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# 'Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise'

## Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework

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**Abstract** ■ This article seeks to complicate the picture of a simple anthropological tradition emanating from the West that defines anthropology as a modern form of expert knowledge. It introduces a broader frame – 'world anthropologies' – that allows us to think about the discipline in terms of a multiple space where 'other anthropologies' and 'anthropology otherwise' may become newly visible. 'World anthropologies' involves a critical awareness of both the larger epistemic and political field in which anthropology emerged and continues to function, and of the micropractices and relations of power within and across different anthropological locations and traditions. The article revisits the critiques of the discipline developed within the dominant locations, proposes a larger framework of inquiry, and ends by suggesting a few first steps towards the positive project of imagining a plural landscape of world anthropologies.

**Keywords** ■ geopolitics of knowledge ■ history of anthropology ■ modernity/coloniality ■ politics of anthropology ■ world anthropologies

### Creating the space for 'world anthropologies'

This article<sup>1</sup> has two parallel aims: to make visible the intensification of certain processes and practices of disciplinization affecting a variety of anthropologies in recent years, particularly in the United States, and to outline a framework for 'world anthropologies' which both pluralizes the discipline in novel ways and contests current anthropological canons. We describe this double goal under the rubric of 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise'. At an immediate level, the aim is to complicate the picture of a single tradition emanating from the West that defines anthropology as a modern form of expert knowledge. According to this view, anthropology has become universalized through national and sub-national traditions that are, to a greater or lesser extent, confined within the epistemological space constituted by a given field of conceptual and institutional practices. By contrast, 'other anthropologies and anthropology

otherwise' requires thinking about the discipline in a broader frame and within a multiple space, that of 'world anthropologies'. 'World anthropologies' involves a critical awareness of both the larger epistemic and political field in which anthropology emerged and continues to function, and of the micro-practices and relations of power within and across different anthropological locations and traditions.

In order to envision 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise', it is necessary to revisit the subtle modalities through which the models that emerged and were consolidated chiefly in British, French and Anglo-American academic establishments became naturalized. There is more to the project, however, in that we make some suggestions for starting to think about the conditions that could make a plural landscape of world anthropologies possible. We believe it is important to discuss these processes openly, given that 'anthropology' today, perhaps more than ever, functions as a global field, albeit one in which some anthropologies have more paradigmatic weight – and hence more power and implied authority – than others.

This article is based on the analytical distinction between what one may call 'dominant anthropologies' and 'other anthropologies/anthropology otherwise'. This analytical distinction has hardly been explored, mostly because the critiques done so far (at least in the centers) have been articulated *from* the locus of enunciation and *within* the assumptions that constitute 'dominant anthropologies' (broadly, capitalist modernity). 'Dominant anthropologies', in other words, assume a single epistemic space within which anthropology functions as a real, albeit changing and contested, practice. 'Other anthropologies/anthropology otherwise', on the contrary, suggests that the space in which anthropology is practiced is fractured – perhaps even more so today than in the past, and despite increasing normalizing tendencies worldwide – making it into a plural space. In other words, rather than assuming that there is a privileged position from which a 'real anthropology' (in the singular) can be produced and in relation to which all other anthropologies would define themselves, 'world anthropologies' seeks to take seriously the multiple and contradictory historical, social, cultural and political locatedness of the different communities of anthropologists and their anthropologies.

We hope to show that 'world anthropologies' is not just a clever label intended to replace previous attempts at speaking from outside the domain of dominant anthropologies, such as 'indigenous' or 'native' anthropologies (Fahim and Helmer, 1980; Jones, [1970] 1988; Narayan, 1993), 'anthropologies of the South' (Krotz, 1997), 'peripheral anthropologies' (Cardoso de Oliveira, 1999/2000), or 'anthropology with an accent' (Caldeira, 2000). Many of the questions formulated by these conceptualizations are pertinent and useful for the project of 'world anthropologies'. However, as we will see, 'world anthropologies' does not claim an epistemological and ontological privilege on some other criteria (e.g. the identity of

the speaker, geographical location, or type of contestation). Rather, we see the project of 'world anthropologies' as an intervention aimed at loosening the disciplinary constraints that subalternized modalities of anthropological practice and imagination have to face in the name of unmarked, normalized and normalizing models of anthropology.

It is important for us to locate this article in two ways before beginning our argument. First, although some of the argument may apply to other anthropologies, the article is written from the perspective of Anglo-Saxon anthropologies – more concretely, anthropology in the United States – in which both authors are chiefly located (both of us, however, have significant experience and engagement with several Latin American anthropologies, especially in Colombia). Because we see *both* an intensification of certain normalizing processes within US anthropology *and* a growing ascendancy of this anthropology over many world anthropologies – with both processes remaining largely unexamined in the US itself, although increasingly problematized and discussed elsewhere – we believe it is important to attempt a new kind of provincialization of US anthropology at this particular historical juncture.<sup>2</sup> Our critical exercise is thus conducted in the terms of an academic discourse that has been largely minted in the US academy and, of course, in the English language (the 'post-imperial dialect', as Gustavo Lins Ribeiro [2000] would put it). This might seem paradoxical in relation to the argument we want to make. Let us say that we see this article as part of a broader project of envisioning a 'world anthropologies' landscape, which would include looking carefully at other anthropologies, forms of knowledge, modalities of writing, political-intellectual practices, networks and so forth. In other words, while we do not see our goal as determined by 'the center', we do address this center as an element of a broader strategy that aims at both showing the naturalization of canons and contributing to a pluriverse of knowledge practices. This is one important point of intervention, although by no means the only one. Also, we do not want to suggest that dominant anthropologies are 'bad' while 'subaltern' ones are 'good'. We are not making a moral argument but an analytical one about power among anthropologies, as we will see in detail. Ideally, this exercise of double critique (critique of power over and power within) would have to be carried out on all world anthropologies. The second way in which the article needs to be located is in its Latin American orientation. As it will become clear, we derive part of our critical conceptualization from certain recent developments in Latin American/ist scholarship which are likely to color our argument in particular ways.

Part I of the article describes succinctly our view of 'dominant anthropologies'. This view is set in an epistemological and political context that is somewhat broader and different from many past critiques in dominant Euro-American anthropologies. Part II examines the critiques of dominant anthropologies from within. Our intent is to show the shortcomings of

these critiques from the perspective of world anthropologies, particularly the fact that every round of critique seems to have been followed by a new round of institutionalization and professionalization. Part III goes on to present a broad context for reassessing anthropological practice that goes beyond the space of intra-disciplinary critiques. Our aim at this level is to engage in the broadest conceptualization we can envision in order to revisit the possibilities and constraints under which mainstream anthropological establishments operate. Finally, Part IV takes a first few steps towards the positive project of imagining 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise'.

### I. The epistemological and political context of 'dominant anthropologies'

... privileged anthropologists, much like privileged people everywhere, avoid scrutinizing too closely a system from which they benefit. (DiGiacomo, 1997: 94)

#### *Discourse and practice in 'dominant anthropologies'*<sup>3</sup>

By 'dominant anthropologies' we mean the discursive formations and institutional practices that have been associated with the normalization of anthropology under academic modalities chiefly in the United States, Britain and France. Hence, 'dominant anthropologies' include the diverse processes of professionalization and institutionalization that accompanied the consolidation of disciplinary canons and subjectivities, and through which anthropologists recognize themselves and are recognized by others as such. Thus, with the concept of 'dominant anthropologies' we attempt to identify an analytical and political space to examine those changing, contested and heterogeneous practices, and unspoken agreements, that constitute what *certain* anthropologists already have done and said *as such*. We should remark, however, that whereas the concept of 'dominant anthropologies' certainly points at a geopolitics of knowledge, 'dominant anthropologies' – as much as subaltern or other anthropologies – do not correspond neatly to any set of geographical locations.<sup>4</sup>

Despite their diversity and heterogeneity, 'dominant anthropologies' converge in their attempt to bracket the historicity and cultural specificity of their own discourses and practices. Therefore, 'dominant anthropologies' have constituted themselves as a set of *differentiating interventions* of what counts as 'anthropology' and who an 'anthropologist' is, which tend to obliterate diversity or elicit particular constructions of what is thinkable as different. These modalities of articulating anthropology are indissolubly embedded in particular institutional settings and linked to political economies; they subtly regulate the production of possible discourses, the terms of the disagreements, and effect a normalization of anthropological

subjectivities. 'Dominant anthropologies' draw disciplinary genealogies and boundaries as they reproduce themselves not only discursively, but also through maintaining control over the authorization of those who can know. There is a multiplicity of academic and institutional practices (e.g. training, research, writing, publishing, hiring and so forth) that constitute obvious mechanisms of foreclosure of the conditions of reproduction and consolidation of the 'dominant anthropologies' establishment. Indeed, these anthropologies are constituted by the changing and always disputable order of the anthropologically thinkable, sayable and doable, configuring thus not only their horizon of intelligibility but also their possible transformations. As we shall see, while the analysis of these micro-practices of the academy has been broached in the past two decades in dominant anthropologies, it has been done in a partial and almost anecdotal way.

'Dominant anthropologies' are made possible by a set of institutionalized practices and modalities of production and regulation of discourses. These practices and modalities are anchored in a disciplinary domain. As Foucault argued, '[d]isciplines constitute a system of control in the production of discourse, fixing its limits through the action of an identity taking the form of a permanent reactivation of the rules' (1972: 224). As discourse, 'anthropology is a rule-governed system of utterances (a discursive formation, in Foucault's sense of the term) that systematically constructs "facts" in ways that have at least as much to do with the goals of the discipline and the organizations it sustains as with the world "out there"' (Escobar, 1993: 379). These modalities of disciplinary control are diffuse, but highly efficient. As Brazilian anthropologist Kant de Lima has shown (in one of the few ethnographies of US anthropological knowledge practices), disciplinary constraints are:

... much more concerned with the control of forms of how any knowledge is produced than with its contents. However, clearly this inattention to contents is only apparent: the emphasis is placed in what *is said* rather than on what *should not be said*. The form of disciplinary control is more diffuse, and consequently it may be more efficient. (1992: 194)

In other words, institutionalized practices and relations of power shape the production, circulation and consumption of anthropological knowledge as well as the production of subject positions and subjectivities. These micro-practices of the academy define not only a specific grid of enunciability, authority and authorization, but also the conditions of existence of anthropology as an academic discipline. While some of these processes have been already discussed (Brenneis, 2004; Clifford, 1988; Escobar, 1993; Fox, 1991; Kant de Lima, 1992; Rabinow, 1991; Trouillot, 1991), they tend to be taken for granted as a sort of common sense that is rarely subjected to systematic scrutiny. As Ben-Ari states in a persuasive article, 'while we are very good at analyzing how anthropology creates various others such as the "natives" or the "locals", we are less adept at rigorously analyzing how we create and

recreate “anthropologists”’ (1999: 390). The intra-academic practices and discourses that naturalize ‘anthropology’ and ‘anthropologists’ include practices of authority/authorization<sup>5</sup> that have resulted in the creation of particular regimes and concepts (such as ‘culture’ in ‘Anglo-American anthropology’ or ‘social system’ in ‘British anthropology’, or ‘ethnographic authority’ in both).<sup>6</sup> We can also put it in terms of games of truth that define ‘an intricately differentiated structure of authorities which specifies who has the right to say what on which subjects. As markers of this authority, we have distributed examinations, degrees, titles and insignia of all sorts’ (Chatterjee, 1997: 13).

‘Dominant anthropologies’ are usually located in a relation of dominance or even hegemony with ‘other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise’. ‘Dominant anthropologies’ operate like *normalizing machines* that preclude the enablement of different anthropological practices and knowledge worldwide. To the extent that ‘dominant anthropologies’ operate from a paradigmatic and privileged epistemological position, they constitute apparatuses of erasure of difference and effect a given inscription of difference in the name of anthropological canons. This does not mean, however, that these canons are homogeneous, even in the mainstream academic cores of ‘Anglo-American anthropology’, ‘French ethnology’ or ‘British social anthropology’. Rather, their institutional and discursive conditions of existence must be understood as an unstable equilibrium of ongoing struggles within and against what appear to be the ‘cores’ of the anthropological establishment at a certain time. One of the effects that we would like to highlight here has been the consolidation of an academic elite and elite academic institutions that marginalize other anthropologists, institutions and anthropologies, even inside the mainstream anthropological establishment.

There is a geopolitical dimension to anthropology that needs to be made visible. As we shall see below, ‘dominant anthropologies’ are part and parcel of the modern intellectual division of labor. That the modern regime of power is also a colonialist one has of course been considered by anthropologists, up to a point. However, some of the implications of this fact have escaped anthropological attention and can be brought into sharper focus through the notion of ‘coloniality’ being worked out by a group of Latin American authors. In these works, coloniality – defined as the subalternization of knowledge and culture of oppressed and excluded groups that necessarily accompanied colonialism, and which continues today with globalization – is seen as constitutive of modernity. There is no modernity without coloniality, so that the proper unit of analysis is not modernity (as in all intra-European analyses of modernity) but modernity/coloniality, or the modern/colonial world system. We shall derive more implications of this re-framing of modernity later in the article.<sup>7</sup> For now we can say that, broadly speaking, as in the case of other expert knowledges, ‘dominant anthropologies’ constitute a Eurocentric

technique for the construction of 'reality'. The specificity of these anthropologies in this regard has been its contribution to the domestication of ('social'/'cultural') alterity; this has taken place in a double movement: first, and more conventionally, 'familiarizing' otherness; second, and more recently, exoticizing sameness.

It is also important to underscore that, while we have emphasized the discursive and institutional dimensions of the normalization of anthropologies, these processes are part and parcel (simultaneously conditions of possibility and result) of political and economic conditions of dominance. In our conception of capitalist modernity, epistemic and politico-economic structures are inextricably intertwined, even if in this article we have chosen to emphasize the former (see Ribeiro and Escobar, in press a, for further discussion of the relation between anthropology and world systems of power). The laying down of knowledge infrastructures for the social sciences, including anthropology, and its relation to global structures of politico-economic power, particularly the rise and consolidation of US imperialism, has been thoroughly analyzed by Vincent (1990) and Nugent (2002). Ideologies of progress, modernization and development required both knowledge and cultural work that was provided and carried out by social scientists, often under the sponsorship of philanthropic organizations and state agencies, at least since the late 19th century. The type of US academic hegemony – and hence US hegemony in the discipline of anthropology – that produced 'dominant anthropologies', in this way, is very much part of the structures of global capitalism. The very size of the US anthropological establishment and the reason why it produces so many anthropologists is not independent of this double structural condition, a fact that, with a few exceptions, goes unproblematized in the discipline. This also goes a long way towards explaining the dominance of US universities in the social sciences (including the reification, without scrutiny, of the so-called 'elite' or 'top' anthropology departments). It is difficult to visualize ways in which these powerful material interests and structures could be transformed, but this should needless to say be part of a 'world anthropologies' project. Unfortunately, the institutional tendencies in Euro-American anthropology at present are not conducive to this aim (Brenneis, 2004).

Finally, it is necessary to underscore (as a final caveat) that there have been both processes of dominance within 'dominant anthropologies' (in relation to particular paradigms, groups of practitioners, or even sub-fields such as ethnomusicology or folklore) and attempts to create what Nugent (2002) has called 'alternative academic canons' throughout the history of the field. That the histories of dominant anthropologies have not been as monolithic as is often assumed by critics of past periods has been shown for some cases, for instance by Vincent (1991) with respect to one of the normative periods *par excellence*, the Edwardian moment of Malinowski's time. Our argument can be chastised for focusing on a selective (mainstream) tradition within 'dominant anthropologies'. Let us say that we see



our discussion of the anthropologies without history as complementary to these attempts at bringing about moments of contestation and differentiation within the histories of the dominant strands.

## II. 'Dominant anthropologies' and their discontents: critique, renewal, and re-institutionalization

Periods of 'crisis' and critique are not at all new in the anthropological domain. However, the loci of enunciation from which these critiques are articulated matters. This section is an attempt to re-map broadly the critiques produced *within* 'dominant anthropologies', focusing on the more well-known critiques in Anglo-American literature. Analytically speaking, these critiques have been articulated in three interwoven terrains: (1) the world at large, (2) epistemological and textual practices and (3) institutional micro-practices within the academic establishment. Our argument here is that every round of critique, despite important insights and productivity, resulted in a new round of institutionalization and professionalization of the field. (In the next section, we maintain these same terrains and attempt to deepen the critiques.)

(1) *The world at large*. The first kind of critique problematized anthropological practice with reference to the relations of domination and exploitation in the world at large. This critique was articulated in the 1960s and 1970s largely from a Marxist political economy perspective, and usually in the name of Third World struggles against colonialism and imperialism. One of the most radical expressions of this critique was, of course, *Reinventing Anthropology* (Hymes, [1969] 1974). Even though the contributions to this volume were unevenly developed and had different emphases, they shared the insistence on the need for a shift in the epistemological, institutional and political foundations of Anglo-American anthropology. Some (such as the contributions by Hymes, Scholte and Diamond) went further. They questioned, for instance, the transitory hegemony of 'departmental anthropology' in Anglo-American anthropology and opened up the discussion about moving toward a non-academic anthropological practice. Others argued for a reflexive and emancipatory anthropology that would start by taking itself seriously as an anthropological object, recognizing that all anthropological traditions are culturally mediated and contextually situated (Scholte, [1969] 1974). Others questioned the shortcomings of an indigenous anthropology that would only replicate elsewhere the templates of metropolitan schools. In short, *Reinventing Anthropology* did include a call to turn the ethnographical gaze toward the cultural grounds on which this gaze itself had been rooted; it engaged in a critical 'anthropology of anthropology', and to this extent we may find in it the idea of 'world anthropologies', albeit *in statu nascendi*.

Critiques of this type were articulated throughout the 1960s and 1970s by those who called for a politically engaged anthropology. As is well

known, some of these critiques focused on the relationship between 'anthropology' and 'colonialism' (Asad, 1973; Copans, 1975; Lewis, 1973).<sup>8</sup> Other critiques argued for a radical anthropological praxis sensitive to the struggles of liberation by Third World peoples, or for the development of indigenous anthropology as a partial corrective to anthropology's Eurocentrism (e.g. Fahim, 1982). In the late 1980s, this sort of critique raised the possibility of an anthropology more sensitive to class, racial and gender domination, one that would work 'toward social transformation and human liberation . . . [and show] how cultural critique as politicized deconstruction of various hegemonic ideologies and discourses can be a significant and necessary component of broader struggles for equality, social and economic justice, and far-reaching democratization' (Harrison, 1991: 8, 6). In sum, during this period the epistemological and political uniqueness of 'indigenous' or 'native' anthropologists, the demand for the de-colonization of anthropological knowledge, and the political role of anthropologists in the reproduction or contestation of the status quo were three of the pivotal points of the debate.

We can point today at some of the limits of these critiques. As South African anthropologist Archie Mafeje (2001) states in a remarkable analysis of metropolitan critiques, these critiques rarely questioned the taken-for-granted academic environment in which anthropology existed, nor could they adumbrate a post-anthropological era, so that the critics ended up being 'conservative rebels' implicated in the reproduction of the academy. Although there were some exceptions, for Mafeje the agent of anthropological and social transformation continued to be the white westerner. Most failed to see the role of the colonized in de-colonizing knowledge, something that has become acutely clear more recently. This is why perhaps what Asad (1973: 18) said of those anthropologists working under colonialism – that, no matter how politically progressive, they nevertheless chose to live '*professionally* at peace' with the system – would also generally apply to most metropolitan critiques. Despite their political importance and productivity, this 'literature of anguish' (Ben-Ari, 1999) is thankfully over, and now other terrains of critique are being considered, particularly those that were among the blind spots of the political economy critiques, such as the micro-practices of the academy.

2. *Epistemological and textual practices.* In the mid-1980s, textual practices emerged as the object of intense debate mainly in Anglo-American anthropology (e.g. Clifford, 1988; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Marcus and Fischer, 1986). This chapter of the history of critique within dominant anthropologies is well known, since it is the closest to us, and we will not dwell on it save to show some of its shortcomings from the perspective of our argument. Today, this critique could be seen as effecting a set of displacements from *cultures-as-text* (interpretative turn), to *texts-about-culture* (writing culture and the politics of representation), ending up with *anthropology-as-cultural-critique* (critical cultural constructivism). Even though there were of

course multiple and antagonistic tendencies within this 'textual turn', there was a virtual consensus about the necessity of problematizing some of the main epistemological assumptions of mainstream anthropologies – including the hypertrophied position of epistemology itself (Rabinow, 1986). Critiques focused on the modalities of authorship and authorization inscribed in rhetorical figures as well as the problems of representing cultural alterity. One of the main targets of this critique was the textual practices of the so-called realist ethnography. This opened up a moment for novel forms of writing that were more sensitive to the location of the author, the incompleteness of 'anthropological data', the necessarily dialogic and power-laden nature of fieldwork (Page, 1988), and the polyvocality of any representation of culture. The 'postmodern' moment – as it came to be labeled by its critics – also influenced an entire critical trend on the prevailing objectivist, essentialist and reified conception of 'culture' which emphasized, conversely, the historicized, located, polyphonic, political and discursive character of any 'cultural fact' (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992; Dirks et al., 1994; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Rosaldo, 1989).

While the textual turn opened up important possibilities for post-anthropological ethnography and post-epistemological accounts of culture, it nevertheless sheltered academic anthropological practices (Fox, 1991); it was also largely silent on anthropologies in the Third World (Mafeje, 2001). This latter aspect was incorporated in what was in all likelihood the most important critique of the 'writing culture' move, the feminist critique, including the subsequent and rich debate on feminist ethnography (see e.g. Behar and Gordon, 1995; Gordon, 1988, 1991; Knauff, 1996; Visweswaran, 1994). From the outset, this trend rightly articulated the critique of epistemology coming from feminist theory with the social critique coming from women of color and Third World women. In this respect, the 'women writing culture' and feminist ethnography trends contributed to destabilizing academic canons in ways that other critical perspectives did not. By raising the issue of what it meant to 'decolonize feminist anthropology' (Visweswaran, 1994: 101; see also Gordon, 1991), that is, feminist anthropology's relation to different kinds of women and women in other places, this group of anthropologists questioned feminist thinking and practices of ethnographic fieldwork and writing. In addressing the question of 'what it means to be women writing culture', they thus joined a critical epistemological reflection – including the relationship between anthropology and feminism (echoing an older argument by Strathern, 1987) – with a political reflection on power relations among women. As is well known, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1983) provided a spark and a model for this rethinking, along with *Writing Culture*. Twenty years later, *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (Anzaldúa and Keating, 2003) poses new challenges for feminist anthropology and anthropologies as a whole.

3. *Academic micro-practices*. The 1990s brought with them a new domain

of critique that had remained largely invisible within ‘dominant anthropologies’ – the institutional relations and practices within the academic establishment. These micro-practices and relations include, among others, mechanisms of training, hiring and promotion, the construction of hierarchies and prestige linked to academic departments, events such as colloquia and conferences, hidden canons and exemplars for publication in leading journals, funding patterns and grant-writing practices, and so forth. This critique shifted the focus to the practices of production, circulation and consumption of anthropological discourses and subjectivities. The gaze was thus directed toward the conditions under which anthropological labor is produced (Fox, 1991). This trend was in part a reaction to the over-emphasis on the textual aspects of anthropological work. As Abu-Lughod put it: ‘the decolonization of the text . . . leaves intact the basic configuration of global power on which anthropology, as linked to other institutions of the world, is based’ (1991: 143). Trouillot proposed the concept of ‘electoral politics’ to refer to:

. . . the set of institutionalized practices and relations of power that influence the production of knowledge from within academe: academic filiations, the mechanisms of institutionalization, the organization of power within and across departments, the market value of publish-or-perish prestige, and other worldly issues that include, but expand way beyond, the maneuvering we usually refer to as ‘academic politics’. (1991: 18)

What was at stake with this critique was the very materiality of production and reproduction of the anthropological establishment as such, a project recently taken up again by Brenneis, as we already mentioned.

Some of the consequences of this questioning remain to be studied further. For instance, if anthropological training inscribes subjects into certain intellectual traditions, the understanding of the reproduction and positioning of ‘dominant anthropologies’ involves a detailed description and analysis of this training. In this sense, Ben-Ari (1999) noted how the training of former colonial subjects in metropolitan centers has largely constituted a mechanism of expansion of dominant anthropologies throughout the globe. ‘By “allowing” – permitting, inviting, enticing – Third World scholars to join the discussions of academic anthropology, are we not reproducing anew the power relations of colonialism?’ (Ben-Ari, 1999: 404). This view may be somewhat static, yet it points at important, and often invisible, processes of power and influence over anthropologies in many parts of the world (witness, for instance, the increasing ‘North-Americanization’ of many Latin American anthropologies since the 1980s). For Ben-Ari (1999: 391), the model of an ‘authentic anthropology’, defined in terms of the representations that anthropologists make about themselves, involves three domains of practice: fieldwork, writing (particularly the ethnographic monograph) and institutional activities (particularly an academic job). He notes how:

... [d]espite the variety of deconstructions, critiques and questioning that have been sounded in the past few years, it is a ... specific version of professionalism that we work with. This version is a 'classic' British or American one: an anthropologist does fieldwork, in an-other place, faces and overcomes difficulties, writes her/his findings in a text called an ethnography (juxtaposing theory and data), and is employed in an academic institution. (Ben-Ari, 1999: 390, emphasis in the original)

Fieldwork has also been placed under scrutiny. For example, from the point of view of some activists in the south, the practice of going abroad to 'study other cultures or societies' in order to write about them has always been another form of exploitation and, obviously, the expression of unequal power relationships. Moreover, this particular anthropological frame could be seen as the expression of the bourgeois imaginary of a 'free individual' who 'decides' by him/herself what he/she 'wants' to 'study', when, where, how and for how long, while the people 'studied' are located in the 'passive' place of being observed, being the 'informants', and so forth. Much has changed, of course, in this ideology; yet the fact remains that dominant anthropological establishments and discourses continue to operate as a political technology for the production – often domestication, as we shall see below – of alterity. To understand more fully this aspect we need to broaden our view of the contexts in which anthropology emerged and operates. What we hope to achieve in the next section is a certain deepening of the previous critiques in ways that allow us to make visible a project of decolonizing anthropology at three interrelated levels: epistemic, social and institutional.

### **III. A further historicization of the production of anthropological knowledge**

Anthropologists work within a political and epistemological context that shapes their practice and that is beyond the ethnographer's immediate control (Escobar, 1993; Fox, 1991). We believe that it is important to revisit these conditions as a step towards imagining 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise'. What follows is a further, albeit brief, exercise in the sociology of production of anthropological knowledge, in the broadest terms we are able to imagine. We suggest that this broad contextualization has to incorporate at least the following dimensions: the modern intellectual division of labor within which anthropology emerged and within which it fits; the social and political contexts associated with this division of labor, that is, what we have called here modernity/coloniality; and of course the academic milieu in which 'dominant anthropologies' are largely practiced. In what follows we present a succinct view of these factors, raising questions for 'dominant anthropologies' about each of them, with the aim of creating a space for 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise'. (For the

sake of simplicity, we will use anthropology in the singular in this section, although it should be understood that we are referring to ‘dominant anthropologies’ as defined here.)

(1) *Anthropology and the modern division of intellectual labor*. In our view, Foucault has provided the broadest possible framework for locating the emergence and development of the social and human sciences, including anthropology’s specificity (see especially 1973: 344–87). Anthropology can be located within the modern episteme, understood as a particular configuration of knowledge that coalesced at the end of the 18th century and that involved, among other features: (a) the emergence of the figure of (Western) Man as the foundation of all knowledge and its privileged subject, separate from the natural order (see also Heidegger, 1977); (b) a given configuration of the natural, social and human sciences; (c) a series of tensions (‘the anthropological doubles’) that created a permanent instability in the structure of modernity and which, in Foucault’s analysis, might eventually result in the dissolution of Man and the modern episteme. Within this modern episteme, anthropology (ethnology, in Foucault’s account) and psychoanalysis function as counter-sciences – that is, as forms of knowledge that present the West with its own limits by confronting it with difference and the unconscious. They nevertheless find in Western *ratio* – and, hence, in European dominance – their reason for being.

There are two additional arguments to consider. First, within this modern division, anthropology was assigned the ‘savage slot’, an epistemological and political problematic that, despite important transformations, anthropology has not yet been able to transcend fully. In Trouillot’s critical contextualization, anthropology emerged within a larger enunciative field structured, after the Renaissance, around the figures of Order (the West as is), Utopia (the West as it could be) and the Savage (the non-West). Anthropology ended up being entrusted with the Savage slot – the study of savages and primitives (see also Stocking, 1987). Today, ‘the direction of the discipline depends upon an explicit attack on that slot itself and the symbolic order upon which it is premised’ (Trouillot, 1991: 34). For Trouillot, the starting point of this project cannot be the crisis of anthropology but must be the crisis in the wider world, through a vindication of a multiplicity of others (rather than ‘an Other’) with their partial truths and political projects. There is a link to be made between this idea of multiplicity of worlds and ‘other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise’.

Second, the modern division of intellectual labor fostered a phallogo-Eurocentric approach to knowledge. Modernity entailed the triumph of logocentrism, understood as a belief that finds in logical truth the foundation for any rational theory of the world as made up of knowable and, hence, controllable things and beings (e.g. Vattimo, 1991). Central to the phallogo-Eurocentrism of ‘Man the Modern’ (Haraway, 1997) has been a fundamental concern with epistemology as the vehicle for assessing truth and objective knowledge. In emphasizing the situatedness and partiality of

all knowledge, feminist epistemology articulates a frontal challenge to the modern knowledge order, including the concern with epistemology itself. This challenge is still to be fully worked into anthropology (feminist, subaltern or otherwise). Can, for instance, a notion of 'situated anthropologies' and ethnographies emerge from these frameworks?

(2) *Whether constitutive of anthropology or not, colonialism and imperialism have provided the overall context for the exercise of the discipline. This, however, does not need to be a 'fatal' trait; it could also be – indeed has been at times – a condition of possibility for de-colonizing expert knowledge.* The colonial context has not yet been fully shed. To understand the 'total colonial fact' (Ben-Ari, 1999) and to finally exorcize it, anthropology has to find a *point d'appui* that problematizes the very fact of a modern episteme and a Western *ratio* – that is, it has to deal with both colonialism and coloniality. This means considering the knowledge and cultural effects of colonialism/imperialism – what we referred to above as 'coloniality', or the colonial difference – plus Eurocentrism and the subalternization of knowledge that accompany these processes.

(3) *Anthropological practice takes place within modern disciplinary and institutional structures that account for the production of expert knowledge.* As already pointed out, the main result of this feature is the idea of a single space within which valid anthropology is produced. We will see the implications of this observation for moving beyond the assumption of a singular space and toward the plural space of 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise'.

Let us now list some of the most important implications of this analysis. At the epistemic and epistemological levels, we may ponder the effectiveness with which anthropology has represented radical alterity – have these representations enabled a radical critique of the West, or have they become technologies for the domestication of alterity? If it could be argued that the relationship with colonialism might have been contingent (e.g. Foucault, 1973: 377), that with Eurocentrism was not. How can anthropology bring the 'exteriority' of the West to bear more fully on the structures that made Man possible, including logocentrism? How can it foster a new dispersion of the human experience into a different play of differences and identities? Does the abandonment of 'the Other' in favor of a multiplicity of others entail the need to abandon the anthropological project altogether, or rather the possibility of recasting it as an anthropology of others (anthropologies of others), whose object(s) would be different historical subjects, in their irreducibility to any universal narrative (the West's or any other)? The notion of situated knowledge also has implications that go beyond partial perspective and a politics of location. It raises the issues of translation of knowledge across sites that are linked by networks of connections among power-differentiated communities. How can anthropology both 'see faithfully from another's point of view' (Haraway, 1988: 583), especially from the margins, on the one hand, and, on the other, enact a politics of translation that fully takes into account the power differentials across sites?<sup>9</sup>



At the social and political levels, one may wonder whether any 'de-colonization' of anthropology entails a 're-anthropologization', and if so, at the service of what? What strategic alliances and networks could be established for this purpose? For instance, between critical discourses in North and South, among graduate students worldwide, dissident anthropologists, Third World anthropologists, minority anthropologists, subaltern intellectuals of various kinds, activists. The question of the agents of such decolonization or radical transformation continues to be an important one. Some authors suggest subaltern social movements (Trouillot, 1991), Third World intellectuals in North and South (Harrison, 1991), the subaltern themselves (Mafeje, 2001). From the modernity/coloniality perspective it is possible to talk about (non-Eurocentric) epistemic perspective(s) that can be occupied by a host of social actors in many geopolitical locations and in multiple ways; in this way, it is not the identity of the subject that matters most, but the subject's ability to inhabit a border space of thought and practice. It could perhaps be claimed that, historically and socially, subaltern groups are more attuned to this epistemic perspective and are thus more likely to occupy effectively the spaces of transformation (the borders of the modern colonial world system), but of course no identity guarantees a politics or a perspective, and non-subaltern actors might find the project of border thinking enabling.

Finally, in terms of academic practices, it is clear that these have emerged as a primary target and space for the transformation of anthropology. One may ponder, then, what the main parameters are for advancing such a project. Who/what needs to change? How? Why does this change not happen now? How far can one push in this regard? Is the most radical project that anthropology can visualize for itself the very dissolution of the modern intellectual division of labor under the dictates of logocentrism? What would it take for anthropology to fully take into account the fact that it is the product of micro-practices that profoundly affect the field? The questions would become even more complex if we add the connections between the academy and more explicit politico-economic interests and forces.

A world anthropologies landscape focused in reworking coloniality would attempt to deal with the various levels and layers of power and decolonization: text, social reality, epistemic perspectives, academic practices (Escobar, 1993). These are, of course, interrelated. We suggest that we can think theoretically and politically about a project of decolonization or transformation at three levels.

*Epistemic transformation:* aiming at configurations of knowledge and power that go beyond the paradigm of modernity, towards an other paradigm(s), an other way of thinking (Mignolo, 2000; Santos, 2002). At this level, the thrust could be said to be on *locating knowledge* – including locating dominant knowledge in order to make visible other worlds and knowledges – what in the modernity/ coloniality perspective we have called 'worlds and knowledges otherwise'.<sup>10</sup>



*Social and political transformation*: locating anthropology explicitly within the power configuration defined by imperial globality and global coloniality (broadly, the modern/colonial world system; see also Escobar, 2004b). At this level, we may discuss anthropologies' role in technologies of production of alterity, and the link between these and socioeconomic and political projects of domination.

*Institutional transformation*, moving in two directions: beyond the disciplinary/undisciplinary boundary; and beyond the academic/non-academic divide. This would also entail *de-colonizing expertise*.<sup>11</sup>

The end result would be multiple spaces of interpretation (pluritopic hermeneutics, for epistemic de-colonization; see Mignolo, 2000); pluriversity (for social and political de-colonization); and 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise' (for institutional de-colonization and beyond). This would be the space of 'world anthropologies'. Let it be emphasized that these are provisional proposals intended to foster debate more than to provide a durable context for imagining beyond anthropology in the singular.<sup>12</sup>

#### IV. Envisioning world anthropologies

... we suffer increasingly from a process of historical amnesia in which we think that just because we are thinking about an idea it has only just started. (Hall, 1997: 20)

We believe that in the last two decades we have witnessed a tendency toward a growing influence of the Anglo-American model of anthropology on many world anthropologies.<sup>13</sup> It was already the case in the early 1980s that 'proportionate to the world community of anthropologists, the numbers of Anglo (especially of North) American anthropologists are very large indeed' (Stocking, 1982: 174; see Ribeiro and Escobar, in press b, for current figures worldwide; for instance, there are over 2000 anthropologists in Japan alone, and close to the same number in several Latin American countries, and those of us in the USA, often including those that specialize in those areas, know little about them). As Ben-Ari states, in this process of achieving hegemony:

... what happened was not the advent of any kind of world-wide consensus about the anthropological project, but rather that the basic terms and criteria which were (and still are) used in discussions and contentions about the profession were accepted by the overwhelming majority of anthropologists at the time. (1999: 396)

This tendency is reflected in the production of anthropological subjectivities. As Colombian anthropologist Carlos Alberto Uribe (1997: 259–60) noted, referring to anthropologists, among some of those who are subalternized there is often a tendency to emulate metropolitan practice. This hegemonic

process notwithstanding, as the WAN (World Anthropologies Network) Collective put it (2003), a question that remains is whether the production of Southern and subaltern anthropologies can be fully described in terms of a metropolitan matrix, no matter how much this matrix might be seen as a negotiated outcome, or whether there are indeed different practices and knowledges that go beyond them. This is a call to take seriously the notion that differences matter regarding anthropologists and anthropologies themselves. These historical and cultural differences involve relations of power and practices of marginalization and invisibilization (Krotz, 1997).

In other words, contestation of the subalternization associated with the taken-for-granted 'dominant anthropologies' is a necessary step towards the opening of a space of visibility and enunciability for 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise'. This contestation is not only discursive, given the dissimilar conditions in which the various world anthropologies are articulated and deployed. In order to realize the constitutive plurality of world anthropologies, it is indispensable to reverse the *asymmetrical ignorance* that goes into the processes of hegemonization/subalternization. A number of authors have pointed out already the asymmetrical ignorance that characterizes the world anthropological landscape. Without going in detail into the historiography of dominant anthropologies and the political economy of visibilities it upholds (past and present), it is fair to say that 'histories of anthropology' are often histories of the '(three) great traditions', with all other (usually national) 'traditions' in a secondary position (e.g. Ben-Ari, 1999; Cardoso de Oliveira, 1999/2000; Kant de Lima, 1992; Krotz, 1997; Ribeiro and Escobar, in press b; Stocking, 1982; Uribe, 1997, for a more thorough discussion). This is why 'anthropologists working at the "center" learn quickly that they can ignore what is done in peripheral sites at little or no professional cost, while any peripheral anthropologist who similarly ignores the "center" puts his or her professional competence at issue' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 27).

This 'asymmetrical ignorance' is related to a 'metropolitan parochial mentality', which, as Daniel Mato (2001: 128) notes, affects particularly intellectuals located in metropolitan contexts; there is a tendency either to imagine that what happens there is representative of what has happened in the rest of the world (or of what sooner or later will happen), or, alternatively, to assume that their interpretations have universal value. There is often a geopolitics of knowledge that reduces the 'natives' (even when they are anthropologists) to serving as sources of information, while those anthropologists firmly ensconced in the anthropological establishment are seen as producing theory or more valid descriptions about others.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to keep in mind how difficult it is to modify the discursive economy in which these processes take place. As Stuart Hall says, 'changing the terms of an argument is exceedingly difficult, since the dominant definition of the problem acquires, by repetition, and by the weight and credibility of those who propose or subscribe to it, the warrant

of “common sense” (1982: 81). A process of visibilization of silenced or subalternized anthropologies and anthropologists thus requires moving beyond the mere contestation of ‘dominant anthropologies’ and the terms in which they have been thought of as ‘anthropology’. This process also goes well beyond a naive claim for recognition on the part of the ‘dominant anthropologies’ establishment (to avoid falling into the master/slave dialectics described by Fanon, [1952] 1967, among other reasons). As Mafeje puts it for African contexts: ‘the deconstruction of Eurocentrism should not be constructed as an absolute rejection of the influence of European thinking on African scholars but rather as a rejection of assumed European intellectual hegemony’ (2001: 14).

The future of ‘world anthropologies’ entails going beyond disciplinary and academic constraints – at least as they exist today, given the increasingly corporatized model of the university worldwide. A ‘world anthropologies’ project must move towards a recognition of what is both un/non-disciplinary and un/non-academic in worldwide practices – in actuality or *in potentia*. First, the project needs to engage with un-disciplinary frameworks to the extent that these embody a radical critique of the canons of authority/authorization that reproduce the ‘dominant anthropologies’ establishment. Un-disciplinarity suggests that worldwide practices need to move beyond the mechanical addition or melding of ‘disciplines’ that is often involved in the terms ‘inter-’ and ‘trans-disciplinarity’.<sup>15</sup> Rather, an un-disciplinary horizon allows for the contestation of the modern/colonial epistemological assumptions of disciplinary expert knowledge. It operates with the goal of de-colonizing expertise. In other words, a ‘world anthropologies’ non-disciplinary horizon would both subvert the existing politics of knowledge and take seriously the truth-effects enacted by plural, place-based anthropological discourses. In so doing, even the terms ‘anthropology’ or ‘anthropologies’ could be radically reconceptualized or abandoned altogether. The concept of a ‘post-ethnological era’ proposed by Mafeje (2001) points in this direction.

Second, in order to enable world anthropologies, it is necessary to question the formative distinction between academic and non-academic realms. To some extent, this divide has operated like the state/civil society distinction analyzed by Mitchell (1991) and, more recently, by Hansen and Stepputat (2001). The divide suggests that there are two sides – academy and its outside – with the former defined by a specific rationality and set of practices outside, and different from, other realms of social life. Consequently, the discussion often centers on how to bridge or create connections between the academic and other orders. As Mitchell has suggested, the crucial issue is to realize that what produces and maintains this boundary is itself a mechanism that enables the deployment of a certain politics of knowledge. To make a parallel with the ethnography of the state, once you take into account the grounded practices of everyday re/production of academic knowledge, the radical boundary

between academic and other realms of social life becomes inevitably blurred.

As an un-academic project, the enablement of 'world anthropologies' would entail a critique of the epistemological and politico-economic conditions that constitute the academic realm as if it were separate from (and a possible standpoint for) other practices and relations. By stating that 'world anthropologies' must be understood as not only academic, we would like to highlight the multiplicity of enunciative locations – in tandem with related notions such as situated knowledges, border thinking or place-based epistemologies (Escobar, 2001). Chakrabarty's (2000) work is particularly relevant in this regard. His analysis of the relationships between 'subaltern pasts' and history as discipline can serve as a heuristic to think broadly about the relations between expert knowledge and 'subaltern knowledges'. Chakrabarty's notion of 'subaltern pasts', and his proposal for 'provincializing Europe', push the limits of Eurocentric grids of intelligibility (as his Althusser epigraph indicates). Other authors similarly raise the issue of the incommensurability of subaltern and expert knowledges, and the impossibility of the former being represented in its own terms by the latter – which was precisely the thrust of Spivak's famous article, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (see e.g. Coronil, 1996; Guha, 1983 [1994]; Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000).

Were we to follow the subalternists' analysis to its logical conclusions, would we have to admit that 'dominant anthropologies' have always been part of the prose of counter-insurgency (always reducing the insurgent/Other to a Western discourse and logic)? Or has it been able, now and then, to show that the insurgent/savage can be the subject of his/her own narrative, the protagonist of his/her own history? From the perspective of the academic/non-academic divide, have anthropologists' customary translations of subaltern worlds into the abstract terms of logocentric discourse meant that they have inevitably done little more than 'report on the subaltern', or has this very translation not also at times been able to upset the self-confidence of the West and enable important subaltern resistances and reconstructions? If, as we adduced earlier, 'dominant anthropologies' more often than not operated as technologies for the domestication of alterity – translating subaltern worlds into Eurocentric terms – have they not produced also conditions for such alterities to exercise a critical function vis-a-vis the very system that makes them visible?

We pose these questions to problematize our own position, but also to suggest possible moves towards 'world anthropologies'. Mafeje (2001) has suggested a number of moves that are useful in working through these predicaments, including: a deconstructionist approach from an African perspective; non-disciplinarity – a sort of free borrowing from any field without concern for disciplinary rules, methods, etc.; a non-epistemological approach, beyond the adherence to a general 'discursive method'; a practice of ethnography as made up of the subject's own texts,

decoded by the social scientist in their own context, under non-alienating and thoroughly political conditions, and in a way that takes subjects as knowledge-producers in their own right; and a 'post-ethnological' approach to theory building – one that goes beyond the objectifying and classifying imperatives of anthropology (this would entail abandoning the concept of culture in favor of ethnography). What may emerge from these new practices is 'new styles of thinking and new forms of organization of knowledge' (Mafeje, 2001: 60), bringing about a post-anthropological era, beyond what any project of 're-anthropologization' could accomplish.

Needless to say, Mafeje's solutions are no panacea and are full of traps and tensions further down the line. Our aim in describing them is less to propose them as a model than to show a particular way of thinking that aims at pluralizing practices. This gives us the chance to remind ourselves that anthropology could indeed be in the avant-garde of the transformation of the modern intellectual division of labor (i.e. of the system of the disciplines as we know it), if such a project were ever to be entertained seriously. It also brings to the fore the question of what 'beyond epistemology' entails. Is it possible to go beyond the preoccupation with criteria for assessing the truth, or the truth value of a statement, representations, etc. (that is, the process of reasoning and the validity of statements, what could be called the analytics of truth of Western logocentrism, as opposed to the Foucauldian project of the relation between truth telling and the exercise of power)? In what ways does 'beyond epistemology' also entail going beyond the dominance of principles such as cognitivism, positivism, logic, metaphysics, logocentrism? What would be the role of seemingly alternative styles of reasoning and argumentation (e.g. traditions of rhetoric, exegesis, oratory, performance, non-logocentric writing, etc.), the introduction of 'subaltern epistemologies', or the recovery of non-dualist Western traditions such as phenomenology?

### Final comments

A 'world anthropologies' horizon changes not only the taken-for-granted content of 'dominant anthropologies', but also – as in the case of the modernity/coloniality approach – the *terms*, *conditions* and *places* of worldwide anthropological conversations and exchanges. 'World anthropologies' is an intervention toward the making possible of 'other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise'. This visualization entails a novel attempt at de-naturalizing the *doxa* of 'dominant anthropologies'. As Kant de Lima notes:

... the control exercised over intellectual production in general and anthropology in particular as an academic, scientific discipline is not accomplished in the academy by censoring the contents of propositions, or, at least, not only by doing this. It involves the imposition of the academic form of expression which,

in the final analysis, orients and organizes thought and imposes its limits on intellectual production, in the process of domesticating it. *What is important is not whether or not the content of a proposition is revolutionary, but whether or not it can be neatly fitted into the forms of expression permitted by the academy, and whether or not it is a disciplined and docile product and, consequently, useful for the same academy.* (1992: 207, emphasis added)

We suggest that 'world anthropologies' constitutes an attempt to transform the uneven conditions of possibility of production/circulation of anthropological thinking at large. 'World anthropologies' takes seriously the idea that (cultural, historical, political and epistemological) differences matter, not only as an externality embedded in the so-called object of study, but also as constituent of any anthropological project. To this extent, 'world anthropologies' builds on, and extends in terms of its conceptual and political consequences, the radical potential of an anthropology of anthropology. In short, as a project, 'world anthropologies' is not more, but not less, than taking anthropological thinking seriously. Thus, the enablement of 'world anthropologies' involves a pluralizing, de-centering and re-historicizing of what usually appears as a single and non-problematic 'anthropology'. 'World anthropologies' entails a re-articulation of anthropological thinking that enables it to take seriously the constitutive function of power and difference in the political economy of visibilities. In this sense, 'world anthropologies' aims towards a post-anthropological era, a moment beyond the dominance of 'dominant anthropologies'. Here, as Gustavo Lins Ribeiro (2001: 176) says, 'the prefix "post" suggests the possibility of drawing other cognitive maps . . .' and, of course, making possible other conditions of intervention.

Anthropologies' multiple changes and repeated crises reveal that it is a highly reflexive discipline that projects itself onto, and receives feedback from, the topics it studies. As a consequence, anthropology is finely attuned to the sociological changes of each period; in a globalized world this calls for more diverse international voices and perspectives actively participating in any assessment of the frontiers of anthropological knowledge. Studying each other as anthropologists becomes important from this perspective. Indeed, a globalized world is a perfect scenario for anthropologies to thrive, since one of anthropology's basic lessons is respect for difference. A discipline that praises plurality and diversity needs to foster these standpoints within its own milieu. This means a multi-centered field in a polycentric world. Turning to other anthropologists and anthropologies – and with an attentive eye to epistemic, epistemological and political differences – is a *sine qua non* for 'world anthropologies'.

It would be ironic if the project of world anthropologies came to be seen as a new attempt on the part of the 'periphery' to strike back, as in some simplistic interpretations of the aims of the postcolonial critique vis-a-vis the former imperial powers. On the contrary, we think that this is a moment of enlargement of the anthropological horizon that will make

anthropology a richer cosmopolitics, one that is capable of dealing with the challenges arising in the 21st century (Ribeiro and Escobar, in press b).

## Notes

- 1 This article has several sources. The initial idea of a plurality of anthropologies came up in conversations among the two authors and Marisol de la Cadena in Chapel Hill in spring 2001. We then drafted a text on the idea of a 'world anthropologies network', WAN (available at <http://www.ram-wan.org>). Several steps followed, including WAN graduate seminars taught at both Chapel Hill (by Arturo Escobar with Restrepo's assistance) and the University of Brasilia (by Gustavo Lins Ribeiro) in fall 2002. Ribeiro and Escobar also started working on a conference on 'World Anthropologies' in fall 2001, which took place as a Wenner-Gren Symposium in spring 2003, with the participation of several of those who had joined by then a loose 'WAN Collective'. Informal discussions have been maintained online since, especially by five of us (de la Cadena, Susana Narotzky from Universidad de Barcelona, Ribeiro, Restrepo and Escobar), which really enriched the article. The WAN collective has since enlarged (see its short collective text in *Social Anthropology*, WAN Collective, 2003); it has also engaged in a series of projects and presentations, so far chiefly in Latin America and, to a lesser extent, Europe and the US. We would also like to thank some of our WAN friends (Eeva Berglund, Eduardo Archetti, Sandy Toussaint, Shiv Visvanathan and Esteban Krotz) for comments, and support from colleagues at the two institutions with which we are affiliated (particularly Dorothy Holland and Peter Redfield at Chapel Hill, Mauricio Pardo, María Victoria Uribe and Cristóbal Gnecco in Colombia) for giving resonance to the project. Finally, our thanks to four anonymous referees as well as the journal editors for their useful comments and interest in the piece.
- 2 We shall have more to say about this later on in the article. A panel proposal for the EASA conference in Vienna in September 2004, for instance, called attention to the lack of awareness about the growing control of agendas, funding, publishing and so forth by elite departments in the United States in ways that affect anthropology in the USA and beyond. 'To what extent does this domination stifle intellectual creativity?', these anthropologists asked. 'Does anthropologists' lack of reflexivity reveal conceptual and theoretical weaknesses in their approach to politics?' The workshop was aimed at stimulating discussion 'about the limits of anthropologists' reflexivity vis-a-vis the production and reproduction of (social, intellectual, institutional, editorial, linguistic) power structures within their own discipline' (Gausset and Gibb, 2004). More analyses of this sort are surfacing outside the US, and the problem has begun to be tackled in the US itself. In his 2003 Presidential Address to the AAA, Donald Brenneis analyzed at length the increasing intersections among scholarly knowledge, managerialist language and practice, and private capital that result in ever higher levels of privatization and normalization of knowledge. For him, these changes represent 'profound transformations' that (Euro-American) anthropologists have failed to analyze. In our view, practices such as publishing and hiring are becoming even more normalized than in the recent past. Hiring practices are becoming so tightly controlled (with most positions going to those trained in a few elite departments) that it is reaching scandalous (albeit not formally discussed) levels. Publishing in some leading



journals seems to obey a canon so strict that it is becoming a formula (one has to follow the formula for the article to be published); articles in these journals also involve almost exclusively self-referential scholarly exchanges which silence or exclude the often extremely rich debates taking place in the locations where the anthropologist is working on precisely the same topics he or she is writing about. As geographer David Slater has pointed out (2004), there is a pervasive tendency in metropolitan scholarship to ignore the contributions of African, Asian and North American intellectuals writing in those parts of the world, so that pointing at this absence and including those voices should be part of any critical postcolonial geopolitical theory. That the influence of the US anthropology model is growing is also attested by simple observations such as increased attendance of non-US-based anthropologists at the AAA meetings, and the desire (and sometimes the need, given the prestige) to publish in English-speaking journals.

- 3 We have shifted several times our characterization of 'dominant anthropologies' over the past three years, from terms such as 'metropolitan' and 'central' to 'straight' (from queer theory) and 'hegemonic'. We finally settled for dominant in this article, echoing Gramsci's conceptualization but also Ranajit Guha's notion of the dominance without hegemony achieved in many colonialist social formations. We should make the caveat, however, than while the relation between 'dominant anthropologies' (again, particularly US) and many other world anthropologies can be described as one of dominance (and in some cases even hegemony), the kinds and degrees of contestation vary considerably. For instance, the degree of contestation of, and independence from, Anglo-American anthropology has been much greater in Brazil, Mexico or India than in most other Latin American anthropologies with which we are familiar. Colombian anthropologist Myriam Jimeno has made the argument that, unlike the case of some dominant anthropologies, the ineluctable link that exists between anthropologists and their societies and subjects of study in many Third World countries creates anthropologies where not only the contents but also the very categories of anthropological work are contested; this contestation, in Jimeno's analysis, includes the localization, radical transformation and outright rejection of metropolitan categories (Jimeno, 2003; see also Ramos, 1999–2000 and Das, 1998 for Indian anthropology). There would be much more to say about the status of the discussion of the relation between 'dominant anthropologies' and subaltern, Third World or peripheral anthropologies than there is space for here. We hope to take up this issue for the case of Latin American anthropologies in a subsequent work. Gianni Vattimo and Manuel Cruz (1999) have made the interesting argument that peripheral philosophies such as those of Italy and Spain are perhaps richer and more universal since they have to process all of the various metropolitan schools, which are all too busy building their own systems to take others into account. Something of the same sort happens with many anthropologies, particularly of the South, which engage by necessity with various dominant anthropologies and with other anthropologies of the South to create their own eclectic and less provincial practice. Finally, we will not deal here with interesting developments in recent years in some dominant anthropologies, particularly France (for further discussion on several European cases, see Ribeiro and Escobar, in press b); or developments in fields (such as science and technology studies) which are bringing about important changes in dominant anthropological practices; or in particular schools (such as the anthropology of social movements being



developed at Chapel Hill, where concepts of ethnography, networks and theory itself are being rethought, to some extent articulating with the WAN project and with novel ways of integrating research and action; activist anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin; or Graeber's [2004] proposal for anarchist anthropologies).

- 4 For instance, there are certain fields within the countries where 'dominant anthropologies' are dominant (such as folklore, ethnomusicology and visual anthropology) that have been subjected to subalternizing pressures. The same argument might apply to feminist and minority anthropologies and, in general, to processes of subalternization in all world anthropologies.
- 5 It is pertinent to recall Said's statement on these practices of authority/authorization:

There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces. Above all, authority can, indeed must, be analyzed. (1979: 19–20)

- 6 Although we will not elaborate this idea here, we should mention that these anthropological regimes not only inscribe a specific order of knowledge and of the thinkable (or, in Bourdieu's terms, a *doxa* as well as its *heterodoxas* and *orthodoxas*), but that, *as a form of expert knowledge*, dominant anthropological practices and imaginings are connected with modern regimes of power, which refers, for instance, to the processes of governmentality described by Foucault (or, to appeal to another widely valorized theoretical horizon, the rationalization of the lifeworld).
- 7 Even if the work of this group, still largely unknown in the Anglo-Saxon academy, is important for the argument we are making, we cannot present it at any length here. We refer readers to Escobar (2004a), which contains a full bibliography and an extended presentation of the work of this group of authors. The group includes well over two dozen researchers, with a high concentration in the Andean countries, but also some working in the US on Latin America and Latina/o questions. The leading figures of this group at present are the Argentinean/Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel, the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano and the Argentinean cultural theorist Walter D'Almeida. The modernity/coloniality perspective includes, among other features: the adoption of a world perspective in the explanation of modernity, in lieu of a view of modernity as an intra-European phenomenon; the identification of the domination of others outside the European core as a necessary dimension of modernity; the notion of *coloniality of power* (Quijano, 2000), a global hegemonic model and technology of power in place since the Conquest that articulates race and labor, space and peoples, according to the needs of capital and to the benefit of white European peoples; and a conception of Occidentalism (Coronil, 1996) and Eurocentrism as the knowledge structure and forms of modernity/coloniality – a hegemonic representation and mode of knowing that claims universality for itself. In sum, there is a systematic re-reading of modernity in terms of modernity's 'underside', as Dussel (1996) calls it. The main conclusions are, first, that the proper unit of analysis is modernity/coloniality – in sum, there is no modernity without coloniality, with the latter being constitutive of the former. Second, the fact that 'the colonial difference'

is a privileged epistemological and political space. In other words, what emerges from this alternative framework is the need to take seriously the epistemic force of local histories and the kinds of border thinking that are more likely to be found in the political praxis of subaltern groups. Here is a further characterization of coloniality by Walter Mignolo (cited in Escobar, 2004b: 218):

Since modernity is a project, the triumphal project of the Christian and secular west, coloniality is – on the one hand – what the project of modernity needs to rule out and roll over, in order to implant itself as modernity and – on the other hand – the site of enunciation where the blindness of the modern project is revealed, and concomitantly also the site where new projects begin to unfold. In other words, coloniality is the site of enunciation that reveals and denounces the blindness of the narrative of modernity from the perspective of modernity itself, and it is at the same time the platform of pluri-versality, of diverse projects coming from the experience of local histories touched by western expansion (as the World Social Forum demonstrates); thus coloniality is not a new abstract universal (Marxism is imbedded in modernity, good but short-sighted), but the place where diversity as a universal project can be thought out; where the question of languages and knowledges becomes crucial (Arabic, Chinese, Aymara, Bengali, etc.) as the site of the pluriversal – that is, the ‘traditional’ that the ‘modern’ is rolling over and ruling out.

The question of whether there is an ‘exteriority’ to the modern/colonial world system is somewhat peculiar to this group, and easily misunderstood. It was originally proposed by Dussel in his classic work on liberation philosophy (1976), and reworked in recent years, including through Mignolo’s concept of ‘border thinking’ (2000). In no way should this exteriority be thought about as a pure outside, untouched by the modern; it refers to an outside that is precisely constituted as difference by hegemonic processes. By appealing from the exteriority in which s/he is located, the Other becomes the source of an ethical discourse vis-a-vis a hegemonic totality. This interpellation of the Other comes from beyond the system’s institutional and normative frame, as an ethical challenge. This is precisely what most European and Euro-American theorists seem unwilling to consider; both Mignolo and Dussel see here a strict limit to deconstruction and to the various Eurocentered critiques of Eurocentrism.

- 8 For a more detailed and contemporary analysis of this topic see Ben-Ari (1999); Pels and Saleminck (1994); Van Bremen and Shimizu (1999).
- 9 This last aspect involves, of course, paying attention to the structuring forces of local/subjugated knowledge that impose unequal translations and exchanges; it involves ‘translations and solidarities linking vision of the subjugated’ (Haraway, 1988: 590; see also Santos, 2002 and Mignolo, 2000, for a similar statement from the perspective of the World Social Forum and border thinking, respectively).
- 10 *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise* (WKO) became the title of the electronic journal that replaced *Nepantla: Views from South*, a journal that featured many of the debates on the coloniality of knowledge. See WKO’s webpage: [www.jhfc.duke.edu/wko](http://www.jhfc.duke.edu/wko).
- 11 This tripartite division crystallized in a discussion at Chapel Hill with Walter Mignolo and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, who had been thinking about these issues in the context of local knowledge and inter-religious dialogue. We are grateful to both colleagues for their engagement with our project.

- 12 There are additional inquiries derived from the Latin American modernity/coloniality framework that could be raised for anthropology, and which we hope to develop in a subsequent article. Just to give an idea, consider the following issues: first, the need for more explicit anthropological narratives constructed from different epistemic positions, from the diversity of historical processes (since it is from this perspective that anthropology could best contribute to the articulation of macro-narratives from the critical perspective of coloniality). This means that 'world anthropologies' need to situate themselves in the multiple (pluritopic) spaces enabled by border thinking. What might these anthropological narratives 'from the epistemic border' look like? What contemporary practices would have to change to accommodate such 'anthropologies from the border', so to speak? Second, 'world anthropologies' requires a reorganization of anthropology as a field of knowledge lodged within a singular modernity, an openness to thinking from modernity's underside, from the 'other than modernity', from the colonial difference. Yet everything – from historical forces to academic practices, including the dominance of English – seems historically oriented to make such a move improbable. What sorts of conditions – social, political, academic/intellectual, epistemological – could be more conducive to unfreezing the imaginary of the social sciences into new terrains and practices, where it could think in an other logic and practice other epistemologies? Third, how could we think about the ethnographies of local histories enacting dominant global designs, side by side with ethnographies of subalternized and border knowledges, so as to release the potential radical value they could have in terms of moving beyond modernity? Ethnographic research could detect interesting sites where 'double critiques' (de- and re-construction of modernity side by side with internal cultural critique by subaltern groups of their own cultures and practices) are taking place, so as to avoid the persistent dichotomy of 'West versus the Rest'. The question, again, is: how can 'world anthropologies' effect changes in current practices and strategies to make such a project possible?
- 13 Even though it is important to keep in mind that there is no absolute consensus about what 'anthropology' means inside the Anglo-American academy, it is reasonably safe to assert that there have been dominant concepts such as the 'four fields' and 'culture' (the disciplinary 'object' *par excellence*) that have been widely shared. To the extent that these can be said to constitute a dominant paradigm, it has been affected by what Hymes called a sort of 'departmental anthropology', which accounts for a 'domestication . . . of anthropology as an academic discipline in this country' ([1969] 1974: 10). We see signs of a new round of domestication in the US and many countries in recent years, most likely related to the growing neoliberalization of the academy in most countries, heightened competition for jobs, crisis in the academic publishing world, and of course the wider political climate that has put many academics and academic units on the defensive, if not under retreat. We would like to emphasize that this article's analysis is not a critique of individual anthropologists in the US or anywhere; many of them are, in our experience, progressive intellectuals who have a tremendous sense of solidarity with struggles in the places where they work (as we ourselves try to have). Some manage to craft a radical practice vis-a-vis their home communities or those of the people with whom they work. The analysis is meant to examine the shortcomings, contradictions and aporias of professionalized academic practices, as currently defined, by locating them anew in a larger context. As Graeber (2004: 98) says, 'while anthropology might

seem perfectly positioned to provide an intellectual forum for all sorts of planetary conversations, political and otherwise, there is a certain built-in reluctance to do so'. It is this reluctance that we would like to explain.

- 14 Needless to say, this trait characterizes other disciplines as well; US Latin Americanist political science, for instance, has been notorious in making invisible those authors with whom they converse while in Latin America, and in whose works they often find inspiration.
- 15 The Latin American modernity/coloniality research program explicitly seeks to develop an un-disciplinary practice. While its members come from particular disciplines (philosophy, literary theory, sociology, anthropology, and law primarily), the collective effort is towards 'un-disciplining' the disciplines, and to develop 'theory without disciplines'. See Escobar (2004a) for further discussion.

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