Dis-ease with Postmodern Anthropology

Selected Papers from the Autumn Meeting of the Anthropological Association of Ireland,
held at LSB College, Dublin, 10 to 13 December 1999

Edited by Mark Maguire, George E. Marcus, A. Jamie Saris, and Steve Coleman

Volume V
2000

Table of Contents

Introduction: Dis-ease with Postmodern Anthropology

The articles in this special issue represent a selection of papers presented at the autumn meeting of the Anthropological Association of Ireland, held at LSB College, Dublin, from 10 to 13 December 1999. The conference called for anthropologists to appraise the challenges facing their discipline in the context of the postmodern turn in the human sciences. The meeting, as reflected in the articles herein, was ambitious in scope and attracted a varied and venturesome response, drawing together views from several disciplines and traditions. Nonetheless, these articles are held together by the shared sense that anthropology has been touched by and must respond to postmodernism.

Fashionable yet ambiguous, postmodernism has had profound and tangible effects upon anthropology in terms of how the discipline is perceived and, indeed, organized. Regardless of whether one is a 'postmodernist', one has to take notice of its effects. The term itself functions a little like Raymond Williams's (1976) notion of keywords: around it gathers clusters of other terms that stretch from globalization to inter-subjectivity. The locus of these concerns, however, remains very often unchallenged.

This special issue is not one of definition or an attempt to look for the hidden logic of postmodernism, rather, the concern is with its effects and the course of action it provokes. From George Marcus's call for a new model of ethnography that departs radically from that bequeathed to Anthropology by Malinowski to Kerric Harvey on the anthropology of technological environments and Christina Moutsou on the subjectivity of fieldwork, one may see readily not just a skeptical interrogation of a discipline but also a real drive to make use of the opportunities and flexibility inherent within it.

Terry Eagleton has long been associated with the postmodern turn in the human sciences. His article in this issue continues his recent line of inquiry into the notion of culture.

Anthropologists have tended to use this term without addressing it *per se.* Eagleton, in contrast, traces contemporary uses of the term to a ninteenth-century triptych of 'excellence', 'economics' and 'ethnos'. Mass culture, 'Culture' in the Arnoldian sense, and the particular, exclusionist uses of culture all appear in the crosshairs of his critique. While Anthropology has struggled with the slipperiness of its central term for more than a century, it has only more recently become explicitly aware of how a register of culture can easily be wielded as a tool of power, while being liable to various forces expanding its semantic domain, until it becomes almost unusable as a concept.

George Marcus's article, "Beyond Malinowski and After Writing Culture", is an especially pertinent contribution to this issue in that the author is connected directly, as a main protagonist, to the Writing Culture Critique, which is, for many, central to the way cultural anthropology has approached postmodernist questions. Here he addresses the evident new designs and practices in fieldwork, usually manifesting themselves in later second projects, in the work of established ethnographers, and asks whether lessons may be learned from which a new model of fieldwork may be established? Multi-sited fieldwork has been with us for some time, scattered and diffuse in its employment and rarely theorized to the extent and rigor necessary for it to replace the model that we have taken from Malinowski.

The critique and reflexive refinement of ethnographic practice is very much at the forefront in the work of Christina Moutsou, in terms of the way problematic aspects of her own subjectivity appear purposely to both unsettle and complement her fieldwork. Continuing this concern for method, the work of Kerric Harvey charts changes in the technological environment in which both human and non-human mix and interact, opening up possibilities for anthropology and sign-posting a type of ethnography in which the style characteristic of the postmodernist turn seem quite appropriate.

William Stein's contribution may be described as an 'ethnohistory' of the Vicos Project. His research integrates the story of that project with the history of anthropology. Drawing

on theorists from Marx to Derrida, he pulls together both the ethnography of multiple contexts and a concern to highlight the inequalities in, and the tangible effects of, the transitive notion of development that motivated this intervention.

In an important contribution, Tom Ryan rethinks the significant influence of Jacques Derrida on the human sciences and to anthropology. Derrida shines amid the A-list of French intellectuals so often cited in postmodernist texts. Many view his *oeuvre* as the underpinning of postmodernism (particularly in the English-speaking world) and cite his 'break' from structuralism as a key moment in the human sciences. Ryan disinters the essential moments and debates, necessary for understanding Derrida's relationship with structuralism. "To deconstruct is a structuralist and anti-structuralist gesture at the same time", according to Derrida (1995: 83). What are the consequences for rethinking anthropology in the light of a rereading of deconstruction, he asks?

This issue concludes with a comment by Maurice Bloch (with some minor input from Mark Maguire), who argues forcefully that the anthropology he does seems evermore distant from that which has come to be known as "postmodernist". While his comment apportions a certain amount of blame to institutional matters of organization in the United States—the same criticism can, of course, be extended to British and European anthropology in various measures—the strong point that emerges is that the enterprise of anthropology, as Bloch conceives it, is not driven by 'ethnography' as such. This provocative position stands in stark contrast to the other work in this issue; yet, Bloch's contribution dovetails in interesting ways with Tom Ryan's preceding call for a rereading of the intellectual heritage of the postmodern turn. The debates surrounding postmodernist anthropology, it seems, are far from over.

This is only the second time that the Anthropological Association of Ireland has published a special issue of this journal. It was felt by many that the quality of contributions to the 1999 meeting and the level of connectivity between them merited publication in this manner. The guest editors would like to thank those involved in the organization and success of the

<div align="right">**George E. Marcus and Mark Maguire**</div>

Bibliography

Derrida, Jacques
   1995 *Points... Interviews, 1974-1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Williams, Raymond
   1976. *Keywords.* London: Fontana.

Culture Wars

Terry Eagleton
Warton Professor of English Literature
St. Catherine's College, Oxford University

The word 'culture' has always seemed both too broad and too narrow to be really useful. Its aesthetic meaning includes Stravinsky but not necessarily science fiction; its anthropological sense may stretch from hairstyles and drinking habits to the manufacture of drainpipes. In its turbulent career as a concept, culture has been both a synonym and an antonym of 'civilization', has pivoted between actual and ideal, and hovered precariously between the descriptive and the normative. In its narrower sense, the word means the arts and fine living: the arts define what makes life worth living, but they are not themselves what we live for. It suggests rather patronizingly that science, philosophy, politics and economics can no longer be regarded as 'creative' (for what historical reasons is this so?), and implies rather alarmingly that civilized values are now to be found only in fantasy.

Culture in this Schillerian or Arnoldian sense is an antidote to sectarianism, keeping the mind serenely untainted by one-sided commitments and plucking a universal humanity from our squalid, empirical, everyday selves. Yet since this blithe Hellenism sets its face against specific practical interests, it can realize itself in action only at the cost of betraying itself. The action necessary to secure it undermines its own harmonious symmetry. But you can still strive to link this sense of culture to others, in a three-step process: culture as aesthetic defines a quality of life (culture as civility) which it is the task of politics to realize in culture as a whole (culture as corporate form of life).

Six historic developments in modernity put the notion of culture on the agenda. First, culture drifts to the fore the moment

'civilization' itself begins to seem self-contradictory. It is at this point that a dialectical thought becomes necessary. Once the idea of civilization, in post-Enlightenment Europe, becomes more of a drably factual term than an uplifting and normative one, culture begins to counter it as utopian critique. Second, culture springs into prominence once it is realized that without radical social change (culture in that sense), the future of the arts and fine living (culture in that other sense) is in dire jeopardy. For culture to survive, you have to change the culture. Third, with Herder and German idealism, culture in the sense of a distinctive, traditional, perhaps ethnic way of life provides a convenient way of belabouring Enlightenment universalism. Fourth, culture starts to matter once Western imperialism is faced with the conundrum of alien life forms which must be inferior but which seem in reasonably good shape. Culture, like Raymond Williams's masses, is, in short, other people. The Victorians didn't see themselves as a culture, since the relativizing, self-estranging effect of this move would have been too damaging. In the era of imperialism, then, the West is confronted with the specter of cultural relativism at the precise moment at which it needs to affirm its own spiritual privilege. The other two reasons for the prominence of the idea of culture belong more to our own era. First, need one say, the culture industry: that historic moment in which cultural or symbolic production, separated from other forms of production in the great epoch of modernity, is finally reintegrated with them to become part of general commodity production as such. Second, in the past few decades, the fact that for the three currents which have dominated the global political agenda—feminism, revolutionary nationalism and ethnicity—culture in the broad sense of identity, value, sign, language, life-style, shared history, belonging or solidarity, is the very language in which one articulates one's political demands, not an agreeable bonus. This is true of identity politics, as it is not so much, of say, industrial class struggle or the politics of famine.

And this, from the viewpoint of a classical conception of culture, is a dramatic, indeed momentous development. For the whole point of culture, classically speaking, was that it was the terrain on which we could, for a blessed moment of

transcendence, put in suspension all our quirky idiosyncrasies of region, gender, status, profession, ethnicity and the like, and meet instead on the common ground of the fundamentally human. If culture in the more narrow, aesthetic sense mattered, it was because it provided a way of lugging these human values around with us in conveniently portable form, as well as fleshing them out as sensuous experience. To this extent, culture was part of the solution; but what has happened over the past few decades—one major reason why the notion has been plunged into spectacular crisis—is that it has veered on its axis from being part of the solution to being part of the problem. Culture no longer means a terrain of consensus but an arena of contention. For postmodernism, culture means not the transcendence of identity but the affirmation of one.

Of course in one sense, culture and crisis go together like Laurel and Hardy. Culture and crisis were born at a stroke. The very notion of culture is a strategic response to historical crisis. But for us, here and now, that crisis has assumed a distinctive form, which one might summarize as the opposition between Culture and culture. Culture (in the sense of universal civility) is itself cultureless, is indeed in a sense the enemy of culture in this lower-case sense. It denotes not a particular way of life, but those values which ought to inform any way of life whatsoever. Or rather, Culture is at once culture-bound (roughly, speaking, part of Western modernity) and the very implicit standard by which particular cultures can be identified and evaluated in the first place. It is, then, in an exact philosophical sense, transcendental— the very conditions of possibility of a culture as such—while nevertheless taking on flesh and blood in a particular way of life, rather as God had to incarnate himself *somewhere* and for some mysterious reason chose first-century Palestine to do so.

One can think of Culture, perhaps, in terms of the Romantic imagination. The imagination is not bound by a specific time and place: it just is that infinite capacity for universal sympathy which allows us to penetrate the spirit of any specific time, place, object or identity whatsoever. It is thus, rather like the Almighty for whom it is a secular substitute, both everything and nothing. This protean, quicksilver force has no identity of its own: its

identity consists simply in the sympathetic capacity to assume other people's identities, indeed to know them better than they know themselves. It occupies all identities from within, yet precisely by doing so transcends any one of them, since no one of them can rival this power. Cultures (in the lower-case sense) know themselves, whereas what Culture knows is them. And the affinity of this benign power to the more liberal forms of imperialism need not, I imagine, be laboured. Culture is not a particular way of life but the custodian of cultures; and so, stateless and timeless that it is, it assumes the right to intervene into such cultures in the name of Culture, which is to say, ultimately, in the name of their own good.

Cultures (in the lower-case sense) are uncultured, at least from the standpoint of Culture, because they are blatantly, sometimes militantly particular, resonant of nothing but themselves, and without such difference would simply disappear. What they do, from Culture's somewhat disdainful standpoint, is seize perversely upon particularity in the sense of historical contingency—upon pure accidents (in the scholastic sense) of place, provenance, sex, occupation, skin-color and the like—and elevate these, which are not for Hegel 'In the Idea', to universal status. Culture, for its part, is concerned not with the contingently particular but with that very different animal, the essentially individual; and its aim is to set up a direct circuit between individual and universal, by-passing the sordidly empirical *en route*. Indeed what could be more uniquely individual, more wholly self-referential and *sui generis*, than the universe itself.

Now the momentous event of our own time is that this war of versions of culture is not, for good or ill, merely a clash between those tedious old fogeys in the English department who still study line-endings in Milton, and those bright young things down the corridor who write books on masturbation. Would in a sense that it were! Would in a way that culture were indeed, as the vulgar leftists claim, remote from everyday life. In Bosnia or Belfast or the Basque country, however, culture isn't just what you put in the CD player or gaze at in the gallery: culture is what you kill for. The conflict between Culture and cultures has now become mapped upon a geopolitical axis, between the West and

the rest, so that what Western Culture in the sense of universal subjectivity and civility confronts is culture in the sense of nationalism, regionalism, nativism, corporatism, communitarianism, family values, religious fundamentalism, ethnic solidarity, new Ageism and the like—corporate forms of culture which lay siege to it both within and without the gates. This is not, need one say, just a combat between north and south of the globe, partly because some of the enemies are also within, partly because, say, Islamic liberalism sets its face against Texas fundamentalism, or Indian socialism contests European racism. In any case, nothing is more claustrophobically corporate than the brave new global world of the transnational corporations, which can be quite as closed and homogenized as the most parochial of tribes or incestuously intimate of Southern Baptist neighborhoods.

Even so, the geopolitical axis is now pretty obvious—or, if you prefer, the stalled dialectic between these alternative meanings of culture, which increasingly paint each other into a corner. The more emptily formalistic universality becomes—the more it becomes synonymous with capitalist globalization—the more ingrown and pathological become the cultural defenses against it. The more the liberal humanists falsely celebrate William Blake as the voice of the eternally human, the more they ditch him in California as a Dead White Male. For every European liberal, a neo-Nazi thug; for every jet-setting corporate executive for whom anyone who might be a customer is human, a local patriot for whom humanity exists strictly on this side of the mountains. A vacuous globalism confronts a militant particularism, as the torn halves of a freedom to which they do not add up.

But our culture wars are in fact three-cornered, not a simple polarity. There is, to begin with, high or minority culture, or better what Fredric Jameson has called 'NATO high culture'. This version of culture is, so to speak, the spiritual wing of the EU, and must increasingly betray its own prestige, harmonious, disinterested symmetry by unilateral military operations which succeed only in unmasking the very spiritual universalism they are intended to prop up. As the West continues to define itself as

the wronged Goliath squaring bravely up to the bullying Davids, we are likely to witness more of this self-subversion, in which liberal universalism redefines its slogan 'nothing human is alien to me' as: 'even the most obscure backwater can threaten our profits'.

The outlook for the West here, however, is not exactly sanguine, since part of what we are living through, in the period after the classical nation-state, is a skewing of cultural and political forms, or if you like a failure (so far, anyway) of new transnational political forms to achieve their essential cultural correlatives. Not many people are ready quite yet to throw themselves on the barricades with a defiant shout of 'Long Live the European Community!' Politics needs people's cultural or psychic investments if it is to thrive, but the contradiction here is that culture is a less abstract affair than politics, a matter of what we live on the body and in the gut and on the pulses, and with our kinsfolk, and so always potentially askew to the necessarily universal forms of the state, not to speak of the transnational. Indeed it was the hyphen in the phrase 'nation-state' which for a triumphant moment of modernity secured the link between culture and politics, people and government, local and universal, kinship and polis, ethnic and civic; and another reason why the notion of culture is in big trouble is because the nation-state is too. The nation-state was in its day a marvelously resourceful way of linking individual and universal, sensuous particularity and formal abstraction, as indeed was that other great invention of modernity, the work of art. I mean the work of art as reconstituted from the ground up by what we know as aesthetics, for which the art work was important because it figured forth a whole revolutionary new kind of totality, a new relationship between particular and whole, one in which the law of the whole was no more than the articulation of its sensuous particulars.

This minority meaning of culture, then, survives; but in today's world it enters into strange contradictions with two other versions of culture. First, culture as corporate particularity, or identity politics, as the old 'exotic' anthropological meaning is now refurbished and begins to spawn wildly to include gun culture, deaf culture, beach culture, police culture, gay culture,

Zulu culture, Microsoft culture and the like: a universe of sensuous particulars which unlike the classical work of art tends to deny the universe altogether. There is also of course mass, commercial or market-driven culture, these last two versions taken together comprising, I suppose, what we know as postmodern culture. One might summarize the trio, far too glibly, as excellence, ethnos and economics. Or one might plot them along an alternative axis, that of universalism, parochialism and cosmopolitanism.

But just look at some of their curious interactions. For example, the more the postmodern market culture of the West penetrates the globe (and there is now an institute for postmodern studies in Beijing), the more the west needs to find some sort of spiritual legitimacy for this somewhat overweening global operation. But the more market forces proliferate, the more skeptical, relativist, provisional, anti-foundational postmodern culture within the West undermines the very forms of stable, solid values which market culture needs to draw upon for its orderly framework, and which the West needs to appeal to for its spiritual authority. One can't, in other words, easily take the Nietzschean way out here, which is just to ditch the superstructural authority ('God is dead') and celebrate the provisionality. Or rather, it is easier to recommend this if you are running a humanities department rather than a state. Neo-pragmatist forms of justification of a Rortyian kind—'this is just what we white liberal Western bourgeois do, take it or leave it'—are both too ideologically feeble and too politically laid-back for a West which is not only now claiming an overreaching global authority for itself, but which is faced by enemies elsewhere which have much stronger, more foundational forms of cultural legitimation such as Islam. At the same time, however, Western capitalism itself creates the kind of jaded, skeptical, post-metaphysical ambiance which gives a distinctly hollow, implausible ring to the kind of high-rhetorical foundational appeals—the Destiny of the West, the triumph of Reason, the Will of God, the White Man's Burden—which served the bourgeoisie supremely well in their time.

In fact, if one wanted yet another reason for the crisis of culture in the West, one might do worse than answer: the failure of religion. I must remind myself here of course that the United States has more churches than hamburger joints—that the most materialist nation is a rampantly metaphysical society, and that it is still *de rigeuer* for US politicians to make solemn, sentimental, high-toned appeals to the Almighty's special regard for their great country. (Here, incidentally, is another problem with the ideal, utopian or rhetorical sense of culture: the fact that one cannot just briskly dispense with it, yet that all it is likely to do is expose the embarrassing gap between the ideal and the actual, reveal the performartive contradiction between what capitalist societies do, and what they say they do). It was, of course, not the atheistic left which brought religion low as an ideological form, but, in a supreme irony, industrial capitalism itself, whose ruthless secularizing and rationalizing cannot help discrediting the very metaphysical values it needs to legitimate itself.

Culture, delicate, evanescent, impalpable creature that it is, was called upon in the nineteenth century to stand in for religion itself—a function which brought it under such intense pressure that it began to betray pathological symptoms. Religion had always done the job much better, with its close fusion of the intelligentsia (priests) and popular masses, of ritual and inwardness, its linking of the immediate textures of personal experience to the most cosmic of questions. With religion, an aesthetic ritual or symbolic form involves millions of the common people and is directly relevant to their daily lives: an extraordinary cultural phenomenon in the age of modernity. Culture in the minority, specialized sense, however, cannot play this role, since it is shared by too few people; while culture in the more corporate, anthropological sense cannot do it either because it is too clearly a terrain of combat rather than a transcendental resolution of conflict.

Culture in the traditional sense, then, is nowadays assailed by identity politics, market culture and postmodern, post-ideological skepticism—yet the irony is that it colludes with these antagonists too, and sometimes helps to create them. Identity politics at its worst—paranoid, supremacist, bigoted—is a kind of

bad particularity which is just the flipside of a bad universality. Culture as civility provides the frame within which culture as marketeering can operate securely. And high and market culture quite often share the same conservative values, since an art at the mercy of market forces is likely to be just as cautious, conformist and anti-experimental as the most respectably canonical of works. In any case, much high NATO culture is far to the left of NATO. Homer wasn't a liberal humanist, Shakespeare put in a good word for radical egalitarianism, Balzac and Flaubert detested the bourgeoisie, Tolstoy rejected private property and so on. It is not what these works of art say, but what they are made to signify, which is the political point.

Culture as universality has much more going for it than the postmodernists seem to imagine. It was a revolutionary, earth-shattering notion in its day—the extraordinary idea that you were entitled to freedom and respect, liberty, equality and self determination, not because of who you were or where you came from or what you did, but simply because you were a human being: a member of the universal species. It was the *ancien regime* here that was particularist, local, differential, and abstraction and universality which were radical, as the supposedly historically minded postmodernists don't seem to appreciate. Marx was an apostle of Enlightenment; but Marxism is a curious cross-breed of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, since Marx also recognized that if a genuine universality were to be fashioned (and we cannot presume with the liberal humanists that it is simply *given*), it would have to be constructed in and through difference and particularity (which Marx sometimes alludes to as use-value). Particularity, as with the Hegel from whom Marx is cribbing here, must return again, this time at the level of the genuinely universal; which simply means that the universal reciprocities of socialism must be established, but as relations between the richly individuated, sensuously particularized men and women which class-society had helped to foster. Any more-than-parochial community has to begin with where and what people, parochially or bodily, are; and if it can do so successfully it is because there is no local particular which is not open-ended, differential and overlapping. The purely local, strictly speaking, does not exist.

People are what they are because their sensuous particularity is *constitutively* open to an outside: to be fully on the inside of a body, language or culture is to already open to a beyond.

We have witnessed in our time an enormous inflation of the notion of culture, to the point where the vulnerable, material, bodily, objective species-life which we share most evidently in common has been hubristically swept aside by the follies of so-called culturalism. It is true that culture is not only what we live by, but in a sense what we live for. Affection, relationship, memory, belonging, emotional fulfilment, intellectual enjoyment: these are closer to most of us that trade arrangements or political contracts. Yet, nature will always finally have the edge over culture, a phenomenon known as death, however much neurotically self-inventing societies seek implicitly to deny it. And culture can be too close for comfort. Its very intimacy is likely to grow morbid and obsessional unless we place it in an enlightened political context, one which can temper these immediacies with more abstract, but also in a way more generous, affiliations. Culture in our time has waxed overweening and immodest. It is time, while acknowledging its significance, to put it firmly back in its place.

Beyond Malinowski and After Writing Culture: On the Future of Cultural Anthropology and the Predicament of Ethnography

George E. Marcus
Chair of Anthropology
Rice University

I will leave something so grand as the future of cultural anthropology to itself and stick with the predicament of ethnography. But if one has followed developments at least since the early 1980s, the former is very much at stake in the latter. The current centrality of the practice of ethnography in the identity of anthropology has indeed been a source of ambivalence in the recent valedictory writings of the major figures of the most senior generation of American anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz (e.g., Geertz 2000) and Marshall Sahlins. Both very much see themselves as the beneficiaries of a certain 'golden age' of the discipline as it was conceived earlier in the century. They seem to feel that while ethnography has been crucial to the discipline it cannot be all that there is to it. For those of us of a later generation, it depends on what can be done—what range of projects can be pursued—within the confines of what is considered ethnography.

I myself helped shape, but also have continued to be shaped by, the so-called Writing Culture Critique of anthropology of the 1980s (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Reflecting the broader critical interdisciplinary ferment of that time, focusing on practices of representation and their limitation as well as on reflexive modes of knowledge production, the Writing Culture Critique opened the traditional space of ethnography as the arena for the further development of anthropology itself. Subsequent years have only reinforced just how central ethnography continues to be, not only as a practice of knowledge production in anthropology but also as the medium of the norms and ethos of professional

socialization. The Writing Culture Critique was absorbed positively by anthropologists, but its implications were contained by the idea that it dealt only with writing, with strategies for composing ethnographic texts, thus leaving fieldwork—the true experiential core of the discipline—untouched. I always believed, however, that the most substantial implication of the critique was for the fieldwork process (Marcus 1986). Only now that what was once termed postmodernity is now experienced everywhere as the equally vaguely termed process of globalization is such an implication being addressed in a second wave of critique. This time the focus is on the traditional and powerfully symbolic model of fieldwork under pressure from both changing social and cultural theories and changing conditions of the world and the objects of study that they offer ethnography.

Despite all of the diverse peoples, cultures, practices, and places that anthropologists have studied, the discipline has really operated with only one paradigm or model of ethnography: the traditions of Malinowski and Boas, refined over the past seventy years in several varieties of British and American anthropology. Indeed, ironically, all of the critiques of anthropology, even the Writing Culture Critique of the 1980s, have left this model in place and even reinforced it. While this model remains adequate for certain projects of research and in fact has been renewed by a certain accommodation of anthropology and history over the past two decades, I will be more concerned here with its insufficiency for growing numbers of research projects in anthropology in areas that deal, for example, with science and technology, contemporary politics and political discourses, social movements, NGOs, international organization, with the space that used to be devoted to questions of development, with media, and to some degree with art, art markets, and museums (see Marcus 1998a). In fact, in these quite vast and growing areas of ethnographic research, new designs and practices of fieldwork and norms of ethnography are evident in *de facto* circumstantial ways, mostly as pragmatic responses of being caught in unexpected conditions of research. Such works argue for multiple methods and make a virtue of them, while worrying little about the traditional protocols of ethnography (see Martin 1994, Gusterson 1996,

Fortun in press, Holmes 2000). However, for reasons that I will discuss, I believe that the articulation of an alternative paradigm, ethos, and set of norms—derivative from the historic spirit of ethnography, so to speak, but markedly different from the single paradigm powerfully in force—is necessary at this point. This is a paradigm that needs to have the flexibility but also the normative power of the Malinowskian one, especially in the defining of the all-important projects of graduate dissertation research.

My own effort to begin such a discussion has evolved since the Writing Culture Critique in the form of tracing the emergence and implication of what I have termed multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1998a). In some respects, the fact that traditional ethnography could be, and often in fact has been, multi-sited is obvious. The fact that populations are on the move, and that technologies and markets now reach everywhere, makes what is obvious even more so. But, in this article, I hope to demonstrate that there is more than meets the eye in the evolution of certain kinds of projects of multi-sited ethnography, especially those that do not begin with a defining people or place, but with a different sense of the object of study (Marcus 2000). In these projects there are different stakes entirely for the practice of ethnography, stakes for which merely making do circumstantially or through methodological *bricolage* will not serve as an ideology or regulative ideal of practice. Instead, a discussion and articulation of the changing conditions of fieldwork is needed so that an alternative and fully legitimated paradigm of disciplinary ethnographic practice might emerge in anthropology.

I will discuss further the kinds of considerations, interests, and conditions of contemporary research that generate a multi-sited space in the pursuit of fieldwork, but given what I think is at stake in this form of ethnography (or at least in making it explicit), it only makes sense to do so in the context of a certain analysis of contradictions in anthropology's current mode of professional production and in what I will call a crisis in the modes of reception of its ethnographic form of knowledge. I should add that I am addressing primarily the American situation of anthropology at present, although I do not believe these

conditions of reception are unique to the United States. This would be an account of how the interdisciplinary ferment of the 1970s and 1980s (moving from debates led by literary studies about postmodernism into attempts to build and institutionalize cultural studies of distinct varieties) has settled back into the practices of disciplines and given these practices a rather curious character at this juncture. There can be little question that the era of interdisciplinary ferment in the human sciences—now subsided, I believe—beginning with the introduction of French post-structuralist ideas through literary studies and feminism, then passing through a generic concern with postmodernism, and finally through a phase of generic cultural studies, has had a profound effect on the practice of anthropology. It has provided a kind of identity and relevance for it outside its own continuing efforts at self-definition and self-promotion, and then affecting both the heart of the discipline and peripheral tendencies as well. For example, the area studies mainstream organization of ethnographic and career specialization in the discipline, built upon claiming expertise in terms of certain peoples, places, and languages, has been revised and renewed in the major graduate departments by new accommodations between history and anthropology under the influence of post-colonial studies, which has been the primary non-Western, theoretically sophisticated, and institutionally enduring product from the period of interdisciplinary ferment (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, Dirks 1998). It has served to keep the classic ethnographic paradigm of practice and traditional objects of study in place in new and interesting ways.

At the same time, the influence of the period of interdisciplinary ferment has introduced a far more disruptive and potentially also more transformative dynamic in the discipline on which I want to place more emphasis here. I have written recently about the increasingly experimental nature of the second and later projects of established scholars in my own and adjacent generations. In my analysis, these projects are often distinct departures from career-making first projects, begun as graduate students. And, this is where the vibrant trend of experimental ethnography, called for in the 1980s, has *de facto*

established itself (Marcus 1998b). These projects often begin from a very personal agenda and they do not have a predictable 'standard' ethnographic monograph outcome, as earlier projects by the same scholars most likely had. In other words, these projects are distinctive for not following the classic paradigm of symmetry between object of study or topic, fieldwork, and written product. Further, I have observed that these second projects, in their interdisciplinary venturesomeness and unconventional departures in form, attract many of the best graduate students to anthropology as opposed to what now defines the mainstream. And where did these students develop their interest in anthropology? Increasingly, I have observed, not in traditional undergraduate curricula of anthropology, but in courses influenced by the interdisciplinary arena that has given the discipline a far stronger identity than it has given itself. However, when these students enter graduate programs they find the traditional training model in effect, and what graduate research becomes is a negotiation between models of career-establishing first projects and the exemplary second and later works of professors. If I were actually doing an ethnography of the mode of professional reproduction now it would focus on the state of this process of negotiation in the various departmental cultures of the discipline.

The question that I will be posing at the end of this article is the possibility for an alternative paradigm of ethnography in anthropology that legitimates and establishes the character of what I have termed second projects equal to that of the traditional paradigm. For me, the fertility of critical anthropology and the relevance of the discipline depend on it.

Now I want to turn to the second strand of analysis of the current situation of the discipline that I mentioned above: what I called a crisis in the modes of reception of ethnography. These days anthropologists have much more to say in the way of argument within the confines of the ethnographic form than perhaps classic works did because this form has become the testing ground for most of the interesting ideas that anthropologists have offered about changes in the contemporary world. Yet, in its various receptions, the ethnographic form is

very limited indeed and perhaps even classically was meant to be so limited. Thus, outside the discipline ethnographies are inevitably forms of knowledge subordinated as 'cases studies', or instances, to the uses and purposes of others—for example, theorists in the social sciences and humanities, policy makers, social activists and journalists. The voice and power of anthropological knowledge are therefore always appropriated rather easily in debates in various spheres and are undercut by the stereotypic reception of the ethnographic form as mere case study that other discourses present abstractly. That is, ethnography when controversial provides obstructionist interventions in other more politically or socially powerful discourses or, when read sympathetically, it provides corrections to projects of abstract language and analytic ambition in realms as diverse as policy studies and literary studies. In effect, it acts as a sort of surrogate for the experience, voice, and everyday life conditions of human subjects, otherwise the objects of theory or what James Carrier (1998) has characterized generally as virtualist discourses which cognize the world abstractly and try to act on it in these terms. This is of course a noble service of ethnography, and anthropology generally, but the ethnographic paradigm in its classic formulation engages only weakly and on the terms of other more powerful theoretical and formal genres of discourse.

The subordinating and stereotypic *external* reception of ethnography would not be so consequential if the level of the *internal* reception by anthropologists of their own ethnography were stronger, more systematic and more analytic. But, at present, I find this not to be the case, and especially in the arenas of new topics and what I have termed second projects by established scholars. Even ethnography in the mainstream, also shaped by the influence of the period of interdisciplinary ferment, gets very little sustained or systematic attention beyond very small groups of specialists. More generally, ethnographies are objects of aestheticism and often summary judgment and evaluation. They are judged quickly, establish reputations, and then are often forgotten. Especially in new topic arenas like science and technology studies, or at least outside traditional area

studies, the work within the discipline is still too sparse to elicit a community of dense critical interpretation and evaluation. Aside from admiration for innovation on the inside of the discipline, it is thus left almost solely to external reception to evaluate such work and, as noted, this reception is either as mere ethnography or in terms of stereotypic contribution. Thus, the overall crisis of reception of the ethnographic form, inside or outside the discipline, is in the curtailment of the power of the knowledge, ideas and arguments that it contains to have effect, by the limits of the classic form. And, this predicament leads to the consideration of an alternative paradigm or legitimated form for the ethnographic practice to which I now want to turn.

I want to explore the difference that the pursuit of multi-sited ethnography makes by asking what calls it forth as a different problem in the design of fieldwork from the classic paradigm? That is, there is something different at stake than just the multi-sitedness that has always been entailed in following out the variants of particular situated cultural units or forms, as in, for example, from rural to urban variations of particular social organizations or the same thing in one setting or another. This is the classic multi-sitedness of controlled comparison in ethnography. What I have in mind is comparison that has gotten out of control by disruptions of the relied on senses of basic social processes that have held the world in place for a certain period of time. In this regard, the considerable contribution of Arjun Appadurai's well known 'scapes' model of the global (Appadurai 1996) was to break the hold of dominant center-periphery world system models, enabling precisely a fractured multi-sited canvas for ethnography rather than more orderly processes of macro-visions of world historical capitalism. The point is that the objects of ethnography would now have to be constituted in more fractured, discontinuous spaces. But Appadurai's is really not a methodological framework nor is it presented in specifically ethnographic terms. As such, it is all too easy to use his terminology, as many have, to reconstitute the classic *mise-en-scène* of concentrated peoples and places fieldwork, albeit now with a different contextualization.

For me, the most interesting multi-sited projects arise more literally and viscerally from efforts to do fieldwork on certain kinds of topics that are just very difficult either to situate or find a classic mode of contextualization for. There are many varieties and ways that this kind of multi-sited project can come about. Here, let me play out, albeit schematically, two scenarios of how multi-sited projects involving very different research practices might emerge from contemporary conditions of fieldwork. One of these scenarios arises from the contemporary conditions for shaping ethnography as a medium of cultural critique. As Michael Fischer and I developed in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986, [1999]), the major classic technique of critique in anthropology was based on that form of comparison known as juxtaposition. Juxtaposition has also been a key technique of Western avant-gardes (and of postmodernist styles derived from it) in terms of collage, montage and assemblage, in the creation of 'making strange' effects or defamiliarization, which to some degree critical anthropology has shared in a much more prosaic way. However, rather than the logic of juxtaposition being aesthetic or idiosyncratic, in anthropology it was based on a certain stable vision of the world and how its differences were organized—'the West and the Rest', distinct geo-cultural regions, certain practices embedded in a particular cultural, linguistic, social system juxtaposed with other practices embedded in another. It is the basis of this logic that has been disrupted in recent years with the hyper-movement of populations, things, technologies—and reflections on these changes in fashionable currents of social thought that overspill the regimes of academia and become the currency of discussion in everyday life and public spheres—all that is now debated by such cliched expressions as globalization and hybridity and raised as implications for the coherence, integrity, and morality of local, situated life.

For many projects of cultural critique, the logics of juxtaposition, rather than being given, must themselves be derived ethnographically; that is, from within the design of fieldwork itself, which in turn generates multi-sited spaces of fieldwork. In my review essay on the emergence of the multi-

sited paradigm of ethnography (Marcus 1998a), I used the 'following' or 'tracking' metaphor to signal this logic of evolving the space of ethnography from within the confines of fieldwork. This strategy of generating juxtapositions from novel logics discovered in probing native points of view within the scenes of fieldwork also relies on constructs like reflexive modernization proposed by social theorists (see Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994) and, for example, Appadurai's (1996) emphasis on the availability of 'everything everywhere' to the imagination locally situated. Simply, critical ethnography relies for its own frameworks of analysis and exposition on the reflexive maps and indeed crypto-ethnography of it subjects to a greater degree than ever before. Thus, the purpose, function, ethics, and nature of the working relationships at stake in the traditional function of probing native points of view changes considerably in this multi-sited space. It is a kind of theater of complicit reflexivities orchestrated by the ethnographer involved in collabourations of a much more complex and explicit sort than was ever envisioned in the rapport-guided traditional *mise-en-scène* of fieldwork relationships with mere informants.

What is potentially at stake here is a revival of some of the more radical implications for method of the 1980s writing culture critique, but now it is not so much a question of experiment in writing ethnographic texts as experiments in the design of fieldwork. Take, for example, the key trope of collabouration in the Writing Culture Critique and in this multi-sited formulation. In the Writing Culture Critique, collabouration was a powerful critical reconfiguration of the traditional understandings of anthropologist-subject relations in the classic *mise-en-scène* of fieldwork, but that critique did not break the frame of that *mise-en-scène* or its purposes. But collabouration in the evolving multi-sited space of fieldwork does potentially break the boundary between the ethnographic productions of the anthropologist and the counterpart cultural productions and representations of the collabourators, with whom the anthropological project is fully complicit. This raises substantial questions for the value and forms of disciplinary knowledge that the alternative paradigm of ethnography might legitimately offer.

Another feature of this scenario of the generation of multi-sited fieldwork is that it complexifies the notions of reflexivity that were so emblematic in the writing culture critique. Here the notion that ethnography is variably both thick and thin in multi-sited ethnography is crucial. I used 'thick and thin' as the title of a recent collection of essays (Marcus 1998), but I take the metaphor to be quite crucial. In classic ethnography, thickness was a virtue, thinness was not; in multi-sited fieldwork, both thickness and thinness are variably expected, and accounting for the differences in quality and intensity of fieldwork material becomes one of the key insight producing functions of ethnographic analysis. This accounting for the variability of thickness and thinness of ethnography is the most substantive and important form of reflexivity in multi-sited projects. It involves straightforward questions of access and conditions of opportunity in different sites, but more interestingly it also involves discussions of emerging commitments and ethical practice in relation to the orienting collabourations at the center of such projects. At its most reflexive, thickness and thinness in multi-sited ethnography involve questions of what I have termed circumstantial activism and what Paul Rabinow (1999) referred to as circumstantial integration. The meaning and foundations of a project of ethnography generates a moral economy, far more complicated than the redemptive moral economy that governs most contemporary ethnography under the classic paradigm, that determines the limits of what reflexivity can explore in the relation of anthropologist to a set of usually socially subaltern subjects in the throes of resistance and accommodation to the state, the market and institutional orders. The critical multi-sited project of fieldwork that I have been discussing operates in quite a different, literal, mutually referenced space of ethnography, both thick and thin.

I now want to address more briefly a second, not unrelated, scenario by which multi-sited fieldwork emerges under contemporary conditions of fieldwork. Indeed, ethnography in its essence means moving within the lifeworlds and textured sense of experience among its subjects, but to do so now more than ever requires crossing fields of representation and modes of

systematic discourse produced by knowledge practices overlapping with the anthropologists own. To some extent, anthropologists always operated by bracketing off from the scene of fieldwork, or the route to it, competing realms of representations in order to enter the essentially oral worlds of subjects. Particularly in new topic areas, but in the traditional ones as well, this bracketing off is increasingly less possible or acceptable, especially when even traditional subjects themselves produce systematic forms of discourse and self-representations addressed to a world of contextualizing representations produced by media, states, corporations, and NGOs, among other agencies. Any anthropological response to this virtually universal condition of ethnography now calls forth some form of multi-sited fieldwork.

Indeed, interdisciplinarity itself—once considered a realm apart from the actual research process, but instead a space where the results and products of research projects are discussed and debated—now folds into the space of ethnography itself and becomes one of the conditions internal to its very process. The exact configuration of interdisciplinarity depends on the nature of the ethnographic research, but the fact that the fieldwork involves integral engagement with expert or technical knowledge practices as one of its sites for collabouration and thick description has potentially profound implications for the predicament of the forms of reception of anthropological knowledge, an issue which I raised above and will return to at the end of this article.

Thus, in order to eventually enter the lifeworlds of particular subjects—subaltern or elite—anthropologists today often have to make an ethnographic object of another discipline, another style of expert knowledge first. The exemplary texts of current multi-sited work, many coming from science and technology studies, like Paul Rabinow's *Making PCR* (1996) and *French DNA* (2000) or Emily Martin's *Flexible Bodies* (1994), very much summon up images of anthropologists going back to the classroom, attending medical school classes, reading textbooks, in order to establish the orienting collabourations or perspectives (what was formerly called 'establishing rapport') so key to their projects. Similar ethnographies of reason, abstractions and

discursive practices are integral sites or aspects of contemporary projects that involve the law, media, corporations, arts, or even politics and political discourse, generically today. Because many subjects are likely to be involved with disciplines or professions, so much ethnography absorbs a certain interdisciplinarity as partial objects of study. And as noted, this tends to reconfigure the boundaries of what knowledge practices are inside or outside the realm of ethnographic investigation radically, and who is the audience or the community of reception for ethnography, and who is to be included within the emergent multiple sites of fieldwork.

With this point about how interdisciplinarity itself enters or is folded into the scene of multi-sited fieldwork, I want to return in conclusion to the earlier analysis that I offered of certain contradictions and predicaments in the current professional practice of anthropology. It was this stake and connection of the proposal of an emergent paradigm of multi-sited ethnography that I have wanted mainly to establish and clarify in this article. First, to return to the bind of graduate students caught between the appeal of second projects of established professors and the traditional paradigm of ethnography still in force as the training model. The critical task for the future is how to make what is generated by the exemplary works of established scholars through rhetoric of serendipity, opportunity, and circumstantial, unexpected rupture encountered in what begins as the pursuit of traditional ethnography (see Marcus 1999) into an alternative paradigm of ethnographic method as legitimate as the traditional one.

Each spring I am taken up with reading both graduate student dissertations and proposals for fieldwork. I have noted that the most interesting projects among our students are, like the exemplars of established scholars, experiencing the same conditions of changed circumstances of work but without either the freedom to experiment as in the second and later projects of established scholars or an explicit model of alternative norms for doing fieldwork. The exemplars inspire what 'cutting edge' dissertations would like to be, but in fact they are not models for them. Graduate projects cannot begin or end in the way that these

projects do by a rhetoric of falling into them opportunistically, but instead must make method out of a rhetoric of circumstance. As noted, a key question for me now is in what ways are the second projects, the exemplars for beginners—or rather in what version of methodology talk and rhetoric *could* they become— training models for beginners? The working out of the scenarios of changed practice that I have broached in this article is a first attempt at responding to this question.

And, finally, I return to the other predicament of anthropology that I discussed: that of a certain crisis in the forms of reception of ethnography, and here the response of the proposal of multi-sited research as I have described it is much more complicated. I would merely recall the potential and need for multi-sited ethnography to enfold certain configurations of interdisciplinary connections into the realm of fieldwork investigation itself. This suggests the possibility of the collapse of professional relations into fieldwork relations and a sphere of norms and practice which remains to be explored where the primary reception classes for ethnography are also collabourators and subjects of fieldwork. This is much more than the long awaited natives speaking back to anthropologists in the traditional *mise-en-scène*; rather, it is a total re-conception of the kind of knowledge that anthropology offers and to whom it is offered within the knowledge hierarchies of its Euro/American strongholds. In addition, it raises new questions about the kinds of knowledge it offers for reception by its own disciplinary community.

Here, as a final suggestion, what is perhaps implied is a transcending of the idea of ethnography as the producer of a certain genre of book, text, or emblematic knowledge form. Ethnography, instead, becomes diffused into many possible alternative forms of writing and reporting, required by the relations and receptions involved in a multi-sited design of fieldwork. Thus, we do not have to worry—as in fact many scholars involved in second projects do not—about the model of ethnography being a monograph representing comprehensively and reporting on fieldwork. Rather ethnography refers to an overall process generating several modes of writing of which the

report to the discipline is just one of a variable form. In this way, we can break the hold of the stereotypic external receptions of anthropological knowledge as mere case studies, and of internal, fragmented, overly aesthetic receptions by anthropologists of their own current knowledge form. As I have attempted to explain, it is the evolution of multi-sited research in redundantly and multiply represented worlds of inquiry that begins to come to terms with this predicament of ethnography, which is at the core of the future of anthropology.

Bibliography

Appadurai, Arjun
    1996 *Modernity at Large*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Beck, Ulrich, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash
    1994 *Reflexive Modernization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Carrier, James, ed.
    1998 *Virtualism: A New Political Economy.* London: Berg.

Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, eds.
    1986 *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff.
    1992 *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Dirks, Nicholas, ed.
    1998 *In Near Ruins: Culture Theory at the End of the Century*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Fortun, Kim

In Press *Advocating Bhopal*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Geertz, Clifford
       2000 *Available Light*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gusterson, Hugh
       1996 *Nuclear Rites*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Holmes, Douglas
       2000 *Integral Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Marcus, George E. and Michael Fischer
       1986 [1999]. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marcus, George E.
       1986   Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.

       1998 *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

       1998a Ethnography in/of the World System: the Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. In *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

       1998b Sticking with Ethnography through Thick and Thin. In *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

       1999 ed. *Critical Anthropology Now*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

2000   What Is at Stake—and Is Not—in the Idea and Practice of Multi-Sited Ethnography. *Canberra Anthropology: the Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*. 22 (2):6-14.

Martin, Emily
1994 *Flexible Bodies*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Rabinow, Paul
1996 *Making PCR*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1999   American Moderns: on Sciences and Scientist.   In *Critical Anthropology Now*, ed. George E. Marcus. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

2000 *French DNA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dreaming Anthropology: Unfolding Inter-Subjectivity in Complex Anthropological Research

Christina Moutsou
University of Cambridge

Introduction

This paper draws from my research on Greek and Turkish activists and restaurant-owners in Brussels and the ways through which they represent their ethnic identities. It focuses mostly, however, on my preconceptions about participant observatory research, known commonly as 'fieldwork', before I embarked on it. The arguments unfold around an unusual text, a dream narrative: a dream I had about fieldwork one month before its actual beginning. It seemed to entail many elements inherent in the notions of anthropological fieldwork, as well as many issues raised in my own particular participant observation. *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986) has addressed the problem of the ethnographer's position in fieldwork and the inevitable subjectivity entailed in all representations of culture. The selection of a dream the researcher had about fieldwork, as a means of exploring inter-subjectivity, constitutes an example of the central argument in the paper, i.e. that anthropological research is experiential. In other words, it attempts to demonstrate how anthropological representations of social phenomena also entail the anthropologist's personal experiences of living in the place of research.

The purpose of drawing from the dream images is not to analyze and/or interpret the researcher's subjective experience of fieldwork although, inevitably, some analysis of the dream material seems to come close to interpretation. Primarily, the following dream narrative attempts to highlight how important issues to do with carrying out anthropological research and constructing theory are also conceived and manifested as

personal experiences, which often go beyond academic or 'rational' thinking. I will argue that anthropologists make sense of the societies studied through their subjective experience of them and their unique encounters with informants within particular contexts. This article suggests that taking into account the informants' as well as the researcher's experience can be a way out of a long-held anthropological dilemma: whether one should provide an objective description of social phenomena or remain faithful to informant's contradictory accounts of their lives and communities.

On Dreaming

The transcription of the following dream constituted my first field entry, before actually 'going to the field':

I am in London with Pauline (pseudonym). It is sunset and I try to persuade her to go to Brussels with me before it gets dark. We start asking around about modes of travel, and we are informed that the only way to go to Brussels is by a rocket like plastic boat. We are now in a dock and we can see Brussels at the end of the horizon, a city by the sea, full of minarets, surrounded by the red colors of the sunset. We board two individual boats, which actually fly above the water in a high speed. We are in Brussels in a few minutes.
We find ourselves in a dangerous ghetto, next to the port, where there are many decrepit tower blocks, where migrants and members of the Mafia live. We can feel that many people are hidden behind their windows and they look at us suspiciously. Some meters away, in the port, there is a strict border control by the police, and people are queuing to be checked. Whoever tries to enter illegally gets shot. We realize with terror that Pauline will certainly get shot, as she is not a European citizen. But I realize that I don't have a passport on me either.
Pauline has disappeared from the scene, and I am alone. I decide to fly again with my rocket boat, and look for the center of Brussels, where it will be better. I am in a lovely

place now, like the courtyard of a museum, I have been there before and have nice memories. There are many tourists around. I walk along with them trying to find the center of Brussels, as I know that this museum is in the center. Surprisingly, I am in a Mediterranean (Greek or Turkish) village instead, by the seaside. I am very disappointed and look for a bank to exchange money, because I need to take the bus to go to Brussels. I am in the village's central square, where many men are gathered and talk loudly. I ask an old man in fluent French, for the location of the bank. He answers back in Greek, and for some reason I find that offensive. I realize that all the buses have left, and can't catch them…

Abu-Lughod observes that two increasingly influential categories of anthropological writing and anthropologists are absent from *Writing Culture*: feminists, and what she calls, 'halfies' or people with mixed or unclear ethnic background, including the native anthropologist (Abu-Lughod 1991). Such categories within anthropology, she argues, address the problem of positionality of the ethnographer and his/her research. According to her, feminist anthropologists, as well as those who study their own or Western societies, are dealing only with parts of the social reality, as they potentially belong to a part of the topic studied.

More specifically, as Bakalaki (1997) observes, Greek anthropologists, as a rule, do research among 'their own people'. The result of this tendency is that the categories of 'ethnographer', 'academic audience', and 'informants' in the anthropology of Greece are increasingly intermingled. Therefore, questions of the anthropologist's position within their research become crucial (Abu-Lughod 1991, Bakalaki 1997). Positionality was a central issue in my fieldwork, as my research was influenced repeatedly both by my presence as a young, female person and my particular ethnic background, which created ambiguous and multifaceted relations with my informants.

The above dream addresses in multiple ways the issue of my position within my fieldwork setting and preconceptions

based on the topic and my training. It was only after Freud's theory of the unconscious that dreams started to be regarded in the Western world as meaningful and not mere biological waste products. Nowadays, dream analysis in Western societies seems to take place within a specialized field of professionals, such as psychotherapists (Edgar 1994). It is not my purpose here to provide a formal or 'scientifically credible' interpretation of dream material. However, recent debates in anthropology discuss the multiple ways through which anthropologists make sense of the societies studied, which often go beyond verbal expression and rationality (Hastrup *et al.* 1994).

Women Writing Culture suggests that female anthropologists have often attempted to reveal the 'painful' experience of fieldwork in a discipline inspired by ideas of conquest of the unknown and acquirement of knowledge. The text argues that the above ideas are gender biased and tied closely to the origins of anthropology as a male enterprise of exploring the world (Behar 1995, Narayan 1995). Within the same context, Stoller (1986) stresses how anthropologists inevitably use all their senses and bodily experiences as a prime source for understanding the societies where they conduct research, particularly as their verbal skills are often restricted. Anthropologists' acquaintance with an 'other' culture involves experiences which are difficult to express (assuming that one would like to) in an academic context. In this respect, dreams about fieldwork provide a useful way of approaching and considering such experiences.

Edgar argues that dreams are metaphors constructed socially and culturally. Dream symbols should not be considered as universal but their meaning and possible interpretations should be thought as being integrated in one's social position and culture (Edgar 1994). Hillman draws an interesting parallel between anthropological fieldwork and dreaming. She argues that in fieldwork, as in dreaming, one should be able to think in terms of the dream or the field experience. For example, how the subject felt being placed in a particular situation in their dream or in their research, in order to make sense of things (Hillman 1989).

Finally, Stewart demonstrates analytically that the dream experiences of certain Greeks in Naxos stand at the threshold

between the personal and the social. Anthropology has attempted to distinguish solidly between cognition and emotionality, individual and society, culture and nature and so on (Stewart 1997). According to Stewart, these categorical distinctions fail to address the multiple dimensions of complex experience (such as dreaming). This argument informs my approach in this article. In other words, I see the dream narrated above as a locus of my personal history, previous experience of Brussels, and anthropological training and reading. My background in combination with my observations and participation in my informants' equally complex experiences in Brussels during fieldwork have resulted in the particular form of my writing.

Flying to Brussels

As felt in the dream, the first experience of fieldwork was a sense of an exciting journey. According to my anthropological education, Brussels had to be objectified and exoticized in order to become the appropriate fieldwork setting. As Okely (1996:5-6) argues a simplistic and unified presentation of the 'West' often underlies anthropology, which assumes difference only for the 'exotic' others. Brussels was lying by the sea, surrounded by red and purple colors, the perfect reflection of the Orient (Said 1978). One could only approach to Brussels via phallus shaped flying boats, to 'penetrate' and 'conquer' the unknown 'object of desire' (see also Kulick and Wilson's 1995 work for a rather contradictory analysis of the 'taboo' subject of fieldworkers' sexuality).

I was going to Brussels to do research among Greeks and Turks. According to the dream, Islam had apparently already conquered the City, as minarets were the dominant landmarks, when viewed from afar. Such a view holds many similarities with historical representations of Istanbul, and even my hometown, Thessaloniki (Moutsou 1994). Thus, Brussels was both exotic and familiar, possibly because of what I was going to study there. Going to study the 'immigrants', we found ourselves in a dangerous ghetto. The dangers came from poverty and social exclusion, from the fact that people there had a

substantially different background from us, and, in this sense, they were the 'others'. Therefore, at the first sight my ethnic affiliations with them felt unimportant. Moreover, Pauline, seen previously as 'exotic', became a part of 'we', as she accompanied me from Britain, where we had bonds through higher education and our student status.

However, Brussels is not only a city of foreigners and it is definitely not seen widely as Oriental. On the contrary, the popular stereotype (see MacDonald 1993) portrays it as the very center of Europe. Soon after we arrived in Brussels, we realized fearfully that we were just as excluded as those 'immigrants' that we feared. The power figures of the dream were the police officers, possibly Belgians, who controlled people's entry into their country. My first thought was to resort to my 'European status'. While Pauline risked arrest, they would treat me favorably as a 'European citizen'. I soon discovered that without official power (a passport), I was in as much danger as she was, and the only possible solution was to escape, seeking a friendlier place.

Unlike 'traditional' anthropological studies in the past (mainly before 1960), which have concentrated on small rural communities, I was in a pluralistic and chaotic urban space, of which I had to make sense. Going to Brussels was not sufficient to conquer it; I had to find its very center. The search for Brussels' center became the dream's main concern. I needed to connect my life, and the life of the people I planned to understand with the multiple faces of Brussels' life. But how can one reach the center of a city's life when focusing on 'immigrants', who have often been seen by anthropologists as marginal, forming islands of culture within the city? Consequently, I found myself in a tourist place. While walking along with the tourists, I was looking for the center. Unfortunately, I only managed to discover a Mediterranean island, with men sitting in the central square—such a representation of men can well fit into macho stereotypes for both Greeks and Turks.

In the last part of the dream, my multiple and often ambiguous connections to the topic of my research become apparent and turn it into a nightmare. I am in Brussels to study

people from my own ethnic group, (Greek) and our neighbors or enemies (Turks). However, all these people are 'immigrants', and I am a student coming from Britain, and not from Greece. Moreover, I have been to Brussels before (possibly represented by the museum in the dream), but had no contact with immigrants (was I a tourist?). Therefore, my connections to Brussels are complicated, because they transcend national and ethnic boundaries (Hannerz 1996). The question posed in the last part of the dream deals with my own ethnic identity in relation to my informants. It also reveals my fear of failing to capture a holistic view of the city, and study Mediterranean culture instead. I tried to position myself by speaking French (and not Greek), but I only received replies in Greek. My perceptual assimilation with my informants signals the loss of hope for finding Brussels' center (as the buses left).

The main theoretical issues touched here are as follows: (1) the question of anthropological representation of subjects was raised by Brussels' view and the approaching journey; (2) immigrants were viewed initially as the marginal 'others', but it soon became apparent that who is defined as 'immigrant' largely depends on the predominant power relations; (3) urban space was revealed to be central and in direct relation to people's lives; and, finally, (4) the dream begins with Brussels' minarets (associated in my imagination with Turkish culture) and ends in a Mediterranean (ethnically unspecified) village, where I find myself trying to avoid speaking Greek. This raises the question of Greeks' relations to the Turks, and my own placement within my attempt to investigate them.

A Greek among the Greeks and the Turks

Mandel, having conducted research among the Turks and Greeks in Berlin, observes that, "life in the Federal Republic of Germany can be seen as a social scientific laboratory for Greek-Turkish interaction" (Mandel 1989:68). She further explains that Berlin provides the ideal occasion for one to study how Greeks and Turks interact outside their national territories, which bound them in a highly biased ideology about Greek-Turkish relations.

Similarly, Brussels also constitutes a field where Greeks and Turks interact outside their countries of origin. Furthermore, in Brussels, Greeks and Turks have to position themselves in relation to the idea of Europe, which is an ambiguous part of their identities. However, the metaphor of the scientific laboratory that Mandel uses, becomes much more complicated and less appropriate when the observer 'belongs' to one of the two groups studied.

The most crucial point of my fieldwork, as revealed in the dream, was the question of my ethnic identity in relation to my informants. In other words, why should anyone give credit to a Greek claiming that she will 'objectively' compare the Greeks and the Turks? The question of objectivity is one that the social sciences have has great difficulty answering. I inevitably had subjective feelings and reactions (considerably more complicated than what might be assumed considering my Greek origin). However, the fact that I could claim less easily to be 'scientifically objective' made me realize the complexity of inter-ethnic relations, and of the construction of ethnic identities through the ambiguity of my own position. After all, 'participant-observation' cannot but be about 'taking part' in other people's lives and observing not only 'the others', but also oneself as a participant.

Strathern argues that the term 'anthropology at home' is usually taken for granted, while in fact, 'home' has very ambiguous meaning and should be further explored (Strathern 1987). This was particularly true in my own fieldwork. I was not 'at home' in Brussels, but I was in the 'center of Europe', which was in some sense, as revealed in the dream, felt as if it stood for 'going back to the origins'. If doing research among the Greeks did make me feel 'at home', then Turks were definitely 'not home'. However, I did not know whether my home during fieldwork was where I come from in Greece or in Britain, my research base.

Indeed, my feelings about my position were even more complicated, as revealed in the following quotation from my field notes:

I want to observe the Greeks here because they are the 'Other' for me. The 'Other' cannot be somebody with whom one has nothing in common. Nothing could be more 'the Other' for me than these people [the Greeks in Brussels] with whom I have common origin, but my own upbringing has taught me that they represent all the social values to which I am opposed. This is why the Turks are not the absolute 'Other' for me, but the realization of myself and my ideals in something that is actually unknown to me.

The above was written at the beginning of my fieldwork and was an attempt to express my agonizing and uncomfortable feeling that socializing with Greeks did not make me feel 'at home'. On the other hand, socializing with the few Turks I knew at the time felt more 'familiar'. This was a first grasp of a much later realization, which came about through repeated patterns of behavior of the Turks and Greeks towards me. When I was among the Greeks, they took my ethnic origin for granted, but that did not imply that I was 'one of them'. On the contrary, my social background (inescapably apparent through my manners) and more importantly the fact that I was not an 'immigrant', but 'somebody coming from Greece' highlighted my difference. Unlike the Greeks, the Turks saw my ethnic origin in a more generalizing way. I soon discovered during the interviews with Turks that it was to my advantage to state that I was Greek. The initial short and diplomatic answers addressed to an imagined Belgian researcher were transformed, in most cases, to a vivid conversation with a 'neighbor', someone to whom hospitality had to be offered.

Turks' behavior towards me followed a pattern that I was to discover in a much later stage of fieldwork. As many other writers have indicated previously, Greek-Turkish relations are complex and can vary from acute hostility (when political conflicts are predominant) to close friendship (Papadakis 1994, Mandel 1989, Kolodny 1985). Particularly, in the context of living away from their homelands Greeks and Turks often feel a strong affinity for each other (Mandel 1985, Koçturk 1992). As Koçturk (1992:96) observes: "If friendships outside the Turkish

community are established these are usually with other immigrants, most often with Greeks as cultural affinities between the two countries transcend political hostilities."

Therefore, although my position definitely influenced my interaction with the Turks and the Greeks this influence was not straightforward and unproblematic. As with most anthropology research, although often unacknowledged, the anthropologist's gender, social and ethnic background, and personality gives them privileged access to some issues while restricting access to others. However, the role that one's own ethnic origin plays during fieldwork is variable and often unpredictable. As Panourgia (1995) argues, in the case of her research about death among people of her family and social circle in Athens, her anthropological role made her at times feel a stranger among her most beloved. Or, as Bakalaki (1997:511) demonstrates, asking questions about gender identity to Greek female informants, which they assumed that she should already know, provoked serious doubts about her own gender identity. Similarly, in the case of my fieldwork, Greek informants were, as a rule, more suspicious of questions about, for example, whether they miss Greece than the Turks. Furthermore, as expected in any significant social interaction, it was not only my informants, who had reactions towards me, but I also had intense feelings towards them (see also Panourgia 1994). Those feelings however, have also enabled me to approach thoroughly the lives of the people I socialized with, which is in any case the underlying purpose of establishing fieldwork as the fundamental method of anthropological research.

Representations as Contradictions

In my dream, the representation of Brussels was as a place both 'European' and exclusive to foreigners and, at the same time, Islamic and passionate. This was a first flying view, a view from afar. However, it constituted the prelude to my anthropological journey.

Writing Culture is a landmark in the debate about the authority and power imbalance entailed in anthropological

representations of 'the Other' (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Furthermore, the Writing Culture Critique has questioned the extent to which representations of culture can be objective. In attempting to demonstrate how anthropology has been inspired by modernism and colonialism, though, the authors of *Writing Culture* have paid little attention to the field encounter and to the representational processes taking place in praxis, and not only in anthropological narratives. In this respect, they have been accused of doing 'anthropology of the armchair' (James *et al.* 1997:3-5). James *et al* argues that attention should be drawn to the multiple forms of representation during the field encounter.

The importance of representation for my own work became apparent soon after I embarked on fieldwork. By interacting with people and observing the happenings in Greek and Turkish communities, I realized that there were endless and contradictory accounts of what it meant to be a Greek or Turk in Brussels (Rapport 1997). At the beginning of the writing-up phase, I wondered how to represent these various representations. The question for me was posed mainly in terms of 'translating' faithfully people's stories rather than 'inventing' a satisfactory writing technique (although writing style is obviously relevant to this question). I felt that there was definitely not a single 'reality', I encountered in the field, and that choosing to refer to some issues rather than others was to obscure and misrepresent what I experienced. However, to refer to 'everything' (which, in any case, was only 'everything I encountered') was to miss the theoretical focus and write something incomprehensible and chaotic (Strathern 1991).

My field material gave the final answer to my dilemma. I soon realized that it is not only anthropologists who represent their subjects, but people in different social contexts also represent themselves through various forms. Therefore, I came to see Greek and Turkish associations and restaurants as representations of ethnicity. Greek and Turkish activists and restaurant-owners make claims about people's identities, which often come in contrast to each other, and are continuously transformed and open-ended (Bowman 1997). In the same way, my dialogue with the above people produced many different

versions of what constituted Greekness and Turkishness (Rapport 1997). As MacDonald observes during her study of a museum, she came to realize slowly that not only was the museum a representational mechanism by itself but also that its representations were full of contradictions (MacDonald 1997:172-173). Not surprisingly, and the equivalent phenomenon is observed in the respective anthropological theories, the more the restaurants and ethnic associations try to 'loyally' represent people's culture, the more their versions disagree with each other. As MacDonald concludes: "The challenge is to disrupt easy positioning and to highlight the semantics and politics of representational practices themselves" (MacDonald 1997:173).

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila
    1991 Writing Against Culture. In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present.* R. G. Fox, ed. Pp. 137-162. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Bakalaki, A.
    1997 "Students, Natives, Colleagues: Encounters in Academia and in the Field." *Cultural Anthropology* 12 (4):502-526.

Behar, Ruth
    1995 Introduction: Out of Exile. In *Women Writing Culture.* Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, eds. Pp. 1-29. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bowman, Gleann
    1997 Identifying Versus Identifying with the 'Other': Reflection on the Sighting of the Subject in Anthropological Discourse. In *After Writing Culture.* Allison. James, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dawson, eds. Pp. 34-50. London: Routledge.

Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, eds.
 1986 *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Edgar, I.
 1994   Dream Imagery Becomes Social Experience: The Cultural Elucidation of Dream Interpretation. In *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis. An Encounter Through Culture,* S. Heald and A. Deluge, ed. Pp. 99-113. London: Routledge.

Freud, Sigmund
 1926   The Question of Lay Analysis. In *Historical and Expository Works on Psychoanalysis*. The Penguin Freud Library, vol. 15, Pp. 283-363.

Hannerz, Ulf
 1996 *Transnational Connections*. London: Routledge.

Hastrup, Kirsten and Peter Hervik
 1994   Introduction. In *Social Experience and Anthropological Knowledge*. Kirsten Hastrup and Peter Hervik, eds. Pp. 1-12. London: Routledge.

Hillman, D. J.
 1989   Dream Work and Field Work: Linking Cultural Anthropology and the Current Dream Work Movement. In *The Variety of Dream Experience*. M. Ullman and C. Limmer, eds. Pp. 117-141. Welling Borough: Crucible.

James, Allison, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dowson
 1997 Introduction: The Road from Santa Fe. In *After Writing Culture*. Allison James, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dowson, eds. Pp. 1-15. London: Routledge.

Kocturk, T.

1992   *A Matter of Honor: Experiences of Turkish Women Immigrants*. London: Zed Books.

Kolodny, E.
1985 *I Samothraki stis Ohthes tou Nekar: Ellines Metanastes stin Stoutgardhi (Samothrace on the Shores of Nekar: Greek Immigrants in Stuttgard)*. Athens: National Center of Social Research.

Kulick, Don and Margaret Willson
1995 *Taboo.* London: Routledge.

MacDonald, Sharon, ed.
1993 *Inside European Identities.* Providence: Berg.
Mandel, R.
1989b Ethnicity and Identity among Migrant Guest Workers in West Berlin. In *Conflict, Migration and the Expression of Ethnicity.* N. L. Gonzales and C. S. McCommon, eds. Pp. 60-74. London: Westview Press.

Moutsou, Christina
1994   "Urban Definitions of Greekness: Selective Turkish Fragments in *Salonikan* Popular Expressions." Unpublished.

Narayan, Kirin
1995   Participant Observation. In *Women Writing Culture*. Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, eds. Pp. 33-48. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Okely, Judith
1996 *Own or Other Culture*. London: Routledge.

Panourgia, E. N. K.
1995   *Fragments of Death, Fables of Identity: An Athenian Anthropography.* Madison: University of Wisconsin.

Papadakis, Y.

1994a Perceptions of History and Collective Identity: A Study of Contemporary Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Nationalism. University of Cambridge. Ph.D. 18440.

Rapport, Nigel

1997   Edifying Anthropology: Culture as Conversation; Representation as Conversation. In *After Writing Culture.* Allison James, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dowson, eds. Pp. 177-193. London: Routledge.

Said, Edward

1978 *Orientalism.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Stewart, C.

1997 "Fields in Dreams: Anxiety, Experience, and the Limits of Social Constructionism in Modern Greek Dream Narratives." *American Ethnologist* 24 (4):877-894.

Stoller, Paul

1986   *The Taste of Ethnographic Things*. Philadelphia: University of Pensylvania.

Strathern, Marilyn

1987 The Limits of Autoanthropology. In *Anthropology at Home*. A. Jackson, ed. Pp. 16-37. London: Tavistock Publications.

1991   *Partial Connections.* London: Savage, Roman and Littlefield.

Postmodernism Revisited: Anthropology, Technology, and Addiction in Informationalized Societies

Kerric Harvey
Associate Professor, School of Media and Public Affairs
The George Washington University

Addiction and the Anthropological Lens

Addiction is a tricky word. On the one hand, it is a specific term referring to a particular set of behaviors and a constellation of personality traits that carry implications in a clinical environment. On the other hand, the word itself is so over-used in today's popular press and daily news that it has come to mean everything, which is the same thing as meaning nothing at all. The stable of things to which people used to be addicted was once limited primarily to substances one ingested and/or criminal behavior. Now the list has expanded to include previously benign phenomenon: it is just as possible to be addicted to carbohydrates, dairy products, and red meat as it is to work, exercise, or even sex. This article looks at addiction within a technological context, understanding it as an anthropological phenomenon within informationalized cultures—the online era counterpart to the old notion of 'industrialized' nations. Understanding the internal dynamics of informationalized societies necessitates re-visiting the usefulness of various evolving models of anthropology itself. Of special interest here is the potential offered by the much maligned and perhaps often misunderstood—granted, sometimes misapplied—enterprise known as postmodern anthropology.

For anthropology, perhaps Stephen Tyer's attempt at defining postmodernism by its prevailing methodology supplies the best starting point. As he puts it:

A postmodern ethnography is a co-operatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality. … Because postmodern ethnography privileges 'discourse' over 'text,' it foregrounds dialogue as opposed to monologue, and emphasizes the cooperative and collabourative nature of the ethnographic situation in contrast to the ideology of the transcendental observer. [1986:125-126]

At one level, postmodernism supplies anthropologists with a new vocabulary for describing how people in different cultures, including subsets of our own culture, set about making sense of their individual and corporate lives. Moreover, postmodernist precepts and principles provide a truly profound way to 'do anthropology' differently: they offer an alternative to earlier ways of understanding what anthropology is and what anthropologists do.   Postmodernist anthropology is particularly useful in identifying a range of possible analytical models for understanding the internal structures and social dynamics of a techno-social environment.

Changing Cultural Contexts

"If a computer knows what you're feeling, can it be your best friend?"
– *New Scientist*

This epigraph, from the famous general-interest magazine, refers to developments across the techno-social field in research targeted at personal computers that are bio-metrically sophisticated. Though it sounds as if we are straying into the realm of science fiction, time, money and energy are being spent on developing 'PCs' that adjust automatically to information streams regarding the mood and mindset of their human users. Monitoring physiological oscillations in body temperature, heart and breathing rates, muscle tension, and so forth, such a

computer will recognize a range of emotions. It will alter its own 'behavior' in response, doing things like interrupting the work at hand with helpful little prompts like: "You know you get crazy whenever you write about that. Why don't I play an except from 'The Memory of Trees' to calm you?" In preliminary lab tests, the prototype of these newly sensitive computers achieved an 80% accuracy rate as they differentiated among eight different human emotions (Davidson 1999:28).

The article from which the above epigraph was drawn begins, not incidentally, with the dry statement that, "Today, many people spend more [time] interacting with computers than with other humans" (Davidson 1999:27). Extravagant claims about the 'wired world' aside (about 30% of the US, alone, still doesn't have e-mail), within a certain demographic, and for a particular social and economic class, statements such as this find their audience. This introduces a companion issue to the anthropomorphizing of information technology phenomenon.

In 2000, about 80% of all American businesses use e-mail and/or 'rely' on the Internet—or more likely, the World Wide Web—to conduct some aspect of their commercial life. E-commerce is heralded as the Second Coming of capitalism, with the American government pouring millions of bipartisan dollars into switching to the cyber world as fast, and as thoroughly, as possible. Since its release into the commercial public sphere in 1995, the American side of that global spectacle known as the Internet has exhibited truly startling growth. Though real numbers are hard to get, approximately 180 million Americans, and 260 million people world wide, are on the Web. 18% of the world's 800-million plus Web pages and the 60 billion e-mails sent every year connect through online search engines of one type or another (Lauria 1999). The Net continues to grow at about 10% a month. Increasingly, this growth is of a commercial nature: there are millions of retailers now on the Web, with their combined advertising expenditures expected to reach around $5 billion by the end of this year (*Washington Post* 1997). By 2002, the sale of goods on the Web may soar to around $300 billion—although I, personally, feel that number is a little high. Nor is the conversion limited to the Western side of the Atlantic: both

continental Europe and the British Isles are channeling as much as possible of their educational, institutional, and public communication systems into online configurations. This transformation is complicated and, arguably, somewhat compromised, by confusion between two things: the role of government as opposed to that of business; and, an increasing inability to think of human issues in anything other than technological terms. However, although one could build several good cases for life on both sides of the 'digital divide,' one stable statistic suggests several intriguing implications for the future in informationalized cultures.

Thirty-five percent is the threshold separating societies that tolerated human slavery from those dependent on it—in other words, if more than a third of the labour pool in any society is 'owned' then that society is a dependent one (Davis 1966, Finley 1972, 1980, Elkins 1969, and Harvey 1995). Interestingly enough, most 'modern' societies—especially those in the thick of the online revolution—now report dependency rates of around 35%. More and more, they rely computers and computerized communications and informational systems to achieve *non-communications* type of work, such as transportation, shipping, education, the work of government, and so on (see Harvey 2000).

Although it may seem a leap of faith to compare human slavery of centuries past with robotic or computerized devices of today, if one considers the issue only in terms of workforce dynamics the jump becomes far less gigantic. An under-explored aspect of human slavery is the impact on the owners, and when dependency reaches the 35% threshold, a mutual dependency emerges—albeit with entirely different moral and experiential conditions on the opposing sides of the equation. Even if we don't go quite that far, however, a not-too-distant cousin of non-human slaves is already firmly entrenched in our social midst. I refer, of course, to the presence of so-called 'smart' computer technology in both domestic and global communication networks. These sophisticated versions of computer search engines, automated labour, etc. made possible by the widespread use of so-called 'smart' computer chips, provide an entirely new backdrop against which to study human behavior. Simply put,

there is something intrinsically interesting about human behavior attempting to replicate itself artificially in one format or another.

When we build something like the 'feeling' computer described in the *New Scientist* article and then give it a name and genderized pronoun, in some fashion we move that object away from being purely 'something'. We drape on it in bits and pieces of our own sense of self and person; we humanize it through our reactions to it; we make it act like us as much as we can, even to sound like us. This all makes us develop ways of relating to it as some *ersatz* version of us, even if we know, rationally, that it isn't. We train ourselves to interact with intelligent machines as if they were at some level intelligent people—which, conversely, is bound to change the ways in which we deal with people. As these sentient machines become increasingly more 'multi-task', we treat them ever more like full range beings—the term anthropomorphizing does not even begin to cover the situation.

In a way then, our human reactions to the informationalized world reveal us to ourselves in an entirely new way. But is it, really, appropriate to make the leap from having complex, 'emotional' exchanges with one's laptop computer to the development of a social dependency on various types of owned labour—anthropomorphic or not? To a great degree, the question is a spurious one. The current penetration of sentient technology has already stolen the thunder from the notion of a more fully automated workforce. And, that new set of labour and social relationships brings with it a new understanding of a very old quality in communal life: power. A new kind of power, too—power over that what was thought to be immutable. Power to conquer at least momentarily the laws of the physical world, because we have invented some things finally to which mundane matters like time and space are irrelevant, largely. E-mail *per se* is indifferent to time; virtual offices, by definition, are divorced from the confines of physical space. This set of communication tools goes beyond its predecessor systems, such as printing and the telephone, which still have one foot in physical space, since a human must be included to close the communications loop. However, my computer's intelligence agent can 'talk' your computer's and come up with a plan and the steps required to

make that happen can be automated—in ways that neither Gutenberg nor Margaret Meade ever imagined possible.

One way to describe this new type of power is the phrase 'Total Power Relationship' (TPR), which captures both the antiquity of the slave-owning dynamic and the ultra-modern capabilities of technologies like virtual reality and artificial intelligence (Harvey 2000). But, what, exactly, is the full nature of this informationalized society and what might the negotiations and discussions characteristic of it be like, anthropologically speaking? It would seem safe to suggest that highly complex, largely invisible processes will obtain as humans redefine 'self', and 'life-world', based in large part on our reactions to 'tools' we developed to give power over our physical world.

As we press forward, creating houses that vacuum themselves and ID cards that list quantities of personal, medical, and financial information, a curious relationship is likely to emerge: dependency on those things that provide a sense of control. A dependency that some scholars theorize approaches addictive dimensions. And, it is anthropology, especially anthropology informed by postmodernist thinking, which may help us sort out which is the tail, so to speak, and which is the dog, in techno-social situations.

Technology and Addiction in the 21st Century

The possibility that some TPR-generating technological devices might actually encourage addictive tendencies in human users has become discussible within the subset of media scholars who look at technology, anthropologically (Stein 1997, Eppright *et al.* 1999, Cooper *et al.* 1999). Barnett (1999) reports that Kimberly Young, University of Pittsburgh, has developed a test for quantifying the degree to which Internet users, for example, experience their own relationship with online technologies as an addictive phenomenon. She isolated several measurable dimensions of Internet addiction, focusing on both the 'hows' and the 'whys' of developing unhealthy social patterns, which are not just facilitated by the Web, but which are, indeed, a function of it.

Young (1998) draws overt parallels with Internet addiction and various forms of chemical dependency, especially alcoholism.

One statistical approach, employed by a team of researchers and reported *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, and Computers* (1999) supports the notion that significant sub-clusters of the US population demonstrate a marked—and an increasing—preference for online methods of social interaction to the subordination or outright exclusion of all others (see Pratarelli *et al*. 1999). Moreover, the findings of Greenberg, Lewis and Dodd (1999) highlight the uneven susceptibility to Internet addiction for different demographic groups. The authors draw a correlative link between low self-esteem in college students—particularly female college students—and vulnerability to using the Net in a way that approaches full-sale addiction, for example. It is important to note this does not suggest the Internet is intrinsically addictive but, rather, that it presents a set of traits that lend to addictive usage by specific personality types. Though the candidates for what constitutes an addictive substance change over time, expert consensus about the classic pattern of addictive behavior is relatively stable. A typical addiction moves through several discernible stages, or levels of intensity, with each stage signifying a more serious level of dependency than the one that precedes it. As Duncan and Gold (1982:11) describe this movement, the stages of addiction are as follows: "... experimental usage (of the addicting substance or behavior), progressing to social-recreational use, escalating to circumstantial-situational use ... then intensified use, and culminating in compulsive use."

Drawing specific parallels between behavior patterns for individuals and for collections of individuals, such as entire societies, is of course a tricky thing. It may very well be important to wonder aloud, nevertheless, if societies fall prey to the same patterns as the people who comprise them. Certainly, the speed and unquestioning attitude with which the United States, for example, willingly redefined public culture according to the characteristics of a relatively untried and commercial-based organizing principle—the Web technologies—suggests that this may be the case. Particularly, too, when we listen to what

sociologists and anthropologists have already observed about the changing mental climates surrounding the Web-based world, with its accompanying TPR-based cultural value system.

Anthropology responds to the Online Era

As early as 1995, a White House-mandated report of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) suggested that the online have the power to transform society. In the brief period since 1995, when the NSF Task Force released its report, both the impact and the scope of the online component in contemporary culture swelled, raising the issues raised to a much higher and critical level. We have also seen fervent growth in connecting devices, like laptops, cell phones and beepers, etc. that have come to characterize public and private life today. The findings of the NSF further reinforced the importance of applying anthropological methods to studies of new technologies, enlarging the debate beyond the corporate agenda, and into the social one:

> Methods are needed in linguistic or communication analysis that are sensitive to revealing social or cultural relationships and changes in these relations are important. These include but are not limited to methods appropriate to ethnographies of communication; ethnographies of discourse, pragmatics, including speech act theories, socio-linguistics; sociology of language; creolization or pidginization processes; code switching; and, ethno-semantics. [NSF 1995]

Big business, both US and global, is not ignorant of this situation, and since has been, more and more, turning to hiring anthropologists to help unravel the very postmodern complexities characterizing the techno-social world. As Corcoran reports in an article entitled "Anthropology, Inc.":

> Xerox hired its first anthropologist in the mid-1970s to think about how paper flows through a real-life office…. The [US]

federal government is also turning to anthropologists to understand how changes in policy may affect the rhythms of local communities.

Why anthropology? Anthropologists listen. 'We've been trained to watch,' says Marietta Baba, a professor of anthropology at Wayne State University in Detroit. 'We don't come around with a battery of instruments or a grid that we map problems onto,' she said. Instead, anthropologists try to get an inside peek at how people in a group interact or get a job done. [Corcoran 1993:6]

The watershed NSF Report of 1995 echoes this interior effect of the Internet on group processes at various levels of size and complexity, declaring outright that:

[The Internet] ... is a social product, and social decisions and interests are reflected at all stages of its design, deployment, and end-user appropriation.... [These] new technologies must be understood in relation to other technologies as well as in relation to the social context of their use and creation. [American Anthropological Association 1996:3]

Some of these 'social contexts' have already started to change, in profoundly anthropological ways. In the September 1999 edition of *Anthropology News*, Princeton's Emily Martin describes what she calls the "manic style", and explains how it relates to the dominant personality paradigm in today's business environment. She notes that mental conditions previously considered to be problematic are beginning to be re-framed as assets, at least, for corporate executives. Martin writes:

For example, ADHA [*Acquired Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*] has begun to appear as an asset in books for business entrepreneurs; manic-depression, frequently loosely associated with tormented geniuses, has begun to occupy the best-seller list in the forms of memoirs and novels.... In popular culture, representations of these two conditions

appear to be in the process of redefinition from being a disability to being a strength … [1999:6]

Contributions of Postmodern Anthropology

Given the chaotic, illusive and fractured nature of the technological environment within which contemporary anthropologists try to study the social world, it may very well be the case that a combination of ethnographic methods best address the research needs of techno-social subjects like robotics, virtual reality, the Internet, and the like. Positivists point to postmodernism's rootlessness, suggesting its appearance is symptomatic of contemporary intellectual *rigor mortis*. To some extent, these criticisms are well-founded, although the tendency to pit positivism against postmodernism as a direct and equal intellectual opposition is unhelpful. As with most over-simplifications, they are tidier than they are truly illuminating. Perhaps both the much-maligned positivism and the multiply defined postmodernism have something to offer, and something to avoid, in translating the idiom of modern-day culture into anthropologically decipherable terms.

The larger point, however, is this: what we actually need, at present, is a fluid and flexible way of analyzing a world defined precisely by those same characteristics. Personality traits that would have led to involuntary isolation in previous times are normalized within both business and social environments. As Martin notes:

> … [W]hat might be called 'manic or hyper style', a style that draws on the 'mania' in manic depression and the 'hyper' in ADHD, is [now] being attributed to exuberant and creative people in a wide range of fields…. The qualities of the 'manic style' fit well with the kind of person frequently described as highly desirable in corporate America; always adapting by scanning the environment for signs of change, flying from one thing to another, while pushing the limits of everything, and doing it all with an intense level of energy focused totally on the future. [1999:6]

Is this paradigmatic of a deeper, more enduring shift in the social notion of mental health, and is technology at the root of it? It is difficult to tell, in part, because it is difficult to tell anything about the online world with any real level of certainty. If we make the question smaller, though, we make it more answerable, although not any less anthropologically significant. Does technology aid and abet this devolution in Acquired Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder? The NSF report, the addiction literature, the accumulating profiles on technology use and distribution in the US and, indeed, across the globe, all intersect in a way that prompts me to say yes.

Technology doesn't just help make manic behavior tolerable in postmodern society—given the results of the NSF study, technology and the TPRs that accompany it, make such disturbed behavior both inevitable and, on the surface, desirable. Given, then, the convergence of communication media that fragment the social universe, and a value system that normalizes that characteristic, postmodernist anthropology seems highly useful as a means of studying contemporary cultures. The self-reflexive aspect of postmodernism often rises to the fore, together with postmodernism's signature characteristic of treating everything as a dialogue, work-in-progress, or relative truth. Moreover, it is precisely these traits—this elusive character, this light-footedness—which makes postmodern anthropology particularly well suited for studying the phenomenon of postmodernity, like the Internet or virtual reality or robotics.

In postmodernity, things that by their very being tend to fracture our most cherished understandings of an anchored social or material culture, fixed frames of reference have little utility. Borrowed from a time and place when time and place were still functions of physicality they are like navigational aids in a foreign language. Decorative, moving, perhaps profoundly eloquent expressions of a cosmology once sovereign but ultimately unhelpful in making our way across new terrain. In contrast, much about postmodern anthropology suggests that precisely the type of maverick guide we need to track renegade phenomenon like those surfacing in the online era. Now is the

time, it would seem, to press the more reliable aspects of the postmodern through into analytical use within a life-world becoming increasingly post-human.

Bibliography

American Anthropological Association
    1996   *Culture, Society, and Advanced Information Technology.* Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation.

Barnett, Jason
    1999   Work in Progress, SMPA 1999, 'Senior Seminar', the George Washington University, Washington DC.

Cooper, Alvin, *et al*.
    1999 Online Sexual Compulsion: Getting Tangled in the Net. *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity* 6 (2):79-104.

Corcoran, Elizabeth
    1993   Anthropology Inc. *The Washington Post*, 21 February 1993, H1, H6-H7.

Davidson, Clive
    1999   I Know How You Feel. *New Scientist*, no. 2185 (8 May): 26-31.

Davis, David Brion
    1966   *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

    1984   *Slavery and Human Progress*. New York: Oxford University Press.

de Roulhac, J.G. Hamilton
    1926   *The Best Letters of Thomas Jefferson.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Duncan David and Robert Gold
    1982   *Drugs and the Whole Person*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Elkins, Stanley M.
    1969   Slavery in Capitalist and non-Capitalist Countries. In *Slavery in the New World.* Laura Foner and Eugene D. Genovese, eds. Pp. 3-15. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: New York University Press.

Eppright T., M. Allwood, B. Stern, and T. Theiss
    1999   Internet Addiction: A New Type of Addiction? *Mo Med* 96, no. 4 (April):133-136.

Finley, M.I.
    1980 *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*. New York: Viking Press.

Newsweek
    1992   For the Love of Robotics 119 (9 March):8-9.

Greenberg, Joshua L., Stephen E. Lewis, and David K. Dodd
    1999   Overlapping Addictions and Self-esteem Among College Men and Women. *Addictive Behaviors* 24, no. 4 (July-August):565-571.

Harvey, Kerric
    2000   *Eden Online: Re-inventing Humanity in a Technological Universe.* Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.

    1995   Mr. Jefferson's Wolf: Slavery and the Suburban Robot, *Journal of American Culture* 17 (4):79 - 89.

Lauria, Angela E.
    1999   Personal Communication, Washington, DC, (2 December).

Martin, Emily
    1999   Flexible Survivors. *Anthropology News* 40, no. 6 (September).

Moore, Stephen D.
    1994 *Post-Structuralism and the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
Pratarelli, Marc E., Blain L Browne, and Kimberly Johnson
    1999   The Bits and Bytes of Computer/Internet Addiction: A Factor Analytic Approach. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, and Computers* 31, no. 2 (May).

Stein, Dan. J.
    1997   Internet Addiction. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 154, no. 6 (June):890.

Tyler, Stephen A.
    1986   Postmodern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult, to Occult Document. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. Pp. 122-140. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Washington Post
    1997   18 March, A1.

Young, Kimberly S.
    1998 *Caught in the Web.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Food and Fetish in Peru: 'Potato Power' and the Vicos Project

William W. Stein
Texas Tech University

The Modernity Project at Vicos

This article looks back on the Vicos Project from nearly a half century later with a point of view acquired in the intervening years. The Project brought developers to one small part of Peru, but we know now that the kind of development they practiced was based on the transitive significance of the verb 'to develop'. This meant that some people 'developed' other people, but not themselves. In other words, it was a monological development, without reciprocity, and an 'unreflexive modernization'. What I present is a "multi-sited ethnography" (Marcus 1998) of North Americans in Vicos, Lima, Ithaca, New York, Lubbock, Texas, and elsewhere, an "ethnoscape … of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live" (Appadurai 1996:33). Perhaps it is also ethnohistory of the recent past.

We are here, in a different place from where we were, and, to paraphrase Donna Haraway (1991:196), to be somewhere in particular is perhaps the only way to find a larger vision. So any knowledge I generate here and now is located, positioned, and situated in relation to this object. Haraway points out, that "location resists the politics of closure." That is, the final meaning of our endeavor is indefinitely postponed. We find ourselves in a world where the enchantment which modernity thought it had swept away replaces certainty. Following Stephen Tyler's (1986:126) call for a postmodern ethnography that refutes the opposition of 'observer-observed' and instead calls for a cooperative and dialogical production of discourse, my 'dis-ease' then is with all varieties of vanguardist certainty. Our knowledge is contingent. The ethnographic object changes as I change by

writing about it. I do not only interpret it but I change it at the same time. Such a chronicle of the Vicos Project is not subjective but, rather, reflexive.

With such a play of undecidables we can liberate ourselves from the well-known binary opposition of interpreting versus changing things constructed by Marx, and from any other "division" (Bourdieu 1991:130), which would exercise symbolic power so as to restrict the way we experience the world. Interpretation is deconstructive, that is, it disassembles and assembles at one and the same time. Vincent Crapanzano (1986:52) states this more poetically: "Interpretation has been understood as a phallic, a phallic aggressive, a cruel and violent, a destructive act, and as a fertile, a fertilizing, a fruitful, and a creative one." This is not binary but a single process.

This said, let us turn to our ethnographic summary. The Vicos Project was a 'participant intervention' enterprise carried out on a *Hacienda*, which can be defined as an estate in which farmers paid labour-rent for their land. The community is located in the Callejón de Huaylas, a valley in the North Central Andes of Peru. The Project was carried out by a team of North American and Peruvian applied anthropologists between 1952 and 1957. It is known in the English-language literature as the Cornell-Peru Project, and in Peru as the Peru-Cornell Project, which is why I settle for the neutral Vicos Project. But my neutrality goes far beyond a name: I was never a member of the Project, although I was a visitor in Vicos as well as a guest instructor and researcher there. Moreover, I would like to take a stance—at least at this point in the article—that neither praises nor blames.

In 1951, Vicos belonged to the Public Benefit Society of Huaraz. The '*Beneficencia*', a quasi-public welfare agency in the Department capital, the governing board of which was composed of regional landlords who were more interested in preserving the agrarian *status quo* than in helping poor people. The Beneficencia rented the Hacienda Vicos to the highest bidder at a public auction for terms of five or ten years at a rental fee of some $500 per year. For this small sum, the renter or *patrón* acquired an estate of 18,000 acres located at altitudes of 9,000 to 14,000 feet above sea level, as well as the labour power of around 250

Hacienda workers, heads of Vicos families, who were obliged to work on the Hacienda*'s* fields, or in any other capacity, for three days a week in exchange for allottments of household land.

The 2,000 people of Vicos were called '*colonos'*, or 'serfs'. The Project adopted the latter term and viewed the Hacienda as a manor. Townspeople in the Callejón de Huaylas, the main valley above which Vicos is located, referred to them as '*indios'*, Indians, an insulting term in Peruvian Spanish. They referred to themselves as '*Vicosinos'*, or 'Hacienda *nuna'*, Hacienda people. Some simply identified themselves as '*obreros'*, or 'workers'. I am going to use the latter term because in Peru, where order-givers who do not work are distinguished from order-takers who do, 'worker' suggests a racial as well as a class identity (see Roediger 1999:19) but in a way that avoids the hurt of the epithet 'Indian'.

Land in Vicos was distributed unevenly, with some workers in possession of fairly large holdings and others who worked minuscule fields. The poor Vicosinos, the majority, were micro-holders whose agricultural production was insufficient to feed their families and so had to work for the bilingual (in Spanish and Quechua) people in the town of Marcará, six kilometers below in the main valley, in order to supplement their Vicos income. The small landlords of Marcará identified themselves as '*mestizos'*, a term which had lost its racial meanings long since and meant simply that they filled an intermediary function in relation to the people who lived in the heights. At the time of the Project's intervention Vicos was suffering from a potato blight, as well as other agricultural problems, and its people were suffering from hunger as well as a number of endemic and epidemic diseases. They were illiterate and only a handful of men could speak Spanish with any degree of competence.

In 1951 the renter of Vicos was running a failing operation and willing to assign the estate to another party on a sublease, while Professor Allan R. Holmberg, an anthropologist at Cornell University, was ready to take it over. Holmberg was inspired by U. S. President Harry S. Truman's 'Point Four' call for aid to the so-called underdeveloped parts of the world, and in the spirit of this early Cold War discourse believed that poverty could be

cured by development. Anticipating Michel Foucault's (1972:49) definition of discourses as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak", the Project staff found Vicos and the Vicosinos 'underdeveloped' and saw their task as one of education, or re-education, and formation, or re-formation (Porter 1995:69).

With the assistance of highly placed friends in Lima, Holmberg brought enough pressure to bear on the Huaraz Beneficencia to have Vicos transferred to his University. I think that he might have initiated the immediate abolition of the Hacienda system if the rental contract had not required him to maintain it and keep the workers bound to it. Thus, an abusive, exploitative, and oppressive regime was maintained for a few years more. However, Holmberg and his staff abolished the many extra duties the workers were called on to carry out and promised them that their moveable and non-moveable properties would no longer be subject to confiscation for failure to comply with Hacienda rules. The Project announced that it would not take profits from the operation of the Hacienda but would invest them in the community. With the help of community authorities the Project set about building a primary school, which the government staffed with teachers, and housing for the latter, and a clinic, and initiated its program of technological innovation. The building program was utilized for the training of Vicosinos in skilled trades like masonry and carpentry. Peruvian agronomists were contacted to provide new seeds and methods of planting.

In a dramatic 'policy narrative', Holmberg (1955) viewed himself in a role analogous to a psychoanalyst in a therapeutic situation:

> What does the analyst do? He [sic] starts with a patient who desires but is unable to function to his fullest capacity in the world in which he [sic] interacts. The fact that he cannot do so may be the fault of the society in which he lives, but if the patient is to make a satisfactory and desirable adjustment to life, he must change his behavior in various ways. The analyst cannot change this behavior for him; the patient must do it for himself. Ideally, what

happens is this: Through a process of self-enlightenment, with occasional strategic intervention by the analyst, the patient cures himself so that he can face up to his anxieties and shoulder his responsibilities to the best of his native abilities. When he reaches this point, the analyst is out of a job. [*ibid*:26]

It seems to me that the role of the participant interventionist in the process of community development is much the same. His job is to assist the community to develop itself, and to study this process while it is taking place. He cannot "cure" the community as a surgeon cures a patient; the community must perform the operation on itself. At first, to be sure, as our experience in Vicos indicates, the investigator may have to intervene frequently and boldly, but as problem-solving and decision-making skills are developed, the investigator intervenes less and less until he works himself out of the role of intervener and into the role of consultant and observer.

Emery Roe (1994:34-35) defines "policy narratives" as "stories (scenarios and arguments) which underwrite and stabilize the assumptions for policy making in situations that persist with many unknowns, a high degree of interdependence, and little, if any, agreement." He adds that rural development is a genuinely uncertain activity, and one of the principal ways in which practitioners, bureaucrats, and policy makers articulate and make sense of this uncertainty is to tell scenarios and arguments that simplify or complexify that reality. Indeed, the pressure to generate policy narratives about development—where, again, policy is broadly defined—is directly related to the ambiguity decision-makers experience over that development. Other things being equal, the more uncertain things seem everywhere at the micro-level, the greater the perceived scale of uncertainty at the macro-level and the greater the perceived need for explanatory narratives that can be operationalized into standard approaches with widespread application. Thus, the failure of field blueprints based on policy narratives often serves only to reinforce, not reduce, the appeal to some sort of narrative that explains and addresses the persisting, even increasing,

uncertainty. This has much applicability to the present world and to the history of the late twentieth century but I also think it bears on the Project's problems in Vicos.

The Project only *seemed* to have control of dependent and independent variables. Adams and Cumberland (1960:188) comment: "To actually 'rent' a population in which experimental introductions could be carried on would come excitingly close to the long-sought laboratory of human society of which sociologists and anthropologists have often dreamed." Holmberg appears to have seen the Vicos Project in the same light. What was problematic, however, was that in reality few, if any, variables were controlled. Vicos was not sealed off from an outside world but was one part of the flow of events in Peru. Vicosinos had participated in a local labour protest in the mid-1920s, which caused the reduction of an Hacienda obligation of four days work per week to three, and the community had been the scene of labour unrest in the nineteenth century as well (see Stein 1991). The Callejón de Huaylas had been invaded by Chilean expeditionary forces in 1839 and 1883, and a massive insurgency had occurred there in 1885.

At mid-century most Vicosinos remained immersed in the sub-regional patronage network in close relations with patrons in Marcará and Carhuaz, the capital of the Province twelve kilometers to the northeast, or attached as near-feudal retainers to more powerful Vicosinos. Perhaps the Project's belief that it had "excluded other would-be wielders of power" by asserting its own "power domain" (Holmberg and Dobyns 1969:409) under which Vicosinos could take shelter led its staff to fail to see what Bourdieu (1977:191) refers to as the "symbolic violence" in social relations. The symbolic violence of the intermediary elites in relation to subalterns was only reduced by the expansion of the state into the Peruvian hinterland which undermined their power and privilege (Nugent 1997:196). All of this is not intended to suggest that the abolition of unpaid labour, the provision of more food for hungry people, education so that people can read the Republic's Constitution and know their rights, the acquisition of skills and trades, and living better in general, are not good. Paul Doughty (1987:437) states: "To remain acquiescent in the face of

manifest human need and deprivation and not use one's professional skills to address the situation was anathema to . . . the spirit of the Project." Yet there was something "wild,"—like a "wild psychoanalysis" in which an analyst resists the analysis (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973:481)—something uncontrolled and unconscious in the Project's interventions, something that was unable to protect its clients from using their new powers against themselves. Holmberg, whose self-conception of working himself out of a job was heroic but out of tune with the times, was unable to attract large grant funds because research foundations, as well as development agencies, did not take to this homespun view of development in which both the Other and the aid-giver were scheduled to disappear. Consequently, he only managed to spend a few weeks each summer in Vicos after 1952. He was missing from the Project most of the time and left it in the hands of field directors. These North Americans in turn did not speak *Quechua* and effectively left the management of Vicos in the hands of mestizo administrators and anthropologists, and the Vicos leadership. Had Holmberg been funded, he would have been present more of the time and probably more active in the day-to-day activities of the Project.

The Project's problems in conducting successful demonstrations on Hacienda land with unwilling workers were enormous. After its declaration that the custom of property seizure for defaults would be abolished, attendance at Hacienda labours diminished dramatically. Panic overcame the Project staff, and in August 1953 after consultation with community leaders the land of one worker with over seventy absences was confiscated. After this, attendance increased. Despite its lack of control, the Project's interventions had some positive effects. When the sublease expired in 1957, the Project had introduced improvements in agricultural production, a complete primary school, and a clinic, among a number of strategic changes. The Peruvian government then intervened to expropriate the estate so that negotiations could take place for the sale of Vicos to its inhabitants, a transaction which was finally completed in 1962 and in which the Beneficencia was overpaid and the Vicosinos' savings were used up. Vicos organized itself as a production

cooperative in which the former Hacienda lands were retained as commons to be worked by the community for its own benefit. Instead of the customary 156 days of labour per year, the commoners then contributed between 40 and 60, leaving them more time to seek wage labour outside Vicos. Ironically, if the Vicosinos had waited another seven years, the Peruvian agrarian reform would have swept away the Hacienda and they could have used their savings in other ways.

The Potato Fetish

In 1951 several crop blights had significantly reduced subsistence production by Vicos households. Potatoes had been the second food in Vicos for generations, with maize being the first. When the Project took over the operation of the Hacienda in January 1952, one of its first efforts was to intervene in agriculture in order to alleviate the desperate nutritional situation. This more immediate and specific goal was also related to the general and longer-range goals of conserving natural resources, maximizing land use, diversifying and broadening the economy, and creating new sources of income (Vázquez 1955:56). The Project was instrumental in persuading the Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture to open an experimental station of SCIPA (*Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Producción de Alimentos*) in Vicos. Project staff members in collabouration with the agronomists worked out a program which was adapted to the agricultural problems and needs of the region. In a language which now seems archaic, Holmberg and Dobyns outlined the Project's rationale and its problems:

> The Cornell Peru Project resorted to persuasion to insure that these innovations would be applied by the serfs to their own fields, and not simply be ignored as things the rich and slightly crazy gringos [sic] understood and could afford to do, but that poor, ignorant, Indian serfs could not. The Cornell Peru Project offered to make improved seed, fungicides, insecticides, fertilizer, etc., available to those serfs who wanted to try them on their own subsistence

plots, through a sharecropping arrangement. The serfs, subject to repeated crop failures, were accustomed to obtaining new seed from local merchants upon fairly disadvantageous terms. The Cornell Peru Project offer permitted them to keep a considerably larger share of the harvest, but charged them enough to convince them the Project was making a serious offer, and was not foolish. [Holmberg and Dobyns 1965:44-45]

Despite the Project's efforts to make it possible for Vicosinos to maintain or increase potato production and successful demonstration in Hacienda fields, where production of good potatoes more than doubled during the first planting, a variation far outside the range of Vicosinos' expectations, the workers were slow in responding. Attempts were made by the Project staff to persuade, bribe, push, or otherwise inflict the share-planting system on the Vicosinos through four planting seasons, to no avail. Finally, the Project gave up and instituted a credit program which most Vicosinos, in view of their need and the compelling results of the demonstration plantings, accepted. Vicos became the biggest potato producer in the region, and potatoes became a source of commercial activity as well as a subsistence crop for many Vicos households. Under some conditions yields doubled, redoubled, and more. A decade later it was hard to find Vicosinos who were still planting by customary methods (Holmberg 1960, 86). With the profits, Vicosinos were finally able to buy their land from the Beneficencia in 1962. Holmberg and Dobyns discuss the engagement in commerce by enterprising Vicosinos in the 1960s:

Over 100 peasants annually market their own personal potatoes through the community farm enterprise, obtaining a cash income per farmer of nearly $40 from this source alone. These potatoes are grown on fields that could not support the serfs of 1951…. Many Vicos serfs sell their produce on the regional market, catching tramp trucks on the highway to carry their products to the departmental capital city of Huaraz, thereby keeping a social anchor out

against adverse occurrences and maintaining the extant fictive kinship ties with local dominant group merchants. The notable aspect of this continued web of social relationships is that the Vicos peasants produce enough, not only to supply this demand, but also for the regional and national markets. [Holmberg and Dobyns 1969:409-410]

The Vicos peasants today sell agricultural produce for cash and purchase commodities for cash. Thus, they have escaped from the traditional, interpersonal dependence. Subservience in the Andean region has been expressed in terms of personal service. Cash, in other words, permitted the serf or peasant to commute personal services into money.

The potato story does not end here. When I visited Vicos in September and October 1971, potato production for commercial purposes had disappeared from the commons. An agricultural cycle had come to completion through the intensive farming of one crop leading to its exhaustion with the appearance of new potato blights. A regional bacterial infection was serious enough to cause the government to forbid the export of potatoes to anywhere else in the country. With the vision of the '90s, Jan van der Ploeg (1993:222-223) comments that new varieties of potatoes in Peru degenerated rapidly: "Within three or four years they become incapable of generating even low levels of production. The new stock is 'done' or, as farmers in the highlands state, '*Ya no tiene fuerza*' [It has no power any more]. That is to say, the claim of 'superiority' provokes a reaction that is equally formulated as a magico-religious statement: the power which was once claimed turns out to be rather ineffective (to be lost). Ploeg continues: "Magic" and "misery": these are the clues that explain the increasing adoption of improved varieties by Andean farmers. "Magic": because a cultivar intentionally constructed to be superior, effectively functions as a spell. It is introduced and perceived as an emanation from another, more powerful world. The new varieties are also represented (and accepted) as a gift. This association is made especially at the level of direct encounters between technicians and *promotores* [extension agents] on the one hand and farmers on the other. The problem is only

that after some time the gift seems to have lost its power. But then, in the mean time other things have changed too. Through the adoption of the gift, the genetic stock normally conserved carefully by these farmers, may have eroded. And then the "misery".

In a volume published by Holmberg's epigones, at around the time of my visit to Vicos, Henry Dobyns published his account of 'potato power' in Vicos:

> If a man's [sic] power consists of his ability to influence others, the Vicos Indians acquired 'potato power' with the farming skills they learned … in the farm practice change program. Potato power provoked many changes in dominant group behavior toward Vicos Indians.
>
> 1. Increased potato production provided Vicosinos greater equality with nearby mestizo trading-town merchants in their complex commercial-ceremonial kinship relations. The Indians produced more farm surplus for sale, and by growing more needed to purchase less, thus freeing themselves to a considerable degree from merchant exploitation.
> 2. Potato production increases permitted Vicosinos to escape the local market to sell produce on the regional and national markets for cash, with no ceremonial relationships affecting prices…. At the same time, commercial sales proceeds gained from the regional and national market attracted regional merchants pursuing profits. Alert urban businessmen in the Department … capital began to dispatch truckloads of merchandise directly to Vicos, by passing local merchants….
> 3. Commercial potato production placed Vicos Indians in the cabs of "tramp" trucks plying the highways to the nation's capital. By social custom, reinforced by economic differentials, dominant group individuals rode inside, Indians on the truck bed or on top of its cargo. As large-scale potato shippers, the Vicosinos could demand cabin space….

4.   [T]he skilled potato producers continue to exercise economic power that has materially altered—if not entirely reversed—their former dependence on ill-paid unskilled labour. Microanalysis of potato power at Vicos at least illustrates that acquiring production skills is basic to all economic development in marginally subsistence gardening society….   The Vicos data indicate that the process of growth begins with learning new skills—how to employ the factors of production to increase yields. [Dobyns 1971:142-144]

Dobyns's intention, without doubt, is to carry the notion of 'potato power' no farther than this, but the idea captures my attention. And here is why: the construction of 'potato power' changes things. The potato has been transformed from food into a commodity, but not merely 'a commodity', rather, a fetish. 'Potato power', however, is only a mask for 'money power', which is itself a mask for human relations.

'Potato Power' as a Commodity Fetish

When we write of commodity fetishism, we need to recall that Karl Marx employed the term in what might very well also be read as a highly personal statement in his analysis of capital:

The mystical character of the commodity does not therefore arise from its use-value…. It is nothing but the definite social relations between [people] themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy we must take flight into the misty realm of religion. There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race….   [A]nd, these things, far from being under their [*people's*] control, in fact, control them. [Marx 1976:164-168]

Marx employed a metaphor, borrowed from thermodynamics, when he viewed the labour it took to make a commodity as "congealed" in the latter. The point would be that potato power hides and mis-recognizes the unequal relations of big farmers, small farmers, and micro-holders in Vicos commodity production, exchange, and consumption. As a celebration of the Project's achievement it would be, thus, perverted, inverted, an upside-down monument. But let us penetrate deeper into commodity fetishing. Baudrillard (1981:88-93) offers a critique that suggests Marxism refers "all the problems of 'fetishism' back to superstructural mechanisms of false consciousness" and thereby prevents analysis of "the actual process of ideological labour." Baudrillard quips, "The term 'fetishism' almost has a life of its own." In place of serving "as a metalanguage for the magical thinking of others, it turns against those who use it, and surreptitiously exposes their own magical thinking." Meanwhile, the word "fetish" has become semantically distorted: it refers to a force, a supernatural property of the object and hence to a similar magical potential in the subject," but it originally "signified exactly the opposite: a *fabrication*, an artifact, a labour of appearances and signs." Consequently, fetishism, rather than sanctifying objects or values, "is the sanctification of the system as such, of the commodity as system." Nowhere does Baudrillard suggest that we should abandon the term 'commodity fetishism', but his discussion is aimed at showing how tricky it is to use it. Of all that he has to say here, the point that I think has significance for the Vicos case is that fetishing is not a permanent human condition, that fetishing is not a human mental structure, and that Vicosinos are not caught on the binary horns of the dilemma of choosing between "God, the saints, and the mountain spirits" on one side, and potato power or money power on the other. This is Taussig's (1980:230) aim in calling for "a non-fetishized mode of understanding human relations and society." Thus, Vicosinos would not have to mime the fetishing of the developers but could grow according to their own plan.

Timothy Mitchell comments:

To the mechanism of misrepresentation by which power operates, Marx opposed a representation of the way things intrinsically are, in their transparent and rational reality…. The problem with such an explanation was that, in revealing power to work through *mis*representation, it left representation itself unquestioned…. Marx himself, although he wanted none of the accompanying political passivity, conceived of an essential separation between the person and an object-world in the same way, in terms of a structure or plan existing apart from things themselves. [Mitchell 1991:18-21]

We can take another, de-essentialized look at Vicos, perhaps a de-fetished one at the commodity. In her introduction to a recent collection of articles on Andean markets, Brooke Larson (1995:20) notes that such contemporary studies "challenge lingering assumptions about the destructive or assimilative powers of global market forces in Andean history." What if money is neither good nor bad but neutral? Just as in her Aymara example, in Ancash Quechua the word *rantin* applies to both market exchange for cash *and* reciprocity and one can make a ceremonial gift as *qelle*, the supporter of a festive sponsor, in either cash or festive supplies. Maurice Bloch (1989:167) observes that: "It is in European culture that money is far from morally neutral and its moral charge hinders conversion from one sphere of activity to another." And he adds, with regard to the anthropological contrast between exchange and gifts: "In societies where only gift exchange prevails, there is no money, but with the coming of commerce money makes its appearance. As a result the introduction of money comes to signify almost automatically an assault on a disinterested autarchic society dominated by pure morality" (Bloch 1989, 169). Arjun Appadurai writes:

The exaggeration and reification of the contrast between gift and commodity in anthropological writing has many sources. Among them are the tendency to romanticize

small-scale societies; to conflate use value (in Marx's sense) with *gemeinschaft* (in Toennies's sense); the tendency to forget that capitalist societies, too, operate according to cultural designs; the proclivity to marginalize and underplay the calculative, impersonal and self-aggrandizing features of non-capitalist societies. These tendencies, in turn are a product of an oversimplified view of the opposition between Mauss and Marx…. [Appadurai 1986:11]

Olivia Harris (1989:237) points out that Marx's conception of 'natural economy' implies "that there is something *unnatural* about exchange," and that "lurking in his writing is an implicit critique of money itself, and thus, since his concept of exchange relies so heavily on *monetary* exchange, also a critique of exchange." Jonathan Parry (1989:64-66) also challenges a discourse based on the radical opposition of two types of exchange, for gifts, too, may "embody evil and danger," and "it becomes clear that this picture must be qualified, for neither gift exchange nor commodity exchange constitute morally homogeneous and undifferentiated categories." And Alfred Gell (1992:142) comments that prestation has "had a favorable press in anthropology" while "'commodities' an unfavorable one," and he notes: "Objects are alienated in gift exchanges…. What is not 'alienated' in gift-giving is not the gift-object itself, but that which *cannot* be alienated, namely, the social identity of the donor, which still attaches to the object after it has been given away."

I will let Derrida (1992:7) deconstruct the "gift" as "aneconomic," that it is, indeed, not simply an impossibility but "*the* impossible. The very figure of the impossible. It announces itself, gives itself to be thought as the impossible." And: "For there to be a gift, there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, countergift, or debt. If the other *gives* me back or *owes* me or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift, whether this restitution is immediate or whether it is programmed by a complex calculation of a long-term deferral or difference" (Derrida 1992:12). Consequently:

For there to be a gift, not only must the donor or donee not perceive or receive the gift as such, have no consciousness of it, no memory, no recognition; he or she must also forget it right away and moreover this forgetting must be so radical that it exceeds even the psychoanalytic categoriality of forgetting in the sense of repression. It must not give rise to any of the repressions (originary or secondary) that reconstitute debt and exchange by putting it in reserve, by keeping or saving up what is forgotten, repressed, or censured. (*ibid.*:16)

If commerce is, thus, de-essentialized we may re-examine the consequences of increased money-flow in Vicos. With more money Vicosinos were able to invest in "knowledge funds," such as literacy, which enabled them to begin the task of equalizing things with their mestizo neighbors. In consequence of the increase in literacy, and the 1989 Constitution which opened the electorate to non-literates, Vicosinos became the electoral majority in the District of Marcará and in 1986 elected one of their own to the position of *alcalde*, mayor (Doughty 1987:147).

The fetish never ceases to amaze! In the case of Vicos, if indeed the slowing of the circulation of potatoes in Vicos is the slowing of the circulation of people, I have the strong conviction that the Vicosino imagination will invent other ways of cementing social bonds. Certainly, the strong links Vicosino migrants to Peru's cities maintain with their kindreds in Vicos, a phenomenon which has been observed in many communities by countless researchers in Peru for the last forty years, is not what we might expect if commerce, or potato power, really had eroded them. So I think that the future of Vicos is not something to be feared, decried, or put off, but rather something to be celebrated. At the same time, we may also ask what else is potato power hiding?

Karl Marx, resonating with the spirit of post-Enlightnment philosophy, brought fetishing out of metaphysics and into social relations. Marx deconstructed the mystical nature of commodities. It is precisely this that leads Jacques Derrida

(1994:46-47) to comment: "Marx does not like ghosts any more than his adversaries do. He does not want to believe in them. But he thinks of nothing else. He believes rather in what is supposed to distinguish them from actual reality, living effectivity. He believes he can oppose them, like life to death, like vain appearances of the simulacrum to real presence. He believes enough in the dividing line of this opposition to want to denounce, chase away, or exorcise the specters but by means of critical analysis and not by some counter-magic. But how to distinguish between the analysis that denounces magic and the counter-magic that it still risks being?" Thus, "Marx loved the figure of the ghost, he detested it, he called it to witness his contestation, he was haunted by it, harassed, besieged, obsessed by it. In him, but of course in order to repulse it, outside of him. In him outside of him: this is the place outside of place of ghosts wherever they feign to take up their abode. More than others, perhaps, Marx had ghosts in his head and knew without knowing what he was talking about" (Derrida 1994:106).

Fetishing

Fetishing carried the Project into the error of substituting everything else for the two actions it could not perform: liberating the Vicosinos from the Hacienda system and redistributing the land more equitably. If the Project had tried the first it would have failed in its contract with the Beneficencia. If it had tried the second it would have lost the cooperation, indeed support, it received from powerful Vicosinos. Here let us reflect on a strategic question asked by Fabian (1983:154): "[W]hen we accept domination as a fact, are we not actually playing into the hands of those who dominate?" In this, the Project made itself a part of the 'development problem' it desired to overcome, but because it needed to appear to be doing the rational and disinterested action it was unable to 'diagnose' itself as problematic, or submit to an objective 'diagnosis.' But I want to make this critique as an ethnographer of the Project and not as someone condemning it morally. The Vicos Project was a creation—a fetish—of the 1950s.

It modeled in small-scale the great North American enterprise—one which presented an attractive surface while hiding much.

The Project was overly concerned with its potency as social science, its insatiable desire to prove itself and its methods as a mature scientific undertaking. Taussig (1993:226) ponders, "How strange and multitudinous a notion 'society' becomes when we thingify it, as if this very act makes it slip away from us," and then asks, "[S]hould we not allow the terminology to express its sacral bent more fully and instead of saying social facts are *things* say that social facts are *reification* ...?" He suggests, "The most rigorously sociological sociology in the history of Western Man [sic] turns out to be bound, tooth and claw, to fetishism, from which it is itself inseparable and of which it becomes exemplary" (*ibid*.:235). Social science, thus, becomes haunted and more mirror than science, for social scientists who look into their data for reflections of themselves.

The Project's object, as I have outlined it, was not merely to engage successfully in social science but to attract more research funding and, by its fame, to enhance the careers of its staff. But absenteeism, which threatened to bring disaster, interfered with these noble aims. How could it use the Hacienda as a 'controlled' experiment in development if its workers did not show up at work? How could it demonstrate and disseminate the virtues and advantages of increased productivity under such conditions. It wanted to liberate the Vicosinos not only from the Hacienda system at Vicos but from the inequalities and injustices of their social order. But the Project erred, as such projects are wont to err. In order to achieve its goal the Project became the Hacienda. It took on this identity without acknowledging it.

In exercising control of the Hacienda work force in the way it did, the Project-Hacienda, by manipulating its 'independent variables,' gave up all hope of 'controlled experimentation.' To gain control, it lost control. The equivalence of commodity producers became a fetish, "potato power," but meanwhile the Project was blind to inequality and injustice and offered no challenge to these conditions. None of this has been said to date. It has remained unsaid for nearly half a century. This is because

"it has gone without saying," as Bourdieu (1977:167) would phrase it, "because it came without saying."

The Hacienda Vicos and the Project are really—or unreally—fetishes which hid the persons who exercised power in their names. The Hacienda and the Project did not exist but, rather, represented the local staff, as well as the principal investigator, the absent Allan Holmberg, and the contract with the Beneficencia. In sum, the field of social relations of the Vicosinos with *their* Others. Thus, it was not that Vicosinos were 'Hacienda people,' that they owed anything to the Hacienda, or that they were subject to what the Hacienda wanted from them, but that, as Eric Wolf (1966:3) writes, "control of the means of production, including the disposition of human labour," has passed from them, "the primary producers into the hands of groups that do not carry on the productive process themselves, but assume instead special executive and administrative functions, backed by the use of force."

Following Pierre Bourdieu, we can open ourselves to a different dialogue with the Vicos Project while we de-other it:

> The subject of scientific discourse needs to be asked the same questions that are put to the object of that discourse. How and by what right can the researcher ask, about researchers of the past, questions that he [or she] does not put to himself [herself] (and vice versa)? [Bourdieu 1993:49]

The Project's personnel were only engaging in the discourse of their location in time and space. "Curiously, fetishes," Donna Haraway (1997:136) writes, "produce a particular 'mistake'; fetishes obscure the constitutive tropic nature of themselves and of worlds. . . . Fetishes make things seem clear and under control."

I have given much attention here to the Project's errors, and their effect on its scientific pursuits. What effect did it all have on Vicos? I think not much. Vicos has grown and changed in accord with national events. Although I have not visited in Vicos in recent years, my impression from those who have been there is that the community is much like thousands of other rural

communities in Peru: net exporters of people to urban centers and struggling to survive in a poor country which bears the burden of a large external debt and does not have the resources to provide services to its people equitiably. Agrarian reform came and went. Vicos has now distributed almost all of its commons to its people, no longer specializes in potatoes but has diversified its economy, has a secondary school, and is moving to establish itself as a political District, separate from Marcará. When I interviewed Vicosinos in 1971, they were already beginning to forget the Project's interventions. If the memory is not extinguished now, it will be soon.

Bibliography

Adams, Richard N., and Charles C. Cumberland
 1960 *United States University Cooperation in Latin America.* East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Institute of Research on Overseas Programs.

Appadurai, Arjun
 1986 Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value. In *The Social Life of Things, Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 3-63. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

 1996 *Modernity at Large, Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Baudrillard, Jean
 1981 *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign.* Trans. Charles Levin. St. Louis: Telos Press.

Bloch, Maurice
 1989 The Symbolism of Money in Imerima. In *Money and the Morality of Exchange*, Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch, eds. Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre

1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

1991 *Language and Symbolic Power*. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

1993 *Sociology in Question*. Trans. Richard Nice. London, Thousand Oaks, CA, and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Crapanzano, Vincent

1986 Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. Pp. 51-76. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

Derrida, Jacques

1992 *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

1994 Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York and London: Routledge.

Dobyns, Henry F.

1971 Enlightenment and Skill Foundations of Power. In *Peasants, Power, and Applied Social Change*: *Vicos as a Model*. Henry F. Dobyns, Paul L. Doughty and Harold D. Lasswell, eds. Pp. 137-166. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

1974 The Cornell-Peru Project: Experimental Intervention in Vicos. In *Contemporary Cultures and Societies of Latin America*,

second edition. Dwight B. Heath, ed. Pp. 201-210. New York: Random House.

Dobyns, Henry F., Paul L. Doughty, and Harold D. Lasswell, eds.
    1971 *Peasants, Power, and Applied Social Change, Vicos as a Model*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Doughty, Paul L.
    1987 Against the Odds: Collabouration and Development at Vicos. In *Collabourative Research and Social Change, Applied Anthropology in Action*, Donald D. Stull and Jean J. Schensul, eds. Pp. 129-157. Boulder, CO, and London: Westview Press.

Fabian, Johannes
    1983 *Time and the Other, How Anthropology makes its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Foucault, Michel
    1972 *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gell, Alfred
    1992 Inter-Tribal Commodity Barter and Reproductive Gift-Exchange in Old Melanesia. In *Barter, Exchange and Value, An Anthropological Approach.* Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones, eds. Pp. 142-168. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson
    1997 Discipline and Practice: "The Field" as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology. In *Anthropological Locations, Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and

James Ferguson, eds. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

Haraway, Donna
1991 *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women, The Reinvention of Nature.* New York: Routledge.

1997
Modest__Witness@Second__Millennium.FemaleManᶜ__Meets__ OncoMouse™, Feminism and Technoscience. New York and London: Routledge.

Harris, Olivia
1989 The Earth and the State: The Sources and Meanings of Money in Northern Potosí, Bolivia. In *Money and the Morality of Exchange.* Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch, eds. Pp. 232-268. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Holmberg, Allan R.
1955   "Participant Intervention in the Field". *Human Organization* 14 (1):23-26.

1960 Changing Community Attitudes and Values in Peru: A Case Study in Guided Change. In *Social Change in Latin America Today, Its Implications for United States Policy,* eds. Richard N. Holmberg, Allan R., and Henry F. Dobyns.

1965 Case Studies of Subsistence and Transition, Vicos, Peru. In *Comparative Studies of Cultural Change*, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University. Mimeographed. Ithaca, NY.

1969 The Cornell Program in Vicos, Peru. In *Subsistence, Agriculture and Economic Development*, ed. Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Pp. 392-414. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Laplanche, J., and J. B. Pontalis.

1973   The Language of Psycho-Analysis.   Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Larson, Brooke
1995 Andean Communities, Political Cultures, and Markets: The Changing Contours of a Field. In *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes, At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*, Brooke Larson and Olivia Harris, with Enrique Tandeter, eds. Pp. 3-53. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.

Marcus, George E.
1998   *Ethnography through Thick and Thin.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Marx, Karl.
1976 *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 1.* Trans. Ben Fowkes. London: Penguin Books.

Mitchell, Timothy
1991 *Colonising Egypt.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

1995 The Object of Development, America's Egypt. In *Power of Development.* Jonathan Crush, ed. Pp. 129-157. London and New York: Routledge.

Nugent, David
1997   *Modernity at the Edge of Empire, State, Individual, and Nation in the Northern Peruvian Andes, 1885-1935.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Parry, Jonathan

1989 On the Moral Perils of Exchange. In *Money and the Morality of Exchange*. Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch, eds. Pp. 64-93. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pels, Peter
    1998 The Spirit of Matter: On Fetish, Rarity, Fact, and Fancy. In *Border Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*. Patricia Spyer, ed. Pp. 91-121. New York and London: Routledge.

Ploeg, Jan Douwe van der
    1993 Potatoes and Knowledge. In *An Anthropological Critique of Development, The Growth of Ignorance*, ed. Mark Hobart, 209-227. London and New York: Routledge.

Porter, Doug J.
    1995 Scenes from Childhood, The Homesickness of Development Discourses. In *Power of Development*. Jonathan Crush, ed. Pp. 63-86. London and New York: Routledge.

Roe, Emery
    1994 *Narrative Policy Analysis, Theory and Practice*. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.

Roediger, David R.
    1999 *The Wages of Whiteness, Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (Revised Edition). London and New York: Verso.

Stein, William W.
    1988 *El levantamiento de Atusparia, el movimiento popular ancashino de 1885: Un estudio de documents*. Lima: Mosca Azul Editores.

1991   La lucha por la mano de obra campesina el el Perú rural. In *El caso de los becerros hambrientos, y otros ensayos de antropología económica,* William W. Stein, 23-75. Lima: Mosca Azul Editores.

1998   Next to Nothing: More on Pedro Pablo Atusparia. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78:307-315.

Taussig, Michael
1980   *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America.* Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

1993   *Maleficium*: State Fetishism. In *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*. Emily Apter and William Pietz, eds. Pp. 217-247. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press.

Tyler, Stephen A.
1986   Postmodern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. Pp. 122-140. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Vázquez, Mario C.
1952   "La antropología cultural y nuestro problema del indio". *Perú Indígena* 2 (5/6):7-157.

1955   *A Study of Technological Change in Vicos, Peru: Cornell-Peru Project.* M.A. Thesis, Cornell University. Ithaca, NY.

Wolf, Eric R.
1966 *Peasants.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Anthropological *Différance*: From Derrida to Lévi-Strauss

Tom Ryan
University of Waikato, New Zealand
Visiting Professor,
École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris (2001)

> *Différance* points to a relationship (*a férance*)—a relation to what is other, to what differs in the sense of alterity, to the singularity of the other—but 'at the same time' it also relates to what is to come, to that which will occur in ways which are in-appropriable, unforeseen, and therefore urgent, beyond anticipation. The thought of différance is also, therefore, a thought of pressing need, of something which, because it is different, I can neither avoid nor appropriate.... There would be no différance without urgency, emergency, imminence, precipitation, the ineluctable, the unforeseen arrival of the other, the other to whom both reference and deference are made. – Jacques Derrida, "The Deconstruction of Actuality"

'The other', 'alterity', 'otherness'—entangled words, and for a long time key themes in Jacques Derrida's work. He is not, of course, the first twentieth century thinker to have explored these notoriously slippery concepts: Husserl, Lacan, de Beauvoir, and Levinas are particularly significant precursors in this task. Nevertheless, a recent commentator (Lucy 1995) went so far as to describe Derrida as "the philosopher of *différance*", the latter term being translated as "relations to the other"; the same writer characterized deconstruction as "a philosophy of the other", and the Derridean sense of 'writing' as "otherness in general". Derrida, meanwhile, continues to assert that if anything at all is 'undeconstructible', it must be 'justice', which in turn is "an affirmative experience of the coming of the other ... the future itself ... the fact that I permit the other to be other, which

presupposes a gift without exchange, without re-appropriation, without jurisdiction" (Lucy 1995).

Beyond the field of philosophy, anthropology is the discipline of the social or human sciences, which might be expected to have most in common with this appeal to difference. After all, these very same words—the other, alterity, and otherness—are stock-in-trade terms in contemporary anthropological discourse. They are also prominent in the titles of some of the most acclaimed anthropological publications in recent years. How these words are read, and how they are given meaning, is clearly not the same in anthropological discourse as it is in deconstructionist discourse. But while that difference is not a major problem in itself, it does direct attention to a parallel issue of considerable significance: the apparent lack of informed engagement between anthropology and deconstruction.

A cursory flick through the contents of the anthropology section of a university library or through the citations index of recent anthropological journals suggests strongly that the work of Derrida and of deconstructionists generally have had less impact on anthropology than they have had on cognate disciplines. I am not the first to make such an observation. The Australian anthropologist, Vicki Kirby, in her discussion of the relative absence of feminist perspectives from postmodern anthropology, argued that this obvious lack in fact masks another exclusion:

> ... Namely of a post-structuralist theoretical framework which can trace its genealogy directly back to Saussurean linguistics. Although 'language theory' figures prominently in the 'new ethnography' it is a quite circumscribed conceptualization of language which finds its way onto this radical agenda: there is certainly no room left for the most unruly offspring of semiotics. And yet deconstruction (or grammatology) can trace its pedigree back to Lévi-Strauss and structuralism, familiar topics which still appear somewhere in undergraduate anthropology courses.... What of post-structuralism's critique of structuralism, Derrida's re-reading/re-writing of the logocentrism of Saussure and the ethno-centrism of Lévi-Strauss? ... These

interventions remain strangely absent from our universities' anthropology curricula. [Kirby 1989:15]

While acknowledging that anthropologists like Marshall Sahlins and Jonathon Friedman see their recent work as "operating within a semiotic, post-structuralist, analytical frame", Kirby proposes that because neither of these theorists "questions his own epistemological position within his respective argument" (Kirby 1989:passim), neither can be properly called post-structuralist. In response to claims that some essays in James Clifford and George Marcus's *Writing Culture* are deconstructive, she replies that such comments show a failure to understand what constitutes the 'strategic moves' that inform a properly deconstructive reading. Kirby similarly argues that because Stephen Tyler's *The Unspeakable: Discourse, Dialogue, and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World* (1987) never actually comes to terms with Derrida's sense of 'writing', it "entirely misses the point" in its declared aim of relating deconstructionist and ethnographic practice (*ibid.*, 23).

Another insight into the same broad question is provided by the British anthropologist Henrietta Moore, in her account of the relationship between anthropology and psychoanalysis. She argues that the contemporary discipline of anthropology displays considerable hostility towards post-structuralism and deconstruction, though this hostility usually takes the form of simple avoidance. For instance, "in the face of recent post-structuralist and deconstructionist critiques of the unified, rational, subject of western humanist discourse, anthropologists have remained perversely silent; they have scarcely contributed to the debate at all" (Moore 1994:132). She suggests that this negativity is inspired by modernist anthropology's allegiance to empirically oriented ethnographic inquiry.

Moore also proposes that anthropologists are prone to reject post-structuralism and deconstruction because these approaches threaten the Cartesian *cogito*, the 'I' who enables experience of self and of the world and who is the essence at the core of identity. Anthropologists are typically uneasy about the notion of the

subject as 'shifting, imaginary, and conflicting', seeing in it the potential for both a pathological characterization of the other and an undermining of the anthropologist's own personal experience and knowledge of another culture. Post-structuralist and deconstructionist accounts of the subject, Moore concludes, are widely seen as threatening the anthropological project itself.

Different again is the view articulated by Maurice Godelier in an article entitled "American Anthropology as Seen from France". He emphasizes the unease felt by French anthropologists at the way some of their American colleagues are pursuing what they claim to be a radical critique, a deconstruction, of anthropological practice:

> In principle we view this deconstruction and critical reflexivity as something positive. This has always been one of the necessary tasks of anthropology and, with the 'new world order'; it has become even more necessary. Yet we do not feel entirely easy with some of the forms taken by this new development.... [It could] lead to the complete disappearance of anthropology, gradually dissolving it into the rising tide of so-called 'cultural studies' - the paradox being that if this were to happen, it would be in the name of a radical critique of Western culture that has been made possible partly by the very anthropology it is destroying. [Godelier 1997:4]

Godelier finds it surprising that many claim this 'deconstruction-dissolution' trend to be based on the work of French scholars whose theses, "once on the other side of the Atlantic, seem to blend into a sort of theoretical hodgepodge, graced with the rather pompous label of 'post-modernism'... ." Anthropologists in France, he says, tend to be rational, critical, pragmatists who, for example, will "use structural analysis on myths and kinship terminologies without being ashamed, but without being structuralists either", and, "while we acknowledge that Marxism, as a meta-theory, has collapsed ... [we] still continue to think that some parts of it are good to think and good for thinking" (Godelier 1997:4). Equally important, French

anthropologists distinguish between "Derrida, Lacan, Ricoeur and Heidegger; we use Foucault, Derrida, Bourdieu, Lyotard, if they are useful". While Godelier is clearly unimpressed by Derrida's recent discussions of gift giving and the work of Mauss, he nevertheless acknowledges deconstruction in principle as a constructive intellectual enterprise and praises Derrida for having "produced some admirable work". Nowhere, however, does he acknowledge anything called post-structuralism—as for most French veterans of 1950s-70s structuralism, the addition of the prefix 'post' would seem to be nonsense.

Despite their differences, these three anthropological commentators produce something like a consistent triangulation of viewpoints on the problematic relationship between anthropology and deconstruction. Several of their arguments and themes can be reformulated as working propositions: first, that possibly more than any other social science, anthropology has resisted engagement with deconstruction; second, that the inherent empiricism and subjectivism of ethnographic practice has been a significant factor in this pattern of avoidance and exclusion; third, that postmodern anthropology's efforts at pursuing a deconstructive ethnography have been largely unproductive; and fourth, that contemporary anthropology— perhaps, deconstruction itself—must benefit from a cautious, critical engagement between anthropology and deconstruction.

How, then, might such an engagement be initiated? My approach, which might tentatively be called epistemographic, is to dig back into deconstruction's own archives, to its effective beginnings in the period 1965-67. I am concerned specifically with two of Derrida's early essays, where he engages directly with the work of the structural anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss. Without a doubt, these essays are amongst the most influential and debated of Derrida's total oeuvre: "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" is credited frequently with having introduced deconstructionist thinking into the United States and, thus, to the world at large; "The Violence of the Letter: From Lévi-Strauss to Rousseau" is regarded as both a classic statement on 'writing' and amongst the finest expositions of deconstructive practice. The following

discussion therefore might be more accurately described as a re-engagement between anthropology and deconstruction.

> In fact one can assume that ethnology could have been born only at the moment when a decentering had come about: at the moment when European culture - and, in consequence, the history of metaphysics and of its concepts - had been *dislocated*, driven from its locus, and forced to stop considering itself as the culture of reference. This moment is not first and foremost a moment of philosophical or scientific discourse. One can say with total security that there is nothing fortuitous about the fact that the critique of ethnocentrism - the very condition for ethnology - should be systematically and historically contemporaneous with the destruction of the history of metaphysics. Both belong to one and the same era. [Derrida 1978:282]

North American and other English-speaking deconstructionists frequently claim that deconstruction originated at an international colloquium on "Critical Language and the Sciences of Man", held in late 1966 at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. A feature of the event was the presence of a contingent of French scholars, assumed by their hosts to be structuralists or at least familiar with structuralism, which included Barthes, Lacan, and Derrida—the latter, in particular, still being quite 'unknown' in America. Derrida's paper, "*La Structure, le Signe, et le Jeu dans le Discours des Sciences Humaines*", emerged as an unexpected highlight of the conference. When translated into English and published in the 1967 conference proceedings, it provided the theoretical basis in the United States for 'deconstructionism'—and, in some versions of the narrative, for example, Wolin (1995:195), for 'poststructuralism', 'postmodernism', and even 'cultural studies'.

The opening part of "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" hones in on the concept of 'structure'. It is, we are told, as old as the Western *episteme*, Western science and Western philosophy, though with its roots also deep in ordinary language. This idea of structure has

traditionally been neutralized by a process of centering, by referring it to a point of presence or fixed origin; the function of this center has been to orient, balance, organize the structure, and, especially, to limit its 'play'. At the center there can be no substitution of contents, elements, or terms, no transformations. But while the center governs the structure, it also escapes structurality, such that the center is both inside and outside the structure, the totality having its center elsewhere; thus, the center is not really the center, 'structure' being thought of as a series of substitutions, as the center successively and in regulated fashion receives different forms or names. The history of metaphysics is thus the history of those metaphors and metonymies: at its matrix is the idea of Being-as-presence, in all its diverse senses - *eidos, arche, telos, energia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject), transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, etc. But, continues Derrida, an 'event', the exterior form of which is a 'rupture' or a 'redoubling', seems to have occurred in the history of the concept of 'structure'. This came about when the 'structurality of structure' began to be thought, and likewise the idea of no centre, no natural site, no fixed locus: a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign substitutions come into play, where language invades, where everything became discourse. This radical 'decentering' is part of the totality of our era rather than being attributable to a specific event, doctrine, or author. Nevertheless, several 'names' do warrant mention: Nietzsche for his critique of metaphysics, truth, and Being; Freud for his critique of self-presence, consciousness, the subject, and self-identity; and, most radically, Heidegger for his destruction of metaphysics, onto-theology, and Being-as-presence. But, too, there is no language, no proposition that does not use the form, the logic, and implicit postulations of what it seeks to contest; thus, even Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger worked within the inherited concepts of metaphysics.

The human sciences are tied intrinsically to both the language and concepts of metaphysics and to the above-mentioned 'event'. Derrida's reference to the 'privileged place' of ethnology reflects the dominant position of the discipline, in the form of Lévi-Strauss's structuralism, amongst the human sciences

in 1960s France. But it clearly, also, relates to his perception of a broader *dislocation* of European culture—encouraged, no doubt, by the tragedy of two recent Europe-initiated 'World' Wars, the horror of Nazi genocide, the division of Europe into 'Western' and 'Communist' blocs; the assumption of world leadership by the United States and the Soviet Union, the collapse of Europe's colonial empires, and the immigration into Europe of millions of Third World peoples. His privileging of anthropology is thus as much about changing global economic, political, and social circumstances, as it is a purely intellectual, or even 'Western', event. Nor is it coincidental that the critique of racism and Euro-centrism, which Derrida characterizes as the very *raison d'être* of modern anthropology, should coincide with the critique of Western metaphysics. They are, he insists, entwined unavoidably.

As with any other science, Derrida continues, anthropology's existence is fundamentally discursive; and, no matter how much anthropology may resent the fact, its discourse is Western in derivation. Unavoidably, therefore, anthropology accepts into its discourse the 'premises of ethnocentrism' at the same moment that it denounces it. No individual anthropologist is responsible for this contagion; but, equally, there are different ways of dealing with it. Or, in Derrida's words:

> The quality and fecundity of a discourse are perhaps measured by the critical rigor with which this relation to the history of metaphysics and to inherited concepts is thought. Here it is a question both of a critical relation to the language of the social sciences and a critical responsibility of the discourse itself. It is a question of explicitly and systematically posing the problem of the status of a discourse which borrows from a heritage the resources necessary for the *deconstruction* [my italics] of that discourse itself. [Derrida 1978:252]

It is only at this point that Derrida turns to, 'as an example, the texts of Claude Lévi-Strauss. His reason for doing so, he says, is not only because of the privilege accorded to ethnology among the human sciences, nor even because "the thought of Lévi-

Strauss weighs [so] heavily on the contemporary theoretical situation" (*ibid*.: passim). Rather, it is more because Lévi-Strauss's work declares a certain choice and elabourates a certain doctrine, in a more or less explicit manner. Indeed, Lévi-Strauss's writings are exemplary in that they reflect a clear and critical relation to contemporary anthropological and social science discourse, to the extent that have effectively already initiated their own deconstruction.

Derrida then proceeds to follow this movement via various guiding threads in Lévi-Strauss's work, beginning with "the opposition between nature and culture" (*ibid*). This opposition, which Derrida notes "is congenital to philosophy ... and even older than Plato" (*ibid*), is initially employed in *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949) in this largely 'traditional' way. Almost from the start of that work, Lévi-Strauss was grappling with what he called the 'scandal' of the incest prohibition, which as both universal prohibition and social norm combined together the supposedly exclusive categories of nature and culture. While Derrida is clearly of the view that Lévi-Strauss did not pursue as far as he might have the philosophical dimensions of this particular overlay of contradictions, there can be no doubt that he was in awe of the overall scope and achievements of this aspect of the anthropologist's work. At the same time, as he trawls the philosophical depths of most of Lévi-Strauss's major texts, Derrida hones in on what he sees as their shortfalls: an inability to break definitively with empiricism; a problematic opposition between 'engineer' and '*bricoleur*'; an uncritical anti-historicism; a romantic nostalgia for Neolithic humanity; an unresolved tension between 'presence' and 'play'.

A fundamental even-handedness is likewise apparent in the last page of "Structure, Sign, and Play" when Derrida contrasts two modes of interpretation in the human sciences: one 'retrospective', which attempts to reconstruct an original meaning or truth, and to which he says Lévi-Strauss is still attached; and the other 'prospective', which welcomes explicitly the indeterminacy of meaning, and to which Nietzsche pointed the way. These two interpretations of interpretation, Derrida insists,

together share the field called "in such a problematic fashion, the social sciences". While their absolute irreconcilability must always be acknowledged and accentuated, it is definitely not a question of choosing between them. The task, rather, is to "try to conceive of [*their*] common ground, and the *différance* of [*their*] irreducible difference" (Derrida 1978:252 [his italics]).

But, despite such careful wording, many readers of "Structure, Sign, and Play" appear to have misconstrued Derrida's concluding message. In the words of Jonathon Culler: "though he says we are not able to choose between these alternatives, he was widely understood as opting for the second and was thus viewed as an apostle of 'free play'" (Culler 1979:158; see also Hobson 1998:25). A possible explanation for the prevalence of this privileging of the 'Nietzcheian' and denigration of the 'Lévi-Straussian' perspective is provided by Richard Rorty when he argues that Paul de Man and the 'Yale School' never really abandoned their prior existentialist leanings (Rorty 1995:166), so that—by implication—their 'reading' of this essay may not have been as Derrida 'intended' it. On the other hand, this kind of reading was never just a North American phenomenon, as the Italian semiotician, Umberto Eco showed when he claimed (1973:373-76) that by opposing the Nietzcheian thematic of 'man without origin' to the Lévi-Straussian 'ontology of presence', Derrida had in fact "demolished ... definitively liquidated ... structuralism".

More recently, however, the Belgian philosopher, Edouard Delruelle has excavated a quite different "Structure, Sign, and Play". In his opinion, Derrida's notion of 'play' was derived largely from Lévi-Strauss, and there are strong parallels between 'deconstruction' and the Lévi-Straussian concept of 'bricolage'.

> Derridean '*différance*' is indissociable from the *rupture* that unexpectedly fractured Western intellectual history through a multiplication of signs of absence, at the heart of our most assured modes of thought, of any 'transcendental signified'. Ethnology, in this context, is quickly perceived as one of the strongest forces of *decentering*. Was it not born at the moment where European culture 'was *dislocated*, chased

from its place, thus ceasing to be considered the culture of reference'? Derrida, like Foucault, underlined the critical aperture it provided, especially for accounts of the engagement between Western thinking and primitive societies. Lévi-Straussian analysis of mythological activity, in particular, seems symptomatic of this research, made possible by ethnographic distance, of a kind of discourse free of 'all reference to a *center*, to a *subject*, to a privileged *referent*, to an origin or to an absolute beginning' … thus making Lévi-Strauss from the start one of the most conspicuous figures of this contemporary 'era of suspicion'. In this respect, Derrida shows, Lévi-Strauss resorted to an authentic logic of play. [Delruell 1989:111-12 (author's translation)]

However, rather than confront the parallels between his own work and structuralist discourse, Derrida resorted to the argument that Lévi-Strauss's oeuvre reveals certain metaphysical presuppositions linking back to the eighteenth century, especially to Rousseau. Derrida is quite wrong on this score, Delruelle believes. The gap between Rousseauist and structuralist discourse is more discontinuous than continuous, being marked in fact by a kind of 'epistemological break'. But since Derrida's other major commentary on contemporary anthropology took the form of a more substantial analysis of the alleged 'Rousseauist' aspect of Lévi-Strauss's work, it is to this essay that we now turn.

Nevertheless, the effacement of the frontier between nature and culture is not produced, from [*Elementary Structures of Kinship*] to *The Savage Mind*, by the same gesture. In the first case, it is a question rather of respecting the originality of a scandalous suture. In the second case, of a reduction, however careful it might be to not 'dissolve' the specificity of what it analyses…. At once conserving and annulling inherited conceptual oppositions, this thought [Lévi-Strauss's] thus stands, like Saussure's, on the borderline: sometimes within an uncritical conceptuality, sometimes pressing on its boundaries and working towards

deconstruction [my emphasis]. [Derrida 1966:4 (this author's translation)]

An authoritative history of structuralism published recently in Paris (Dosse 1997) described the early-to-middle 1960s as 'La Belle Époque' of French structuralism. Sartrean existentialism, phenomenology, and philosophical humanism, having come to dominance in the wake of World War II, were finally in retreat; the human sciences, albeit with a distinctly anthropological flavor, were for the first time on an institutional par with the humanities and the natural sciences; and 'structuralist' thinkers like Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan, Foucault, and Althusser were celebrated as the great intellectuals of the day. But, the same history tells us, if 1966 saw structuralism reach its *apogee*, the following year marked the beginning of '*Le Chant du Cygne*' , its swansong. And, the most important player in this dramatic turn of events was the 'ultra-structuralist' philosopher, Jacques Derrida, then a young lecturer at *École Normale Supérieure*, who in 1967 oversaw the publication of three very influential books.

In late 1966, *Les Cahiers pour l'Analyse,* an occasional publication of the *École Normale Supérieure* -based '*Circle d'Epistémologie*', of a decidedly Althusserian/Lacanian hue, produced an issue subtitled "*Lévi-Strauss dans le Dix-Huitième Siècle*". The lead article was an essay by Derrida called "*Nature, Culture, Ecriture: La violence de la lettre de Lévi-Strauss à Rousseau*". A footnote said that the essay was based on lectures presented during the 1965-66 academic year in the course '*Ecriture et Civilisation*', and that a theoretical introduction to the latter had recently appeared as "*De la Grammatologie*" in the Paris journal *Critique* (see Derrida 1965). *De la Grammatologie* became subsequently the title of the last published of Derrida's three 1967 books. Its second half, headed "*Nature, Culture, Ecriture*", had as its opening chapter "*La violence de la lettre: de Lévi-Strauss a Rousseau*". Within the space of a year, therefore, this essay had two separate high-profile publications in France.

Perhaps more than any other of Derrida's early essays, "The Violence of the Letter" had a rocky—dare I say 'violent'—

reception in French intellectual circles. Most prominent amongst the critics was Lévi-Strauss himself, in a letter subsequently published in a 1967 issue of *Cahiers pour l'Analyse*. In very wounded tone, he accuses Derrida of having dissected *Tristes Tropiques* "with the delicacy of a bear": the text was never meant to be read other than as "the musings of an ethnographer in the field", and thus should not have been exposed to such intensive philosophical analysis. In his own work, Lévi-Strauss argues, "philosophical considerations are no more than improvised pedestals on which to display 'precious objects' such as 'a way of life, an institution, a belief, a set of representations". He likewise insists, contrary to Derrida, that he never represented the Nambikwara as anything other than both good and bad, that their perfidy is patently not all due to the introduction of writing, and that at no time has he ever suggested there is now or has been anywhere such a thing as a society free of oppression. By way of parting shots, Lévi-Strauss reserves for himself—as for "certain painters and musicians"—the right to employ various styles between and within his different books, and refuses Derrida's "sly question" as to "whether the anthropologist wants to be engineer or *bricoleur*!" [this author's translation].

Several non-French commentators appear to agree with Lévi-Strauss. The American anthropologist James Boon, for example, dismissed Derrida's charge that the reflections on 'writing' in *Tristes Tropiques* were 'naive' with the counterclaim that Derrida himself was naive for not realizing that the 'writing lesson' as described by Lévi-Strauss was no more than "a hackneyed philosophical chestnut resorted to by the narrator to fight insomnia" (Boon 1990:210). The literary critic, Jonathon Culler, meanwhile, proposed that "Derrida's own tone seems to vary: Husserl, Heidegger, Hegel, and Saussure are treated with more respect than Rousseau and Lévi-Strauss, whose 'blind spots' are noted in a language that is often disparaging" (Culler 1979:173). In her in English-language translation of *De la Grammatologie*, meanwhile, Gayatri Spivak in a generally approving tone describes "The Violence of the Letter" as:

... The only genuinely polemical and, perhaps, the least formally awkward section of the book. He takes Lévi-Strauss to task for slackness of method, for sentimental ethnocentrism, for an oversimplified reading of Rousseau. He criticizes Lévi-Strauss for conceiving of writing only in the narrow sense, and for seeing it as a scapegoat for all the exploitative evils of 'civilization', and for conceiving of the Nambikiwara as an innocent community 'without writing'. [Spivak 1976:xxxiii]

Derrida, for his part, perhaps sensitive to the angry response of Lévi-Strauss and others to the 1966 publication of "The Violence of the Letter", in an introduction to the essay as it appeared in *De la Grammatologie* the following year reaffirmed both his admiration for and separation from the Lévi-Strauss's work:

If I have chosen the example of the texts of Claude Lévi-Strauss, as points of departure and as a springboard for a reading of Rousseau, it is for more than one reason ... [it is] for the theoretical wealth and interest of those texts, for the animating role that they currently play, but also for the place occupied in them by the theory of writing and the theme of fidelity to Rousseau. They will, therefore, in this study, be somewhat more than an exergue. [Derrida 1976:100]

But perhaps the last word on this matter should be left to Christopher Johnson, one of the few scholars to be familiar with the texts of both Lévi-Strauss and Derrida, especially those associated with "The Violence of the Letter". For him, Lévi-Strauss is an indisputably major figure on the post-War French intellectual scene, dominating both the reconstituted discipline of anthropology and the new interdisciplinary field of the *Sciences Humaines* (Johnson 1997a:123). As precisely 'sciences' of the human, the human sciences claimed to have gone beyond the metaphysical preoccupations of traditional philosophy, and to have replaced them with a more concrete and scientific

perspective on the totality of human experience. Sartrean existentialism, which had dominated intellectual debate in France since the war, suddenly appeared outdated and lacking. Lévi-Strauss himself attacked the subjectivist basis of existentialism, and criticized the ethnocentrism of a philosophy whose conception of the individual subject was culture-specific and, thus, far from the achieving the universality it claimed (Johnson 1997b:6-7).

Given this context, Johnson argues, Derrida's reading of *Tristes Tropiques* must be seen as a "necessary and important intervention in the debate which developed around structuralism in the 1960s". The only surprise was that he focused not on that work's theoretical discussions, but rather on its autobiographical and ethnographic aspects. In particular, Johnson continues, Derrida rejected the argument—which he attributes to Lévi-Strauss—that writing, difference, and violence came to the Nambikwara from the outside, as a result of contact with Europeans and the modern world. Derrida's counter-argument is that writing, difference, and violence are not something that suddenly 'happen' to a previously pure and intact system; rather, they are 'always already' there, at the origin, from the origin, which means, in effect, that there is no pure 'origin' (Johnson 1997b:41).

Johnson likewise reminds us that Derrida's focus on 'writing', and particularly his shift from an everyday understanding of the word to one of 'writing-in-general', reflects and is part of "a more general revolution in modern thought". This revolution began, according to Derrida, with Lévi-Straussian structuralism's adaptation of a model of difference derived from linguistics, such that the term 'language' referred not only to verbal communication but to any complex system, and eventually even to phenomena such as action, movement, thought, reflection, consciousness, unconsciousness, and experience. More recently, Johnson reports by way of summarizing Derrida's argument, the scriptural model has begun to replace the linguistic, the term 'writing' replacing 'language'. But these shifts are not simply developments internal to philosophy and the human sciences: they are an integral dimension of the great

advances of postwar science, especially in the newer disciplines like molecular biology, information theory, and cybernetics. Significantly, too, in his theoretical introduction to *De la Grammatologie*, Derrida claims to find support for his theory of 'writing' in the work of the eminent French palaeo-anthropologist, André Leroi-Gourhan, especially in his 1964 book *Le Geste et la Parole* (Johnson 1967b:44-47).

> To deconstruct is a structuralist and anti-structuralist gesture at the same time: an edification, an artifact is taken apart in order to make the structures, the nerves, or as you say the skeleton appear, but also, simultaneously, the ruinous precariousness of a formal structure that explained nothing, since it is neither a center, a principle, a force, nor even the law of events.... Deconstruction as such is reducible to neither a method nor an analysis (the reduction to simple elements); it goes beyond critical decision itself. That is why it is not negative, even though it has often been interpreted as such despite all sorts of warnings. For me, it always accompanies an affirmative exigency, I would even say that it never proceeds without love... [Derrida 1995:83]

Lévi-Strauss for Beginners, a generally excellent popular introduction to the great anthropologist and his work published recently, draws to an end with the comment that Derrida's essay, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences" was "a confrontation with Lévi-Strauss ... one of the founding texts of postmodern thought which marks the point where the break with structuralism occurred" (Wiseman and Groves 1997:172). The text goes on to claim that whereas Derrida's purpose is "to 'deconstruct' the edifices of the past (metaphysics, nature, language), Lévi-Strauss is a builder like the mytho-poetic *bricoleur* of his own invention". Captions, super-imposed over a photograph of the interviewer talking to an aged but alert Lévi-Strauss, complete the narrative:

Interviewer: Do you accept the criticism that Derrida has leveled at you?

Lévi-Strauss: I must confess I haven't read him closely. He and I do not at all have the same way of writing. I find him difficult to follow.
[Wiseman and Groves 1997:172]

Derrida, meanwhile, in a recent interview on the subject of his relations with his teacher and colleague, Louis Althusser, described the isolation he felt within the *École Normale Supérieure* and the wider Parisian intellectual scene around the time he published the essays in question:

Where it had any, that period's diplomacy (war by other means) was that of avoidance: silence, one doesn't cite or name, everyone distinguishes himself and everything forms a sort of archipelago of discourse without earthly communication, without visible passageways. Today the sea between these archipelagos should be reconstituted. In appearance, no one communicated. No one was translated. From time to time, there were, from afar, signals in the night: Althusser hailing Lacan or hailing Foucault who had hailed Lacan who hailed Lévi-Strauss. There I was, the new kid—in a certain sense it wasn't my generation.... Never, between Althusser and me, for example, was there any publicly declared hostility. There was publicly declared hostility against me on the part of so many others ... Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Foucault later … there was never any attack upon what I was doing, rather avoidance. [Derrida 1993:194]

A third of a century after their only tangible encounter, it seems relations have hardly improved between the intellectual instigators of structural anthropology and deconstruction. Perhaps an earlier hostility has given way to simple avoidance, but the essential distance separating them remains the same. The only way beyond this bind, perhaps, is for Derrida to be taken at

his word: the sea between these archipelagos must be reconstituted; deconstruction must be re-imagined as simultaneously structuralist and anti-structuralist, as affirmative, even as never proceeding without love. "Structure, Sign and Play" and "The Violence of the Letter", in particular, must be re-read—with love, in affirmation, as neither for nor against, as crucial early efforts to bridge the gap between structuralism and the then-unnamable archipelago to which it was, and very much still is, discursively linked.

The space between deconstruction and anthropology should be explored, their alterity welcomed, *différance* pursued. Deconstructive strategies must be put to work in ethnographic contexts, to bring into play an anthropology capable of radically reinterpreting the cultural interfaces, social asymmetries, ethical dilemmas, and actual events that mark the contemporary world. Such strategies, to quote the philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, provide:

> A way of rethinking our common conceptions of politics and struggle, power and resistance, by insisting that no system, method, or discourse can be as all encompassing, singular, and monolithic as it represents itself. Each is inherently open to its own undoing, its own deconstruction ... deconstruction is not imposed from outside a discourse or tradition but emerges from that discourse's own inner dynamics.... It is for this reason that, rather than being construed as a system of critique, of destruction, Derrida insists over and over that deconstruction must be understood as a mode of affirmation, indeed as a mode of double affirmation. [Grosz 1995:61]

At the same time, the deconstructive encounter with anthropological epistemology, launched so dramatically by Derrida in 1965-67, and somewhat inchoately re-launched by a phenomenologically-inspired postmodern anthropology in the mid-1980s, must again become part of the equation. Deconstruction alone seems to promise the possibility of an anthropology of anthropology; ironically, it may also be

anthropology, more than any other intellectual discipline or tradition, that defines deconstruction's own limits, that points the way to a deconstruction of deconstruction. For, as Derrida has emphasized frequently, deconstruction's ultimate focus and reference must always be Western metaphysics, which itself is linked inherently to the culture and mythology of 'the West':

> What is metaphysics? – a white mythology which assumes and reflects Western culture: the white man takes his own mythology (Indo-European mythology), his logos - that is, the mythos of his idiom, for the universal form of that which it is still his inescapable desire to call Reason.… White mythology, a metaphysics which has effaced in itself that fabulous science which brought it into being, and which yet remains, active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible drawing, covered over in the palimpsest. [Derrida 1974:69]

Comments such as this have caused some to argue that Derrida's thought has strong affinities with a much older interpretive tradition, itself associated closely with Jewish *pilpul* and Talmudic scholarship generally. One commentator has even linked Freud, Derrida, and Lévi-Strauss together as leading modern representatives of an Hebraic-Rabbinic 'school' of thought that exists—albeit contradictorily—'outside' of and 'other' to the dominant Greco-Christian tradition. Thus, while Freud and Derrida probe for "an original language, the concrete meaning behind the abstract concept, or dream image, or narrative", Lévi-Strauss pursues "the savage mind ... a language, logic, and set of meanings which the tradition of Western thought has covered over" (Handelman 1982:18-19).

Of course, such a line of reasoning raises more questions than it answers. Here it will simply prompt us to recall that the primary object of conventional modernist anthropology is everything that is not 'Western', especially in as much as it relates to 'non-literate' cultures and societies. But, as was argued by Derrida in his commentary on Lévi-Strauss's work, such a privileging of 'non-West' over 'West' and of 'orality' over

'writing' implies a discipline that simultaneously both undermines and reproduces ethnocentrism. Perhaps it is now time for anthropology to accept the general validity of this observation; and, perhaps, deconstruction might reciprocate by acknowledging its own still largely unrecognized specter, its own binaristic conceptual hierarchy, specifically, its privileging of 'West' over 'non-West'. Such a problematrix intrinsically threatens neither anthropology nor deconstruction: rather, it points the way to a still unrealized promise, to the acceptance and return of a gift, to the mutual recognition of an other's alterity: that is, to a genuinely deconstructive anthropology, or, in other words, to anthropological *différance*.

Bibliography

Boon, James
    1990   *Affinities and Extremes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, eds.
    1986 *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Culler, Jonathon
    1979 Jacques Derrida. In *Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida.* John Sturrock, ed. Pp. 154-180. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Delruelle, Edouard
    1989   *Claude Lévi-Strauss et la Philosophie*. Editions Universitaires. Bruxelles: De Boeck Université.

Derrida, Jacques
    1965   "De la Grammatologie". *Critique*, no. 223 (December):1016-1042.

1966   "Nature, Culture, Ecriture: La violence de la lettre de Lévi-Strauss à Rousseau". *Cahiers Pour l'Analyse* 4 (Sept.-Oct.):1-46.

1967a   *L'Écriture et la Différance*. In *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass. Paris: *Editions du Seuil*. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978]

1967b *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit. [trans. Gayatri Spivak, 1976, *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press]

1974   "White Mythology", *New Literary History* (6):69.

1993   Politics and Friendship: An Interview with Jacques Derrida. In *The Althusserian Legacy.* E. Ann Kaplan and Michael Springer, eds. Pp. 183-231, London: Verso.

1994   "The Deconstruction of Actuality: An Interview with Jacques Derrida". *Radical Philosophy* 68 (Autumn):28-41.

1995   *Points... Interviews, 1974-1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Dosse, Francois
1997 *History of Structuralism. Volume I: The Rising Sign, 1945-1966*, trans. Deborah Glassman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Eco, Umberto
1973 *La Structure Absente*. Paris: *Mercure de France*.

Godelier, Maurice
1997   "American Anthropology as Seen from France". *Anthropology Today* 13 (1):3-5.

Grosz, Elizabeth

1995 *Space, Time and Perversion: The Politics of Bodies*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Handelman, Susan A.
1982 *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory.* Albany: SUNY Press.

Hobson, Marian
1998 *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines*. London: Routledge.

Johnson, Christopher
1997a "Anthropology and the *Sciences Humaines*: the voice of Lévi-Strauss". *History of the Human Sciences* 10 (3):122-133.

1997b *Derrida: The Scene of Writing*. London: Phoenix.

Kirby, Vicki
1989 "Capitalizing Difference: Feminism and Anthropology". *Australian Feminist Studies* 9 (Autumn).

Lévi-Strauss, Claude
1949 *Les Structures Élémentaires de la Parenté,* Presses. Paris: Universitaires de France. [1956 trans. R. Needham, *The Elementary Systems of Kinship*. London: Verso]

1955 *Tristes Tropiques*. Paris: Plon. [1973, trans. J. Weightman, *Tristes Tropiques*, London: Cape]

1962 *Le Pensée Sauvage*. Paris: Plon. [1966 trans. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press]

1967 "A propos de 'Lévi-Strauss dans le XVIIIe Siecle'". *Cahiers Pour l'Analyse* (8):89-90.

Lucy, Niall
1995 *Debating Derrida.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Marcus, George E. and Michael Fischer
    1986   *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Moore, Henrietta
    1994 Gendered Persons: Dialogues between Anthropology and Psychoanalysis. In *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis: An Encounter through Culture*. S. Heald and A. Deluz, eds. Pp. 131-145. London: Routledge.

Rorty, Richard
    1995 Deconstruction. In *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Volume 8: From Formalism to Post-structuralism*. Roman Selden, ed. Pp. 166-196. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri
    1976   Introduction. In Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Tyler, Stephen
    1987 *The Unspeakable: Discourse, Dialogue, and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Wiseman, Boris and Judy Groves
    1997 *Lévi-Strauss for Beginners*. Cambridge: Icon.

Wolin, Richard
    1995 *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Acknowledgements

Comment

Postmodernism – The Nature/Culture Debate in Just Another Guise?

Maurice Bloch *(with Mark Maguire, LSB College)*
Professor of Anthropology
London School of Economics and Political Science

I know what anthropology is. I come across it, for example, while doing fieldwork in a Zafimaniry house between the Betsileo and Tanala areas southeast of Ambositra, Madagascar. On one fairly typical evening we were talking about the differences in vocabulary of different dialect groups and different funeral customs of, for example, Indians and Malagasy. But then we moved on to more general theoretical issues: whether we were descended from the same ancestors and if we were, how it could have come about that we had such different languages and customs? We discussed whether children of Malagasy who lived in France are true Malagasy and whether they would want their bodies to be brought back to their tombs; whether it is natural for men to want to have several wives or is that simply the product of custom; and, whether all humans love their kinsmen equally, and so on. What we were talking about was, of course, anthropology.

Clearly Morgan, Tylor, Levi-Strauss, Geertz, Boas and myself have all engaged in anthropology in this sense. I don't say 'are anthropologists' specifically because I would then have to include Durkheim and Bourdieu, Piaget and Chomsky, Aristotle and Pascal, Milton Friedman and Mandeville, Darwin and E.O. Wilson, and probably everybody who has ever lived. I am not sure if I am pleased to be involved in an enterprise of such central concern or if I might not like a bit more exclusivity. But, I am comfortable with anthropology understood in this way. I say all this because it is my comfort with this understanding of

anthropology that underscores my view of postmodern anthropology. In short, I am beginning to feel a decided dis-ease with the current postmodernist 'turn' because it seems concerned primarily with what anthropology *should* be. This stated aim is clearly off-putting to one such as myself who, quite simply, does not see it as a central issue. Perhaps this has something to do with why I am not really sure I know what all the fuss is about.

When I listen to people talking about postmodernism one fact seems clear: it is a kind of enterprise that involves reference to a set of authors nearly all of whom are of the French intellectual tradition or, at the very least, are French, like me. Foucault, Derrida, Ricoeur, Cixous, Lyotard and, perhaps, Bourdieu. Celebrating discontinuity is one thing, but it is very difficult to find much that these different authors have in common. They, on the whole, are or were convinced that they have nothing in common, and display towards each other the kind of exclusive cliquishness that characterizes French intellectuals. What they have in common is that they are French, but then so is Gerard Depardieu and he is not usually included.

But if I'm not sure I know what the fuss over postmodernism is about—something I share with quite a lot of people—I should be better positioned to make a stab at postmodern anthropology. But there I run up against another problem: what is meant by 'anthropology' in this type of discussion? It's an acute problem because many of the writers who lay claim to the title 'postmodernist anthropologist' seem to be clear that they are talking about a thing which exits out there, since they are very keen to reform it, to transform it and to purify it of various turpitudes. The problem is that they cannot be using the word in the way that I was using it when I was talking of the Zafimaniry. One cannot reform a topic of discussion or inquiry or punish it for being in league with colonialism, for instance. So they must be talking of something quite different. Perhaps when anthropology is discussed as if it were a thing out there what is actually under discussion is the academic institutions of anthropology departments and associations. But, there is yet more difficulty in understanding anthropology in this way, as one has to ask which academic institutions?

Anthropology, as a label for a discipline, is simply not the same thing in different countries and its relation to anthropology, in the Zafimaniry sense, is extremely varied. Anthropology understood in the university department sense is particularly problematic because there are usually other disciplines, perhaps on the same corridor or in the same university building, which also 'do anthropology' in the Zafimaniry sense.

For example, the question of whether anthropology should concern itself with industrialized societies or historical societies is not a great issue with universal moral and political significance, but it is a local university organization issue. So is the question about whether anthropology should develop general propositions about humans or should merely be a collection of ethnographic stories. It might be that in a particular university the job of developing general propositions is done in departments with other names than anthropology, while the anthropologists merely tell stories about here and there. Thus, it is matter of the division of labour within an institution. But, the division of labour has also methodological and theoretical implications.

If one takes, by way of a general example, the case of cultural anthropology as it has manifested itself in the United States, it becomes possible to see a particular division of labour and form an opinion as to whether it has been fruitful or not. I want to make the argument that the composition of American departments (usually four fields, with biological and cultural anthropology within the same department) has encouraged a kind of 'nature/culture ping pong'. This may also go some way towards offering an explanation as to why postmodernist anthropology (on the culture side of the table) took root quickly in and had the greatest effect on American academia. This Ping-Pong stands in direct opposition to the form of anthropology I have termed Zafimaniry, and by uncritically accepting and incorporating methodological and theoretical elements of postmodernist anthropology we are also inviting the reopening of the old nature/culture divide.

Many would accept that anthropology in the United States has swung alternately between emphasis on either nature or culture. If we understand this Ping-Pong in the following way: if

it is universal it is natural; if it is variable it is cultural, one may see anthropologists facing each other on opposing sides throughout the history of the discipline, from Morgan and Boas all the way to Geertz and Schneider. In this environment postmodernist anthropology took root. Suspicious of meta-narratives and the unitary nature of cultures, it seems paradoxically to simplify the persistent problem of nature/culture.

But, there is a further complication to this story: the gradual domination of ethnography in anthropology. Rather than being an often-effective servant of the anthropological enterprise, ethnography seems now to be master, at least in the minds of postmodernists. The unfortunate consequence of this methodological apotheosis is the abandonment of questions characteristic to anthropology, in the Zafimaniry sense. And, while the rejection of meta-narratives is an issue of concern for postmodernists, the narrative versions of Marxism or enlightenment discourse that the French writers were reacting against have little to do with the questions that compose Zafimaniry anthropology.

While the postmodernists argue over meta-narratives in the university departments, the Zafimaniry questions *remain* for the Zafimaniry and everybody else. We as human beings are concerned with the general questions of anthropology. So if the effect of postmodernism is that anthropologists are declaring that they have nothing to tell us except how they want to reform university anthropology departments (a topic of no interest to Zafimaniry anthropologists) and how they don't know anything about human beings in general—why listen? But if we find people who do have something to say we will pay attention to them—the prospect is that they may not be members of anthropology departments.

For some time now others, outside of the anthropology departments, have been doing Zafimaniry anthropology: biologists, evolutionary psychologists and philosophers, to name but a few, are engaged in an anthropological enterprise that the postmodernists seem too preoccupied to do. But the idea that anthropology in the Zafimaniry sense should be done in

anthropology departments has the very obvious advantage of experience. There is a long academic history in which rich knowledge has been accumulated and methods refined. Those outside the anthropology departments simply do not have this history. And, one effect of postmodernist anthropology is that with the abandonment of the questions of Zafimaniry anthropology those looking for anthropological insights have turned to others elsewhere and are not getting access to anthropology as it could and should be.

I am comfortable with what anthropology is and, as an anthropologist, I ask fundamental questions that seek to understand and attempt to explain both commonalities and differences. These are the questions of Zafimaniry anthropology, questions of interest to the Zafimaniry, people in anthropology departments and people looking for anthropological insights outside of academic institutions. I wonder would postmodernist anthropologists have anything to say in the conversations taking place in Zafimaniry houses?

Second Call for papers for an inter-disciplinary conference

Writing the City:
Urban Life in the Era of Globalisation

Second Abstracts deadline: 01 June 2001
The conference will take place in LSB College, Dublin
(an affiliate of Dublin Business School)
Balfe Street, Dublin 2, Ireland
24-27 August 2001

Keynote Speakers include Edward W. Soja,
Immanuel Wallerstein, Gaytari Spivak
and Declan Kiberd

For further information or to send abstracts,
please contact Mark Maguire or Paul Hollywood,
LSB College, Balfe Street, Dublin 2,
Republic of Ireland,
Phone: +353 – 1 – 6485485
or Email: MMaguire@Ireland.com