

Writing Culture

The Poetics and Politics
of Ethnography

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Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology

Beyond Epistemology

In his influential book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), Richard Rorty argues that epistemology as the study of mental representations arose in a particular historical epoch, the seventeenth century; developed in a specific society, that of Europe; and eventually triumphed in philosophy by being closely linked to the professional claims of one group, nineteenth-century German professors of philosophy. For Rorty, this turn was not a fortuitous one: "The desire for a theory of knowledge is a desire for constraint—a desire to find 'foundations' to which one might cling, frameworks beyond which one must not stray, objects which impose themselves, representations which cannot be gainsaid" (315). Radicalizing Thomas Kuhn, Rorty portrays our obsession with epistemology as an accidental, but eventually sterile, turning in Western culture.

Pragmatic and American, Rorty's book has a moral: modern professional philosophy represents the "triumph of the quest for certainty over the quest for reason" (61). The chief culprit in this melodrama is Western philosophy's concern with epistemology, the equation of knowledge with internal representations and the correct evaluation of those representations. Let me briefly outline Rorty's argument, add some important specifications by Ian Hacking, then claim that Michel Foucault has developed a position that enables us to supplement Rorty in important ways. In the rest of the paper I explore some ways in which these lines of thought are relevant to discourses about the other. Specifically, in the second section I discuss recent debates about the making of ethnographic texts; in the third section, some differences between feminist anthropology and anthropological feminism; and, finally, in the fourth section, I put forward one line of research, my own.

Philosophers, Rorty argues, have crowned their discipline the queen of the sciences. This coronation rests on their claim to be the specialists on universal problems and their ability to provide us with a sure foundation for all knowledge. Philosophy's realm is the mind; its privileged insights establish its claim to be the discipline that judges all other disciplines. This conception of philosophy is, however, a recent historical development. For the Greeks there was no sharp division between external reality and internal representations. Unlike Aristotle, Descartes's conception of knowing rests on having correct representations in an internal space, the mind. Rorty makes the point by saying: "The novelty was the notion of a single inner space in which bodily and perceptual sensations (confused ideas of sense and imagination in Descartes's phrase), mathematical truths, moral rules, the idea of God, moods of depression, and all the rest of what we now call 'mental' were objects of quasi-observation" (50). Although not all of these elements were new ones, Descartes successfully combined them into a new problematic, setting aside Aristotle's concept of reason as a grasp of universals: beginning in the seventeenth century, knowledge became internal, representational, and judgmental. Modern philosophy was born when a knowing subject endowed with consciousness and its representational contents became the central problem for thought, the paradigm of all knowing.

The modern notion of epistemology, then, turns on the clarification and judgment of the subject's representations. "To know is to represent accurately what is outside the mind; so to understand the possibility and nature of knowledge is to understand the way in which the mind is able to construct such representations. Philosophy's eternal concern is to be a general theory of representations, a theory which will divide culture up into the areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretense of doing so)" (3). The knowledge arrived at through the examination of representations about "reality" and "the knowing subject" would be universal. This universal knowledge is, of course, science.

It was only at the end of the Enlightenment that the fully elaborated conception of philosophy as the judge of all possible knowledge appeared and was canonized in the work of Immanuel Kant. "The eventual demarcation of philosophy from science was made possible by the notion that philosophy's core was a 'theory of knowledge', a theory distinct from the sciences because it was their foundation," Rorty argues (132). Kant established as a priori the Cartesian claim that we have certainty only about ideas. Kant, "by taking everything we say to be about something we have constituted, made it possible for epistemology to be thought of as a foundational science. . . . He thus en-

abled philosophy professors to see themselves as presiding over a tribunal of pure reason, able to determine whether other disciplines were staying within the legal limits set by the 'structure' of their subject matters" (139).

As a discipline whose proper activity is grounding claims to knowledge, philosophy was developed by nineteenth-century neo-Kantians and institutionalized in nineteenth-century German universities. Carving out a space between ideology and empirical psychology, German philosophy wrote its own history, producing our modern canon of the "greats." This task was completed by the end of the nineteenth century. The narrative of the history of philosophy as a series of great thinkers continues today in introductory philosophy courses. Philosophy's claim to intellectual preeminence lasted only for a short time, however, and by the 1920s, only philosophers and undergraduates believed that philosophy was uniquely qualified to ground and judge cultural production. Neither Einstein nor Picasso was overly concerned with what Husserl might have thought of them.

Although philosophy departments continue to teach epistemology, there is a counter tradition in modern thought that followed another path. "Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey are in agreement that the notion of knowledge as accurate representation, made possible by special mental processes, and intelligible through a general theory of representation, needs to be abandoned," Rorty observes (6). These thinkers did not seek to construct alternate and better theories of the mind or knowledge. Their aim was not to improve epistemology but to play a different game. Rorty calls this game hermeneutics. By this, he simply means knowledge without foundations; a knowledge that essentially amounts to edifying conversation. Rorty has so far told us very little about the content of this conversation, perhaps because there is very little to tell. As with Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and, in a different way, Dewey, Rorty is faced with the fact, troubling or amusing, that once the historical or logical deconstruction of Western philosophy has been accomplished, there is really nothing special left for philosophers to do. Once it is seen that philosophy does not found or legitimate the claims to knowledge of other disciplines, its task becomes one of commenting on their works and engaging them in conversation.

Truth versus Truth or Falsity

Even if one accepts Rorty's deconstruction of epistemology, the consequences of such a move remain very open. Before exploring some of them, it seems important to underline the point that rejecting epistemology does not mean rejecting truth, reason, or standards of

judgment. This point is made very succinctly by Ian Hacking in "Language, Truth, and Reason" (1982). Parallel to Rorty's distinction of certainty versus reason, Hacking draws a distinction between those philosophies involved in the quest for truth and those—which he calls styles of thinking, so as not to limit them to modern philosophy—that open up new possibilities by proceeding in terms of "truth or falsehood."

Hacking puts forward what is basically a simple point: what is currently taken as "truth" is dependent on a prior historical event—the emergence of a style of thinking about truth and falsity that established the conditions for entertaining a proposition as being capable of being taken as true or false in the first place. Hacking puts it this way: "By reasoning I don't mean logic. I mean the very opposite, for logic is the preservation of truth, while a style of reasoning is what brings in the possibility of truth or falsehood. . . . styles of reasoning create the possibility of truth and falsehood. Deduction and induction merely preserve it" (56–57). Hacking is not "against" logic, only against its claims to found and ground all truth. Logic is fine in its own domain, but that domain is a limited one.

By drawing this distinction one avoids the problem of totally relativizing reason or of turning different historical conceptions of truth and falsity into a question of subjectivism. These conceptions are historical and social facts. This point is well put by Hacking when he says: "Hence although whichever propositions are true may depend on the data, the fact that they are candidates for being true is a consequence of an historical event" (56). That the analytical tools we use when we investigate a set of problems—geometry for the Greeks, experimental method in the seventeenth century, or statistics in modern social science—have shifted is explainable without recourse to some truth denying relativism. Furthermore, science understood in this way remains quite objective "simply because the styles of reasoning that we employ determine what counts as objectivity. . . . Propositions of the sort that necessarily require reasoning to be substantiated have a positivity, a being true or false, only in consequence of the styles of reasoning in which they occur" (49, 65). What Foucault has called the regime, or game, of truth and falsity is both a component and a product of historical practices. Other procedures and other objects could have filled the bill just as well and have been just as true.

Hacking distinguishes between everyday, commonsensical reasoning that does not need to apply any elaborate set of reasons and those more specialized domains that do. There is both a cultural and a historical plurality of these specialized domains and of historically and culturally diverse styles associated with them. From the acceptance of a diversity of historical styles of reasoning, of methods, and objects,

Hacking draws the conclusion that thinkers frequently got things right, solved problems, and established truths. But, he argues, this does not imply that we should search for a unified Popperian realm of the true; rather, à la Paul Feyerabend, we should keep our options in inquiry as open as possible. The Greeks, Hacking reminds us, had no concept, or use, of statistics, a fact that invalidates neither Greek science nor statistics as such. This position is not relativism, but it is not imperialism either. Rorty calls his version of all this hermeneutics. Hacking calls his anarcho-rationalism. "Anarcho-rationalism is tolerance for other people combined with the discipline of one's own standards of truth and reason" (65). Let us call it good science.

Michel Foucault has also considered many of these issues in parallel, but not identical, fashion. His *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1976) and *Discourse on Language* (1976) are perhaps the most developed attempts to present, if not a theory of what Hacking refers to as "truth or falsity" and "styles of thought," then at least an analytic of them. Although the details of Foucault's systematization of how discursive objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, and discursive strategies are formed and transformed is beyond the scope of this paper,¹ several points are relevant here. Let us merely take one example as illustrative. In the *Discourse on Language* Foucault discusses some of the constraints on, and conditions for, the production of truth, understood as statements capable of being taken seriously as true or false. Among others, Foucault examines the existence of scientific disciplines. He says:

For a discipline to exist, there must be the possibility of formulating—and of doing so ad infinitum—fresh propositions. . . . These propositions must conform to specific conditions of objects, subject, methods etc. . . . Within its own limits, every discipline recognises as true and false propositions, but it repulses a whole teratology of learning. . . . In short, a proposition must fulfill some onerous and complex conditions before it can be admitted within a discipline; before it can be pronounced true or false it must be, as Monsieur Canguilhem might say, "within the true." (1976: 223–24)

Foucault gives the example of Mendel: "Mendel spoke of objects, employed methods and placed himself within a theoretical perspective totally alien to the biology of his time. . . . Mendel spoke the truth, but he was not *dans le vrai* of contemporary biological discourse" (224). The demonstration of the richness of this style of thinking has been the great strength of Foucault, Georges Canguilhem, and other French practitioners of the history and philosophy of science, particularly the "life sciences."

It is perhaps not accidental that both Rorty and Hacking are concerned with the history of physical science, mathematics, and philoso-

1. For a treatment of the subject see Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) pp. 44–79.

phy. What has been missing from their accounts is the category of power, and to a lesser extent (in Hacking's case) society. Hacking's current very interesting work on nineteenth-century statistics does, however, include these categories. Although compelling in its deconstructive force, Rorty's story is less convincing in its refusal to comment on how the epistemological turning came about in Western society—according to Rorty, like Galilean science, it just happened—or in its inability to see knowledge as more than free and edifying conversation. Not unlike Jurgen Habermas, although refusing Habermas's striving for foundationalism, Rorty sees free communication, civilized conversation, as the ultimate goal. As Hacking says: "Perhaps Richard Rorty's . . . central doctrine of conversation will some day seem as linguistic a philosophy as the analysis emanating from Oxford a generation ago" (1984: 109). The content of the conversation and how the freedom to have it is to come about is, however, beyond the domain of philosophy.

But conversation, between individuals or cultures, is only possible within contexts shaped and constrained by historical, cultural, and political relations and the only partially discursive social practices that constitute them. What is missing from Rorty's account, then, is any discussion of how thought and social practices interconnect. Rorty is helpful in deflating philosophy's claims, but he stops exactly at the point of taking seriously his own insight: to wit, thought is nothing more and nothing less than a historically locatable set of practices. How to do this without reverting to epistemology or to some dubious superstructure/infrastructure device is another question, one Rorty is not alone in not having solved.

Representations and Society

Michel Foucault has offered us some important tools for analyzing thought as a public and social practice. Foucault accepts the main elements of the Nietzschean, Heideggerean account of Western metaphysics and epistemology Rorty has given us, but draws different conclusions from these insights—ones, it seems to me, that are both more consistent and more interesting than Rorty's. We find, for example, many of the same elements that are in Rorty's history of philosophy—the modern subject, representations, order—in Foucault's famous analysis of Velazquez's painting *Las Meninas*. But there are also some major differences. Instead of treating the problem of representations as specific to the history of ideas, Foucault treats it as a more general cultural concern, a problem that was being worked on in many other domains. In *The Order of Things* (1973) and later books, Foucault demonstrates how the problem of correct representations has informed a multitude of social domains and practices, ranging

from disputes in botany to proposals for prison reform. The problem of representations for Foucault is not, therefore, one that happened to pop up in philosophy and dominate thinking there for three hundred years. It is linked to the wide range of disparate, but interrelated, social and political practices that constitute the modern world, with its distinctive concerns with order, truth, and the subject. Foucault differs from Rorty, then, in treating philosophical ideas as social practices and not chance twists in a conversation or in philosophy.

But Foucault also disagrees with many Marxist thinkers, who see problems in painting as, by definition, ultimately epiphenomenal to, or expressive of, what was "really" going on in society. This brings us briefly to the problem of ideology. In several places, Foucault suggests that once one sees the problem of the subject, or representations, and of truth as social practices, then the very notion of ideology becomes problematic. He says: "behind the concept of ideology there is a kind of nostalgia for a quasi-transparent form of knowledge, free from all error and illusion" (1980: 117). In this sense, the concept of ideology is close kin to the concept of epistemology.

For Foucault, the modern concept of ideology is characterized by three interrelated qualities: (1) by definition, ideology is opposed to something like "the truth," a false representation as it were; (2) ideology is produced by a subject (individual or collective) in order to hide the truth, and consequently the analyst's task consists in exposing this false representation; and revealing that (3) ideology is secondary to something more real, some infrastructural dimension on which ideology is parasitic. Foucault rejects all three claims.

We have already alluded to the broad lines of a critique of the subject and the search for certainty seen as based on correct representations. Consequently, let us briefly focus on the third point: the question of whether the production of truth is epiphenomenal to something else. He has described his project not as deciding the truth or falsity of claims in history "but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (131-33). Foucault proposes to study what he calls the regime of truth as an effective component in the constitution of social practices.

Foucault has proposed three working hypotheses: "(1) Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. (2) Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. (3) This regime is not merely ideological or superstructural; it was a condition of the formation and development of

capitalism" (133). We shall explore some of the implications of these working hypotheses in the next three sections of the paper.

As Max Weber, I think, once said, seventeenth-century capitalists were not only economic men who traded and built ships, they also looked at Rembrandt's paintings, drew maps of the world, had marked conceptions of the nature of other peoples, and worried a good deal about their own destiny. These representations were strong and effective forces in what they were and how they acted. Many new possibilities for thought and action are opened up if we follow Rorty and abandon epistemology (or at least see it for what it has been: an important cultural movement in Western society) and follow Foucault in seeing power as productive and permeative of social relations and the production of truth in our current regime of power. Here are some initial conclusions and research strategies that might follow from this discussion of epistemology. I merely list them before moving on to recent discussions in anthropology on how best to describe the other.

1. Epistemology must be seen as a historical event—a distinctive social practice, one among many others, articulated in new ways in seventeenth-century Europe.

2. We do not need a theory of indigenous epistemologies or a new epistemology of the other. We should be attentive to our historical practice of projecting our cultural practices onto the other; at best, the task is to show how and when and through what cultural and institutional means other people started claiming epistemology for their own.

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

4. We must pluralize and diversify our approaches: a basic move against either economic or philosophic hegemony is to diversify centers of resistance: avoid the error of reverse essentializing; Occidentalism is not a remedy for Orientalism.

The Writing of Ethnographic Texts: The Fantasia of the Library

There is a curious time lag as concepts move across disciplinary boundaries. The moment when the historical profession is dis-

covering cultural anthropology in the (unrepresentative) person of Clifford Geertz is just the moment when Geertz is being questioned in anthropology (one of the recurrent themes of the Santa Fe seminar that gave rise to this volume). So, too, anthropologists, or some of them in any case, are now discovering and being moved to new creation by the infusion of ideas from deconstructionist literary criticism, now that it has lost its cultural energy in literature departments and Derrida is discovering politics. Although there are many carriers of this hybridization (many of those present at the seminar, as well as James Boon, Stephen Webster, James Siegel, Jean-Paul Dumont, and Jean Jamin) there is only one "professional," so to speak, in the crowd. For, whereas all the others mentioned are practicing anthropologists, James Clifford has created and occupied the role of ex officio scribe of our scribblings. Geertz, the founding figure, may pause between monographs to muse on texts, narrative, description, and interpretation. Clifford takes as his natives, as well as his informants, those anthropologists past and present whose work, self-consciously or not, has been the production of texts, the writing of ethnography. We are being observed and inscribed.

At first glance James Clifford's work, like that of others in this volume, seems to follow naturally in the wake of Geertz's interpretive turn. There is, however, a major difference. Geertz (like the other anthropologists) is still directing his efforts to reinvent an anthropological science with the help of textual mediations. The core activity is still social description of the other, however modified by new conceptions of discourse, author, or text. The other for Clifford is the anthropological representation of the other. This means that Clifford is simultaneously more firmly in control of his project and more parasitical. He can invent his questions with few constraints; he must constantly feed off others' texts.

This new speciality is currently in the process of self-definition. The first move in legitimating a new approach is to claim it has an object of study, preferably an important one, that has previously escaped notice. Parallel to Geertz's claim that the Balinese were interpreting their cock fights as cultural texts all along, Clifford argues that anthropologists have been experimenting with writing forms whether they knew it or not. The interpretive turn in anthropology has made its mark (producing a substantial body of work and almost establishing itself as a subspeciality), but it is still not clear whether the deconstructive-semiotic turn (an admittedly vague label) is a salutary loosening up, an opening for exciting new work of major import, or a tactic in the field of cultural politics to be understood primarily in sociological terms. As it is certainly the first and the third, it is worth a closer examination.

In his essay "Fantasia of the Library" (1977) Michel Foucault plays adroitly with the progression of uses Flaubert made throughout his life of the fable of the temptation of Saint Anthony. Far from being the idle products of a fertile imagination, Flaubert's references to iconography and philology in his seemingly phantasmagoric renderings of the saint's hallucinations were exact. Foucault shows us how Flaubert returned throughout his life to this staging of experience and writing, and used it as an ascetic exercise both to produce and to keep at bay the demons that haunt a writer's world. It was no accident that Flaubert ended his life as a writer with that monstrous collection of commonplaces *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. A constant commentary on other texts, *Bouvard et Pécuchet* can be read as a thorough domestication of textuality into a self-contained exercise of arranging and cataloguing: the fantasia of the library.

For the sake of the argument, let us juxtapose Clifford Geertz's interpretive anthropology to James Clifford's textualist meta-anthropology. If Geertz is still seeking to conjure and capture the demons of exoticism— theater states, shadow plays, cock fights— through his limited use of fictionalized stagings in which they can appear to us, the textualist/deconstructive move runs the risk of inventing ever more clever filing systems for others' texts and of imagining that everyone else in the world is hard at work doing the same thing. Lest the argument run away in directions of its own, I should stress that I am not saying that Clifford's enterprise has up to the present been anything but salutary. The raising of anthropological consciousness about anthropology's own textual mode of operation was long overdue. Despite Geertz's occasional acknowledgements of the ineluctability of fictionalizing, he has never pushed that insight very far. The point seems to have needed a metaposition to bring home its real force. The voice from the campus library has been a salutary one. What I want to do briefly in this section is to return the gaze, to look back at this ethnographer of ethnographers, sitting across the table in a cafe, and, using his own descriptive categories, examine his textual productions.

Clifford's central theme has been the textual construction of anthropological authority. The main literary device employed in ethnographies, "free indirect style," has been well analyzed by Dan Sperber (1982) and need not be rehearsed here. The insight that anthropologists write employing literary conventions, although interesting, is not inherently crisis-provoking. Many now hold that fiction and science are not opposed but complementary terms (De Certeau 1983). Advances have been made in our awareness of the fictional (in the sense of "made," "fabricated") quality of anthropological writing and in the integration of its characteristic modes of production. The self-

consciousness of style, rhetoric, and dialectic in the production of anthropological texts should lead us to a finer awareness of other, more imaginative, ways to write.

Clifford seems, however, to be saying more than this. Substantively, he argues that from Malinowski on, anthropological authority has rested on two textual legs. An experiential "I was there" element establishes the unique authority of the anthropologist; its suppression in the text establishes the anthropologist's scientific authority.² Clifford shows us this device at work in Geertz's famous cockfight paper: "The research process is separated from the texts it generates and from the fictive world they are made to call up. The actuality of discursive situations and individual interlocutors is filtered out. . . . The dialogical, situational aspects of ethnographic interpretation tend to be banished from the final representative text. Not entirely banished, of course; there exist approved topoi for the portrayal of the research process" (1983:132). Clifford presents Geertz's "appealing fable" as paradigmatic: the anthropologist establishes that he was there and then disappears from the text.

With his own genre Clifford makes a parallel move. Just as Geertz makes a bow to self-referentiality (thereby establishing one dimension of his authority) and then (in the name of science) evades its consequences, so, too, Clifford talks a great deal about the ineluctability of dialogue (thereby establishing his authority as an "open" one), but his texts are not themselves dialogic. They are written in a modified free indirect style. They evoke an "I was there at the anthropology convention" tone, while consistently maintaining a Flaubertian remove. Both Geertz and Clifford fail to use self-referentiality as anything more than a device for establishing authority. Clifford's telling reading of the Balinese cockfight as a panoptic construct makes this point persuasively, but he himself makes the same omission on another level. He reads and classifies, describing intention and establishing a canon; but his own writing and situation are left unexamined. Pointing out Clifford's textual stance does not, of course, invalidate his insights (any more than his reading of Malinowski's textual moves invalidates the analysis of the Kula). It only situates them. We have moved back from the tent in the Trobriands filled with natives to the writing desk in the campus library.³

An essential move in establishing disciplinary or subdisciplinary legitimacy is classification. Clifford proposes four types of anthro-

2. The importance of this double move is one of the central arguments of my *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977).

3. I would like to thank Arjun Appadurai for his help in clarifying this and other points.

political writing, which have appeared in roughly chronological order. He organizes his essay "On Ethnographic Authority" (1983a) around this progression, but also asserts that no mode of authority is better than any other. "The modes of authority reviewed in this essay—experiential, interpretive, dialogical, polyphonic—are available to all writers of ethnographic texts, Western and non-Western. None is obsolete, none is pure: there is room for invention within each paradigm" (142). This conclusion goes against the rhetorical grain of Clifford's essay. This tension is important and I shall return to it below.

Clifford's main thesis is that anthropological writing has tended to suppress the dialogic dimension of fieldwork, giving full control of the text to the anthropologist. The bulk of Clifford's work has been devoted to showing ways in which this textual elimination of the dialogic might be remedied by new forms of writing. This leads him to read experiential and interpretive modes of writing as monological, linked in general terms to colonialism. "Interpretive anthropology . . . in its mainstream realist strands . . . does not escape the general strictures of those critics of "colonial" representation who, since 1950, have rejected discourses that portray the cultural realities of other peoples without placing their own reality in jeopardy" (133). It would be easy to read this statement as preferring some "paradigms" to others. It is perfectly possible that Clifford himself is simply ambivalent. However, given his own interpretive choices he clearly does characterize some modes as "emergent" and thereby as temporarily more important. Using a grid of interpretation that highlights the suppression of the dialogic, it is hard not to read the history of anthropological writing as a loose progression toward dialogical and polyphonic textuality.

Having cast the first two modes of ethnographic authority (experiential and realist/interpretive) in largely negative terms, Clifford moves on to a much more enthusiastic portrayal of the next set (dialogic and heteroglossic). He says: "Dialogic and constructivist paradigms tend to disperse or share out ethnographic authority, while narratives of initiation confirm the researcher's special competence. Paradigms of experience and interpretation are yielding to paradigms of discourse, of dialogue and polyphony" (133). The claim that such modes are triumphing is empirically dubious; as Renato Rosaldo says: "The troops are not following." Yet there is clearly considerable interest in such matters.

What is dialogic? Clifford at first seems to be using the term in a literal sense: a text that presents two subjects in discursive exchange. Kevin Dwyer's "rather literal record" (134) of exchanges with a Moroccan farmer is the first example cited of a "dialogic" text. However, a

page later, Clifford adds: "To say that an ethnography is composed of discourses and that its different components are dialogically related, is not to say that its textual form should be that of a literal dialogue" (135). Alternate descriptions are given, but no final definition is arrived at. Consequently the genre's defining characteristics remain unclear.

"But if interpretive authority is based on the exclusion of dialogue, the reverse is also true: a purely dialogical authority represses the inescapable fact of textualization," Clifford quickly moves on to remind us (134). This is confirmed by Dwyer's adamant distancing of himself from what he perceives as textualist trends in anthropology. The opposition of interpretive and dialogic is hard to grasp—several pages later Clifford praises the most renowned representative of hermeneutics, Hans Georg Gadamer, whose texts certainly contain no direct dialogues, for aspiring to "radical dialogism" (142). Finally, Clifford asserts that dialogic texts are, after all, texts, merely "representations" of dialogues. The anthropologist retains his or her authority as a constituting subject and representative of the dominant culture. Dialogic texts can be just as staged and controlled as experimental or interpretive texts. The mode offers no textual guarantees.

Finally, beyond dialogic texts, lies heteroglossia: "a carnivalesque arena of diversity." Following Mikhail Bakhtin, Clifford points to Dickens's work as an example of the "polyphonic space" that might serve as a model for us. "Dickens, the actor, oral performer, and polyphonist, is set against Flaubert, the master of authorial control moving Godlike, among the thoughts and feelings of his characters. Ethnography, like the novel, wrestles with these alternatives" (137). If dialogic texts fall prey to the evils of totalizing ethnographic adjustment, then perhaps even more radical heteroglossic ones might not: "Ethnography is invaded by heteroglossia. If accorded an autonomous textual space, transcribed at sufficient length, indigenous statements make sense on terms different from those of the arranging ethnographer. . . . This suggests an alternate textual strategy, a utopia of plural authorship that accords to collaborators, not merely the status of independent enunciators, but that of writers" (140).

But Clifford immediately adds: "quotations are always staged by the quoter . . . a more radical polyphony would only displace ethnographic authority, still confirming, the final, virtuoso orchestration by a single author of all the discourses in his or her text" (139). New forms of writing, new textual experiments would open new possibilities—but guarantee none. Clifford is uneasy about this. He moves on. Temporarily enthusiastic for dialogic, Clifford immediately qualifies his praise. He leads us on to heteroglossia: seduced—for a para-

graph—until we see that it too is, *hélas*, writing. Clifford closes his essay by proclaiming: "I have argued that this imposition of coherence on an unruly textual process is now, inescapably a matter of strategic choice" (142).

Clifford's presentation clearly offers a progression even if, by the end of the essay, it is a purely decisionist one. However, Clifford explicitly denies any hierarchy. At first I thought this was mere inconsistency, or ambivalence, or the embodiment of an unresolved but creative tension. I now think that Clifford, like everyone else, is "*dans le vrai*." We are at a discursive moment in which the author's intentions have been eliminated or underplayed in recent critical thought. Rather, we have been led to question the structures and contours of various modes of writing *per se*. Fredric Jameson has identified various elements of post-modern writing (e.g., its refusal of hierarchy, its flattening of history, its use of images) in a manner that seems to fit Clifford's project quite closely.

From Modernism to Post-Modernism in Anthropology

Fredric Jameson, in his "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (1983), offers us some useful starting points to situate recent developments in anthropological and meta-anthropological writing. Without seeking a univocal definition of post-modernism, Jameson delimits the scope of the term by proposing a number of key elements: its historical location, its use of pastiche, the importance of images.

Jameson locates post-modernism culturally and historically not just as a stylistic term but as a period marker. By so doing he seeks to isolate and correlate features of cultural production in the 1960s with other social and economic transformations. The establishment of analytic criteria and their correlation with socioeconomic changes is very preliminary in Jameson's account, little more than a place marker. However, it is worth marking the place. Late capitalism is defined by Jameson as the moment when "the last vestiges of Nature which survived on into classical capitalism are at last eliminated: namely the third world and the unconscious. The 60s will then have been the momentous transformational period in which this systemic restructuring takes place on a global scale" (207). This is not the place to defend or criticize Jameson's periodization, which he recognizes as provisional. Let us simply note that it gives us the possibility of discussing changes in representational forms within a context of Western developments

that lead forward to the present situation of those writing the descriptions not in a backward-looking mode establishing textual connections with writers in very different contexts, which frequently elide differences. For this reason, let us adopt it as heuristic.

The various post-modernisms forming in the sixties surfaced, at least in part, as a reaction against the earlier modernist movements. Classical modernism, to use an expression that is no longer oxymoronic, arose in the context of high capitalist and bourgeois society and stood against it: "it emerged within the business society of the gilded age as scandalous and offensive to the middle class public—ugly, dissonant, sexually shocking. . . . subversive" (124). Jameson contrasts the subversive modernist turn of the early twentieth century with the flattening, reactive nature of post-modern culture:

Those formerly subversive and embattled styles—Abstract Expressionism; the great modernist poetry of Pound, Eliot or Wallace Stevens; the International Style (Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies); Stravinsky; Joyce, Proust and Mann—felt to be scandalous or shocking by our grandparents are, for the generation which arrives at the gate in the 1960's, felt to be the establishment and the enemy—dead, stifling, canonical, the reified monuments one has to destroy to do anything new. This means that there will be as many different forms of postmodernism as there were high modernisms in place, since the former are at least initially specific and local reactions against those models. (111–12)

Jameson, not unlike Habermas (1983), clearly thinks there were important critical elements in modernism. Although they would probably differ on what they were, they would agree that in an important sense the project of modernity is unfinished, and certain of its features (its attempt to be critical, secular, anti-capitalist, rational) are worth strengthening.

I would add that if it arose in the 1960s in part as a reaction to the academic canonization of the great modernist artists, post-modernism, moving quickly, has itself succeeded in entering the academy in the 1980s. It has successfully domesticated and packaged itself through the proliferation of classificatory schemes, the construction of canons, the establishment of hierarchies, blunting of offensive behavior, acquiescence to university norms. Just as there are now art galleries for graffiti in New York, so, too, there are theses being written on graffiti, break dancing, and so on, in the most avant-garde departments. Even the Sorbonne has accepted a thesis on David Bowie.⁴

What is post-modernism? The first element is its historical location as a counter-reaction to modernism. Going beyond the by now "classic"

4. As reported in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 16–22, 1984.

definition of Lyotard (1979)—the end of metanarratives—Jameson defines its second element as pastiche. The dictionary definition—"(1) An artistic composition drawn from several sources, (2) a hodgepodge"—is not sufficient. Pound, for example, drew from several sources. Jameson is pointing at a use of pastiche that has lost its normative moorings; which sees the jumbling of elements as all there is. Hodgepodge is defined as "a jumbled mixture," but it comes from the French *hochepot*, a stew, and therein lies the difference.

Joyce, Hemingway, Woolf, et al. began with the conceit of an interiorized and distinctive subjectivity that both drew from and stood at a distance from normal speech and identity. There was "a linguistic norm in contrast to which the styles of the great modernists" (Jameson 1983: 114) could be attacked or praised, but in either case gauged. But what if this tension between bourgeois normality and the modernists' stylistic limit testing cracked, yielding to a social reality in which we had nothing but "stylistic diversity and heterogeneity" without the assumption (however contestable) of relatively stable identity or linguistic norms? Under such conditions, the contestatory stance of the modernists would lose its force: "All that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum. But this means that contemporary or post-modernist art is going to be about art itself in a new kind of way; even more, it means that one of its essential messages will involve the necessary failure of art and the aesthetic, the failure of the new, the imprisonment in the past" (115–16). It seems to me that this imprisonment in the past is quite different from historicism. Post-modernism moves beyond the (what now seems to be an almost comforting) estrangement of historicism, which looked, from a distance, at other cultures as wholes. The dialectic of self and other may have produced an alienated relationship, but it was one with definable norms, identities, and relations. Today, beyond estrangement and relativism, lies pastiche.

To exemplify this, Jameson develops an analysis of nostalgia films. Contemporary nostalgia films such as *Chinatown* or *Body Heat* are characterized by a "retrospective styling," dubbed "*la mode rétro*" by French critics. As opposed to traditional historical films which seek to recreate the fiction of another age as other, "*mode rétro*" films seek to evoke a feeling tone through the use of precise artifacts and stylistic devices that blur temporal boundaries. Jameson points out that recent nostalgia films often take place in the present (or, as in the case of *Star Wars*, in the future). A proliferation of metareferences to other representations flattens and empties their contents. One of their chief devices is to draw heavily on older plots: "The allusive and elusive

plagiarism of older plots is, of course, also a feature of pastiche" (117). These films function not so much to deny the present but to blur the specificity of the past, to confuse the line between past and present (or future) as distinct periods. What these films do is represent our representations of other eras. "If there is any realism left here, it is a 'realism' which springs from the shock of grasping that confinement and of realizing that, for whatever peculiar reasons, we seem condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about that past, which itself remains forever out of reach" (118). This, it seems to me, describes an approach that sees strategic choice of representations of representations as its main problem.

Although Jameson is writing about historical consciousness, the same trend is present in ethnographic writing: interpretive anthropologists work with the problem of representations of others' representations, historians and metacritics of anthropology with the classification, canonization, and "making available" of representations of representations. The historical flattening found in the pastiche of nostalgia films reappears in the meta-ethnographic flattening that makes all the world's cultures practitioners of textuality. The details in these narratives are precise; the images evocative, the neutrality exemplary, and the mode *rétro*.

The final feature of post-modernism for Jameson is "textuality." Drawing on Lacanian ideas about schizophrenia, Jameson points to one of the defining characteristics of the textual movement as the breakdown of the relationship between signifiers: "schizophrenia is an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence . . . a signifier that has lost its signified has thereby been transformed into an image" (120). Although the use of the term *schizophrenic* obscures more than it illuminates, the point is telling. Once the signifier is freed from a concern with its relation to an external referent it does not float free of any referentiality at all; rather, its referent becomes other texts, other images. For Jameson, post-modern texts (he is talking about Language poets) parallel this move: "Their referents are other images, another text, and the unity of the poem is not in the text at all but outside it in the bound unity of an absent book" (123). We are back at the "Fantasia of the Library," this time not as bitter parody but as celebratory pastiche.

Obviously this does not mean that we can solve the current crisis of representation by fiat. A return to earlier modes of unselfconscious representation is not a coherent position (although the news has not yet arrived in most anthropology departments). But we cannot solve it by ignoring the relations of representational forms and social prac-

tices either. If we attempt to eliminate social referentiality, other referents will occupy the voided position. Thus the reply of Dwyer's Moroccan informant (when asked which part of their dialogue had interested him most) that he had not been interested in a single question asked by Dwyer is not troubling as long as other anthropologists read the book and include it in their discourse. But obviously neither Dwyer nor Clifford would be satisfied with that response. Their intentions and their discourse strategies diverge. It is the latter that seem to have gone astray.

Interpretive Communities, Power Relations, Ethics

The young conservatives . . . claim as their own the revelations of a decentering subjectivity, emancipated from the imperatives of work and usefulness, and with this experience they step outside the modern world. . . . They remove into the sphere of the far-away and the archaic the spontaneous powers of imagination, self-experience and emotion.

JURGEN HABERMAS, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project"

A variety of important writing in the past decade has explored the historical relations between world macropolitics and anthropology: The West vs. The Rest; Imperialism; Colonialism; Neo-Colonialism. Work ranging from Talal Asad on colonialism and anthropology to Edward Said on Western discourse and the other have put these questions squarely on the agenda of contemporary debate. However, as Talal Asad points out in his paper for this volume, this by no means implies that these macropolitical economic conditions have been significantly affected by what goes on in anthropological debates. We also now know a good deal about the relations of power and discourse that obtain between the anthropologist and the people with whom he/she works. Both the macro- and microrelations of power and discourse between anthropology and its other are at last open to inquiry. We know some of the questions worth asking and have made asking them part of the discipline's agenda.

The metareflections on the crisis of representation in ethnographic writing indicate a shift away from concentrating on relations with other cultures to a (nonthematized) concern with traditions of representation, and metatraditions of metarepresentations, in our culture. I have been using Clifford's metaposition as a touchstone. He is not talking primarily about relations with the other, except as mediated through his central analytic concern, discursive tropes, and strategies. This has taught us important things. I have claimed, however, that this approach contains an interesting blind spot, a refusal of

self-reflection. Fredric Jameson's analysis of post-modern culture was introduced as a kind of anthropological perspective on this cultural development. Right or wrong (more right than wrong in my view), Jameson suggests ways of thinking about the appearance of this new crisis of representation as a historical event with its own specific historical constraints. Said another way, Jameson enables us to see that in important ways not shared by other critical stances (which have their own characteristic blind spots) the post-modernist is blind to her own situation and situatedness because, qua post-modernist, she is committed to a doctrine of partiality and flux for which even such things as one's own situation are so unstable, so without identity, that they cannot serve as objects of sustained reflection.⁵ Post-modernist pastiche is both a critical position and a dimension of our contemporary world. Jameson's analysis helps us to establish an understanding of their interconnections, thereby avoiding both nostalgia and the mistake of universalizing or ontologizing a very particular historical situation.

In my opinion, the stakes in recent debates about writing are not directly political in the conventional sense of the term. I have argued elsewhere (1985) that what politics is involved is academic politics, and that this level of politics has not been explored. The work of Pierre Bourdieu is helpful in posing questions about the politics of culture (1984a, b). Bourdieu has taught us to ask in what field of power, and from what position in that field, any given author writes. His new sociology of cultural production does not seek to reduce knowledge to social position or interest per se but, rather, to place all of these variables within the complex constraints—Bourdieu's *habitus*—within which they are produced and received. Bourdieu is particularly attentive to strategies of cultural power that advance through denying their attachment to immediate political ends and thereby accumulate both symbolic capital and "high" structural position.

Bourdieu's work would lead us to suspect that contemporary academic proclamations of anti-colonialism, while admirable, are not the whole story. These proclamations must be seen as political moves within the academic community. Neither Clifford nor any of the rest of us is writing in the late 1950s. His audiences are neither colonial officers nor those working under the aegis of colonial power. Our political field is more familiar: the academy in the 1980s. Hence, though not exactly false, situating the crisis of representation within the context of the rupture of decolonization is, given the way it is handled, basically beside the point. It is true to the extent that anthropology is certainly reflective of the course of larger world events, and specifi-

5. I would like to thank James Faubion for this point.

cally of changing historical relations with the groups it studies. Asserting that new ethnographic writing emerged because of decolonization, however, leaves out precisely those mediations that would make historical sense of the present object of study.

One is led to consider the politics of interpretation in the academy today. Asking whether longer, dispersive, multi-authored texts would yield tenure might seem petty. But those are the dimensions of power relations to which Nietzsche exhorted us to be scrupulously attentive. There can be no doubt of the existence and influence of this type of power relation in the production of texts. We owe these less glamorous, if more immediately constraining, conditions more attention. The taboo against specifying them is much greater than the strictures against denouncing colonialism; an anthropology of anthropology would include them. Just as there was formerly a discursive knot preventing discussion of exactly those fieldwork practices that defined the authority of the anthropologist, which has now been untied (Rabinow 1977), so, too, the micropractices of the academy might well do with some scrutiny.

Another way of posing this problem is to refer to "corridor talk." For many years, anthropologists informally discussed fieldwork experiences among themselves. Gossip about an anthropologist's field experiences was an important component of that person's reputation. But such matters were not, until recently, written about "seriously." It remains in the corridors and faculty clubs. But what cannot be publicly discussed cannot be analyzed or rebutted. Those domains that cannot be analyzed or refuted, and yet are directly central to hierarchy, should not be regarded as innocent or irrelevant. We know that one of the most common tactics of an elite group is to refuse to discuss—to label as vulgar or uninteresting—issues that are uncomfortable for them. When corridor talk about fieldwork becomes discourse, we learn a good deal. Moving the conditions of production of anthropological knowledge out of the domain of gossip—where it remains the property of those around to hear it—into that of knowledge would be a step in the right direction.

My wager is that looking at the conditions under which people are hired, given tenure, published, awarded grants, and feted would repay the effort.⁶ How has the "deconstructionist" wave differed from the other major trend in the academy in the past decade—feminism?⁷ How are careers made now? How are careers destroyed now? What

6. Martin Finkelstein (1984) presents a valuable summary of some of these issues as seen in the social sciences.

7. These issues are being explored in an important doctoral thesis being written by Deborah Gordon at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

are the boundaries of taste? Who established and who enforces these civilities? Whatever else we know, we certainly know that the material conditions under which the textual movement has flourished must include the university, its micropolitics, its trends. We know that this level of power relations exists, affects us, influences our themes, forms, contents, audiences. We owe these issues attention—if only to establish their relative weight. Then, as with fieldwork, we shall be able to proceed to more global issues.

Stop Making Sense: Dialogue and Identity

Marilyn Strathern, in a very challenging paper (1984), "Dislodging a World View: Challenge and Counter-Challenge in the Relationship Between Feminism and Anthropology," has taken an important step in situating the strategy of recent textualist writing through a comparison with recent work by anthropological feminists. Strathern makes a distinction between feminist anthropology, an anthropological subdiscipline contributing to the discipline's advancement, and an anthropological feminism whose aim is to build a feminist community, one whose premises and goals differ from, and are opposed to, anthropology. In the latter enterprise, difference and conflict—as historical conditions of identity and knowledge—are the valorized terms, not science and harmony.

Strathern reflects on her annoyance when a senior male colleague praised feminist anthropology for enriching the discipline. He said: "Let a thousand flowers bloom." She says: "Indeed it is true in general that feminist critique has enriched anthropology—opened up new understandings of ideology, the construction of symbolic systems, resource management, property concepts, and so on." Anthropology, in its relative openness and eclecticism, has integrated these scientific advances, at first reluctantly, now eagerly. Strathern, drawing on Kuhn's much-used paradigm concept, points out that this is how normal science works. Yet the "let a thousand flowers bloom" tolerance produced a sense of unease; later, Strathern realized that her unease stemmed from a sense that feminists should be laboring in other fields, not adding flowers to anthropology's.

Strathern distances her own practice from the normal science model in two ways. First, she claims that social and natural science are different: "not simply [because] within any one discipline one finds diverse 'schools' (also true in science) but that their premises are constructed competitively in relation to one another." Second, this competition does not turn on epistemological issues alone, but ultimately

on political and ethical differences. In his essay, "What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?" (1980), Stanley Fish makes a similar point (albeit to advance a very different agenda). He argues that all statements are interpretations, and that all appeals to the text, or the facts, are themselves based on interpretations; these interpretations are community affairs and not subjective (or individual) ones—that is, meanings are cultural or socially available, they are not invented *ex nihilo* by a single interpreter. Finally, all interpretations, most especially those that deny their status as interpretations, are only possible on the basis of other interpretations, whose rules they affirm while announcing their negation.

Fish argues that we never resolve disagreements by an appeal to the facts or the text because "the facts emerge only in the context of some point of view. It follows, then, that disagreements must occur between those who hold (or are held by) different points of view, and what is at stake in a disagreement is the right to specify what the facts can hereafter be said to be. Disagreements are not settled by the facts, but are the means by which the facts are settled" (338). Strathern adroitly demonstrates these points in her contrast of anthropological feminism and experimental anthropologists.

The guiding value of those interested in experimental ethnographic writing, Strathern argues, is dialogic: "the effort is to create a relation with the Other—as in the search for a medium of expression which will offer mutual interpretation, perhaps visualised as a common text, or as something more like a discourse." Feminism, for Strathern, proceeds from the initial and unassimilable fact of domination. The attempt to incorporate feminist understandings into an improved science of anthropology or a new rhetoric of dialogue is taken as a further act of violence. Feminist anthropology is trying to shift discourse, not improve a paradigm: "that is, it alters the nature of the audience, the range of readership and the kinds of interactions between author and reader, and alters the subject matter of conversation in the way it allows others to speak—what is talked about and whom one is talking to." Strathern is not seeking to invent a new synthesis, but to strengthen difference.

The ironies here are exhilarating. Experimentalists (almost all male) are nurturing and optimistic, if just a touch sentimental. Clifford claims to be working from a combination of sixties idealism and eighties irony. Textual radicals seek to work toward establishing relationships, to demonstrate the importance of connection and openness, to advance the possibilities of sharing and mutual understanding, while being fuzzy about power and the realities of socioeconomic constraints. Strathern's anthropological feminist insists upon not los-

ing sight of fundamental differences, power relationships, hierarchical domination. She seeks to articulate a communal identity on the basis of conflict, separation, and antagonism: partially as a defense against the threat of encompassment by a paradigm of love, mutuality, and understanding in which she sees other motives and structures; partially as a device to preserve meaningful difference per se as a distinctive value.

Difference is played out on two levels: between feminists and anthropology and within the feminist community. Facing outward, resistance and nonassimilation are the highest values. Within this new interpretive community, however, the virtues of dialogic relationships have been affirmed. Internally, feminists may disagree and compete; but they do so in relation to one another. "It is precisely because feminist theory does not constitute its past as a 'text' that it cannot be added on or supplant anthropology in any simple way. For if feminists always maintain a divide against the Other, among themselves by contrast they create something indeed much closer to discourse than to text. And the character of this discourse approaches the 'interlocutionary common product' for which the new ethnography aims." While tropes are available for all to use, how they are used makes all the difference.

Ethics and Modernity

The emergence of factions within a once interdicted activity is a sure sign of its having achieved the status of an orthodoxy.

STANLEY FISH, "What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?"

Recent discussions on the making of ethnographic texts have revealed differences and points of opposition as well as important areas of consensus. To borrow yet another of Geertz's phrases, we can, and have been, vexing each other with profit, the touchstone of interpretive advance. In this last section, through the device of a schematic juxtaposition of the three positions previously outlined, I shall propose my own. Although critical of dimensions of each of these positions, I consider them to be members, if not of an interpretive community, at least of an interpretive federation to which I belong.

Anthropologists, critics, feminists, and critical intellectuals are all concerned with questions of truth and its social location; imagination and formal problems of representation; domination and resistance; the ethical subject and techniques for becoming one. These topics are, however, interpreted in differing fashions; different dangers and different possibilities are picked out; and different hierarchies between these categories are defended.

1. *Interpretive Anthropologists.* Truth and science conceived as interpretive practices are the commanding terms. Both anthropologist and native are seen as engaged in interpreting the meaning of everyday life. Problems of representation are central for both, and are the loci of cultural imagination. Representations are not, however, sui generis; they serve as means for making sense of life worlds (which they are instrumental in constructing) and consequently they differ in their functions. The goals of the anthropologist and the native are distinct. To take one example, science and religion differ as cultural systems in strategy, ethos, and ends. The political and ethical positions are important, if largely implicit, anchors. Weber's twin ideals of science and politics as vocations would, if embodied in a researcher, yield the ethical subject for this position. Conceptually, scientific specification concerning cultural difference is at the heart of the project. The greatest danger, seen from the inside, is the confusion of science and politics. The greatest weakness, seen from the outside, is the historical, political, and experiential cordon sanitaire drawn around interpretive science.

2. *Critics.* The guiding principle is formal. The text is primary. Attentiveness to the tropes and rhetorical devices through which authority is constructed allows the introduction of themes of domination, exclusion, and inequality as subject matter. But they are only material. They are given form by the critic/writer, be she anthropologist or native: "Other tribes, other Scribes." We change ourselves primarily through imaginative constructions. The kind of beings we want to become are open, permeable ones, suspicious of metanarratives; pluralizers. But authorial control seems to blunt self-reflection and the dialogic impulse. The danger: the obliteration of meaningful difference, Weber's museification of the world. The truth that experience and meaning are mediated representationally can be over-extended to equate experience and meaning with the formal dimension of representation.

3. *Political subjects.* The guiding value is the constitution of a community-based political subjectivity. Anthropological feminists work against an other cast as essentially different and violent. Within the community the search for truth, as well as social and aesthetic experimentation are guided by a dialogic desire. The fictive other allows a pluralizing set of differences to appear. The risk is that these enabling fictions of essential difference may become reified, thereby reduplicating the oppressive social forms they were meant to undermine. Strathern puts this point well: "Now if feminism mocks the anthropological pretension of creating a product in some ways jointly authored then anthropology

mocks the pretension that feminists can ever really achieve the separation they desire."

4. *Critical, Cosmopolitan Intellectuals*. I have emphasized the dangers of high interpretive science and the overly sovereign representer, and am excluded from direct participation in the feminist dialogue. Let me propose a critical cosmopolitanism as a fourth figure. The ethical is the guiding value. This is an oppositional position, one suspicious of sovereign powers, universal truths, overly relativized preciousness, local authenticity, moralisms high and low. Understanding is its second value, but an understanding suspicious of its own imperial tendencies. It attempts to be highly attentive to (and respectful of) difference, but is also wary of the tendency to essentialize difference. What we share as a condition of existence, heightened today by our ability, and at times our eagerness, to obliterate one another, is a specificity of historical experience and place, however complex and contestable they might be, and a worldwide macro-interdependency encompassing any local particularity. Whether we like it or not, we are all in this situation. Borrowing a term applied during different epochs to Christians, aristocrats, merchants, Jews, homosexuals, and intellectuals (while changing its meaning), I call the acceptance of this twin valorization *cosmopolitanism*. Let us define cosmopolitanism as an ethos of macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness (often forced upon people) of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates. Although we are all cosmopolitans, *Homo sapiens* has done rather poorly in interpreting this condition. We seem to have trouble with the balancing act, preferring to reify local identities or construct universal ones. We live in-between. The Sophists offer a fictive figure for this slot: eminently Greek, yet often excluded from citizenship in the various poleis; cosmopolitan insider's outsiders of a particular historical and cultural world; not members of a projected universal regime (under God, the imperium, or the laws of reason); devotees of rhetoric and thereby fully aware of its abuses; concerned with the events of the day, but buffered by ironic reserve.

The problematic relations of subjectivity, truth, modernity, and representations have been at the heart of my own work. Feeling that considerations of power and representation were too localized in my earlier work on Morocco, I have chosen a research topic that employs these categories more broadly. Being temperamentally more comfortable in an oppositional stance, I have chosen to study a group of elite

French administrators, colonial officials as well as social reformers, all concerned with urban planning in the 1920s. By "studying up" I find myself in a more comfortable position than I would be were I "giving voice" on behalf of dominated or marginal groups. I have chosen a powerful group of men concerned with issues of politics and form: neither heroes nor villains, they seem to afford me the necessary anthropological distance, being separate enough to prevent an easy identification, yet close enough to afford a charitable, if critical, understanding.

The discipline of modern urbanism was put into practice in the French colonies, particularly in Morocco under Governor-general Hubert Lyautey (1912–25). The colonial architect-planners and the colonial governmental officials who hired them conceived of the cities where they worked as social and esthetic laboratories. These settings offered both groups the opportunity to try out new, large-scale planning concepts and to test the political effectiveness of these plans for application both in the colonies and eventually, they hoped, at home.

Studies of colonialism have until recently been cast almost exclusively in terms of this dialectic of domination, exploitation, and resistance. This dialectic is, and was, an essential one. By itself, however, it neglects at least two major dimensions of the colonial situation: its culture and the political field in which it was set. This has led to a number of surprising consequences; strangely enough the group in the colonies who have received the least attention in historical and sociological studies are the colonists themselves. Fortunately, this picture is beginning to change; the varied systems of social stratification and the cultural complexity of colonial life—as it varied from place to place at different historical periods—is beginning to be understood.

As a more complex view of colonial culture is being articulated, I think we also need a more complex understanding of power in the colonies. The two are connected. Power is frequently understood as force personified: the possession of a single group—the colonialists. This conception is inadequate for a number of reasons. First, the colonists themselves were highly factionalized and stratified. Second, the state (and particularly the colonial state) is something we need to know a great deal more about. Third, the view of power that understands it as a thing, or a possession, or emanating unidirectionally from the top down, or operating primarily through the application of force has been put seriously in question. With less than 20,000 troops, the French, after all, ran Indochina in the 1920s with a degree of control that the Americans with 500,000 some fifty years later never approached. Power entails more than arms, although it certainly does not exclude them.

The work of Michel Foucault on power relations provides us with some helpful analytic tools. Foucault distinguishes between exploitation, domination, and subjection (1982:212). He argues that most analyses of power concentrate almost exclusively on relations of domination and exploitation: who controls whom, and who extracts the fruits of production from the producers. The third term, subjection, focuses on that aspect of a field of power farthest removed from the direct application of force. That dimension of power relations is where the identity of individuals and groups is at stake, and where order in its broadest meaning is taking form. This is the realm in which culture and power are most closely intertwined. Foucault sometimes calls these relations "governmentality," and the term is a helpful one.

Following Foucault, Jacques Donzelot has argued that during the later part of the nineteenth century, a new relational field of great historical import was being constructed: Donzelot (1979) calls it the "social." Specific areas, frequently taken to be outside of politics, such as hygiene, family structure, and sexuality, were being made into targets for state intervention. The social became a demarcated and objectified set of practices partially constructed by, and partially understood through, the emerging methods and institutions of the new social science disciplines. The "social" was a privileged locus for experimentation with new forms of political rationality.

Lyautey's highly sophisticated view of colonization turned on the need to bring social groups into a different field of power relations than had previously existed in the colonies. In his view, this could only be achieved through large-scale social planning, in which city planning played a central role. As he said in a eulogy for his chief planner, Henri Prost: "The art and science of urbanism, so flourishing during the classical age, seems to have suffered a total eclipse since the Second Empire. Urbanism, the art and science of developing human agglomerations, is coming back to life under Prost's hand. Prost is the guardian, in this mechanical age, of 'humanism.' Prost worked not only on things, but on men, different types of men, to whom *la Cité* owes something more than roads, canals, sewers and a transport system" (Marrast, ed. 1960:119). For Lyautey and his architects, then, the new humanism applied itself appropriately not only to things, but to men, and not only to men in general—this was not Le Corbusier's humanism—but to men in different cultural and social circumstances. The problem was to accommodate this diversity. For these architects, planners, and administrators, the task confronting them was how to conceive of and produce a new social *ordonnance*.

This is the reason why the cities of Morocco were of such importance in Lyautey's eyes. They seemed to offer hope, a way to avoid the

impasses both of France and of Algeria. Lyautey's famous dictum "A *chantier* [construction site] is worth a battalion" was meant literally. Lyautey feared that if the French were allowed to continue to practice politics as usual, the results would continue to be catastrophic. A directly political solution, however, was not at hand. What was urgently required was a new scientific and strategic social art; only in this way could politics be sublated—and power truly "*ordonné*."

These men, like so many others in the twentieth century, were trying to escape from politics. This did not mean, however, that they were unconcerned with power relationships. Far from it. Their goal, a kind of technocratic self-colonization, was to develop a new form of power relations where "healthy" social, economic, and cultural relations could unfold. Integral in this scheme was the need to invent a new governmentality through which the (to them) fatally decadent and individualistic tendencies of the French could be reshaped. They constructed and articulated both new representations of a modern order and technologies for its implementation. These representations are modern social facts.

This paper has outlined some of the elements of the discourses and practices of modern representation. The relationship of this analysis to political practice has been only glancingly touched on. What, how, and who might be represented by those holding a similar view of things escapes from our more standard categories of social actors and 'political rhetoric. In closing, I simply mark the space. Foucault, responding to the charge that by refusing to affiliate himself with an already identified and politically locatable group he forfeited any claims to represent anybody or any values, answered: "Rorty points out that in these analyses I do not appeal to any 'we'—to any of those 'we's' whose consensus, whose values, whose traditions constitute the framework for a thought and define the conditions in which it can be validated. But the problem is, precisely to decide if it is actually suitable to place oneself within a 'we' in order to assert the principles one recognizes and the values one accepts; or if it is not, rather, necessary to make the future formation of a 'we' possible" (1984:385).

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