s (Fei 1939); Edmund Leach, whose research in Burma was interrupted by the war (Leach 1954); and Raymond Firth, who carried out research in Malaya following his earlier work in the Pacific (Firth 1946). There were also the groups of Dutch and French scholars carrying out work in their colonial empires, in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), and in French Indochina (now Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia). What is left out of many of these accounts is the activity taking place among Asian scholars, with the exception of those like Fei whose work became part of the Western canon. It also leaves out all those scholars engaged in forms of research and writing closely related to modern anthropology; but who lacked the legitimacy which training in the core Western departments bestowed. In the case of Japan, it ignores completely the fact that a major school of anthropology had developed in the late nineteenth century, paralleling and in some cases even preceding the developments taking place in the West. This school was in part a result of Japan's encounter with Western scholars during the Meiji period (1868-1912), but was also a response to Japanese nationalism and colonialism, as the chapters by Askew and Yamashita in this volume show.

The aims of this introduction, therefore, are two fold. The first is to give a brief historical sketch of some of the main strands of development in Asian anthropology, many of which are unfamiliar to scholars in the West. The second is to examine some of the main issues in the relationship between

anthropology in Asia and the rest of the world, such as the problem of Western dominance, the uses of theory, the process of indigenization, languages of publication, the audiences to which anthropology is addressed, and the possible contribution of anthropology in Asia to the development of the discipline world wide.

### Anthropology in Japan

As mentioned above, Japan has a history of anthropology going back to the latter half of the nineteenth century, and it also has the largest number of anthropologists in Asia. The Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology (*Nihon Bunkajinruigakukai*, formerly the Japanese Society of Ethnology or *Nihon Minzokugakukai*) is one of the largest anthropological associations in the world, numbering around 2,000 members at present. Japan is thus the largest center for anthropological research in Asia. What, then, are the characteristics of Japanese anthropology in terms of its history and its structural position in the world as a whole?

### Origins and development

As Askew and Yamashita note in their papers in this volume, the origins of Japanese anthropology date back to 1884, when a group of young scholars formed a group called *Jinruigaku no Tomo* (Friends of Anthropology) (Terada 1981: 7). This was founded as a response to the theories of Edward Morse, a professor in the biology department at Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) who had carried out some archeological excavations on an ancient shell mound. From the evidence of the bones he found there, he suggested that cannibalism had once been practiced in central Japan. The members of the group felt that the origins of the Japanese should be investigated by the Japanese themselves rather than outsiders (Shimizu 1998: 115; 1999: 126), so the formation of the group was partly inspired by Japanese nationalism. After two years, the workshop evolved into a society called *Tokyo Jinruigakukai* (Anthropological Society of Tokyo), later known as *Nihon Jinruigakukai* (usually translated in English as the “Anthropological Society of Nippon”). The leading figure in the group, Tsuboi Shōgorō, later studied for three years in London, and became the first professor of anthropology at the University of Tokyo in 1892. He remained active in the debate on the origins of the Japanese in the early years of the twentieth century until his death in 1913.

The annexation of Taiwan in 1895 marked the start of the Japanese colonial empire, and as this expanded, ethnographers followed in the wake of the military and the administrators, much as they did in the empires of the West. The materials they collected remain some of the most important early sources of information on these societies. One of the most remarkable figures was Torii Ryuzō, Tsuboi’s successor as professor of anthropology at Tokyo Imperial University, who traveled extensively throughout the entire region from Mongolia to Southeast Asia, as described in the chapters by Askew and Yamashita. He not only collected extensive written data, but also built up an early photographic archive of the region, a total of over 1,800 prints (Suenari 1995:3).

In 1913, the year of Tsuboi’s death, Torii published a paper based on his extensive fieldwork, proposing the establishment of a discipline he called *Tōyō jinshugaku* or *Tōyō minzokugaku* (“Oriental ethnology”). This was similar to the “Japanese Orientalism” advocated by the historian Shiratori Kurakichi (see Tanaka 1993; Kang 1996; and Yamashita in this volume). Torii advocated the study of the Orient by Oriental scholars because they were assumed to be in a better position than Western scholars to study these regions (Torii 1975: 482-83). Because of his extensive field research abroad, Torii was much more concerned with cultures outside Japan’s national boundaries than Tsuboi had been. His article marked a new stage in the history of Japanese anthropology, one in which Japan began to observe others, and not be observed (Shimizu 1998: 116). In this new stage, the object of study shifted from the origins of the Japanese people and Japanese culture to Japan’s “colonial Others” in Asia. Interest in ethnological research continued to develop with further Japanese colonial expansion, into Micronesia in 1919, Manchuria in 1933, and Southeast Asia in 1941.

The *Nihon Minzokugakukai*, or Japanese Society of Ethnology, was formed during the same period, in 1934. The Orientalist historian Shiratori Kurakichi mentioned above was the first president. Interestingly its establishment was stimulated by the First International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held in London that same year. The rationale was stated as follows:



“Ethnology in Japan has a history of several decades. However, we have not yet reached an international standard [of research] ... Ethnological studies in Japan have been concerned with native culture and ancient cultural survivals in Japan under the name of *minzokugaku* [here meaning folklore studies]. But we should develop the discipline through comparisons with other cultures, using the results of the development of the discipline in the West to consider cultural origins and diffusion. In particular, through participation in the First International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held at London this summer, we have realized that we should promote ethnological research in Japan. This is the reason why we are reorganizing the former *Minzokugakkai* [i.e. Society for Folklore Studies] into the *Nihon Minzokugakkai* [i.e. the Japanese Society of Ethnology].” (Minzokugaku Shinkokai 1984: 4, translation by Yamashita)

This statement is interesting because it shows the growing cleavage in Japanese anthropology, between scholars whose primary concern was the origins of Japanese society and culture, and scholars who were interested in the kind of comparative anthropology then developing in the West. The two groups were about to part company institutionally as well as intellectually. In 1935, the influential Japanese folklorist, Yanagita Kunio, founded an association called *Minzokugakkai no Kai* (Group for Research into Popular Traditions). Yanagita was an influential figure in Japanese literature for over half a century (Oguma 2002: chapter 12). He had a dual career as a diplomat and writer, and his book based on Tohoku folk tales, *Tono Monogatari* (Tales of Tono, Yanagita 1975 [1909]) was one of the key texts in Japanese folklore studies (Yamashita 2003: chapter 9). The group he founded later evolved into an association also romanized as *Nihon Minzokugakkai* though using different characters (meaning “Folklore Society of Japan”) As the result, scholars specializing in Japanese folklore and ethnological studies (or *Volkskunde* in German) became separated from those interested in comparative ethnology (*Volkerkunde* in German). These two traditions have continued side by side until the present, but as Cheung shows in his chapter in this volume, the balance has continued to shift in favor of a comparative socio cultural anthropological approach over the years. A defining event in relation to this was the Eighth Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES), held in Japan in 1968. This trend was symbolized most recently in the decision of the Japanese Society of Ethnology to change its name to the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology, from the Spring of 2004.

From the annexation of Taiwan in 1895 onwards, ethnologists had been used by the Japanese colonial government, and they also became involved in the war effort after 1941 (cf. Shimizu and Bremen 2003). A number of ethnographic research institutes were set up, some of which had colonial origins. These included the *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūsho* (Institute of Oriental Studies) at the University of Tokyo, which still exists, plus departments of ethnology in the Japanese imperial universities in Seoul and Taipei. Other shorter lived ethnographic research institutes were established during the Pacific War: the *Minzoku Kenkyūsho* (Institute of Ethnic Research) in Tokyo (1943-45) and the *Seiboku Kenkyūsho* (Northwestern Research Institute) in Mongolia (1944-45). Both of these were closed at the end of the war, but their longer term significance was that some of the leading figures in anthropology in postwar Japan such as Mabuchi Tōichi and Umesao Tadao carried out their first research in such institutions.

After the war Japan lost its colonies, and the interests of Japanese ethnology were once again confined to Japan. Fieldwork became mainly confined to groups such as the Ainu of Hokkaido (also discussed in Cheung’s paper in the volume) and the Okinawans. But during the Korean War, the Japanese economy began a long period of high speed economic growth which lasted for over twenty years. By 1964, the year of the Tokyo Olympic Games, restrictions on overseas travel and foreign exchange for Japanese were finally removed, and Japanese scholars once again began to focus more on “other cultures” outside Japan and less on Japanese culture itself.

Several things can be noted from this brief history. First, Japanese anthropology started with a search for the origins of the Japanese and their culture in response to the theories of foreign researchers. From the outset, it was a nationalistic project, as was also true of some other anthropologies in Asia. Second, unlike other Asian countries, Japan itself became a colonial power in Asia and the Pacific, and Japanese anthropology reflected this colonial experience. Its history was more similar to that of Western anthropology than other Asian anthropologies, even if Japanese anthropologists did tend to see their

colonial Others through the lens of what Yamashita describes in his chapter in this volume as “Japanese Orientalism.” As in early British and American anthropology, the dividing line between amateur and professional anthropologists was often rather vague, as shown in the chapters by Askew and Yamashita. Yamashita’s paper focuses on research in the Nan’yô or Japanese “South Seas” (Micronesia and Palau). Interest in this region continued after the war, and one of the major preoccupations remained the light that these societies could cast on the cultural origins of Japan itself.

Third, the regional concerns of Japanese anthropology have varied historically, along with the power and influence in Japan. In his examination of the articles in *Minzokugaku kenkyû* (Japanese Journal of Ethnology) from 1935 to 1995, Sekimoto Teruo has noted a centrifugal tendency in Japanese research over the years (Sekimoto 1996: 138–39). In each historical period, Japanese anthropologists have generally been more interested in regions peripheral to Japan than in Japan itself. Cheung’s chapter makes a similar point: by the 1960s, Japanese anthropologists were diversifying rapidly, both geographically (away from the traditional fields of research of the Ainu, Okinawa, Taiwan, North China, Korea, and Japan), and also theoretically, bringing their interests more in line with those of anthropology in the West. This trend eventually resulted in the long debate over the name of the Japanese Society of Ethnology during the 1990s which Cheung describes, and which has only been resolved very recently.

However, these areas of research now have little connection with Japan’s wider economic interests: Japanese anthropologists have generally been more interested in Africa and Latin America than they have in the United States, where Japanese economic interests are vital (Shimizu 1998: 121).

Finally, it should also be noted that, despite the large numbers of anthropologists in Japan and the immense volume of work they publish, it is still surprising how little of this work is known in the West.

### ***Japanese anthropology in the anthropological world system***

This brings us to the consideration of Japan’s position in what Kuwayama, in his chapter in this volume and elsewhere, has called the “academic world, system” (see e.g. Kuwayama 1997; 2000; 2004). In his analysis, he draws on models of the capitalist world system developed by Frank, Wallerstein, and others. The “core” of this system consists of the United States, Britain, and France, which define what kinds of anthropological knowledge carry the highest prestige (see also Gerhohn and Hannerz 1982), together with the language in which anthropologists must write if they wish to be taken seriously. In this model, Asian anthropologies are generally classified as “peripheral,” though Japanese anthropology is “semi peripheral,” historically intermediate in influence between the rest of Asia and the West. The course of the subsequent debate is described in detail by Kuwayama in his chapter in this volume.

Here the point can be made that anthropology has now become so international that it is becoming increasingly difficult to see where the “center” really is. The most powerful anthropology departments in the United States have many teachers and students from “peripheral” areas, just as Asian universities have many scholars from the West. The division is made even fuzzier by the rise of the new information technology, and the ease of information flow, so that center and periphery are now intermingled in very complex.

### ***Anthropological production and language***

Perhaps the most critical structural problem for Japanese anthropology in the anthropological world system is the problem of language. Japanese anthropologists are generally very knowledgeable about the main trends in Western anthropology, as shown in the bibliographies of articles in the *Minzokugaku-kenkyû* and other leading journals. Graduate students are required to read works in English or other European languages. However, Japanese scholars mainly write in Japanese, which makes access difficult for non Japanese readers. In this respect; Japanese cultural anthropology, unlike the Japanese economy, imports too much and exports too little.

One result of the “balance of payments” problem is that it is difficult for theoretical ideas from Japan to be adopted more widely. Unlike France, which has always been a major source of theoretical

ideas for the Anglophone world, the ideas of Japan's theoretically more adventurous anthropologists have had little impact outside Japan. Indeed, Mathews's chapter in this volume goes as far as arguing that Japan has become an "intellectual colony" of the West. Japanese anthropologists "sometimes seem to reduce Japanese anthropology to being a matter of collecting data to confirm Western theory." Like Kuwayama, he argues that the problem arises from power relations in the academic world system, with Japanese anthropology remaining constantly in the shadow of Western hegemony.

Eades (2000) has discussed some of the other institutional factors that might explain this reluctance to write in English, and argues that major differences between the career structures of anthropologists and the publishing industries in the West and Japan may be partly to blame. In the West, and especially America, there is immense pressure on the most prestigious journals and publishers from academics wanting to publish with them. The lengthy peer review system and subsequent revisions mean long delays in publication, often of the order two to three years. Books from major academic presses can also take years to produce. Even though peer review is assumed to safeguard and guarantee quality, the long lead time in publication means that in situations of rapid social change much of the empirical material is dated before it is published. A final point is that publishing in the West requires mastery of complex theoretical vocabularies and writing styles that are constantly changing, and these are extremely difficult for non native speakers to acquire and keep up with.

Japanese academics, in contrast, publish much of their work in university in house journals, where delays are a matter of weeks or months rather than years. Japanese book publishers are much more efficient than those in the West, and titles are frequently published within six months. Books published in Japanese in Japan generally sell more copies than books published in the West. It is therefore not surprising that few Japanese academics attempt to publish their work through conventional Western channels. Most publish quickly in Japanese and then move rapidly on to the next piece of research. Japanese anthropologists often focus more on empirical data and less on theory than researchers in the West. Historically speaking, it is not the Japanese system which is out of line with the rest of the world, but rather the West, where pressures of competition have led to rapid changes in the publishing system since World War II. Paradoxically, it is the Western system that has become the role model for scholars elsewhere, because of the power and prestige it has managed to accumulate.

### ***Theory and its audiences***

However, there is a related question: to what extent is it worth translating anthropological work written in one language into others? Work may be translated for two basic reasons, either because it contains interesting data, or because it contains interesting theoretical insights. Generally it seems to be agreed that one of the hallmarks of Japanese research is the richness of the data presented. However, this does not mean that theory is not highly valued in Japan: it clearly is. The works of leading Western theoreticians appear in Japanese translations very quickly, and many Japanese academics adopt as a career building strategy exegesis and interpretation of a particular theorist for local audiences. However, it makes little sense to translate this work into other languages in which many similar works of interpretation already exist. Mathews in his chapter makes a related point, noting that some theoretical issues that are still current in Japan are of little interest to scholars in the West, such as the search for the origins of Japanese traditions.

It can be argued that all academic anthropologists feel a need to address two different kinds of audience: the global community of scholars, and the local societies in which they live. Because of the sheer size of the American anthropology profession and the fact that its members write in English, scholars based in America can often assume that the global community of anthropologists and their local audience are one and the same. For Japanese anthropologists, the distance between these two poles is much greater. Addressing the global community raises the problems of writing and publishing in English discussed above. Addressing the local audience can be done in Japanese, which is much easier. These factors tend to reinforce the belief among many Japanese researchers that their main responsibility is to communicate with their local audience, which is Japanese. The end result is a distinctive school of domestic anthropology with its own preoccupations, such as the origins of Japanese culture and identity, and its own canon of literature for citation.

A final area to be explored in relation to the anthropology of Japan is that of minorities. It is often said that Japan is a “homogeneous society,” but historically speaking, as Oguma (2002) has pointed out, Japanese images of themselves have been much more complex. He argues that from the late nineteenth century to the Japanese colonial period, Japanese leaders and intellectuals generally saw Japan as a mixed nation. From time immemorial, the Japanese had successfully assimilated a variety of peoples from outside Japan, from both Northeast and Southeast Asia. The corollary of this belief was that the Japanese advance into Asia was “a return to the Japanese homeland,” and that the assimilation of the peoples there should be easy due to existing ties of kinship (Oguma 2002: 321). After 1945, with the collapse of the empire and the reduction in the number of non Japanese in Japan, an alternative myth of ethnic homogeneity took over. Not surprisingly, this myth has encountered increasing criticism over the years, and there has been a growing body of research both by Japanese scholars and outsiders on minorities in Japan, including permanently resident Koreans (Ryang 1996; Fukuoka 2000), the people of Okinawa (Hook and Siddle 2001; Allen 2002), and the Ainu of Hokkaido (Siddle 1996; Fitzhugh and Dubreuil 1999; Walker 2001).

Cheung’s chapter in this volume reveals some of the political complexities of carrying out this research, especially for scholars, Japanese or foreign, wishing to publish the results in Japanese. The Ainu share much in common with other minority aboriginal ethnic groups of the Pacific Rim. They were the original inhabitants not only of Hokkaido, but also Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, and probably of parts of northern Honshu. Now they form a small minority in Hokkaido alone. As a result of Japanese conquest and assimilationist policies, they lost control of their land, and found much of their culture, their language, and their traditional modes of subsistence officially suppressed. These measures, coupled with intermarriage, meant that little of their original culture survived, apart from arts and performances that could be salvaged as the basis of a tourist industry. Their culture was only officially recognized by the Japanese government in 1997. Thus when Cheung submitted a paper on images of the Ainu to a major Japanese language anthropology journal in 1995, relations between the Ainu, the anthropology establishment, and the state were still highly sensitive.

A final issue raised by Cheung’s chapter is that of the definition of anthropological insiders and outsiders. Japanese anthropology has internationalized to the point where we have a continuum of roles. Japanese anthropologists who write mainly in Japanese for local audiences, Japanese anthropologists who write in both Japanese and foreign languages for different audiences, (e.g. Yamashita, Kuwayama), Japanese scholars based in the West who write mainly in English (e.g. Emiko Ohnuki Tierney, Takie Sugiyama Lebra, Lisa Yoneyama), foreigners based or trained in Japan who can write in Japanese (e.g. Cheung and the Chinese anthropologists based in Japan mentioned in the next section), foreigners based in Japan writing mainly in English (e.g. Eades), and so on. The number of categories can be multiplied if we consider whether or not these scholars are writing about Japan or elsewhere, or if we take into account scholars of Japanese heritage with other nationalities. Clearly the question of who are the “native” or “indigenous” anthropologists, as opposed to “outsider” or “foreign” anthropologists, is become increasingly complex in relation to Japan, and a similar situation is developing in relation to China.

### **Anthropology in China**

As Ishikawa Yoshihiro has recently argued, the early development of Chinese anthropology also had links with Japan, as ideas of race and evolution made their way in from Europe via Japanese translations at the end of the nine-teenth century (Ishikawa 2003). Among those most interested in the new ideas were intellectuals opposed to Manchu rule, who found Torii’s classification of the Manchu as a Tungus people from Siberia useful as a stick with which to beat the Qing regime. An alternative strategy was to hypothesize that the Han themselves were different because they had originated from elsewhere, as suggested by the eccentric French historian, Terrien de Lacouperie, who proposed that Chinese civilization could be traced back to ancient Mesopotamia. His ideas also seem to have arrived via Japan and enjoyed a brief vogue among Chinese intellectuals as well (Ishikawa 2003: 22). More significantly, as Liu notes in this volume, the ideas of Spencer, Morgan, and Engels were also becoming known in China via Japan

(cf. Guldin 1994: 24). These ideas were also popular among revolutionary students who saw in evolutionary theory a justification for regime change (Guldin 1994: 25). By the early 1920s, some scholars were attempting to apply these theories to the evolution of Chinese society. Institutional structures were also being established, such as the Academia Sinica in Nanjing (Guldin 1994: 31–32). In the interwar years, until the onset of the war with Japan, increasing numbers of Chinese were going abroad for training, including Fei Xiaotong and Lin Yaohua, and distinguished foreign scholars were starting to come to China. The list of monographs on China written by Chinese scholars in English was also starting to grow.

The end of the Pacific War in 1945 left Chinese anthropology little time to recover before the onset of civil war, the removal of the Guomindang regime in Taiwan, and the communist victory in 1949. There followed a long period of very mixed fortunes for the social sciences. In mainland China, sociology was closed down as a discipline until after the death of Mao (Wong 1979), while ethnology was reorganized around a new Central Institute for Nationalities (CIN), the task of which was to identify, research, and help formulate national policy towards China's minorities (Guldin 1994: 101). Major surveys of language and social history were carried out, starting in the late 1950s. However the political campaigns that swept across the country, starting with the Great Leap Forward, caused increasing disruption, and from 1966–71 the work of the CIN was halted. Attacks against leading ethnologists such as Lin and Fei escalated, and most of their fieldnotes and books disappeared (Guldin 1994: 193). Accounts by foreign scholars during the period before 1978 were also few and far between, exceptions being the studies by Hinton (1966, 1983) and the Crooks (1959; 1966), authors from outside anthropology with special access because of their own pro regime credentials.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the postwar generation of Western specialists on China had taken to working in Taiwan and Hong Kong during the years of chaos on the mainland. On the positive side, the closure of the mainland led to an extraordinary concentration of research in Hong Kong and Taiwan, much of it of a very high quality. The precursor in Hong Kong was Maurice Freedman, whose book, *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China* (1958) proved highly influential. This was followed by a major series of studies of the New Territories of Hong Kong, by Baker (1968), Potter (1968), James Watson (1975) and Rubie Watson (1985), making this one of the most intensively researched areas in the world. However, even within this area there were striking differences between villages, and minor variations in the environment could have dramatic effects on development patterns and social structure. Another substitute for fieldwork in mainland China itself was to gather data from Chinese who had emigrated to Hong Kong, and this formed the basis of several other studies (e.g. Parish and Whyte 1978; Whyte and Parish 1984; Chan et al. 1984; and Oi 1989).

The other alternative to research on the mainland was to go to Taiwan. As Bosco shows in his chapter in this volume, much of the research on Taiwan during the colonial period had been Japanese research on the aboriginal population (cf. Eades 2003). Chinese researchers carried on the tradition of aboriginal research after the separation of Taiwan from the mainland, at a time when much of the work on the Han Chinese was categorized as “sociology.” However, Taiwan also saw an influx of Western “anthropologists” studying the Han Chinese, including Gallin (1966), Pasternak (1983), Cohen (1976), Ahern (1973), A. Wolf and Huang (1980), and M. Wolf (1972). Meanwhile, Japanese scholars led by Mabuchi were starting to return to Taiwan to resume their own work there (cf. Suenari 1995; 1998).

The situation for anthropologists on the mainland gradually improved with the end of the Cultural Revolution. Fei emerged from years of persecution to become one of China's most influential establishment academics, and travel to China by Western scholars became more common. At first many of these visits were short, but gradually longer term fieldwork became possible, resulting in a fine series of monographs, which documented the upheavals of the revolutionary period and the early years of economic reform (e.g. Endicott 1988; S. Huang 1989; Siu 1989; Potter and Potter 1990; Judd 1994). Senior scholars in the major American departments such as Arthur Wolf, Myron Cohen, and James Watson who had previously carried out research in Hong Kong and Taiwan had students who increasingly chose to do their fieldwork on the mainland.

Since the late 1980s, the research interests of younger Western scholars in China have diversified to include an increasing number of projects relating to urban and cultural studies (e.g. Jankowiak; 1993;

Bruun 1993; Davis et al. 1997; Davis 2000; Tang and Parish 2000; Dutton 1998; Barme 1999), as well as ethnic identity among the minorities (e.g. Gladney 1991; Rudelson 1997; Hanson 1999; Schein 2000). There have also been an increasing number of studies by mainland Chinese scholars educated in the West after the Cultural Revolution who returned to China for their fieldwork (Yan 1996; Jing 1996; Liu 2000). To these must be added several major studies by mainland Chinese scholars based in Japan, such as Nie (1992) and Han (2000). These bodies of work are particularly interesting in the comparison they offer between the different effects of American and Japanese training on Chinese scholars of very similar background. In general, the Western trained scholars tend to produce work on rather focused topics heavily influenced by recent theory, whereas the Japanese trained scholars produce classic all round village studies exceptionally rich in historical and empirical data, in the tradition of Fei's early work from the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> As with the research on Japan, the internationalization of research on China has resulted in a complex body of work in Chinese, Japanese and English, written by a variety of Chinese and foreign scholars variously based in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and further afield.

Two other chapters on China in this volume, by Zhuang and Wu, represent other facets of recent Chinese anthropology. Zhuang's paper is an interesting case study of a scholar using anthropology critically in order to achieve practical reforms. He uses the anthropology of education as the starting point for a critique of traditional and contemporary Chinese education. He begins with an outline of the main characteristics of Confucian education, highlights the political elements inherent in it, and suggests that many Confucian traits have survived in the modern Chinese system. Passive students, rote learning, a one way flow of information, an emphasis on examinations, and constraints on free discussion in class clearly place constraints on creativity and require reform. Much of what he describes fits well with other analyses of higher education throughout East Asia in the past few years and the current processes of reform underway in a number of countries there (cf. Goodman 2001). Finally, Zhuang provides fascinating information on the teaching of anthropology in Chinese universities, including the changes in the curriculum that have taken place since the 1980s.

Wu's paper focuses on a very different subject, that of traditional dance, which in China provides not only a focus for expressions of local and ethnic identity, but also an important element in a burgeoning tourist industry. As he notes, indigenous and foreign anthropologists may well experience and interpret these dances in very different ways. The dances themselves can be seen both as genuine attempts to preserve and stage traditional forms in ways that are meaningful to modern audiences, and as classic examples of reinvented tradition. Wu himself is well aware of the reinvented nature of the spectacle, and he also examines the role of the state in the process. After the revolution, dance teachers could impose their own meanings on what they taught, but ultimately they could not challenge the interpretations of the state. Even into the 1990s, despite the growth of the capitalist market and opportunities for performers to "moonlight" and accept other work in the free economy, the state still continued to attempt to control performers and maintain what it saw as acceptable standards. But now, as Wu wistfully comments, the market has done its worst: "Today, almost anything can be staged as long as it makes profit for the performers and organizers."

### **The Meaning of "Indigenous"**

What Wu's paper also highlights is the importance of the position of anthropologists in relation to their subjects and in the interpretations they make of what they observe. His own position is ambiguous, as someone who is Tai-wanese but was born in mainland China, raised in Taiwan, educated in Australia, and long resident in Hong Kong and Hawaii. He was therefore able to act as both "insider" and "outsider" in relation to his mainland subjects. As we have seen in the cases of both Japanese and Chinese anthropology, there is increasing complexity in the notions of indigenous/foreign, insider/outsider, and subject/object. One of the most important themes underlying the papers in this volume is to examine critically notions of "native" or "indigenous" anthropology, and how useful they are for an understanding of the development of anthropology in East and Southeast Asia.

### ***Indigenous as homegrown research***

According to Webster's dictionary, the term "indigenous" in ordinary usage means, "having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment."

Anthropology cannot be said to have originated in Asia, but it is certainly being produced in Asia, where it has certain characteristics that make it different from anthropology elsewhere. “Thus, the term “indigenization” is now sometimes used to mean the rise of anthropology in places that were previously only studied by for-*e*ign anthropologists. This actually excludes the United States and Europe where local anthropology has generally been carried out by local people rather than foreigners.

### *Indigenous as local research*

Sometimes “indigenous” is also used to refer to local rather than overseas research. In local research, fieldworkers and informants share a common culture. For example, indigenous anthropology in Taiwan often refers to research by Taiwan anthropologists about Taiwanese society. As has often been noted, a common culture between fieldworker and informants allows symbols and allusions to be more readily grasped (Aguilar 1981). Despite the danger that familiarity can be deceptive (Greenhouse 1985), the likelihood that linguistic competence of the anthropologist will be much higher allows for a deeper exploration of meaning (Ohnuki Tierney 1984).<sup>6</sup>

The definition of indigenous anthropology as studying one’s own culture overgeneralizes, however, by ignoring *infra* cultural differences (Narayan 1993). Taking the case of Chinese anthropologists, if an anthropologist from Beijing were to conduct research in Hong Kong, this might now be considered “indigenous” anthropology when seen from a national perspective. However, because of the differences in language and lifestyle, it could be argued that this is comparable to a British anthropologist carrying out research in Italy or Spain, *i.e.* within the European Union. A northern Chinese researcher in Hong Kong may well experience a degree of culture shock, an experience made more complex by the tension between the assumption of Chinese *cul*-tural unity and the discovery of great cultural difference. At the same time, a certain commonality in background is undeniable, and the interplay of difference and commonality can be used to see things in a new light.

A range of commonality and difference thus in fact exists between “native” or “indigenous” researchers and the societies they research: This range can be described as a scale, but is in fact more complex since it includes physical appearance, ethnicity, language, class, gender, age, and other separate factors. Hu Tai li (1984) has described her experience as an anthropologist of mainland parentage studying a Taiwanese village where she was a daughter in law. She had to learn a new field language (Minnanhua and Mandarin are mutually unintelligible, even though they share a common writing system), and found that life in a rural village was quite different from what she was accustomed to in the city. A number of scholars have noted that particular commonalities and differences need to be considered, since class, gender, age, ethnicity, and other factors will affect the research experience (Aguilar 1981). Within this range of commonality and difference, there are some projects we would recognize as “native” or “indigenous” anthropology, in which anthropologists study people who speak the same (or nearly the same) language as they themselves grew up with, with whom they can blend in physically and behaviorally, and who share the same cultural background. In addition, some scholars of local ancestry but born and educated abroad may be viewed as “native” by the local people, even if they themselves do not feel that they are (see *e.g.* Hamabata 1990).

It is often assumed by anthropologists in the West that their colleagues in East and Southeast Asian countries overwhelmingly study their own societies, but the case studies in this book show that this is something of an over-simplification. It is true that in many countries, including China, the Philippines, and Taiwan, most research has been local and students are primarily interested in their own societies. For instance, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, courses are taught on Chinese society and culture, on Chinese “minorities,” and Hong Kong culture, but not on the other major regions studied by anthropologists such as Africa, South Asia, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East.<sup>7</sup> In most of the countries represented in this volume, government funding agencies are primarily interested in the contribution that anthropology can make to nation building and development. Neither these agencies nor the students are particularly interested in exotic comparisons or distant peoples, given that funds for overseas research and travel, together with economic ties with other areas of the world, are restricted. The major exception is Japan, as described above, even though the Japanese government was certainly interested in the contribution anthropologists could make to nation building in the early years of Japanese anthropology. For other countries a link between research and political,

economic and business interests is often essential for funding, despite academic pretensions of scientific disinterestedness. Anthropology—indeed most social science research—is funded primarily by states that have economic development and nation building agendas, so most research and teaching has focused on people within the national borders. Thus, the inward looking nature of much Asian anthropology is in large part the result of funding priorities which make distant research unjustifiable. When national priorities change, so does the pattern of research. In Taiwan, interest in the anthropology of Southeast Asia has recently grown, coinciding with the island's foreign investment in that region. Research on Taiwan's aboriginal communities has also taken a new turn, given the aborigines' historical and cultural links with Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and Taiwan's own search for an identity distinct from that of the mainland.

### *Indigenous as locally published research*

Local anthropology can be divided into two types by where a work is published; some writers make a distinction between “native” and “indigenous” anthropology, and this may be useful in some instances. “Native” anthropologists are defined as those that share a common language and cultural background with their informants, often having grown up in the same society, but they write in a foreign language and act as cultural translators for a foreign audiences: By this definition, Fei's *Peasant Life in China* (1939) was a work of “native” anthropology since he came from China and did research in his home area, but wrote in English.

In contrast, “indigenous” anthropology can be defined as written by local anthropologists for local readers. Indigenous anthropologists share a common culture with their informants, and write in their common language. Since they are usually based in their home countries, they usually teach students with whom they share a common culture about themselves and their countrymen, rather than about foreign peoples.

Using this distinction, anthropological works can be divided along two dimensions: similarity between fieldworker (author) and informants, and similarity between intended audience and informants, yielding a four fold table (see Figure 1). The distinction between native anthropologists and indigenous anthropologists hinges on whether the audience is the same as the informants. Both native and indigenous anthropologists write about the culture they were raised in, but native anthropologists write for foreign audiences (e.g. Fei 1939; Befu 1971) while indigenous anthropologists write for domestic audiences (e.g. Chuang 1977; Myerhoff 1979). In indigenous anthropology, informants, fieldworker, and audience all speak the same language.

Native and indigenous anthropology can be contrasted with the two other cells in the table. In “regular/exotic” anthropology, which is the dominant model in North America, the anthropologist goes to a foreign place, using a foreign language to interview informants, and writes in English, which is a foreign language to the informants. Examples include M. Wolf (1960) and Bestor (1989). This has long been regarded as the norm in anthropology in the United States, United Kingdom, France (Rogers 2001: 490) and Japan.

In rare cases, the anthropologists do fieldwork in places that are foreign and different for them, and then publish in the language of the informants. Here the fieldworkers and informants have cultural differences, but the culture and audience is the same (or at least overlaps). One example is the research published in English by Korean born Choong Soon Kim (1977) on race relations in the southern United States. Because such scholars sometimes feel their audience does not treat them seriously (see e.g. Kim 1990; Hsu 1973), we label them here “foreign experts/Cassandras.” The closest example in this book is that of Cheung who describes his experience writing on the Ainu for a Japanese audience on the Ainu, which was viewed as politically sensitive.

The distinction between native and indigenous anthropology is not hard native language, and thus participate in the academic dialogue “back home,” as is the case with the Australian based Japanese sociologist, Yoshio Sugimoto (e.g., Sugimoto 1993,1997) and Kuwayama in this volume. Furthermore, in some instances, because of the prestige they have as academics overseas, native anthropologists often have substantial influence in the anthropological community of their country of origin, even if



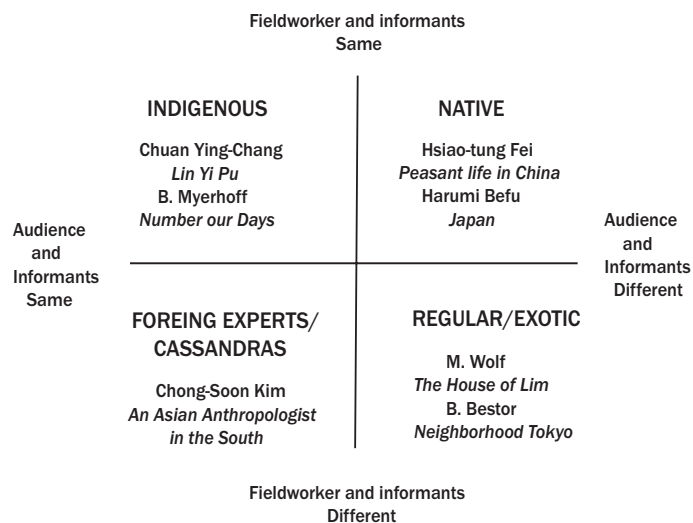
they do not publish very often in their native language. An interesting case here is that of Harumi Befu (who was actually born in America, but who spent much of his youth in Japan, returning to America after World War II). Thus, making a clear distinction between “native” and “indigenous” anthropology is often problematic.

Nevertheless, the advantage of this distinction between native and indigenous anthropology is that it focuses on the intended audience in addition to the characteristics of the researcher. In both cases the anthropologist claims a special authority based on cultural commonality with the people studied, but the distinction recognizes that the writer will make different assumptions depending on the intended audience. Audiences of “outsiders” need more background, while “natives” will find descriptions of the obvious to be of little scientific merit.

Anthony Giddens is purported to have said that sociology is stating what we know but are not aware of. Anthropologists studying exotic societies, on the other hand, have traditionally written about things that their audience did not know about. Now that travel, news media, and documentaries mean that fewer societies seem exotic, anthropology has had to adapt. Part of this change is the growth of an anthropology that is indigenous, in the sense described here, with local anthropologists writing in the language of their informants.

***Intentional.indigenization***

The term “indigenization” in some cases refers to the purposeful adaptation of anthropology to local conditions, resulting in a viewpoint different from that of mainstream anthropology: Some anthropologists call for indigenous theories to replace imported theories, and for the voices and views of the local people to be given priority. Often the result is research questions which are very different from those in the United States and Western Europe. Sometimes this localism is based on a rejection of a universal science of human culture, but in many cases the argument is that indigenous theories are of superior scientific value and/or practical use to the local society. An additional motivation in some countries (e.g. China) is to make anthropology politically acceptable by claiming that it is indigenous and not “Western.” Furthermore, many Asian scholars feel that their contributions have not been sufficiently recognized by Western scholars, while Western scholars make reputations merely reporting what is common knowledge, and treat local scholars as assistants rather than intellectual partners.<sup>8</sup> Thus, indigenization as a purposeful movement is in response to the perceived hubris of Western anthropologists who see themselves as defining the field and imposing their own practices as the rules of the game.



**Figure 1.** Difference and sameness among audience, fieldworker, and informants.

There are, of course, national traditions in anthropology, but they are not always purposely created. Sometimes they are simply side effects of the developmental process in social science. Present day Japanese anthropologists do not seek to consciously indigenize anthropology, even though, like Kuwayama in this volume, they may see it as a Western dominated “world-system.” But a large body of writing in Japanese inevitably creates a Japanese tradition of scholarship, within which scholars research and write, making reference primarily to previous work in Japanese, often written by members of their intended audience, rather than to work written in English. The same is true to a lesser extent of work in French, German, and Spanish. But some early Japanese anthropologists, as we have seen, did operate with a nationalist agenda, in making a case for the development of an “Oriental” ethnology or history, distinct from that in the West. Memories of the equation between anthropology and colonialism still linger in many parts of the world, with the result that Western anthropology is still linked in the minds of some scholars with colonial, neocolonial, or postcolonial hegemony, and denounced accordingly.

The clearest example in this volume is the chapter by Magos. She argues that it has long been recognized that “Western concepts, theories, and methods are inappropriate to the Asian setting” and that a “change in the anthropologist’s role and perspective might require a set of theories based on non Western precepts and assumptions.” Colonial education “imposed ... concepts, ideas, beliefs, and practices which were alien to the natives,” and the process of indigenization is presented as a struggle against this outside hegemony by particular groups of local scholars. As her chapter makes clear, the development of anthropology in the Philippines has to be seen within the context of the turbulent history of the country, in which Spanish, American and Japanese colonialism were followed by years of political instability and dictatorship. It is also clear from her paper just how complex the notion of “indigenization” is in the context of the Philippines. At one level it expresses the aspirations of the peoples of the Philippines for freedom from domination from outside. At another level, it also expresses the struggle among the ethnic minorities in the Philippines, including the Muslims in the south and aboriginal groups, for their own ethnic identities to be recognized (cf. Tokoro 2003; Shimizu 2003). Readers may disagree with parts of Magos’ argument, or find the shifts in the use of the word “indigenization” to describe these different contexts unsettling, but the editors of this book decided that it was important to include this chapter as an example of the kind of challenge to a universal anthropology that is common in many of parts of Asia, as in other parts of the postcolonial world. There are also similarities between the cases of the Philippines and Korea, as discussed by Kim in his chapter in this volume, in that Korean anthropologists have also been struggling to liberate themselves from a colonial legacy, in this case Japanese.

### ***National, ethnic, and indigenous***

Other types of cleavage and conflict underlie the two chapters in this volume on Malaysia. Shamsul is also interested in the links between colonialism and anthropology, given that colonial knowledge “subsequently came to be accepted as the basis of the history and the territorial and social organization of the postcolonial state.” Postcolonial nations are still officially seen as consisting of the various ethnic groups documented by colonial anthropology, though anthropologists are also seen as useful specialists in mediating the relations between these groups. Like Zhuang, Shamsul discusses the politics of the curriculum in anthropology departments; and comments that anthropology graduates are considered employable partly because of their supposed expertise in multi ethnic situations. However, he is loathe to use the word “indigenization” in the Malaysian context, preferring to see the development of the discipline in Malaysia as a process of “Malaysianization” after the crisis of 1969, with a shift from the old emphasis on “Malay studies” to one on the multi ethnic pluralism of the Malaysian state. “Indigenous” in the Malaysian context has become a word associated with just one of the local ethnic groups, the Malays. Tan also discusses contemporary Malaysian anthropology, and the influence on it of the ethnic diversity within the country, including aboriginal groups (the Orang Asli), the Chinese, and the minorities in East Malaysia. Like the country itself, anthropologists are recruited from a variety of ethnic groups,

giving them very different viewpoints. This makes the dichotomy between “foreign” and “indigenous” researchers largely meaningless, as the most important divisions lie within the country, not between Malaysia and the outside world.

### **Beyond Indigenization?**

When “indigenization” is viewed as the adaptation of anthropology to suit local settings, it is inherently particularistic. From this viewpoint, instead of anthropology being seen as a universal science, it is seen as primarily a Western construct that needs to be tailored and modified to make it useful in Asia and elsewhere. If the proposition that anthropology always needs to be indigenized to be valid were to be taken to its logical conclusion, the discipline would be divided into a host of mutually incompatible national projects with no grand aspirations in common: Though nationalistic pride will continue to drive some anthropologists to argue for the creation of new forms of “indigenous” anthropology; the more *difficult challenge* in the discipline is to reconcile the universalistic goals of anthropology as a science with the particularistic problems and viewpoints of the local, and to use local viewpoints to inform and improve the universal enterprise. Among anthropologists in China, there seems to be a consensus that anthropology needs to be indigenized (*bentubua*), yet at the same time, the same scholars argue for increased ex-change to learn from the West (see for examples the papers in Rong and Xu 1998).

The analysis of the uses of the terms “native” and “indigenous” anthropology above suggests that it may be useful in some contexts to limit the term “native anthropology” to mean research conducted by a native of the culture, and “indigenous” research to refer to research and publication by native anthropologists in their own languages. However, the case studies of the “indigenization” of anthropology in East and Southeast Asia in this book show that there is no universal process of indigenization and that the only utility the term may have comes in highlighting local differences. The key issues affecting native and indigenous anthropology are issues that affect anthropology everywhere: audience and context.

### **Audience**

One of the major weaknesses of the universalistic models of anthropology as a science is the lack of recognition that writing must address an audience. An audience has certain assumptions upon which writing must build, or which it must seek to undermine. In general, these assumptions are simply the ethnocentric understandings of the readers’ own cultures. What strikes anthropologists as worth studying is usually that which seems odd from their common sense point of view. Even though anthropologists should ideally study questions that emerge from received theory, in practice, many of our questions originate from our own times and social context. Postmodernist critics have noted that politics and emotions, and not just theory, mediate knowledge. The chapters in this book suggest that the culture of the audience forms a kind of hidden substructure on which we build our theory. Whether we notice and accept theories and interpretations is based, in part, on how well they fit with our received common sense. In our areas of specialization, we can hope to transcend culture bound perspectives to some degree, using cross-cultural anthropological theory, but because we address a culturally based audience and do not write in a universal language (even English is not universal), the reception of all writing is affected by the culture of the intended audience.

One experience that leads scholars in China to feel that indigenization is necessary is the odd sense of seeing their own cultural practices described in Western categories. Despite the deserved praise received in the West by books such as Yan’s *The Flow of Gus* (1996) and Jing’s *The Temple of Memories* (1996), some scholars in China have dismissed the books as “written for foreigners” because they describe things (*guanxi* and social memory) that “everybody in China knows” and because they “do not address the real problems of China.” Undoubtedly, the books would have been written differently had they been written first in Chinese: The intended audience matters. This is the basic reason why the monographs written by the Chinese scholars based in Japan address rather different issues to those written by Chinese scholars based in the West, despite the similar Chinese origins of the two groups.

The chapters in this volume show that much indigenous anthropology is motivated by a desire to record a vanishing past. As in the West, this nostalgia for the past is in part a critique of capitalism and materialism and the rationalization of society. In addition, however, it is driven by controversies over national identities and by attempts at nation building. Many of the authors point to nation building as one of the primary purposes of anthropology. The position of anthropology is often similar to that of history, ethnomusicology, and other disciplines. The resulting research is much like Western folklore: empirical, atheoretical, and oriented towards collecting and classification. These characteristics, which are often cited by outsiders as limitations of indigenous research, can be understood as due to the audiences of their work and the context of the research funding and not due to the nature of the fieldworker.

### **Context**

It has been said that “foreign anthropologists are less affected than local ethnographers by the political and social world of their research” (Kapferer 1990: 299). From our discussion above, it is clear that the key differences arise from the audiences for which the anthropologists write. Indigenous anthropologists write in the same language as their informants, so will have their work scrutinized by their informants. Ethnographers are increasingly concerned about the ethical and legal issues that arise when informants read their published work (see e.g. Allen 1997). The freedom previously enjoyed by foreign anthropologists was entirely premised on the assumption that the subjects would not read the ethnographies, but as Tan points out in his chapter, this can no longer be assumed. Given that this assumption of separation is increasingly untenable in our increasingly globalized world, all anthropologists are affected by the political and social world in which they do research.<sup>9</sup> Here again the distinction between indigenous and foreign anthropology fades as one realizes that the primary issue is that of the audience which reads the ethnography, and as one realizes the degree to which the world is interconnected. Anthropologists are increasingly being confronted with individuals claiming to be “natives,” and therefore to have more authority than anthropologists regardless of data (their experience being the only necessary datum).

Each chapter of this book shows how various aspects of context have strongly affected what is studied as part of anthropology. Tan in this volume notes that he had to abandon his hope of doing fieldwork in northern Thailand because doing so would make him unemployable back home in Malaysia. Magos describes the localism that led young scholars to want to do fieldwork in the Philippines. In developing countries, economic development and topics related to nation building are more likely to receive government funding, leading scholars to specialize in these areas. Thus, the job market and the national political context both strongly affect the nature of indigenization. This should not come as a surprise; Joan Vincent (1990) has ably demonstrated the influence of national agendas on political anthropology in the United States and the United Kingdom, and there has been much commentary since the early 1990s on the way in which the area studies approach in the United States was a response to the Cold War.<sup>10</sup>

Though it probably should not have been a surprise, one thing we have discovered in editing this book is how widely the nature of the process of indigenization, the adaptation of anthropology to local conditions, varies from country to country. In the Philippines, as Magos' chapter makes clear, the word “indigenous” operates at different levels, both national (minorities versus the majority) and international (Filipinos versus outsiders). In Malaysia, for historical reasons, the term “indigenous,” has come to mean “Malay” and hence the study of Malay society in contrast to Chinese, Indian, or British society (Cheap 1996). Thus, both Malaysian authors in this book (Shamsul and Tan) hesitate to use the term “indigenous” in their chapters. The Malaysian case highlights the political and nationalistic usage of the concept of indigenous. Given the many variables along which one can be an “insider” or “outsider,” and the obvious nationalistic and ethnic manipulation of the term “indigenous” it perhaps behooves us, as anthropologists, to view “indigenous anthropology” with caution and skepticism. All the chapters in this book show how local context and history have affected local anthropological theory, concepts, and fieldwork. But their writers also note the importance of an international dialogue among scholars, not only between Asia and the United States and Europe, but also among scholars in Asia.

## Conclusion: Asian and Global Anthropology

Focusing on one country at a time, as the chapters of this book do, risks obscuring the connections between countries, overlooking both the students that go overseas for degrees and postdoctoral research and the visitors and fieldworkers that come and influence local scholars. Yet many of the chapters focus on connections, and the reader is left in no doubt as to the importance of travel and contact with foreign anthropologists. The world economic system is the most prominent influence: Filipino scholars have ties with the United States, scholars in Taiwan and Korea have contacts with the United States and Japan, and Malaysian scholars have ties with the United Kingdom and Australia. So far, however, there has been very limited communication between anthropologists from different Asian countries. As Kuwayama notes, quoting Gerholm and Hannerz (1982: 7), residents of the peripheral islands within the anthropological world map always look to the mainland center, but they know little about each other. Japan has the largest anthropology industry in the region, and Japanese anthropologists have always been most deeply concerned with Asia, but Japan has failed to develop as the major regional hub in the discipline, partly because of the language factor discussed above, and partly as a legacy of its imperial and colonial past. This is well illustrated in the chapter on Korea in this volume by Kim. In recent years, a number of scholars have been anxious to create links within the region, through meetings, exchanges, and joint research and publication.<sup>11</sup> Given this trend, there are several interesting possibilities for future cooperation between Asian anthropologists.

The first issue to be confronted is the historically ambiguous position of Japanese anthropology in relation to Japanese colonialism and imperialism. During the colonial period, Japanese anthropology practiced its own kind of Orientalism, in which the people of Asia were seen as “*dojin*” or “indigenous peoples” (cf. Kawamura 1993). They were also ranked as “progressive” or “backward” instead of being treated equally. This historical period could be examined not only by Japanese but also by other Asian scholars as a joint project on the history of colonialism and anthropology in Asia.

A second issue is that of the differences and tensions between anthropology as practiced in Japan and elsewhere in the region, following on from Mathews’ discussion of Japan and the United States. For example, Japanese anthropologists have historically been less concerned with the anthropology of development than anthropologists elsewhere in Asia. This raises the question of the reasons for these differences in emphasis between Asian anthropologies, and in what ways they can learn from each other.

Third, given that anthropology in each Asian country has its own national characteristics, how can the discipline deal with common problems such as development, environment, migration, or ethnic conflict in the postcolonial world? In order to answer these questions, one solution might be to set up an Asian network for anthropological studies which can hold regional meetings, rather like the European Association of Social Anthropologists established in the late 1980s. This would also enable Asian anthropologists to develop their own distinctive projects rather than simply depending on the West for ideas. However, even though there are national and regional differences in anthropology, we still see anthropology as a unified global enterprise. We are not advocating the development of “Asian” anthropology as opposed to “Western” anthropology. What is required is interaction between Western and Asian anthropologies that can enrich the discipline world wide. An interactive anthropology is global, because it is neither national nor international but transcends both, allowing anthropologists to work with anyone on the globe “and to appreciate the worldwide processes within which and on which they work” (Albrow 1990: 7). Anthropology is a cultural product. If culture travels, as James Clifford (1992) puts it, anthropology travels, too. Through traveling the world, anthropology can be enriched and transformed by adjusting it to the local situation. The anthropology of the twenty first century will be constructed on the basis of the “glocal,” namely the interaction of global and local relations (Robertson 1995), in the same way as other major forms of cultural production in the world are constructed, and in the process it could radically change the map of the anthropological world-system.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the term “anthropology” is used throughout the book to refer to American style cultural anthropology or European style social anthropology, rather than the broader “four field” anthropology practiced in the United States, which also includes archeology, linguistics, and bio medical or physical anthropology. Generally socio cultural anthropology is by far the largest of the four fields. There are national differences in terminology within Asia. In Japan, the meaning of the term *jinnruiigaku* is as wide as that of “anthropology” in America. The term for “cultural anthropology” is *bunkajinnruiigaku*, though the older term *minzokugaku* (“ethnology”) is also often used. As in some European countries, there is also a strong tradition of folklore studies (also pronounced *minzokugaku* in Japanese, though written with different characters). Terms using similar characters are also found in mainland China, though “anthropology” (*renleixue*) is not as widely used as the term “ethnology” (*minzuxue*). This usually refers to research on national minorities which in the past used Marxist Leninist evolutionary theory, a model adopted from the former Soviet Union. “Sociology” is used for work on the Ban Chinese. A number of former colonial countries in East Asia follow the British tradition, in which social anthropology is often taught alongside sociology, whereas in Japan and the United States the two disciplines are more distinct. At the level of graduate research in Asia, differences between sociology, American style cultural anthropology, and European style social anthropology are often elided as scholars focus on similar social issues using similar bodies of theory. In this book we regard contemporary socio cultural anthropology as a fairly homogeneous discipline which uses an internationally accepted body of theory and research methods, while the various research traditions from which it arose are now in practice inextricably intertwined.

<sup>2</sup> On indigenization, see the edited volumes resulting from conferences organized by the Wenner Gren Foundation at Burg Wartenstein (Fahim 1982; Messerschmidt 1981) and the Association of Social Anthropologists in the United Kingdom (Jackson 1987). For earlier work on Asia, see Befu and Kreiner (1992) on national traditions of Japanese studies, and Chiao (1985), and Yang and Wen (1982) for research on the sinicization of the social sciences. Since the early 1990s, Eades and Yamashita have organized a series of panels at the Annual Meetings of the American Anthropology Association, focusing on the history and current state of anthropology in Japan. One of these resulted in a volume on Japanese research on China, edited by Suenari, Eades, and Daniels (1995 j). In 1996, a number of articles on the history of anthropology in Taiwan were published (see Li 1996, Chang 1996, and the special forum in the *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology*, no. 80). A conference entitled “Forty Years of Anthropology in Taiwan” was held in March 1997 at the Institute of Ethnology of the Academia Sinica in Taipei. (The Chinese title is actually slightly different from the official English title: *Renleixue zai Taiwan de fazhan* literally means “The Development of Anthropology in Taiwan.”) In May 1997, Jan van Bremen convened an international workshop in Leiden on the indigenization of Asian anthropology (Bremen 1997). The same year also saw the publication of a book edited by Yamashita, Kadir Din and Eades on the anthropology of tourism, consisting mainly of papers by Asia scholars (Yamashita, Kadir Din, and Eades 1997). In China, two volumes have focused on the localization and indigenization of anthropology, edited by Rong Shixing and Xu Jieshun (1998) and Xu Jieshun (2000), and many major conferences in China now include papers on this issue. The Fourteenth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held in Williamsburg, Virginia, in July 1998 included two panels which formed the starting point for this book: “The Making of Anthropology in Asia: The Past, The Present, and the Future” organized by Shinji Yamashita and Takeo Funabiki, and “Indigenization of Anthropology in East and Southeast Asia,” organized by Joseph Bosco. In the same year, the Japanese Society of Ethnology published the first issue of a new English language journal, *Japanese Review of Cultural Anthropology*, designed to make the results of research by Japanese scholars more readily available to scholars elsewhere. More recently, the Department of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong has launched its own English language journal, *Asian Anthropology*, and the Institute of Ethnology of the Academia Sinica in Taipei has launched the new bilingual *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology*. There is also the Berghahn series of which this volume is part. This is only a partial list: other references can be found in the chapters throughout this book. Not only are there a growing number of Asian anthropologists studying their own and other societies, but they are also increasingly interested in publicizing this research internationally.

<sup>3</sup> See the chapter by Kuwayama in this volume. A session of the 2000 Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS) conference was also devoted to this theme, and the papers were published in Asquith (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Hinton went to China as an agriculturalist. For many years after his first volume, *Fangshen*, was published (Hinton 1966), he was prevented from returning to China, due to the American government's seizure of his passport and by the onset of the Cultural Revolution (Hinton 1983: xiii xiv). He later retired to Mongolia. The Crooks stayed on in China as translators, but David Crook was incarcerated for much of the Cultural Revolution, and was only released in 1973. He died aged 90 in 2000 (Davin 2000).

<sup>5</sup> In the case of Nie, this is not a coincidence. She was Fei's student at Beijing University before moving to Japan, and she discusses the influence of Fei on her fieldwork in the introduction in the book based on her Tokyo Ph.D. thesis (Nie 1992):

<sup>6</sup> Note that this excludes the study of minorities in one's own society, such as the study of Native Americans in the United States and of minority nationalities in China. This type of study, which has often been seen as part of a colonial agenda (Asad 1973), takes advantage of proximity, government funding, and the fact that informants are often bilingual. Anthropologists from the dominant society generally do not claim to share the culture of their informants, even though there may in fact be many commonalities because of education and popular culture.

<sup>7</sup> While it is not unusual for universities in the United States and United Kingdom to focus their research on a small number of ethnographic regions, they still usually claim to teach anthropology as a global subject, drawing on material from all over the world. In Asia outside Japan, however, the focus is usually firmly on the home region.

<sup>8</sup> In the worst case, as noted by Whyte (1984: 211), the project was designed overseas, and it only used local scholars as informants and to collect data; the local scholars got a stipend but no credit in publications which came out in English.

<sup>9</sup> The discussion in *Anthropology Newsletter*, October 1999, p. 4, in relation to the work of Gilbert Herdt, illustrates this issue well.

<sup>10</sup> Ironically, as this volume goes to press, there is another discussion starting in America of the status of area studies programs in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington in 2001. Some area studies scholars now see themselves as under attack from neo-conservatives as "subversive," and "anti-American" because they are seen as supporting and representing the interests of the peoples they study.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, in Japan, a symposium entitled "Cultural anthropology and Asia: The past, the present and the future" was organized in 1995 at the annual meeting of the Japanese Society of Ethnology at Osaka. The aim was to discuss the state of cultural anthropology in Asia and the possibility of cooperation in future. Anthropologists from China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia participated, and the Turkish anthropologist, Nur Yalman of Harvard University, gave the keynote speech. There have also been research exchange programs at institutions such as the National Museum of Ethnology at Osaka and joint research projects with financial support from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, the Japan Foundation, the Toyota Foundation, and others. An Asia Center was specially established by the Japan Foundation in 1995 in order to promote mutual understanding of Asian peoples and their cultures.

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## INTRODUCCIÓN. ANTROPOLOGÍA BRASILEÑA CONTEMPORÁNEA. CONTRIBUCIONES PARA UN DIÁLOGO LATINOAMERICANO

Alejandro Grimson y Pablo Semán

¿Por qué resulta importante publicar en español la antropología que se produce en Brasil? La antropología brasileña es, como cualquier otra de América Latina, una antropología periférica, pero dadas sus dimensiones y, sobre todo, el papel que crecientemente cumple en el continente y en las redes transnacionales de la disciplina se la puede considerar una “gran” antropología periférica. Como afirma Cardoso de Oliveira, la antropología que se hace en Brasil, por sus alcances teóricos y empíricos tiene fuertes rasgos de una “antropología de punta” (Cardoso de Oliveira 1998: 132).

La combinación de los dos aspectos mencionados, su carácter periférico y de avanzada, hace necesaria esta publicación. La antropología brasileña ofrece análisis y actitudes teóricas que constituyen una interpelación potente e inspiradora para los practicantes de la antropología social, pero es relativamente desconocida en el mundo hispano parlante, en el que las diversas antropologías nacionales se ignoran recíprocamente y tienden a vivir el carácter internacional de la disciplina como la simple mimesis de algunas corrientes académicas centrales. Multiplicar y jerarquizar la circulación de la antropología brasileña ofrece la posibilidad de enriquecer el arsenal de instrumentos del que cada antropólogo puede disponer y la oportunidad de diversificar una situación de diálogo unipolar y unidireccional que parece conducir la producción a puntos ciegos, como la tendencia a reducir la diversidad cultural a un caso más de la etiqueta de lo políticamente correcto y la politicidad de lo social al formato de algunos movimientos sociales. A partir de esta presentación también esperamos reforzar el desarrollo de estudios comparativos que en sus primeros pasos ya muestran su enorme potencial.

En diversos países latinoamericanos parecen generarse en, estos últimos años importantes procesos de renovación teórica, de incremento en la cantidad y calidad de las investigaciones, de surgimiento de una nueva generación que se formó en los países centrales y que regresa a sus países con fuerte compromiso institucional y antropológico. Esta renovación viene a enriquecer y a redimensionar las tradiciones locales de la antropología o del análisis cultural y político fertilizando un campo erosionado por largos períodos de autoritarismo, represión y vaciamiento del mundo universitario y el campo intelectual. En este marco puede percibirse un creciente cosmopolitismo teórico en los modos de abordaje y de selección de objetos potencialmente analizables. Es un riesgo, sin embargo, que esas aperturas sean parcializadas en diálogos bidireccionales con Estados Unidos, Inglaterra o Francia, desconociendo otras tradiciones intelectuales y su producción contemporánea.

Acceder a la antropología brasileña es, en ese sentido, un capítulo clave de un proyecto cosmopolita que no se confunda con la ampliación de la escala de circulación de las voces más potentes. La apuesta a la circulación y visibilidad latinoamericana de los productos la antropología brasileña trabaja sobre dos dimensiones de las asimetrías estructurantes de la producción académica. Por un lado busca neutralizar el obstáculo que supone la distancia lingüística y prestigiar el valor de esta contribución con el estatuto de jerarquía que confiere a un texto su traducción. Por otro lado se trata de algo más que dar cumplimiento a un imperativo enciclopedista de completar el mapa de la disciplina haciendo audible una voz generalmente ignorada. En la medida en que la antropología brasileña tiene críticamente presente el contexto transnacional de articulación de sus debates y problemas se trata de posibilitar el despliegue de efectos críticos que vibran en esa voz.

Como antropólogos argentinos, y a riesgo de ser demasiado domésticos, asumimos que esta posibilidad se nos hizo evidente en la práctica, en nuestras trayectorias académicas. En nuestras respectivas especialidades hemos realizado una experiencia que nos ha permitido palpar un entramado de actividad, referencias recíprocas, problematizaciones y conflictos que transformaron nuestro hacer. Nuestras respectivas tesis doctorales fueron realizadas en programas de posgrado brasileños y de diversas formas buscaron definir internacionalmente un estado de la cuestión que se beneficiaba con la incorporación de un capítulo brasileño.

Esa incorporación permitía leer críticamente ese panorama y efectuar acotaciones sustanciales. En el análisis del campo religioso deben reconocerse las necesidades de relativización que imponen los antropólogos brasileños cuando, lejos de describir las vigas y nuevas formas de religiosidad popular como simples compensaciones de las carencias materiales, las toman como expresiones de un universo simbólico que no por próximo deja de ser diferente. En el análisis de las zonas de fronteras entre estados nacionales resulta clave recuperar los aportes que el estudio de las zonas de frontera interétnicas realizara en las últimas cuatro décadas contribuyendo a comprender articulaciones entre procesos sociales y territoriales, culturales e identitarios. En este terreno se trataba en parte de pensar hasta qué punto una tradición brasileña de estudios sobre las relaciones entre los indígenas y la sociedad nacional contribuía a pensar los vínculos entre sociedades nacionales en regiones de fronteras políticas.

Por todo esto es necesaria una acotación: esta compilación y estas breves notas introductorias son realizadas a partir de una experiencia particular y no como consecuencia de un estudio sistemático de Brasil o de la antropología en general. Las afirmaciones de esta introducción no son el juicio de especialistas en Brasil o en el estudio de la disciplina como objeto. Ellas pueden ser mejor leídas como el resultado de la elaboración de un aspecto clave de nuestras respectivas experiencias de formación e investigación en centros brasileños, así como de los diálogos que hemos tenido entre nosotros a partir de ellas, con el simple objetivo de presentar un universo académico complejo al lector que se acerca sin conocerlo. Un corolario de esta acotación es que tampoco pretendemos realizar una exposición de la historia de la antropología brasileña: apenas haremos referencia a algunas trayectorias históricas que permiten ceñir mejor algunas de las afirmaciones que hacemos acerca de lo que identificamos como producto.

### **Antropología hecha en Brasil**

¿Hay una antropología brasileña? ¿Cuáles son los aportes en los que reconocemos una antropología periférica de avanzada? La primera pregunta tendría entre los antropólogos brasileños una respuesta negativa: más de una decena de programas de posgrado y centenas de profesores e investigadores configuran una base problemática para el discernimiento de cualquier tipo de unidad mucho más cuando las diferencias de conceptos y estilos de trabajo que existen en la antropología brasileña se remontan a sus inicios, a los círculos relativamente más reducidos en que comenzó a desarrollarse y aun a las tendencias emergentes en el contexto de la ampliación de la formación de posgrado en antropología social en todo el país.

La densidad y productividad de este campo surge de la combinación de varios factores. Por un lado, el papel que las élites le dieron a la antropología en la construcción de la idea de nación, el desarrollo de una elite universitaria pluralmente conectada, abierta a la influencia y la presencia directa de científicos extranjeros, así como los efectos del proceso de modernización de la universidad que se dio a partir de la década de 1960. Con la disponibilidad continua de recursos de formación e investigación así como con la formación de un amplio público especializado surgió un terreno propicio para el desarrollo de una dinámica que, sin renunciar al universalismo del proyecto científico, fue relativamente autocentrada en la producción de conocimiento antropológico. Esto se combinó con que la antropología adquirió en Brasil considerable prestigio social e influencia pública, incluso en las políticas públicas (Velho 2003).

En ese contexto ha surgido una producción etnográfica de estándar elevado y amplitud de objetos: la producción de tesis de un alto nivel se combina con la presencia de varias camadas de profesores que se han formado en centros neurálgicos de la disciplina y contribuyen a mantener y desarrollar la actividad de la red internacional que fertiliza a la antropología.

Escapa a las posibilidades de esta introducción la exposición de una historia de la producción antropológica brasileña. Queremos, en cambio señalar y exponer brevemente ciertos rasgos que emergen del dispositivo brasileño en la producción de antropología y se vinculan con su carácter de antropología periférica de avanzada: el énfasis en la aplicación de las perspectivas teóricas y metodológicas de la antropología a la sociedad contemporánea, la forma en que toma lugar la tensión entre relativización y universalización, el papel crucial que desempeñan en ella las comparaciones y el correlativo papel de lo nacional.

### 1. Lo exótico y lo familiar en la antropología brasileña

Es frecuente que en un Departamento de Antropología de una universidad brasileña los estudiantes de doctorado se apliquen a la tarea de analizar fenómenos urbanos de la mano de conceptos y enfoques derivados de Malinowski, Evans Pritchard o Dumont. La antropología realizada en Brasil tiene muchas veces la forma de una curva que se aproxima a lo exótico, lo integra en una fórmula antropológica y una vez afianzada en ese gesto lo repone dialéctica y productivamente con relación a lo próximo y lo familiar. Las más diversas influencias constitutivas de la antropología brasileña han sido ocasión de este ejercicio: del estructuralismo de Lévi Strauss, y todo lo que implicó su presencia en Brasil, a la importación de Dumont, así como las diversas influencias de la antropología inglesa y estadounidense. ¿Sobre qué bases y con qué consecuencias se llega a este desarrollo?

George W. Stocking (1983) distinguía las antropologías nacionales dedicadas a la nación (antropologías de *nation building*) de las desarrolladas en las metrópolis en conexión con la constitución de los imperios (antropologías de *empire building*). Si en la antropología británica —paradigma de las antropologías imperiales— fue determinante el encuentro con los “otros” en los dominios de ultramar, en la antropología producida en países de Europa continental resultó clave la alteridad interna. En Brasil, donde fue asumida tempranamente la relevancia de la antropología en el proyecto nacional, el estudio de las poblaciones indígenas, que tenían un lugar clave en el imaginario nacional, fue decisivo en el desarrollo de la antropología.<sup>1</sup> A pesar de que el estudio de las poblaciones indígenas tiene un peso cuantitativamente menor en el conjunto de la antropología brasileña, esta le debe una parte muy relevante de su producción teórica: una parte significativa de la investigación antropológica produce una adecuación de las teorías y conceptos que emergieron del análisis etnográfico de los “indígenas” para pensar problemas contemporáneos de las sociedades modernas (Montero, 2004).<sup>2</sup>

El caso de la vida teórica del concepto de la fricción interétnica, y los debates conceptuales y metodológicos que aún suscita en la actualidad, es uno de los que ilustra esta situación.<sup>3</sup> La teoría del contacto interétnico —que Ramos (1990) describe como la *trademark* de la antropología brasileña— y los estudios de la “fricción interétnica” innovaron en un plano teórico metodológico general mostrando que el estudio de los indígenas requería considerar sus relaciones con “los blancos” y no, como era habitual en la década de 1950, concebirlos al margen de entramados económicos, sociales y políticos con la sociedad nacional. Esto implicó el despliegue de un campo de estudios que se prolongaron durante más de cuatro décadas y permitieron una conceptualización política de la etnicidad (véase Cardoso de Oliveira, en este volumen).<sup>4</sup>

Esta perspectiva relacional y conflictiva contribuyó a forjar una línea de estudios en la antropología brasileña, desde la cual se realizaron debates, críticas y aportes. Por ejemplo, acerca del papel de la historia y la situación histórica (Pacheco de Oliveira 1988; Cardoso de Oliveira 1996), de la cuestión de los indios “misturados” (Pacheco de Oliveira, en este volumen) o, de otra manera, del proyecto del indigenismo (Ramos, en este volumen).

Algunos desarrollos de esta perspectiva relacional y conflictiva fueron criticados por Viveiros de Castro (1999) —un texto que por su extensión no pudimos incluir en este volumen—, proponiendo un debate acerca de cómo estudiar a los indígenas, pero cuyo alcance, a nuestro entender al igual que en la perspectiva criticada, presenta un interés teórico y metodológico que excede el estudio de los indígenas. Para Viveiros de Castro (1999: 115)

“la alternativa es clara: o se toma a los pueblos indígenas como criaturas de la mirada objetivadora del estado nacional, duplicándose en teoría la asimetría política entre los dos polos, o se busca determinar la actividad específicamente creadora de esos pueblos en la constitución del ‘mundo de los blancos’ como uno de los componentes de su propio mundo vivido, es decir, como materia prima histórica para la ‘cultura culturante’ de los colectivos indígenas. La segunda opción me parece la única opción, si lo que se desea hacer es antropología indígena” (traducción nuestra).<sup>5</sup>

Esta postura halla correlato en la que, precisamente reivindicando la posición de Viveiros, promueve Fonseca (2004) para el análisis de los grupos populares: “salvadas las enormes diferencias entre sociedades indígenas y grupos populares, me gustaría sugerir que los investigadores que se dedican a uno y otro campo enfrentan demandas persistentes de trabajar sus datos empíricos exclusivamente en términos del impacto de la sociedad dominante y, si no lo abrazan como objetivo principal del análisis, son tildados de ‘culturalistas’”.

Al menos algunas de las vigorosas líneas de investigación de la antropología brasileña se desarrollaron relacionadas con los esfuerzos que movilizaron las poblaciones indígenas, esa presencia que hacía diferencia en el territorio de —como dice el himno nacional— la “mae gentil” que debía contener a todos como brasileños. ¿Cómo asumir esa diferencia? ¿Captando su lado radical y exponiendo su inconmensurabilidad? ¿O entendiendo que el hecho de su presencia en un territorio nacional constituye el paso inicial de un movimiento de ingreso a una dinámica mayor y sobredeterminante? La historia de la etnología brasileña está atravesada por este dilema y la traslación de sus hallazgos al mundo urbano ha portado ese atravesamiento.

Más allá de las posiciones que cada uno pueda tener en este debate (y debemos admitir que nosotros mismos tenemos posiciones diferentes al respecto), lo que interesa resaltar es que nuevamente el estudio de “los otros” tiene impactos teóricos en otras áreas de la antropología. Si estas distintas conceptualizaciones han sido seguidas con interés es porque, de hecho, presentan una analogía con los abordajes de sectores populares urbanos. Nos referimos, especialmente, a las tensiones entre perspectivas relacionales, para las cuales las culturas de los sectores populares necesariamente establecen referencias directas en relación a las disputas hegemónicas, *vis à vis* perspectivas que enfatizan la autonomía de esos grupos, en un sentido más radicalmente relativista, para las cuales hay experiencias populares que implican un punto de vista y una actividad que sólo se captan pensando que el “ser para sí” no es patrimonio exclusivo de los grupos dominantes. Habiendo dicho que nuestros propios énfasis son distintos en estas alternativas, podemos agregar que no se trata de diluir la tensión con retóricas acerca de su complementariedad, sino más bien de asumir que comprender esta tensión como constitutiva quizá sea una de las posibilidades más productivas de la práctica antropológica.

El pasaje de familiarizar lo extraño a tornar extraño lo familiar es una fórmula de Roberto DaMatta (1997: 14) que condensa en su propia carrera otra forma de materialización del movimiento que transfiere adquisiciones en el campo de la antropología clásica al análisis de la sociedad compleja en la que viven los investigadores. Luego de su incursión en sociedades indígenas interrogará a la sociedad nacional brasileña atendiendo un aspecto clave en la perspectiva antropológica: los rituales y, en especial, el carnaval. Y lo hará dando lugar a una obra cuya influencia ha trascendido los límites de la disciplina y de Brasil. En *Carnavales, balandros y héroes* (DaMatta 2003) propone una interpretación de Brasil que, apoyada en la antropología que Dumont (1992) había desarrollado sobre la India, dilucida las diferencias



de Brasil con las sociedades prototípicas de la modernidad estableciendo sus dualidades y las reglas de la relación entre sus diversos momentos. Dumont había reparado que la sociedad de castas, al definirse positivamente como holista ofrecía un modelo de contraste con el universo moral del individualismo y sus valores del yo y la libertad: en el universo holista cada “individuo” se define como parte relativa de un todo siempre jerarquizado. La interpretación de DaMatta discernirá en el análisis del Brasil contemporáneo la vigencia simultánea, contrastante y complejamente articulada de principios individualistas y holistas internalizando en la construcción intelectual del objeto Brasil el análisis que Dumont refería a un territorio externo a Francia e incluso a la modernidad en general.

Ese trabajo, que aún hoy conserva vigencia a la hora de pensar cuestiones mayores de las ciencias sociales tales como los problemas que ofrece la cultura política en los procesos de transición a la democracia o el insuficiente avance de los principios de ciudadanía en los países latinoamericanos, influyó notablemente en los trabajos teóricos y empíricos de antropólogos que continuaron esa intuición. Algunos de ellos, notablemente Gilberto Velho (en este volumen), desarrollaron y promovieron una etnografía sistemática y abarcativa de las formas existentes del individualismo en Brasil así como de sus formas de relación con los principios holistas. Posteriormente, otros, como Luis Fernando Días Duarte (1986), desarrollaron una comprensión profunda y sistemática de los momentos holistas de la sociedad brasileña mostrando hasta dónde podía pensarse su complejidad de la mano de una aguda teoría de la diferenciación cultural basada en extrañamiento de lo supuestamente familiar.

## 2. Una producción

Como no hay antropología sin comparaciones y contrastes que lleven a poner en cuestión los parámetros siempre problemáticamente universales que las ciencias sociales (entre ellas, a veces, la propia antropología) aspiran a desarrollar, la tensión entre relativización y universalización es constitutiva de la práctica antropológica. La antropología brasileña ha participado agudamente de esta tensión, ya que su punto de partida es la matriz implicada en el punto anterior: una sociedad que tiene en su interior un sistema de diferencias que países como Inglaterra sólo podían contener en su carácter y extensión de imperios. Junto a esta situación, se planteaba la disputa interpretativa acerca de la forma de la unidad de Brasil y las definiciones acerca de “los brasileños”.

Los extremos a los que podría haber llevado esta situación se han visto temperados en el marco de la consolidación de una cultura universitaria de investigadores que ha difundido, es verdad que desparejamente, la experiencia antropológica por excelencia: la asociación indisoluble entre investigación teórica y empírica, la del viaje de ida a la alteridad y la del retorno que pone en perspectiva las categorías analíticas de partida, la de la conciencia de la dificultad de las generalizaciones simples y *a priori*. Si “dominación” parece ser una categoría del sentido común de los estudiantes argentinos, “diferencia” parece ser una categoría del sentido común de los estudiantes brasileños que testimonian hasta dónde ha calado el impulso del momento relativizador de la producción de conocimiento social. Pero mucho más importante es que la vinculación de la docencia con la investigación, y el estilo de las generaciones que impulsaron la antropología universitaria desde la década de 1950 en adelante, pese a todas las diferencias que puedan invocarse, parece asumir como propia la divisa de Dumont (1992: 52): “Sólo aquel que se dirige con humildad a la particularidad más ínfima mantiene abierta la ruta de lo universal” (nuestra traducción de la edición brasileña).

Esto se remonta al menos a Florestan Fernandes, que, al pensar la cuestión indígena, reclamaba una “rotación de perspectiva” (Fernandes, 1975) que permitiese describir los procesos de colonización y destribilización del lado de las instituciones y organizaciones sociales indígenas. Las antropologías producidas en Brasil en la actualidad, tanto la mirada dirigida a las sociedades indígenas como la que se proyecta a los diversos grupos de la sociedad nacional, han sido capaces de acceder a diversos juegos de sentido nativos y de extraer en ese acceso sus consecuencias perturbadoras.

La apuesta epistemológica a la positividad de la alteridad se ha expresado de diferentes formas en diversos campos en que actúan antropólogos brasileños. Y más que traducirse en el rostro caricatural del etnocentrismo invertido con que se castiga de antemano a toda pretensión de desfamiliarización, se ha plasmado en imágenes verosímiles y profundamente contextualizadas de distintos segmentos del territorio y la sociedad nacional. Esta producción no se opone tanto a las pretensiones universalistas como ayuda a redimensionarlas y sobre todo a hacer evidente que universalismo y particularismo son momentos de una tensión irreductible que sólo progresa a través de un ejercicio permanente de reconstrucción de paradigmas.

Aunque la antropología brasileña no es homogénea en relación a la cuestión del compromiso y el relativismo, una vertiente con peso en su interior postula un tipo de equilibrio que nos parece especialmente productivo. Al igual que en otros países, quizá porque sea una característica de la propia disciplina, el mayor riesgo consiste en que el compromiso con un grupo cualquiera se convierta en un romanticismo que opaque el proyecto de comprensión de los complejos Procesos reales en los cuales los actores están insertos. En ese sentido, hay una corriente fuerte en la antropología brasileña que insiste con un momento constitutivo y *sine qua non* del análisis etnográfico y de cualquier conceptualización: la descripción rigurosa de los sentidos en los propios términos de los actores. No porque ese sea el límite del proyecto antropológico. En absoluto. Pero sí porque es su condición de posibilidad. Es sólo a partir de allí y desde allí que es posible debatir acerca de traducción, interpretación, dialogismo y todo el instrumental que actualmente se ofrece al académico.

En este sentido cabe subrayar una presencia singular en la antropología brasileña y en este volumen. El trabajo de Otávio Velho busca escapar de las estrecheces del relativismo y del universalismo a través del señalamiento de una lógica de las semejanzas a la que la antropología no puede renunciar. No se trata de reafirmar las ilusiones del ideal de conocimiento positivista sino de no negar las realidades que tienen un contexto más amplio que lo local, y remiten a estructuras abarcativas y profundas como el horizonte creado por la globalización (Velho, 1997) o la cultura bíblica brasileña de cuya eficacia da cuenta el trabajo de Otávio Velho que se publica en este libro.

### 3. La gran tradición comparativa

En las primeras páginas de *Casagrande e Setrúala*, Gilberto Freyre compara las modalidades que adquirieron las relaciones “interraciales” en Brasil con aquellas que se desarrollan en los Estados Unidos. Aquí la comparación no procuraba encontrar similitudes entre diferentes sociedades con el objetivo de generalizar, sino que buscaba contrastar procesos históricos distintos para comprender cada uno de ellos. Bastante más tarde la comparación consolidaría ese estatuto en la antropología social, apuntando a la elucidación recíproca de los casos particulares.

Quizá la posibilidad de las comparaciones y, sobre todo, su alcance más allá de las fronteras nacionales podría ser considerada un indicador de la madurez del pensamiento antropológico en una sociedad determinada. La antropología necesita monografías de calidad para poder comparar, acceso a esas monografías y capacidad teórico metodológica para desarrollar el contraste de manera productiva.

En ese sentido, no resulta casual que el estudio de DaMatta que ya mencionamos tenga un fuerte componente comparativo, por ejemplo entre el carnaval de Río de Janeiro y de New Orleans, entre un Brasil donde predomina la interpenetración de grupos normatizada por la jerarquía (“diferentes pero juntos”) en oposición a la ideología igualitarista con segregación (“iguales pero separados”) que caracteriza a los Estados Unidos. Había antecedentes en el análisis de las formas específicas de racismo, como el trabajo de Nogueira (1954), quien planteaba que mientras el esquema del prejuicio racial estadounidense es “de origen”, el brasileño es “de marca”. O sea, el sistema norteamericano no admite gradaciones y es axiomático, mientras Brasil admite y produce diversas gradaciones que establecen toda

una jerarquía (blanco, mulato, negro, indio, mameluco, cafuso). El racismo estadounidense teme la miscegenación y define que cualquier persona que tenga una “gota de sangre negra” será considerada negra.

Nuevos y crecientes capítulos de este proyecto comparativo se desarrollan en la antropología brasileña contemporánea. En la clave de los textos que mencionábamos, por ejemplo, Segato ha contrastado tres “formaciones de diversidad”: Estados Unidos, Brasil y Argentina. Los tres países usan el mismo término para referirse a su constitución como nación: “melting pot” en Estados Unidos, “crisol de razas” en la Argentina, “cadinho de raças” o “fábula de las tres razas” en Brasil. Esa misma expresión refiere a imágenes completamente diferentes. En los Estados Unidos refiere a un mosaico étnico, un conjunto de unidades segmentadas, segregadas y enfrentadas de acuerdo con una estructura po-lar de blancos y negros. El relato nacional brasileño habla de la fusión de blancos, negros e indios. Fábula de fusión complementada en la jerarquía ya señalada. El crisol, en cambio, refiere en la Argentina a la mezcla de “razas” europeas. No hay lugar para los indígenas ni para los afrodescendientes en el relato oficial de la nación. Mientras en los Estados Unidos las señales diacríticas de la afiliación étnica se exacerbaban y, actualmente, el acceso a los derechos se da en gran medida a través de la pertenencia a una minoría (afro americano, hispano, etc.), en la Argentina hubo un proceso de deseticización por el cual “la nación se construyó instituyéndose como la gran antagonista de las minorías” (Segato 1998: 183). Así, estos contrastes permiten comprender que la formación argentina se asentaría en el “pánico a la diversidad” y en una vigilancia cultural a través de mecanismos oficiales y oficiosos. A su vez, esto se expresa en que el lugar de las “minorías” y el clivaje político es muy diferente en los tres países.

Claro que la cuestión “racial” en Brasil y sus comparaciones con Estados Unidos abarcan muchos otros trabajos. Pero lo que interesa remarcar aquí no se refiere tanto al tema que se compara como al método comparativo. Interesa aquí remarcar que este uso de la comparación es creciente en Brasil, así como la incorporación del contraste con otros países latinoamericanos, algo poco frecuente pero que despierta cada vez más el interés de los antropólogos brasileños. Las comparaciones incluyen temas de visibilidad indígena y relato nacional (Ramos 1998), de modos de presentar la nación y de narrarla (Ribeiro, en este volumen; Frigerio y Ribeiro 2002), de estilos de antropología (Cardoso y Ruben 1995), del lugar de la antropología en relación a diferentes países (Peirano 1992) o de procesos en el campo religioso (Oro 1999).

Esta larga tradición comparativa se ha consolidado y se expande incorporando no sólo las referencias a otras sociedades, sino —y esto es novedoso— investigación empírica propia. Así, lentamente se están transformando los alcances y límites de la antropología brasileña.

#### **4. Los límites brasileños de la antropología brasileña**

Montero dice que “lo que le interesa a la antropología brasileña es, desde siempre y cada vez más ampliamente, ‘nosotros mismos’”. Lo que resulta complejo, evidentemente, es la definición del nosotros y de cómo estudiarlo. Porque si sólo podemos conocernos en el contraste con el otro, el capítulo comparativo impulsa cada vez más a los antropólogos brasileños más allá de sus propias fronteras. De hecho, Cardoso de Oliveira (1998) señalaba como rasgo de las antropologías periféricas que las fronteras nacionales aparecían como límite de sus propios proyectos. En otras palabras, apuntaba el patrón de que observan y analizan sus “otros internos”. Evidentemente, eso tiene implicancias teóricas y metodológicas. La teoría antropológica se constituyó, y se seguirá produciendo en el futuro, sobre la condición de que para comprendernos a nosotros mismos es imprescindible comprender a los otros. Y, en su desarrollo, como aprecian estos y otros autores brasileños, no sólo los “otros internos”, sino también los otros territoriales, étnicos, nacionales o regionales. Como muchas otras antropologías periféricas, la tradición de estudio de los “otros internos” fue en desmedro de atravesar las fronteras y, especialmente, aquellas con otros países latinoamericanos. Esto fue, y aún en parte es, un déficit de la antropología brasileña. Sin

embargo, poco a poco empieza a ser superado. Los artículos incluidos en este libro incluyen el estudio de y la reflexión sobre “otros internos”, sobre “nosotros mismos”, desarrollos comparativos y reflexiones sin fronteras.

Así, la antropología producida en Brasil cada vez más trasciende las fronteras brasileñas. El estudio de los migrantes brasileños en Portugal (Feldtnan Bianco, en este volumen), estudios sobre el Banco Mundial (Ribeiro 2003), sobre aspectos de la cultura estadounidense (Oliven, en este volumen) o de otras antropologías como la India o Estados Unidos (Peirano 1992) o Canadá (Ruben 1995; Baines) o los muy diversos trabajos de Luis Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira acerca de Quebec (por ejemplo, 1999) son ejemplos de avances cualitativos relativamente recientes que se están produciendo en la antropología brasileña. Atravesar las fronteras nacionales, también en un sentido latinoamericano, es una condición necesaria —aunque no suficiente— para ser una antropología cada vez menos periférica.

La cuestión de las fronteras de estudio de la disciplina implica un verdadero desafío acerca de los límites que esta u otras antropologías se impondrán a sí mismas. Quizá, traducirla, hacerla dialogar en castellano, promover que sea más leída que lo que puede ofrecer un libro, pueda ser una contribución para trascender esas fronteras.

Así, una antropología nacional puede transformar su lugar y sus proyectos. Como señala Otávio Velho (2003) la *nation buil-ding* ya no es el horizonte de estas antropologías “nacionales”. Velho se pregunta: ¿qué puede sustituir el *nation building*? ¿Los derechos humanos, el empoderamiento de grupos subalternos, el medioambiente, la justicia global? Y afirma que cualquiera sea la cuestión que la reemplace probablemente no ocupará el mismo lugar central.

Las antropologías periféricas y nacionales no están destinadas a serlo para siempre y, además, no sólo deben desplazarse hacia el tipo de inserción central o imperial. Una antropología, como en el caso de la brasileña, que comienza crecientemente a estudiar más allá de sus fronteras, una antropología que podría incorporar como capítulo central estudiar etnográficamente a las propias metrópolis, quizá no sea fácilmente clasificable en estas etiquetas. Más allá del futuro de la antropología brasileña, imaginamos a las antropologías latinoamericanas asumiendo el proyecto de estudiar a las elites de nuestros países tanto como a las culturales metropolitanas y entendemos que también allí puede haber complejas imbricaciones entre proyectos antropológicos y proyectos culturales y políticos. Exotizar aquello que se instituye como el parámetro cultural del mundo, producir etnográficamente distancia de la racionalidad instrumental devenida máquina de la cotidianidad, provincializar los Estados Unidos comprendiendo que sus formas de alimentación, sus concepciones del trabajo y de matrimonio son contingencias históricas, extrañarse de aquello que reclama para sí mismo el estatuto de única normalidad, constituye, a la vez, un proyecto disciplinario y mucho más que un proyecto disciplinario. Puede ser una apuesta a que la rotación de perspectivas no sea, alguna vez, sólo una práctica especializada de la antropología.

### La selección de artículos para este libro

No será difícil que el lector concuerde en que la tarea de seleccionar catorce artículos de antropólogos brasileños está destinada a producir injusticias en un país que tiene más de un centenar de grupos de investigación en el CNPq (el Consejo Nacional de Investigación en Brasil). De todos modos, el objetivo se limita a permitir un primer acceso en castellano a muchos autores o a temas de sumo interés y difíciles de conseguir. Para ello se fueron definiendo sucesivas restricciones. La primera fue que la selección sólo abarcará la antropología contemporánea y no la historia de la antropología brasileña. La segunda fue no volver a traducir textos que pueden conseguirse con relativa facilidad en español, como el caso de DaMatta, Segato, Palmeira o Heredia. La tercera fue ofrecer un cierto panorama de lo que se produce en diferentes regiones y distintas instituciones de Brasil, evitando el riesgo de hacer un libro que contenga sólo textos de investigadores de dos o tres universidades. Evidentemente la extensión de los textos fue

relevante, pero todos estos sucesivos recortes se hicieron con optimismo porque en las referencias de esta introducción y de los propios artículos el lector interesado podrá encontrar otros textos por donde continuar explorando la multifacética antropología brasileña. Esperamos que otras traducciones y diálogos se sumen este libro.

### **Agradecimientos**

Queremos agradecer a la Fundación CAPES y a la Asociación Brasileña de Antropología (ABA), que apoyaron este proyecto desde sus inicios. A nuestro destacado co editor en este volumen, Gustavo Lins Ribeiro, con quien formamos un equipo de trabajo para realizar este libro. A todos los autores que cedieron generosamente los derechos y colaboraron de múltiples maneras para que esta publicación sea posible. A Diana Klinger y Gabriela Binello por las traducciones.

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Agradecemos las sugerencias y críticas de Eduardo Archetti a una versión anterior de esta introducción. Sólo nosotros somos responsables de los errores u omisiones que pudiera haber.

### **Notas**

<sup>1</sup> Como veremos después, estos estudios se bifurcaron entre las perspectivas que indagaban la alteridad como un caso más de la diversidad humana y las que, de forma pionera, se refirieron a las relaciones entre los indígenas y la sociedad nacional. Pero más allá de las distintas posiciones en (y sobre) la an-tropología brasileña la cuestión gira en torno al tipo de relación establecida entre el desarrollo de la disciplina, la construcción de la nación y el estudio de las poblaciones indígenas (véanse p.e. Souza Lima 2002; Viveiros de Castro 1999; Ramos 1990; L'Estoile, Neiburg y Sigaud, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Aunque eso no es novedoso, ya que de alguna manera la historia de la antropología consiste en la construcción de herramientas teórico metodológicas a partir del estudio de “los otros” que transforman después el estudio del “nosotros”, hay dos elementos que cabe mencionar en relación a Brasil. El primero es que a diferencia de otras antropologías periféricas, Brasil constituye un caso donde su propio estudio de los pueblos indígenas produjo aportes teóricos que pueden ser aplicados al estudio de las sociedades complejas. El segundo es que, según constató Montero, las sociedades complejas condensan la gran mayoría de la investigación antropológica actual en el país, lo cual tampoco es uniforme en las diversas antropologías nacionales.

<sup>3</sup> Nuestra exposición no aspira a tener carácter sistemático. Por eso la demostración que estamos ensayando no acude a ejemplos de otra gran área de estudios de la antropología brasileña como es la de los estudios sobre la población de afrodescendientes, y los que discuten y critican la noción de raza a la luz de los resultados de las investigaciones sobre las relaciones interétnicas. Pero esto no nos impide señalar que en este terreno la antropología y las ciencias sociales brasileñas han hecho aportes que también hablan de su densidad y relevancia en la articulación internacional de esta problemática. Sobre este pun-to, véase Healey (2000).

<sup>4</sup> El hecho indudable de que los aportes realizados en Brasil en los estudios interétnicos no hayan tenido el impacto internacional de textos clave como la célebre introducción de Barth (1976), afirmación que de

todos modos habría que relativizar respecto de varios países de América Latina, no niega la originalidad de aquella producción a inicios de la década de 1960 y de la creatividad de los diálogos posteriores con los autores centrales de la antropología inglesa, francesa y con la conceptualización del propio Barth. A nuestro entender la disociación entre la relevancia del aporte conceptual y su reconocimiento es sobre todo producto de una asimetría.

<sup>5</sup> Esta intervención polémica, cuya extensión hacía imposible su publicación en este volumen, desarrolla argumentos que superan a los acusaciones automáticas de sustancialismo o esencialismo y dialoga con las más sofisticadas argumentaciones que se puedan imputar en este sentido.

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## ANTROPOLOGÍAS MUNDIALES. ¿PODEMOS PENSAR FUERA DE LOS DISCURSOS HEGEMÓNICOS?<sup>1</sup>

Susana Narotzky

Esta mesa redonda fue dedicada a nuestro querido colega y amigo Eduardo 'Lali' Archetti que nos acompañó en muchos debates y nos transmitió su alegría de vivir.

Desde hace ya algunos años un colectivo de antropólogos y antropólogas<sup>2</sup> de distintos lugares participamos en un proyecto que tiene como objeto desvincular el quehacer antropológico de las prácticas que se han ido consolidando como hegemónicas en la academia y que provienen fundamentalmente del entorno académico anglosajón. Esto nos lleva a preguntarnos e intentar valorar los objetivos y las prácticas que en otros lugares pueden ser fuente de conocimiento, ya sea de aquel definido como 'antropológico' por los que lo practican, ya sea del que no se presenta como tal pero encierra la capacidad de provocar al conocimiento antropológico desde otros ámbitos, incluyendo los no científicos. En este sentido, la mayor parte de los países que hoy forman la Unión Europea también se encuentran fuera de los centros de poder en torno a los que cristaliza la producción de conocimiento antropológico. Pero además, en los propios 'centros' hegemónicos existe una multitud de lugares no hegemónicos donde se produce o se dan las condiciones de posibilidad para la producción de conocimiento antropológico.

La mesa de debate que organizamos Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (U. Brasilia) y yo misma, ambos partícipes en la Red de Antropologías Mundiales-World Anthropologies Network ([www.ram-wan.org](http://www.ram-wan.org)), forma parte de una serie de eventos mediante los cuales estamos intentando plantear el debate y la participación en torno a estas inquietudes. Planteamos el debate en los siguientes términos:

“Son cada vez más claros los problemas de poder entre distintas prácticas de antropología en el mundo. Estamos en un momento de vindicación de las antropologías no-hegemónicas frente a la hegemonía anglosajona (EE.UU. y G.B.) que nos hace plantear varias cuestiones. ¿Cómo se crean alternativas a los modos de producción de conocimiento hegemónicos sin reproducir otros tipos de hegemonías? ¿Es posible crear un espacio de conocimiento y comunicación no jerárquico entre los que nos dedicamos al estudio de los fenómenos sociales y culturales? ¿Cuales son las alternativas a 1) dejarse fagocitar y 'asimilar' por el sistema hegemónico de producción de conocimiento, o 2) producir un sistema distinto pero autosuficiente que no necesita abrirse a lo 'otro' y se desenvuelve en un solipsismo reconfortante? Existe a la vez el atractivo de explorar otros discursos que quizá nos devuelvan una cierta autonomía creativa, y el temor de recaer en pautas dominantes del pensamiento antropológico. Pensamos que nos movemos entre necesidades realistas, que nos permitan comprender la pragmática de los juegos de poder, y necesidades utópicas que nos propulsen a otras regiones de realidad posibles.

El objetivo de este panel de discusión es el de explorar alternativas múltiples en un ejercicio dialéctico de crecimiento intelectual colectivo. Proponemos pensar en la diversidad y alcance posibles de formas y procesos de conocimiento. Pensar en la posibilidad de crear un espacio conectado que abarque no sólo las historias institucionalizadas de conocimiento antropológico

de los espacios nacionales, sino también modalidades no-científicas o ex-céntricas de conocimiento de la realidad, cosmopolíticas que nos permitan plantear preguntas nuevas sin por ello caer en un eclecticismo barroco ajeno a la voluntad de explicar la realidad social.”

## Ponencias

A partir de esta propuesta propusieron a debate sus reflexiones los siguientes antropólogos y antropólogas: Junji Koizumi (Osaka University), Myriam Jimeno (Universidad Nacional de Colombia), Victoria Goddard (London University), Esteban Krotz (Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán), Nelly Arvelo-Jiménez (Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas), Rosana Guber (CONICET-IDES), Alcida Rita Ramos (Universidade de Brasília), además de Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (Universidade de Brasília) y Susana Narotzky (Universitat de Barcelona). El debate posterior fue muy intenso y participó buena parte del numeroso público. Voy a intentar en la presente reseña describir brevemente las líneas fundamentales de las diversas ponencias así como las cuestiones que se levantaron durante el debate. Por último propondré una reflexión propia al hilo de lo anterior.

En su ponencia, Junji Koizumi describió los rasgos generales de la formación de la ciencia antropológica en Japón. Por un lado señaló las diversas influencias occidentales en la antropología japonesa, desde la influencia de la antropología social británica hasta la de la antropología difusionista de orientación germánica, el estudio del folklore, el estructuralismo de Levi-Strauss o más recientemente la antropología interpretativa americana. La antropología japonesa aparece como un producto híbrido claramente asentado en modelos occidentales. La pregunta que se plantea Koizumi es ¿qué hay de ‘japonés’ en esta mezcla de tradiciones occidentales que han influido a los antropólogos japoneses? La comparación con la ciencia económica le sirve para mostrar los diferentes modos en que modelos occidentales son adoptados y transformados en la práctica de distintas disciplinas en Japón. Mientras la economía importa modelos occidentales que aplica a la realidad de Japón en lo que Koizumi define como una tendencia ‘centrípeta’, la antropología aplica las herramientas metodológicas importadas de occidente principalmente a realidades ‘exóticas’ no sólo del sureste asiático sino también de América Latina y África, siguiendo así plenamente la tendencia ‘centrífuga’ de la antropología occidental tradicional. Sin embargo, la antropología japonesa tiene ‘algo’ que la diferencia de la antropología que se practica en occidente y que fue definido en una reunión de la American Anthropological Association como el “Japanese twist”. Ese ‘algo’ que se expresa incluso a través de una práctica de la disciplina que se ajusta a los cánones científicos con los que fue definida en los países occidentales de origen se encuentra en la dimensión local que deja una impronta ineludible. La cuestión que se plantea en definitiva es la de la tensión entre una única antropología científica sustentada en las nociones de neutralidad objetiva y aplicación universal frente a una pluralidad de antropologías localizadas. Koizumi plantea la necesidad de pluralizar la idea de ‘antropología’ para evitar ser absorbidos por el singular de la hegemonía.

La ponencia de Myriam Jimeno planteó una cuestión que expresa un desarrollo y una práctica diferentes de la antropología en Colombia. La idea central es la de la interrelación ineludible entre la dimensión de ciudadano y la dimensión de antropólogo / investigador en la práctica de la antropología colombiana. Su recorrido por la historia de la antropología en Colombia muestra por un lado la existencia de diversos momentos o etapas con enfoques que pasan por 1) la antropología descriptiva de las sociedades amerindias, 2) la preocupación por la desigualdad social y la diferencia cultural en la construcción del estado-nación y 3) la consolidación académica de la disciplina y la integración institucional de los antropólogos en organismos públicos orientados a la resolución de cuestiones concretas. Por otro lado subraya la heterogeneidad de las posiciones políticas y metodológicas de los antropólogos en el interior de estas ‘etapas’. Un ejemplo de esto es la divergencia existente en la segunda etapa entre aquellos que sustentaban una perspectiva ‘integracionista’ con el objetivo de propiciar una homogeneidad cultural nacional ligada a una idea de modernización, y aquellos ‘indigenistas’ que reivindicaban su compromiso / colaboración con las comunidades indígenas lesionadas por las fuerzas económico políticas de la modernización. Esta última modalidad se definió como ‘antropología militante’ y estuvo influenciada

por las teorías dependentistas y en general marxistas. La última etapa se presenta en un contexto marcado por la nueva constitución y la violencia, en el que los indígenas hablan por sí mismos y los antropólogos desplazan su participación hacia el escenario público nacional en el que actúan como 'expertos'. Por otro lado la violencia de los conflictos plantea la necesidad de cautela por parte de los investigadores y la práctica de la 'neutralidad civil'. Jimeno señala la distancia que esto supone de la propuesta de George Marcus y otros antropólogos que abogan por la 'complicidad' entre el investigador y los sujetos estudiados. En conclusión Myriam Jimeno muestra la heterogeneidad de intereses y propuestas que se fraguan en torno a la cuestión de la construcción de la nación, la nacionalidad, el estado nacional, la democracia y la ciudadanía, y subraya que puntos de vista y perspectivas contrapuestas se proyectan en el campo discursivo en el que participan como intelectuales los antropólogos colombianos alejándolos así de una mera repetición de modelos metodológicos importados.

Victoria Goddard parte de la pregunta: ¿qué, exactamente, es lo que provoca el efecto hegemónico en la producción de conocimiento antropológico en el centro? Goddard estudia los movimientos de la producción científica en Gran Bretaña y plantea la existencia de lo que denomina una pseudo-hegemonía que atenaza a las y los antropólogos entre dos ámbitos de fuerza contradictorios. Por un lado encontramos la tendencia por parte de los investigadores a desarrollar la vertiente crítica de la antropología que siempre ha constituido una de sus mayores fuerzas de seducción. En este ámbito se observa una pulsión hacia la radicalización y la reflexividad que lleva a enfatizar la relación entre poder y conocimiento y se sustenta en las propuestas foucauldianas y las reflexiones provenientes de los estudios post-coloniales. Por otro lado la reorganización de las formas de poder en torno al proyecto neo-liberal produce efectos materiales no sólo sobre los fenómenos que estudian los antropólogos sino también sobre sus propias prácticas de docencia e investigación. En este sentido las nuevas formas de regulación como son la cultura de la inspección ('audit'), de la responsabilidad coercitiva ('accountability') y del establecimiento de objetivos ('benchmarking') producen efectos a la vez de competitividad y jerarquización (entre colegas, entre centros universitarios) y de solidaridad corporativa (frente a otras disciplinas con las que compiten) que se expresan en la producción y transmisión del conocimiento: inflación de las publicaciones y por tanto presión sobre el tiempo de reflexión y de maduración de los problemas y teorías, aumento del trabajo de contaduría y gestión por parte de los investigadores en detrimento del tiempo dedicado a la producción o transmisión del conocimiento, control y acotamiento de las temáticas de estudio y de docencia justificado en términos de oferta y demanda y reforzado por las jerarquías así instituidas en los centros de decisión (comités de selección de proyectos de investigación, de revistas indexadas, etc). Este productivismo científico, alentado por prácticas regulatorias referidas al mercado que tienen consecuencias en los niveles de financiación de las instituciones públicas y en el mercado laboral, afecta de forma directa el contenido y la calidad del conocimiento producido. De este modo las ideas críticas y radicales quedan neutralizadas por las políticas de docencia e investigación del gobierno y por los sistemas de regulación implementados en el mundo universitario. Victoria Goddard muestra para el caso de Gran Bretaña que hay que desterritorializar la idea de un conocimiento antropológico hegemónico y situar el efecto de hegemonía del lado de los procesos político económicos que desarrolla el proyecto neo-liberal.

Las propuestas de Esteban Krotz se enmarcan en una definición de la antropología como ciencia que cristaliza en torno a la categoría de alteridad. Observa la necesidad que tiene la disciplina de diversificarse mediante la apertura de las antropologías originarias, todavía hoy en día hegemónicas, hacia otras antropologías que Krotz define como 'del Sur' o 'periféricas'. Señala que más allá del origen colonial de la dominación de las antropologías originarias hay que buscar las razones por las que comunidades académicas y profesionales pujantes en el presente, como por ejemplo las de México y Brasil, prolongan la dependencia en términos epistemológicos respecto a estas antropologías del Norte. Su propuesta busca enfrentar los mecanismos que en el propio Sur llevan a privilegiar el conocimiento producido en el Norte. Esto se refleja en los programas de docencia que minimizan la antropología 'propia' enfatizando las corrientes y temáticas generadas en el Norte, o también en la adopción por parte de los académicos del Sur de los énfasis teóricos dominantes en el Norte que les permiten ubicarse mejor en la comunidad antropológica 'universal' que no es otra que la que ejerce el poder hegemónico. Para impulsar el cambio

Krotz propone una serie de tareas que define como una meta-antropología del Sur ocupada en “el análisis de las dinámicas de producción y reproducción del conocimiento antropológico y de los colectivos que generan, administran y difunden dicho conocimiento”. Esto implica 1) estudiar las diferentes tradiciones antropológicas, sus trayectorias históricas y las dinámicas de generación de conocimiento y 2) realizar una comparación sistemática entre ellas con el fin de desvelar su heterogeneidad interna pero al tiempo los puntos comunes que las distinguen de las antropologías hegemónicas. Esta propuesta pretende recuperar para las antropologías del Sur y en general para la ciencia antropológica la capacidad de ser un instrumento para la acción política emancipatoria, desvelando así la articulación entre la epistemología y la creación de condiciones de posibilidad para transformar la realidad.

Nelly Arvelo-Jiménez planteó la cuestión de la falta de confianza en las propias producciones del conocimiento antropológico local. En el contexto venezolano donde se discuten ‘procesos revolucionarios’ que pretenden la integración Sur-Sur geopolítica y económicamente, sin embargo la dependencia de las metodologías antropológicas producidas en los centros hegemónicos sigue presente. La reflexión de Arvelo-Jiménez se estructura en torno a la acogida negativa de los antropólogos venezolanos al modelo heurístico propuesto por su equipo de investigación y denominado Sistema de Interdependencia Regional del Orinoco (SIRO). Desde su punto de vista este rechazo debe entenderse como una forma de dependencia respecto del paradigma evolucionista dominante en la antropología hegemónica para el desarrollo de estas áreas de integración sociocultural, siguiendo el modelo de Steward. Arvelo-Jiménez plantea la cuestión central de la invalidación apriorística de un modelo heurístico diferente construido a partir de un gran número de datos recogidos tanto de fuentes históricas y secundarias diversas como del trabajo etnográfico directo y articulados en forma de hipótesis que se prestan a ser verificadas científicamente. Esto desvela una falta de autoestima y de respeto por propuestas que no se amoldan a las establecidas en los centros hegemónicos del conocimiento antropológico. Muestra también nuestra dependencia de la legitimación exterior del conocimiento que producimos, la aceptación de prioridades ajenas en la investigación y la docencia y la admisión indiscutida de unos estándares de evaluación generados en el Norte que sientan los términos de los intercambios académicos. En definitiva la propuesta de Arvelo-Jiménez exige recuperar la confianza en la ‘antropología propia’, exigir respeto y promover la dignidad de las propias reflexiones y conceptos.

La propuesta de Rosana Guber plantea la ingenuidad de la pregunta que orientaba la reflexión de la mesa: ¿Es posible pensar *fuera* de los discursos hegemónicos? A partir del ejemplo de la antropología argentina cuya historia se tiende a presentar como una serie de momentos discontinuos marcados por los periodos políticos del país en donde las lealtades políticas tienden a proyectarse como perspectivas analíticas en el mundo académico, Guber muestra 1) la falacia de esas pretendidas rupturas en donde las prácticas de los periodos anteriores se presentan como el yermo del “nada se ha hecho” y 2) la necesidad de ir más allá de la imagen de refundación permanente de la disciplina que únicamente obstruye posibles conversaciones con otras formas de hacer antropología. En su ponencia señala la importancia de conocer las líneas y debates internos dentro de la antropología local que muestran la heterogeneidad existente en el interior de las ‘antropologías periféricas’ así como las hegemonías internas que se producen en distintos momentos históricos. Coloca el énfasis en descubrir las conexiones existentes entre antropólogos, metodologías y prácticas aparentemente ajenas y contrapuestas tanto locales como extranjeras, con el fin de mostrar el enriquecimiento real producido por estos debates. Subraya además que esa visión discontinua de permanentes refundaciones de la disciplina ligadas a los cortes políticos institucionales, oculta modalidades anteriores del quehacer antropológico que quedan así encriptadas y silenciadas en las ‘nuevas’ prácticas metodológicas. En este sentido Rosana Guber planteó que “no se puede pensar *fuera* mientras pretendamos pensar *contra*” y abogó por el establecimiento de conversaciones y debates abiertos con otras formas de hacer antropología nativas así como extranjeras.

Alcida Rita Ramos presentó una utopía en donde las diversas tradiciones antropológicas tendrían una intercomunicabilidad verdaderamente horizontal, en contraste con la situación presente que contrapone una antropología hegemónica en el centro a otras antropologías en la periferia. ¿Qué

cuestiones impiden el florecimiento de una antropología genuinamente cosmopolita”? se pregunta Ramos. Más allá de la hegemonía lingüística, de la desigualdad del mercado editorial, de la ignorancia Metropolitana de la producción periférica, la ponencia señala un aspecto epistemológico fundamental que diferencia la práctica de la antropología en el centro de la de la periferia. Esta cuestión tiene que ver con los modos de asumir el “sentido político de la diferencia”. Frente a una antropología Metropolitana que a pesar de su reflexividad actual se propone estudiar unos Otros supuestamente impotentes y marginales (en este sentido delimitados, distanciados y exotizados), dependientes del quehacer antropológico para tener visibilidad y relevancia política, Ramos presenta la antropología latinoamericana, volcada hacia el estudio de sus propias realidades, como un acto político en sí mismo centrado en las transacciones sociales entre y en el interior de los pueblos, es decir situando la diversidad permanentemente como objeto político y base del quehacer antropológico. En este sentido, la propia diversidad se propone como revulsivo fundamental para desestabilizar la arrogancia de la producción antropológica en la Metrópoli e inocularla con la duda sobre sí misma. La construcción de un canon antropológico policéntrico debe basarse en conversaciones entre cánones diversos, multilingües y abiertos a ideas provenientes tanto del interior como del exterior, desde una perspectiva crítica, más allá del seguidismo estéril. Ramos indicó que la existencia de intereses en común es necesaria para llevar a cabo esta empresa y señala, como una de las vías fundamentales para generar estas transformaciones en el ámbito antropológico, el desarrollo de investigaciones conjuntas entre antropólogos de distintos lugares, ya que la investigación es el interés común fundamental de los antropólogos. En definitiva propone la implementación de una práctica de la diversidad.

## Debate

El debate que siguió la presentación de ponencias fue muy rico. Los temas propuestos en las intervenciones fueron retomados y aclarados por los ponentes. Alcida Ramos, por ejemplo, habló de la ‘alquimia’ entre el conocimiento foráneo y el local y propuso la metáfora de la especificidad local del movimiento indígena en Brasil y Argentina, con sus formas de protesta diferenciadas, como ilustración de la creatividad política de la diversidad en su expresión de tensiones al tiempo globales y locales. Rosana Guber frente a la propuesta de recuperar la ‘confianza’ retomó la cuestión de ir más allá de la confianza en el sentido de poner en cuestión las bases del ‘reconocimiento’ que pueden ocultar grandes espacios de conocimiento: ¿Quiénes serían los reconocidos y los reconocibles?, se pregunta. Para Nelly Arvelo-Jiménez el tema de la confianza está ligado a la posibilidad de establecer las propias prioridades de investigación y los propios modos de evaluación de los resultados. En la primera parte del debate se retomaron las categorías de centrípeto y centrífugo para la práctica antropológica que propuso Kozuomi, añadiendo Ramos la de ‘bumerang’ representada por aquellos antropólogos que salen de la periferia, van al centro y desde esa posición toman su país de origen como objeto de estudio. Este tipo de ‘antropólogos nativos’ son normalmente portadores de metodologías que se difunden desde el centro aunque contribuyen también a provocar tensiones en los campos de conocimiento y re-conocimiento y por tanto suelen ser ejes de transformación. Sin embargo, como señaló Guber, quizá el concepto de ‘antropología nativa’ habría que limitarlo a los casos en que se da una continuidad entre los conceptos nativos y los conceptos científicos. Victoria Goddard incidió en la dimensión de ciudadano /antropólogo planteada por Myriam Jimeno y resaltó las condiciones materiales impuestas por el mercado en el contexto de las políticas neo-liberales en sus efectos paradójicos en el proyecto antropológico, y en la práctica de la docencia y de la investigación generando dinámicas de competencia y de solidaridad disciplinaria simultáneamente. En este sentido, me parece, los efectos de competencia puramente mercantil se expresan también en la inflación de propuestas analíticas y teóricas que producen una proliferación de discursos potencialmente hegemónicos en los centros de producción de conocimiento. Sin embargo, esta diversidad permite también el surgimiento de propuestas reflexivas y radicales dentro de proyectos orientados hacia objetivos emancipadores de transformación de la realidad.

En una intervención central, Gustavo Lins Ribeiro amplió la propuesta de Esteban Krotz de realizar una meta-antropología del Sur, planteando la necesidad de historicizar la difusión de la antropología en el

mundo. En efecto, los antropólogos siempre viajaron y crearon redes transnacionales en el interior de las cuales se generaron campos de tensión diversos articulados en torno a las especificidades de la construcción de los estados nacionales, las élites, las apuestas políticas, las ideologías y las estrategias coyunturales. Este es un campo complejo con una larga historia en gran medida todavía inexplorada que nos mostraría la complejidad real de los procesos de producción de conocimiento antropológico en la confluencia de diversas propuestas universales con contextos y problemáticas locales.

Una intervención del público cuestionó la pertinencia de pretender “pensar fuera de los discursos hegemónicos” apoyándose en la futilidad de hacerlo ya que “la verdad no existe, existen distintas verdades que no tienen por qué estar en competencia dialógica”, dentro de esa topografía cada cual debe encontrar su lugar de enunciación propio. Al hilo de esta intervención, Susana Narotzky planteó la distinción entre el ámbito del discurso político en el que la proliferación de verdades es no sólo posible sino incluso puede ser deseable, y el ámbito de la práctica política que exige un horizonte de verdad que oriente los proyectos de transformación.

### Comentario

El tema central que me parecen recoger todas las ponencias de la mesa es el de la relación ineludible entre epistemología y acción política. Recordemos por ejemplo las palabras de Alcida Ramos en el sentido de que “hacer antropología es un acto político por definición [en la periferia]” o de Esteban Krotz que propone “Recuperar la antropología como instrumento de acción política emancipatoria” o la propuesta de Myriam Jimeno de enfrentarnos a la realidad de un “antropólogo/ciudadano” o esa capacidad crítica que es una constante de la antropología por lo menos desde los años 1960s como nos recuerda Victoria Goddard.

Ahora bien, esta relación entre los discursos antropológicos y la acción política plantea algunas cuestiones que debemos enfrentar.

1) La primera es la de la heterogeneidad de los discursos tanto en las periferias como en los centros, sobre todo la heterogeneidad de las formas de compromiso de las y los antropólogos como ciudadanos, cuestión que se hace muy presente en la práctica de la antropología “en casa”. Lo que esto plantea es la realidad de proyectos políticos muy diversos, a menudo enfrentados, entre lo que a menudo tendemos a homogeneizar como “del Sur” o “periféricos”, y esto se va a expresar no sólo en el grado de compromiso con determinadas causas sino también en los discursos intelectuales y en las apuestas metodológicas (ya sea de origen endógeno o exógeno) con las que estos antropólogos/ ciudadanos se enfrentan a la realidad en la que están inmersos. En definitiva lo que esto plantea es la necesidad de evitar una cierta ingenuidad derivada de las estructuras materiales y discursivas de las fuerzas del desarrollo del capitalismo a escala mundial en la que se invertiría el parámetro modernista haciendo homogéneamente ‘buenos’ a los sujetos periféricos y ‘malos’ a los sujetos centrales, y esto no sólo en términos morales sino también en términos de sus propuestas políticas, económicas o de conocimiento –como si no fueran a su vez diversas, conflictivas, cambiantes y conectadas entre sí en debates complejos y largos. En este sentido la propuesta de Rosana Guber y de Myriam Jimeno de atender a los debates y diálogos internos, a menudo ocultados, de las antropologías periféricas en conexión con las posiciones de los antropólogos como sujetos / ciudadanos en su devenir histórico parece fundamental. Esto permitirá desvelar heterogeneidades pero también procesos de hegemonía internos, así como tensiones, diálogos, reapropiaciones de teorías exógenas y endógenas en distintos momentos. Permite pues no sólo historicizar el conocimiento antropológico dentro de las periferias, lo que no dejará de producir una comprensión mayor de sus propuestas, sino también posibilitar conversaciones entre conocimientos ‘otros’ desde muchos puntos de vista (el pasado, la ideología, la topografía de poder, la geografía, etc.) que ineludiblemente llevarán al enriquecimiento de nuestras posibilidades creativas.

Desde el punto de vista práctico es por tanto ineludible realizar la tarea que propone Esteban Krotz de una meta-antropología del Sur, completada por la propuesta de Gustavo Lins Ribeiro de trazar los

mapas cognitivos y las redes de conexión mundiales que desvelan las tensiones y producciones en el conocimiento antropológico.

2) La segunda cuestión que plantea esta relación entre discursos antropológicos y acción política tiene que ver con la materialidad de la producción del conocimiento y esto en dos sentidos. Primero, porque conceptos generados o adoptados por la antropología como por ejemplo el de ‘multiculturalismo’ o el de ‘economía informal’, tienen efectos directos y materiales en las decisiones políticas de diversos agentes sociales, es decir que inciden y transforman la vida de las personas, producen las condiciones de posibilidad en el interior de las cuales la interpretación histórica y la acción política toma forma y se genera una realidad con todo su peso. Segundo, porque existen condicionantes materiales que limitan las posibilidades de los distintos agentes sociales de producir conocimiento y también de comunicar (distribuir) el conocimiento producido. Estas condiciones materiales van desde el acceso a bibliotecas bien provistas, fondos para investigación, traducciones, etc. hasta los sistemas de regulación y control de la producción y transmisión del conocimiento descrito por Goddard para Gran Bretaña, pasando por cuestiones ligadas a la violencia social y política que ha descrito Jimeno para Colombia y que puede llevar en una generación del ‘compromiso’ a la ‘neutralidad civil’ en la investigación. Por supuesto todos estos condicionantes materiales están relacionados con fuerzas económico-políticas complejas de orden global y también con tensiones y decisiones de ámbito local. Por otro lado, los modos en que desde distintas posiciones las y los antropólogos han desarrollado estrategias para superar y enfrentar estos condicionantes es muy diverso y atañe tanto a posibilidades coyunturales como a cuestiones meramente personales o de oportunidad, de las que las más frecuentes han sido el multilingüismo en las periferias y las trayectorias educativas que pasan por la Metrópoli normalmente en los estadios finales de la educación universitaria. En cualquier caso habría que estudiar las transformaciones que la existencia de internet y el mayor acceso a la difusión de material bibliográfico y debates intelectuales produce en las generaciones de antropólogos que están ahora en formación no sólo en las periferias sino en los centros, y las posibilidades efectivas que esto supone respecto a las políticas epistemológicas.

3) Otra cuestión fundamental que se plantea al hilo de la relación entre epistemología y política es la del propio discurso científico, es decir la de la delimitación del ámbito de conversabilidad de los distintos conocimientos producidos no sólo desde las prácticas antropológicas sino también desde otros lugares de enunciación no-antropológicos. El caso descrito por Nelly Arvelo-Jiménez nos sitúa directamente en este debate: ¿hasta dónde admitir la pluralización de discursos dentro del ámbito de la ciencia antropológica? ¿Pueden todas las formas de conocimiento ‘conversar’? Esto es particularmente interesante respecto a la interlocución con formas no-laicas, teológicas, específicas o indígenas de conocimiento de la realidad, algunas no universales en su espectro u orientación pero otras también universales aunque distintas del universalismo de la modernidad. Esto ya no es únicamente cuestión de ‘reflexividad’ en la práctica antropológica en el sentido en que lo podía plantear Bourdieu en sus últimos escritos, es un cuestionamiento del paradigma central de la modernidad: la razón objetiva, es decir la creencia en el lenguaje referencial a la realidad. A partir de ese axioma se posibilita la conversación científica. La quiebra de este axioma disuelve el propio concepto de epistemología y nos abre caminos encontrados. Por un lado puede llevarnos a un relativismo extremo en el ámbito de las producciones del conocimiento en donde la inconmensurabilidad produce islote y se nutre a sí misma. Por otro lado nos puede llevar a una conversación pluri-situada donde cada cual desde su posición y su historia, desde sus formas específicas de producción de conocimiento se vea capaz de hacer circular sus saberes y enriquecerse en el proceso. Pero esta opción es muy compleja de manejar incluso en términos teóricos precisamente porque el proyecto político tiende a situarnos respecto al conocimiento en entornos no sólo orientados sino en gran medida excluyentes o con una flexibilidad limitada.

El reto de WAN-RAM es el de poder establecer formas de práctica antropológica que retomen el proyecto crítico y emancipatorio de la antropología y que permitan instaurar conversaciones y debates - incluidos aquellos posibles con proyectos políticos distintos o antagónicos—que incidan a su vez en la realidad de los proyectos de transformación que les afectan como ciudadanos de aquí y de allá, de su

lugar y del mundo. Pero sin olvidar que conversar, más que un lenguaje común requiere un interés común.

## Notas

<sup>1</sup> Mesa redonda realizada en el 1er Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Antropología, 11-15 de julio en Rosario, Argentina.

<sup>2</sup> Para un listado de los miembros del WAN, ver: <http://www.ram-wan.org>



**RED DE ANTROPOLOGIAS DEL MUNDO:  
ENCUENTRO EN SANTAFÉ DE ANTIOQUIA, COLOMBIA  
XI CONGRESO DE ANTROPOLOGÍA EN COLOMBIA  
AGOSTO 24 AL 26 DE 2005**

Andrés Barragán

El siguiente texto es producto de una ordenación temática y una transcripción parcial de los contenidos que se dieron en las dos reuniones del WAN-RAM en Santafé de Antioquia. Las ideas expresadas en algunos casos han sido editadas y sintetizadas para permitir alcanzar una lectura fluida y, por supuesto, evitando perder o distorsionar los puntos de vista expresados.

**Conversatorio abierto (miércoles 24)**

A este conversatorio asistieron estudiantes y antropólogos egresados de los departamentos de Antropología de la Universidad de Antioquia, Universidad de Popayán, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Universidad de Caldas, Universidad del Magdalena, Universidad de Los Andes, Universidad Externado de Colombia y Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. También estuvieron presentes Marisol de la Cadena, Arturo Escobar, Alcida Rita Ramos, Juan Ricardo Aparicio, Cristóbal Gnecco, Carlos Luis del Cairo, Roberto Almanza, Carlos Andrés Barragán.

***Sobre el RAM-WAN***

El conversatorio se inició con una presentación introductoria de los objetivos del colectivo a cargo de Cristóbal Gnecco. Distribuimos la hoja de presentación del RAM-WAN (ver anexo) y alrededor de su lectura se propuso “provocar” una conversación con las personas asistentes, un diálogo, sobre qué ha sido hasta el momento la red y qué puede ser la red en la proximidad.

*Cristóbal Gnecco:* La red tiene pocos años de existencia; es una asociación semi virtual que funciona a través de Internet y en la que participan individuos interesados en controvertir las prácticas hegemónicas de la disciplina antropológica. Algo que ya tiene una trayectoria larga en la antropología latinoamericana y en la antropología de la India. Esta crítica se ha hecho más evidente a medida que distintos investigadores en el campo de las ciencias sociales realizan sus estudios de postgrado con más frecuencia en centros metropolitanos de producción de conocimiento. La red problematiza la forma en la que estos individuos han hecho de agentes para la reproducción de ciertos modelos de conocimiento en los países periféricos. Es preciso una mirada crítica. La red enmarca parte de este proyecto.

*Juan Ricardo Aparicio:* No es tanto reconocer los lugares privilegiados para la enunciación de la antropología como reconocer las prácticas que posibilitan ese privilegio. La WAN-RAM quiere reconocer unas antropologías en plural.

*Carlos del Cairo:* Es propiciar un diálogo plural; es una respuesta a una necesidad sentida para vacunarnos contra la institucionalización.

*Marisol de la Cadena:* Me gusta decir que pienso desde los Estados Unidos y las alturas del Cuzco (Perú), mi inspiración viene de esos dos lugares, no puedo dejar de pensar desde ellos. Desde las alturas del

Cuzco me gusta leer la producción del conocimiento y leer la teoría antropológica proveniente de distintas partes de América Latina. Quisiera retomar la idea de vacunarse contra la institucionalización, proponer pensar fuera de la institucionalidad “congreso” de la que estamos haciendo parte. Vivir también en la contradicción que eso significa. Pensemos la RAM-WAN como una propuesta desde adentro de la antropología, hacia fuera de la antropología. Queremos abordar el pensamiento antropológico para indisciplinar, recogiendo los procesos de conocimiento fuera de las disciplinas académicas. Queremos que ustedes nos lancen sus preguntas, queremos que la red esté en constante cambio. Para esto, quisiera poner una reflexión sobre dos pilares de la Antropología con mayúscula, la canónica: (a) cultura, y (b) el otro. Pensemos por fuera de estas dos categorías. Pensar la cultura que produce actualmente la antropología y que más allá, pensemos las antropologías del mundo como producción de conocimiento. Salir de la idea de pensar el “otro”, para salirnos a la categoría de “nosotros”. Pensar más bien la antropología como un proceso de conversaciones entre “otros”, de “otro” a “otro”; para resituar la diferencia de una nueva manera. Una en la que no se presente a “otro”, sino la diferencia entre “otros”. Creo que esto nos puede dar un campo de discusión amplio para pensar la pregunta por las antropologías del mundo.

Ha sido necesario partir de un punto: la Antropología; y por lo menos ya se ha alcanzado que se reconozca o que se hable de antropologías, que haya un reconocimiento a la pluralidad desde la cual se puede alcanzar la indisciplinización. La etnografía es una herramienta privilegiada para producir otras formas de conocimiento para “nosotros”, y lo uso porque el “nosotros” aún existe, para hacer reconocimiento de otras formas de conocimiento descalificadas. Me refiero a indisciplina hablando desde la disciplina, porque no podemos indisciplina desde “un no sitio”. No podemos arrancar “ahistóricamente”.

*Arturo Escobar:* Uno de los motivos de este proyecto, más una idea inicial que una historia, fue pensar cómo funciona el proceso de formación y entrenamiento de estudiantes de doctorado latinoamericanos en Estados Unidos. Hago referencia al caso de Eduardo Restrepo, un antropólogo que ustedes conocen, con una ya larga trayectoria de investigación en Colombia. Llegar a estudiar a Chapel Hill le significó tomar un año largo de cursos obligatorios que se convirtieron en un proceso muy impositivo, restrictivos y cuyo funcionamiento y lógica no estaba muy abierto a la discusión o a la crítica. Surgió la pregunta de ¿cómo pensar la formación de postgrado de otra manera? Esto llevó a la consideración de cómo, y hasta qué punto desde la academia gringa, desde la historia de la antropología, se tenía conocimiento o se leía la producción de conocimiento desde Latinoamérica. Esto se da de manera mínima, aunque gradualmente se ha dado, por ejemplo, la inclusión de literatura e ideas que vienen de países como India. Desde Latinoamérica se lee la producción de las antropologías hegemónicas (antropología norteamericana, inglesa, francesa), pero ellos no nos leen y en muchos casos nosotros tampoco leemos lo que se produce en otras antropologías de Latinoamérica, África, Australia, Asia, etc. ¿Qué significaría desarrollar una antropología más pluralista, indisciplinada? Ahí viene la idea de la Red.

*Marisol:* La RAM-WAN no significa sólo puntos de conexión sino procesos, generación de procesos, no estamos ubicados en un sitio específico sino desde muchos sitios. Arturo está Carolina del Norte, yo en Davis, California, Eduardo Restrepo está aquí y al mismo tiempo en Chapel Hill, Alcida Rita Ramos está en Brasil y se mueve por el resto del mundo... y creo que lo que caracteriza a quienes estamos participando actualmente en la red es que estamos pensando desde diferentes partes del mundo y tratamos de conectar. NO SOMOS UNA INSTITUCIÓN. Es más un proceso abierto para lanzar preguntas para las que en muchos casos no tenemos respuestas. Pero en el espacio que se genera de conversación, se espera que ustedes reaccionen frente a lo que se propone en la red y a lo que se discuta posteriormente.

*Alcida Rita Ramos:* En la reunión de Rosario (Argentina) distintos antropólogos nos reunimos a discutir sobre las antropologías nacionales. Allí fue evidente cómo Inglaterra, por ejemplo, comienza a ser periférica. Las antropologías del mundo están pasando por un proceso de catarsis. Es un poco difícil deslumbrar un proceso de diálogo, de construcción, para que no se conviertan en hegemónicas, en dominantes. ¿Por qué estamos insatisfechos con las antropologías metropolitanas del mundo anglosajón, de sus alternativas?

Porque cuando por ejemplo yo me encontraba escribiendo el trabajo que presenté en Rosario yo estaba en la metrópoli (Estados Unidos), y escribía en contra de la metrópoli. ¿Cómo pensar construir una realidad alternativa? Me sentí totalmente impotente porque esa realidad alternativa no aparecía. Me apareció como una ficción, como una utopía. Escribí una fantasía “Era una vez un lugar maravilloso... de antropologías horizontales, de igualdad con las antropologías metropolitanas, en la producción, en la asignación de recursos, donde los procesos de “peer review” eran auténticos y no una trampa, fuera de un endocanibismo. Pero la realidad es otra. Yo tengo más curiosidad que certezas en el proyecto de un proyecto nuevo de antropología.

*Marisol:* Nuestro cuestionamiento parte de una sensación de incomodidad, situada desde el centro hegemónico por excelencia (Estados Unidos). Un efecto que se presenta como efecto cascada y que constato cuando voy a Perú y me doy cuenta de cómo se produce la antropología hegemónica en el país, Lima con respecto a la periferia del país. Voy a Cuzco, provincia o periferia con relación a Lima, y se evidencia cómo se produce la hegemonía de la antropología central. Es una nebulosa, pues no ocurre sólo en la disciplina o en la academia como institución y en el conocimiento que allí se produce. Es un conocimiento que excluye otros tipos de conocimientos.

*Andrés Barragán:* Alcida, ¿con qué procesos específicos estás relacionando una “periferización” de las tradicionales antropologías hegemónicas (francesa, inglesa...)?

*Alcida:* En el caso de la inglesa con el exceso de institucionalización. Tienen tantas auditorías, tan severas que los antropólogos(as) profesionales tienen pocas posibilidades o espacios de crear dentro del Estado. Así lo evidenció Victoria Goddard de la Universidad de Londres. Todo el tiempo se argumenta. ‘*Esto para esto*’, ‘*aquello por tal y tal razón*’, etc. Todo tiene que ser contabilizado, todo tiene que ser “transparente”. Francia, ha perdido apoyo; me parece se ha tomado mucho tiempo para preocuparse por lo local... ha perdido si se quiere originalidad en sus abordamientos, no hay mucha originalidad a excepción de algunos autores, por supuesto. Pero yo no siento que haya un bloque francés de grandes ideas antropológicas. Con esto no quiero decir, que haya uno en Estados Unidos o en otro lado. Sin embargo, en Estados Unidos hay concentrado un gran poder que también sofoca a Francia a Inglaterra, en términos de producción antropológica. Quisiera señalar también la resistencia que hay por ejemplo a leer francés. O que en otros países europeos como Escandinavia, Holanda, Dinamarca la disciplina enfoca su atención a la producción anglosajona.

*Cristóbal:* Yo creo necesario señalar que la red no pretende enfatizar la relación del sur geopolítico, en tanto que en ella se han vinculado personas que no pertenecen del sur geopolítico pero que sí pertenecen a una corriente contra-hegemónica. La red no pretende presentarse como algo emanado únicamente del sur geopolítico. Uno puede pensar tres modelos de relación con los discursos globales y sus efectos en prácticas específicas locales. Uno sería el modelo viejo basado en la transmisión de verdades desde el centro a la periferia, en el cual muchos estudiantes latinoamericanos fueron a participar como agentes que iban a estudiar el *locus* y lo iban posteriormente a reproducir en sus respectivas periferias. Otro hizo una considerable oposición a ese modelo en Latinoamérica y se presentó a su vez como oposición al anterior, pero de una forma también hegemónica, de reemplazo, de acuerdo al materialismo histórico. Una cosa por otra. Un tercer modelo, es la creación de una suerte de antropologías vernáculas, que tienen un viejo eco de las políticas liberales del siglo XIX en todos los países latinoamericanos de cómo hacer tabula rasa con el pasado y partir de cero. Esta también es una posición criticable y que también a la hora del té reproducía una hegemonía. Pero hay una cuarta vía, que considero es alrededor de la cual se está conformando y tejiendo la red, y es la posibilidad de “acompañar” procesos de construcción de sentido desde lo local.

*Juan Ricardo Aparicio:* Considero que la red debe aportar a la crítica de una noción de intelectual orgánico que está movilizando la transformación de la sociedad; no hay garantías, vamos caminando al lado del abismo. Podemos hacer contribuciones e intervenciones modestas.



*Andrés*, lectura del propósito de WAN-RAM: Necesariamente multilingüe, multilocalizada y organizada tanto virtualmente como en eventos e intervenciones concretas, imaginamos la RAM como un entramado de discusión e intervención sobre las heterogeneidades de las antropologías mundialmente y las geopolíticas de conocimiento implicadas en su producción.

La RAM se propone contribuir a transformar las actuales condiciones y circuitos de conversabilidad entre los antropólogos /as en el mundo reconociendo la pluralidad de posiciones y las relaciones de poder que subyacen a las diversas locaciones. No es una celebración del multiculturalismo al interior de la antropología, no es el ‘descubrimiento’ de la diferencia al interior de la antropología. Antes bien, es la problematización de los mecanismos sobre los que se normalizan y naturalizan ciertas modalidades y tradiciones antropológicas desempoderando otras antropologías y antropologías de otro modo.

El colectivo que impulsa la RAM ha realizado una serie de actividades. Hemos tenido reuniones informales usando congresos en Estados Unidos como la Asociación Antropológica Americana (AAA) y la LASA. En 2002 organizamos un taller en el AAA, al cual atendió un buen número de personas (especialmente por Latinoamericanos que trabajan en los Estados Unidos). Además, en 2003 realizamos en Europa una conferencia internacional con la ayuda de la Wenner-Gren Foundation. De esta conferencia saldrá próximamente publicado un libro que recoge las diferentes ponencias. En la revista de la Asociación Antropológica Europea hemos publicado lo que consideramos el manifiesto del RAM. También hemos coordinado la enseñanza de varios seminarios de postgrado en los Estados Unidos (Universidad de Carolina del Norte-Chapel Hill y Universidad de California-Davis) y en Brasil (Universidad de Brasilia) para discutir la relación entre la antropología y las otras antropologías. Estas experiencias nos han motivado a apoyar programas de entrenamiento doctoral alternativos (como el programa en la Universidad del Cauca en Popayán, Colombia). Así como el diseño de una red regional de doctorados en América Latina explorando la combinación de las tecnologías virtuales con las presenciales en los procesos de enseñanza.

*Arturo*: Se cuestionan dos tipos de proyectos académico-político: uno el de una antropología universal, supuestamente compartida por todos los antropólogos del mundo en los cuales hay unos mitos de origen, en la cual hay unos textos clásicos de autores (Taylor, Malinowski, Lévi-Strauss, etc.); y el otro una visión de antropología como multiplicidad, que no se puede reducir a un solo y único modelo, una disciplina que por su propio carácter es plural. Pensamos esto con el concepto: “otras antropologías y antropologías de otro modo”. Es una apropiación de otro eslogan: “otros conocimientos y conocimientos de otro modo”. Tiene que ver con el Zapatismo un poquito ¿recuerdan cuándo el comandante Marcos dijo: “crear un mundo donde quepan otros mundos”? Otros conocimientos son posibles, otras antropologías son posibles. Es preciso pensar los términos de conversabilidad entre antropólogos, cómo se definen se definen las estructuras de poder.

### **Questionamientos**

*Intervención*<sup>1</sup>: ¿Cómo indisciplinar, no para disciplinar, sino para pensar? ¿Ese indisciplinar propuesto desde el RAM-WAN, ¿no constituye una subordinación de esas antropologías hegemónicas?

*Arturo*: Mejor, ¿cómo neutralizarlas?

*Intervención*: ¿Por qué un proyecto que se plantea indisciplinador se sigue haciendo desde la Antropología? ¿Qué pasa con otros proyectos académicos que también pueden estar en ese diálogo?

*Intervención*: Yo opino que así como hay gente que no ha podido entrar a este salón, o que no le ha tocado la fotocopia que están repartiendo, así como hay gente que no puede ir a Estados Unidos a escribir, ¿cómo se pueden hacer circular estos saberes? Siempre hay gente por fuera. Si usted no habla inglés, si usted no cita tales autores que escriben allá (Walter Mignolo, Arturo Escobar, etc.). Aquí, para que me lo validen [en la formación], tengo que citarlos. Aquí no hay plata para investigar, tengo que traducirlo para

que me lean. Tengo que citar los últimos artículos publicados en revistas famosas, a las cuales no tengo acceso, si mi universidad no ha comprado los derechos. Aquí tenemos [en Medellín] algo de bibliografía de los años setentas y ochentas y me toca trabajar con eso. ¿Entonces?

*Roberto Almanza:* Mi pregunta tiene que ver con la relación entre la red y la autoría o el autor. ¿Cómo pensar lo indisciplinadamente correcto dentro de la red? ¿No caemos en una especie de ventriloquia subalterna, porque creemos que hablamos en pro de los subalternos y estamos repitiendo un discurso hegemónico?

*Intervención:* ¿Tu dices [Cristóbal] que la red trata de hacer un acompañamiento de lo local, pero cómo se reivindican con lo local si desde el mismo lenguaje hay una imposibilidad, un obstáculo? Yo he trabajado con indígenas, ¿cómo se puede hacer un balance entre los lenguajes?

*Juan Ricardo:* Las antropologías del mundo es un proyecto en construcción... no tenemos respuestas claras a esos problemas... no hay garantías...

*Cristóbal:* Yo creo que podemos crear estrategias para cambiar eso. Hace algún tiempo un estudio de Colciencias,<sup>2</sup> de hace diez años tal vez, determinó que la formación de Ph.D. colombianos en el exterior le salía muy caro y decidió comenzar a estimular la formación de maestrías y doctorados en el país. La red piensa que debe hacerse lo mismo pero por otras razones, no porque sea costoso formar doctores en Estados Unidos, sino porque aquí hay condiciones (neocolonialismo) y las particulares condiciones de conflicto, que hacen necesario que se hagan programas de maestría y de doctorado aquí y no allá. Que no todos los estudiantes que tienen la posibilidad de hablar otro idioma o de estudiar un postgrado lo hagan allá y vuelvan a reproducir un canon o a controvertirlo aquí. Uno de los objetivos del RAM-WAM es apoyar y apostarle estos programas, con la participación individual de sus miembros y con los contactos que eventualmente se posibiliten la participación en investigaciones, pasantías, vinculación de profesores, etc. Esta es una estrategia concreta.

*Marisol:* Con respecto a lo que se ha mencionado, voy a decir algo un poco marginal. El uso de dos palabras: “acá” y “allá”. Para nosotros, aquí, cuando las usamos, el “allá” significa el sitio del poder y el sitio de la luz. Pues NO. Y el “aquí”, está significando el sitio del no-poder. Sí y no. También que el “acá” está significando el sitio de la no-luz. Pues NO. Es preciso que resignifiquemos esos dos términos y los introduzcamos en el proceso de conversación.

*Intervención:* Siento que hay una hegemonía de ese conocimiento. Me pregunto si para países que no hacen parte del todo de la hegemonía tradicional pero son europeos, el conocimiento que se está generando en otros países como India, África, América Latina, ¿se les está convirtiendo en un arma contra-hegemónica? Porque de hecho lo que yo veo es que la antropología del resto del mundo se está convirtiendo en un elemento importante en los modelos de formación en esos países. Me refiero a que profesores como Arturo Escobar o Valentín Mudimbe se están convirtiendo en pilares de la teoría antropológica en el mundo. Me pregunto ¿es eso un arma contra-hegemónica? ¿Qué hace esta red con relación a esto? ¿Vamos a aprovechar este momento?

*Arturo:* Bueno esto involucra a todos los postcoloniales, en particular a intelectuales que provienen de las antiguas colonias inglesas como la India, Sri Lanka, por ejemplo. Migraron a Inglaterra y a Estados Unidos, y comenzaron hasta cierto punto a transformar las agendas de investigación, las perspectivas. Hasta cierto punto, énfasis esto ha sido importante. Pero ha habido un peligro y es que muchos de esos movimientos han sido institucionalizados en Estados Unidos. Se convirtieron en funcionales al sistema. No sé cuál será el caso de Alemania. Pero un antropólogo hindú tiene la siguiente crítica a los diaspóricos que han ido a Estados Unidos pero se han quedado allá. Los diaspóricos son los antropólogos(as) de la India, de Sri Lanka y de Malasia: “Hacen cosas muy interesantes pero que no son útiles para pensar problemas de la India”. Esto porque no están en contacto con lo local de una manera activa, intensa. El

proyecto del RAM-WAN tiene dos componentes: uno académico-político que es transformar las prácticas académicas dentro de la disciplina. Para Marisol y para mí, que estamos en Gringolandia, o Walter Mignolo, es trabajar para transformarla allá, como un movimiento social dentro de. Y tal vez tenemos el beneficio de ver lo que les pasó a los diaspóricos. Resistir la institucionalización. Ser más estratégicos. El otro elemento es más político en cuanto al conocimiento; de cómo podemos construir una red que limite esas prácticas hegemónicas que condicionen siempre el ir allá.

*Intervención:* ¿En qué queda lo global, desde donde también se construyen dinámicas alternativas? No necesariamente la confrontación con la globalización sino la utilización de ese espacio para empoderar a los subalternos, etc. ¿Cómo la RAM-WAN la puede instrumentalizar?

*Intervención:* ¿Acompañar los procesos desde la RAM-WAN es ver, observar, actuar, intervenir, evidenciar?

*Arturo:* ¡Es todo eso! La red está constituida por individuos cuya acción combinada está produciendo un proyecto. En cierta forma hay una teoría de redes detrás de esto. De la complejidad, de interacciones, en Colombia, en Brasil, en Rosario, en otras partes del mundo que producen dinámicas que a su vez producen otras. No hay un mecanismo de control, no hay una estructura. Bueno, tiene que haber una estructura mínima que por el momento se organiza alrededor de un colectivo, con el cual se construyó un página web ([www.ram-wan.org](http://www.ram-wan.org)). Muy probablemente si en el momento de hacerla hubiesen estado vinculadas más personas, podría haber sido diferente la forma en la que se arma esa red. La idea es que a la red, a la discusión entren todos esos elementos o temáticas que han surgido en esta conversación, los subalternos, lo local, lo no hegemónico, lo indígena, lo que no puede codificarse en la norma académica, etc.

*Intervención:* A mí me gustaría saber si ustedes tienen algún tipo de financiación, si no la tienen, etc. También, que me parece un poco difícil de controlar tanta información, porque estamos hablando de una red, de cómo se van a organizar tantos temas de las heterogeneidades de las antropologías...

*Intervención:* Esto es paradójico, que en un Congreso, organizado por una institución, un poder hegemónico como la Universidad, estemos en un espacio en el que se está discutiendo que todo vale, en el que casi no hay que ser antropólogo. A mí me parece que estamos hablando mierda.

*Marisol:* No tenemos financiación. Utilizamos recursos como profesores de universidades públicas [Marisol y Arturo], con poco dinero. A pesar de esto tenemos la opción de participar en la reunión de la American Anthropological Association (AAA). Ser profesora de planta de un Departamento de Antropología, me permite tener una financiación anual de \$600 dólares para participar en una conferencia nacional. Entonces con Arturo, yo y otras personas como Susana Narotzky, Gustavo Lins Ribeiro con fondos personales nos reunimos allí. Sacamos de nuestro salario para formar la página web, por ejemplo. Para venir a Santafé tuvimos que contar con el apoyo de instituciones colombianas.<sup>3</sup> Si buscamos financiamiento pero no para buscar salarios o algo por el estilo, sino para hacer eventos, publicaciones, etc.

*Intervención:* Quisiera volver al punto de que aquí en Colombia, ya que se ha tocado el tema de cómo a la RAM-WAN le interesa apoyar programas de doctorado, es más importante tener un título de una universidad privada como Los Andes “la Harvard colombiana”, o mejor si es extranjera. La idea que se trasmite es que si usted es de afuera es mejor que si es de adentro, en términos de posibilidades de conseguir trabajo.

*Andrés:* Eso es discutible, porque es distinto si lo está observando como un acceso diferenciado de clases sociales, a que erróneamente usted suponga que en Los Andes está recibiendo una mejor formación como antropólogo en comparación a la que recibe alguien que sale de la Nacional o de la del Cauca o de los nuevos Departamentos. Discutamos la manera improvisada en la que se están implementando programas de maestría en detrimento de los pregrados. ¿Es verdad, como afirman las directivas de Los

Andes que en el pregrado no se puede hacer un aporte al conocimiento? ¿Es ese el sentido original de la tesis de investigación? No será que están ocultando el sentido pedagógico de ese ejercicio, en aras de facilitar el ingreso a las nuevas maestrías y asegurar los cupos y los presupuestos?

*Intervención:* Es grave que para atraer a los estudiantes de pregrado a las maestrías les eximan la presentación de un trabajo de grado, con la condición de permanecer mínimo un año en la maestría. Cuando les dan el título de pregrado hay muchos casos en los cuales la gente se retira.

*Juan Ricardo:* Yo creo que no es cierto que “todo vale” dentro de lo que se propone la red. Hay ciertas especificidades dentro de estas antropologías del mundo. Las prácticas que terminen en un ejercicio hegemónico no son parte de las antropologías del mundo.

*Cristóbal:* Una de las críticas que tenemos que hacernos es que conocemos muy bien que se está cocinando en la academia de Estados Unidos o Inglaterra y no sabemos qué pasa en Brasil, en México, en Bolivia. Brasil es casi la mitad de Suramérica y nos hemos empeñado en darle la espalda. Una tarea es conocer más lo que se produce y discute en estos países.

*Intervención:* Yo creo que es clave que no sólo nos digamos ojo con Brasil o México, porque ahí estamos reproduciendo un reconocimiento de la misma lógica. Es preciso mirar otros a los que no se les reconoce una antropología fuerte. Ahora, esta es una red de antropólogos y no considero tampoco que “todo vale”, creo que hay un llamado contra-hegemónico y que está reivindicando una antropología desde donde se puede estar produciendo conocimiento alternativo, que pueda acompañar procesos contra-hegemónicos. Cuando se habla de cuestionar esas lecturas hegemónicas de la antropología clásica, me pregunto si quienes están participando del WAN-RAM, hubiesen sido capaces de construir esta crítica sin haber pasado primero por este proceso de conocimiento. ¿Qué valoración se le debe dar entonces a esos elementos en la formación que son los que a la vez les han dado las herramientas críticas para identificar esos procesos de contrahegemonía?

*Pablo Jaramillo:* A mí preocupa cierto autismo academicista, pues Arturo mencionaba dos proyectos, el académico-político y el político; pero hasta ahora sólo se ha discutido el primero. ¿Qué pasa con el 90% de los antropólogos que no están en la academia y que están ejerciendo otro tipo de antropología. El resto del mundo nos está viendo a los antropólogos como unos autistas y no podemos darnos el lujo de decir que estamos en la nebulosa!

*Alejandro:* Yo pienso que una parte de los antropólogos que se gradúan piensan en investigar, en enseñar y en publicar, otra parte trabajan en consultorías aquí y allá. Yo creo que acá estamos pensando en vanidades intelectuales y no en cosas prácticas que podamos hacer.

*Alcida:* Con relación a esos actores que no son antropólogos quisiera decir que tienen que tener una cabida en la red. Ellos han sido el punto de partida de ese “conocimiento científico” que caracterizó a la disciplina, su origen. Es preciso que participen en los procesos de investigación con igualdad de condiciones, ¿que tal si tomamos en serio los conocimientos de con quienes trabajamos (campesinos, indígenas, negros, etc.)? La red puede tener un papel importante.

*Roberto Almanza:* Yo quería hacer una distinción. No podemos equiparar al académico con el intelectual. Existe un universo de sujetos que son intelectuales más no académicos. El antropólogo no es el único que tiene el privilegio de hablar sobre el otro. ¿Acaso un indígena que no sea antropólogo, que no esté “disciplinado”, no puede hacer una etnografía sobre su pueblo?

*Arturo:* La antropología nació un en un punto y en unos contextos particulares de la historia. Es una historia bastante cimentada, que no podemos descartar de tajo. ¿Cómo cuestionamos el canon y al mismo tiempo hacemos una serie de intervenciones que nos permitan hacer y decir? No todo vale. Que



tal si como decía Alcida, la antropología tomara en serio los conocimientos de con quienes trabajamos (los ambientalistas) y yo incluiría aquellos emanados de los desarrollistas, etc., no solamente el de los “buenos”. En cierta forma también el de los “malos”. Yo creo que es una pregunta interesante y puede ser la que transforme la antropología más allá de la academia.

*Intervención:* Yo quisiera comentar que esa antropología a la que nos referimos es Estado-céntrica y esa característica finalmente lo que ha hecho es que contribuyamos a reforzar un sentido unidireccional de la historia, y el cual considero debemos impactar. También considero que se debe trabajar la pregunta por los currículums, de los pregrados, que se mencionó antes. Un impacto que critique el desprestigio que significa para alguien que se graduó afuera dar clase en un pregrado. Eso se ve así. Con respecto al sentido de acompañamiento de lo local; a pesar de no tener el intelectual orgánico del que hablaba Gramsci, tenemos que seguir cumpliendo un papel intelectual en la sociedad. El problema es que ese sentido de acompañamiento está muy cercano a una noción, un espíritu mesiánico del antropólogo.

*Intervención:* ¿Cómo posibilitar la ampliación temática de intereses, en nuestra antropología, tanto en la enseñanza, o en la práctica? No porque esté mal hacer antropología sobre indígenas, sino para considerar nuevos campos.

*Marisol:* Uno de los objetivos de la red es propiciar un cambio en los términos de la comunicación, hacer posibles redes, conexiones entre diferentes antropologías y entre espacios para hacerlas. Esto se puede interpretar como la necesidad de deslocalizar, pero es más interesante pensarlo como la oportunidad de aprender en otro espacio local. Traigo una anécdota: ante de venir a estudiar a Estados Unidos no me atrevía a hacer análisis de otros sitios que no fueran Perú, y fui a hacer investigación a Guatemala y me dio confianza el hecho de que podía localizarme en otro espacio, pero no deslocalizarme. Y sí uno de los problemas que tienen las antropologías latinoamericanas es la hiperlocalización. Ya no tolero más la forma en la que el “conocimiento” que subordina los conocimientos, que no solo está presente en la academia, está en las ONGs. Quisiera crear un espacio donde la justicia se vea, ante la injusticia de la hegemonía.

*Intervención:* ¿Cuál es el compromiso, cómo no lo podemos plantear, del antropólogo, o del intelectual con lo local?

*Intervención:* Con relación al papel del antropólogo con la sociedad, es muy claro el desconocimiento que hay dentro de nosotros como gremio hacia fuera y que se ilustra con la anécdota de un colega mío que fue a pedir trabajo a Metro Salud [en Medellín] y la señora que lo iba a contratar le dijo: “yo tengo al psicólogo y sé por qué le pago, tengo el sociólogo y sé por qué le pago, tengo al trabajador y sé por qué le pago, pero a usted no sé por qué le voy a pagar”. No hay un conocimiento de qué es lo que hace un antropólogo o para qué sirve.

*Juan Ricardo:* En contextos de la violencia actual que vive el país, en la manera como el Estado, los medios y la academia se han encargado “hablar de la violencia”, resulta útil considerar el caso de la Universidad de la Resistencia que están formando alrededor de veinte comunidades del Chocó, desplazadas, para construir conocimientos alternativos sobre, en y para la violencia. Comparten información, sin currículums, sin títulos. Ellos mismos están haciendo una cartografía alternativa del por qué actualmente las zonas del sur del país son zonas de conflicto. Con el caso de la Universidad de la Resistencia, en definitiva, un lugar no académico, se fractura el mono-loguismo característico para hablar sobre la violencia en el país. La pregunta que nos queda es: ¿cómo nos situamos frente y con este proceso?

*Marisol:* ¿Cómo tengo que escribir para que la gente que yo conozco en el Perú y que trabaja en distintas instancias del Estado?, para que no me digan: “Eres muy antropológica Marisol?”. Esto quiere decir que lo que a ti te interesa personalmente no es necesariamente relevante en términos políticos. Esto es un tema central. ¿Cómo hacer que el quehacer antropológico se vuelva relevante políticamente de manera



inmediata? Son puntos ciegos que tenemos: la definición de la política y lo que entra en su definición, que va paralelo a lo que entra en la definición de conocimiento. Es preciso abrir la política a aquellos espacios, o mejor afectar aquellos espacios que no proceden del “conocimiento”. La idea de dar voz me molesta muchísimo, me interesa mejor la idea de cómo me dan voz. Es preciso repensar lo que entra o no entra en la política –que es lo que no tiene razón–. Pensar el Estado-razón y como Estado-nación.

*Arturo:* Uno de los proyectos del WAN-RAM para subvertir la racionalidad editorial del mundo académico del cual hace parte esa Antropología, es crear una especie de casa editorial, línea editorial, donde tengan cabida distintos conocimientos, no necesariamente académicos.

*Intervención:* Es interesante manejar la iniciativa del *copy-left*.

*Arturo:* Sí ese es un principio, no de propiedad intelectual, porque precisamente va en contra de ese concepto. Se define como la posibilidad de poder ser apropiado, utilizado, apropiado si se quiere, es gratuito. En la red lo estamos manejando, con los documentos, la revista en línea.

### **Propuestas**

Rescribir las presentaciones de los objetivos del RAM-WAN de manera que se dejen de lado el uso de glosas impenetrables y se busque un lenguaje que tome cierta distancia con el acostumbrado a usar en el campo intelectual.

Continuar con el apoyo a la formación de programas de maestría y de doctorado.

Volver sobre el documento borrador en el que se hacía un pequeño detenimiento en los préstamos que la RAM-WAN hace de la teoría de redes, para desarrollarlo más y colgarlo de la página.

Si hay una crítica a la institucionalidad, pues entonces hay que buscar otros medios que trasciendan lo institucional y lo resignifiquen (instituciones como COLCIENCIAS), no solamente que le hagan el quite.

Me gustaría que la página tuviera más información sobre antropología aplicada y otra información con áreas específicas de trabajo.

### **Reunión Hotel Mariscal Robledo (jueves 25)**

A esta reunión asistieron Marisol de la Cadena, Juan Ricardo Aparicio, Arturo Escobar, Gustavo Lins Ribeiro, Myriam Jimeno, Roberto Almanza, Kristina Lyons, Claudia Steiner, Alejandro Castillejo, Cristóbal Gnecco, Alcida Rita Ramos, Carlos Andrés Barragán.

### **Sobre el RAM-WAN**

*Marisol:* Este es un evento informal que desde la red estamos haciendo en distintas partes del mundo para dar circulación a los objetivos de las antropologías del mundo. Esta reunión no está estructurada, a excepción del interés de tratar tres grandes temas. El primero está relacionado con una información de lo que quiere ser una red de antropologías mundiales; el segundo intercambiar ideas, críticas, preguntas hacer un poco de brainstorming, y llevar hasta sus límites el proceso en el que se quiere convertir la red. El tercero es tal vez uno de los más importantes, y es discutir cómo vamos a operativizar y dividirnos el trabajo.

Esta red surgió de conversaciones entre Arturo y yo cuando éramos colegas en Chapel Hill a raíz de una serie de inconformidades e inquietudes con la manera en la que desde el norte se mira a las antropologías del sur, o mejor no se miran, pero que cuando son consideradas el carácter de esta mirada es subordinada, ignora, invisibiliza. Inconformidades también sobre cómo estas miradas o no-miradas se reproducen en otros centros que no necesariamente están ubicados en el norte. Inconformidades con la forma en la que se invisibilizan en el norte posibilidades alternativas que surgen en el propio norte. De estas conversaciones surge el reconocimiento de la multiplicidad de posicionalidad de centros y periferias. No de un solo norte, sino muchos nortes, no un solo sur, sino muchos sures. Una relación geopolítica de conocimiento. En ese momento entra en la conversación Gustavo Lins Ribeiro, luego Eduardo Restrepo como estudiante y paulatinamente ha ido creciendo, ampliando, al punto que hemos alcanzado un grupo de personas en distintos puntos del mundo. La idea de la red es que es un proceso para cambiar términos de conversabilidad entre distintas formas de hacer conocimientos. Los niveles en los cuales se mueve la red son institucionales, disciplinarios y niveles no disciplinarios, o mejor indisciplinarios. Con esto quiero decir que queremos cambiar los términos de conversabilidad en la producción de conocimiento entre antropologías institucionalizadas y por fuera de éstas. Esa es la idea central, en un resumen apretado, de lo que quiere ser el RAM-WAN como filosofía. No queremos separarnos de la idea de la RAM-WAN como proceso. Para poder descentrar y mover centros, cambiar las relaciones de conversabilidad uno de los principios fundamentales es lo que hemos llamado en-redarnos, y con eso queremos decir incorporar y soltar, incorporar y soltar, discutir e ir cambiando el proceso “normal” de producción de conocimientos caracterizado por ser unidireccional. Los eventos que hemos hecho han sido formales e informales, en la triple AAA (noviembre de 2002), seminarios en el contexto universitario, otro evento fue la reunión en Italia, el seminario de Rosario.

*Gustavo Lins Ribeiro:* Hubo una reunión bastante institucional cuando yo fui presidente de la ABA, e inspirados por nuestros debates, invité a catorce directores de asociaciones antropológicas de países como Japón, India, Suráfrica, etc., y nos quedamos tres días en Recife (Brasil) para discutir sobre cómo incrementar la pluralidad de la antropología a partir de las Asociaciones. De ahí salió el Consejo Mundial de Asociaciones antropológicas, con dieciséis miembros. Es algo único, y está tratando de ganar un pulso, nunca se había presentado un proyecto como este. Y a pesar de que son organismos muy institucionalizados, la idea ha tenido un impacto, a pesar de la forma que casi es anti RAM-WAN.

*Marisol:* De estas reuniones recogemos la información y pues la estamos circulando a través del correo electrónico, desde la página, espacios a los cuales los invitamos a participar.

*Arturo:* La página inicial fue lamentablemente canibalizada por una página de pornografía! Afortunadamente ya está funcionando muy bien gracias al trabajo de Eduardo Restrepo, Andrés Burbano y Andrés Barragán.

*Marisol:* Hay un núcleo central importante en Colombia y la idea es crear estos mismos núcleos en otras partes del mundo, en seminarios y conferencias que esperamos hacer a través de metodologías virtuales.

*Gustavo:* Es preciso destacar el primer número de la revista del RAM-WAN, que es un esfuerzo grande y que esperamos que no quede allí.

### **Cuestionamientos**

*Claudia Steiner:* ¿Cuándo te refieres a un núcleo central, estás hablando de qué gente?

*Marisol:* Me refiero a contactos, por ejemplo Cristóbal, Andrés, Eduardo, son un grupo de contactos colombianos. Es un núcleo de gente interesada. Quiero crear en Perú, por ejemplo, un grupo de gente que quiere participar o no. Yo por ejemplo participo a veces, hay momentos en los que no lo puedo

hacer de manera muy frecuente por mis obligaciones. Por eso es un grupo de gente interesada. Uno de los principios es que construimos a partir de los desacuerdos. Tenemos discusiones en las que no necesariamente estamos de acuerdo. Los documentos que producimos así mismo van cambiando. En el proceso hay mucha discusión, mucha cooperación y mucho anonimato. Queremos ser itinerantes y no anclados a un solo sitio.

*Gustavo:* Hemos tenido varias experiencias de discusión en cursos formales de doctorado, tanto Arturo como yo, en Estados Unidos y en Brasil respectivamente, en los cuales es interesante comenzar a señalar las relaciones de poder en la producción del conocimiento. Me gustaría mencionar por ejemplo que es curioso cómo se ha comenzado a identificar el interés por las antropologías nacionales como una iniciativa latinoamericana. Sí estamos centrados en el español, pero esto ha comenzado a cambiar y ya hay inclusión de personas que se mueven en el inglés.

*Marisol:* Todo el tiempo estamos entrando y saliendo; la presencia es esporádica y no queremos que esto cambie. El que quiere estar, o no tiene tiempo, o no le interesa aportar a una discusión específica, pues está muy bien.

*Arturo:* No queremos ser una red jerárquica. También buscamos que tome su propio ritmo.

*Cristóbal:* La red ha estado participando y ayudando en la preparación de un programa de doctorado en la Universidad del Cauca. Algunos de los individuos que participan en la red, han sido interlocutores valiosos en la formulación del proyecto.

*Alejandro Castillejo:* Yo tuve la intención de ir a Rosario, lamentablemente no se pudo, pero quería decirles que estoy contento de escucharlos. Y quisiera mencionar el programa que estoy motivando desde hace siete meses de intercambio y colaboración académica entre la Universidad de Los Andes y universidades africanas, particularmente en la que yo trabajé en Suráfrica, University of Western Cape (Ciudad del Cabo). Y surge de la diferencia que aparece al preguntarse por ejemplo sobre el colonialismo. Yo me refiero a una cosa totalmente distinta y ellos a otra. Un tema sobre el cual que se viene permanentemente haciendo referencia cuando se consideran las estructuras de las ciudades. ¿Por qué será que siempre necesitamos de un tercer referente para hablar de algo, entonces tu y yo nos encontramos en Londres para hablar sobre la violencia en Colombia y Uganda, pero no logramos hablar aquí. Desde el punto de vista teórico en cierta forma hemos sido dependientes para hablar de temas que específicamente nos interesaban tanto a los ugandeses, a los surafricanos, como a los colombianos, específicamente a mí. Entonces se me ocurre la idea de montar un intercambio para aprender qué significa hablar y dialogar. ¿Cuáles son los términos de la conversación? No necesariamente se ha dado entre antropólogos, considero que participan un poco más los historiadores, ya que los antropólogos tienen un papel más conservador. Porque lo que sucedía entre mis colegas y yo es que durábamos hablando horas enteras y nunca estábamos hablando de lo mismo.

*Alcida:* Sobre esto quisiera referirme al artículo que publicó Adam Kuper en *Current Anthropology* en el cual habla sobre el retorno del indígena,<sup>4</sup> con una idea súper universalizante, en la cual no da espacio a otra noción que sea la tradicional. Es desastroso...

*Arturo:* Nosotros le hemos puesto énfasis a los términos de conversabilidad a las antropologías del mundo, para retomar lo que mencionó Alejandro. Es preciso comenzar por establecer esas condiciones de conversabilidad en las periferias, precisamente porque no han existido esas condiciones.

*Alejandro:* Una de las propuestas que yo le quiero hacer a la Universidad de Los Andes, que es un poco rara, está justificada en que aquí en América Latina poco se conoce de los pensadores poscoloniales africanos. No se conoce a Frantz Fanon, por ejemplo. Y en la otra vía, un ejemplo más radical, en África no conocen al Che Guevara.



*Claudia:* Tengo como una pequeña preocupación; evidentemente la idea de la red me encanta, estoy súper de acuerdo, creo que es importantísima, pero ¿cómo evitar la hegemonía de la red? ¿Cómo evitar que la red se vuelva algo hegemónico? Muchas veces con sorpresa estamos hablando que no conocíamos lo que hacía, y casi ahora recurrimos a una red que puede llegar a suplantar discusiones. Casi a escala nacional no conocemos lo que está haciendo. No sé si me explico, que la red se convierta en la cuestión hegemónica “vamos a recurrir a la red porque la red se vuelve la hegemonía”.

*Gustavo:* Yo creo que eso tiene que ver con la práctica política. Creo que estamos aún muy temprano para prever si la red algún día va a ser hegemónica. Por supuesto, es una posibilidad. Sin embargo es pertinente evitar la tentación del poder.

*Claudia:* Lo digo sobretodo por la necesidad de súper ampliarla y que no sea una red de personas específicas.

*Marisol:* Es clave tener conciencia del peligro del poder, y una vocación por el no-poder. Reconcer que el peligro está aquí. Una de las cosas es no firmar. Aunque algunas veces se hayan publicado artículos con nombre propio con el caso de Eduardo y Arturo, en español y en inglés. Pero a la larga eso es producto de una conversación.

*Alejandro:* Cada vez me rehúso a usar fuentes en inglés para mis cursos, gran parte de mi formación ha estado en esa lengua (en Estados Unidos, en Europa en África) y creo que es preciso disminuir su efecto. Hay que trabajar eso en el espacio curricular. Que las líneas filosóficas de un postgrado no tengan esa influencia norteamericana tan marcada.

*Gustavo:* Nuestra propuesta no es una propuesta de destruir la antropología en lengua inglesa. Es decir, negar que tienen algo interesante que decir. Muchas veces hemos recibido fuertes críticas, por ejemplo a la introducción del libro, en las que nos señalan como una apuesta a un sentido de multiculturalismo en la antropología. Esa es la lectura que han hecho antropólogos norteamericanos. Nosotros no queremos nuevas casillas (slots) para que cada uno esté en la suya y tener una colección.

*Marisol:* Es preciso ser conscientes de las prácticas cotidianas que establecen las conexiones dominantes de conversabilidad y tratar de cambiarlas en lo posible. Nosotros en los seminarios le apuntamos a eso. En mi caso, he dictado un curso de teoría de la antropología, en el cual incluyo literatura de las antropologías del mundo. Estamos comenzando a pensar una conversación para el próximo año. Particularmente me interesaría abrir una discusión sobre los pregrados de antropología en Perú.

*Myriam Jimeno:* Bueno yo simplemente quería decir que tenía mucho interés en escuchar qué era la RAM-WAN, comparto la preocupación de ustedes desde hace bastante tiempo y preguntar cómo se va a volver operativo. Me interesa mucho participar y ayudar en lo que sea posible.

*Claudia:* Todas mis preguntas vienen de la ignorancia, pero la tendencia era ver a la red como dos o tres personas. Creo preciso difundir y compartir más las discusiones de la red. No sabíamos mucho del proyecto de doctorado del Cauca, nosotros [el departamento de Antropología de Los Andes] vamos a comenzar proyecto de doctorado en unos años, así que sería bueno que se convirtiera en un espacio de discusión.

*Gustavo:* Es difícil evitar que los proyectos se terminen relacionando con las personas que están alrededor de ellos, y por supuesto es fatal. Pero la filosofía del RAM-WAN no da espacio para personas que vengan a luchar por un poder, o a imponer su pensamiento y sus acciones.

*Claudia:* Yo sé que la palabra que voy a usar no les va a gustar, pero por qué no se “institucionaliza” una cátedra que sea una base para la discusión, para comprometer a los profesores del Departamento, y a los estudiantes. Pensar programas de cursos y cátedras para el pregrado y para el postgrado.

*Andrés:* Pero, ¿hasta qué punto nos interesa desde el RAM-WAN hacer énfasis y reproducir esa diferencia entre el postgrado y el pregrado? ¿No es algo que podemos ver críticamente desde la red? Porque esa diferencia es la manera institucional en la que se da un ordenamiento de acceso y juego con el conocimiento. Mi posición es muy crítica a la forma en la que se está instrumentalizando los programas de maestría en detrimento del pregrado bajo una lógica de mercado. Yo propongo que hagamos los programas de cursos, la selección de temas, las bibliografías, independiente de que hagan uso de estos en el pregrado o en los postgrados.

### **Propuestas**

Es preciso retomar la discusión de teoría de redes, para aclarar que la red no es uno o dos individuos, sino un conjunto de personas que están interactuando.

Estamos buscando que el libro que reúne las ponencias presentadas en Italia y que será lanzado por Berg Publishers en los primeros meses del 2006,<sup>5</sup> sea publicado en español, con la expectativa de que lo haga una editorial que tenga una buena cobertura en América Latina sin que esto implique un costo demasiado elevado y que limite su acceso.

CLACSO podría ser una buena opción para la publicación de la traducción al español del libro.

Es más preciso hablar de una línea editorial del RAM-WAN.

Seguir participando en eventos para hacer divulgación de los objetivos de la RAM-WAN.

Proponer talleres itinerantes en países como la India, por ejemplo, para llevar la discusión, la conversación del RAM-WAN. Para esto necesitamos una colaboración más amplia de nuevos miembros de la red.

Hacer programas generales y temáticos con bibliografías no anglo-centradas para fomentar la discusión de los objetivos de la red.

Pensar proyectos de traducción y publicación de textos fundamentales de crítica que no estén en español. Pero que estos textos estén en línea, y cuyo acceso sea gratis.

Está abierta una convocatoria para recibir trabajos para la revista electrónica del RAM-WAN. No tienen que ser artículos convencionales.

Poner en marcha el FORO de discusión en la página con temáticas mensuales en las que las personas suben sus comentarios al servidor sin ningún tipo de censura o filtra. Es necesaria una interfase para esto y aquí es clave seguir contando con el trabajo de Andrés Burbano. La forma en la que funciona la página del Tablero Interactivo del Museo del Oro podría servir como ejemplo:

<http://quimbaya.banrep.gov.co/tabmuseo/messages/4/4.html?1126709780>

### **Notas**

<sup>1</sup> Por falta de estrategia del relator, no se recogieron en todos los casos los nombres de las personas que participaron con preguntas y opiniones. Estos casos están señalados con un frío y anónimo “Intervención”.

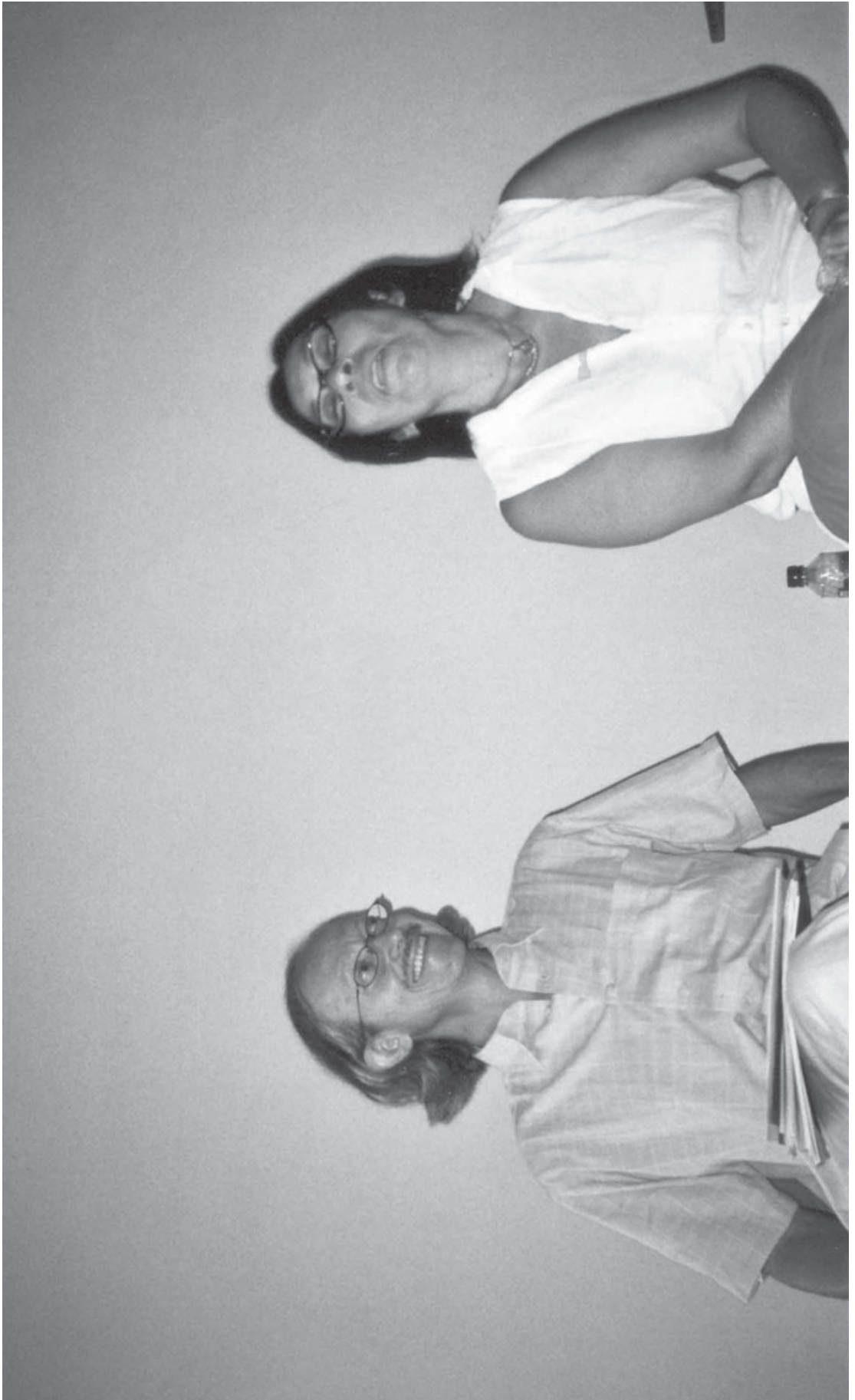
<sup>2</sup> Instituto Colombiano para el Desarrollo de la Ciencia y la Tecnología “Francisco José de Caldas”.

<sup>3</sup> Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia (ICANH), Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Universidad de Antioquia, Universidad del Cauca, Universidad de Los Andes.

<sup>4</sup> Kuper, Adam. 2003. The Return of the Native?. *Current Anthropology*. 44 (3): 389-402.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.bergpublishers.com/uk/book\\_page.asp?BKTitle=World%20Anthropologies](http://www.bergpublishers.com/uk/book_page.asp?BKTitle=World%20Anthropologies)





**Review of Ernesto De Martino, *The Land of Remorse: a study of Southern Italian Tarantism* (first published in Italian in 1961 as *La Terra del Rimorso: contributo a una Storia Religiosa del Sud*) translated and annotated by Dorothy Louise Zinn, with a foreword by Vincent Crapanzano. 332 pp. Free Association Books, London 2005. Website: [www.fabooks.com](http://www.fabooks.com)**

By Stephen Bennetts

Tarantula, tarantella, tarantism, Taranto: this classic anthropological study describes a possession cult and dance practised until recently by peasants in the Taranto region of Southern Italian who believed they were possessed by the *taranta*, or tarantula spider.

[Here, for once, is a new book about Italy in English which transcends the familiar Anglophone clichés of the Tuscan villa (*Under the Tuscan Sun* or Bertolucci's excruciating *Stealing Beauty*), Florence (*Room with a View*), and Dolce Vita Rome (Australian writer Penelope Green's recent *When in Rome*).] The setting for *La Terra del Rimorso* (*The Land Of Remorse*) is [the less fashionable area of] Southern Puglia, in what was once the Kingdom of Naples and where until recently, victims of tarantism would suffer annually recurring psychotic symptoms between June and August after the summer harvest season. These attacks were believed to be caused by the bite of the tarantula, and different *tarante* were thought to have different natures which produced different effects on their victims: some were violent and aggressive, others lascivious, others tearful, and others sleepy. Victims of the spider (the *tarantati*) were cured through a form of music and dance therapy provided by a group of tarantella musicians hired to perform in the victims' homes. The musicians would first carry out a musical diagnosis of the precise nature of the spider which had possessed its victim, before playing the particular style of *tarantella* most suited to purging the venom of that particular spider through dance.

The cult appears to have originated near Taranto some time after the 1100s, but later spread throughout the Kingdom of Naples and even parts of Spain. In a magisterial survey of the historical evidence, De Martino explores the historical continuities between tarantism and the Classical Greek ecstatic cults of Dionysus, the stronghold of which was in this Greek-speaking area of southern Italy, still known to this day as Magna Grecia. Tarantism began its slow and inevitable decline after the sixteenth century Council of Trent, when the Catholic Counter Reformation went on an offensive against popular beliefs seen to deviate from orthodox Christian teaching. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Church was successful in partly Christianising the cult by establishing a Chapel of St Paul in the town of Galatina, with the saint now becoming a major focus of annual cult activity on his feast day of June 29. In an attempt to refocus and disarticulate the cult, the tarantella music and dance therapy was banned from the chapel. The spread of rationalist Enlightenment doctrines from Naples beginning in the late seventeenth century further hastened the decline of tarantism throughout Southern Italy.

First published in 1961, *The Land of Remorse* is a classic of anthropological detective work. Was this bizarre phenomenon really caused by the bite of the tarantula, or was it instead a mere 'superstitious relic', or a localised form of psychosis prevalent among illiterate Southern Italian peasants? Almost sixty years ago, in 1959, a group of scholars arrived in the small town of Galatina to unravel the riddle. They comprised a historian of religion (De Martino), neuropsychiatrist, toxicologist, psychologist, anthropologist, ethnomusicologist, social worker and photographer.

It soon became clear that the research team was documenting the last vestiges of the cult, which by now had retreated to an isolated pocket of peasant society in Salento, the stiletto heel of Southern Italy. Tarantism still persisted in its classical form in the music and dance therapy sessions conducted in the

home, whilst the partly Christianised form of the cult, amputated of its musical and dance component, continued in the grotesque and histrionic displays at the Chapel of St Paul, as possessed *tarantati* arrived for the feast day of Saint Paul to ask the saint for healing.

In De Martino's analysis, the mythology of the *taranta* and the catharsis of the possession state provide a framework in which personal psychological tensions common throughout Southern Italian peasant society could be publicly dramatised. Private sufferings caused by unhappy love, bereavement, sexual frustration, or subaltern social status were transfigured into annually recurring possession states which were culturally determined, rather than being the result of a real spider bite. The ritualised healing through dance and music provided victims with psychological closure and reintegration back into the community, at least until the summer of the following year.

[According to one Salentine authority, the last episode of tarantism involving actual possession took place in 1993, but the last living practitioner died in 2000. Yet 'tarantism' has recently taken on another curious form. The current Southern Italian folk revival and associated *pizzica* dance craze incorporate a grab bag of different impulses: re-emergent Southern regionalism, the reevaluation of a peasant past which is now distant enough for young Southern Italians to romanticise rather than feel ashamed of, and a rejection by the Italian anti-globalisation movement of the television-fixated 'cultural homogenisation' of Berlusconi Italy. De Martino's book has now achieved cult status beyond the academy; go to many folk concerts in Southern Italy today and you will find it on sale alongside tambourines, castanets and other accoutrements of the recently exhumed Southern Italian past. In a process which has been aptly described as 'proletarian exoticisation', De Martino's plain female peasant *tarantate* have given way in contemporary reworkings of the theme to video clips featuring dissociated but picturesque young beauties writhing to the latest tarantella folk hit. Within the current Salentine folk revival, De Martino functions as a kind of symbolic fetish, validating an isolated area of Southern Italy which almost nobody had heard of until the 'rediscovery' of tarantism and tarantella ten years ago suddenly put Salento on the map.]

De Martino's intellectual pedigree was unusual. His interest in Southern Italian peasant culture grew out of his political engagement with the Italian Socialist Party and later the Communist Party, which led him to party activism among southern Italian peasants from the 1940s on. For anthropologist and de Martino collaborator Clara Gallini, he was characteristic of that familiar type of post-war Italian life; the politically engaged left wing intellectual 'equally committed to research and to the attempt to link research to political praxis'.<sup>1</sup> De Martino's earlier work however, was heavily marked by the idealism of Neapolitan philosopher Benedetto Croce, a figure so dominant within early twentieth century Italian intellectual life that his influence is even perceptible in a Marxist like Antonio Gramsci, whose characteristic preoccupation with ideology has a distinctively Crocean flavour. The gradual publication after 1948 of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* had a huge impact on Italian left wing intellectuals,<sup>2</sup> and in De Martino's case provided a stimulus for the anthropological investigation of the culture and ideology of the Southern Italian 'subaltern classes', particularly as embodied in peasant folklore. But De Martino also drew inspiration from other more cosmopolitan currents from outside Italy, including psychoanalysis and the existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre. American anthropologist George Saunders has commented that in *The Land of Remorse*, de Martino seemed to be attempting something

very akin to what Foucault did a few years later with *Madness and Civilisation* (1973): an analysis of the discourse about tarantism aimed at exposing relations of power, the tensions of cultural change and the redefinition of the Other through the control of culture by the elite.<sup>3</sup>

This study will be of interest to scholars across a wide range of disciplines, including historical and psychological anthropology, psychiatry, ethnomusicology, the history and anthropology of religion, shamanism and ethnographic methodology.

Although De Martino is today widely celebrated as the father of Italian anthropology, and his 1961 study of tarantism is certainly the most influential work ever written by an Italian anthropologist, the book has been unavailable to non-Italian readers until now, apart from a 1966 French edition.<sup>4</sup> His American translator, Dorothy Zinn, is an anthropologist at the University of Basilicata in the heart of Lucania, the focus for so much of De Martino's research. Any non-Italian who has ever struggled through the at times dense original text will appreciate the difficulties of bringing this book to an English-speaking audience. Zinn's judicious notes contextualise a wealth of references which will be obscure to most non-Italian readers, while Vincent Crapanzano's brilliant opening essay provides a fitting induction for this important anthropological thinker into the wider context of world anthropology.

## Notes

1 Interview published in Santoro, V & Torsello S (eds.) 2002, *Il Ritmo Meridiano. La Pizzica e le Identità Danzanti del Salento*, Edizioni Aramire, Lecce, pp 157-166.

2 Gundle, S (1995) 'The Legacy of the Prison Notebooks: Gramsci, the PCI and Italian Culture in the Cold War Period' in Duggan, C. & Wagstaff, C (eds) *Italy in the Cold War: politics, culture, and society, 1948-1958*

3 Saunders deserves full credit for his long battle to achieve recognition for De Martino's work outside Italy. See especially his pioneering articles: 'Contemporary Italian Cultural Anthropology' *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1984) (13) 447-66 and "'Critical ethnocentrism" and the Ethnology of Ernesto De Martino', *American Anthropologist* (1993) 95 (4): 875-893.

4 *Il Mondo Magico*, Turin Boringhieri 1973, was first published in English by an obscure Australian publisher as *Primitive Magic: The Psychic Powers of Shamans and Sorcerers* (Bay Books Sydney 1972). Other notable works by De Martino include: *Sud e Magia* (Southern Italy and Magic: Feltrinelli, Milan 1987), an ethnographic study of popular magical practises in post-war rural Southern Italy, *Morte e Pianto Rituale* (Death and the Mourning Ritual: Turin Einaudi 1975) and *La fine del Mondo: Contributo all'Analisi delle Apocalissi Culturali* (The End of the World; a contribution to the analysis of cultural apocalypses: Turin Einaudi 1977). See also Gallini, C & Faeta, F (1999) *I Viaggi nel Sud di Ernesto de Martino*, Bollati Boringhieri, Turin 1999, which features the superb fieldwork photos of Sandro Pinna, who accompanied De Martino on almost all of his ethnographic trips in Southern Italy.



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The review of Ernesto de Martino’s *The Land of Remorse: a study of southern Italian Tarantism*, by Stephen Bennett’s was published in the *Weekend Australian* (Review section), 28-29 January 2006, p. R10.