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# Provocations of European Ethnology

AT A SPECIAL WORKSHOP held in the fall of 1994, we gathered to discuss the rapid growth of interest in European ethnography and ethnology, especially since the foundation of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe in 1986, and its implications for the larger development of anthropological theory.<sup>1</sup> After the deliberations, each of us developed the position paper originally formulated for that initial encounter. The texts that follow are the result. They claim neither thematic nor theoretical unity, but they do suggest that the refocusing of anthropological interest on one of the discipline's cultural contexts of emergence, coupled with the geopolitical shifts of the past decade, may have contributed to a reconsideration of the role of social and cultural anthropology in the formulation of a social theory. In one sense the "anthropologizing" of Europe was a necessary methodological counterpart to the dethronement of Europe as the fount of all wisdom. But what, for those who still (or for the first time) claim it as their identity and home, is Europe? We offer these brief ruminations

as, we hope, a productive provocation to our colleagues working in a world that has rarely been able to adopt a stand of indifference toward the idea of Europe and toward all that this idea has entailed.

## Theorizing Europe: Persuasive Paradoxes

Michael Herzfeld

In these comments we examine the question of "Europe," both its presence in anthropology as an object of study and its relatively slow appearance in the canon of major ethnographic sites, in order to ask what the recent "turn to Europe" portends for anthropology. Until only some two or three decades ago, our discipline often seemed preoccupied with just about every part of the world *except* Europe. Yet few today would argue that this is still the situation—if, in more than a crassly littoral sense, it ever was. The goal now is thus not to argue for some sudden and phantasmagoric capitulation in which ethnographers of the exotic turn abruptly to the study of Europe. To the contrary, such a move would deprive Europeanist ethnography of its greatest asset: the peculiar status of "Europe" within the field has important lessons for *all* anthropologists. But these do not include a catechism of conversion.

I wish to suggest three areas of timely interest: new ways of examining the concept of colonialism; a closer look at questions of who speaks for whom (and its embarrassing corollary, where do "our" ideas come from?); and an epistemological critique drawn from the well-attested interpretation of nationalism, colonialism, and the rise and proliferation of our discipline. These three areas possess a certain mutual relevance and coherence,

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and they serve to open up a discussion of the ways in which current practical exigencies, from limited funding to geopolitical realignments and closed borders, may generate useful perspectival shifts at the level of theory.

Colonialism first, then. Europe is often seen as the source rather than the destination of colonialism, yet Europe contains a number of sites that were colonized rather than colonizing even in Victorian times: Malta and Cyprus are clearly defined examples. For Cyprus, Vassos Argyrou (1996a, 1996b, 1997) has already documented some of the consequences for daily social practice. There are some less obvious cases as well; Begoña Aretxaga (1995) and Jane Nadel-Klein (1991) have argued for Ireland and Scotland, respectively, as the training grounds for the grand expansions of colonial rule in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere far from Europe (see also Feldman 1991). Larry Wolff (1994) has suggested an analogous subordination of the former Eastern Bloc countries. There is also the vexed question of relationships between colonialism and class domination, and this is further complicated by two other historical phenomena: the massive migration from the former colonies in Europe and the perennial challenges that groups such as the Gypsies and the Jews have posed for bureaucratic and scholarly classification of nation-states (see Boyarin 1991; Okely 1987). In countries still recovering from the hardships of totalitarian control or local wars, pluralism may not seem a high priority to the majority population or even to some relatively privileged minorities.

There is an additional and perhaps equally instructive complication. Colonialism, as I have noted, is often taken to be a primarily European, or at least Western, project. (But see Robertson 1995 for a countervailing example.) Greece, however, and indeed much of the Balkans entered the family of nation-states, not through the breakup of a European empire but from the detritus of Ottoman suzerainty, as did much of the Arab world. It is thus important to ask whether Syrian, Greek, and Serbian complaints about "the Turkish yoke" bear witness to "another" colonialism or whether, as I suspect, they instead indicate a hegemony by certain specific Western powers that find it convenient to treat the Turkish past as a stain on these countries' occidental escutcheon. For these powers the orientalist argument has proved useful for reining in the lesser and more dependent European countries' frequent demands for greater control over their own destinies. It has perpetuated an uneven struggle over cultural capital at the global level, a struggle that is also reproduced, as again Argyrou's materials especially illustrate, in everyday life. It is also important to note that the rhetoric of this differentiation continues to animate local violence and outside meddling, most obviously in Bosnia.

In other words, we must confront two very different, but interrelated, variants of the usual sense of colonialism: the possibility of a non-Western variant and the distinct possibility that a more discreet and perhaps far more insidious Western colonialism, one that is primarily engaged today in the international politics of cultural distinction, is still very much alive and well.

My second point stems from the first and logically anticipates the issue that follows. It concerns the various responses of Europeans to the, sometimes startling, discovery that they are already under the dissecting glaze of anthropologists. This is *both* an intellectual refinement of a covert racism (of the "we are not savages" variety), at one level, and at another, paradoxically, a late version of the colonialist critique of anthropology. These are not necessarily mutually incompatible stances. Taken together, however, they indicate how powerful and pervasive is the model of occidental superiority and the idea that rational scholars are somehow free of cultural constraints or the messy vagueness of symbolism (see especially Connor 1993; Huntington 1993).

Moreover, they reflect the perpetuation of colonialist assumptions even, or especially, within the optimistically named "new Europe." This appears with notable force in the epistemological nativism of certain Spanish anthropologists (e.g., Llobera 1986; Moreno Navarro 1984), although rarely those in the national capital, a contrast that shows how easily subnational hierarchies may reproduce international inequalities (see Fernandez 1983). As more moderate voices have cautioned, however (on Greece, for example, see Bakalaki 1993; Gefou-Madianou 1993), there is ample space for mutual generosity: displacing a genuinely colonialist arrogance by an equally monopolistic nativism may be historically interesting and perhaps even politically understandable, but it risks reproducing the very discourse that it seeks to destroy, an irony already noted by some African intellectuals in the postcolonialist context (Mbembe 1992; Mudimbe 1988).

The anthropology of nation-states—in which, after all, considerable intellectual labor has already been expended on ethnological questions (too often contemptuously derided by anthropologists as "folklore")—benefits from a more dynamic interaction of endogenous and exogenous perceptions. It also, we should add, challenges the essentializing propensities of both and of the exceptionalisms (national and anthropological) that these terms imply. Mutual hostility is counterproductive; as a model more worthy of emulation, let me mention George Saunders's recent (1993) exploration of Ernesto De Martino in this journal and its exposure to local discussion and dissection in the Italian journal *Ossimori* (Saunders 1995). This study and the reactions to it suggest that De Martino had great implications (many of them never realized because of the

parochialism of the "great traditions" of academia) for the development of close relations between anthropology, psychology, and political philosophy.

Along the lines I have argued for Greece (Herzfeld 1987), we can more generally take Europe as an object for comparison with anthropology. This is not to focus on the petty concerns of a single discipline in a more collectivist rendition of "navel gazing" but to *use* the highly accessible history of what is, after all, a historically European-derived cultural activity to flush out some of the assumptions it shares with nationalism and colonialism, both of which, if not quite as uniquely European as some commentators have argued (for nationalism, especially, see Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983), are engaged in extremely self-conscious processes of classification and control. This should serve in turn to disembody the parochiality of much current theory, permitting a more generous recognition of the extent to which the grand theoretical constructions of our discipline may have been generated by local observers.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the ethnographic demonstration that Eurocrats are as subject to cultural constraints will help to effect the converse move to a more contextual reading of "rationality."<sup>3</sup> Thus, always paradoxically but also persuasively, the inclusion of Europeanist ethnographic studies among the *comparanda* of a still-comparativist enterprise may lead us to a clearer identification of some of the sources of its residually persistent ethnocentrism.

Europe is currently undergoing a virtual orgy of self-construction, and this has generated some further anthropological reflections, although many of them are still occidentalist in their relative exclusion of the formerly communist regions.<sup>4</sup> It is vital at this juncture to keep in full view the artificial nature of these processes and the direct engagement of social scientists in them. Comparing a nation-state or supranational entity with anthropology or any other social-science discipline is emphatically not a matter of comparing discrete objects (see Handler 1985). But the mutual entailment of investigators and investigated does give a more global twist to the ideal of participant observation, which it also, and in direct consequence, translates to a more interesting theoretical level.

The epistemological goal is not always uppermost in Europeanists' minds, and indeed their ethnographies have in the past often, although not always, been either atheoretical in focus or theoretically derivative. Often, in fact, for very tangible reasons—restricted access in socialist countries, a sense of boring familiarity in others—they have seemed quite far removed from the issues that excited their colleagues working in classically exotic places. Even there, however, there is an important opportunity for intellectual reflection. In the converse racism of a discipline that desires to be antiracist,

the ethnography of Europe has often been viewed as uninteresting or, perhaps more plausibly, as an expendable luxury given the restricted resources available both in funding and in the curriculum. But the paradox remains that the one area where the ethnography of Europe holds the greatest promise lies in the critical reconsideration of our theoretical resources, precisely because this is where it has arrived in the most belated way. In an age that is critical of European domination, Europeans who care about the future of anthropology must and do accept that they are now fully in its gaze and that this has begun to generate a powerful, empirically grounded rethinking of some of the discipline's most cherished assumptions.

## The "New" Eastern Europe in an Anthropology of Europe

Katherine Verdery

The anthropology of Europe is a prime vantage point for combining the discipline's traditional task of combating ethnocentrism (and especially Eurocentrism) with the critique of hegemonic ideology, a critique central not just to our field but to contemporary social theory more broadly. Inasmuch as European domination and influence have spread many of the categories of European thought into the world's far corners, anthropological discussions of hegemonic ideology in a wide variety of settings must come to grips with categories central to European experience. The most trenchant critique of European hegemony must therefore begin in Europe itself. In these remarks, I will suggest two ways in which this task might be pursued through an anthropology of Europe and what role the eastern part of the continent might have in that. The first way is by furthering the critique and deconstruction of the central categories of European experience. The second is by a more nuanced presentation of what is "really happening" in the area of the world so frequently characterized, in omnibus fashion, as "the West."

The image of Europe as a center of developed capitalism and liberal democracy has grounded the division of the continent into West and East, mutually constitutive. This division, heir to an earlier orientalism, formed the contending parties to the Cold War. With the collapse of the East beginning in 1985–91, both the division and the war are obsolete. Political scientist Ken Jowitt catches the significance of this neatly in the brilliant essay "The Leninist Extinction."

For a half century, we have thought in terms of East and West, and now there is no East as such. The primary axis of international politics has "disappeared." . . . Its "extinction" radically revises the framework within which the

West, the United States itself, the "Third World," and the countries of Eastern Europe, the former Russian Empire, and many nations in Asia have bounded and defined themselves. [Jowitt 1992:260-261]

In other words, everything that the West has meant by "we" is now subject to question. This is a wonderful opportunity for anthropology, not only to participate in the inevitable rebounding, redefining, and renaming of what Jowitt calls the Genesis environment ("in the beginning the earth was without form and void") of the post-Cold War era, but also to make our field a center of intellectual production for members of other disciplines working in Europe, and perhaps elsewhere.

The anthropology of Eastern Europe offers a beginning, as it takes on a job other anthropologists have done for decades: describing the penetration of capital into noncapitalist ways of organizing the world. Because the dominant area-studies discourse in research on Eastern Europe assumes more or less unquestioningly that what has been happening in that region is the rapid installation of capitalism and liberal democracy, anthropologists working there are pushed in the direction of showing that this is not what has been happening and that the very categories need to be inspected for the ideological vehicles they are. While this might not be the first choice of problem for ethnographers of Eastern Europe, the circumstances of this specialty compel it into a critique of Europe's fundamental identity categories. Making of necessity a virtue, I would say that Eastern Europe is a particularly advantageous place from which to launch this culturally based critique of liberal capitalist democracy. This is so because Eastern Europe is especially close to capitalist democracy's heartland and because politicians (not to mention everyday thinking) in Western Europe, the United States, and the East itself have so long presented the East as a group of civilized captive nations with European traditions who, unlike the Third World, would indeed be European if only they could throw off the Soviet yoke. Therefore, a critique from this space is especially telling.

The critique I have in mind starts from ethnographic research to find out how people in Eastern European countries are living the "Second Great Transformation" and what cultural forms they are constructing as they do so. Anthropological studies of capitalist development elsewhere have pointed to some of the significant sites for such an inquiry. For instance, deeply constitutive of a capitalist system is the notion that there exists an independent sphere called "the economy," an invisible, agentless actor that works according to its own laws. An ethnography of Eastern Europe can help to show not only how (and to what extent) people come to accept this idea and through what social technologies but also, therefore, how arbitrary a construc-

tion this is. That is not news to anthropologists, but it will be to the economists and policy makers who have themselves been taken in by the ideology of the market and who might be more susceptible to proof of the point using Eastern European as opposed to Third World data.

What, then, is the economy, what is the market, and how are they created? Can we learn something from postsocialist Eastern Europe which might illuminate the historicity of these forms in the European heartland? Elsewhere I have suggested that a mammoth pyramid scheme in Romania served as a site for reconceptualizing money and creating an independent sphere for its circulation and that critical in this process were religious notions such as faith and hope (Verdery 1995). Thus, the rationalization and institutional separation of the economy may be taking place through irrational means. Here are elements for a critique of economic rationality from a perhaps unexpected angle.

Another area for investigation is the idea of property. As private property comes to be restored in various forms across Eastern Europe, the extraordinary complexity of the very idea and possible forms of property comes more fully into view (see, for example, Hann 1993; Verdery 1994a). What exactly is this notion of possessing an exclusive right that is so central to Western selves and Western capitalist forms (see Strathern 1988)? The reconstruction of private property, along with the recommodification of land and labor, will also prove basic to theoretical critiques of the notion of commodification and its place in social science theory, as Martha Lampland (1995) has nicely shown.

The situation is similar with the state. Following a period of bringing the state back into social science, an anthropology of (Eastern) Europe is well positioned to ask what, in fact, the state is. Europe is the home of modern state formation, from which this particular institutional form became hegemonic for organizing international relations. It seems, however, that Western policy makers and scholars take the state as much for granted as they do the economy. How else can we explain the appalling failure to foresee the consequences of the destruction of the Yugoslav and Soviet states? The juxtaposition within Europe, then, of different (and changing) forms of the state places the entire construct into question, opening the processes of its development and functioning to ethnographic investigation.<sup>5</sup> The interdisciplinary "civil society industry" participates (though not always helpfully) in this project. (See the critique in Hann and Dunn 1996.)

I could list many more topics that emerge from the transformation of Eastern European societies, but I believe my point is clear. An anthropology of (Eastern) Europe can be a locus for a cultural critique of Western forms, including capitalism as a cultural system and the

format of the so-called liberal tradition. The contribution such a critique might make to eroding Eurocentrism is, I hope, self-evident.

The second way in which an anthropology of Europe might contribute to that same goal is through exploring the constructs that have governed the paragraphs above: "the West," "liberal democracy," and "capitalism," all spoken of as if they were unitary and all understood at least as much through clichés as through adequate investigation. The West, in particular, has governed writing by anthropologists who work in other parts of the world and often set their problems, or phrase their analyses, with reference to some image of the West that throws their data into relief. Books ranging from Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) to Marilyn Strathern's *The Gender of the Gift* (1988) have used this sort of construct in order to render visible the contrasts they wish to emphasize. Eastern Europeanists (including myself) have also made generous use of these unitary images in discussing the nature of socialism, its representation, or its transformation.

While clarifying by means of an opposing example, or, more baldly, by the use of a straw man, can facilitate communication, the constructs I have named are themselves so ideological as to raise doubts about their utility. What sort of variety is there, in fact, within the West? To what extent is there any real overarching similarity among the parts of Europe in their politics, the workings of their form of capitalism, the operations of their civil societies, the organization of patriarchy in their gendered divisions of labor, their people's understandings of money or property, and so on? What exactly is the thing called liberal democracy (if it is a thing) toward which Eastern Europe is being called? We would serve fellow anthropologists and enhance the precision of their work, as well as enriching the fare of other disciplines, if we were to offer careful accounts of what the West actually consists of (see also Battaglia 1995). What are the central categories of experience of various European peoples, and can they be aggregated in some way that makes comparative sense? Are there, in fact, characteristic organizations of self, work, time, and possession that define a form of core capitalism whose worldwide expansion remains an interesting thing to study? Or, in invoking supposedly characteristic features of an unexamined West, are anthropologists reinforcing ideologies we might wish instead to challenge?

To put the job of an anthropology of Europe in these terms would situate the enterprise well within the central impulses of our own field, as well as of several others that are also engaged in the critique of knowledge, modernity, and hegemonic European forms.

## Explorations in Terra Cognita

Susan Carol Rogers

The emergence of Europeanist anthropology in the United States constitutes one aspect of the breakdown in an earlier disciplinary division of labor whereby history and the other social sciences were concerned with particular dimensions of the familiar West while anthropology attended to the exotic "Rest." Among other consequences of this old division, American Europeanist scholarship in the sister disciplines developed at the center of those disciplines and largely in direct interaction with highly elaborated and well-established indigenous scholarly traditions and institutions. Anthropologists, on the other hand, were most likely to work in relatively unknown places about which they could claim exclusive scholarly expertise. Few American colleagues from other disciplines ventured into the territory figuring prominently on the ethnographic atlas, places where indigenous scholarship was either altogether absent or else unknown or unrecognized within the American academy.

It is easy to argue that such distinctions have by now blurred in all directions. The boundaries between the West and the rest, like those dividing disciplines, are perhaps less sharply defined than they once appeared to be, and virtually all modes of inquiry, pursued by foreign and indigenous scholars, are apt to be considered at least potentially suited to almost any part of the world. Anthropological knowledge can no longer be defined as the study of particular kinds of places or peoples but, rather, has become one form of scholarly knowledge about societies which may also be known by other means. Perhaps nowhere is this shift more apparent than in well-studied and diversely analyzed Europe. Anthropologists working in Europe, then, face in especially obvious form a number of challenges that have emerged, often in more diffuse manners, for those working elsewhere in the world.

Actually, this point requires a significant nuance. To a striking degree, the old geographic/disciplinary division of labor has been reproduced in European Studies. Even a cursory look at American scholarship on Europe reveals a preoccupation with France and Germany, considerable attention to Britain, some marginal interest in Poland, Italy, and Spain, and not much concern with anywhere else.<sup>6</sup> The Europe of interest to most American scholars (and perhaps to most Americans?) in fact consists principally of that geographically and demographically rather limited part of the continent that has been politically and culturally most dominant on the world scene. That Europe also corresponds to the countries possessing among the largest, most well-established, and prestigious indigenous scholarly establishments in the world.

Anthropologists, in contrast, have tended to skirt that Europe and account for a disproportionate share of the American research conducted outside of the France-Germany-Britain core. Insofar as we have bypassed those countries that are most attractive to our compatriots and that possess the strongest indigenous scholarly traditions, American anthropologists have in effect been able to retain relatively exclusive scholarly expertise about the Europe we study.

As a result, the novel requirements of an anthropology of the contemporary world, listed below, are perhaps unevenly applicable across the continent. Most obvious in the well-studied and familiar core nations of Europe, they may be easier to disregard elsewhere. None of them, though, are entirely irrelevant to American anthropological inquiry as it is now conducted anywhere in the world.

#### **Dealing with Well-Established Literatures from Other Disciplines**

Arguably, scholarly knowledge about the world areas associated with classical anthropology (especially Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa, Native North America) has been defined largely by anthropological work. Anthropologists working in these areas need not necessarily venture outside of their own discipline, while researchers from other disciplines are apt to require at least passing familiarity with the extant anthropological literature. Knowledge about Europe, on the other hand, has been defined primarily within intellectual and experiential traditions other than those of anthropology. Indeed, there exist vast volumes of scholarly literature and countless entrenched paradigms treating most of the topics an anthropologist might expect to address there: political and legal institutions, economic development, systems of thought, social class, expressive arts, mass media, and the histories of all of these. To build upon, challenge, or otherwise credibly contribute to existing scholarship on Europe, anthropologists generally must command one or several of the well-established literatures outside of the discipline. My work on rural France, for example, has required familiarity with both the empirical information and the conventional conceptualizations to be found in the substantial existing scholarship on French rural and agrarian history, human geography, and rural sociology. This requires a kind of second-level ethnographic exercise: sufficient immersion to grasp predominant modes of thought, combined with sufficient distance to avoid going native (i.e., a quasi reproduction of conventional history, geographic, or rural sociological analysis).

#### **Addressing Diverse Knowledgeable Audiences**

Insofar as anthropologists possessed relatively exclusive specialist knowledge about, for example, Trobrianders, Nuer, or Kwakiutl, such knowledge not only carried a priori authority but could be assumed to be the only source of information available to the audiences addressed. Potential consumers of Europeanist anthropology, on the other hand, are likely to know a great deal about Europe, very little of it from anthropological sources. Even if we assume a uniquely American academic audience, this would include the large numbers of specialists from other disciplines, newspaper readers, viewers of European films, tourists, people with European friends or relatives, and those who studied European history or literature in college, all bringing their prior knowledge to bear on what we have to offer. This means both that excessively obvious, naive, or inaccurate information is less likely to pass and that we are obliged to take into account and address (explicitly or implicitly) a much more complex array of assumptions, stereotypes, and common knowledge.

#### **Communicating with Indigenous Colleagues**

Most European societies possess well-established academic systems defined by their own intellectual traditions, some of them carrying considerable prestige within the American academy. Indeed, many American scholars have been drawn to Europeanist research through an interest in the work of their European counterparts. The attraction and influence of French historiography, for example, accounts in significant measure for the large number of American historians in France. In contrast, the few European forms of anthropology that are widely known within the American academy (especially British and French) developed, like their American counterpart, as the study of the exotic, inspiring little indigenous or American research in their countries of origin. In general, American anthropology developed in the absence of any comparable scholarly traditions indigenous to its research settings, as well as in isolation from the various European forms of anthropology (except the British), themselves largely independent of each other. For American anthropologists, then, research in Europe presents an unaccustomed situation: settings long occupied by indigenous scholars who, furthermore, are not necessarily inclined to grant special legitimacy to American anthropological perspectives. Without a doubt, the exchange of scholarly expertise from insider and outsider points of view, as well as across disciplinary or nationally specific conceptual apparatuses is potentially stimulating, but it is not an exercise for which most of us are well prepared (Rogers 1996, in press). The poverty of international networks (except Anglo-American) within the discipline

undoubtedly weakens the weight of anthropology within European studies and impoverishes the discipline as a whole. The effort required to enter into meaningful dialogue with the array of nationally distinctive traditions falling under the rubric of anthropology, however, is just as certainly considerable.

### Anthropologists among the Europeanists

It is safe to say that European studies is in a state of considerable disarray. No one is quite sure even where the boundaries of Europe now lie; recent developments within and among the European Union, the old East Bloc, and the former Soviet Union have all shaken to the core well-established paradigms and the confidence of experts in their ability even to understand current situations, much less to predict even short-term likelihoods. This situation seems to have opened a window of opportunity for anthropological perspectives. For some Europeanists, anthropology seems newly relevant insofar as "culture" and related forms of irrationality offer a last resort or black-box explanation for developments that otherwise make no sense. Certainly, the unsettling of Europe has rendered many of the terms by which it has been defined more visible and open to contest and, therefore, both more accessible to anthropological scrutiny and analysis and more obviously interesting to anthropological theory. Anthropological inquiry could well play an important role in redefining what we know about Europe.

The strengths of the discipline in this regard, however, are also its weaknesses. On the one hand, anthropology could help birth some galvanizing departures from fatigued paths precisely because anthropological modes of thought have not been as directly defined by and entrenched in the study of Europe as have those of the other disciplines and imply a much broader cross-cultural frame of reference than do the others. On the other hand, these characteristics also mean that the anthropological enterprise per se does not rest on much explicit knowledge about Europe, nor has it generally involved direct engagement in rethinking well-known parts of the world. Compelling rethinking requires a secure grasp of established thought. That means that consequential Europeanist anthropology demands not only attention to the kinds of specific phenomena we are trained to grasp ethnographically but also effective positioning of our insights with respect to extraordinarily well-entrenched, diverse, and voluminous prior knowledge. For our perspectives on Europe to be heard, they must be informed by a kind of second-order ethnographic understanding of the relevant bodies of extant scholarship in other disciplinary and national traditions and of the knowledge possessed by our potential audiences.

For better or worse, the anthropology of terra incognita undoubtedly is no more. This means that the anthropological enterprise is by now less about defining the unknown than about redefining the well-known. The challenges of the latter, however, are not quite the same as the former, and this is perhaps particularly apparent in the European setting. The study of Europe could well play an important role in redefining how we undertake and articulate anthropological inquiry, on pain of leading the way to an anthropology reduced to a very faint whistle in the wind.

### Brief Note on the Idea of "An Anthropology of Europe"

Talal Asad

I argue that, for anthropologists, it is important to understand Europe for at least three reasons. First, the West is where anthropology as an academic discipline developed and where it continues to have its main locus. Second, anthropologists typically study developing societies, that is, the beliefs and practices of non-European peoples, that have been variously affected by global capitalism. Finally, modernity is commonly spoken of as the historical destiny or the political aim of what are called developing peoples, and modern concepts have long begun to articulate important aspects of their lives, whereas it has hitherto been as partial equivalents of *Europe* that such terms as *modernity*, *liberal-democratic culture*, *advanced/late capitalism*, *the developed nations*, and *civilization* were understood.

We have three senses of *civilization* in use today: first, a single universal development; second, a community with its own unique character, one that is qualitatively different from all others; and third, a set of achievements distinctive of a particular population, which is rankable as higher or lower than another such set and perhaps capable of further development. This last sense is the most interesting and complex of the three because it is *a sense that presupposes a narrative about the emergence and universalization of the West*. This narrative defines a shifting geography: Greece and Palestine; Rome, Latin (that is, Western) Christendom, the Teutonic Christian knights on the expanding borders of eastern Germany, Westernizing Slavs such as Peter the Great; then westward into the Americas, south-eastward into Australia and New Zealand. Neither in its earliest moments nor in its latest was Europe entirely coterminous with what post-Renaissance geographers have defined as Europe. But it is coterminous with an increasingly structured and accelerating history that aspires to embrace the world: the ancient world, the medieval world, the modern world.

But people persist in asking specifically: Is there such an entity as the West? I argue that if Euro-American politicians, educators, bankers, military men, business entrepreneurs, journalists, and tourists all act in the world on the assumption that there is something like "the West and the (heterogeneous) Rest," then there is in fact a West. Put another way, the West is a series of acts (mundane and world-historical) that seek to perform civilization.

Although I think civilization in this sense is a highly problematical concept, its use to mark an opposition between the West and the non-West is an important fact about the relations of power in the world today. In this connection, I want to examine briefly an argument that has surfaced repeatedly in recent theorizing. The argument is that because of the increasing (and increasingly rapid) movement of peoples, commodities, information, and much else, the resultant global phenomena of cultural mixing and exchange render all talk of bounded social and cultural units, including especially West and non-West, meaningless.

But the modern world is surely full of boundaries, and bounded units, although these are often very different from those the world has known in the past. Sovereign states are perhaps the most obvious examples, for their boundaries exclude and include in several ways. There are also innumerable locations within national states which have boundaries: local governments, educational institutions, units of property, and so on. Boundaries are after all central to the politics of institutions, a major component of what such politics are about.

Apart from social and political boundaries, there are intellectual boundaries. What does or does not count as knowledge, as explanation, as truth or falsehood, what counts as belonging to one tradition as against others: all of these criteria presuppose the setting up of boundaries. The criteria may change, indeed they do change, and people may differ in the degree to which they are willing to entertain ideas and practices belonging to other traditions. (And surely we applaud those who are more open in this regard.) But to the extent that people identify such traditions or argue over what is or is not legitimately part of them, they also recognize boundaries between them. And to that extent boundaries do exist in the real world that anthropologists study. Of course, not every kind of cultural boundary is coterminous with the nation-state. But who maintained that they were?

The complex, unequal relations between Western and non-Western locations, I maintain, must be understood centrally in terms of a great historical transformation of people's ways of living through which the West has hegemonized the non-European world. This change involves not the permanent elimination of boundaries

but new ways of making and unmaking them. And among these boundaries is the one that separates West from non-West. The fact that the former has continually drawn on the latter in order to constitute itself is not proof, as some theorists mistakenly think, that the distinction between West and non-West is meaningless. It is the evidence of how power has constructed a particular difference across various similarities.

I want to make two disclaimers here. First, no moral judgment is directly intended when I refer to Western hegemony. Second, in speaking of European-initiated transformation of the world, I do not refer to an inevitable spread of cultural homogeneity. On the contrary, the extension of the West has meant, among other things, the production of new heterogeneities. Indigenous traditions in a multitude of non-Western locations are struggling to maintain control over the production of these heterogeneities, not always successfully.

I repeat: To talk of hegemony does not commit one to the view that the hegemonized world is socially and culturally homogenous. It implies only that modern political, legal, moral, and aesthetic principles are (variously) given priority throughout the world. In other words, Western categories of politics, law, morality, and aesthetics become fundamental to arguments about social practices.

Over a period of at least two centuries, modern nation-states, technologies, economic principles, class organizations, moral values, and political games have been extended from Western to non-Western locations. Nothing comparable has moved the other way in modern times. This is in part the story told by Marx in terms of the historical expansion of capitalism, but only in part and then too often by representing contingency as the working out of some great historical law.

It may be objected that these structures and principles have not in fact been evident in most of the non-West, that most of it does not have successful modern states, modern economies, or modern politics. But the very fact that commentators talk of the nation-state failing in some places, of civil societies virtually nonexistent in others, and of the dismal economic record of most governments clearly shows that Western categories are still being used as yardsticks. Of course non-Western countries differ enormously in their material circumstances and cultural forms, and contemporary trends have by no means eliminated these differences. To speak of Westernization here is to refer to the new moral and political languages and the social activities which they seek to organize, within nation-states as well as between them.

Some will say: Why talk of this process as the extension of the West and not as modernization? I reply: When did this question become significant? Throughout the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, Europeans,



as well as Asians and Africans, wrote of "civilization," "Western civilization," and "European civilization" as if these were interchangeable notions. It was during the period of decolonization after World War II that these expressions were largely replaced by others, such as "modernization" and "development." Does this terminological change reflect a different world? My answer is both yes and no. Everyone now lives in a different world in the sense that politically independent countries are now undertaking the project of progressive change and that the means of change and their objectives have become enlarged. It is the same world as before in the sense that the project of the continuous material and moral transformation of entire populations in the direction first pioneered by Europeans is still the central one.

If it is true (as I argue) that Europe includes a complex history and a shifting geography—that it articulates and intersects with the times and spaces of other communities, states, civilizations—what can an anthropology of Europe be? I am not sure whether a satisfactory answer can be given to this question. But the advice that it is enough to do ethnographic fieldwork in geographical Europe surely will not do. Some idea of Europe must be presupposed here. I would go further: I am certain that no anthropology whatever can do entirely without the idea of Europe and of the acts that perform its civilization.

## The Role of Europe in the Study of Anthropology

Andrew Lass

Any discussion of the role of anthropology in the study of Europe should compel us to reconsider what we would otherwise take for granted: whether anthropology has in fact something unique to offer to the study of Europe and whether it has the authority to do so. We are all perfectly aware of our discipline's European roots. Our presence there is always-already a return home, and our inquiry must therefore take into account how the other perceives us as much as it must explore the historical and theoretical foundations of this relationship between a discipline and a place. Much can be and has been gained from an intellectual history in which one theme stands out among the many. In "bringing anthropology back home," we are doing more than just colonizing another potential ethnographic territory (how aggressive and colonialist this intellectual "curiosity" can get is well illustrated by the most recent, even fashionable interest in the study of Central and Eastern Europe) and so contributing to the discipline's symbolic capital. In a unique sort of way, we are also turning the whole discipline on itself. Europe, too, forces anthropology to confront its limits and traditional interests as

socially and culturally constructed and, in doing so, to reveal its own ethnographic value. This encounter, in turn, can contribute to a better understanding of both anthropology and Europe. It is here, in this hall of mirrors, that we can find our strength as well as our likeness. Such a reflexive turn can not only make for good intellectual history or political critique but engage us in actual ethnographic description and analysis that lies beyond the tired anthropological navel gazing.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the theme of reflexivity, anthropology's willingness to account for its own descriptions and analysis in light of sociocultural formations of which it is a part, need not be belabored. Nevertheless, it deserves to be pointed out again that much of anthropology still persists in looking for the "genuinely real" predominantly "there," where it can also speak of the "marginalized." There remains in our work a "vestigial survivalist thesis" (Herzfeld 1987:8) in which what is not "mainstream" or "from above" but rather exists "in spite of" is the more authentic. There is a persistent tendency, particularly strong in regional studies, to define the ethnographic object in terms of a circumscribed community, a culture, as something that stands "on its own" or "in relation to" the regional or state contexts. We may have replaced the morally suspect search for the "primitive" among the "traditional others" by a politically correct study of the "underrepresented," but either way, we are the ones privileging some realities over others as we replace one search for origin by yet another.

The ethnographic object often carries the qualifier *local*, a term that is used in more than one sense. First, it has become a euphemism for *marginal*, since it lends itself well to a rather populistlike idea of defining the genuinely real as that which is both in place and ordinary and everyday and which, in turn, has come to be covered by the terms *native*, *people*, *folk*, *small*, or *popular*, as opposed to *great*, traditions. It is already presupposed in the very credo of our discipline: the study of local communities. As a result, only some real particulars (termed *local*) qualify as exemplars of the general, that is, of the statistically or socially significant. To put it more bluntly, the local knowledge that seems to be preferred is that which is exotic by virtue of being opposite to high, elite, central, and, more recently, "global" in *our own worlds*. This association between local and marginal may have typified earlier scholarship more so than our present work. Nevertheless, many of us still hold on to it even though the difference between the two terms is indisputable.<sup>8</sup> It would be interesting to study the manner in which the term *local* has replaced the idea of marginality or even "primitiveness," in a more encompassing and seemingly neutral disguise, as the fundamental quality of the ethnographic object, the object of ethnographic description. Perhaps this qualifier, duly analyzed, would reveal a primarily

authenticating function, one that presupposes and therefore assigns a particular aspect (a quality) to the sense of "origin" and that is a key player in the construction of ethnographic authority. *Local* pertains to a generally accepted assumption about what anthropology does. It observes things local (e.g., knowledge, custom, social organization, political economy, you name it, we've got it). But what exactly do we mean by *local*? Local as opposed to what? Are there *things* that do not qualify? I doubt it!

This brings me to the more obvious sense of the term. We often use *local* when we mean by it the idea of the particular. As if to question what general knowledge would be, we seem to insist that local lore is marked by a local flare or, all evidence to the contrary, that the logical category individual does not have universalizing claims. Particulars are thus localized, assumed to be more concrete, and therefore socioculturally real, and universals are particularized once we can show them up as local. No wonder we end up with theories on one hand and local objects on the other. What would happen if we considered a theoretical model, a school of thought—let us say phenomenology or Marxism—as a local tradition, a circumscribed cultural practice? What then? Or why not? What appears to be a viable road to explore is a rather treacherous jungle: the mirror deflects local knowledge back together with its presuppositions. Perhaps there lies an opening move.

I suggest we go a step further, then, perhaps in the direction of a possible future analytic, focus anthropological theory on its own categories (Herzfeld 1987:3), and take a closer look at how the idea of fieldwork constructs the local object. It does not take much effort to see that the authenticating *qualisign* of the real as particular can be understood as an aspect of presencing: the here of the now of participant observation, anthropology's counterpart to historiography's eyewitness. This quality of presence, of seeing, even touching, in fact "taking part in" conveys a sense of place (locatedness) to that which is being described. The fact that a Western (read "European") theoretical text then fails to qualify as a cultural object—at least not until I can draw the text "outside itself" and ground it, by virtue of reference, in the real (that is, locate it)—in spite of the fact that there is no reason to assume that it is not is therefore illuminating. It sheds light on a mechanism of objectification that lends our discipline its particular sense of authenticity. It helps reveal yet another way in which we are selective in what and how we study. The conflation of "local" with "particular" and the tendency to locate such knowledge in the field that is other than ~~that~~ of the investigator constitute not only a distancing act that carries with it the *qualisign* "objectivity." It is a spatial move, in the social as well as physical sense, as decisive to the manner in which anthropology constructs

its object as is the temporal *denial of coevalness* discussed by Johannes Fabian (1983). Our point of view is integral to the very manner in which we grasp the phenomenal *thing*. This, then, is anthropology's version of what Roland Barthes (1986) identified as the *reality effect* that characterizes the realistic novel and that is also deeply embedded in the European tradition.<sup>9</sup>

There is no reason why we cannot treat theory (any theory, not just anthropological theory) as an ethnographic object. But must the particular (or is it local?) value of a universalizing discourse necessarily take on the cultural significance of ethnic identity? In almost all cases, the ethnographic study of European theory is converted to the study of the intelligentsia understood in relation to the formation of cultural and social identities. This identification of the intellectual as key player in the social and cultural process is given by the topic itself, the topic of national or ethnic identity, and it is anthropology's very concept of culture that is implicated in the kind of thick description that it then receives. Initially, the ventures of our discipline into Europe had been into the same familiar space of culture that has defined the domestic ethnographers and folklorists: the proper peasants. And while so much has changed since, our concern with culture is still one that rests upon an idea of otherness that is informed by our own intellectual roots caught somewhere in the unresolved tension between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. It is precisely our concept of culture, its semiotic facelift notwithstanding, that is infused with the idea of tradition, one in which the local is conflated with marginal (or popular) on the one hand and with the particular on the other. While we ourselves engage in the practice of theory, we simultaneously resist its analysis *except* when it is the universalizing language of others (Buddhist texts or Muslim religious leaders will do) and/or when it can be linked to ideology or (national) identity, as exemplified by the work of several of the authors of this article on the role of the intelligentsia in the construction of national ideology, history, and language policy. If going around the world and being caught doing so allow anthropology to recognize both the hermeneutic principles that govern its interpretations and the grounding of its own analytics in the Western worldview, then what is to be revealed as we bring anthropology back home to Europe where, as we apply our objectifying categories of analysis, we find them already in place? What are we confronted with? The cultural determination of objectification or the heuristic limitations of the concept of culture?

It is anthropology's aim to make of the particular a case of generalized importance, that is, to come up with *theories of practice*. The study of cultural production, specifically the study of European conceptual thought, provides it with the opportunity to gain insight into the

*practice of theory*. Such activity is particular as well. And if, in investigating this practice, anthropology confronts its own theories (as I have found phenomenology staring at me from the pulpit in the political rhetoric of Prague immediately after the events of 1989) or the historically informed limits of fieldwork, then, I would suggest, it is being confronted by the very ethnographic reality that is, as it has been, its mandate to describe and make sense of. The study of Europe is among other things also the possibility of confrontation with Western culture as a culture that practices and makes particular claims on theoretical abstractions, objectification, and reflection. For me this is the unique challenge that Europe offers to the study of anthropology and therefore that anthropology can offer to the study of Europe.

### Exotic England: Benefactors as Anthropological Subjects

Jane Schneider

Could there be a historical anthropology of England that would render culturally specific (i.e., exotic) this former epicenter of industrial, capitalist, and imperialist power, distinguishing it within Europe and inverting its normally acultural role as emblem of universalism in social thought?<sup>10</sup> Hermann Rebel's approach to "long histories" suggests that there can. Skeptical of the success stories implied by expressions like "the rise of Europe," Rebel conjures histories whose endpoints are the 20th century's greatest horrors: the industrialized world wars and the Holocaust. Yet his procedures contrast with Daniel Goldhagen's recent history of the Holocaust, which defines "eliminationalist antisemitism" as a *sui generis* mind-set of the German people (1996:70 ff., 419). On anthropologically safer ground, Rebel has been tracing the eliminationalist inheritance and labor practices of the Austrian peasant family, as these practices were intensified under militarist, absolutist regimes in the 16th through 18th centuries.

The families in question privileged a principal heir while denying an inheritance, marriage, and a life to his siblings. At the same time, archaeological and social-historical findings point to marginalized persons, with their many resentments, rejoining their communities as second-class citizens, allowed to police boundaries, discipline transgressors, and engage in known but unauthorized and unacknowledged violations of the ostensible legal-judicial order. According to Rebel (1983, 1991, 1996), the associated traumas of dispossession and failed promises of justice shaped the cultural context of later catastrophes. This attention to marginalization processes in the particular, to their intensification in times of nation-state building or societal collapse,

and to the moral-judicial discourses and practices surrounding and concealing them has inspired the following account.

Historical anthropologists of England have no event like the Holocaust to throw into sharp relief its long-term processes of marginalization. Yet English history has been marked by episodes of violent displacement, producing and reproducing a particular moral economy, the central feature of which assigns superiority to "improvers" (those who invest labor or capital in a resource to make it more productive) while defining those who are thereby displaced as *merely transitory casualties* of change.<sup>11</sup> To the extent that they do not band together to impede progress, such "redundant" persons will eventually be reabsorbed by the inexorable growth of the whole. The assumed temporariness of the inconvenience and the incipient moral or political indictment of the dispossessed add up to a shallow, exonerative apprehension of dislocation. The expectation of long-term growth short-circuits dwelling on any victimization. To the contrary, improvers typically ridicule expressions of empathy for victims.

Christine MacLeod's history of the English patent system offers several diagnostic examples, among them the 1736 patent application of John Wyatt, coinventor of the spinning engine, who argued that profits resulting from machinery that diminished "the labour of a certain set or class of our people" would lead to an expansion of the industry and with this the reabsorption of some of the unemployed. Wyatt recognized that spinners "might not appreciate (his) 'self-evident' arguments" but had an ally in the attorney general, who declared that "this inconvenience" to spinners will be "greatly overbalanced by the advantage that will accrue thereby to our woolen manufacture." Indeed, should English clothiers be able to undersell the French, "persons who are now of no use at all will thereby be rendered useful to the public" (quoted in MacLeod 1988:164–165). Such reasoning hinged on imagining displaced persons as only temporarily put out and easily mollified. Their ties to families, their suffering from the loss of a livelihood, and their bitterness at being pushed to the edge of society were not considered a cost factor to weigh against the benefits.

That labor-displacing inventions were favored by capitalists and government elites seems an obvious point to make about the period of rapid industrialization which rendered England the workshop of the world.<sup>12</sup> Nor is it remarkable that the logic of the moral economy of that moment was subsequently reproduced many times over in the British colonies of the Victorian era, in the expansionist, neocolonial United States, and in both of these nation-states as they fostered visual barriers against urban and industrial blight. An equally familiar manifestation of the culture of improvement is

the fact that these states, having spawned global institutions such as the World Bank and a hugely dislocating "revolution" in communications technology, are today the prime architects of models for breaking up "welfare dependency" all over the world. What a historical anthropology might establish is that the association of a strong commitment to improvement with a vacuous approach to dislocation can already be detected in the *longue durée* of English agriculture.

England exemplifies the overall significance of livestock and manuring within Europe's "nuclear areas": those heartlands of medieval urbanism and state formation in which kings and lords and monastic orders fostered agricultural development. Unlike other nuclear areas of the world where development was linked to irrigation systems, in temperate Europe it was the integration of plowland with animals, and with the fodder crops to feed them, that underwrote concentrations of power and wealth. In addition to providing traction and protein, animals were the foundation for Europe's medieval arms race and the militarily supported expansion of Christian feudal society to the Holy Land, the "pagan" East, and the Muslim south. Key for understanding England, animals in the form of sheep sustained a core industry, woolen textiles, through which the state positioned itself in the competitive arena of foreign exchange.

In the century and a half following William the Conqueror's military campaign in Yorkshire, Cistercian monks received grants of land in the English midlands on which they developed large, efficiently consolidated granges, well suited for improving cultivation and raising sheep. The mix of arable and pasture varied from grange to grange, with the pastoral specialty being more pronounced in the uplands. Often, the right to enclose accompanied the grant of land and the monks soon acquired an "unenviable reputation as depopulators" (Donkin 1978:48). According to one contemporary source, they "raze[d] villages and churches . . . and level[ed] everything before the ploughshare," and another source described how, robed in white, they "frightened the poor and drove them from their land" (quoted in Donkin 1978:39). Most striking, the monks reengaged the "cleared" peasants not as serfs with security of tenure but as detached laborers working for a wage (Donkin 1978:60). To historian R. A. L. Smith, their project "anticipate[d] the whole subsequent development of English agriculture" (Smith 1947:104, quoted in Donkin 1978:58).

Animals are at the core of Bruce Campbell and Mark Overton's new perspective on English farming (1993). Refusing to paint the late 18th century as revolutionary, they find antecedents in 13th- through 17th-century efforts to increase the density of livestock and, by cultivating fodders, to unlock animals from a "pastoral sector" in which their manure simply oxidized and

disappeared. Norfolk, the region most renowned for experiments with clover, turnips, and other fodders, saw a doubling of the density of cattle during the 16th and 17th centuries. In other regions sheep were decisive, woolen cloth exports having "taken off" following the "age of discovery." Both lords and yeoman farmers enclosed land for sheep, while cottagers and smallholders, thus closed out, sold their labor to consolidated farms and cottage industries, or endured persecution as "vagrants" (see Roseberry 1991). Sheep had once been a peasant animal but now "great gentlemen flocksters," each managing a thousand head or more, sought "folding rights" for, as the saying went, "sheep eat men" (Campbell and Overton 1993:77-78, 88).

All told, England was developing a distinctive pattern of land tenure and rural class relations. By the end of the 17th century, its landlords controlled 70 to 75 percent of the cultivable surface, a far higher percentage than on the continent, where, as Robert Brenner has observed, peasants held onto customary rents as a hedge against landlord predation (1976:46; 1982). It is not by accident that Marx's model of capitalism was based on the English case, he himself recognizing that "the presence of a large peasantry could inhibit [the model's] full unfolding" (Wolf 1982:303). Meanwhile, as erstwhile peasants exited the countryside, London, that "solvent of local ties and magnet for dispossessed or upwardly mobile immigrants from all over England" (Adams 1996:73-75), developed in an unprecedented way. No other city in the world had ever grown as rapidly or come to represent as overwhelming a proportion of the national population: 11 percent by the 1750s (Adams 1996:73-75). This plus the exodus to the colonies were among the impersonal economic processes that conveniently removed from sight (and mind) all but the most recalcitrant of the uprooted.

This brings us to the late-18th-century Acts of Parliament that enabled "improving landlords" to enclose 6 million acres, an "expulsive force" in the words of Robert Adams (1996:74). "Cleared" peasants were expected to take comfort that a Greater Good awaited their nation and them; no need to dwell on the short-term loss of customary rights to hunt, cut wood, and graze livestock on common land, by definition of an underutilized resource. The implied disenchantment—which relieved the improvers of worrying that those who had lost their livelihood would come back, spiritually or actually, to haunt them—was reflected in the parallel history of crime. Theft and poaching multiplied with exclusions from use rights. New accumulations of as-yet-unprotected wealth and new markets in which to peddle hot goods emboldened thieves and bandits. But the propertied classes, having turned their backs on an enchanted world that would anticipate and recognize acts of retributive justice, criminalized all disorders and

sought to have them repressed through spectacular punishment (Linebaugh 1991; McLynn 1989).

Were more anthropologists to "study up," we would no doubt conclude that dominant groups characteristically think of themselves as a universal standard against which others are to be judged and weave an insulating veil around their lives, lest knowledge of their subordinates' suffering cast an unwelcome shadow. In these remarks, I challenge the anthropology of Europe to explore whether the ideology of improvement, which has been held by dominant groups in England over a very long history of agrarian, industrial, and imperial expansion, does not also carry with it a moral stance of indifference and expendability. Two psychologists have recently proposed that, historically, members of the English privileged classes often represented themselves as victims, unrequited because their colonial subjects, and the working classes at home, failed to appreciate their "gift" of a model of improvement, resenting them instead (see Robertiello and Hoguet 1987:19-23).

Today galloping technological advances continue to induce tremendous dislocations all over the globe. Yet Anglophone (and Anglophile) decision makers rarely see beyond formulas like the "business cycle," the "invisible hand," and "overpopulation," which render the chaos, if not benign, then beyond anyone's control (see Adams 1996). As before, they are sustained by their faith in growth as the eventual, long-term fix, reabsorbing enough people from the rivers of the displaced to erase all collective memory of the rest. To see their culture, with its particular practice of submerging responsibility in a panacea of growth, as exotic, rather than as the endpoint of a universalizing evolutionary trajectory, is to open the door for other perspectives to be heard, even from within Europe.

## The North-South Axis in European Popular Cosmologies and the Dynamic of the Categorical

James W. Fernandez

The countries of northern Europe have built remarkable civilizations beside cold seas under a weak sun. But no reasonable man of Anglo-Saxon or Germanic stock has ever been wholly satisfied with his own civilization. Indeed, such periods of history as have been marked by Teutonic pride and Teutonic self-sufficiency have been unhappy ones. The chill oceans need the tempering of the Mediterranean. Unless the German or Englishman is willing to submit, however remotely to the influence of the South, there is always the danger of his relapsing into coarseness at best, at worst brutishness. That is why . . . no man could be considered cultivated if he had not gone out to engage art, philosophy, and manners of the Latin countries.

—Anthony Burgess, *The Age of the Grand Tour*, 1966

Since we are here making something of a grand tour of the European scene in the interests of distilling the implications of work done there for anthropological theory generally, Anthony Burgess's benevolent evocation (not the only kind to be sure) of the Grand Tour and the north-south dichotomy (or dialectic) it exploits may give us an apt epigraph. As one who moved from African studies into European studies, from the south to the north, that is, after several decades of work in Africa spent studying cultural revitalization movements and the cosmologies they build, I want to suggest the fertility of the European scene for the same theoretical work, that is, for the study of popular cosmology. Indeed I chose my present field site in Asturias, northern Spain, in important part because the socialist uprising among miners that took place there in 1934 (La Comuna Asturiana) appeared a classic revitalization movement. (See also Mintz 1982 on the Andalusian anarchists of the same period.)

Animadversions such as Burgess's are plentiful in European literature. Let me offer snatches from another: Jan Morris's report in the *New York Times* travel section, on the transformation of "quality space" he experienced in a small plane flight from Geneva to Lugano over the Magic Mountain.

To poets, hedonists and conquering generals from sterner places, the Alps have always been the symbolic frontier of the South, where the wine flows easier and the warm begins. Nowadays scores of roads and railroads cross or tunnel their way through the mountains, . . . but on a recent morning I undertook a more metaphorical kind of journey over that old barrier between sensibilities. . . . I began in Geneva, a city that can be the very epitome of the North. [Morris 1986:43]

The plane crossed the Alps.

Instantly, no doubt about it, we were in the South. Everything was lush, intimate, soft-edged, seductive. . . . I have a taste for metaphor, and it seemed to me that allegorically speaking nothing could beat that passage over the great divide . . . from one world to another. [Morris 1986:43]

And let me add to these literary evocations of the great divide a set of revelatory incidents that arose during a month's teaching in Granada in September 1992. It was during that period in Europe in which it was becoming painfully apparent that there were very significant differences in the abilities of the various European nations to meet in a timely way the "convergence criteria" of the Maastricht treaty. Indeed, it was becoming apparent that there was a Europe of at least two velocities (the actual word employed), fast and slow. The Granada press, indeed the Spanish press generally, was full of talk about the Europe of two velocities, and this north-south image was complemented by implicated images such as the Europe of two lanes, the fast and the

slow, or the Europe of two trains, the freight and the passenger, or the European train of two classes, first and second. In each of these phrasings the ability of the South, or the Mediterranean in general and Spain in particular, to come up to speed was much questioned. There was considerable pessimism reflecting both the actual facts of Spanish lag in convergence as well as the enduring north-south dichotomy, which, we might say, has always had its velocity component, its particular differentiation of the way that time and space are understood to be melded in cold and warm Europe.

There was also both defensiveness and also some mild cultural chauvinism. An amusing column appeared in a Granada morning newspaper (9/26/92 in the bullfight section), in which the columnist, a recognized taurine authority, took a moment amidst an appreciation of the elegant art of a triumphant torrero during the recent patronal corridas to remind his readers that it was not the bullfighter's velocity but on the contrary his southern restraint and deliberation, indeed the dignity of his *slowness* in administration of both cape and muleta in the passing of the bull, that was the keynote of his triumph. This observation led to a general observation on the creaturely scurrying around of the getters and spenders of this world. It was the bull after all who had velocity! All this hurry and rush was placed in unfavorable contrast to those like "us Granadinos" who knew how to live with austerity and tranquillity and deliberation against the ultimate onrushing fatalities of the human career.

These reflections on European differences and a kind of moral frontier occurring in southern Spain recalled earlier essays of mine on culture as quality space. In particular, they recalled an essay written from the perspective of my work in northern Spain, an essay on a late-19th-century poetic exchange (in regional dialects) between an Andaluz and an Asturian (Fernandez 1988). This long exchange plentifully and playfully evoked the north-south dichotomy between the green Spain of the north and the dry Spain of the south; the taciturn and industrious Spain of the north and the expressive, voluble, and *dolce far niente* Spain of the south; and so on. In a footnote to that essay I included a reference to Donald Campbell and Robert LeVine's (1968) useful discussion of the north-south dichotomy in their study of ethnocentrism, with its chart of binary oppositions by which we may usefully if elementally structure the north-south dialectic not only for Europe but much more globally.

The times are such that these elemental structural oppositions provoke our skepticism. We feel the need to move beyond the prevailing dichotomies that afflict and hobble the intellectual life: a time when, for example, we seek to escape the mind/body problem by finding the mind in the body and the body in the mind.<sup>13</sup> At the same

time such a chart, at the least and in however minimal a way, indicates the interpretive space for categorical shifting in the interpretation of selfness and otherness. It indicates the ambivalence of the categories in their use. Thus, in my view, it would still be unwise and even perhaps prematurely involuted to elaborate upon the intertwined complexities of these dichotomies without considering the weight they carry, *grosso modo*, in the body politic and as popular and vitalizing articles of social incorporation (or exclusion) in corporate communities as energizers to their incorporation. It would be a mistake to enter into complexities this side of the dynamic of the categorical present in the dichotomies of popular cosmology. We should want to enter into our complexities on the other side of the simplicities that are often sufficiently regnant in popular cultural logic chopping and in the elemental put-ups and put-downs in the quality space of social interaction.

In reflecting briefly on the north-south dichotomy as it is expressed in the struggle for European identity and for a Europe without frontiers, the assumption is that it carries more than negligible weight in popular thought and, perhaps more deviously, in thought of a more sophisticated kind. The assumption is that these popular cosmologies are category systems that at least potentially contain their own frontiers, which work against a Europe without frontiers. Always conceivably present in this way—as usually essentializing idioms by which emergent political-economic difficulties can be addressed—these popular cosmologies are constraints on Europeanization. Thus, while the possibility exists for Europeans to make their own Europe, they do not make it in just the way they intend, but partly in ways that respond to deeper and older geopolitical imaginings.

Just as we have learned that national boundaries and national identifications are not necessarily imposed from the political centers of power but may arise on the peripheries locally and according to local needs (Sahlins 1989), so it is to be argued that the sense of identity does not respond necessarily and inevitably to the calculations of the cognitive centers of thought but, rather, in peripheral parts of the thinking and experiencing mechanisms according to deeper and virtually cosmological senses of qualitative and dynamic differences in locality. There is a theory bound up in these assertions, of the dynamic of the categorical, well worth addressing in Europe, just as there is a wealth of material in Europe on which such theoretical study can feed.

Focusing on one set of vectors operating across a categorical divide, that of north-south, I have here addressed my own particular interest in cosmology as quality space and in ethnography as an experiential enterprise designed to enable our entrance into the experience of that quality space understood actively in the

dynamic of the categorical. But I intend these references to my own interests in categorizations and identity dynamics (the transformations or revitalizations in category they inspire) in quality space (Fernandez 1992) only to relate these particular interests to the rich possibilities in European anthropology for the theoretical exploration of cosmology and worldview and to point us to these explorations. We tend to associate both cosmological study and revitalization theory with ethnographic work in the more isolated cultures of the world: the typical anthropological milieu. But Europe as well is a rich arena for that kind of study as indeed antecedent work appropriately present in our own workshop richly demonstrates.<sup>14</sup> And perhaps, because of the fact that Euro-American anthropology and ethnography itself proceed out of that milieu and are inevitably influenced by it, Europeanist inquiry in these areas can have salutary reflective consequences for anthropological work generally.<sup>15</sup>

Let me add a humanistic coda here. Insofar as we are interested in European integration based on a humane vision of the human condition sub specie Europaea—and it is not only what is happening in the Balkans, Bilbao, or Belfast that should animate that interest—there are plenty of these visions that transcend and enhance this particular categorical dynamic and that offer us, as in our epigraph, a vision of “complementary place” (Fernandez 1988:32–33) rather than contrastive and fundamentally incommunitative place. A classic humanistic vision of this kind, and to make another literary reference, we may recall Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain* (1932), which, as a bildungsroman taking place on the Swiss Alpine heights of the north-south watershed between two sick societies, points the way to just that transcendence or heightening (*Steigerung*) of our understanding. More particularly, we find this healthy humanistic vision in the ironic wisdom of the author’s central character, who, as it turns out, is not the simplehearted Hanseatic Hans Castorp but the more complex Mediterranean *Herr Settembrini!*

## Notes

1. The constituent segments of this multiply authored article were generated for and as a result of a workshop sponsored by the Council for European Studies and held at Harvard University, October 14–16, 1994. The authors have since continued to debate and comment on each other’s work, and have also benefited substantively from the helpful input of the *American Anthropologist* editors and readers.

2. In this regard, E. E. Evans-Pritchard’s (1940:202) claim to have generated an account of Nuer society from the diagrams that his informants drew in the ground for him can be seen as an act of expropriation, but he was at least sensitive enough to record the source of his knowledge.

3. For example, Abélès 1996; Bellier 1993; Herzfeld 1992; Zabusky 1995; and see Tambiah 1990.

4. See Delamont 1995; Delanty 1995a, 1995b; Goddard et al. 1994; Macdonald 1993; O’Dowd and Wilson 1996; Wilson and Smith 1993.

5. For example, Borneman 1992; Kligman 1994; Verdery 1994b.

6. See Rogers in press for an analysis of the disciplinary and country-focus distributions of European studies in the United States, based on the 1992–94 application pools for dissertation fellowships from the Western Europe and Eastern Europe committees of the Social Science Research Council and American Council of Learned Societies.

7. In using the all-inclusive “we” throughout this argument, I do not wish to insinuate a uniform paradigm that applies to all anthropologists nor forget, for example, that there are “non-Europeans” studying in “Western” societies. But neither is it a just rhetorical device, since I am writing about what is clearly the received discourse we are all struggling with.

8. A good example of this kind of thinking appears in a recent issue of the *Anthropology Newsletter*. In a response to a commentary on anthropology’s future agenda, Nancy Scheper-Hughes writes:

Is ethnography really dead? Is local, micro-analytical research all but obsolete in the vexed transnational world in which we all live? Not, I think, as long as millions of rural people live much of their lives not more than 100 kilometers from the place they were born. . . . Anthropology must be there to provide the kind of deeply textured fine-tuned narratives describing the specificity of lives lived in small isolated places, in distant homelands, in the “native yards” of sprawling townships and in the Afrikaner farm communities of Stellenbosh. [In Borofsky 1994:74,76]

Similarly, in the work of Michel Foucault, whose analyses of the politics of discourse have had quite an influence on the anthropological studies of knowledge and power, one finds that the concept of “subjugated knowledge,” the unofficial and unrecognized discourse whose study he advocates, is also described as “local knowledge” (Foucault 1980). His use of the term *local* is highly normative and, one could even say, intentionally so.

9. Talal Asad argues against the term *local* when he reminds us that “it is an old empiricist prejudice to suppose that things are real only when confirmed by sensory data, and therefore people are real but structures and systems are not” (1993:6). See also his contribution to the present article.

10. These remarks have benefited from the encouragement and helpful comments of Michael Herzfeld, Hermann Rebel, Peter Schneider, and Eric Wolf.

11. The term *moral economy* is used here in the broad sense that every economy has a moral (as it has a political) dimension. It does not imply particular moral features such as reciprocity or the equalization of goods and services. In other words, my usage overrides the distinction that anthropologists have sometimes made between economies that are “moral” and those that are “formal,” a distinction that only fortifies the perception of England as universalistic or acultural.

12. The English cotton industry consumed 4 million pounds of raw cotton in the late 1760s and 300 million pounds by the 1830s, a transformation without precedent (Adams 1996:108).

13. See Johnson 1987. But the whole burden of the feminist critique has been to deconstruct the mind-body dichotomy by whose elaborations women were confined to nature and men granted culture. There is a whole literature by now tearing apart and deconstructing that hoary Aristotelian analogy: nature : culture :: women : men.

14. As it is Michael Herzfeld who has brought us together here, I need hardly mention his own considerable work on identity theory as disemic or stereotypic poetic performance (or, as I prefer, the "dynamic of the categorical") in the presence of officialdom (see Herzfeld 1987, 1992).

15. A point well made by Herzfeld (1987).

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