

1 Introduction

Any time an author revisits old theoretical grounds in producing a new edition of a book it is a welcome opportunity to reflect on intellectual directions that he or she has pursued over the years as well as the more general state of theory in contemporary anthropology and beyond. This Introduction will be directed, therefore, to two principal ends. The first is to discuss selectively some of the developments in contemporary anthropology and anthropological theory. The second is to revisit the themes of the original rationality debates so as to extend their purview to encompass the concerns of ethnographic writing and postmodernism that dominated in the 1980s, and the more recent issues of globalism, cultural borders, and cultural diasporas that have received wide interdisciplinary attention in the 1990s. It is likely, moreover, that these later issues will continue to engage scholars and to be dominant politically well into the twenty-first century.

The Anglo-American rationality debates, which served as the departure point for the first edition of this book in 1984 and as part of a larger effort in that work to synthesize political economy and cultural theory, no longer command the degree of attention that they did throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. Many anthropologists have turned rather to poststructuralism, postmodernism and postcolonial theory for critical insights and have come to distrust the “grand narratives”¹ of modernism that inform the majority of positions represented in the rationality debates. However, I believe that the general themes presented through the rationality debates have not been surpassed in that sociocultural anthropologists in particular continue to be engaged with the theoretical and political issues and problems of understanding “the other” even if the direction of inquiry should be more the politics of representation than conventional epistemology. In fact, as I argue in chapter 9, as long as the historically produced political, economic, and social inequities that prefigure knowing on a global basis remain intact, the issues raised through the rationality debates will have an enduring relevance.

With respect to the general state of theory in anthropology, of which the above distrust of modernism is increasingly representative, the theoretical

options are numerous and richly provocative. They range from attempts to revitalize structuralism to working through local articulations of culture with global processes, to rethinking the very foundational assumptions of the discipline – to name just some of the noteworthy. Moreover, anthropological theory has significantly influenced numerous disciplines and intellectual mediums, especially history, literary criticism, and cultural studies, and has exhibited more generally an increasing popularity and relevance to multicultural education and global initiatives, even if of the dubious sort.² However, not all of the developments have been quite so beneficial, since some anthropology departments have – like Duke and Stanford – split literally along ideological lines while others struggle to maintain a weak, even tenuous, union. Surely in question is the older and once-venerated vision of American anthropology as a four-field discipline (archaeology, linguistics, physical anthropology, cultural anthropology) integrated through the concept of culture as a mark of being distinctively human. As anthropologists turn away, furthermore, from the the potentially discipline-integrating questions of social evolution and comparative social development, which include culture as primary to the micro-discourses of postmodernism, the common ground between the four-fields tends to erode. How does one reconcile, for example, research on primate morphology and behavior with research on contested identities and cultural diasporas, the politics of language, and the archaeological evidence for state formation? Apart from the near ubiquity of intellectual fragmentation and practice, the above division in anthropology is compounded by a commitment on the part of some anthropologists to natural science as paradigmatic for the human sciences. The consequent long-standing tension resonates with and underlies all the contributions to the rationality debates and is thus a further testimony to their continuing importance.

No one can really predict whether or not the subdisciplines of anthropology will go their separate ways. After all, in Europe social anthropology, linguistics, archaeology, and physical anthropology have always been separate disciplines and presently in the United States physical anthropologists and archaeologists have their own vital professional associations, to which they seem more committed than they are to the American Anthropological Association.³ However, it will take a greater vision than nostalgia provides to forge a new union in American anthropology. I suspect that such a union will require pursuing the large questions of the human condition in its multiplicity, even if the answers are necessarily multivocal and inconclusive, and a commitment pragmatically – and here ancestors such as Boas and Mead come to mind⁴ – to challenge prejudice and social inequality in their multiple local and global forms. On the other hand, the theoretical and methodological issues of science, especially positivistic science, cut across the subdisciplines and thus one discovers tensions and challenges that are

not simply interdisciplinary in nature and which in some circumstances have been remarkably constant.⁵ This complicates the conversation both between and within subdisciplines especially in light of the hegemonic role assumed by natural science and instrumental rationality in the realm of human affairs.

The philosopher Edmund Husserl (1970), who is rarely cited in anthropology, recognized in the early twentieth century the ethnographic implications of natural science assuming a paradigmatic influence not only for scholarship but also for human experience more generally. While Husserl's phenomenology is marred, in my view, by locating the certitude of knowing in the solipsistic structure of the transcendental ego, he was a primary contributor to the idea of human experience as meaningfully constituted. The emphasis on the world as prefigured through human agency, or even human consciousness, was an important contrast to the empiricism of Hume and to regnant ideas concerning human nature at the dawn of the twentieth century. To Husserl and subsequent phenomenologists⁶ more attuned to the social conditions of knowing we owe the concept of the "life-world". The concept of "life-world" has become familiar to anthropologists, especially those attuned to symbolism, as the intersubjectivity of meaning, the idea that human beings collectively create and inhabit a shared world of constituted meaning or experience. Husserl believed, moreover, that science was a potential threat to the "life-world" to the extent that scientific progress resulted in what he referred to as "the mathematization of nature." That is, the emphasis in science on abstract theories removed from experience and mathematical formulas, especially those of theoretical physics, potentially detracted from our collective ability to talk about a world shared, the realm of collective experience, and collective symbolic meaning.

Husserl's vision of a life of collective meaning imperiled by natural science, a condition which he identified as a crisis, is elaborated further in Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958) and Jürgen Habermas's *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984). Like Husserl, Arendt maintains that ordinary discourse and figurative language, what anthropologists generally refer to as tropes, are important to the having of a world in common. Technical language and especially the dependency of natural science on mathematics reduces the potential for human agents to establish the common grounds of understanding and consensus, both of which are essential to the building of community and political life. Habermas shares Arendt's belief that political or civic life is informed by the mutual understanding and consensus realized through ordinary language. However, Habermas sees the hegemony of science and its reliance on technical or instrumental rationality not only as a threat to "shared meaning" but also as a political challenge resulting in what he calls the "colonization of the life world." Stated simply, Habermas believes that the pervasiveness of science

as paradigmatic of understanding in general is coming progressively to define the nature of human experience. Moreover, the the commitment of science to instrumental reason establishes a framework whereby the objects of scientific knowledge and research are constituted towards the end of technical control. This commitment to control, in turn, establishes science as a potentially powerful force in shaping social policy, while glossing over the political interests that normally compete in the public arena and define the nature of politics more generally.

While the divisions in contemporary anthropology and the political implications of science, especially technical or instrumental reason, are not, as noted, the primary focus of the rationality debates, I believe that the rationality debates lend themselves to a broad conversation that includes the issues raised by Arendt and Habermas as extensions of the “life-world” and the public arena. If we turn to Evans-Pritchard’s classic work on the Azande, for example, we discover a critical engagement, albeit indirectly, both with the salient issues of evolution that marked the discourses of the late nineteenth and with early twentieth-centuries and positivist science as a model for understanding humans in their multiplicity. As I argue in chapter 2, Evans-Pritchard was a serious student of phenomenology and especially the hermeneutics of Dilthey, they led Evans-Pritchard to a rather significant departure, although not a complete one, from the reductive naturalized needs orientation of Malinowski and the essentialized structures of Radcliffe-Brown, the predominant paradigms of British social anthropology. Moreover, Evans-Pritchard’s work on the Azande can be interpreted as a direct challenge to French philosopher Lucien Lévy-Bruhl’s (1965) influential thesis on the “prelogical” mentality of indigenous peoples.

Lévy-Bruhl argued that indigenous peoples (he used the word “primitive”) fail to distinguish categorically, as a natural endowment of mind, between animals and humans in their ritual life and thus do not have the requisite logic shared by westerners. The implication is that indigenous peoples are reflective of an earlier state of social evolution, an idea that was wide spread at the end of the nineteenth century and which came to serve as the civilizing ideology of western colonialism. Those committed to supporting colonialism could thus argue that, if not salvation, they at the very least were the harbingers of reason. Evans-Pritchard refuted Lévy-Bruhl’s argument by presenting ethnographic evidence from the Azande that supported the logical coherence of their witchcraft accusations and consultation of oracles. According to Evans-Pritchard, the difference between the Azande and us is not a consequence of mind but rather their assumptions – from which they reason just as we do. He maintains that we and the Azande share the same logic or rationality but proceed from different assumptions about the natural and social world. The Azande thus manage a household just as we would and draw attributions of causation in a manner

not dissimilar from ours. Needless to say, Evans-Pritchard's support of Zande rationality had the same practical potential as Boas's challenge to the racist immigration policies of the American government, although Evans-Pritchard's efforts did not alter the discourse of English colonialism.

Evans-Pritchard is an especially complex anthropological ancestor because his work bridges the incommensurable traditions of structural functionalism, of which *The Nuer* is illustrative, and a hermeneutic interpretation of Zande ritual practices. Moreover, although not generally acknowledged in American anthropology for this, Evans-Pritchard can be identified as an early supporter of historical anthropology.⁷ However, it is Evans-Pritchard's rich elaboration of Zande intentions: an exploration of their "life-world", which sets him directly in opposition to colleagues in anthropology seeking to find the universal in the particular, the elaboration of law across cultures, human society in accord with nature – all of which was present in the British anthropology of the time. Nevertheless, as I argue in chapter 3, Evans-Pritchard would betray his own hermeneutic insights by rejecting the existence of Zande witches on empirical grounds. It is this rejection of Zande witches on empirical grounds that the Anglo-American rationality debates take their point of departure, one that commences with "the linguistic turn" in social theory as represented in Peter Winch's appropriation of the ordinary language philosophy of the later Wittgenstein. As we shall see, the linguistic turn has important theoretical implications for anthropology's relation to science which, in turn, has important implications for the subdisciplines.

The Linguistic Turn

Of all the social science disciplines, anthropology is perhaps the most engaged with language. The reasons should be self-evident in that anthropology has constructed itself historically as a mode of knowing whose primary object is the non-western other. Accessibility to other cultures, as Lévi-Strauss's classic *Tristes Tropiques* (1974) illustrates clearly, depends largely on understanding their languages and cultural idioms. Many graduate programs still incorporate a course on field linguistics as a fundamental part of training at the doctoral level and offer courses on applied linguistics, including sociolinguistics, as well. Language is, furthermore, not only important to sociocultural anthropologists but also to archaeologists struggling to interpret the meaning and symbolism of material culture, and to physical anthropologists interested in questions of evolution as they pertain to the human fossil record. In short, language is a key medium for understanding human cultures past and present and because of its foundational

relation to culture should occupy a central place in the discipline of anthropology.

That Evans-Pritchard's rejection of the empirical existence of witches has something to do with language may initially not be self-evident. However, this connection with language is precisely the line of argument pursued by philosopher Peter Winch in his *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (1958). As noted above, Winch borrows from Wittgenstein's later rather than early period; this is because he is interested in presenting a theory of language as practice, a view of language that is thoroughly conversant with much of contemporary cultural anthropology. The early Wittgenstein (I do not go into detail here because much of this is described in chapter 3) was drawn to the label theory of language, a theory that presents words as corresponding to objects in the physical world. This theory is at fault for its formalism and for not taking into account human agency, a problem not dissimilar to the insufficiencies of the Prague School of linguistics, the formalism of De Saussure, or for that matter the digital logic of Lévi-Strauss. By contrast, and as a rejection of the essentialism of the label theory, the later Wittgenstein (1953, 1965) developed a theory of language games and forms of life whereby the physical and social world is composed of interrelated and potentially changing linguistic practices. The implications for science are quite interesting and significant in that for Wittgenstein the physical world and its material objects are a product of linguistic practice, and thus reject the schism between nature and nurture embraced by anthropology and the allied social sciences.⁸

If one considers that Winch's aforementioned book was published in the late 1950s, his appropriation of the later Wittgenstein was very innovative and has likewise proven to be influential in the social sciences. While the later Wittgenstein established a paradigm of linguistic practice, the specific connection of language to human agency and social interaction was not developed. Winch argued that just as we could understand words or concepts through their use in multiple language games so we could understand social interaction as a type of communicative practice. That is, the identity of what it is that people do as individuals and as members of a collectivity – group, village, town, nation – is based upon their shared, even tacit, assumptions that are communicatively embodied in a speech community. Winch's view of social action as communicative challenges both the essentialism and naturalism that can lead scholars to regard human action in lawlike terms, a common outcome of scientific practice.

As I discuss in chapter 3, Winch challenges Evans-Pritchard's assertion that Zande witches cannot be supported on empirical grounds. For Winch, empirical grounds are not a given but rather a consequence of linguistic and social practice, and so they are relative and must therefore be accounted for socially. Apart from the consequences for Evans-Pritchard's conclusions

regarding Zande witchcraft, Winch's theory of social action as communicative practice establishes the basis for an anthropology or sociology of science. Empiricism, which is often taken as the bedrock of epistemology in the natural sciences and in significant areas of the social sciences, is regarded by Winch as relative to the intersubjective assumptions and methodological practices of natural science and therefore should not be taken as a universal – an Archimedean point from which to bring into question all that is particular. According to Winch, to understand Zande witchcraft we must come to grasp the assumptions and particular rationality that inform its practice. To dismiss the existence of Zande witches on empirical grounds is to commit a category mistake; that is, to apply assumptions or linguistic practices particular to western societies to societies where such assumptions are irrelevant or make no sense.

Some of Winch's adversaries in the rationality debates have argued that his theory of communicative practice presupposes that all human action is transparent. Winch's response to this charge invokes psychotherapy, healing through discourse, as a means of illuminating what is not transparent to actors in terms of their own actions and motivations. A therapist will assist a patient in working through blockages by reviewing with the patient the potential sources of problems sedimented symbolically in the past. The inequalities between therapist and patient aside, Winch maintains that the interpretations suggested by the therapist or patient must be mutually intelligible and make sense within the patient's actual and potential experience. Likewise, asserts Winch, an ethnographer must search for an interpretation of indigenous social practices that approximates informants' actual or potential experience. To Winch's credit, the informant's self-interpretations are taken seriously, a necessary precedent to recognizing the humanity of indigenous others.

Winch's appropriation of the later Wittgenstein as applied to a theory of communicative action has continuing importance for anthropology so long as the human past and present in its multiplicity remains the primary object domain. Although individual anthropologists may have preferences for other linguistically based social theories (e.g. Bourdieu, Foucault, Baudrillard, de Certeau), some of which I will take up later in this Introduction, Winch's work remains as a testimony to the enduring significance of language as practice to human agency and self-identity, as well as the relativity of rationality across cultures. Nevertheless, I continue to believe, as I argued in the original edition of this book, that Winch's theory is essentially contemplative of language games and communicative action because it does not question the historical, social and political-economic constraints under which individual and collectives engage each other in public space. It thus falls short of the reflexive potential that has long been a part of the critical practice of anthropology.

Friends and Foes

Winch's critique of Evans-Pritchard's assertion that the existence of Zande witches cannot be upheld on empirical grounds generated significant responses from both anthropologists and philosophers. What remains of interest to us here are the challenges that these responses pose both to the "linguistic turn" in social theory and to science and universal rationality as paradigmatic of human understanding in general. Many of the participants in the original rationality debates were critical of Winch's relativism and believed that "knowing" must rest on criteria which are verifiable, a condition that weighs heavily on the narrative and often anecdotal character of field research in sociocultural anthropology. Others, mostly in the minority, appreciated Winch's notion that rationality is a social construction but nonetheless upheld criteria of rationality that were not context-dependent, a key point of contention regarding science.

To his credit, I. C. Jarvie has done much to familiarize anthropologists with the work of philosopher Karl Popper, especially regarding science. The fact that Popper maintains, as does Jarvie, that the "truths" of science are tentative gives a complexity to his theorizing that is absent in many social scientists, who believe that the method and practice of science are foundational and therefore need not be questioned – positivism in its most vulgar form. In fact, following Popper, Jarvie argues against a naive empiricism – knowledge based on sense sensation – by asserting that theories are always informed by presuppositions that then must be subject to testing, or what Popper terms "falsification." Nevertheless, Jarvie, unlike Winch, upholds standards of objectivity grounded in the consensus of the research community. For Jarvie, empirically tested hypotheses are true because they correspond to a state of affairs in the world and thus, as by Evans-Pritchard, the existence of Zande witches can be refuted empirically.

Jarvie has also championed "methodological individualism," which places him at odds with many anthropologists trained in the Durkheimian tradition, especially the structural functionalism of British social anthropology.⁹ According to methodological individualism, it is individuals and not institutions or collectivities that act. While (as I continue to believe) Jarvie has embraced as primordial an unexamined sense of self, he does at least entertain debate about the agency involved in social action in a manner that challenges reified visions of social institutions. What is missing is an appreciation of the social and historical contingencies through which the self is constituted.

While anthropologist Robin Horton does not counter Winch directly, his writings on indigenous modes of thought can be taken as a refutation

of the sort of linguistic relativism supported by Winch and most theorists who champion the linguistic turn. Like Winch, Horton refutes Levy-Bruhl's contention that indigenous peoples are prelogical. However, quite unlike Winch, Horton argues that language socialization is preceded by preverbal schemata that are inborn and thus species-wide. Preverbal schemata include material object and causal concepts. The material object repertoire, in which there are ostensibly one hundred or so items, reproduces the label theory of language, with the exception that the label theory never regarded the relation between words and objects as primordial but rather as learned. The fact that causal concepts are inborn gives, for Horton, an unquestioned status to causal assertions as they relate to human behavior.

Horton, like Jarvie, borrows from Popper in arguing that societies are either open or closed. Open societies are capable of self-reflection and criticism while closed societies live by the determinations of tradition. For Horton, therefore, modern societies embrace the spirit of science and are able to bring their own beliefs and social practices into question, and thus are open. By contrast, the anomalies of beliefs and experience are never questioned in indigenous cultures, Zande oracles being exemplary, because of an absence of science and the predominance of tradition. Indigenous societies are thus closed. While perhaps not intending to, Horton's advancing of open and closed societies reproduces the Enlightenment bias against tradition as "anti-reason" and glosses over the fact that tradition itself is generally a product of invention, making a society's relation to tradition immensely more self-reflective than Horton allows.

Steven Lukes occupies an important position in the rationality debates in challenging Jarvie's methodological individualism. Following in the Durkheimian tradition where social facts are the predominant objects of social analysis, Lukes argues for the importance of social institutions as both limit and possibility of social action. According to Lukes, it is collective rather than individual life that is the foundation of social life, since one becomes an individual only through the mediation of family, tribe, nation or other institutions in their multiplicity. Moreover, according to Lukes, the emphasis on the individual in western society is recent and the product of historical factors associated with capitalism and the bourgeois state.

Lukes tends to support Winch in his assertion that there are culturally specific criteria of truth and rationality that one must invoke in order to understand, for example, Zande witchcraft or Nuer religious metaphors. However, Lukes distinguishes himself from Winch through arguing that culturally specific criteria of truth and rationality are ultimately tied to formal rules of truth and intelligibility that are shared by the human species.

According to Lukes, such formal rules, which are reminiscent of Lévi-Strauss's formalist rationality, are necessary in order for understanding between different cultures to be possible.

Lukes's position on universal criteria of truth and rationality is likely to resonate fairly widely with anthropologists who believe that the possibility of understanding the "other" depends on a cognitive faculty shared at some level. After all, no one really accepts the proposition that anthropologists and indigenous others live in radically separate worlds, even if such a potential was popularized throughout the 1970s through Carlos Castaneda's books on the Yaqui shaman, Don Juan, or to some degree implied much earlier in the linguistic relativity of Sapir and Whorf. However, as I argued in the original edition of this book, understanding cultures is as much informed by the potential uses of language as it is through the conventional. That is, anthropologists and informants are always seeking common grounds of understanding through extending the horizons of their conceptual and linguistic practices, which is what we often refer to today as pushing the boundaries of discourse.

Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of Winch is similar to that of Lukes yet not entirely unsympathetic to Winch. Like Winch, MacIntyre maintains that criteria of truth and rationality are relative in that they have a history. Such a claim is very important to anthropology more generally since it creates the possibility of studying the history and culture of science; it thus counters the positivistic self-justification of science in scientific terms, and even pragmatic assertions that science should be the regnant epistemology because "it works".¹⁰ However, like Lukes, MacIntyre contends that beliefs are propositions, collectively informed, about states of affairs in the world. The veracity of these beliefs can be judged ultimately by criteria that are extra-contextual. Unlike Lukes, MacIntyre views extracontextual criteria as having a history but, from my point of view, one that is regrettably evolutionary. The potential therefore to grasp truth and rationality historically is sacrificed ultimately by MacIntyre to the very assumptions that he originally brings into question.

The focus on Jarvie, Horton, Lukes, and MacIntyre is deliberate because they represent the predominant views on truth and rationality held in the social sciences. While my discussion is by no means exhaustive, and deliberately so, I have aimed to create a rhetorical tension between these four theorists that will establish the boundaries of the Anglo-American rationality debates in their historical version. The arguments against Winch and more generally ordinary language philosophy on the parts of Jarvie, Horton, Lukes, and MacIntyre, combined with my own belief that Winch lacks a perspective from which to bring language games into question, makes hermeneutics a potentially attractive alternative from which to defend the linguistic turn in social theory.

Hermeneutics Revisited

With little doubt, hermeneutics has played a seminal role in contemporary anthropological theory with virtually all ethnographers who incorporate discourse as a model for interpretation across cultures.¹¹ Hermeneutics occupies an important theoretical place in, for example Paul Rabinow's *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1973) and Renato Rosaldo's *Culture and Truth* (1989), not to mention my own recent *Vintages and Traditions* (1996). Of the two hermeneutic philosophers discussed extensively in the first edition of this book, that is Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, it is Ricoeur who has been the most influential in anthropology. The reasons for Ricoeur's popularity have to do with a methodological emphasis that is absent in Gadamer and the fact that Ricoeur's voluminous writings, most of which are theoretically germane to the social sciences,¹² have been translated into English. Ricoeur's having held a joint appointment in France and the United States is perhaps another contributing factor. Nevertheless, in spite of being less known to anthropologists, Gadamer's insights into the general process of understanding continue to be of importance to all anthropologists and relevant to the general interpretive themes of the rationality debates. I will therefore discuss some of the reasons for Gadamer's continuing importance before turning to Ricoeur.

Gadamer provides a historical dimension to the linguistic turn which is absent in ordinary language philosophy as represented by the later Wittgenstein and Winch, and which resonates with recent trends in cultural theory. Gadamer argues, in a manner that suggests his Heideggerian training and the influence of Heidegger on contemporary hermeneutics, that "language is the being of man." Stated simply, for Gadamer, humanity is identified with a language community: to be human is to have a language; world and language are inseparable. This does not mean that Gadamer is insensitive to cultural differences nor does it indicate an indifference to the extraordinary number and variety of language communities. Rather, Gadamer's ideas on the centrality of language are fully conversant with the aforementioned tradition of grand theorizing that upholds the merits of speaking to the human condition in general. Moreover, Gadamer's emphasis is neither empirical speech events nor individual human agents, since he argues that our experience as social beings is necessarily prefigured by the language community of which we are a part. Our experience of self, other, and world is thus a product of the language we speak.

The connection between self, language, and world is for Gadamer profoundly historical in that he believes that tradition or past collective life as sedimented in language shapes and limits both actual and possible experience, what he calls effective historical consciousness. In this way he argues

that “language speaks us”; our linguistically embodied past is consequential for the present as it becomes an emergent future. Tradition or collective life as sedimented in language becomes the historical and cultural horizon from which we or anthropologists engage the life-worlds of others. What we take to be ethnographic data or knowledge belongs neither to the anthropologist nor indigenous informants, but is a synthesis of their respective cultural horizons.

Regarding knowledge as a synthesis of cultural horizons is important to Gadamer’s critique and ultimate rejection of method as the determining ethos of truth in the natural sciences and empirically based social sciences. For Gadamer, all knowledge is contingent, thus opening science to social and cultural elaboration. Although scientists, especially in the positivistic genre (the commitment to science’s justification of itself scientifically), may believe that reproducible methods assure objectivity, Gadamer’s version of hermeneutics shows that knowledge production in general is informed by cultural tradition as embodied in the intersubjectivity of language and thus cultural tradition shapes our horizon of expectations and possible experience.¹³ For Gadamer, knowing is pre-judging, and consequently having a bias is precisely what allows us to know anything about either the natural or social worlds. Gadamer’s hermeneutics gives theoretical support, therefore, to the historical and enduring importance of culture broadly conceived as the central integrative feature of anthropology.

Ricoeur’s hermeneutics takes us in a somewhat different direction but nonetheless with an importance equal to that of Gadamer. As mentioned above, Ricoeur has a methodological emphasis that is absent in Gadamer’s work. However, this is not the sort of methodological rigor that serves its own instrumental ends, for which Gadamer is critical of science, but rather a method that is employed in the interest of exploring the symbolic density of social life. Ricoeur (1971) distinguished himself early on through arguing that social life is symbolic and thus social action is like a text in that it contains the objectified meanings of social actors. The project of an interpretive theory was thus to decipher the sedimented meanings in a manner analogous to how an audience deciphers the meaning of a text.

Ricoeur’s analogy between text and action is very important to anthropology because it allows us to distinguish between intentions and meanings. Questions related to intention, in spite of the warnings of Clifford Geertz (1973) – himself indebted to Ricoeur – often lead the investigator to probe the states of mind or intentions of authors, informants, or the agents of social action. As we should know by now, it is a specious assumption that we can ever get inside the heads of others to know what they thought when they created this or that object or performed a particular ritual or social action. However, pursuing the interpretation of meaning is another project altogether.

I will avoid the details of Ricoeur's theory here as they are elaborated in chapter 6. Essentially, Ricoeur argues that since texts are an object of public consumption the meanings they take on for the audiences to which they are directed are independent of the author's intentions. For Ricoeur, this assertion about the public nature of meaning, and symbols as conveyers of meaning, is applicable to all human products – art, literature, artifacts – and by extension to human action itself, hence the above analogy with text. The objective becomes therefore how we make sense of public meaning rather than subjective intentions. Ricoeur appeals to the formalism of structuralism and an early phenomenology in arguing that we bracket the outside references of the text in order to explore its inner relations. Whether we agree with the method or not (I was very critical of the method in the first edition of this book), the general idea that we look to public meanings to explore the opacity of social life remains a significant challenge for all of the human sciences.

In spite of significant merits, the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur continue to be, in my view, insufficient to the critical potentials of anthropology. The notion of tradition, even in the version of effective historical consciousness, employed by Gadamer does not take into consideration that culture is often a contested arena. Moreover, if we are to make use of the concept of a language community, it is important to recognize that within and between language communities human agents are positioned in discourse differentially, a recognition that leads to both a politics of language and politics of culture. If anthropology as a discipline is to realize the critical potentials of embracing cultural diversity, anthropologists must be engaged with issues of local and global inequality and the construction of differentiated public arenas.

Ricoeur replicates to some degree the shortcomings of Gadamer's hermeneutics, especially in the formalism of his textual analogy. Again, as with culture, the constitution and interpretation of social meanings as embodied symbolically is subject to dispute. While Ricoeur is attentive to the multivocality of symbols, he does not raise the issue of power other than to advance a vision of symbols as practically effective in the public domain. Because Ricoeur, like Gadamer, is not concerned with concrete human agents, he does not address the differential position of human agents as they engage each other in history-making, perhaps yet further evidence that inert texts do not fully capture, even metaphorically speaking, the dynamism of social processes. For this reason, I turned to the Marxist tradition in hopes of establishing a more developed sense of differentiated human agency.

Marxism and Critical Theory Revisited

At the time that the first edition of this book was published in the early 1980s, Marxism or political economy occupied a significant place within

anthropology and the social and human sciences more widely. Apart from its long-standing reputation for addressing questions of inequality anchored in work or labor, Marxism also appeared to articulate well with transformations in the world economy that followed the Second World War. Marxism seemed especially well equipped theoretically to explain globalization and the structural inequalities between developing nations and nations that were asserting their dominion as centers of finance capital. Today, much of this has changed and political economy in particular no longer appears to dominate research directed at the production and reproduction of inequalities. While this in part may result from the demise of the Soviet Union and the impression on the part of some scholars that capitalism has triumphed over socialism – a dubious assertion by any account¹⁴ – I believe that there are reasons internal to Marxist theory itself that explain the loss of some of its luster.

As noted above, Marxist scholars, especially orthodox Marxists committed to political economy, have long pursued the critique of capitalism and social inequality through analyzing the process through which social labor is appropriated, a point of view which makes labor the principal formative and transformative process of the human species. This perspective, for example, underlies Eric Wolf's (1999) evaluation of power among the Kwakiutl, the Aztecs, and in National Socialist Germany, in spite of the fact that he has acknowledged the importance of culture as a medium of social control.¹⁵ The Marxist emphasis on labor is both a measurable strength as well as a noteworthy weakness, especially when represented in terms of grand theory. There is little doubt that we can learn much historically about class formation and the structural inequalities of national and regional economies from a Marxist perspective, addressing as it does the distribution and allocation of social labor; we can do so especially in a contemporary context, where the primary interest is commodities and their circulation. However, the emphasis on social labor across times and cultures glosses over the mutual recognition and concerns of the public sphere, inclusive of contested culture, and thus advances a vision of the human condition as essentially informed by instrumental rationality. As I argue throughout this book, it is impossible to raise questions which are self-reflexive from an instrumental framework, that is, the types of questions that lead us to uncover the assumptions which inform knowledge claims. Moreover, an instrumental framework potentially overlooks the subliminal involvement of power in everyday experience or the life-world and ultimately regards cultural processes as derivative of social labor. It thus misses the generative potential of culture, including the cultural prefiguration of experience and social inequality.

The above critique of orthodox Marxism is not just applicable to the orthodoxy of political economy but also remains germane to the critique of

structural Marxism represented in the first edition of this book. While Althusser may no longer be read with the eagerness that was typical of his reception in the 1970s and early 1980s, his work is of interest as much for what it overlooked as the theoretical argument it advanced. Althusser's work generated significant interest because it raised the perennial issue in Marxism of the relation between base and superstructure. Marxist orthodoxy generally regarded culture or ideology, as noted above, as determined by the social relations of production, a conclusion that struck many social theorists, myself included, as too facile and reductive. Althusser, on the other hand, assigned a relative autonomy to culture by arguing that the economy was determinant in the "last instance," a conclusion that was appealing to some but still suggested to many others that the "base" ultimately structured cultural options or lived experience. In my view, Althusser's Marxism shares the general problem of structuralism in not being sufficiently attentive to human agency, a problem that renders the "last instance" unsuitable as a resolution to the question of how to reconcile political economy and culture. Without a notion of social agency as constitutive, culture becomes little more than labor's shadow.

The issue of social agency with respect to all the structural Marxists discussed in the first edition – Hindess and Hirst, Godelier, Terray, and Meillassoux – remains paramount, the lack of this concept is the main shortcoming of each of their theoretical positions. Hindess and Hirst are somewhat interesting in this regard because they argue in favor of "reality" as a product of theoretical discourse. While the incorporation of discourse is laudable as a critical alternative to naive empiricism, they fail to relate discourse to positioned actors, thus undermining the possibility of raising reflexive questions about the human interests that inform theory. Moreover, an absence of concrete reference to human agency as constitutive leaves Hindess and Hirst unable to address historical processes associated with a socially differentiated human arena in that human actors merely serve the ends of theoretical abstractions.

With Meillassoux, Terray, and Godelier, we encounter the ever-important issue of the applicability of modes of production analysis to indigenous societies. Generally, the French Marxist anthropologists have accepted the universality of modes of production analysis, with some fine-tuning to account for the central integrative role of kinship in indigenous societies. However, as Sahlin (1976) among others has argued, mode of production analysis is profoundly tied to a Marxist argument for the self-production of the species through the instrumentality of labor, thus glossing over the symbolic exchange of culture. Stated otherwise, mode of production analysis risks an economic interpretation that is foreign to practice in indigenous cultures. Because he has taken on the theme of rationality directly, Godelier (1972) has participated less in this structuralist Marxist tendency.

In the first edition of this book, I turned largely to E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and Jürgen Habermas to advance the cause of integrating political economy and cultural theory towards the end of a critical communicative theory. At the time, I thought it important to preserve the emphasis in political economy on history and economic constraints to human action – that is, the constraints ensuing from exploitation and the expropriation of social labor – while also turning to broader hegemonic themes that are produced and reproduced through culture. From E. P. Thompson, I was able to draw theoretically on a vision of historical process where human agents are not simply victims, moved totally by forces beyond their control, but rather, are engaged in the making and transforming of their quotidian lives. Such a view is not only important to understanding the multiple pathways and agencies of oppression, but it also draws our attention to resistance as a cultural practice.

Raymond Williams emphasizes cultural production in a manner that incorporates symbolism and the intersubjectivity of language as material process. Like Thompson, Williams is a scholar who is cited extensively in anthropology, the wide interest he arouses is surely due to his emphasis on material culture. Furthermore, unlike many theorists who regard language and symbolism as a largely mental or ideational process, Williams believes that language and culture are forms of material social interaction. In what amounts to a culturally informed Marxism – what is often referred to as neo-Marxism¹⁶ – Williams goes further than many contributors to the “linguistic turn” in social theory by suggesting through his concept of “selective tradition” that interlocutors engage each other from differentiated social positions, thus opening culture to considerations of dispute and domination.

Thompson and Williams continue to be of importance to anthropology because they provide theoretical insights to what Sidney Mintz (1996) has called the “anthropology of everyday life.” Both theorists emphasize the degree to which human agents are involved in the making of their social worlds and how the past operates effectively as both limit and possibility. Moreover, both Thompson and Williams are attentive to the traditional concerns of political economy in exploitation locally and beyond, while advancing a theory of culture that is nuanced and differentiated. In my view this is a real alternative to Tylor’s complex whole and to the tendency of semiotics and interpretive anthropology to be removed from concrete material practice.

The influence that Jürgen Habermas has had on anthropology has been limited, for defensible reasons. There is little doubt that Habermas’s project of creating a communicative theory of society with practical intent has much to contribute to anthropology, in spite of ethnographers who remain suspicious or generally critical of Habermas’s commitment to “grand the-

ory” and what he calls the unrealized critical potentials of modernism. Nevertheless, for anyone interested in the traditional concerns of the Anglo-American rationality debates in cross-cultural interpretation and the critique of positivistic science, Habermas has much to offer. Moreover, apart from Hannah Arendt, there are few theorists who equal Habermas’s understanding of the implications of technology, science, and instrumental rationality for public policy, the politics of the public sphere and even for the meaning of individual and collective experience. With respect to the rationality debates, Habermas links rationality as differentiated to knowledge-constitutive interests. Instrumental rationality constitutes its objects of knowledge towards the end of technical control, while communicative rationality establishes a framework of knowing where mutual recognition and mutual understanding are predominant. Finally, critical rationality informs the self-reflexive potentials of knowing and orients human subjects towards the world with an interest in challenging exploitation and domination, an interest cultivated by the Enlightenment but, according to Habermas, still unrealized in contemporary society. In short, the comprehensiveness and critical nature of Habermas’s theory provides for anthropology as a whole a number of theoretical options. They range from illustrating the contingency of knowledge to emphasizing the political and cultural consequences for contemporary life of the dominion of science and instrumental rationality. Moreover, his critique of domination is directed to critical theories as well, which he believes, like political economy, to be informed by instrumental rationality.

The major shortcoming of Habermas’s grand theory is its reliance on cognitive or developmental psychology, on Lawrence Kohlberg to be precise,¹⁷ to justify from an evolutionary perspective the reputed critical potentials of Enlightenment rationality. Like all evolutionary perspectives, Habermas’s invoking of developmental sequences risks treating contemporary indigenous cultures in particular as timeless images of a distant human past, what Johannes Fabian (1983) has called the “denial of coevalness.” That is, because Habermas’s theory implies that indigenous cultures are representative of an earlier stage of cognition and thus rational development than societies that have embraced the Anglo-French Enlightenment, indigenous cultures are consequently regarded as non-contemporaneous. Such a theoretical move as Habermas’s would, ironically, reproduce the very eclipsing of the public domain to which Habermas has directed his critique of instrumental reason. For this reason, some scholars may prefer Michel Foucault to Habermas as a source for critical theory, especially since Foucault’s theory takes a subversive stand against Enlightenment rationality.

Although Foucault is referred to in the first edition of this book, it might strike some readers as curious that his theoretical corpus did not occupy a larger part, bearing in mind my own criticisms of positivistic social science

and instrumental rationality. Surely Foucault's emphasis on discourse and the "disciplinary gaze" bears some resemblance to a communicative theory of social action? However, the decision to favor Habermas over Foucault in *Understanding Cultures* has less to do with shortcomings in Foucault and more with the foci of Habermas's critiques. Although Foucault's writings have ranged widely over topics from the medicalization of society to sexuality with great acuity and originality, apart from *The Order of Things*, his theoretical corpus is not as specifically directed as is Habermas's to the themes and issues embodied in and ensuing from the rationality debates. On the other hand, Habermas has long sought to establish the prerequisite conditions of human self-formation by outlining the normative bases of truth and mutual understanding through ordinary language. The ontological breadth of his theoretical project has led Habermas to confront both the hegemonic claims of positive science and the limitations of critical theory, including political economy. Moreover, Habermas (1976) has taken on directly the issue of rationality through his challenge to Popper and his followers, and has outlined clearly the limitations of structuralism for its lack of attention to praxis.¹⁸ Habermas thus addresses many of the issues covered in the rationality debates and his theory of communicative action accords with my own efforts to synthesize political economy and cultural theory.

As for Foucault, I believe that his theory of discourse has some of the same insufficiencies as Gadamer's ontological vision of language. As a challenge to epistemology, and I may add a credible one, Foucault argues that the notion of the subject and humanity itself is a recent product of discourse. Such an assertion as this decenters the individual as the foundation of epistemology, an assertion that is commensurate with Agnes Heller's (1981) historicization of individuality and MacPherson's (1962) critique of Hobbes. However, by decentering the individual and by extension humanity itself, Foucault abandons human agency as constitutive. After all, to whom do we attribute the formation of discourses even if Foucault, following Nietzsche, argues for the problematic nature of origins? Moreover, with little or no reference to human agency as constitutive then the door is open to Foucault to gloss over the internal tensions and contested discourses that emerge from concrete social actors and their differential positions within the public arena, both local and global.

The other issue which Foucault raises with brilliance but not without problems is the ubiquity of power. I can hardly think of another scholar who has taught us more about the subtleties and discursive nature of power than Foucault has. It is very easy to ignore, for example, how regulations regarding the sale of food, the burial of the dead, or the organization of social space in the hospital are related to both the increased disciplinary power of medicine and the ability of the modern state to shape individual experience

and practice. Foucault's emphasis on power is, therefore not only attuned to the negative consequences of social control but also to the positive potentials to create new conditions and life possibilities. We have clearly learned from Foucault to look for power in often ignored social spaces and public practices in a manner that is likely to influence scholarship for generations to come. However, Foucault's contention that power is ubiquitous does not go far enough in distinguishing politically, as Arendt (1958) has argued more generally, between the "power over" and the "power to." The latter refers to power as social control while the former involves the political capacity of human subjects to engage each other in the formation and shaping of the public sphere, even if public and private have been used – and they are not by Arendt – to obfuscate domestic labor and the "power" of women.

The above critique of Foucault is not meant as a dismissal, since his theoretical importance to contemporary anthropology and the human sciences is indisputable. Nevertheless, as with Habermas, it is important to acknowledge the limitations as well as the considerable merits. The tension perhaps between the "grand theory" of Habermas and the subversive discourses of Foucault, may suggest yet another alternative in Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984), although the potential theoretical options and favorites are far too numerous to review here. With Bourdieu, as with Habermas and Foucault, the emphasis is on a communicative understanding of social action. However, Bourdieu steers clear of assumptions of universal notions of rationality and avoids the potential problems associated with self-determining discourses. In fact, Bourdieu appeals to the very tradition of praxis that is so central to political economy and Marxism more generally, but puts a specific emphasis on culture, which is embodied in his notion of "habitus." With "habitus," Bourdieu has in mind the structured practices and dispositions defined subjectively and objectively that are representative of human subjects participating in fields of social action. The emphasis in Bourdieu is thus on human agency self-defining and defined. Moreover, Bourdieu maintains that human subjects participate in different fields of action which are governed by different logics, an assertion that refines the generality of action by accounting concretely for the differentiation of human actors themselves. With Bourdieu, fields of action governed by different logics challenge reified visions of culture and language by appealing to human agents located differentially in social space.

Bourdieu is also attentive to the multivocality of power, especially the symbolism of power as suggested through his concept of "cultural capital" (1984). By this, Bourdieu means acquired resources that serve symbolically and practically to secure privileges, economic or otherwise, within different fields of action and power. I found, for example, Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital especially useful (Ulin 1996) in discussing ethnographically

the particular economic advantages of Bordeaux wine on the basis of a historically constructed and culturally mediated winegrowing hierarchy, a hierarchy that simply could not be grasped solely in economic terms. Thus with Bourdieu, we have a theoretical alternative, only partly explicated here, to the homogeneous concept of culture and glossing of power represented in the rationality debates, an alternative that could advance the synthesis of political economy and cultural theory in a manner attentive to concrete human agency. However, while Bourdieu's theory offers much to anthropologists interested in the localization and differentiation of power as manifested through cultural praxis and informed historically, he does not appear to address with the same vigor the larger questions of globalization and cultural diasporas, which have captured the attention of contemporary anthropology.

New Directions

Apart from this Introduction, this new edition of *Understanding Cultures* contains chapters entitled "Modernism and Postmodernism" and "Bounded Selves – Bounded Cultures," which were not present in the original. The intention of authoring a new edition is to make the rationality debates conversant with theoretical issues such as representation, ethnographic authority, cultural diaspora, and globalism that have emerged in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s while also arguing for the continuing relevance of theories advanced by Winch, his adversaries, contemporary hermeneutics, political economy and cultural theory. This is an undertaking that follows from the encouragement of numerous colleagues who appreciated the breadth and depth of the original work but thought the original terrain could be expanded to incorporate new developments in social theory and more recent concerns in anthropology.

Since the publication of *Understanding Cultures* in 1984, there has been much debate in anthropology and social theory more generally regarding the ostensibly hegemonic implications of Enlightenment rationality and the aforementioned "grand theory," theory that addresses the human condition comprehensively, that the Enlightenment informs. Chapter 8, which is new to this volume, takes up the theme of grand narratives and the challenge that is presently posed by postmodernism, including its anthropological advocates. While not a self-identified postmodernist, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979) is a good example of an influential work that challenges grand narratives, even critical ones such as those developed by Marx, by showing the subaltern status of the multiplicity of eastern cultures when they are represented ideologically as homogeneous. Even more direct is the challenge to Enlightenment rationality and grand theory advanced through Jean-

François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1984), a book that has been very influential in sociocultural anthropology. Lyotard believes that new technologies and specialized discourses have rendered superfluous foundational theories and universal criteria of truth, both of which he regards as the logocentric pretense of the Enlightenment. In the place of grand theory, Lyotard supports relative and local discourses, pastiche, and collage which are subversive of reason and the authority of grand narratives.

Jürgen Habermas (1981, 1984) has been foremost in defending grand narratives and challenging Lyotard's postmodernism. His communicative theory of society seeks to identify universal conditions which are presupposed in communicative action and which mark the reciprocal process by which competing knowledge claims are advanced and mutual understanding or consensus achieved (Bernstein 1983). Like Marx, Habermas's theory, or more exactly metatheory, reconstructs the process of human self-formation and thus allies itself with the Enlightenment interest in progressive transparency of the human condition and liberation. Against Lyotard's relativist and fragmented discourse, Habermas's reconstructive metatheory links the possibility of emancipation and the critical review of knowledge claims to practical action viewed from the idea of communication free from domination.

While there is no doubt a subversive interest in Lyotard's postmodern theory,¹⁹ he appears to accept fragmentation and relative discourses at face value and does not therefore question how fragmentation is produced. From Habermas's perspective, fragmentation ensues from the context of advanced capitalism and the predominance of technical rationality and thus cannot assume the autonomy and removal from historical process that Lyotard's postmodernism suggests. Nevertheless, the emphasis on relative and fragmented discourses has been embraced by some contributors to the influential and challenging Clifford and Marcus volume, *Writing Culture* (1986), especially Clifford and Marcus themselves.

Writing Culture focuses significantly on ethnographic authority and writing, and the more general process of ethnographic representation. In most conventional ethnographies of the past, it was ethnographic realism that predominated – the having been there – and which established the authority of the text. We learn about indigenous others largely through what the ethnographer tells us as a self-appointed, and generally unquestioned, spokesperson for informants. However, as Hayden White (1978) has argued, and James Clifford more recently (1988), the authority of a text and its reputed claims to veracity are rhetorically constructed and so exploring the rhetorical construction of ethnographic texts is imperative. In fact, as Clifford and Marcus point out, and Clifford more exhaustively in his *The Predicament of Culture*, the rhetorical construction of texts invested in the authority of the ethnographer has much to do with the subaltern status of

the informants represented. One potential but by no means ultimate solution to this problem is to foreground informants' voices, a strategy that is pursued by nearly all contemporary ethnographies.

Much of what Clifford and Marcus say about the classic ethnographies and the need to pursue new strategies of ethnographic writing is commendable. There are, I believe, significant gains from foregrounding informants' voices: the vividness of the accounts and the emergence of a multiplicity of differentially located voices, even if ultimately ethnographic authority is still vested in the author.²⁰ For this to be otherwise, indigenous cultures would have to author their own accounts or at the very least have a larger collaborative role, a role that is generally not available as a consequence of structural inequalities and of the way research has been traditionally defined. Moreover, the subaltern position of indigenous cultures is not likely to be changed through alternative strategies of representation without taking into account the structuring of the global economy, perhaps the very sort of ethnographic strategy that is rejected by Clifford and Marcus in their support for pastiche, collage, and local narratives.

The questions raised through ethnographic representation, new strategies of writing, and the challenge to grand narratives never entered into the original rationality debates; however, I believe that they are a logical extension of the general themes of rationality and cross-cultural interpretation upon which the debates focus. For example, to make grasping what others do problematic rather than assuming that human actions are transparent or amenable to universal laws raises the issues of both interpretation and representation. Struggling with what it is that informants convey and mean is an exercise in prefiguring their intentions and meanings, albeit not always consciously as directed to the potential audiences of ethnographic writing. Winch suggests indirectly the concerns of representation when he argues that "we" must extend our language games to understand those of our indigenous informants, implying that the "we" incorporates language games that the anthropologist shares with the general audience to whom ethnography is directed. Moreover, Winch's argument that rationality is particular to language communities contrasts with the majority of his adversaries, who support an empiricist epistemology of science; it reproduces in part the current dispute between the local narratives of postmodernism and the grand narratives of the Enlightenment tradition.

While the rationality debates touch upon and surely suggest current interpretive and representational issues, none of the original participants address broader contemporary concerns of globalism and cultural diasporas in that the epistemological framework of the debates is one that largely resonates with an earlier tradition of anthropology where "bounded cultures" and "bounded selves" were predominant.²¹ Consequently, in revising *Understanding Cultures* I add a new concluding chapter in which I address

the theoretical and methodological limitations of the prevailing image of the lone anthropologist who works as part muse and part scientist within culturally circumscribed spaces.

Winch's theory of language games maintains that cross-cultural interpretation should proceed from exploring the internal logic and meanings of defined speech communities. This assumes that the life-worlds of anthropologist and informants may be incommensurable. To the contrary, Winch's adversaries have generally argued that cultural differences can be subsumed under a common set of assumptions and principles shared by the human species and hence they tend to privilege the natural sciences as paradigmatic for cross-cultural interpretation. Although the theoretical conclusions and methodological assumptions are quite different, both Winch and his critics, from Jarvie to MacIntyre, maintain a vision of cultural difference that reinforces the homogeneity of culture and the general epistemological assumptions of a "knowing subject" and "known object," even though for Winch the "known object" approximates a "co-subject." The rationality debates do not prepare us, therefore, to address culture as differentiated and contested nor do they take us very far in addressing globalism and post-colonial diasporas from which most of the most interesting and challenging questions to contemporary scholarship emerge.

Globalism and global theories draw our attention to the politics and power of interregional and international economic relations as historically composed and to the restructuring of capitalist economies following the World War II. This is the broader context to which anthropologists generally refer in trying to understand how cultures on the local level are affected by and respond to outside forces, a context that was generally ignored in village studies that predominated in the pre-and post-World War II years. Today, it is generally accepted in anthropology that in order to grasp local dynamics the ethnographer must look to the articulation of social practice on the local level with regional and global processes, without overlooking the capacity of individuals to influence political, economic, and cultural dynamics at the state level and beyond.²² Moreover, it is generally believed that structured inequalities and continuing structural transformations of the global political economy adversely affect subaltern local populations and thus lead to the cultural diasporas of migratory labor and immigration to core areas of the global economy.

I maintain, however, that globalism and even world systems theory is not adequate to the task of grasping the complexity of cultural diasporas and the multiplicity of mediated identities both within and between nation states. In fact, globalism as a concept has been ideologically appropriated by multinational corporations and the nation state to legitimate the universalization of technology, science, and capitalist social relations. World systems theory, on the other hand, while attentive to the broader dynamics of

political economy, disregards local-level social processes and the potential of local actors to shape and direct their destinies, an oversight that precludes a substantive understanding of local resistance. Short of a transformation in political praxis, what is required to grasp the density of cultural diaspora and diverse identities locally and beyond is, as I argue in the concluding chapter, an interpretive framework whose orientation is “multi-sited”.²³ Multi-sited analysis includes, as George Marcus (1998) asserts, not only a multiplicity of distinct field sites but also research conducted with many distinct constituencies within a single geographical region, a theoretical and methodological move designed to address discordant narratives.

As with the foregrounding of informants’ voices in ethnographic writing, which gained ascendancy in the 1980s, multi-sited research is becoming increasingly common because the pressing historical and contemporary questions – borders, identities, and cultural diasporas in particular – which inform research demand an approach that is sensitive to a multiplicity of cultural articulations. However, while multi-sited research may address many of the problems associated with bounded culture, it does not necessarily take on the “boundedness” of the ethnographer. This, I believe, is a long-standing problem of western society that likely has its origins in Renaissance culture and society (see Agnes Heller 1981) and, as Georg Lukács (1972) has argued, is associated with the eclipsing of community on the part of an incipient rural capitalism.

Addressing the problems of the “bounded self” in anthropology is likely as formidable a task as challenging the concept of “bounded culture,” perhaps even more so. Unlike the natural sciences where collaborative research is the norm, anthropologists generally undertake research alone and likewise tend to publish their research as sole authors.²⁴ Moreover, young anthropologists are for the most part left on their own to conduct their first field research and even if some collaboration should be involved, as rarely happens, the dissertation is assumed to have one author and is even burdened with the expectation of originality. My point is not that anthropologists working alone cannot carry out very interesting and important research and then convey this research with insight and brilliance. Rather, I maintain that the demands of important research questions necessitate collaborative work and within a field context that is multi-sited. While I take pride in my own field research with cooperative winegrowers in southwest France (see Ulin 1996), I have no problem recognizing the considerable benefits that would have ensued from collaborative work. The terrain covered in that work is immense and the depth of analysis would have been improved by working with others.²⁵

To conclude, the addition of a new final chapter on bounded cultures and bounded selves illustrates how inadequate the strict epistemological frame-

work of the original rationality debates is in addressing the current issues of globalization and cultural diasporas, which result from political and economic transformations in the world. To raise questions today about understanding the “other” necessitates engaging the shifting grounds of cultural identity from a multiplicity of geographical and spatial frameworks. One must also take on the challenge presented through a view of culture as disputed or contested. The new parameters of anthropological inquiry that accommodate “peoples on the move” should not be regarded as conclusive nor should they be seen as an antidote to the fragmentation of the discipline. I continue to believe – and here I betray again my intellectual commitment to grand theory – that there is a relationship between cultural diasporas, globalism, and the fragmentation that challenges the unity of all contemporary professions. If I am correct in the premonition, then we need to look to political praxis rather than exclusively to intellectual praxis for indications as to how to link the power of “knowing” to social justice on a global scale. Short of such a demanding and monumental task that far exceeds any individual effort, the new edition of this book is offered, as was the original, hopefully, as a provocative contribution to an ongoing interdisciplinary conversation on cross-cultural interpretation and as a testimony to the important and enduring theoretical concerns that are raised through the rationality debates.